

**EFFECTIVE POSITIONING STRATEGIES
IN THE NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE INDUSTRY IN CHINA:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS
OF TWO MULTINATIONAL BEVERAGE COMPANIES**

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China owns the second-largest non-alcoholic beverage industry in the world, with potential growth forecasting for the coming years. The market size of the sector was USD 158.3 billion in 2023. Therefore, it shows significant changes in customer behaviors and the requirement of market strategies to sustain the market and gain a competitive advantage. The primary aim of this study was to compare and contrast the key positioning strategies of two multinational beverage companies, especially those that align with the 7Ps marketing mix. The chosen approach of the research design was a positivist one, where a deductive method was followed. The data were collected from secondary sources, and comparative analysis derived the main findings from a descriptive summary and thematic analysis. There is a lot of research on the marketing strategies of both companies. Still, several considerable gaps remain in the academic literature that address the effectiveness of the 7Ps marketing mix in the Chinese non-alcoholic beverage industry. The product portfolio of the first company is mostly based on a variety of beverages as an emotionally connected brand, while the second company focuses on a diversified portfolio with snacks, footwear, and clothing as a young and fun brand. A comparison of positioning strategies of the first company and the second company generates critical insight into how far their marketing strategy is helpful. Both companies heavily invest in promotional activities to enhance their market share and competitive advantage. Comparatively, the first company highly follows traditional and digital advertising methods, whereas the second company mostly follows celebrity endorsements and sponsors. Both companies have extensive distribution networks to reach every corner of the country. The first company practices both premium and affordable pricing strategies, while the second company mostly follows affordable pricing strategies. A diversified product portfolio is much needed to meet the dynamic preference of customer demand, and healthier products are vital to meeting the preferences of health-conscious customers in the beverage industry. The comparative analysis of both companies' positioning strategies in China explains how both can co-exist within the dynamic market environment by implementing highly varied and innovative approaches. The first company has a strong foundation of brand heritage. Diversifying the product portfolio is recommended to meet the continuously changing consumer preference profile. More health-oriented and functional beverages could better capture this growing health-conscious segment. Digital engagement should be further enhanced using personalized markets and e-commerce platforms.

Keywords: Positioning strategies, 7ps marketing mix, non-alcoholic beverage industry, multinational beverage companies