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**MARKETING SUBSTANTIATION OF THE STRATEGIC
POSITIONING OF A PRODUCT ON THE MARKET
(the example of wineries in ATU Gagauzia)**

SPECIALTY 521.04 - MARKETING AND LOGISTICS

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CONCEPTUAL PECULIARITIES OF RESEARCH.

Relevance and significance of the topic. Effective marketing activity allows you to conquer new markets, create demand for your products, retain consumers, form a stable position on the market, which affects the financial well-being of the enterprise and the ways of obtaining opportunities for its further development. The solution to these problems is carried out using appropriate marketing tools, among which positioning should be highlighted.

Strong competition, a wide range of products on the market, and the rapid renewal of their range raise the question of how the consumer will accept the products the enterprise has made. The priority of analysing this task is also determined by the growing pricing policy for the creation of new products, and the highest risk associated with their development. Taking into account the latest achievements in positioning theory, the company management should orientate their efforts towards ensuring a stable competitive position with relatively small financial investments. All this makes manufacturers carry out a careful research and analyse the market positioning of the products offered.

Having analysed the state of modern theory and practice of product positioning, it can be noted that, on the one hand, there is a unique opportunity to learn from the experience tested on consumer markets with higher competition, and thus avoid repeating a number of marketing mistakes. On the other hand, the analysis shows that for the full-fledged positioning of the product, the existing theoretical base is not enough, which would take into account the particular specifics of the market. Despite the attempts made to develop sound product positioning decisions, the end results are often insignificant, which can largely be explained by theoretical difficulties in developing product positioning methods suitable for a particular market. The methods used in selecting positioning attribute include an unreasonably large, often not perceived by consumers, set of product features that do not significantly affect purchase decisions.

Thus, starting to take active steps to gain a stable competitive position on the market, company managers must have a systematic approach to the problem of product positioning, as well as a scientifically based methodology for the formation of a marketing positioning system.

This circumstance, combined with the relevance of the topic, determined the goal, objectives, and working hypothesis of the dissertation.

The degree of problem development. The theory of positioning management in its broadest sense is developed in the works of foreign scientists, such as D. Aaker, T. Ambler, G. Armstrong, G. Assel, P. Dixon, P. Doyle, E. Rice, J. Trout, R. Fatkhutdinov, V. Khrutsky P. Davis, K. Lancaster.

The study of problems and the search for solutions to problems related to improving the efficiency of product positioning is also given increased attention in a number of works by well-known scientists in the field of marketing. Among them are I. Ansoff, G. Bagieva, E. Golubkov, M. Porter, P. Drucker, F. Kotler, Zh. Zh. Lamben, T. Paramonova, A. Yudanov, P. Hansen, R. Nozdrev, E. D. Schetinina, M. Stone.

They have solved many methodological and application in the field of formation of an appropriate positioning theory, substantiation of various concepts and models of product positioning on the market.

A significant contribution to the study of various aspects of marketing was made by Moldovan scientists: G. Belostecinic, S. Petrovici, L. Mitnitcaia, O. Savciuc, P. Cristafovici, G. Zgherea, S. Ghenova.

The concept of product positioning process in advanced economies is considered one of the most important in marketing planning and organization. In the Republic of Moldova, a small number of enterprises apply this concept, as there is no positioning mechanism adapted for enterprises. In the scientific literature, the positioning process is descriptive and does not reflect the methodological approaches in choosing product positioning methods, while taking into account consumer preferences. There is no appropriate methodological toolkit for the formation and selection of a positioning attribute for consumers; moreover, scientific approaches to the assessment of economic efficiency of using the most rational attributes of product positioning are not defined.

Paying tribute to the conducted research, it should be noted that the growing competition in the wine market actualizes the issues of adaptation and application of marketing strategies in the view of increasing the market share of Moldovan producers. The available scientific publications of foreign authors on these issues do not take into account the peculiarities of the economic situation in the Republic of Moldova, in which the enterprises, as participants of the wine market, operate. The application of the positioning strategy has its own characteristics that require theoretical understanding, as well as practical development and effective application, which, in fact, determines the need for this study.

The main purpose of the dissertation is the scientific and practical substantiation of the marketing approach to positioning the winery products, the development of a positioning strategy and achievement of a competitive advantage on the market.

Based on the relevance and purpose of the study, the following **tasks** were set and solved:

- 1) designate the essence of the concepts related to the problem of "product positioning on the market";
- 2) assess the methods of classifying the product positioning on the market;
- 3) substantiate the main factors that influence the market position of the goods;
- 4) develop a methodology for the formation of a positioning strategy in the enterprise;
- 5) develop a positioning model based on a marketing approach, allowing to increase the efficiency of enterprise activities in the wine sector of the ATU Gagauzia of the Republic of Moldova, and achievement of their competitive advantage on the market;
- 6) formulate conclusions and recommendations for further implementation of the developed model for enterprises.

The scientific hypothesis of the study lies in the marketing rationale and the possibility of expanding the offer of wine products on the market, based on the activation of marketing tools and the use of marketing positioning strategies adapted to the wine product.

Methods of dissertation research. When developing the provisions of the dissertation, the following methods were used: empirical research (observation, comparison); sociological methods (expert assessments, survey,) conducting questionnaires, marketing analysis techniques (SWOT-analysis, matrix methods); statistical methods of data processing (grouping, rating); economic and mathematical modelling. Along with this, statistical, the financial and economic information of the enterprises of the wine industry of the ATU Gagauzia and the Republic of Moldova was used.

The object of the dissertation research is the positioning of the enterprise product of the wine industry in the ATU Gagauzia R.Moldova. The choice of the study object is due to the relevance of the problem of increasing wineries competitiveness and the need to ensure the sustainable position of their products on the market, based on the marketing approach.

The subject of the research is the methodological, methodological and practical issues of the strategic positioning of the product on the market.

The scientific novelty and originality of the study lies in the conceptual substantiation of scientific, methodological and practical recommendations for the formation and application of a product positioning strategy within the framework of a marketing approach focused on achieving long-term high efficiency and product competitiveness.

The most significant results obtained by the author that contain elements of scientific novelty are as follows:

➤ The concept of positioning a product on the market is concretized by considering it on the basis of design, psychological and complex approaches;

➤ Considered the composition of qualitative, price and marketing factors that influence the market position of the product;

➤ An approach to the classification of methods for assessing the position of a product on the market is integrated, which is included in the psychological, marketing, graphical methods and models;

➤ The methodology for assessing the competitive positions of goods in the perception of consumers has been adapted, making it possible to identify weak and strong positions of goods, which is the basis for making sound marketing decisions on positioning.

➤ A method for selecting product attributes is applied, which allows to form the information base necessary to determine the positions of goods relative to competitors' products, taking into account their perception by consumers of target segments;

➤ A “Product positioning model based on a marketing approach” was developed based on a practical analysis of wine industry enterprises. This model was studied on the example of the possibility of product positioning in the winery SA "Tomai-Vinex".

The theoretical significance of the work lies in the use of logical approaches to defining the basic concepts of positioning, the principles of situational, system analysis and marketing research, the SWOT analysis methodology, guidelines for developing a product positioning strategy in an enterprise.

The practical significance of the research results lies in solving the main problems associated with increasing the competitive advantage of wineries based on product positioning on the market. The implementation of the dissertation recommendations will improve management processes in the formation of a product positioning strategy based on a marketing approach. The practical significance of the research results is both theoretical and methodological. Separate provisions of the dissertation research can be included in the lecture courses of such disciplines as: "Marketing", "Marketing in industries and fields of activity", "Consumer behaviour".

Approbation of scientific results took place during presentations at national and international scientific and practical conferences such as International Scientific Symposium of Young Researchers, at the Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova (2017), National scientific and practical conference "Problems and challenges of the regional economy in the context of globalization" at Comrat State University (2017, 2018, 2019), International Scientific Conference "Development through Research and innovation-2021", II-nd Edition, Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova (2021).

Overall, 8 scientific articles on the subject of research were published in specialized publications with a total volume of 3.02 printed sheets.

The scientific developments of the author have been tested and are used in the practical activities of wineries in the ATU Gagauzia of the Republic of Moldova.

The format and structure of the dissertation. The dissertation is written in Russian and has a classical structure: introduction, three chapters with nine paragraphs, conclusions and recommendations, bibliography, applications. The main content of the work is presented on 120 pages, including 27 tables, 14 figures, 18 formulas and 10 appendices. The list of bibliographic sources contains 142 titles.

Key words: marketing, strategy, positioning, segmentation, competitiveness.

THE CONTENT OF THE WORK

In the **Introduction**, the relevance of the chosen topic is substantiated, research problems are identified, the goal, objectives, object, subject and methodology of the research are defined, scientific novelty and the scientific problem, which is solved in the thesis, are identified, the theoretical and practical significance of the work as well as approbation and implementation of the results of the work are clarified.

The first chapter of the dissertation "Conceptual foundations of positioning a company's product in the market" presents aspects of product positioning on the market, which are under the close attention of many marketing economists. The concept of product positioning is a fairly new theoretical definition in marketing, but this aspect has many definitions in the scientific literature. In the dissertation, the definition of the concept of "positioning a product in the market" is formulated - from positioning in terms of the psychological perception of the product by the consumer to the concept that the position of the product is formed on the basis of quantitatively measured properties, some of which differ significantly from each other.

A wide variety of approaches to determine positioning have been proposed in the scientific literature. However, all aspects complement each other, and it would be wrong to consider one of these approaches as defining and fundamental. The studied definitions are proposed to be considered within the framework of three approaches - psychological, design and complex. (Table 1.)

Table 1. Classification of definitions of product positioning on the market.

| Approaches | Definition | Authors - researchers |
|------------------------|---|---|
| Psychological approach | Impact on the consumers' minds | Al Raye, Jack Trout, Lamben Zh.Zh., David Aaker, Philip Kotler, Stone Merlin, Assel Henry, Khrutsky V.E., Nozdreva R.B. |
| Design approach | Bringing the goods into conformity with the consumers' requirements | Golubkov E.P., R. Hibing and Peter Doyle, Peter R. Dixon,. M. Tracy and F. Wiersem, David Crevens |
| A complex approach | Product formation and marketing mix for a certain category of consumers | Alekseev A.A., Fedko V.G., Fedko N.G. T. Ambler, Graham J. Huley |

Source: systematized by the author based on [1,2,3,4,6,10,11,12,23,25,26]

When using these approaches, the attributes of goods are considered, but the factors of formation of consumer preferences (expectations, needs, income, age of consumers, knowledge of the product among consumers, consumer satisfaction with the product) are not taken into account, which does not allow the positioning goods at the proper level. In this regard, the dissertation substantiates the use of an integrated approach to positioning.

The author detailed that an integrated approach to the definition of positioning takes into account the characteristic features of this concept to a greater extent. In other words, we can say that positioning is the process of determining the position of a product on the market, taking into account the requirements of the target segments and the capabilities of the enterprise. This approach consists in the orientation of decisions made on the formation of consumer perception, taking into account the characteristics of competing products, the needs of buyers and their requirements, which will ensure the achievement of the positioning goal.

The positioning stage, along with such marketing management tools as market opportunity research and market segmentation, is the basis for developing an enterprise positioning strategy. A conclusion is drawn based on this generally accepted definition of segmentation that this is an activity of an analytical nature, which comes down to the procedure for processing information by dividing it into separate groups, which subsequently serve as the basis for identifying target segments (markets) with certain characteristics.

The content of the goods positioning, as shown by the analysis of scientific sources, is determined by decisions on the search and determination of the goods position for the target segment, the search for the distinctive advantages of the goods.

Despite the differences in segmentation and positioning, their relationship is noted. Positioning allows you to adapt the product to a specific segment, the purpose of segmentation being the product positioning.

Product positioning on the market is one of the key marketing management tools. An analysis of the scientific literature on the research problem showed that strategic marketing management makes it possible to identify and form the typical composition and direction of positioning strategies, which, as a rule, are of a generalizing and non-specific nature. It is rather difficult to use such strategies in practice due to the generality of their formulations and recommendations.

The paper systematizes the classification of the positioning strategy. It is substantiated that positioning strategies built on the basis of a limited range of the most attractive and recognizable by the consumer properties and characteristics of products become narrowly focused on a specific consumer audience and with their help it is possible to increase the volume and profitability of the company's sales.

It is concluded that for an effective positioning of the product, the following most important conditions must be met:

- There must be a clear idea of the target market and the customers the enterprise is seeking. It is noted that the same position on the market can be regarded differently by consumers. In this regard, it is important that the impact of positioning on all target audiences is understandable and the impact on non-target segments is assumed.
- The alternatives on which the product positioning is based must be important to the target customers. Undoubtedly, the positioning of low prices, which is offered to the price-insensitive

segment, is inappropriate. The benefits or features on which the positioning is based must be attractive to the target consumers.

- Positioning should be based on the actual strength of the enterprise and/or its product. Thus, the strengths or their combination should be unique and original for the enterprise. The focus on the company's most efficient use of assets creates a competitive position that guarantees the greatest stability and security in a competitive environment.

In the second chapter "**Methodological aspects of product positioning**", the author substantiates the methodological aspects of product positioning, and a comparative analysis of positioning strategy models is carried out. There are many methods for assessing the product position on the market. All methods for assessing the product position on the market are proposed to be classified into the following three groups: a psychological, graphical and marketing approach to assess the product position on the market, and for almost every product analysed, it is necessary to apply the position assessment method that would take into account the peculiarities of the formation of the corresponding product market .

Each of the approaches to determining the position of goods on the market has a number of advantages and disadvantages. The advantages and disadvantages of psychological, graphical and marketing approaches are presented in the table. (Table 2.).

Table 2. Advantages and disadvantages of methods for assessing the product position on the market.

| Classification of methods | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| Psychological approach | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Allows you to evaluate factors that cannot be quantified. 2. Allows you to define the "ideal" product from the consumer's point of view. 3. Determines the future demand for the product. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is not taken into account is that, in case of violation of restrictions for some criteria, the goods are not allowed on the market. 2. What takes into account is only the subjective assessment of the consumer. |
| Marketing Approach | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Takes into account both a subjective assessment and the parameters of the product itself. 2. Relatively high reliability of results. 3. Allows you to differentiate quality and price indicators. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is difficult to establish weight values for the product importance. 2. It is difficult to assess the degree of influence on the competitiveness of the goods; these factors cannot be quantified. 3. The complexity of choosing the basis of comparison. 4. The complexity of the calculations. |
| Graphical approach | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visibility of the position taken. 2. As to coordinates, both single parametric indicators and an integral indicator of competitiveness can be used. 3. Both objective and subjective assessment of the goods is used. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The complexity of choosing characteristics as positioning coordinates. 2. The complexity of determining the goods position with multidimensional scaling. |

Source: systematized by the author based on [14,16,19]

The paper proposes *a methodology for assessing the competitive positions of goods in the perception of consumers*, which is an analytical tool that allows you to assess the degree of achievement of the positioning goal, identify the reasons for the deterioration in the position of the product, and form the basis for making decisions on the impact on consumer preferences. The methodology for assessing the competitive positions of goods in the perception of consumers allows you to determine the degree of achievement of the positioning goal, identify the reasons for changing positions, and highlight the strongest competitors. The method for determining the level of competitiveness of products is the method of calculating individual and group indicators. This method is one of the most developed and studied in terms of practical application. Differential, integrated and mixed approaches to assessing the level of competitiveness are considered within the framework of this method. All of them are based on the use of single, group (consolidated) and integral indicators for assessing the competitiveness of a product.

The basis for calculating the integral indicator of the goods position strength (IIPS) is the method of expert assessments. This indicator is directly defined as the sum of weighted group indices (indices of knowledge, product attractiveness, sustainable consumer behaviour, perceived difference from competitors' products):

$$IIPS = \sum_{j=1}^n I_{\text{group}.j} \times K_{\text{wt.group}.j} \quad (1)$$

Where $I_{gr.j}$ are group indices;

$kwt.gr.j$ are weight coefficients of the j -th group index;

n is the number of groups of factors that determine the strength of the item's position.

A *methodology for selecting the attributes of a product position* is proposed in the dissertation, which allows determining its characteristics, on the basis of which an enterprise can create product positions in the consumers' perception. This methodology will provide an opportunity to reasonably approach the adoption of the main decision in the field of positioning, taking into account the positions occupied by competitors' products and consumer expectations, which corresponds to an integrated approach to the implementation of this type of activity. The existing methodological approaches to the study of the marketing activities of an enterprise, based on the proposed methodology for choosing strategic positioning attributes, contribute to an increase in the competitiveness of an enterprise, which can be achieved as a result of consideration in the developed positioning strategies.

Based on the goal of the study, it was revealed that positioning strategies aim the activities of wine producers to take into account market conditions. The dissertation reveals significant reserves for increasing production, wine products positioning based on the use of a marketing strategy. The results of the study showed that adapted marketing positioning strategies will significantly expand the competitive opportunities of Moldovan wines and increase their market share, which, in turn, will improve the economic well-being of enterprises.

Chapter III "*Positioning in the consumer market as a factor in the growth of the wine products competitiveness*" presents the author's development of an algorithm for introducing a product positioning model based on a marketing approach; substantiates the need for using the positioning model at wineries; investigates the consumer preferences of the wine product in the ATU Gagauzia of the Republic of Moldova.

As a result of the scientific literature analysis in the field of product positioning [7,10,21,15,6,12,13], the author developed and proposed a product positioning model based on a marketing approach, which includes the following steps (Fig. 1):

1. Determining the goal of product positioning.
2. Pre-positional stage
3. Positioning stage.
4. Evaluation of product positioning effectiveness

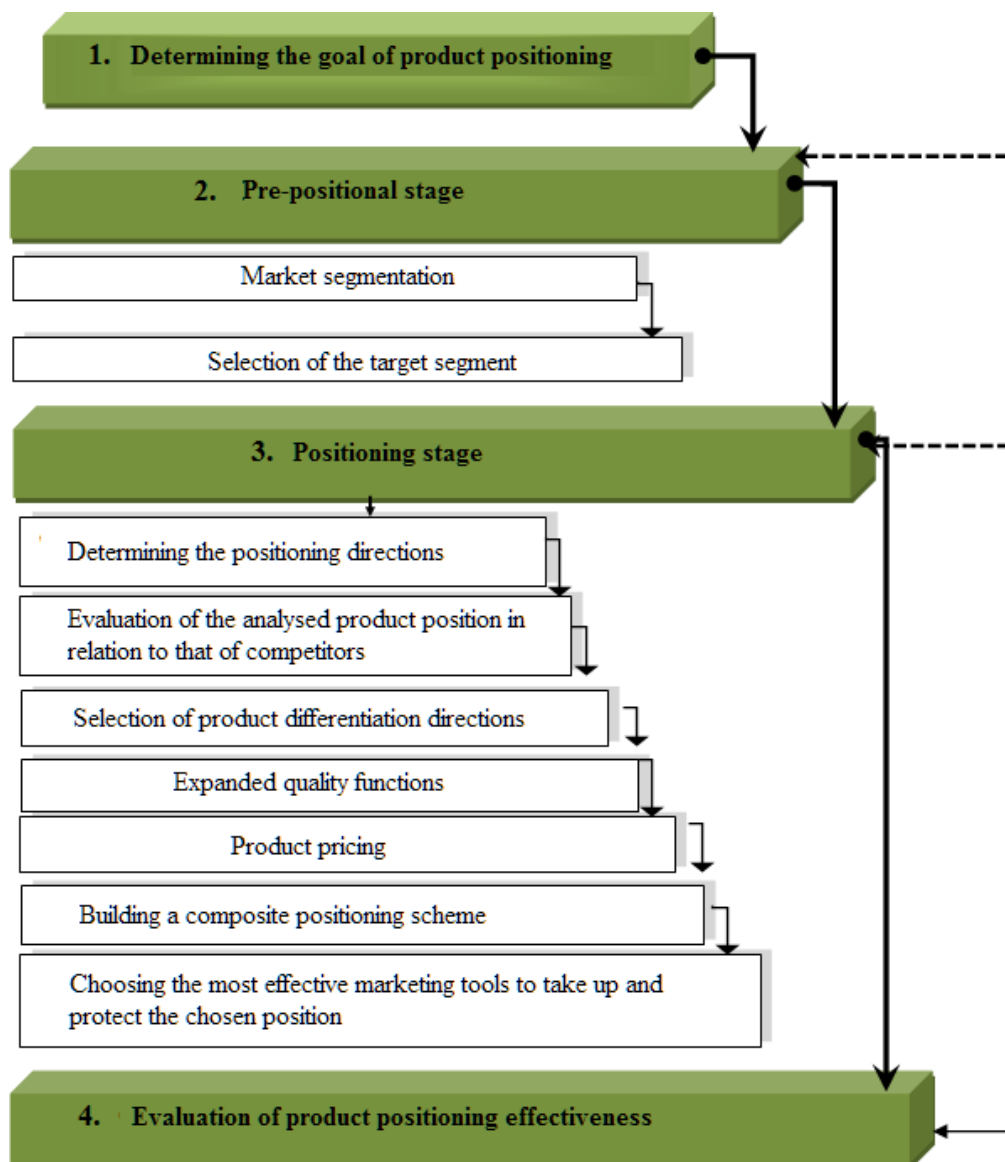


Fig. 1 Product positioning model based on a marketing approach.

Source: Developed by the author

A study on the positioning of the product on the market was carried out on the example of "Tomai-Vinex" JSC winery products.

At the first stage, the mission of the enterprise was established and the goals of product positioning were determined.

The company defines its mission as to produce a large assortment of wines for a wide range of consumers. The chosen mission entailed setting the main *goals of the enterprise that determine the positioning of the goods*:

- creation of a strong product position in the perception of consumers;
- determine the grounds for creating positions in target segments;
- form a high level of consumer awareness;
- profit by making fuller use of product positioning.

Stage II - "The pre-positioning stage accounts for market segmentation and selection of the target segment." At this stage, we conducted a marketing study of consumer preferences on the winemaking market in ATU Gagauzia, and identified target segments of the winemaking market:

1. By age. Target consumers were divided into the following age groups: 18-30 year olds, 31-45 year olds, 46-60 year olds and over 60.

2. By area of employment. Based on the research, it was revealed that the largest number came belongs to the group "Qualified specialist with higher education" - 20.8%, "Employee without higher education" - 14.8%, "Entrepreneur" with higher education - 11.7%.

3. By level of financial situation. It includes respondents with income below average - 37.5% and average - 32.0%. 17.0% of the respondents are people with low income. 14.0% of respondents have above average and high income.

4. By level of respondents' education. A high proportion of respondents are those with higher education - 43.0%.

As the survey showed, the most significant factors influencing the consumer's decision to buy wine products are price (38.5% of respondents), quality (29.0%), location of manufacture (10.0%), appearance (packaging, design) - 5.6%, fame, popularity - 9%, brand of wine products - 7.9%. (fig.2.)

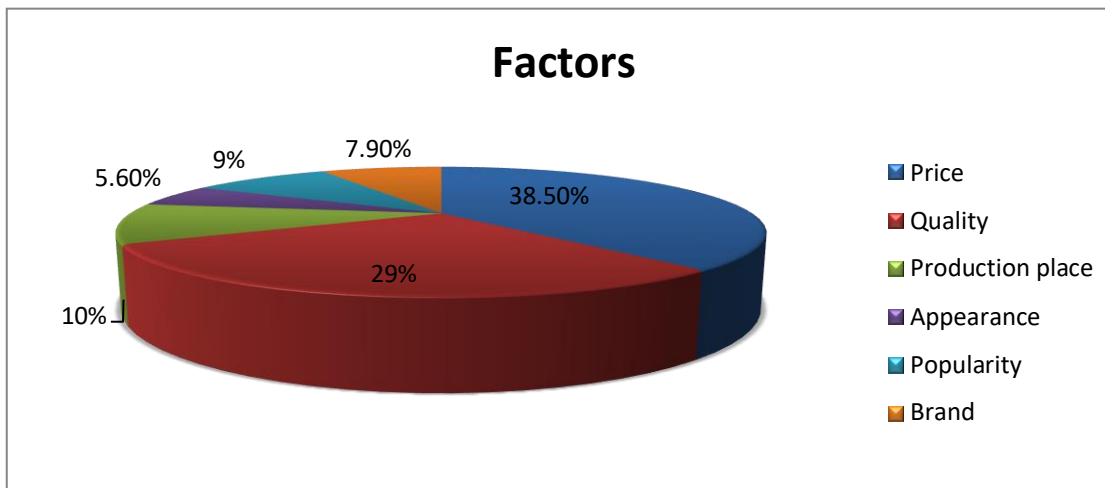


Fig.2. Factors influencing consumers' decision to buy wine in ATU Gagauzia, %

[Developed by the author on the basis of personal data]

At stage III - "Product positioning", an assessment of the validity of product positioning was given and its positioning directions on the market were determined. The possibilities of using the methodology for assessing the competitive positions of goods in the perception of consumers, and the choice of attributes of the position of goods in the market of wine products of ATU Gagauzia are shown.

Two main positioning directions were chosen:

- ✓ positioning by competitors;
- ✓ positioning in relation to price and quality.

To determine the position of the wine product, an analysis of the main competitors of the enterprise under study was carried out along with consumer research.

The strength of the product position takes into account the assessments of consumers, reflecting the factors that form their preferences (knowledge, attractiveness of the product, satisfaction, difference between the product and competitors' products). The definition of the indicator "the strength of the goods position " is based on the method proposed by the author for assessing the competitive positions of goods in the perception of consumers. The rating of wineries and the type of position they hold were determined based on the values of the indicator of the strength of the position of the goods,, which is reflected in Table 3.

The use of ways to increase the strength of a product's position involves the adoption of managerial decisions related to the need to strengthen and protect the created position, which is due to a change in the number of competitors, their desire to take a leading position, a change in the structure of consumer preferences, and the emergence of new consumers in the target segment.

Table 3. Types of enterprise positions on the winemaking market of ATU Gagauzia

| Competitors | IIPS | Rating | Position type |
|-----------------------|------|--------|-----------------------|
| SA «Tomai- Vinex» | 0,48 | 2 | Satisfactory position |
| SA «Vinuri de Comrat» | 0,51 | 1 | Satisfactory position |
| IM «Vinaria Bostovan» | 0,38 | 3 | Satisfactory position |
| SA «Ciok-Maidan-Vin» | 0,02 | 7 | Very weak position |
| SRL «Invinprom» | 0,12 | 5 | Weak position |
| SRL «Tartcomvin» | 0,12 | 5 | Weak position |
| SA «Kazaiak-Vin» | 0,14 | 4 | Слабая позиция |
| SRL «Şadrisvin» | 0,02 | 7 | Very weak position |
| SRL «Jemciujina» | 0,05 | 6 | Very weak position |

Source: Developed by the author.

As studies have shown, such an attribute as quality is of high importance for consumers in the purchase of products. Qualitative attributes are determined by physical and functional properties that together form the overall level of product quality. (Table 4)

It has been determined that the value of the group index of satisfaction with the quality attributes of the wine products of the researched enterprise Tomai-Vinex JSC is identical to that of the competitor Vinuri de Comrat JSC, which indicates that most consumers prefer high-quality wines.

Table 4. Calculation of the group index of satisfaction with the quality attributes of wine products of the enterprises in ATU Gagauzia

| Competitors | Individual taste satisfaction index | | Individual color saturation index | | Group Satisfaction Index | Rating |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|------|-----------------------------------|------|--------------------------|--------|
| | Value | W.Q. | Value | W.Q. | | |
| Tomai- Vinex JSC | 0,47 | 0,4 | 0,67 | 0,3 | 0,38 | 1 |
| Vinuri de Comrat JSC | 0,56 | 0,4 | 0,54 | 0,3 | 0,38 | 1 |
| Vinaria Bostovan ME | 0,39 | 0,4 | 0,44 | 0,3 | 0,28 | 2 |
| Ciok-Maidan-Vin JSC | 0,03 | 0,4 | 0,04 | 0,3 | 0,02 | 7 |
| Invinprom LTD | 0,15 | 0,4 | 0,13 | 0,3 | 0,1 | 5 |
| Tartcomvin LTD | 0,09 | 0,4 | 0,26 | 0,3 | 0,11 | 4 |
| Kazaiak-Vin JSC | 0,04 | 0,4 | 0,10 | 0,3 | 0,04 | 6 |
| Şadrisvin LTD | 0,03 | 0,4 | 0,05 | 0,3 | 0,02 | 7 |
| Jemciujina LTD | 0,20 | 0,4 | 0,30 | 0,3 | 0,17 | 3 |

Source: Developed by the author

The pricing strategy of an enterprise is directly dependent on its positioning strategy. Due to the fact that the sensitivity of buyers to price varies to a large extent, the pricing policy should be built in

strict accordance with the segmentation of buyers by price sensitivity. Consequently, it was established to what level it is possible to raise the price of a wine product of the enterprise under study in order to get the maximum profit from each unit of products sold, without reducing the number of consumers. Based on this, a positioning map was developed. (Fig.3)

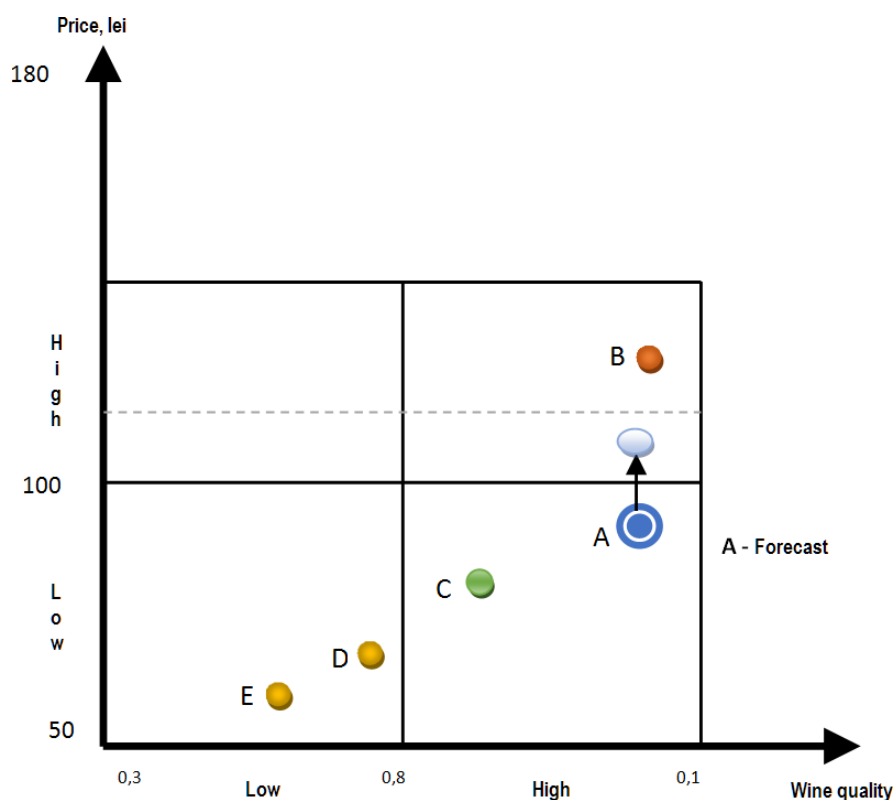


Fig. 3. Positioning map of Tomai-Vinex JSC products in terms of "price-quality" ratio.

Source: Developed by the author

As follows from Fig. 4, Vinuri de Comrat JSC products (**indicator B**) are in the "high quality-high price" zone, the price for a bottle of wine varying from 115 to 160 lei. Tomai-Vinex JSC products (**indicator A**) are in the zone "high quality - low price" - the most attractive for the wide mass of wine consumers (95 lei per bottle of wine). Therefore, while remaining in the same price zone, you need to set the price in such a way that you get the maximum possible profit. This is shown in fig. 3. as point "**A - forecast**", which should be raised to the average market level, that is, 105 lei per bottle of wine. **Indicators C-** (Vinaria Bostovan JV), **D** (Kazaiak-Vin JSC), **E** (Şadrisvin LTD) are competitors, according to consumers, whose quality and market attributes are lower than those of the enterprise under study.

It was revealed that the choice of any price from the indicated price range does not reduce the number of buyers for Tomai-Vinex JSC, since its products remain more in demand in terms of the "price/quality" criterion.

To use effectively the strategy of product positioning based on the best value (high quality product at a price lower than competitors), a new approach to pricing is needed. In this regard, we propose to use the value method of pricing. The essence of this method is that the value of a product is defined as the unity of the price (cost) and the consumer's subjective assessment of its qualitative characteristics (utility). The combinations "quality-price" most preferred by the buyer are identified, based on market research.

At the same time, the economic effect of sales, taking into account such indicators as the choice of the target function, selection of priority factors, analysis of the factors influence on the function target parameter can be represented as the following economic and mathematical model:

$$C=f(x_1,x_2,\dots\dots\dots x_n)\rightarrow\max, \quad (2)$$

Where C is the target function, and $x_{(1)}, x_{(2)}, \dots\dots\dots x_{(n)}$ - factors affecting the target function.

As a criterion for the optimality of the target function, you can take the profit from the sale of products, if denoting by:

X_1 - The production volume of a type of product. (Series "Tomai Tradition")

X_2 - The production volume of a type of product. (Series "Gagauz Wine")

X_3 - The production volume of a type of product. (Series "Muscat")

X_4 - The production volume of a type of product. (Series "Bugeac")

X_5 - The production volume of a type of product. (Series "1903").

P_i - The price for one ton of the i-th type of product.

C_i - The cost of production of the i-th type of product.

C- Fixed costs for all products.

Then the profit function will take the form of the following linear function.

$$\Pi=\sum_{i=1}^5 P_i X_i-\sum_{i=1}^5 C_i X_i-C\rightarrow\max, \quad (3)$$

Despite the increased sales volume, the company's profit has decreased; therefore, the company needs to look for ways to increase profits by minimizing production costs. However, as the target function shows, for some types of products, the costs, on the contrary, have increased. Analysing the profit received for each type of product, according to the range of products, it can be concluded that it is preferable to produce the following types of products - the Tomai Tradition series and the 1903 series.

The performed analysis allows us to consider that the product positioning strategy should become one of the promising development strategies for Tomai-Vinex JSC, for which it is

necessary to conduct market research, determine the target audience, determine the current position of the product on the market, and monitor product positioning indicators.

At the IV stage "Assessment of the effectiveness of product positioning", the evaluation results of the functioning of the "Product positioning model on the basis of marketing approach" are reflected.

During the performance evaluation at Tomai-Vinex JSC, it was found that:

- product positioning planning is not carried out due to the lack of appropriate methods and information base sufficient for decision-making;
- consumer marketing research is not carried out, competitor research is superficial and does not allow to form properly an idea of the market;
- no attention is paid to the selection and formation of distinctive features of goods in comparison with competitors' goods;
- the development of the marketing mix is not linked to the aspects of product positioning and its elements are not coordinated with each other;
- there is no consolidation of the functions necessary for the implementation of the positioning of goods;

Thus, the presence of shortcomings in the organization of goods positioning at Tomai-Vinex JSC and the insufficient degree of its effectiveness indicate the absence of a holistic approach to the implementation of positioning, which requires decisions to be made to eliminate them. This, in turn, will allow a comprehensive approach to the implementation of this type of activity and ensure the achievement of relevant goals.

For this you need:

- to assign to the marketing department the functions of planning and monitoring the results of positioning;
- to allocate authority between the marketing department and functional units, whose activities affect positioning results;
- to create a data accounting system in the field of positioning, which is a set of methods for collecting information and forms for displaying it in the enterprise documentation. The collected information should be displayed in the Market Research Report for Product Positioning, the Market Research Report for Monitoring Product Positioning Performance, and the Product Test Report.

To ensure effective product positioning, practical recommendations were developed for Tomai-Vinex JSC, including the following steps:

1) Preparing for positioning:

It involves determining the characteristics of the product market and segmenting consumers. To determine the characteristics of a product market, it is necessary to analyse the market based on data collected through marketing research, such as:

- analysis of competitor performance indicators (sales volume, market share, perceived product quality, prices, assortment, etc.);

- analysis of indicators that determine demand on the market (consumer requirements, their perception, consumer satisfaction and loyalty, age structure of buyers, purchasing power, etc.).

2) *Selection of product position attributes in the target segment.*

The content of this stage will make it possible to make a decision taking into account the competitive situation, as well as the expectations and requirements of the behaviour of target consumers.

3) *Development of a product positioning plan:*

The plan should reflect:

- results of segmentation of product consumers;
- assessment results of competitors' product positions and assessment of product compliance with consumer expectations;
- presentation of the product position, including a list of distinctive features of the product, a way to differentiate the product for the target segment;
- justification for the choice of basic and supporting distinctive features of the product. It consists in the choice of features according to the criteria: significance for consumers, use by competitors, strength of the competitors' goods positions;
- recommendations for improving the product to bring it into line with the expectations of target consumers.

4) *Monitoring of product positioning indicators.*

It is carried out after the position is created using the marketing mix. The main task of monitoring is to track the performance indicators of product positioning, which will allow timely identification of emerging problems, thereby ensuring the effectiveness of this type of activity.

The frequency of tracking these indicators, the sources of information for their calculation are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Product positioning performance indicators

| Positioning score | Methods of analysis and their characteristic | Source of information | Tracking Frequency |
|--|--|--|--------------------|
| Strength of product positions of competing enterprises | Comparison involves a juxtaposition of actually achieved indicators with the data of previous periods, as well as with the competitors' indicators. Analysis that allows you to determine the impact of changes in | Results of marketing research reflected in the report. | Annually |

| | | | |
|--|--|---|----------|
| | private indicators on the integral indicator of position product strength. | | |
| An indicator of the perceived product quality of competing enterprises | Comparison involves a juxtaposition of the actually achieved indicator with the data of past periods, as well as a comparison with competitor performance. | Results of marketing research reflected in the report. | Annually |
| Product market share | Comparison involves juxtaposition of the actually achieved indicator with the data of past periods. | Marketing research results, internal reporting of enterprises | Annually |

Source: [Developed by the author]

5) Development of solutions to increase the sustainability of consumer perception of the product.

If there is a strong position of the product, efforts are required to increase the sustainability of consumer perception and behaviour, the goal of which is to achieve a high level of loyalty.

6) Taking managerial decisions to strengthen the product position on the market.

The adoption of these managerial decisions makes it possible to ensure the achievement of positioning effectiveness, taking into account changes in the competitive situation on the market and consumer preferences. The characteristics of these solutions are presented in the Table 6.

Table 6. Characteristics of management decisions to strengthen the position of the product on the market

| Goal | Way to achieve the goal | Instruments | Subjects |
|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| High level of consumer awareness | - formation of goods awareness with new consumers; - consolidation of awareness of the product among existing consumers. | Marketing communications | Marketing Service |
| High level of customer satisfaction | - provision and raise of product quality; - formation of acceptable prices for consumers; - product differentiation; - ensurance that the product matches the created position in | Product quality, price, product features, perceived value of the product | Marketing service, functional services |

| | | | |
|---|--|--------------------|-------------------|
| | the perception of consumers. | | |
| Image that provides a strong product position | - creation of associations with the product; | Product Attributes | Marketing Service |

Source :[Developed by the author]

Based on the mentioned above, in order for the position of Tomai-Vinex JSC wine products to *become stronger, it is necessary*:

- a) to increase consumer awareness by transferring awareness of wine products attributes, as well as by transferring awareness of the points of sale of the company's products;
- b) to increase satisfaction through the implementation of the proposed recommendations, based on the results of assessment of wine products compliance with consumer expectations;
- c) to increase the degree of product differentiation through the implementation of measures to consolidate distinctive features (packaging, image).

The implementation of the proposed recommendations for improving product positioning and increasing its effectiveness at Tomai-Vinex JSC will increase sales of the company's wine products.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The performed studies of the process of product positioning on the market in order to increase competitive advantage, the analysis of the factors that determine the position of wine products, as well as the assessment of product position, make it possible to draw a number of **conclusions** that explain the marketing approach to the issue of product positioning on the market:

1. The conducted studies of the essence of the definition of "product positioning" made it possible to distinguish two approaches:

- in the first one, the positions of goods are formed taking into account how consumers perceive them;

- in the second one, the positions of goods are determined taking into account the goods of competitors in relation to their competitive advantages.

2. Despite the existing scientific potential, the following problems in using the concept of product positioning stand out:

- the presence of conflicting judgments about the essence of positioning;
- insufficient accuracy and specification of algorithms for making decisions on positioning;
- the procedure for selecting the attributes of a product position is not sufficiently substantiated and developed in the existing positioning methods;
- insufficient attention is paid to taking into account factors that affect the effectiveness of positioning;
- there is no approach to assess the position of goods in the perception of consumers.

This predetermined the need to identify the place of positioning in the marketing management system, taking into account an integrated approach, as well as the development of methodological support and a mechanism for product positioning.

3. One of the main marketing management tools in an enterprise is product positioning on the market. The positioning process, along with marketing management tools such as market opportunity research and market segmentation, is the basis for developing an enterprise's marketing strategy.

4. Product positioning is the efforts of an enterprise to ensure its leading position, determine its position in relation to competitors, form a special image among consumers, an image that distinguishes it from other competitors, taking into account the advantages and characteristics of the enterprise, due to the presence and efficiency of the use of product consumer properties.

5. Positioning influences the efficiency of the enterprise through the formation of consumer preferences, which is reflected in the growth of sales volumes, increase in market share, improvement of the competitive position of goods on the market. These reasons determine the importance of product positioning and the need for enterprises to implement it;

6. To achieve the goals of product positioning, it is important to use positioning tools at enterprises as part of methodological support. Perception formation tools (product position, product attributes) are used to make decisions on the impact on consumer perception, their preferences, as well as to improve the product. Organizational tools (positioning plan, management decisions to protect and strengthen position strength) are used to coordinate the actions of decision makers, which will ensure the effectiveness of product positioning.

7. The methodology for assessing the competitive positions of goods is an analytical tool that allows you to assess the degree of achievement of the positioning goal, identify the reasons for the deterioration in the position of the goods, and form the basis for making decisions on the impact on consumer preferences. The methodology is based on the calculation of IIPS (Integral indicator of position strength) as the sum of weighted consumer ratings that reflect the factors in the formation of a strong position of the product, and identifies the main competitors according to the criterion of the position strength, and also allows you to evaluate the effectiveness of positioning this enterprise.

8. In the process of marketing research, the respondents indicated the following factors that influence their decision to purchase wine products: price, quality, location of production, popularity of wine, appearance (packaging).

Studies show that the buyer justifies the choice of goods based on the assessment of three main groups of indicators: quality, price and marketing components of the product.

9. On the basis of the study, including the SWOT analysis, strategic marketing decisions for Tomai-Vinex JSC were substantiated, providing for the intensification of marketing efforts, product differentiation, and focus on the average price level along with the quality of goods, the formation and consolidation of the company's image on domestic and foreign markets.

10. Analysing the prospects for the development of the commodity structure of Tomai-Vinex JSC and strengthening its position on the market, it can be assumed that in the coming years the volume of wine production should be ensured with changes in marketing factors.

11. The conducted research confirmed the importance of marketing in ensuring the success of a business, given its impact on the competitiveness of a wine-making enterprise. It is proposed to consider the positioning marketing strategy as a source of ensuring and developing the competitiveness of an enterprise, since this strategy predetermines the results of the economic activity of an enterprise as a whole.

12. On the example of the enterprise under study, an assessment of the effectiveness of positioning wine products was carried out, as a result of which, it was revealed that Tomai-Vinex JSC differs slightly from competitors in terms of indicators: perceived quality and price. However, the values of these indicators indicate difficulties with product positioning, which requires identifying the causes of the current situation and developing appropriate recommendations.

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are offered:

1. We propose to consider the formulations of the concept of “product positioning on the market” given in scientific materials on the basis of: design, psychological and integrated approaches. At the same time, take into account to a higher extent the features of this concept, and an integrated approach to the definition of positioning, which considers positioning as the formation of goods for a certain group of consumers.

2. It is proposed to consider positioning as a process of determining the position of a product on the market, taking into account the requirements of the target segments and the capabilities of the enterprise (within the framework of the marketing approach).

3. All methods for assessing the position of a product on the market can be systematized into groups: a graphical, psychological and marketing approach to assess the position of a product on the market. In fact, for any product under consideration, it is necessary to apply the method of assessing the position that would take into account the characteristics of the corresponding product market.

4. Using a marketing approach to product positioning on the market, a model was developed based on theoretical research and practical analysis of wine industry enterprises. The product positioning model based on the marketing approach is considered on the example of wine products positioning for the purpose of implementing it at the enterprise under study.

5. A method for selecting the attributes of a product position is recommended, based on an assessment of the product's compliance with the expectations of target consumers and a selection procedure according to the following criteria: significance for consumers, use of positioning attributes by competitors, strength of competitors' positions. This technique allows you to justify the choice of product position, identify the reasons for the decrease in consumer satisfaction, and can also be used in making decisions to improve the quality of wine products. Its approbation on the example of Tomai-Vinex JSC products made it possible to determine the most significant attributes for consumers and, taking into account the attributes used by competitors, to develop solutions for adjusting the position in order to strengthen it.

6. A methodology for assessing the competitive positions of goods in the perception of consumers is proposed, on the basis of which, it is recommended calculating an integral indicator that determines the strength of the position occupied by a particular product in the perception of consumers. The approbation of the methodology of competitive positions on the example of wine products made it possible to identify competitors, assess the strength of their products positions, taking into account the perception of consumers, and determine the reasons for the weakening of their position.

7. To ensure effective positioning of the product on the market, practical recommendations were proposed, including: preparation for positioning; selection of product position attributes in the target segment; development of a product positioning plan; monitoring of indicators of product positioning; development of measures to increase the sustainability of consumer perception of the product and making management decisions to strengthen the position of the product in the market.

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1.1. în reviste din Registrul Național al revistelor de profil (cu indicarea categoriei)

1. Aricova L. *Marketing strategies specific to product positioning on the market.*

In: Revista «*Economica*», Nr.2(108), 2019, pp. 44-52, 0,34 c.a ISSN 1810-9136.

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0,4 с.а ISBN 978-9975-155-54-0

Disponibil: https://ase.md/files/publicatii/epub/conf_08.21.pdf

ANNOTATION

Name, surname: ARICOVA Liubov. Dissertation topic: “Marketing substantiation of the strategic positioning of a product on the market (the example of wineries in ATU Gagauzia)”, Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Economics, specialty 521.04. – Marketing and logistics, Chisinau, 2021

Structure of the dissertation: The dissertation is written in Russian language and has a classical structure: introduction, three chapters, conclusions and recommendations, bibliography – 142 sources, 10 appendices. The main content of the work is presented on 120 pages, including 27 tables, 14 figures, 18 formulas. The results of the dissertation were published in 8 scientific papers with a total volume of 3.02 bp.

Key words: marketing, strategy, positioning, segmentation, competitiveness.

Purpose of the study is to develop and scientifically substantiate the marketing approach to positioning the products of a wine-making enterprise, develop a positioning strategy and achieve a competitive advantage on the market.

Objectives of the research: to outline the essence of the concepts of the problem of “product positioning on the market”; to assess the methods of classification of the position of the products on the market; to substantiate main factors affecting the market position of the product; to develop a methodology for the formation of a positioning strategy at the enterprise; to develop a positioning model based on a marketing approach, allowing to increase the efficiency of the enterprises of the wine-making sector of ATU Gagauzia of the Republic of Moldova; to formulate conclusions and recommendations for the further implementation of the developed model for enterprises.

Scientific novelty and originality of the study lies in the conceptual justification of scientific methodological and practical recommendations for the formation and application of product positioning strategy in the marketing approach, focused on achieving long-term high efficiency and competitiveness of the product.

The **results obtained for solving an important scientific issue** lies in the development of the theoretical grounds of the concept of positioning of the products and the development of methodological approaches to its implementation at the enterprise.

Theoretical significance of the work lies in the use of logical approaches to defining the basic concepts of positioning, the principles of situational, systems analysis and marketing research, the SWOT analysis methodology, instructional guidelines for developing a positioning strategy in the enterprise.

Practical value of the work lies in solving main issues associated with increasing the competitive advantage of the wine-making enterprises on the basis of product positioning in the market.

Implementation of scientific results: The research results were presented at 5 international and domestic conferences and confirmed by 2 acts of practical application both in the real economy and in the academic field.

ADNOTARE

**ARICOVA Liubov. „Fundamentarea de marketing în poziționarea strategia a produselor pe piață” (în baza întreprinderilor de vinificație din UTA Gagauzia), teza de doctor în științe economice.
Specialitatea 521.04 – Marketing și logistică,
Chișinău, 2022**

Structura tezei: Teza de doctor este elaborată în limba rusă și are o structură clasică: introducere, trei capitole, concluzii generale și recomandări, bibliografie din 142 de surse și 10 anexe. Conținutul principal al lucrării este expus pe 120 de pagini, inclusiv 27 de tabele, 14 figuri și 18 formule. Rezultatele tezei sunt publicate în 8 lucrări științifice cu un volum total de 3,02 c.a.

Cuvintele-cheie: marketing, strategie, poziționare, segmentare, competitivitate.

Scopul cercetării constă în elaborarea și argumentarea științifică și practică a abordării de marketing față de poziționarea produsului întreprinderii vinicole, elaborarea strategiei de poziționare și atingerea avantajului competitiv pe piață.

Obiectivele cercetării: identificarea sensului noțiunii cercetate „poziționarea produsului pe piață”; evaluarea metodelor clasificării poziției produsului pe piață; argumentarea factorilor principali care influențează poziția produsului pe piață; elaborarea metodologiei de formare a strategiei de poziționare a produsului la întreprindere; elaborarea modelului de poziționare bazat pe abordarea de marketing, care să permită sporirea eficacității activității întreprinderilor din sectorul vinicol al UTA Găgăuzia, Republica Moldova; formularea concluziilor generale și recomandărilor pentru implementarea ulterioară a modelului elaborat pentru întreprinderi.

Noutatea și originalitatea științifică a studiului rezidă în justificarea conceptuală a recomandărilor științifice, metodologice și practice privind formarea și aplicarea strategiei de poziționare a produsului în cadrul abordării de marketing, axată pe obținerea eficienței și competitivității sporite a produsului pe termen lung.

Rezultatele obținute pentru soluționarea problemei științifice importante sunt: dezvoltarea bazei teoretice a concepției de poziționare a produsului și elaborarea abordărilor metodologice față de realizarea acestuia la întreprindere.

Importanța teoretică a lucrării rezidă în utilizarea abordărilor logice față de determinarea conceptelor de bază ale poziționării, principiilor de analiză sistemică, situațională și cercetării de marketing, a metodologiei analizei SWOT, a recomandărilor metodologice pentru elaborarea strategiei de poziționare la întreprindere.

Valoarea practică a lucrării consistă în soluționarea sarcinilor principale legate de creșterea avantajului competitiv al întreprinderilor vinicole pe baza poziționării produsului pe piață.

Aprobarea rezultatelor științifice. Rezultatele cercetării au fost prezentate la 5 conferințe naționale și internaționale și au fost confirmate de 2 documente cu privire la aplicarea practică atât în economia reală, cât și în domeniul academic.

АННОТАЦИЯ

Имя, фамилия: АРИКОВА Любовь. **Тема диссертации:** «Маркетинговое обоснование стратегического позиционирования продукта на рынке (на примере винодельческих предприятий АТО Гагаузия)», диссертация на соискание ученой степени доктора экономических наук, специальность 521.04. -Маркетинг и логистика, Кишинев, 2021

Структура диссертации: Диссертационная работа написана на русском языке, имеет классическую структуру: введение, три главы, выводы и рекомендации, библиография -142 источника, 10 приложений. Основное содержание работы изложено на 120 страницах, включая 27 таблиц, 14 рисунков, 18 формул. Результаты диссертации опубликованы в 8 научных работах общим объемом 3,02 печатных листов.

Ключевые слова: маркетинг, стратегия, позиционирование, сегментирование, конкурентоспособность.

Целью исследования является разработка и научно-практическое обоснование маркетингового подхода к позиционированию продукции винодельческого предприятия, разработка стратегии позиционирования и достижения конкурентного преимущества на рынке.

Задачи исследования: обозначить суть понятий проблемы «позиционирование продукта на рынке»; дать оценку методам классификации позиции товара на рынке; обосновать основные факторы, оказывающие влияние на рыночную позицию товара; разработать методологию формирования стратегии позиционирования на предприятии; разработать модель позиционирования на основе маркетингового подхода, позволяющую повысить эффективность деятельности предприятий винодельческого сектора АТО Гагаузия Республики Молдова; сформулировать выводы и рекомендации для дальнейшего внедрения разработанной модели для предприятий.

Научная новизна и оригинальность исследования заключается в концептуальном обосновании научно-методических и практических рекомендаций по формированию и применению стратегии позиционирования продукта в рамках маркетингового подхода, ориентированной на достижение долгосрочной высокой эффективности и конкурентоспособности продукта.

Полученные результаты для решения важной научной проблемы заключается в развитии теоретических основ концепции позиционирования товаров и разработке методических подходов к ее реализации на предприятии.

Теоретическая значимость работы заключается в использовании логических подходов к определению базовых понятий позиционирования, принципы ситуационного, системного анализа и маркетингового исследования, методология SWOT-анализа, методические рекомендации по разработке стратегии позиционирования на предприятии.

Практическая ценность работы заключается в решении основных задач связанных с повышением конкурентного преимущества винодельческих предприятий на базе позиционирования продукта на рынке.

Внедрение научных результатов: Результаты исследования были представлены на 5 международных и национальных конференциях и подтверждены 2 актами о практическом применении, как в реальной экономике, так и в академической сфере.

ARICOVA LIUBOV

**MARKETING SUBSTANTIATION OF THE STRATEGIC
POSITIONING OF A PRODUCT ON THE MARKET
(the example of wineries in ATU Gagauzia)**

SPECIALTY 521.04 - MARKETING AND LOGISTICS

Summary of doctoral thesis in economic sciences

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