ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

THE EFFECT OF BRAND POSITIONING ON CONSUMER PREFERENCE IN SOME SELECTED BEER BRANDS IN ADDIS ABABA

BY

BETHELIHEM TAMIRU

SGS/0618/2012A

JUNE, 2021

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ADVISOR: MESFIN WORKNEH (Ph.D.)

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APPROVAL SHEET

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis "**THE EFFECT OF BRAND POSITIONING ON CONSUMER PREFERENCE: A CASE STUDY OF SOME SELECTED BEER BRANDS IN ADDIS ABABA**" is my original work, prepared under the guidance of Mesfin Workneh (Ph.D.). All sources of materials used for this thesis have been duly acknowledged. I further confirm that the thesis has not been submitted either in part or full to any other higher learning institution for the purpose of earning any degree.

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ENDORSEMENT

This thesis has been submitted to St. Mary's University, School of Graduate Studies for examination with my approval as a University advisor.

Ato Mesfin Workneh (PhD)

Date and Signature_____

St. Mary's University, Addis Ababa

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ABBREVATION AND ACRONYMS

BP   Brand Positioning

ANOVA   Analysis of Variance

CBBE   Consumer based brand equity

STAN   Strategic, Tactic, and Associative Network

SPSS   Strategic package for the Social Science

ABSTRACT

The main objective of the study was to examine the effect of brand positioning on consumer preference in the case of some selected Beer brands in Addis Ababa. Quantitative approach along with explanatory research design was applied. All consumers of beer were entitled as a study population in which the sample frame was drawn. As the sampling technique, the non-probability sampling method, specifically convenient sampling technique by using those customers available in a certain specific time and place was appropriate for this study. The sample size of the study had a total of 385 targeted consumers of which 282 usable responses were collected through the Self-administered standardized questionnaire with a response rate of 75.1%. These primary data, collected through questionnaire, were coded and analyzed with the help of SPSS 21.0. The findings showed that all dimensions of brand positioning namely Relevance, differentiation, delivery and communication had positive and significant effects on consumer preference. Specifically, Relevance and Differentiation caused relatively the highest effect on consumer preference while communication was found to be the least determining factors. It can be concluded that positioning brand in a proper way can have a good implication on consumer preference. Therefore, firms are recommended to enhance their brand positioning strategy to improve consumer brand preferences.

Key words: *Consumer preference, Positioning, Relevance, Differentiation, Communication and Delivery*

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Brand positioning is considered to be the most sensitive element to take the brand higher level in the minds of the targeted consumer. Marketers try hard to come up to the mark of the consumers as every consumer is different with a different mindset, contains different perceptions and value. These days brand positioning plays a vital role to grab the attention and retention of the consumer, as the correct positioning will force consumer to buy the particular brand products and services (Romani, 2012). From the marketing perspective brand positioning represents the expansion by which marketers try to generate a figure in the minds of their targeted consumers for their product. Companies must work harder than ever before to achieve some degree of differentiation in their products. Many companies have sought to achieve this differentiation by branding their products, simply putting the company's name on product (Mindrut, 2015).

Positioning is the use of marketing to enable people to form a mental image of a product in their minds through emphasizing the distinctive characteristics of a brand that make it different from its competitors and appealing to the public. According to Levi (2012), brand positioning is a way of demonstrating a brand's advantage over and differentiating it from its competition. It is a part of a brand identity and value proposition that is to be actively communicated to the target audience and that demonstrates an advantage over competing brands. In general, positioning focuses on delivering personally relevant product to a target audience, providing differentiation in relative to competitors; delivering the highest customers' value; and direct marketing communication which retain in the mind of prospective customers (Seman, 2010).

A consumer's preference for a particular brand among alternative brands is an indication that, ceteris paribus, a company will translate this preference to a purchase action when the situation arises. Consumer preference therefore is a crucial factor for management consideration especially in an attempt to implement the marketing concept (Samani, 2013). The relationship between the brand and consumer preference is the key to brand

acceptance. The strength of the relationship between the consumer and the brand will reflect the fit between the consumers own physical and psychological needs and the brand's functional attributes and symbolic values, as perceived by the consumer (Hankinson, 2013).

Previous studies explain that one of the most frequently used means for identifying consumers' needs and wants is the study of brands and brand preference patterns. Brand preference consists of a customer's perception of a brand's ability to satisfy a prescribed set of needs more than similar brands in the product class (Samani, 2013; Hankinson, 2013; Levi, 2012). A consumer's preference for a particular brand among alternative brands is an indication that, ceteris paribus, a company will translate this preference to a purchase action when the situation arises. Consumer preference therefore is a crucial factor for management consideration especially in an attempt to implement the marketing concept (Samani, 2013). It appears logical to state that no fruitful marketing program can be formulated and implemented without vigorously attempting to identify the tastes and preferences of the target market. The need for this becomes even more crucial in countries with developing economy at the threshold of technological take-off (Obanjo, 2016). Brewery industry in Ethiopia is not far from these facets.

According to Zelalem (2019), the brand health tracking of breweries is suffered from unexpected results, found the marketing message promoted by the companies far from the consumer's perception towards their specific brands. A study conducted by Ayianlem (2018) also revealed that the intended brand identity breweries wanted to build and the brand image perceived by targeted customers had huge gap in every annual brand tracking assessment. This implies that there is a mismatch between brand positioning marketing strategy and the consumer's preference. Positioning for a brand alone is not enough but the main question that matters is whether the product is well positioned in effective & efficient way within the customer set value and perception (Li & Green, 2010). Otherwise, it would have negative consequence towards the company's goal achievement. I.e., Over-, Under- or Confused-positioning may have adverse effect on attracting wrong customers who might affect the overall business of the company.

An understanding and determination of consumer preference and the factors that give rise to them ultimately become highly fundamental in planning and implementing the company's brand positioning strategies. Brand preference results from personally meaningfulness of the brand (relevancy) to the customer, its uniqueness (differentiated from competitors), delivery as promised, and establish dialogue (communication)or build relationship with customers(Keller, 2004). Therefore it becomes imperative to embark on this research to investigate the effect of brand positioning on consumer preference taking some selected beer brands in Addis Ababa.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Ethiopia with a population closer to 110 million, the per capital consumption of beer stands at 9 liters and is expected to reach 12 liters by the end of 2020/21, which is very small compared to Kenya's above 15 liters and South Africa and around 60 liters. Moreover; in the capital Addis Ababa at least about half of the country's total beer production is consumed (Fortune, 2019). Ethiopia's beer industry is currently comprised of eight companies are participating in the beer production. These are Diageo, Heineken, Bedele, Habesha, Raya, BGI, and Dashen already under production; whereas Zemen & Zabider beer left the market due to failure to withstand the competition. One of the major actors for the growth of the industry came in the past few years accounted for the commencement of transferring all state-owned breweries to private holdings (Adisalem, 2020).

The emergence of globally prominent beer companies under foreign direct investment in the country escalates the stiff competition of local beer brands in the market. In aggressive and costly marketing campaigns, Ethiopian breweries with a small production capacity may soon be annexed by the big ones like Heineken and Diageo. In this regard, their profit margins would not be as it is used to be in the old days. Their survival depends on their effective marketing strategy and winning the minds of potential and existing customers. In opposite argument with the above; despite unlike Harar Beer and Meta Beer which have already been annexed, there would be no merger or being swallowed by others at this stage of Ethiopia's beer industry as the market is fragmented and unserved effectively and sufficiently. However, the effectivity of its brand

positioning strategies in regards to escalating consumer preference is a crucial area to examine that needs to be investigated thoroughly.

Branding plays very important role in the efficient marketing of products or expressive, it allows the companies to dramatize its offering through positioning their product (Keller, 2010). An organization's brand image can be as important as the goods or services it produces. A strong brand image is a powerful asset. A recognized and trusted brand identity makes people confident that the organization is dependable. Developing a corporate brand is important because a positive brand image will give consumers, and other interested stakeholders, confidence about the full range of products and activities associated with a particular company (Keller, 2004). However, poor management of brand positioning affects the sales of breweries and the image of the company at large. It is said to observe that most companies operating in developing countries, like Ethiopia are still inflexible and reluctant to encourage consumers purchase intention through their product branding results in failing to achieve their sales revenue target at last (David, 2018; John, 2019).

To win in the market, companies must become adept and clever in building customers not just building product in order to ensure their survival in the market. This stiff competition also changed the business principle into the survival of the fittest, meaning. fit or satisfy the customer's value first to exist in the market. Business success depends on how the marketing activities are customer focused and fulfill the needs, wants & preferences of the customers' at large (Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan, 2010).According to Kotler (1999), it is not just a matter of being different; success comes from being different in a way that customers want.

Extant researches in the area of positioning as a marketing strategy revealed that brand positioning is one of the customer specific factors that influence consumer preference (Henning, Thurauand Klee, 2010; Romani, 2012; Mindrut, 2015; John, 2019).Consumers tend to assess certain product attributes in a holistically manner rather than a case-by-case basis (Ainslie & Rossi, 1998). Therefore, both extrinsic and intrinsic factors must be accounted when trying to differentiate a product from its competitors. In these circumstances, brands can potentially play many different roles in the consumer decision

process. (Romani, 2012) shows that consumers' psychological, sociological and economic processes are simultaneously involved in choice behavior.

A product is almost irrelevant without the brand. However, beer companies in the country have not taken advantage of this key marketing discipline due to internal politics misguided by their marketing managers or hired consultants or else they simply over- or under-positioning which have an adverse effect on consumer preference (Tirsit, 2015; Zelalem, 2017, ACR, 2018). To emphasize the reality Semans, (2010) prove the powerful aspect of the positioning as Brand positioning is difficult work but the pay-off is obvious. A strong and well positioned brand leads to improved customer preference, satisfaction and loyalty, lower cost of sales and more efficient operations and competitive inoculation. Being saying this, it must be noted that brand positioning should be tied with fundamentals corporate marketing strategies and he also acknowledge that, not positioning the organization's brand is simply not an option but a crucial ingredient in the buying process and should never be left to chance as it's the opportunity to influence the market's perception of a given product.

Therefore, this study investigated the effect of brand positioning on consumer preference in the case of selected beer brand in Addis Ababa. It tried to fill the gap of knowledge on understanding of the vital role of positioning in one's business success with the relationship between positioning and customer preference.

1.3. Research Questions

This study tried to address the basic question through addressing the following specific research questions:

1.3.1. Main Research Question

What is the effect of brand positioning on consumer preference?

1.3.2. Sub Research Questions

1- How does positioning relevance influence customer preference?
2- Does the positioning differentiation affect customer preference?
3- What is the effect of positioning delivery on customer preference?
4- What is the overall effect of communication on consumers' preference?

1.4. Objectives of the Study

1.4.1. General Objective

The study had investigated the effect of brand positioning on consumer preference in the case of selected Beer brand in Addis Ababa.

1.4.2. Specific Objective

i.   To assess the effect of the company's positioning relevance on consumer preference.

ii. To describe to what extent positioning differentiation influence consumer preference.

iii. To evaluate the impact of the company's positioning delivery on consumer preference.

iv. To investigate the effect of positioning communication on the overall consumer preference.

1.5. Significance of the Study

The research would have contribution to different parties living inside and outside the selected beer companies. The concerned managements in the companies can have better understanding on the vital aspects of effective positioning. The finding of the study would help the companies' managers to know and realize their customers' perception & demand about their product. Managers and subordinates would get some insight on how "well positioned" brand enhance their customers' preference as well as the companies' capabilities in regards to implementing its brand positioning strategies. Based on the paper findings, researchers might perform further study on the underlining concepts. Practitioners and new student researchers might get evidence how it is possible to attract and retain customer through effective positioning and understood the vital role of positioning in their daily marketing activities in order to assure sustainable company image. It might also serve as a springboard for further investigation in this specific area.

1.6. Scope of the Study

The research was done on the investigation of the effect of brand positioning on customer Preference in the case of four selected Beer brand in Addis Ababa. The targeted beer companies are Habesha, Dashen, Anbessa, and BGI Ethiopia. The scope was delimited conceptually by focusing beer consumer's preference only from the perspective of brand positioning even though there are a number of factors such as sensory attributes (color, taste, foam, aroma, alcohol percentage, hangover, etc.); individual factors (needs, interests, goals, expectations, etc.); situational influences (physical and social surroundings, etc.) and other factors (risk perception, prototype matching, perceptual categorization, etc.). Methodologically, the study was limited to consumers of the five beer brands as a unit of measurement. Geographically, consumers of Beer brands in Addis Ababa were considered. Due to homogeneity of respondents in different regional estates in Ethiopia, they are intentionally excluded.

1.7. Limitation of the Study

The researcher had faced different problems while conducting this research like hotels, restaurants and bars were not cooperative enough which could enforce the student researcher to extend the collection date of the distributed questionnaire for extended period beyond the allotted time; and some customers will not also be willing to respond a lot part of the questionnaire which make the response rate to be decreased in somehow.

1.8. Organization of the Study

The arrangement of the research paper was organized into five chapters; the first chapter deal about background of the study, statement of the problem, research question, objectives of the study, significant of the study, scope of the study and organization of the study. The second chapter of the paper was concerned on presenting the review of the related literature which described the detail theoretical aspects that support and clarify the practical aspects of the study. The third chapter focused on research design and methodology. The fourth chapter was concerned about data presentation and analysis and other necessary information. The last final chapter leads the research paper to the end with summary, conclusion and recommendation.

1.9. Definition of Key Terms

- **Positioning**: - is how marketers want a brand to be perceived by consumers group of (consumers) in comparison to a competing brand (Lhotáková & Klosová, 2009).

- **Consumer Preference**: is a commitment to continue to make business with a company, on the long-term, is a state of mind, a set of attitudes, beliefs or desires or loyalty is a relationship between attitude and behavior, where attitudinal loyalty is generated by satisfaction, trust and involvement and behavioral loyalty is the act of purchase (BOBÂLCĂ, 2013).

- **Relevance**: - personally meaningful (Lombard, 2007) or relevance deal with the target audience care about your differentiation and is it important in their purchase decision making (Semans, 2010).

- **Differentiation**: - what makes your brand different and unique to other brands in the frame of reference, and the reason why consumers choose to purchase your brand (Semans, 2010).

- **Delivery**: deals with to assure weather the company actually deliver on the differentiation or is it a promise you will be able to keep over time (Semans, 2010).

- **Communication**: - represent the voice of the brand and are a means by which the brand can establish a dialogue and build relationships with customers (Lombard, 2007).

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CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Theoretical Review

2.1.1. Brand Concept

According to Nicholas (1997), brand can be described as a feature of a plain idea of product or service, and it includes the definition or a view of the values that go deeper in the functional performance. In the other words, "A product is something that is made, in a factory; a brand is something that is bought by a customer." Aaker (1991) noted that the brand signals the source of the product to consumers, and protects the customer, as well as, the producer from possible competitors who would attempt to provide products that appear to be identical. In relation to competitors, Nicholas (1997) points out the following crucial notion: "A product can be copied by a competitor, a brand is unique."

A broad variety of theories that attempt to describe the factors which influence consumers and their behavior when making purchasing decisions have been done. The goal of the investigation of consumer behavior is to discover patterns of consumers' attitudes in their decision to buy or to ignore a product (Samaras, 2000). Consumers' preferences for products or brands arise from the combination of many different factors. Some factors come from features of the product itself (e.g., price, durability), while others are attributes of consumers themselves (e.g., goals, attitudes, discretionary income), (Venkatraman, Clithero, Fitzsimons, and Huettel, 2012).

Ge, Brigden and Häubl (2015) proposed that consumers often make choices in settings where some alternatives are known and additional alternatives can be unveiled through search. When making a choice from a set of alternatives, the manner in which each of these was discovered should be irrelevant from a normative standpoint. Consumers must often decide between choosing among a set of previously discovered alternatives and searching to discover additional alternatives before making a choice. A substantial body of prior work examines consumer choice from pre-determined sets of alternatives. As a result, we know much about the influence ofchoice set composition and decision context on choice (Ge, Brigden, and Häubl, 2015). Additionally, consumer characteristics such as

patriotism, protectionism and social economic conservatism are affecting their choices (Spillan & Harcar, 2010).

2.1.2. Brand and Brand Positioning

Consumer perception towards brand is an important aspect of marketing mix (Gabor &Contiu, 2012). Jin& Weber (2013) proposed that, brands served primarily as a way for customers to identify and recognize goods and their manufacturer. The focus of brand value creation was on individual goods where by firms used brands to show ownership and take responsibility for their goods. This in turn helped customers identify and recognize a firm's goods on sight. From the 1930s onwards, brands were viewed as images that firms create to enable customers to both differentiate a brand from its competitors and identify the needs a brand promises to satisfy (Jin& Weber, 2013).

Another aspect of brand is that, it is strongly believed by academics and practitioners that brand reputation is becoming increasingly important. Brands should have a positive reputation to be successful and therefore profitable, (Veloutsou & Moutinho, 2009). On the other hand, Schmitt (2012) describes a comprehensive model of five brand-related processes: identifying, experiencing, integrating, signaling and connecting with the brand. The personal experience of using a brand can be of assorted shapes from the personal experience of using an indistinguishable product without the brand (Sheena & Naresh, 2012). Brands can form relations with other brands. Brands can be anthropomorphized, and many of them are appreciated as cultural symbols. Finally, consumers can organize communities around brands. Consumers know and experience these characteristics about brands and respond to them. The model presented here accounts for these essential characteristics of brands (Schmitt, 2012).

Positioning seeks to put a product in a certain position, or place, in the minds of prospective buyers. The Customer's Mind is a place where every rational & emotional buying decision is made. As customers are bombarded with cheaper substitute products to choose from, they become more aware of their tastes and preferences (Kotler, 2002). To win the consumers, businesses have to ride on unique selling propositions to stay ahead of the competitors (Levi, 2011). According to Kotler, (1999), the key to winning and keeping customers is to understand their needs and buying processes better than

competitors do, and to deliver more value. For the sake of achieving this positioning is the best option and it involves selecting specific attributes desirable for brand association. These attributes include product category, price, perceived quality, application, country of origin and customer service (Romaniuk, 2001; Aaker and Myers, 1987). These positioning attributes provide consumers with functional or emotional benefits and comprise part of the information in a consumer's mind which is associated with a brand and determines brand image (Romaniuk, 2001).

Positioning attributes satisfy consumer requirements, and consumer perceptions of product attributes enable them to distinguish a specific brand from its competitors. As a result, a suitable and distinctive brand positioning can enhance consumers' brand identification that leads to be their preference to buy or consume.

A broad variety of efforts and theories that attempt to describe the factors which influence the consumers and their behaviors when making purchasing decisions. The goal of the investigation of consumer behavior is to discover patterns of consumers' attitudes in their decision to buy or to ignore a product. (Samaras, 2000). Consumers' preferences for products or brands arise from the combination of many different factors. Some factors come from features of the product itself (e.g., price, durability), while others are attributes (e.g., goals, attitudes, discretionary income) of consumers themselves (Fitzsimons & Huettel, 2012).

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2.1.3. Models on Brand Positioning

Keller defines brand positioning as "the act of designing the company's offer and image so that it occupies a distinct and valued place in the target customers' minds." (2008, p.98). According to Keller (2008), brand positioning clarifies what a brand is all about, how it is unique and how it is similar to competitors. The aim of brand positioning is thus to explain why consumers should purchase and use a brand's products.

2.1.3.1. Consumer Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Model

A main objective in positioning a brand is to achieve active and loyal customers, which in turn would allow brands to charge price-premiums and obtain more effective marketing programs (Keller, 2001). Keller (2008) presents the customer-based brand equity model (hereafter CBBE), which is a representation of how one could achieve such a relationship. CBBE is defined as the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to the marketing of the brand (Keller, 1993). CBBE is the variation in outcome when marketing products and services are under a brand name versus without the brand name, and would thus be the value that a brand name possesses. Hence, brand positioning is about creating brand name value. A main aspect in creating brand name value is brand knowledge, which can be conceptualized as a brand node in memory to which associations are linked (Keller, 1993). Brand knowledge is not facts about the brand, but all the thoughts, feelings, perceptions, images, experiences, that links to the brand node in the minds of the consumers in the form of associations (Keller, 2009).

2.1.3.2. Associative Network Model

Associations can be explained through network associative models that display memory as a set of concepts (nodes) that are linked together through paths of associations in a netlike structure (Matlin, 2009). When a node is activated in the network it will spread to the nodes with which it is connected, so called spreading activation (Matlin, 2009). Activation in memory will spread through the associative network along paths from original sources to associated concepts (Anderson, 1983). The ability to make associated concepts active depends on the strength of the link toward the source of activation (Anderson, 1983). Activation measures the likelihood that a particular piece of knowledge will be useful at a specific moment, meaning that the knowledge we associate

with what we are processing is likely to be relevant to the processing (Anderson, 1983). For a brand this implies that consumers activate associations that they find relevant to the decision-making process.

2.1.3.3. STAN Model

The STAN model distinguishes primarily between tactical and strategic positioning, where tactical is a short-term positioning strategy and strategic positioning is a brand's long-term positioning strategy that is supposed to last throughout a brand's lifetime (Supphellen, 2011). A brand's tactical and strategical positioning strategy is made up by primary and secondary associations (Supphellen, 2011). Primary associations are the first associations that come to mind when thinking about a specific brand, and will thus be the first to be activated when provided with the brand as a cue. These associations are usually shared by brands within a product category. Brands may have primary associations that have their own knowledge structure in the minds of the consumers (Keller, 2008). Since the primary associations have links to other associations, consumers might infer that some of the associations that characterize the primary associations are also true for the brand (Keller, 2008).

2.1.4. Dimensions of Brand Positioning

Effective Brand Positioning is contingent upon identifying and communicating a brand's uniqueness, differentiation and verifiable value. It is important to note that "me too" brand positioning contradicts the notion of differentiation and should be avoided at all costs. This type of copycat brand positioning, only works if the business offers its solutions at a significant discount over the other competitors (Dickens, 2013). Akpoyomare, (2013) acknowledge that effective positioning decreases direct competition by avoiding the commodity trap of competing totally on price alone and offers potential customer's choices in the market.

Akpoyomare also added effective positioning has to be centered on meeting the bundle of current and expected benefits sought by the target segment and as a basis on which a product is likely to be differentiated from its competition. Besides the above explanation Lhotáková & Klosová (2009) conclude, to be effective, brand positioning needs to resonate with the customer, differentiate the brand from competitors, and represent what

the organization can and will do over time. Similarly, Again, these dimensions are articulated as evaluating positions comes from Jennifer Rice, of Fruitful Strategy, who recommends the "4D's Rule" of strong brand positioning: Is it desirable by consumers? Is it deliverable by the company? Is it distinctive by the competition? And is it durable over time? So, it's better to discuss each of the above determinants stated by both scholars.

2.1.4.1. Relevance - Is it desirable by consumers?

Relevance measures weather the positioning value proposition is favorable or desirable by the prospect customers or not. According Semans, (2010) relevance in positioning questions the following two questions: - "Does the target audience care about your differentiation and is it important in their purchase decision making? "The development of effective benefit – centered positioning involves three things. First, you have to understand what benefits are sought by the consumers and what the relative importance. Of those benefits is. Second, you have to understand how consumers perceive a firm and its product in relation to competitors on the basis of the benefits sought by consumers. Third, a firm has to know what products and services are bought and consumed by consumers (Akpoyomare, 2013).

Regarding the value proposed to the customer, Levi (2011), argue value should take a front seat to features and functionality every single time. Why, then, do businesses continue to sell features, while customers purchase based on value? Businesses today sell features, while buyers today purchase value. If you focus your brand messaging on the latter, you will significantly distinguish yourself from your competition and put your business in a much better position to close sales opportunities. Li & Green Value leads consumers to become a firm's customers, and with higher levels of value for customers to be loyal customers.

This question demands any business to investigate whether the intended positioning is desirable by the consumer or not. According to Akpoyomare, (2013) Company must take cognizance of the benefits that customers seek and which are not offered by competitors but are desired by the target market. Janiszewska, (2012) also added the essence of positioning, namely assuming a desired position in the audience's awareness by owning a

specific set of associations in the context of competition. Even (BOBÂLCĂ, 2013) admit a favorable set of beliefs connected with brand purchase. Thus, product must be identified in the best way by the customers; otherwise, it will lose credibility and will not be remembered sufficiently. This rule of strong brand position has similar concept with the above variable which is described as a filter of effective positioning variable i.e., "Relevance".

2.1.4.2. Delivery - Is it deliverable by the company?

Can you actually deliver on the differentiation? Is this a promise you will be able to keep over time? There is a story of a bank who decided to position themselves as fast, the bank where you could get your business done quickest. It seemed like a good idea: after all, consumers wanted a fast bank and none of their competitors were making the claim that they were fastest. However, after looking at the financial analysis of what it would take in terms of additional staff, additional branches and additional ATMs, it became clear that there was no way to be the "fast bank" and still stay in business. The position was not deliverable. This question assures weather the articulated benefit actually delivered by the company or not.

Based on Kotler & Armstrong, (2011) justification, solid positions cannot be built on empty promises. If a company positions its product as offering the best quality and service, it must actually differentiate the product so that it delivers the promised quality and service. Companies must do much more than simply shout out their positions with slogans and taglines. They must first live the slogan. But marketing promises count for little if they are not backed by the reality of+ the customer experience. This rule of strong brand position, have the same meaning with the above variable which is described as a filter of effective positioning variable i.e., "Delivery".

2.1.4.3. Differentiation - Is it distinctive by the competition?

Does the target market really believe you are different (superior) to your competitors? Are your competitors able to make the same claim? (One of the ways commonly used to test positioning statements is to substitute your competitor's brand name for yours. If it is still a true statement, then it is not a strong position. For example, a university said its differentiation was that they were "the only place where students can use their gifts." As

that would also be true for just about any institute of higher education, this is not a strong positioning statement.) This question also asks if the claim aspired by the company is unique or different from the industry it operated or from the completion exist in the ultimate market. This rule of strong positioning is the same as the above variable which is described as a filter of effective positioning variable i.e., "Differentiation"

According to him differentiation has two questions: - Does the target market really believe you are different (superior) to your competitors? Are your competitors able to make the same claim? In the context of business, it is what a company can hang its hat on that no other business can claim. Differentiation in today's over-crowded marketplace is a business imperative, not only in terms of a company's success, but also for its continuing survival (Levi, 2011). Companies should differentiate themselves effectively enough. Effective positioning has to be centered on meeting the bundle of current and expected benefits sought by the target segmented as a basis on which a product is likely to be differentiated from its competition (Akpoyomare, 2013). A difference is worth establishing if it is: Important, Distinctive, Superior, Communicable, Pre-emptive, Affordable and Profitable (Takamoto, Akihiro, 2003)

2.1.4.4. Communication - Is it durable over time?

The last question in the 4D rule of strong position asks if the positioning which is desirable by the customer, deliverable by the company and distinctive by the competition has a consistency over time. Again, this rule is one part of delivery variable from the four filter of strong positioning described above which asks whether you will be able to keep the promise over time. Janiszewska, (2012) also describe the three features of effective positioning by articulating, different experts emphasize that positioning should be credible, significant to the audience, differentiating from the competitors and allowing for the organization's growth. From these, let us see what credibility is because others are clear & similar with the above ideas.

No doubt that all marketers are able to communicate their positions but the challenge may be the number of resources it will take to communicate your position to the target market. If you have a highly technical position, will need to educate the market on your position or if you are going to have consumers change the way they do something, you had better

plan on having significant resources available to achieve your position(semen, 2010). Once it has chosen a position, the company must take strong steps to deliver and communicate the desired position to its target consumers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2011). Specially, if the company has a highly technical position, will need to educate the market on the position; if the company are going to have consumers change, will need better plan on having significant resources available to achieve your position (Semans, 2010). Semans also suggest that, if brand position is clearly and definitively selected and communicated (internally to organization and externally to the market), your marketing program

Becomes more focused, effective and efficient, yielding an improved return on your marketing spend. Based on Levi, (2011) explanation, so many businesses expend the vast majority of their staff and financial resources on developing and refining the company's product and service offerings. While this is obviously a critical component of business success, one's own offerings are worthless if their value is not properly articulated and appreciated.

According to him, the fact that 90 percent of businesses fail within the first five years, it's not necessarily because of a poor product or inadequate execution rather, in many more cases it is due to poor communication of value. You cannot assume that your target buyer inherently understands the value of your "flux capacitor", for example. The benefits are likely quite clear to you; but perhaps, your buyer knows very little about the merits of owning such a product and how it can be of value to his/her company.

2.2 Empirical Review

Researchers' tries to manipulate the undeniable role and impact of strong positioning to the business success, not only in terms of single functional activity but to the overall organizational achievement. In general expression, Semans (2010), in his Polaris Marketing Research, Inc. proves the powerful aspect of the concept positioning as Brand positioning is difficult work but the pay-off is obvious. A strong, clearly *"differentiated brand"* returns improved customer preference and develop loyalty in the long-run, lower cost of sales and more efficient operations and competitive inoculation. That being said, it should be noted that brand positioning, because it is fundamental to marketing strategy,

should also be coordinated with and tied to corporate strategy. Unless, the entire organization is supportive of and contributing to the brand position, it is unlikely to succeed.

Also, in Semans (2010), research which was cited by Jennifer Rice summarization "Positioning is hard work. It is not the domain of a commercial ads' agency or marketing department. It is aligning the corporate mission and structure to one that best supports customers, connects with the demand creates customer evangelists. "Research which has done by Rodrigues, (2014), on Asian Journal of Business and Management Sciences for the research tile "Brand preference Influence Factors: Positioning and Brand Identity Comparison" aims to analyze which are the most relevant variables in consumer preference, with the aim of studying the positioning a given brand identity process. The result of the research is brand positioning (internal environment) to variable product (variety) is the tool that most influences the purchase intention of its consumers. Also found that for the brand identity the product factor is the most efficient and effective tool used by the brand.

Li & Green (2010), in Journal of Management and Marketing Research investigate on the title called "A mediating influence on customer preference: The role of perceived value". At the beginning they emphasize Customer preference is the result of successful marketing strategy in competitive markets that creates value for consumers. Then they continue articulating how positioning plays a critical role in formulating a marketing strategy, by evidencing the definition positioning is the firm's differentiation of its offerings as perceived by consumers in comparison to competing products. Since, the purpose of this research was to advance the understanding of customer preference by examining the literature and determining consumer perception of marketing strategy and the mediating role of customer value. As customer perceived value is critical to driving market share and increase customer loyalty. This perception is created by the firm's marketing strategy by having the appropriate marketing mix for the right position in the intended target market (segment).

A research which is made by Samani, (2013) in the title "The role of customer-linking, Brand Position, and New service development on customer preference in Internet

Banking", the research result showed that there is significant relationship between customer-linking, brand position and new service developments with customer preference. The last but not the least, as indicated by Hartmann (2002), on the title "The effect of brand positioning on customer preference: an empirical study of the Iberdrola case". This paper analyzes the effect of brand positioning on customer preference. Based on data of a survey of clients of the energy utility Iberdrola, the study measures the loyalty effect of the company's perceived positioning. The analysis results confirm a significant relationship between the dimensions of positioning and the different rates of loyalty, and stress the importance of proper positioning for managing customer loyalty. In this regard, Janiszewska and Insch, (2012), added positioning should be credible, significant to the audience, differentiating from the competitors and allowing for the organization's growth.

Semans (2010), in his Polaris Marketing Research, Inc. prove the powerful aspect of the concept positioning as Brand positioning is difficult work but the pay-off is obvious. A strong and well positioned brand leads to improved customer preference, satisfaction and loyalty, lower cost of sales and more efficient operations and competitive inoculation. Being saying this, it must be noted that brand positioning should be tied with fundamentals corporate marketing strategies.

Also, according to Stanley, (2010), in the title "the effectiveness of positioning strategies on consumer preference on a client of the Atlas Copcoeast Africa limited", the research result showed that Positioning linked to product benefits is generally more effective than positioning which describes product features without their benefits to the customer.

Whereas, as indicated by Hartmann, Apaolaza & Sainz, (2002), on the title "The effect of brand positioning on customer preference: an empirical study of the Iberdrola case". This paper analyses the effect of brand positioning on customer preference. Based on data of a survey of clients of the energy utility Iberdrola, the study measures the loyalty effect of the company's perceived positioning. The analysis results confirm a significant relationship between the dimensions of positioning and the different rates of loyalty, and stress the importance of proper positioning for managing customer preference. In this regard, Janiszewska & Insch, (2012), added positioning should be credible, significant to

the audience, differentiating from the competitors and allowing for the organization's growth. Another way of looking at evaluating positions comes from Jennifer Rice, of Fruitful Strategy, who recommends the "4D's Rule" of strong brand positioning like desirable by consumers, deliverable by the company, distinctive by the competition, and durable over time.

A research which is made by Tirsit, (2015) in the title "The effect of positioning on customer preference a case of Anbessa shoe share company", considering relevance, differentiation, delivery and communication as a parameter and result showed that their effect of positioning relevance is greater than that of positioning communication; & again positioning communication effect is greater than positioning differentiation in explaining the variability of overall customer preference. Similarly, interims of importance, Relevance is the 1st, Communication follows, Differentiation is the last to affect the overall customer preference but, Delivery has almost negligible effect on the variability of the overall customer loyalty. Whereas the researcher focuses on the impact of positioning on customer preference case of selected beer brands considering relevance, differentiation, delivery, communication as a parameter.

2.2.1. Effect of Relevance on Customer Preference

Semans (2010) and Rice (2004) are among the scholars that identified relevance as one of the dimensions of positioning can be explained. According to Semans (2010) Relevance deals with does the product is significant to a target audience or does the target audience cares about your differentiation and is it important in their purchase decision making? Relevance measures weather the positioning value proposition is favorable or desirable by the prospect customers or not. According to Semans (2010) relevance in positioning questions the following two questions: - "Does the target audience care about your differentiation and is important in their purchase decision making? It's also among one of the four filters that strong or effective and efficient positioning expected to pass through.

In the study conducted on the effect of positioning on customer preference a case of Anbessa shoe S.C by Tirsit (2015), customer preference comes when product is significant or personally relevant to a target audiences and relevance is the first factor

affecting customer's preference among the four filters that strong positioning expected to pass through. Hence, the first hypothesis for this study is

H1: There is a positive and significant relationship between relevance and customer preference.

2.2.2. Effect of Differentiation on Customer Preference

Differentiation is what makes your brand or product or market different and unique to other brands in the frame of reference, and the reason why consumers choose to purchase your brand (Semans, 2010).According to Rice (2004) differentiation or distinctive by the competition is one the element used while evaluating proper or strong positioning. In the study conducted on the effect of positioning on customers preference by (Tirsit 2015), even though differentiation is the last to affect the overall customer preference, there is significant positive relationship between differentiation and customer's loyalty. As a result, below hypothesis was drawn.

H2: There is a positive and significant relationship between differentiation and customer preference.

2.2.3. Effect of Delivery on Customer Preference

Delivery deals with to assure weather the company actually delivers on the differentiation or is it a promise you will be able to keep over time? (Semans, 2010) Based on Kotler &Armstrong, (2011) justification, solid positions cannot be built on empty promises. If a company positions its product as offering the best quality and service, it must actually differentiate the product so that it delivers the promised quality and service. Companies must do much more than simply shout out their positions with slogans and taglines. They must first live the slogan. But marketing promises count for little if they are not backed by the reality of the customer experience.

According to Hartmann, Apaolaza & Sainz, (2002), on the title "The effect of brand positioningon customer preference".The analysis results confirm a significant relationship between the dimensions of positioning and the different rates of loyalty, and stress the importance of proper positioning for managing customer preference. In this regard, Janiszewska & Insch, (2012), added positioning should be credible, significant to

the audience, differentiating from the competitors and allowing for the organization's growth. Hence, the first hypothesis for this study is

H3: There is a positive and significant relationship between delivery and customer preference.

2.2.4. Effect of Communication on Customer Preference

Communication represents the voice of the brand and is a means by which the brand can establish a dialogue and build relationships with customers (Lombard, 2007).After companies assure the relevance, differentiation and credibility of the positioning, it would be mandatory to communicate the position to the market to win customers mind (Kotler& Armstrong,2011). Levi, (2011) also argue Communication is obviously a critical component of business success .Levi, (2011) also discover the Five-Phase Message Development Process. The point here is that creating highly-differentiating, very succinct and extremely powerful messages that clearly articulate the value of products and services is not enough. Such strong, differentiating and value-based messaging should be critical to a business's success as the ability of the products and services it sells. Without either, cannot imagine a business would be able to run at full steam. The whole idea of positioning framework emphasized on how effective communication through articulation of customer value leads to success in business. Thus, the fourth hypothesis is evidenced by the above literatures.

H4: There is a positive and significant relationship between communication and customer preference.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is derived from the concept positioning itself with the very determinants and feature of effective positioning called Relevance, differentiation, Delivery and Communication. The conceptual model is adapted from the below exemplary theoretical concept acknowledged by different authors. Perceived high product quality often resulted from prolonged brand positioning based on quality association. Hence, Positioning is an evolution, built and maintained over time and their benefits come back over timer as well (Semans, 2010).The long-term overall objective of

positioning is to build brand preference, which will in turn achieve a positive long term purchase behavior. Hence, Brand preference is one of the important benefits of purchase intention (Akpoyomare, 2013).

Customer preference is the result of successful marketing strategy in competitive markets that creates value for customers (Li and Green, 2010). Hence, Positioning is a first element of marketing strategy in which everything else aligns with it (Dickens, 2013). Marketing mix are the tactical details of the positioning strategy (Kotler and Armstrong, 2011).Hence, these four variables such as Relevance, Differentiation, Delivery and Communication as identified by different authors (Semans ,2010; Mark, 2005; Christoph and Adamantios, 2007; Janiszewska, 2012) have significant relationship with consumer preference. In general, the ultimate objective of this research framework is to see or assure how the concept brand positioning through the important variable Relevance, Differentiation, Credibility and Communication lead to the customer preference.
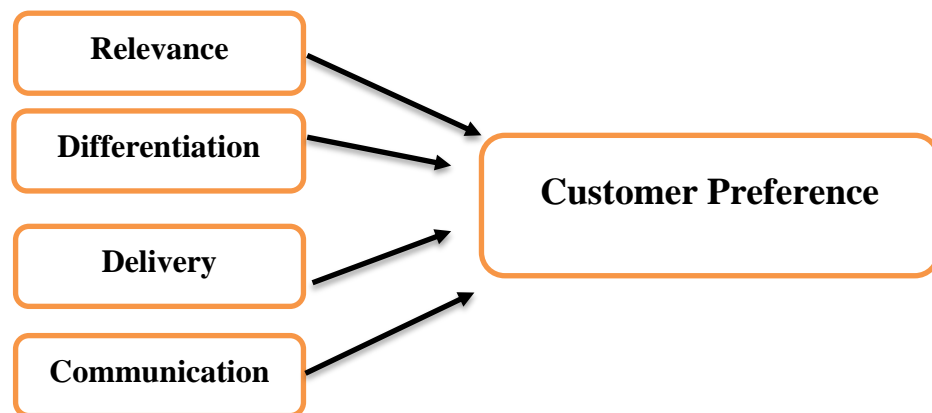
Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study (Adapted from Semans, 2010; Janiszewska, 2012)

Based on the theoretical and empirical literature reviews, the following hypotheses were proposed:

- Relevance has positive significant effect on purchase intention of dental medical service
- Differentiation has positive significant effect on purchase intention of dental medical service
- Delivery has positive significant effect on purchase intention of dental medical service
- Communication has positive significant effect on purchase intention of dental medical service

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Approach

The study intends to investigate the effect of brand positioning on customer preference. As a result, to realize this relationship, the research mainly applied quantitative type of research approach. Quantitative research involves attaching numbers to relationships between variables (Kothari, 2004). It uses objective measurements and statistical analysis of data that was collected from a well-controlled setting. Also the objective of quantitative research is to develop and employ mathematical models, theories and hypotheses pertaining to natural phenomena. Thus, quantitative approach was taken in this study to get insight to the nuances of the process for best selection of methodology tools that fitted best.

3.2. Research Design

There are three types of research design namely exploratory, descriptive and explanatory research. The goal of exploratory research is to discover ideas and in-sights while descriptive research is usually concerned with describing a population with respect to important variables. Explanatory research is used to establish cause-and-effect relationships between variables and causal analysis is concerned with the study of how one or more variables affect changes in another variable. It is thus a study of functional relationships existing between two or more variables (Kothari, 2004). This paper followed the explanatory research design as it would investigate the relationship between variables of interest brand positioning practices (predictors) and customer preference (construct) variable.

3.3. Population

The population of this study is individual customers of Beer in Addis Ababa, aged 21^{+} years-old, reside in Addis Ababa. Consumers in other regional states are excluded for the reason that 60% of the beer consumers are located in Addis Ababa. Thus, hotels and Bar & Restaurants located in Addis Ababa are targeted as study population for the reason that

they are the place where substantially high alcoholic drinks are consumed. Distribution channel members such as distributors, resellers and agents was excluded since the student researcher assumes individual end customer are the true reflection of customers who purchase products based on their own aspiration, need and desire. Thus, study only focuses on the end customer resided in Addis Ababa. In this regard, the total population of Addis Ababa is estimated 4.5 mil and above (Addis Ababa City Administration, 2019). Amongst them, those who are 21^+ years old consumers constitute 30% of the total population (Mundi, 2019). Thus, the sampling frame was 1.35 mil beer consumers in Addis Ababa.

3.4. Sampling Technique

There are two sampling strategies in use to select the targeted respondents from the sample frame. There are likelihood or non-probability methods of sampling (Creswell, 2009). The former applies to random (equal chance) selection, while the latter is subjective and relies on the researcher's decision or reasoning. However, to apply mixed sampling (both probability and non-probability) is appropriate when selection at different strategies require different sampling techniques. Then, the targeted respondents were selected using convenience non-probability sampling method for the reason that it is impractical to get the list of beer consumers in the city. The study considers a total of 1.35 mil beer consumers as a sampling frame to determine proportionate sample size for this study.

3.5. Sample Size

Sampling is the process of selecting a number of study units from a defined study population (Abiy, 2009). It is economical to take representative sample for the intended investigation when conducting census is unrealistic. Since the population of customers is unknown or infinite, Cochran formula was applied (Okeke, 2005). Accordingly, the sample size for patients is computed as follows:

$$n = \frac{z^2(p)(q)}{e^2}$$

Where:

n- Sample size; z- Standard deviation given a corresponding confidence level of 95%; p-Estimated proportion of incidence (success rate = 0.5); q-(1 –p) or assumed failure rate (0.5); e-Proportion of sampling error or error margin in a given situation (5%). Thus, the sample size of the intended study with 95% confidence level, probability of 50% occurrence, probability of 50% failure and 5% marginal error, is obtained as:

$$n = \frac{z^2(p)(q)}{e^2} = \frac{(1.96)(0.5)(0.5)}{(0.5)^2} = 384.16 = 385$$

A representative sample size of 385 respondents, selected conveniently, was taken from a selected sub-city in Addis Ababa.

3.6. Data Types and Data Source

According to Catherine (2007), data may be collected as primary, secondary or both. Primary data are originated by the researcher for the specific purpose of addressing the problem at hand. On the other hand, secondary data contains relevant data that has been collected for a different purpose, but from which the conclusion is valuable for the purpose. In this study basically the primary source, quantitative data from the targeted beer consumers was used for analysis. No secondary data were used at all.

3.7. Data Collection Instrument

Questionnaire is an appropriate measurement scale for survey study to collect quantitative data from the targeted respondents. It is used for collection of primary data from targeted respondents thus it must be prepared very carefully so that it may prove to be effective in collecting the relevant information. Structured questionnaires are those questionnaires in which there are definite, concrete and pre-determined questions. The questions are presented with exactly the same wording and in the same order to all respondents. Resort is taken to this sort of standardization to ensure that all respondents reply to the same set of questions.

The self-administered questionnaire had two different parts. The first part comprises the demographic characteristics of the targeted respondents. The second part constitutes the four variables of brand positioning (independent variable) such as Relevance, Differentiation, Delivery and Communication dimensions were adapted from Semans

(2010); Mark (2005); Christoph and Adamantios (2007); and Janiszewska (2012) and consumer preference (dependent). A Five-point Likert -scale based structured questionnaire was used as a major instrument of data collection. Likert scale ranges from 1- for "Strongly disagreed" to 5- for "strongly agreed".

3.8. Data Collection Procedure

A pilot survey was conducted on 30 respondents at selected three hotels, excluded from the sample frame, prior to administrating the questionnaire to the targeted sample respondents so as to check whether the questioner is clear, easy to understand and straightforward to ensure that the respondents able to answer the questions with no difficulty. In addition to these, the pilot study was administered to test the appropriateness, validity and reliability of the questioner, then based on their feedbacks, some changes was made on the questionnaire before distributing to the selected respondents. Based on the sample size computed on the above formula, self-administered questionnaires was distributed to willing participants at each selected bar and restaurants to collect a total of 385 responses. The targeted hotels, bar and restaurants are Romina bar and restaurant, Maleda bar and restaurant, Ethiopia Hotel, Gize bar and restaurant, Desalegn bar and restaurant, Salegegn bar and restaurant and Wabi Shebele Hotel. The targeted hotels, Bar & Restaurants were selected according to their conveniences for the researcher to collect the data.

3.9. Data Analysis and Presentation

Regression analysis is a statistical method for evaluating the mathematical model representing the relation between variables that can be used for the purposes of predicting the value of the outcome variable, given the measures of the independent variable (Kothari, 2004). Multiple linear regression calculates the coefficients or relative importance of the individual predictors in the multiple linear equation, with one or more independent variables that better predict the value of the dependent variable. Data in this study was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics is used to interpret data in general and for testing hypothesis and investigating research objectives inferential method is used using statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 20. Descriptive statistics is applied to interpret demographic variables of the

respondents and to discover the frequencies of each dimension whereas inferential statistics is used for hypothesis testing such as correlation and multi-regression. Tables and graphs was used to present analysis results pictorially.

Model Specification - Multiple linear regression is made to define the relationship and to evaluate the most dominant variables (brand positioning dimensions namely Relevance, Differentiation, Delivery and Communication) influencing the consumer preference of Beer consumers. In order to assess the relation between brand positioning strategy and consumer preference dimensions, a multi-regression analysis model specification for the regression analysis is designed as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + e$$

Where: Y= Consumer Preference; X_1= Relevance; X_2= Differentiation; X_3= Delivery; X_4= Communication; e = error term, β_0 = constant, term $\beta_{1, 2, 3, 4}$ = coefficients of predictors.

3.10. Validity and Reliability
3.10.1. Validity

Validity is defined as the extent to which data collection methods accurately measure what they were intended to measure (Saunders, 2003). It is the extent to which difference found with measuring instrument reflecting true differences among those being tested. In order to ensure the quality of the research design content and construct validity of the research was checked. Construct validity is all about to establish correct operational measures for the concepts being studied (Yin, 1994). The literature review was conducted and thoroughly examined to make sure that the content of measuring is relevant to the study. Experts' opinions were also being considered.

3.10.2. Reliability

Reliability can be defined as the degree to which measurements are free from errors and, therefore, yield consistent results. Operationally, reliability is defined as the internal consistency of a scale, which assesses the degree to which the items are homogeneous. This study used Cronbach's alpha to assess the internal consistency of variables in the research instrument. Cronbach's alpha is a coefficient of reliability used to measure the

internal consistency of the scale. The coefficient is calculated or determined based on the data that was collected through distributing 30 questionnaires for pretest.

As far as the reliability of the scale measurement, Cronbach's Alpha test were conducted to determine the internal consistency of the scale. The Cronbach's coefficient is calculated or determined based on the data that were collected through distributing 30 questionnaires for pretest. According to Zikmund (2010), scale with coefficient alpha between 0.6 and 0.7 indicate fair reliability so for this study a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.70 or higher is consider adequate to determine reliability. As indicated in Table -1 below, the Cronbach's Alpha value for all predictors and construct variable are more than 0.7 that is the threshold value according to (Cronbach, 1951). These Cronbach's alpha values indicate that the scales used in the questionnaire satisfactorily measured the variables. Hence, reliability for all dimensions was accomplished.

Table 1: The outcome of Reliability Test

Dimension Name	No of items	Cronbach's alpha
Relevance	5	.822
Delivery	5	.715
Differentiation	5	.796
Communication	5	.803
Consumer Preference	5	.711
Overall reliability	25	.829

Source: SPSS data output, 2021

3.11. Ethical Considerations

In order to keep the confidentiality of the data given by respondents, the respondents are not required to write their name and assured that their responses was treated in strict confidentiality. The purpose of the study was disclosed in the introductory part of the questionnaire. Furthermore, the researcher tried to avoid misleading or deceptive statements in the questionnaire. Lastly, the questionnaires were distributed only to voluntary participants after having their full consents in verbal or written form.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

This chapter includes the data analysis, interpretation and presentation of the results. The analyses comprised of both descriptive and inferential statistics in which the former describes the demographic profile of respondents, analysis of responses under each attribute; whereas the latter includes scale reliability test, correlation and multiple regression analysis.

The data collected through self-administered questionnaire featured personal information of the respondents, four dimensions of brand positioning and consumer preference attributes in the case of in the case of four selected beer brand in Addis Ababa. After distributing 385 questionnaires to the targeted customers, 307 questionnaires were collected. The response rate accounted for 75.1% of the total distributed questionnaires, then, screened for the collected questionnaires for missing data and other inconsistency, it was found 282 valid and usable questionnaires for statistical analysis. The responses further screed for error correction and then encoded accordingly to make them suitable for data analysis. After carried out all the required data preparation, then carried out the analysis and the findings are presented as follows. SPSS 22.0 is used to organize and prepare the collected data for analysis; assess the measurement scale validity and reliability; and analyze the multiple regression model enables researchers to test a set of factors simultaneously. Finally, the research questions were addressed according to the results from the regression model analysis and the findings are discussed for each specific objective.

4.1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

This sub-section presents the demographic features of 282 sample respondents. These features are found to be of great help in terms of clearly depicting the diverse background of the respondents on selected beer brand preference. This part of the questionnaire requested a limited amount of information related to personal and demographic status of the respondents. Accordingly, the following variables about the respondents were

summarized and described in the subsequent table. These variables include; sex, age, education, income and experience of the respondents.

Referring Table 4.1, male respondents constituted the highest percentage 188(66.7%) while their female counterparts shared the rest 94 (33.3%). This merely indicates the sampling diversity of more males consume beer compared to females but, with the scope and the sample size of this study, it would be premature to make conclusive remarks as to what this gender discrepancy means. Perhaps, further endeavours with specific focus to gender might explore this venue from a gender-related perspective.

The age distribution of the respondents who participated in the study, the sample included only residents in the target area who were twenty-one years and older. Their age distribution showed that 114(40.4%) was found to be within the age range of 31-45 years followed by 75(26.1%) within 18-30 years. Whereas those respondents whose age fall within 46-60 years and above 60 years old belonged to 20.2% and 2.5% respectively. This indicates that the respondents were from different age groups, younger up to elderlies, that could be taken as positive implication as responses from diversified age groups would have the probability to get clear picture of beer preferences. It is noteworthy to acknowledge that this phenomenon could largely be due to the nature of the product category as beer is high hedonic/ low utilitarian products, consumed for luxury purposes. However, it would be interesting to cross reference this finding with findings regarding other variables and see if there's valuable insight to arrive at.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Category		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	188	66.7
	Female	94	33.3
	Total	**282**	**100**
Age	18-30	75	26.6
	31-45	114	40.4
	46-60	57	20.2
	>60	36	12.8
	Total	**282**	**100**

Education	High school	55	19.5
	Degree	149	52.8
	Masters	78	27.7
	Total	**100**	
Income	<5000	90	31.9
	5000-10,000	133	47.2
	>10,000	59	20.9
	Total	**282**	**100**
Drinking Experience	1-5 years	86	30.5
	6-10 years	137	48.6
	>10 years	59	20.9
	Total	**282**	**100**

*(**Source:** Own Survey, 2021)*

Regarding the educational background of the respondents, the majority 149(52.8%) has first degree but the rest 78(27.7%) has master's holders and 55(19.5%) were high school. This result shows a trend of increasing alcohol consumption from high school certified to first degree holders but decreases when it comes to second degree. The association between education level and alcohol consumption is evident but with this sample size and scope, it would be illogical to reach conclusion. However, with other variables, it may have relevance to assess its influence on consumer preference.

Similarly, those who earned monthly income 5,000-10,000 birr represents relatively the highest share 133(47.2%) followed by 90(31.9%) from <5000 birr and the rest 59(20.9%) represents who earned above 10,000 Birr. This indicates that majority of the respondents were people with highest income and it has an implication of relatively middle-income respondents were more in number. It also noteworthy to mention that the association of beer consumption with income is evidenced in previous studies but hard to reach in conclusion within the scope of this study.

It was also found that more than half, 137(48.6%), of the respondents have 6 -10 years of experience in consuming beer products while 86(30.5%) from 1-5 years of experience in beer consumption. The rest of the respondents who have consumed beer more than 10 years and above represented 59(20.9%) of the total respondents. It implies that the study

participants were from novice to experienced beer consumers which could be taken as an advantage in inclusion of different perspective in this study.

4.1.1. Description of Study Variables

The study investigated the brand positioning that affect the consumer preference of selected Beer brand in Addis Ababa. To compare the respondents' perception towards the variables, descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation are used. The mean value indicates to what extent the sample group averagely agrees or disagrees with the different statements. According to Best (1987), the scale is set in such a way that respondents strongly disagreed if the mean scored value is in the range of 1.00 – 1.80; disagreed within 1.81 – 2.60; neither agreed nor disagreed within 2.81 - 3.40; agreed if it is in the range of 3.41 – 4.20; while strongly agreed when it falls within 4.21 – 5.00. Besides standard deviation below 1.0 shows relatively less variability of an observed response whereas, greater than 1.0 often considered as high variability (Field, 2009). Below, the results are discussed one by one.

4.1.1.1. Brand Positioning

4.1.1.1.1. Relevance

Relevance deal with the target audience care about your differentiation and is it important in their purchase decision making (Semans,2010). Referring this perspective, the respondents' perception is analyzed as shown on Table below.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Relevance

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The quality of the beer suits my demand	282	3.64	1.545
The benefits offered by the beer company matches my desire	282	3.44	1.871
The taste of the beer is my favourite	282	3.64	1.545
The values offered by the beer is important in my purchase decision	282	3.48	1.625
Overall, the beer meets my expectation	282	3.54	1.683
REL	282	3.55	1.212
Valid N (list wise)	282		

(**Source**: Own Survey, 2021)

Relevance of the company was perceived positively for the majority of the respondents agreed that the company quality of the beer and it has the highest mean value (Mean 3.64), the benefits match the desire (Mean 3.44), the taste (Mean 3.64and the products values or benefits are important for the purchase decision (Mean 3.48).The company meets bundle of current & expected benefits (Mean 3.54). According to the result, respondents give positive response on each measuring criteria of Relevance and they more agree on the quality of the beer the company offer and the taste of the beer than the other criteria but in general based on the mean values obtained, the company was more devoted on relevance activities to gain customer preference.

4.1.1.1.2. Delivery

Delivery deals with to assure weather the company actually deliver on the differentiation or is it a promise you will be able to keep over time (Semans,2010). In this regard, the perception of the respondents on is described as follows.

The results revealed that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that the company deliver proven quality (Mean SD=1.43). They agreed on deliver its promise on time (Mean 3.78; SD=1.704) and distribution credibility (Mean 3.42). However, they had doubts on the deliver value (Mean 3.26) and promise considered experience of the customers (Mean 3.16).The overall delivery of the company was perceived strong (Mean, 3.56)

Based on the result on this study, delivery was assessed according to the given five questions and it shows as compared to the others respondents strongly agree on the company proven quality this implies that majority of the respondents had a good impression regarding their company delivery even though more efforts are required to balance deliver articulated value and deliver promise that consider the customer's experience.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of DEL

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The company actually delivers the proven beer quality	282	4.21	1.434
The company delivers its product as or on time as promised	282	3.78	1.704
The company delivers the articulated value as promoted	282	3.26	1.793
The company's distribution channels are credible	282	3.42	1.802
The delivered promises consider the customer experiences	282	3.16	1.769
DEL	282	3.56	1.294
Valid N (list wise)	282		

*(**Source**: Own Survey, 2021)*

4.1.1.1.3. Differentiation

Differentiation deals with what makes your brand different and unique to other brands in the frame of reference, and the reason why consumers choose to purchase your brand (Semans, 2010). The result is analyzed and presented as follows.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Differentiation

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The beer is unique from existing competitors in the beer industry	282	2.99	1.495
I believe the company known for its reputation in the beer industry	282	3.80	1.536
I feel that the beer has special feature than competitors	282	3.66	1.591
The company takes proactive measures to keep/ make its product different	282	2.61	1.088
The company offers differentiated beer with affordable price	282	3.38	1.800
DIF	282	3.49	1.026
Valid N (list wise)	282		

*(**Source**: Own Survey, 2021)*

The result shows that the respondents disagreed on the idea that the company proactive measure (Mean 2.61). On the other hand, the respondent agreed on reputation (Mean 3.80) and special features (Mean 3.66). But they were indifferent regarding the beer uniqueness from other competitors (Mean 2.99) and affordable price (Mean 3.38). Respondents agreed more on reputation of the company as compared to the others. And regarding the uniqueness of the beer and company proactive measure they slightly less agreed. This implies that less due consideration has been given for measurement to make different form other competitor companies. Over all differentiation was perceived positively for the fact that breweries created awareness and their customers believed that they knew the merits of the merits of having their preferred beer brands.

4.1.1.1.4. Communication

Communication represents the voice of the brand and is a means by which the brand can establish a dialogue and build relationships with customers (Lombard, 2007). In this perspective, the analysis presented as below. Table 4.5, majority of the respondents are strongly believed that communication make aware about the brand staffs (Mean 4.22), They also agreed that the company clear communication (Mean 3.47), articulated value (Mean 3.41) and owning merit (Mean 3.54). But they neither agree nor disagreed on self-communication about uniqueness to their customers (Mean 2.86). Overall communication of the company is perceived positively (Mean 3.50). Communication was also assessed in this study based on five questions (criteria's'), Majority of respondents agreed on that company communication makes them aware about the beer brand but overall respondents give positive response on beer was clearly communicated, they believed the value of the beer features were articulated well and the beer by itself communicate its uniqueness to the customer. Generally, it implies that communication was found to be positive which indicates that the company has a lot to do on aware customer with clear communication and to understand the product features offered by the company.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of Communication

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The beer by itself communicates what makes it unique to customers	282	2.86	1.953
The beer is clearly communicated to the customer	282	3.47	1.845
I believe the value of the beer features are articulated well.	282	3.41	1.877
I know the merits of owning the beer	282	3.54	1.735
The company communication makes me aware about the beer brand	282	4.22	1.518
COM	282	3.5007	1.21582
Valid N (list wise)	282		

(Source: Own Survey, 2021)

4.1.1.2. Consumer Preference

It is a commitment to continue to make business with a company, on the long term, is a state of mind, a set of attitudes, beliefs or desires or loyalty is a relationship between attitude and behavior, where attitudinal loyalty is generated by satisfaction, trust and involvement and behavioral loyalty is the act of purchase (Bobalca, 2013). Table 4.6 presents responses on descriptive information on consumer preference as below. Referring mean values, majority of the respondents agreed that they have positive attitude towards the beer (mean 3.52), committed to re-buy (mean 4.12), choose even other are easily available (mean 3.48) suit (mean 3.43), and recommend to others (mean, 3.43). Overall respondents' preference was perceived positively and it has an implication that majority of the respondents have the good attitude to use and rebuy and have a tendency to recommend to others so as to motivate them to use or try it at least once.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics of Respondents Consumer Preference

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I have positive attitude towards the beer brand	282	3.52	1.369
I am committed to re-buy the beer brand	282	4.12	1.289
I choose this beer brand even if other option is easily avail.	282	3.48	.853
I would like to buy this beer brand as it suits me	282	3.43	.820
I recommend the company's reputation to other friends or families	282	3.56	.942
COP	282	3.6206	.81236
Valid N (list wise)	282		

*(**Source:** Own Survey, 2021)*

4.2. Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistics uses sample measurements of the subject and make generalization about the larger population. It comprises different test such correlation analysis among variables and assumption of data test for their suitability or fitness to the intended regression analysis model namely normality, collinearity, linearity and homoscedasticity. Finally, the multiple regression analysis in terms of model summary, ANOVA test and determination of beta coefficients are conducted to address the objectives of this study.

4.2.1. Correlation Analysis

Inferential statistics uses sample measurements of the subject and make generalization about the larger population. It comprises different test such correlation analysis among variables and assumption of data test for their suitability or fitness to the intended regression analysis model namely normality, collinearity, linearity and homoscedasticity. Finally, the multiple regression analysis in terms of model summary, ANOVA test and determination of beta coefficients are conducted to address the objectives of this study.

This study employs correlation analysis, which investigates the strength of the relationships between the studied variables. Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation or simple correlation is the most widely used Method of measuring the degree of relationship between two variables (Kothari, 2004).

Table 8: Pearson Correlation matrix

		REL	DEL	DIF	COM	COP
	Correlations					
REL	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	282				
DEL	Pearson Correlation	.212**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	282	282			
DIF	Pearson Correlation	.458**	.220**	1	.	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000			
	N	282	282	282		
COM	Pearson Correlation	.248**	.127*	.264**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.034	.000		
	N	282	282	282	282	
COP	Pearson Correlation	.622**	.476**	.593**	.385**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	282	282	282	282	282

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

(Source: Own Survey, 2021)

The calculated value of the correlation coefficient ranges from -1 to 1, where -1 indicates a perfect negative relation (the relationship is perfectly linear) and 1 indicates a perfectly positive relationship. A correlation coefficient of 0 indicates that there is no correlation (Akroush, 2003). To interpret the direction and strengths of relationships between variables, the guidelines suggested by Field (2005) were followed. His classification of the correlation coefficient (r) refers 0.1– 0.29 is weak; 0.3 – 0.49 is moderate; and $\geq$ 0.5 is strong. Based on this scale, the responses of the respondents are summarized as below.

Table 4.10 below shows the correlation between the four dimensions of brand positioning and consumer preference. The results indicate that, there is positive and strong relationship between relevance and consumer preference (r = 0.622, < 0.01), differentiation and consumer preference (r = 0.593, P < 0.01). on the other hand, there is moderate positive correlation among delivery and consumer preference (r = 0.476, p < 0.01) and also communication and consumer preference (r = 0.385, P <0.01). In

summary, all brand positioning dimensions have positive and significant relationship with and overall consumer preference.

4.2.2. Regression Analysis
4.2.2.1. Assumption for Multiple Regression Tests

Multiple regression is an analysis that assesses whether one or more predictive variables explain the dependent (criterion) variable. The regression assumptions are multicollinearity, multivariate normality, linearity and homoscedasticity.

4.2.2.1.1. Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity refers to the situation in which the independent variables are highly correlated. When the independent variables are multi-co linearity, there is overlap or sharing of predictive power. When the predictor variables are correlated among themselves, the unique contribution of each predictor variable is difficult to assess. "Tolerance" and "variance inflation factors" (VIF) values for each predictor is a means of checking for Multicollinearity. Tolerance value below 0.1 and VIF value above 10% indicate a Multicollinearity problem, (Robert, 2006).

Table 9: Collinearity Diagnosis

Coefficients[a]		
Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
1 Relevance	.762	1.312
Delivery	.933	1.071
Differentiation	.753	1.327
Communication	.907	1.102

 a. Dependent Variable: COP

(Source: Own Survey, 2021)

As can be seen from table above, regarding this study the tolerance level of all independent variables are greater than 0.1 and the VIF value of all the independent variables are also less than 10. This confirms the absence of multicollinearity and one could conclude that no highly related variables.

4.2.2.1.2. Homoscedasticity

The normal Q-Q chart plots the values one would expect to get if the distribution were normal (expected values) against the values actually seen in the data set (observed values). The expected values are a straight diagonal line, whereas the observed values are plotted as individual points. If the data are normally distributed, then the observed values (the dots on the chart) should fall exactly along the straight line (meaning that the observed values are the same as you would expect to get from a normally distributed data set). Any deviation of the dots from the line represents a deviation from normality. This means that the residuals (the differences b/n the values of the observed and predicted dependent variable) are normally distributed, and that the residuals have constant variance
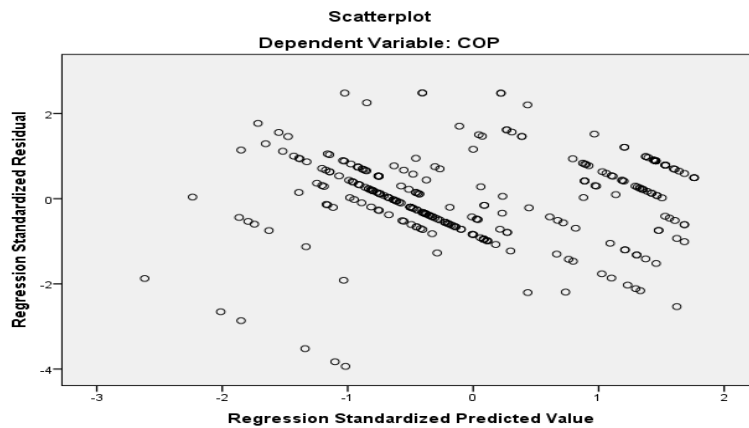
Figure 2: Frequency distribution of Standard Residuals

4. 2.2.1.3. Multivariate Normality

To check that a distribution of scores is normal, it needs to look at the values of Kurtosis and Skewness. Both of which have an associated standard error. The values of Skewness and kurtosis should be zero in a normal distribution. Positive values of Skewness indicate a pile-up of scores on the left of the distribution, whereas negative value indicates a flat distribution. The further the value is from zero, the more likely it is that the data are not normally distributed. Both of which have an associated standard error. However, the actual value of Skewness and kurtosis are not, in themselves, informative. Instead, it needs to take the value and convert it to a z-score. The z-score is simply a standardize score from a distribution that has Mean of 0 and standard deviation of 1.0.

Table 10: Normality of Distribution Using Descriptive Statistics (Skewness and Kurtosis)

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Relevance	282	-.344	.145	-1.082	.289
Delivery	282	-.444	.145	-1.045	.289
Differentiation	282	-.312	.145	-1.218	.289
Communication	282	-.444	.145	-.847	.289
Consumer Preference	282	-.185	.145	.867	.289
Valid N (listwise)	282				

(Source: Own Survey, 2021)
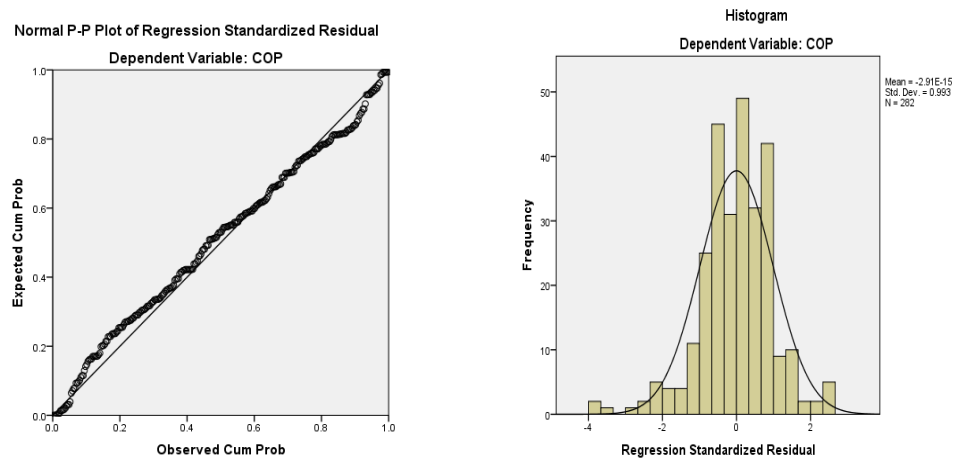
Figure 3: Normal Point Plot and Frequency Distribution of Standardized Residuals

4.2.3. Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is a statistical method to deal with the formulation of mathematical model depicting relationship amongst variables which can be used for the purpose of prediction of the values of dependent variables, and given the values of the independent (Kothari, 2004). Linear regression estimates the coefficients of the linear equation, involving one or more independent variables that best predicts the value of the dependent variable. Multiple regression analysis in this research was used to model the value of the construct variable (consumer preference) based on its linear relation to two or more predictors (Relevance, Delivery, Differentiation, Communication).

Table 11: Model Summary

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.792[a]	.628	.622	.49913

As indicated in the model summary of the analysis on Table 4.11a, above, the value of R (.792) indicated relations of the four independent variables with the dependent one which are accounted for approximately 62.8 % (R^2) of the variation in consumer preference However, the remaining percent (37.2%) was explained by other variables not included in this study.

As indicated in Table 4.11b of ANOVA test, F-value of 116.841 is significant at p < 0.001. Therefore, it can be inferred that with 62.8 % of variance (R Square), brand positioning dimensions is significant and the model appropriately measured the dependent variables – consumer preference.

Table 12: ANOVA Analysis

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	116.433	4	29.108	116.841	.000[b]
	Residual	69.008	277	.249		
	Total	185.441	281			

a. Dependent Variable: COP

b. Predictors: (Constant), COM, DEL, REL, DIF

Table 13: Estimated Regression Coefficients

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	.838	.136		6.176	.000
	REL	.250	.028	.373	8.874	.000
1	DEL	.193	.024	.307	8.098	.000
	DIF	.245	.033	.310	7.330	.000
	COM	.115	.026	.172	4.472	.000

a. Dependent Variable: COP

In short, the regression model predicts overall consumer preference and has been significantly explained by the four independent (brand positioning) dimensions.

The last output in the analysis of the multiple regression models represents the output for the beta coefficients of each brand positioning dimensions. The regression equation for this research is presented below.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 REL + \beta_2 DEL + \beta_3 DIF + \beta_4 COM + e$$

Where, COP = Consumer Preference, REL = Relevance, DEL = Delivery, DIF = Differentiation, COM = Communication. β_0 = Constant, β_1 to β_4 = beta coefficients, and e = error terms. Based on multiple linear regression analysis on Table 4.11c, substituting the results in the model yields:

$$CPR = .838 + .373 REL + .307 DEL + .310 DIF + .172 COM$$

The regression analysis revealed that each brand positioning dimensions have positive and significant effect on overall consumer preference. Relevance (β = .373) has the highest effect followed by Differentiation (β = .310) but Delivery (β =. 307) and Communication (β = .172) have relatively lower contribution to the prediction model.

This predicted change in the consumer preference for every unit change in that specific predictor. For instance, this signifies that for every additional point or investment on Relevance, one could predict a gain of 0.373 points on the overall consumer preference of the companies provided that other variables being held constant; and the same are for other brand positioning dimensions. The results on the above table , implies that all dimensions of brand positioning had significant influences on overall consumer preference at 95% confidence level (p<0.05), indicating that for Beer brand consumers, these factors are important in assessing overall consumer preference of their customers.

Table 14: Summary of the Research Hypothesis Test Result

	Hypothesis	Results
H1	Relevance has significant and positive effect on consumer preference	Supported
H2	Delivery has significant and positive effect on consumer preference	Supported
H3	Differentiation has significant and positive effect on consumer preference	Supported
H4	Communication has significant and positive effect on consumer	Supported

Source: SPSS output, 2021

4.3. Discussion

The findings revealed that Relevance (β = .373) has relatively the highest significant and positive effect on consumer preference. The proposed hypothesis regarding the effect of relevance on consumer preference in some selected beer brands in Addis Ababa is supported as p-value less than .05. It implicated that the development of effective benefit or value centered positioning involves understanding of what benefits are sought by the consumers and what the relative importance of those benefits is. This finding is in line with Akpoyomare (2013) whose findings illustrated that understanding of how consumers perceive a firm and its product in relation to competitors on the basis of the benefits sought by consumers and know what products and services are bought and consumed by consumers. Thus, one can concluded that positioning value proposition is favourable or desirable by the prospect customers preference in selected beer brand in Addis Ababa.

Next to Relevance, differentiation has also relatively higher positive and significant effect on consumer preference (β = .310, p< .05). Based on this the proposed hypothesis has been supported. This result is also in agreement with Semans (2010) who explained

breweries offer special features and it has known reputation that have influence customers to rebuy again and again. Armstrong, (2011) offering the best quality and service, it must actually differentiate the product so that it delivers the promised quality and service. Thus, the finding supported the significant and positive impact of delivery on consumer preference. Differentiation in terms of making a beer brand market different and unique against other brands in the frame of reference, and the reason why consumers choose to purchase that specific beer brand significantly influences consumer brand preference in the context of selected breweries in Addis Ababa.

The findings also revealed the existence of relatively lower positive and significant effect of communication (β = .172, p< .05) on consumer preference. This also justifies the support of the proposed hypothesis referring communication has positive and significant effect on consumer beer brand preference in Addis Ababa. According to Levi (2011) communication that creating highly-differentiating, very succinct and extremely powerful messages that clearly articulate the value of your products and services. effective communication through articulation of customer value leads to success in business. Based on Levi, (2011) explanation, in support of this finding, so many businesses expend the vast majority of their staff and financial resources on developing and refining the company's product and service offerings. While this is obviously a critical component of business success, one's own offerings are worthless if their value is not properly articulated and appreciated.

It can be concluded that brand positioning dimensions' tools have significant and positive effect on prediction of consumer preference of selected Beer brand in Addis Ababa. Relevance and Differentiation played significant role in enhancing purchase intention of consumers. Therefore, concerned managers should evaluate brand positioning elements to improve overall consumer preference of their customers.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Summary of Major Findings

The primary objective of this study was to investigate the effect of brand positioning on consumer preference in the case of selected Beer brand in Addis Ababa.

To address the intended research objectives, four factors were considered namely Relevance, Delivery, Differentiation and Communication to investigate their significant effect on consumer preference of the consumers. A sample size of 282 respondents was selected using convenience sampling technique from customers of beer brand. Based on the theoretical framework and objectives of the study, a questionnaire with 25 items was provided in a 5-point Likert scale to be filled by the respondents. The gathered data was analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistics. The major findings are summarized and presented as below:

- Results of the correlation analysis between the four dimensions of brand positioning and consumer preference illustrated that brand positioning had positive and significant relationship with consumer preference.

- Specifically, both relevance ($r = 0.622$, < 0.05) and differentiation ($r = 0.593$, $P < 0.01$) had positive and strong relationship with consumer preference.

- On the other hand, there was positive and moderate relation between delivery ($r = 0.476$, $p < 0.05$); whereas communication had positive and weak relationship ($r = 0.385$, $P < 0.01$) with consumer preference.

- The collected data were tested for exceeding assumption associated with the regression model and found all the four brand positioning variables and consumer preference construct met the assumptions of multicollinearity, normality, and homoscedasticity.

- As per the regression analysis result, when the overall consumer preference was regressed on the four independent variables (Relevance, Delivery, Differentiation and Communication) contributes to statistically significant level at p-value 0.05.

Brand positioning dimensions are accounted for 62.8% variation in consumer preference.

- All the four dimensions of brand positioning have significant effect on consumer preference. Relevance has relatively the highest effect ($\beta = .373$) on consumer preference followed by Differentiation ($\beta = .310$) at p< .05.

- Delivery ($\beta = .307$) and Communication ($\beta =. 172$) have relatively lower contribution to the prediction model at p- value less than .05.

- Based on these results, all the four proposed alternate hypotheses were supported as they had positive and significant effect at p< .05.

5.2. Conclusion

To build profitable relationships with target customers, marketers usually strive for understanding customer needs better than their strategic competitors do and deliver more customers value. To the extent that a company can differentiate and position itself as providing superior customer value, it gains competitive advantage. Ethiopian brewery industry is not far from this fact. This study thus sought to investigate the effect of brand positioning in terms of relevance, delivery, differentiation and communication variables on consumer preference taking some selected beer brands in Addis Ababa. The survey tried to show the linkage between brand positioning and consumer preference based on Semans (2010) and Janiszewska (2012) models of positioning. Effective brand positioning is characterized by resonating with the customer, differentiate the brand from competitors, and represent what the organization can and will do over time. According to Semans (2010), a strong brand position can pass through these four filters: Relevance, Differentiation, and Delivery & Communication.

Based on the results of the multiple linear regression analyses, relevance of beer brand positioning had positive and significant effect on beer preference of consumers in Addis Ababa. That means, the brand positioning value proposition was favorable or desirable by the prospect customers. According Semans (2010) relevance in positioning questions whether the targeted beer consumers care about the product differentiation and its important in their purchase decision making. The selected beer brands' efforts in this

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regard creating benefit-centered positioning through offering quality beer that matched customer tastes and add value their desire influence consumer brand preferences. Knowing how consumers perceive a firm and its product in relation to competitors on the basis of the benefits sought by consumers may bring relatively higher benefit to the breweries through promoting or enhancing more consumer preference of their specific brands.

Similarly, next to relevance, differentiation had also positive and significant effect on consumer preferences. Making products or services simply different or unique from competitors' brands, reputation of the companies and offering special features affect consumers beer brand preference. However, failure in provision of differentiated products may resulted in losing customers as they easily shifted to other alternatives (Akpoyomare, 2013). In this notion, some of the selected beer brands has given less due consideration for making their beer products unique, however, consumers perceived regarding their differentiated brand positioning positively for the fact that breweries created awareness regarding the merits of having their preferred beer brands.

The results also illustrated that communication attribute of some selected beer brands in Addis Ababa had positive and significant effect on consumer preference. Communication represents the voice of the brand and are a means by which the brand can establish a dialogue and build relationships with customers (Lombard, 2007). Having clear brand communication articulated value and owning merit had significantly influenced beer brand preference of consumers in Addis Ababa. On the other hand, overall communication of the companies under study was perceived slightly positive which implicated that communication the breweries have a lot to do on aware customer with clear communication and to understand the product features offered by the company.

Finally, the results showed that delivery of the promised value through brand positioning had also positive but the least effect on brand preferences of beer consumers in Addis Ababa on selected beer brands. Delivery of proven quality as promised, on time distribution credibility and considered experience of the customers influence consumer brand preferences in some selected beer brand preferences.

The results revealed that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that the company deliver (mean 4.21). they agreed on (mean 3.78) and (mean 3.42). However, they had doubts on the deliver value (mean 3.26) and promise (mean 3.16). The overall delivery of the company was perceived strong (mean, 3.56) which implies that majority of the respondents had a good impression regarding their company delivery even though more efforts are required to balance deliver articulated value and deliver promise that consider the customer's experience. Positioning the company calls for concrete action, not just mere promise, often find it easier to come up with a good positioning strategy.

5.3. Recommendation

- Based on the findings, all the four dimensions of brand positioning have a positive and significant effect on consumer preference. Therefore, Marketing Managers should pay attention to all the four dimensions of Brand positioning.

- The management should focus on relevance and differentiation dimensions since, they have a strong relationship with consumer preference This can be done by increasing quality as well as to meet the expectation of customers, by improving price to make customers re-buy and by offering special features.

- Delivery was perceived positively and moderate relationship with consumer preference. In order to improve this, managers should balance delivered articulated value articulated value and deliver promise that consider the customers experience.

- Communication had positive and weak relationship that means it has relatively lowest effect on preference and that the company should improve awareness to understand product values.

- Further studies can be carried out on the effects of positioning on customer preference. These studies can be carried out in many firms to assess the effects of positioning on customer preference. The research can be furthers expanded to other countries and cultures. It would help to understand in detail different factors influencing consumer preference. Moreover, by using a larger and diverse sample size and even distribution among different age group helps to better understanding of consumer preference of a diverse group of custom

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APPENDICES
Appendix – I: Survey Questionnaire (English Version)

St. Mary University Collage
Department of Marketing Management
The Effect of Brand Positioning of Consumer Preference: A Case Study of Some Selected Beer Brands in Addis Ababa

Dear Respondent,

My name is Bethelihem Tamiru, a postgraduate student of St. Mary's University, School of Graduate Studies. I am conducting a study to assess the effect of brand positioning on consumer preference in the case of selected beer brands in Addis Ababa. The purpose of this questioner is to gather data regarding how the brand positioning in terms of relevance, delivery, communication and differentiation on consumer preference. Your honest and sincere responses for this questionnaire will play a great role in making the research successful. I assure you that all the responses will be treated confidentially and only be used for academic purpose. Participation is purely voluntary and no need to write your name.

I thank you in advance for offering your golden time and if you have any question, please feel free to contact me by the below contact:

BethelihemTamiru

Phone: +251 934973095

Email: betitamiru222@gmail.com

General Information

Please mark [X] in the appropriate box to indicate your choice

1. Gender   ☐ Male   ☐ Female

2. Age   ☐ 18 – 30   ☐ 31 – 45   ☐ 46 – 60   ☐ > 60

3. Education   ☐ High School   ☐ Degree   ☐ Masters

                              ☐   Others, please specify _____

4. Income   ☐ < 5,000 Birr   ☐ 5,000 – 10,000 Birr   ☐

        >10,000 Birr

5. Experience   ☐ 1 – 5 years   ☐6 – 10 years   ☐> 10years

II. Questions regarding Study Variables

Here under the questions with regard to the brand positioning of selected beer brands and consumer preference, therefore, you are kindly requested to put "X" mark on the box which represents your degree of agreement.

1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neutral, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree.

Code	Statement	Scale				
		1	2	3	4	5
RE1	The quality of the beer suits my demand					
RE2	The benefits offered by the beer company matches my desire					
RE3	The taste of the beer is my favorite					
RE4	The values offered by the beer is important in my purchase decision					
RE5	Overall, the beer meets my expectation					
DI1	The beer is unique from existing competitors in the beer industry					
DI2	I believe the company known for its reputation in the beer industry					

DI3	I feel that the beer has special feature than competitors					
DI4	The company takes proactive measures to keep/ make its product different					
DI5	The company offers differentiated beer with affordable price					
DE1	The company actually delivers the proven beer quality					
DE2	The company delivers its product as or on time as promised					
DE3	The company delivers the articulated value as promoted					
DE4	The company's distribution channels are credible					
DE5	The delivered promises consider the customer experiences					
CO1	The beer by itself communicates what makes it unique to customers					
CO2	The beer is clearly communicated to the customer					
CO3	I believe the value of the beer features are articulated well.					
CO4	I know the merits of owning the beer					
CO5	The company communication makes me aware about the beer brand					
CP1	I have positive attitude towards the beer brand					
CP2	I am interested to re-buy the beer brand					
CP3	I choose this beer brand even if other option is easily available.					
CP4	I would like to buy this beer brand as it suits me					
CP5	I recommend the company's reputation to other friends or families					

Many thanks!!!

Appendix – I: Survey Questionnaire (Amharic Version)

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ቅድስት ማርያም ዩኒቨርስቲ

ማርኬቲንግ ማኔጅመንት መምሪያ

የምርት ስም አቀማመጥ በደምበኞች ምርጫ ላይ የሚፈጥረዉ ተፅዕኖ፡

በአዲስ አበባ በተመረጡ የቢራ ስሞች ላይ ያተኮረ ጥናት

</div>

ውድ መላሾች

እኔ ስሜ ቤቴልሄም ታምሩ ሲሆነን የቅድስት ማሪያም ዩኒቨርስቲ ማርኬቲንግ ማኔጅመንት የማስተርስ ተመራቂ ስሆን የምርት ስም አቀማመጥ በደምበኞች ምርጫ ላይ የሚፈጥረዉ ተፅዕኖ፡ በአዲስ አበባ በተመረጡ የቢራ ስሞች ላይ ያተኮረ ጥናት እያካሄድኩ ነዉ። የዚህ ጥናት አላማ የምርት ስምእ ቀማመጥ፣ ግኑኝነት እናል ዩነት በደምበኞች ምርጫ ላይ የሚፈጥረዉን ተፅዕኖ በተመለከተ መረጃ ለመሰብሰብ ነዉ። የእርሶ ታማኝና ቅን ምላሽ ለዚሕ መጠይቅ መሳካት ትልቅ ሚና ይጫወታሉ። ሁሉም ምላሾች በሚስጥር እደሚያዙ እና ለትምህርት አላማ ብቻ እንደሚዉሉ አረጋግጥሎታለሁ። የዚህመጠይቅ ተሳታፊ በፈቃደኝነት ብቻ ስለሆነ ስሞትን መጻፍ አይጠበቅቦትም። ወርቃማ ጊዜዎን በመስጠቶ በቅድሚያ እያመሰገንኩኝ ጥያቄ ካሎት እባክዎን ከዚህ በታች ባለዉ አድራሽ ያሳዉቁኝ።

ቤቴልሄም ታምሩ

ስልክቁጥር: +251 934973095

ኢሜል: betitamiru222@gmail.com

አጠቃላይመረጃ

እባኮዎን መልሶን በተገቢዉ ሳጥን ላይ የ (X) ምልክ ትያድርጉ።

1. ፆታ   ወንድ ☐   ሴት ☐

2. እድሜ   ☐ 18 – 30   ☐ 31 – 45   ☐ 46 – 60   ☐ > 60

3. የትምህርት ደረጃ   ☐ ሁለተኛ ደረጃ   ☐ ዲግሪ   ☐ ማስተርስ
                    ☐ ሌላ, እባኮዎንይግለጹ _____

4.የገቢመጠን   ☐ < 5,000 ብር   ☐ 5,000 – 10,000 ብር   ☐ >10,000 ብር

5.ተሞክሮ   ☐ 1 – 5 ዓመታት   ☐ 6 – 10 ዓመታት   ☐ > 10 ዓመታት

II. የጥናቱ ተለዋዋጮችን የተመለከቱ ጥያቄዎች

ከዚህ በታች የተመረጡ የቢራ ብራነዶች የምርት ስም አና የደንበኞች ምርጫ ላይ ያተኮሩ ጥያቄዎች ሲገኙ ከስር በተጠቀሱት አረፍተ ነገሮች መሰረት ያሉትን የመስማማት ደረጃ እዲገልጹ በትህትና እንጠይቃለን።

1 = በጣም እስማማለሁ, 2 =እስማማለሁ, 3 =ገለልተኛ, 4 = አልስማማም, 5 = በጣም አልስማማም.

ተ/ቁ	መግለጫ	ጥያቄ 1 ልኬት				
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	የቢራዉ ጥራት ከፍላጎቴ ጋር ተስማሚ ነዉ።					
2.	የቢራዉ ኩባንያ የሚሰጠዉ ጥቅም ከፍላጎቴ ጋር ይዛመዳል።					
3.	የቢራዉ ጣእም ተወዳጅ ነዉ።					
4.	በቢራዉ የሚሰጡት እሴቶች ለግብር ዉሳኔ ላይ አስፈላጊ ናቸዉ።					
5.	በአጠቃላይ ቢራዉ የእኔን ተስፋ ያሟላል።					
ልዩ መሆን						
6.	ቢራዉ ከነባር የቢራ ኢንዱስሪ ተፎካካሪዎች የተለየ ነዉ።					
7.	ኩባንያዉ በቢራ ኢንዱስትሪ ዉስጥ በዝናዉ ይታወቃል ብዬ አስባለሁ።					
8.	ቢራዉ ከተወዳዳሪዎች የተሻለ መለያ እንዳለዉ ይስማኛል።					
9.	ኩባንያዉ ምርቱን የተለየለ ማድረግ ቀልጣፋ እርምጃዎችን ይወስዳል።					
10.	ኩባንያዉ የተለያዩ የቢራ ራእይነቶች በተመጣጣኝ ዋጋ ያቀርባል።					

አቅርቦት						
11.	ኩባንያዉ በእዉነቱ የተረጋገጠ የቢራ ጥራት ያቀርባል፡፡					
12.	ኩባንያዉ ምርቶቹን ቃል በገባዉ ሁኔታ እና ጊዜ ያቀርባል፡፡					
13.	ኩባንያው የተገለጸዉን እሴት ያቀርባል፡፡					
14.	የኩባንያዉ የስርጭት ቻናሎች እምነት የሚጣልባቸዉ ናቸዉ፡፡					
15.	የቀረቡት ተስፋዎች የደንበኞችን ልምዶች ይመለከታሉ፡፡					
ምርት የማስተዋወቂያ መንገድ						
16.	ቢራዉ በራሱ በምን ለየት እንደሚያደርገዉ ለደንበኞች ያስተላልፋል፡፡					
17.	ቢራዉ ለደንበኛዉ በግልፅ ይተላለፋል፡፡					
18.	የቢራ ባህሪዎች እሴት በጥሩ ሁኔታ ተገልጧል የሚል እምነት አለኝ፡፡					
19.	የቢራዉ ባለቤት መሆን ጥቅሞችን አዉቃለሁ፡፡					
20.	የኩባንያዉ ግንኙነት ስለቢራዉ ብራንድ እንዳዉቅ ያደርገኛል፡፡					
የደንበኞች ምርጫ						
21.	ስለ ቢራዉ ብራንድ ጥሩ አመለካከት አለኝ፡፡					
22.	ቢራዉን ድጋሚ የመግዛት ፍላጎት አለኝ፡፡					
23.	ሌላ ምርጫዎች በቀላሉ ቢኖሩም ይሄን ቢራ እመርጣለሁ፡፡.					
24.	ይሄ ቢራ ለእኔ ተስማሚ ስለሆነ መግዛት እፈልጋለሁ፡፡					
25.	የኩባንያዉን ዝና ለንደኞቹ እና ለቤተሰቦቹ እመክራለሁ፡፡					

አመሰግናለሁ!!!

Appendix – III

SPSS Analysis Outputs

Table 15: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Category		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	188	66.7
	Female	94	33.3
	Total	**282**	**100**
Age	18-30	75	26.6
	31-45	114	40.4
	46-60	57	20.2
	>60	36	12.8
	Total	**282**	**100**
Education	High school	55	19.5
	Degree	149	52.8
	Masters	78	27.7
	Total	**100**	
Income	<5000	90	31.9
	5000-10,000	133	47.2
	>10,000	59	20.9
	Total	**282**	**100**
Experience	1-5 years	86	30.5
	6-10 years	137	48.6
	>10 years	59	20.9
	Total	**282**	**100**

(***Source***: *Own Survey, 2021*)

Table 16: Descriptive Statistics of Relevance

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The quality of the beer suits my demand	282	3.64	1.545
The benefits offered by the beer company matches my desire	282	3.44	1.871
The taste of the beer is my favourite	282	3.64	1.545
The values offered by the beer is important in my purchase decision	282	3.48	1.625
Overall, the beer meets my expectation	282	3.54	1.683
REL	282	3.55	1.212
Valid N (list wise)	282		

*(**Source**: Own Survey, 2021)*

Table 17: Descriptive Statistics of DEL

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The company actually delivers the proven beer quality	282	4.21	1.434
The company delivers its product as or on time as promised	282	3.78	1.704
The company delivers the articulated value as promoted	282	3.26	1.793
The company's distribution channels are credible	282	3.42	1.802
The delivered promises consider the customer experiences	282	3.16	1.769
DEL	282	3.56	1.294
Valid N (list wise)	282		

*(**Source**: Own Survey, 2021)*

Table 18: Descriptive Statistics of Differentiation

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The beer is unique from existing competitors in the beer industry	282	2.99	1.495
I believe the company known for its reputation in the beer industry	282	3.80	1.536
I feel that the beer has special feature than competitors	282	3.66	1.591
The company takes proactive measures to keep/ make its product different	282	2.61	1.088
The company offers differentiated beer with affordable price	282	3.38	1.800
DIF	282	3.49	1.026
Valid N (list wise)	282		

*(**Source**: Own Survey, 2021)*

Table 19: Descriptive Statistics of Communication

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The beer by itself communicates what makes it unique to customers	282	2.86	1.953
The beer is clearly communicated to the customer	282	3.47	1.845
I believe the value of the beer features are articulated well.	282	3.41	1.877
I know the merits of owning the beer	282	3.54	1.735
The company communication makes me aware about the beer brand	282	4.22	1.518
COM	282	3.5007	1.21582
Valid N (list wise)	282		

*(**Source**: Own Survey, 2021)*

Table 20: Descriptive Statistics of Respondents Consumer Preference

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I have positive attitude towards the beer brand	282	3.52	1.369
I am committed to re-buy the beer brand	282	4.12	1.289
I choose this beer brand even if other option is easily avail.	282	3.48	.853
I would like to buy this beer brand as it suits me	282	3.43	.820
I recommend the company's reputation to other friends or families	282	3.56	.942
COP	282	3.6206	.81236
Valid N (list wise)	282		

*(**Source**: Own Survey, 2021)*

Table 21: Collinearity Diagnosis

Coefficients[a]

Model		Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	REL	.762	1.312
	DEL	.933	1.071
	DIF	.753	1.327
	COM	.907	1.102

a. Dependent Variable: COP

*(**Source**: Own Survey, 2021)*

Table 22: Normality Test

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
REL	282	-.344	.145	-1.082	.289
DEL	282	-.444	.145	-1.045	.289
DIF	282	-.312	.145	-1.218	.289
COM	282	-.444	.145	-.847	.289
COP	282	-.185	.145	.867	.289
Valid N (listwise)	282				

*(**Source**: Own Survey, 2021)*

Table 23: Relationships between brand positioning and consumer preference

Correlations

		REL	DEL	DIF	COM	COP
REL	Pearson Correlation	1	.212**	.458**	.248**	.622**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	282	282	282	282	282
DEL	Pearson Correlation	.212**	1	.220**	.127*	.476**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.034	.000
	N	282	282	282	282	282
DIF	Pearson Correlation	.458**	.220**	1	.264**	.593**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	282	282	282	282	282
COM	Pearson Correlation	.248**	.127*	.264**	1	.385**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.034	.000		.000
	N	282	282	282	282	282
COP	Pearson Correlation	.622**	.476**	.593**	.385**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	282	282	282	282	282

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

*(**Source**: Own Survey, 2021)*

Table 24: Model Summary

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.792[a]	.628	.622	.49913

a. Predictors: (Constant), COM, DEL, REL, DIF

*(**Source**: Own Survey, 2021)*

Table 25: ANOVA Analysis

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	116.433	4	29.108	116.841	.000[b]
1	Residual	69.008	277	.249		
	Total	185.441	281			

a. Dependent Variable: COP

b. Predictors: (Constant), COM, DEL, REL, DIF

*(**Source**: Own Survey, 2021)*

Table 26: Estimated Regression Coefficients

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	.838	.136		6.176	.000
	REL	.250	.028	.373	8.874	.000
1	DEL	.193	.024	.307	8.098	.000
	DIF	.245	.033	.310	7.330	.000
	COM	.115	.026	.172	4.472	.000

a. Dependent Variable: COP

*(**Source**: Own Survey, 2021)*