

## Marketing P's Used By Retailers Of National Soap Brands- A Study Across Retailers Of KSDL In India

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### Abstract:

Despite the fact that Karnataka Soaps and Detergents Ltd., Bangalore is a government-owned firm, the importance of profitability and productivity should not be disregarded in any manner. Research on retailers' marketing practises is being sought to better understand where the business is in terms of product promotion and where it needs to make adjustments to better compete with its rivals. The purpose of the present study is descriptive; specifically, it is to identify associations between the variables being examined. A self-prepared questionnaire was designed keeping in mind the techniques used by retailers to attract and retain consumers based on Product, pricing, marketing, distribution and Physical evidence strategies. The surveys comprised of 35 questions including retail shop data. Using a confirmatory factor analysis and statistics software package, we found that the questionnaire's AVE was more than 5.00, MSV was larger than AVE, and Cronbach's alpha and Composite reliability were both greater than 0.700, indicating that the scales were valid and reliable. This validates the validity of the questionnaire. As to the corporate statistics, 2020-21, there are 3,89,345 retailers of KSDL in India throughout Bangalore, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai and Delhi Branches. Using the Cochran formula of known population at 10 percent margin of error a sample of 100 merchants was selected to be appropriate for the study. The researcher circulated 130 questionnaires and 120 valid replies were chosen for the current investigation. Convenience sampling approach was utilised to pick 20 shopkeepers from each of the branches. Statistical analysis was performed using the statistical software packages SPSS Version 25 and AMOS Version 22. The findings of the study suggest that the mean scores for Marketing mix elements employed by retailers is high for Product strategy and promotion indicating retailers have strong product strategy and promotion, while less significance is given to Physical evidence. Product strategy influences the four marketing Ps by a factor of 77 percent, and physical evidence by a factor of 71 percent. The merchants' focus on product strategy is a good one, but there is still room for improvement in terms of physical evidence if they want to reap the full benefits of the optimal distribution of marketing components.

**Keywords:** Marketing mix elements, Product strategy, Price, Promotion, distribution and Physical evidence.

### Introduction

The marketing mix was developed from the first principle of microeconomics, pricing (Chong, 2003). In order to put marketing plans into action, McCarthy (1964) proposed the "marketing mix," sometimes known as the "4Ps" (Bennett, 1997). There is no scientific basis for the marketing mix; rather, it provides a framework for the main choices that managers make when tailoring their products

and services to meet the demands of target markets. Both long-term strategies and more immediate tactical programmes may be created with the use of the instruments (Palmer, 2004). As with baking, the concept of the marketing mix may be thought of as a blending of many elements. Depending on the desired final result, a baker will adjust the ingredient ratios used to make a cake. The marketing mix's components and their relative weights are flexible and subject to change from one product to the next

(Hodder Education, n.d). Ever since its introduction in the 1940s, the marketing mix management paradigm has served as the dominant framework for marketing theory, research, and practise (Grönroos, 1994; Van Waterschoot, n.d.). According to Kent (1986), "the holy quadruple...of the marketing faith...written on tablets of stone" are the 4Ps of the marketing mix. Both marketing theory and practise have been profoundly influenced by the marketing mix (Möller, 2006).

For these reasons and more, the marketing mix is a potent notion (Grönroos, 1994): – It makes marketing look easy to handle; – It permits the separation of marketing from other operations of the company; – It allows the delegation of marketing work to experts. There are two major advantages to using the marketing mix approach. One of its primary functions is to help marketers see how much of their work involves balancing the relative importance of various elements of the marketing mix. The marketing mix also sheds light on an often-overlooked aspect of the marketing manager's role, which is the second of its many advantages. Every manager faces the challenge of dividing up limited resources among competing priorities; the marketing manager will do the same using the tools at their disposal. This will aid in spreading the marketing ethos throughout the company (Low and Tan, 1995).

The unique mix of elements, including available resources, industry trends, and client preferences, will give the marketing approaches of various businesses a seemingly random appearance. It's important to remember that not every part of the marketing mix is equally vital at all times. Each component of the marketing mix should be evaluated in light of the entire before any final conclusions can be drawn regarding that component alone.

When it comes to the marketing mix, McCarthy (1960) claims that the possibilities are virtually limitless. The 4Ps model of marketing has been praised while also receiving its fair share of criticism. Insufficient time and energy is spent considering the theoretical foundations of the publicly available normative instructions in textbooks. The marketing mix was particularly useful in the early days of the marketing concept, when a greater proportion of the economy was devoted to actual products.

Because of the growing complexity of contemporary organisations and the higher number of items and marketplaces, several authors have attempted to enhance marketing's efficacy by suggesting a fifth P, such as package, people, or process. Nevertheless, the 4 Ps remain the foundation of even the most cutting-edge marketing strategies. Despite (or maybe because of) its evident shortcomings, the adoption of this paradigm in marketing textbooks continues to expand. Despite their flaws, the 4Ps remain a crucial aspect of every successful marketing plan. The current study aims at understanding the importance of 4 P's in context of soap industry with special relevance to Karnataka Soaps and Detergents Limited. The study examines the contribution of each P to the marketing Mix of KSDL products by its retailers.

### Company Profile



Karnataka soaps and Detergents Ltd

### PRESENT STATUS

India is an excellent choice for a market to sell cleaning supplies. The Hindustan liver brand, which dominates the cleaning industry, is available in virtually every part of the industry, with the exception of the tiniest of Indian communities. In India, the market for soap, which is 7.4 lakh tonnes per year, is expanding at a rate of 4 percent.

The Indian soap market is a pseudo market, and it is amazingly complex, being segmented not only on the basis of price benefits, but even a range of emotions within that outlining framework. The hope lies in increasing the value of the rupee, and the potential for doing so is high. The reason for this is that the Indian soap market is pseudo in nature

### PROBLEMS OF SOAP INDUSTRY

The soap business is struggling with a few issues with raw ingredients. The primary components are benzene, soap ash, and linear alkyl. Sodium is also present. Phosphate of Tripoli presents a number of significant challenges with regard to its supply. The difference between demand and supply of vegetable oil is between 1.5 and 2 lakh tonnes,

and it is filled by imports. These days, caustic soda and soap ashes may be found in rather high concentrations in the more affordable forms of soap.

## NATURE OF BUSINESS

The soap manufacturing powerhouse that is KARNATAKA SOAPS & DETERGENTS LIMITED may be found in the Indian state of Karnataka. Manufacturing personal care items such as soaps, detergents, incense sticks, talcum powders, and other such items is the primary focus of this company's operations. The firm has been in existence for close to a hundred years and has a diverse product line that includes everything from basic soaps to fragrant soaps and detergents. It has designed its product line to cater to the requirements of consumers who fall into both upper and lower income brackets of the social stratification system. The company adheres to the philosophy that conducting business should be done not only with the purpose of making a profit but also to serve society by being socially responsible and to engage in business that protects its culture at the same time. This philosophy guides the company's day-to-day operations.

## AREA OF OPERATION

KS&DL has a long history of maintaining the highest quality standards, beginning with the

selection of raw materials and continuing through the processing and packaging of the final product. These products are regularly exported to the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, /Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, and countries in South East Asia, in addition to North America and South America. The top perfume houses of the globe, including those in France, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Germany, Japan, and Saudi Arabia, have a strong demand for sandalwood oil. The oils and fats used in the production of all of KS&DL's toilet soaps are from vegetable sources, and the products include no animal fat whatsoever.

## MARKETING BRANCHES

The company has a functional type of organisational structure with a corporate office spread over 36 acres in Bangalore, a soap manufacturing plant spread over 23 acres in Mysore, a sandal wood distillation factory spread over 25 acres in Shimoga, and six branches in Mumbai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, New Delhi, Kolkata, and Chennai, as well as 20 depots and CFAs spread across India. An extensive distribution network of 3 lakh retail outlets spread across India, with around 1000 modern trade retail locations spread across the country, distinguishes the organisation.

Figure 1- Marketing Branches of KSDL in India

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## Literature review

One of the most important steps in every research project is the literature review. To examine the main aspects of current knowledge, both substantive conclusions and practical approaches to a topic are typically included in a literature review. Studies conducted during the last several years have revealed a high level of industry consolidation

in the marketing of soaps and detergents. The effect of marketing techniques on a company's bottom line has been the subject of a great deal of research. Most of the important studies conducted in India and elsewhere on the topic of marketing strategies in relation to fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) have been analysed and reported on by the researcher in the present study (Soaps and detergent)

**Table 1- Literature review**

<b>Ismaya, S. B., Indrajaya, T., Bawazir, H., &amp; Septa, D. Y.</b> (2022)	Detergent is an improvement on soap since it cleans more thoroughly and does not react negatively to the mineral content of the water. There needs to be a balance between manufacturers' abilities and the right marketing methods, especially for those who are concerned about making ecologically friendly items. Using the distribution channel is a great way to get your product into the hands of more people. Products made by micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSME) have the potential to expand and compete successfully in the market if they are of high enough quality and the right marketing techniques are used.
<b>Ali, A., &amp; Muhammad, K.</b> (2021)	The uniqueness of marketing tools is central to the concept of attracting customers' attention to the things being promoted, hence it stands to reason that businesses need to employ novel approaches to promoting their goods and services. In today's business world, marketers are always on the lookout for fresh approaches to marketing that will help them meet the ever-evolving needs of their target audience. This study's overarching goal is to determine the efficacy of various forms of advertising by gauging their effects on consumers' purchasing decisions. As a result, businesses of all sizes employ an array of promotional strategies in an effort to expand their client base and raise their overall market share. Promotion is a type of marketing that aims to raise awareness of and demand for a company's goods or services among target consumers.
<b>Sharma, M. A</b> (2021)	People in our country, which has a population of over 1.35 billion, are changing their ways of living and becoming more health conscious, which has led to an uptick in interest in natural and Ayurvedic products. Many consumers have chosen Patanjali Ayurveda Products thanks to the many advertising, promotion, and branding efforts put out by Baba Ramdev.
Wanniarachchi, A. S. (2021)	Marketing is more than merely spreading the word about a product. Now, actions may be observed across the board. No one can afford to ignore marketing's significance, since it now powers the company's outbound and inbound operations. There is intense competition for today's consumer dollar from businesses big and small, international and regional, cutting edge and time-tested, public and private. Businesses now understand that a comprehensive marketing strategy is essential to generating and maintaining profitable customer demand, a positive public image, and a strong position in the marketplace. The scope of marketing's function is too broad to be adequately covered in a single article. Numerous modern advertising approaches are possible because to the proliferation of digital media. Some of the more effective recent advertising techniques are ethnic targeting, premium pricing, and visual displays. Here is a sampling of the most popular and fruitful advertising strategies now employed by companies to draw in new customers and retain existing ones.

Lakmali, (2021)	R. Study primarily investigates previous research studies done by researchers related to visual merchandising marketing strategy in various industries, as well as previous studies regarding the price premium strategy and how it is implemented in local context and what kinds of businesses are best suited to the price premium strategy. In addition, the industries most frequently employing these marketing methods were the ones studied. Both the beneficial and negative effects of employing these tactics were uncovered by the study's authors.
Sharma, A., & Adewa, P. K. (2021)	The fast-moving consumer goods industry is booming. The present study is founded on an analysis of the marketing mix components and variables utilised by fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) businesses operating in the Indian market, with specific reference to Patanjali Ayurved Limited and Himalaya Herbals. An online survey was sent out to 500 randomly selected consumers to form the basis of this study. Using responses to surveys, the researcher has built a regression equation that may be used to fine-tune future advertising campaigns.
Achola, G. O., & Were, S. (2018)	This research set out to determine how different marketing approaches have affected the success of FMCG businesses in Nairobi County. The study set out to answer the following questions: what effect do strategies for product specialisation, price leadership, distribution channels, and promotion mix have on firm performance? Product specialisation, pricing leadership, distribution channel, and promotion mix strategies were proven to have a favourable and statistically significant impact on business outcomes.

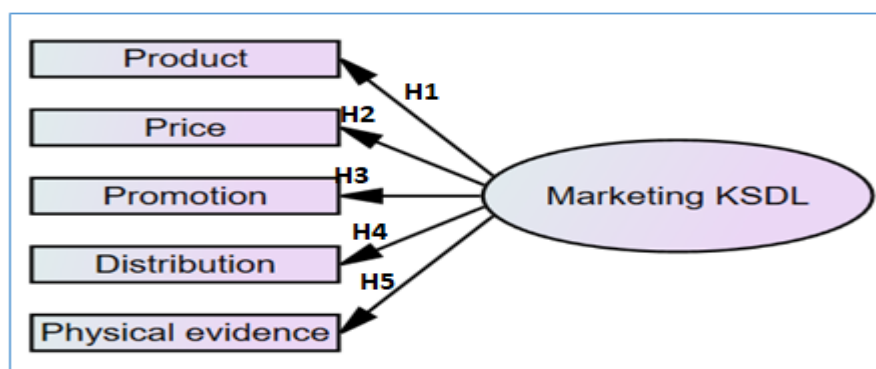
### Research Gap

After reviewing the available literature, it became clear that the vast majority of research addressed broad issues related to the FMCG industry, such as customer happiness, price competition, brand building, and the existence of a regulated or unregulated market. Research suggests that more than 50% of customers buy alternative brands because they could not find what they were looking for, indicating that efficient distribution is crucial to attaining sales goals. Hence are concerns with supply side of the FMCG industry, which can solve

appropriately. There haven't been enough studies that employ Multi variate analysis or Path analysis to determine how much each of the 4 PS contributes to the company's overarching marketing strategy. While the Porter model underpins most studies, the 4Ps of marketing are often given less attention. Also, there is no research specific to soap industry and the marketing strategies used by the retailers in marketing of KSDL products.

### Conceptual framework

Figure 2- Conceptual Framework for the current study



The conceptual framework in the current study comprises of 5 hypotheses- Each element of Marketing Mix is considered as an independent variable which contributes to marketing mix strategies of KSDL Product retailers in India

### Research Objectives

- To determine the impact of elements of Marketing mix on the marketing strategies of KSDL Product retailers

### Research Methods

The current study is descriptive in nature, which aims to establish relationship between variables under the study. A self-prepared questionnaire was drafted keeping in mind the strategies used by retailers to attract and retain customers based on Product, price, promotion, distribution and Physical evidence strategies. The questionnaires consisted of 35 questions including retail store variables. The scale validity and reliability of the questionnaire was measured using confirmatory factor analysis and stats tool package and the AVE was above 5.00, MSV was greater than AVE and Cronbach alpha and Composite reliability was above 0.700. This affirms the validity of the questionnaire. As per the company data, 2020-

21, there are 3,89,345 retailers of KSDL in India across Bangalore , Hyderabad , Mumbai , Kolkata , Chennai and Delhi Branches. Using the Cochran formula of known population at 10% margin of error a sample of 100 retailers was set to be ideal for the study. The researcher distributed 130 questionnaires and 120 valid responses were chosen for the current study. Convenience sampling technique was used to select 20 retailers from each of the branches. The statistical tools package (SPSS Ver 25) and AMOS Ver 22 were used for statistical analysis of the data.

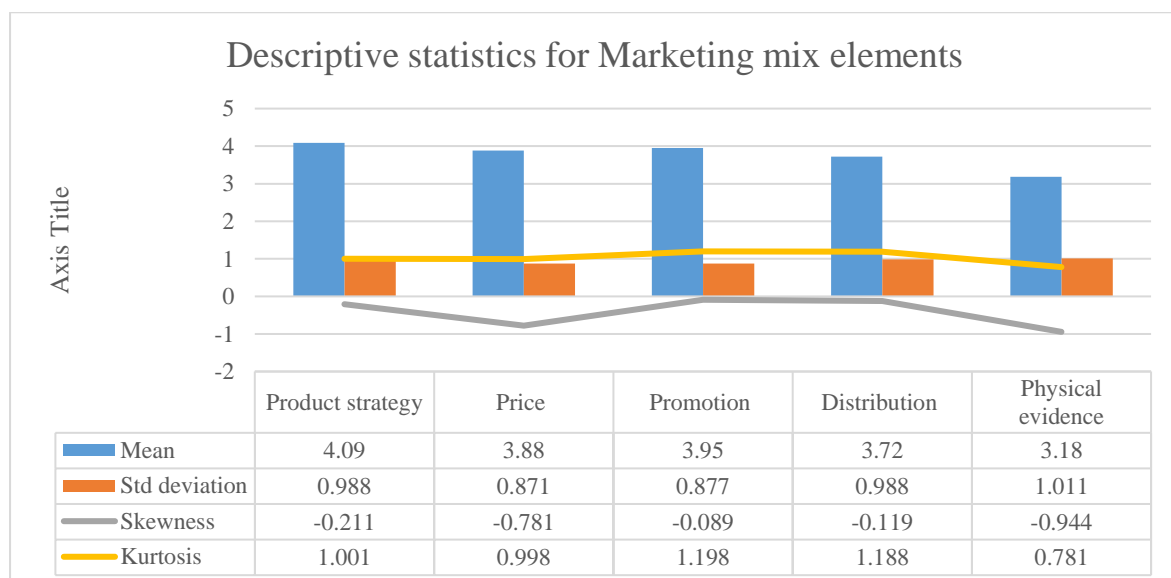
### Discussion and results

#### Retail store variables

The retailer store profile of the respondents under study shows that the 32% stores are operating for less than 5 years now, 32% have 6-10 years of history and 8% retailers have been established for last 5 years. Majority 70% retailers are exclusive dealers of KSDL products and only 30% are retailers who keep all sort of brands. About 72% retailer in the study have only 1 outlet.

#### Descriptive statistics for Marketing P's

Figure 3 – Descriptive statistics for Marketing P's



The mean scores for Marketing mix elements used by retailers is high for Product strategy (4.09) and promotion (3.95) indicating retailers have high product strategy and promotion, but less importance is given to Physical

evidence(3.18) which could be an important element of marketing especially when it comes to Soaps and FMCG's. The standard deviation is below 1.00 indicating that there is less deviation in responses. The skewness and

kurtosis are measures which gauge the normal distribution of the data, the skewness and kurtosis are well within the acceptable range of (-1.5 to +1.5).

Hypothesis – Product, Price, Promotion, distribution and Physical evidence are the factors influencing Marketing strategies of retailers in relation to KSDL Products

Figure 4- Hypothesis Testing

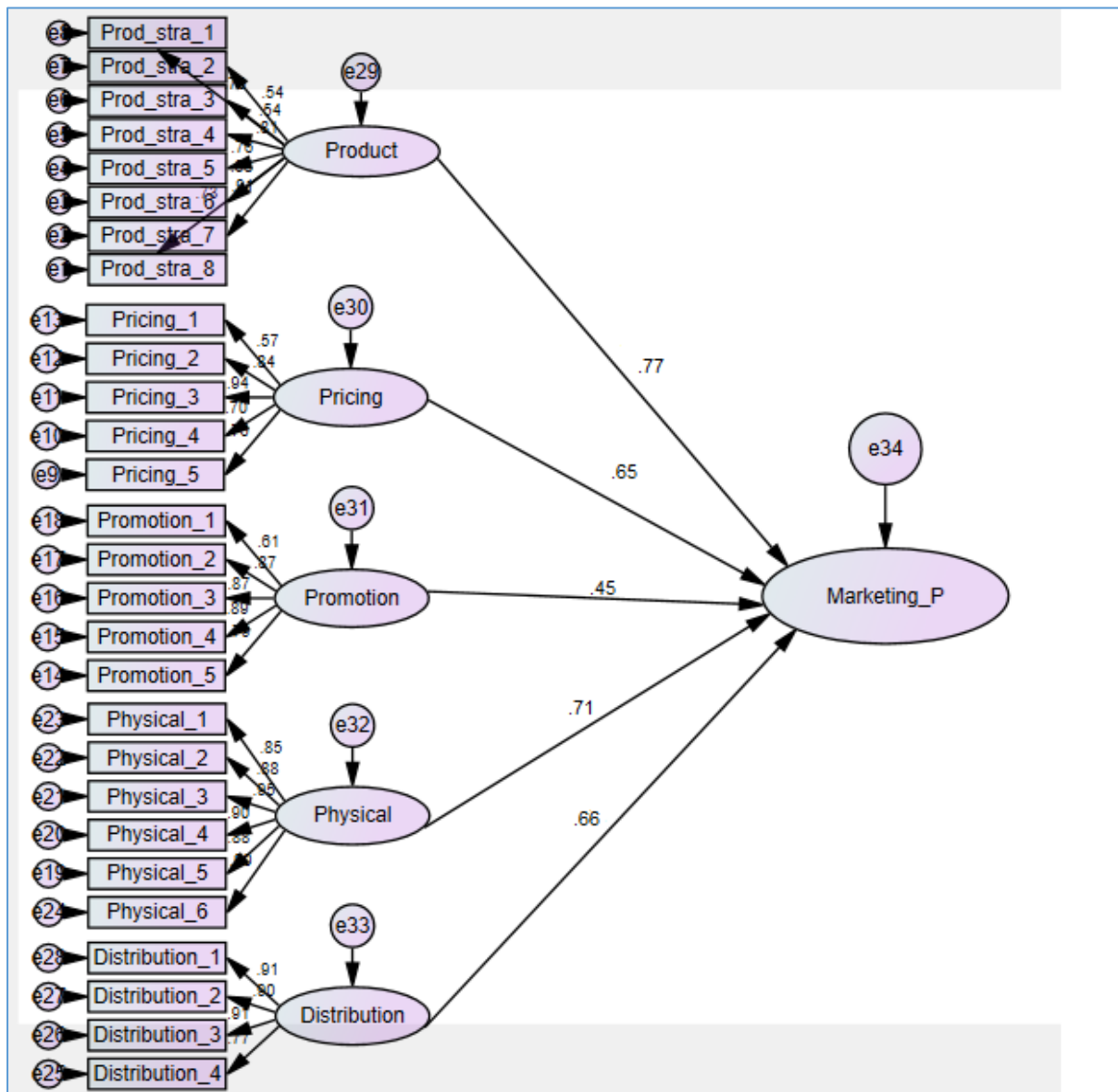


Table 2 – Hypothesis results – Unstandardised and standardised regression estimates for the structural relationships

				Unstd Estimate	Std Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
H1	Marketing_P	<---	Product	0.771	0.072	0.077	13.304	***
H2	Marketing_P	<---	Pricing	0.653	0.075	0.066	15.316	***
H3	Marketing_P	<---	Promotion	0.451	0.077	0.074	12.665	***
H4	Marketing_P	<---	Distribution	0.665	0.076	0.075	13.515	***

H5	Marketing_P	<---	Physical	0.714	0.087	0.079	11.86	***
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The significance values p values are all below 0.05 indicating that there exists a statistically significant relationship between the variables in the study

- In case of Hypothesis 1- There is an impact of product strategy on marketing P's by 77%
- In case of Hypothesis 2- There is an impact of pricing strategy on marketing P's by 65%
- In case of Hypothesis 3- There is an impact of promotion strategy on marketing P's by 45%
- In case of Hypothesis 4- There is an impact of Distribution strategy on marketing P's by 66%
- In case of Hypothesis 5- There is an impact of physical evidence on marketing P's by 71%

Product strategy and physical evidence have the highest impact on the marketing strategies of retailers but there is loop where retailers do not give much importance to physical evidence as seen in the descriptive statistics. Segmentation, targeting, and positioning are always done before deciding on the marketing mix. The purpose of the marketing mix is to include those components that will most likely result in the acquisition of one's target audience. Therefore, in the service industry, physical evidence is employed to attract the appropriate segment and target and to accomplish the appropriate placement. Of course, now days it's utilised for advertising both services and items. The primary channels for product distribution in the modern economy are retail and online shopping. These two domains are distinct service categories. Therefore, stores always search for methods to enhance their offerings.

Due to the increasingly competitive nature of the modern company environment, marketing tactics are a consideration that are of utmost significance in the modern corporate sector. Because marketing techniques are so important to the success of any given company, it is only natural for companies to place a greater emphasis on this aspect of their operations than they do on some of the more fundamental aspects of the goods or services they provide.

## Conclusion

McCarthy (1964) used the marketing mix management paradigm popularised in the 1940s and modified it into the 4Ps, which are still widely used today. However, in the wake of the dot-com boom, modern marketing managers face a whole new set of challenges presented by the Internet. Some of these new forms of marketing are similar to those used in conventional offline advertising, while others are really revolutionary and warrant a place in the E-Marketing mix (or the e-marketing delta compared to the old marketing mix) (Kalyanam and McIntyre, 2002).

Each business's marketing strategy will seem different because of the unique combination of factors such as available resources, industry trends, and customer preferences. Some aspects of the marketing mix will be more crucial than others at different times. The marketing mix as a whole must be taken into account when making any decisions about any one of its parts

According to McCarthy (1960), there is an endless number of ways to approach the marketing mix. Even while 4Ps has had its fair share of criticism, it has been widely credited with helping shape the evolution of marketing theory and practise. Too little thought is given to the theoretical underpinnings of the normative guidance that is so widely available in textbooks. In the early days of the marketing idea, when tangible goods made up a bigger share of the economy, the marketing mix was very helpful. Some writers have tried to expand marketing's effectiveness by proposing a fifth P, such as packaging, people, or process, in light of the increased complexity of modern businesses and the greater number of goods and markets. However, the 4 P's still form the backbone of most modern marketing plans. Many marketing textbooks are structured around this paradigm, and its use continues to grow despite (or maybe because of) its obvious flaws. Although it has been criticised for its shortcomings, the 4Ps continue to be an integral part of any marketing strategy.

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