

Whereas liberalization has opened doors for investment and trade opportunities as well as facilitated an outward drive for exports markets, it has also spelled trouble for many firms particularly in the manufacturing sector.

The Kenya textiles industry is fairly mature in the sense that we have developed all processes in textile manufacture and there is a fair competition. It has been primarily oriented to the domestic market, and has for many years been sheltered from foreign competition by both quantitative and qualitative restrictions on the import of textiles and garments. However large-scale smuggling in of second-hand clothing popularly known locally as 'Mitumba' has periodically diluted such protection? This has brought a lot of concern about the performance of Kenya's textile industry but there is still scarcity of information on how the firms in the industry do their marketing especially in the liberalized economy.

This study was set to investigate the actual marketing practices undertaken by firms in the industry and to evaluate the impact of liberalization through analysis of the probable adjustments in product, price, promotion, distribution, cost structure, research and development, and market predisposition of the firms in the face of changes in the textiles industry environment.

A Survey was conducted on all the spinning, weaving and finishing textiles firms in Nairobi including those firms outside but have offices in Nairobi. The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, which included tables, percentages, frequencies, ranks, mean scores and t-statistics to achieve the set objectives.

The study discovered that all firms utilize all the marketing mix elements in their marketing practices. The utilization of each element differs considerably as many firms emphasize pricing more than any other. The study also found that firms have now changed their prioritisation of their objectives due to market liberalization. Survival is now the most important goal followed by profitability, competitive position, growth and technological position in that order. The impact of liberalization on marketing practices in textiles industry is great. Most of the firms instead of increasing their utilization of marketing strategies in order to remain competitive, they have drastically reduced them. Basically not much of the marketing activities in the industry can be noticed. Hence the unfolding consequences of liberalization no doubt call for rethinking of its implementation.