

## EXPLORING MARKET OPPORTUNITIES: THE ROLE OF SEGMENTATION IN INCREASING SALES IN THE FOOD AND BEVERAGE INDUSTRY

**Gunawan Gunawan**

STIE Amkop Makassar

E-mail: [fadelgun@stieamkop.ac.id](mailto:fadelgun@stieamkop.ac.id)

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This study aims to understand the role of market segmentation in increasing sales of food and beverage products through a qualitative approach. In an increasingly competitive business environment, a deep understanding of consumer characteristics is key to designing effective marketing strategies. The research method used is qualitative with a descriptive approach, where data were collected through in-depth interviews with business actors in the food and beverage sector as well as direct observation of the marketing strategies implemented. The results show that market segmentation in the food and beverage industry is crucial for understanding differences in consumer tastes and needs. By segmenting the market based on demographics, taste preferences, lifestyle, and health aspects, companies can create more suitable products and effective marketing strategies. This approach helps improve consumer satisfaction and loyalty, opens opportunities for product innovation, and reaches new market segments, thus supporting sustainable business growth and company competitiveness.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the midst of many consumers with diverse needs and desires, business actors face a major challenge in identifying who their actual target customers are. Finding the right customers can be likened to searching for a needle in a haystack (Sangadji & Sopiah, 2014). However, this is where market segmentation becomes important. Market segmentation is the process of dividing the market into smaller groups based on certain similarities, such as age, lifestyle, interests, or needs. With this approach, businesses no longer have to guess but can focus more on understanding who truly needs their products or services (Dewi et al., 2022).

Through a deep understanding of the characteristics of each market segment, business actors can develop more targeted and relevant marketing strategies. Moreover, the products or services offered can be specifically tailored to meet the unique needs of each consumer group (Siagan & Cahyono, 2021). As a result, the relationship between business and customers becomes stronger because consumers feel understood and personally served. This approach not only increases customer satisfaction and loyalty but also opens up greater business growth opportunities amidst fierce market competition (Manggu & Beni, 2021).

One strategic approach to managing market diversity is segmentation. Market segmentation is the process of grouping consumers into clusters with similar characteristics, such as demographics, behavior, or lifestyle (Mulyana, 2019). Through segmentation, business actors can craft messages, products, and services that are more targeted to increase appeal and consumer loyalty toward the offered food and beverage products. Market segmentation involves dividing a broad market into several consumer groups with similar characteristics, needs, or preferences. It enables businesses to understand their target market in more detail, making market analysis more effective (Putri et al., 2019).

By conducting market segmentation, companies have the ability to design marketing strategies and product offerings that are more relevant and tailored to the specific needs of each consumer group (Mujahidin & Khoirianingrum, 2019). For example, in the clothing retail industry, segmentation based on age groups allows retailers to target young customers with trendier and more dynamic styles, while older customers may be offered collections with more classic and elegant designs (Noer, 2022). Such targeted approaches not only increase customer satisfaction because their needs and preferences are

understood but also help companies allocate resources more efficiently, whether in promotion, product development, or distribution (Prasetyo et al., 2017).

The food and beverage industry indeed has very large growth potential, especially due to the continuously changing consumption patterns in society along with the development of the times. Lifestyle changes, such as increasing daily busyness and awareness of healthy eating patterns, have created new demands that must be promptly captured by business actors (Irayanri & Tumbel, 2014). In addition, population growth and easy access to information make consumers more selective in choosing products that align with their personal values and needs. In this situation, a deep understanding of consumers becomes crucial. Companies not only have to sell products but also must be able to deliver value and experiences that meet consumer expectations (Rianisari et al., 2018). Therefore, marketing strategies based on a comprehensive understanding of market segmentation become increasingly important in facing intense competition.

Market segmentation in the context of food and beverages helps companies identify specific preferences of each consumer group, so the products offered are more relevant and appealing (Ervianty, 2019). For example, today's younger generation tends to like practical, trendy foods or drinks with high aesthetic value to share on social media. Meanwhile, adult consumer groups pay more attention to nutritional content, health benefits, and the quality of raw materials. These preference differences demonstrate the importance of segmentation in developing marketing strategies, from product development, distribution channel selection, to promotion message formulation (Zebua et al., 2022). When sales strategies are adjusted to the needs and desires of each segment, companies not only increase sales opportunities but also build long-term relationships with consumers who feel more appreciated and understood.

However, in practice, many business actors have not fully utilized the potential of market segmentation optimally. They tend to use general and traditional marketing approaches without conducting in-depth mapping of consumer behavior changes that continuously evolve over time (Mulyana, 2019). The inability to recognize shifts in preferences, lifestyles, and specific needs of various consumer groups can result in products or services offered becoming less relevant. Consequently, there is a mismatch between what the business offers and what the market truly desires (Suprina et al., 2021). This not only impacts low consumer interest in the products but also causes decreased sales, weakened customer loyalty, and reduced business competitiveness amid increasingly fierce competition in the food and beverage industry.

This study aims to identify and analyze how market segmentation is applied by food and beverage business actors to increase sales, as well as to understand how well business actors can adjust their marketing strategies according to the characteristics and needs of each consumer segment. Theoretically, this research is expected to enrich marketing science, especially related to market segmentation strategies in the food and beverage industry. Practically, the research results can provide insights and guidance for business actors in formulating more targeted marketing strategies. Furthermore, socially, effective segmentation application will provide greater satisfaction to consumers because the products offered match their preferences, ultimately encouraging customer loyalty and increasing business competitiveness in a competitive market.

## 2. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method to gain an in-depth understanding of how market segmentation is applied by food and beverage business actors to increase sales. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with several business actors in the food and beverage sector, particularly MSMEs, who were purposively selected based on specific criteria such as business experience, product diversity, and the market segmentation applied (Sugiyono, 2016). In addition, data were also obtained through direct field observations and documentation of marketing activities carried out by the business actors. Data analysis was conducted interactively through stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. This study aims to capture the reality and

actual practice of market segmentation from the perspective of business actors, as well as to describe its impact on sales strategies and overall business success..

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Segmentation is a crucial step that cannot be overlooked because every consumer has different needs, preferences, and behaviors. Incorrectly determining market segments can cause marketing strategies to be ineffective, which ultimately hinders business growth and reduces profit potential (Burhan, 2020). Therefore, a deep understanding of consumer needs differences must be the main guideline in designing products, setting prices, and developing targeted promotional strategies. Essentially, consumers want products or services that not only fulfill their needs but are also offered at competitive prices and aligned with the value they expect (Zusrony, 2021). By accurately identifying market segments, business actors can allocate resources more efficiently, increase customer satisfaction, and create sustainable business growth opportunities.

For market segmentation to produce optimal results, it must meet three main criteria: measurable, accessible, and profitable. Measurable segmentation allows business actors to know the market potential in each segment, whether by the number of consumers, purchasing power, or other demographic and psychographic characteristics. Next, segmentation must be accessible, meaning the market segment can be effectively reached through appropriate distribution and communication channels. Without adequate access, marketing strategies will not reach the intended target. Finally, the chosen segment must also be profitable, capable of providing reasonable profits for the business. Not all large or easily reachable segments guarantee profits, so it is important for business actors to select segments that are not only potential but also aligned with the company's capabilities and long-term goals.

The following are several stages you must go through to produce effective market segmentation:

#### 1. Conducting Research

The first and most important step in market segmentation is conducting thorough target market research. This research aims to clearly identify which consumers will be included in one segment based on similar characteristics. Without thorough research, market segmentation will be assumptive and carries a high risk of resulting in misguided strategies. Business actors need to understand consumer behavior, habits, interests, and needs to logically and relevantly group them. This process can be done through surveys, interviews, observations, or analysis of historical sales data and consumer interactions.

It is also important to note that not all individuals can be grouped into one segment simply because they share the same geographical environment. For example, women and men often have different needs, lifestyles, and purchasing considerations, so grouping them in one segment can make marketing strategies less effective. The same applies to differences in age, profession, or income level. Students tend to seek economical and functional products, while workers may prioritize quality and comfort. By understanding these differences, business actors can create marketing messages that are more personal, relevant, and able to create strong appeal in each targeted segment.

#### 2. Identifying the Target Market

After conducting thorough target market research, the next important step is to identify and determine the target market to focus on. At this stage, business actors need to decide whether to target new consumers to expand market reach or focus on existing customers to increase loyalty and repeat orders. This decision is crucial as it will influence the direction of marketing strategies implemented. Targeting new customers requires a different approach compared to retaining existing customers, in terms of messaging, communication channels, and promotional forms used.

Once the target market is determined, the next step is to understand the needs and desires of that segment. This can be done by establishing active and ongoing communication with consumers, for example, through social media, satisfaction surveys, product reviews, or other interactive activities. Direct interaction helps business actors capture aspirations, complaints, and consumer expectations more accurately. By deeply understanding their interests and demands, companies can create more relevant and suitable products or services, thereby increasing the likelihood of purchase and long-term customer loyalty.

To ensure accurate segmentation, business actors also need to set specific criteria in determining the target market. These criteria can be based on variables such as demographics (age, gender, income), geography (residence location or marketing area), psychographics (lifestyle, interests, values), and behavior (consumption habits, loyalty levels, purchase frequency). Using clear and consistent criteria will facilitate the process of preparing focused and effective marketing strategies. In addition, adjusting strategies based on the characteristics of each segment allows companies to be more responsive to market dynamics and changing consumer trends.

### 3. Data Analysis

After all data about the target market has been collected, the next equally important step is to process and analyze the data systematically. This analysis aims to extract in-depth information that can serve as the basis for designing precise and effective marketing strategies. By understanding the patterns, preferences, and needs of each segment, companies can avoid generalized or one-size-fits-all marketing approaches. Analyzed data will help formulate the uniqueness of each segment, so companies can create relevant promotional messages, appropriate products, and determine optimal distribution channels.

One approach that can be used in the analysis process is the SWOT model (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) for each market segment. This model allows business actors to identify strengths to maximize, weaknesses to improve, opportunities to exploit, and threats to anticipate. By applying SWOT analysis, companies can tailor promotion and marketing strategies according to the real market conditions faced by each segment. The resulting strategies become more targeted, adaptive to challenges, and have a greater chance of success in attracting and retaining consumers in an increasingly competitive market.

### 4. Conducting Evaluation

Although marketing strategies have been designed and implemented based on thorough segmentation, the evaluation process remains an essential step that must not be overlooked. Evaluation is conducted to assess the extent to which the implemented strategies successfully reach and fulfill the needs of each market segment. This includes measuring the effectiveness of promotional campaigns, consumer satisfaction levels, and the impact on sales growth. By conducting regular evaluations, business actors can determine whether the targeted market segments are truly appropriate and delivering the expected results, or if adjustments are needed.

Furthermore, evaluation helps detect changes in market dynamics that may occur, such as shifts in consumer preferences, the emergence of new competitors, or changing consumption trends. Thus, the evaluation results become the basis for making continuous strategy adjustments to remain relevant and competitive. Proper evaluation also ensures that market segmentation is not just theoretical but truly used as a tool to guide more strategic, efficient, and data-driven business decisions. This enables the business to continue developing and maintaining its advantage amid intense competition.

The benefits of segmenting target consumers according to their characteristics are significant, both in the short term and long term. Here are some benefits of market segmentation in business:

#### a. Business owners gain a better competitive position

By conducting accurate market segmentation, business owners can group consumers based on similar behaviors, preferences, and needs. This grouping allows businesses to develop more personalized and relevant strategies for each group, making marketing messages easier to understand and accept by the target audience. Strategies aimed at specific groups also prevent wasting resources because communication and promotion are focused on those who genuinely need the product or service offered.

Moreover, market segmentation enables businesses to be more adaptive to changing trends and market dynamics. When a company clearly understands each segment's characteristics, it can monitor shifts in preferences or needs more specifically. This provides an advantage in innovating and responding faster than competitors who still use a general market approach. Thus, market segmentation is not only a tool to understand consumers but also a vital foundation for maintaining business sustainability and competitiveness amid fierce industry rivalry.

- b. Business owners can allocate their budget more precisely across various market segments

Market segmentation allows companies to identify consumer groups with high purchasing power, strong loyalty, or unmet needs that competitors have not fully addressed. With this information, companies can prioritize marketing efforts on segments that promise higher profit potential. This focus not only increases sales opportunities but also strengthens the brand's position in the eyes of consumers who feel their needs are specifically served. Instead of trying to reach everyone, companies become more strategic in deciding whom to target first and how to reach them effectively.

Additionally, more focused budget allocation on profitable segments helps improve operational efficiency. Promotion, distribution, and product development costs can be adjusted to be more targeted and avoid being wasted on less promising markets. This directly impacts Return on Investment (ROI) by utilizing resources for activities that have a real effect on business growth. This strategy also helps companies build long-term relationships with their core customers, creating brand loyalty and opening opportunities to expand into new market segments aligned with the company's existing strengths.

- c. Business owners can tailor products or services offered to match market demands

Through market segmentation, companies can design products or services that truly reflect the expectations and needs of specific consumer groups. This includes adjustments in various aspects, such as product features, packaging design, pricing strategies, and distribution channels. When products are tailored to the characteristics and lifestyles of the targeted segment, consumers feel more valued and appreciated. This creates an emotional closeness to the brand, which in turn increases the likelihood of repeat purchases and product recommendations.

For example, for the millennial segment that prioritizes practicality and aesthetics, companies can offer food and beverages in attractive, portable, and social media-friendly packaging. Meanwhile, for adult or elderly segments, emphasis can be placed on nutritional information, natural ingredients, and health benefits. With this strategy, companies not only meet consumer expectations more specifically but also build a strong and credible brand image across different segments. Consistent customization of each segment's uniqueness ultimately fosters long-term loyalty, which is an important asset for business sustainability.

- d. Business owners can identify market opportunities that show potential for new product development

By deeply understanding various market segments, business actors can identify unmet consumer needs and desires that existing products or services have not fulfilled. These gaps become strategic opportunities for companies to develop new innovations that are more relevant to the preferences of certain segments. For example, if there is a consumer segment that desires healthy food made from natural ingredients but such products are scarce in the market, the company can design special products to meet that need. Thus, market segmentation functions not only as a marketing tool but also as a source of inspiration for innovative and targeted product development.

Furthermore, creating new products based on market segmentation results increases the likelihood of product acceptance by consumers. Because the products are designed to meet the expectations and specific needs of certain segments, the risk of market failure is minimized. Innovations born from segmentation understanding also strengthen business positions amid increasingly fierce competition, as companies do not only compete with existing products but also open new markets with unique and differentiated offerings. Therefore, market segmentation is a crucial foundation for driving sustainable business growth through relevant and adaptive innovation.

- e. Business owners can identify new potential consumers

Market segmentation not only helps companies understand their primary target consumers but also allows them to recognize potential consumer groups that have not yet been tapped. By studying the characteristics, needs, and behaviors of consumers outside the core segments, businesses can discover new opportunities that may have been overlooked. For instance, a product previously focused on a certain age segment can be developed or promoted differently to attract another age group with similar needs but not yet reached. This approach opens doors for companies to strategically expand their customer base.



Expanding market reach by targeting potential segments is also crucial for long-term business growth. In a dynamic and competitive market environment, relying on only one market segment is risky if trends change or interest declines in that segment. With effective segmentation strategies, companies can be more flexible and adaptive in responding to market changes and maintaining business sustainability. Identifying and developing new segments helps create additional revenue sources and strengthens the company's position to remain competitive for a longer period.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Dalam konteks industri makanan dan minuman, segmentasi pasar menjadi kunci utama untuk memahami keberagaman selera dan kebutuhan konsumen yang terus berubah. Dengan membagi pasar berdasarkan karakteristik demografis, preferensi rasa, gaya hidup, dan aspek kesehatan, pelaku usaha dapat merancang produk yang lebih relevan dan strategi pemasaran yang tepat sasaran. Hal ini membantu meningkatkan kepuasan konsumen serta memperkuat loyalitas terhadap merek di tengah persaingan yang semakin ketat. Segmentasi juga membuka peluang bagi inovasi produk dalam industri makanan dan minuman, seperti pengembangan varian baru yang sesuai dengan tren kesehatan, kemudahan konsumsi, atau nilai estetika yang diminati segmen tertentu. Dengan pendekatan ini, perusahaan tidak hanya mampu mempertahankan produk yang sudah ada, tetapi juga terus beradaptasi dan memenuhi kebutuhan konsumen yang berbeda-beda, sehingga memperluas pangsa pasar dan meningkatkan penjualan. Selain itu, segmentasi pasar memungkinkan pelaku usaha untuk mengidentifikasi dan menjangkau segmen konsumen potensial yang selama ini belum tersentuh, sehingga memperluas cakupan pasar dan memastikan pertumbuhan bisnis yang berkelanjutan. Dengan strategi segmentasi yang tepat, industri makanan dan minuman dapat lebih responsif terhadap perubahan perilaku konsumen dan dinamika pasar, menjadikan bisnis lebih adaptif dan kompetitif dalam jangka panjang.

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