

Effect of Entrepreneurial Marketing Practice on Performance of Small and Medium Agro Based Youth Enterprises in Kenya

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Abstract

The research aimed to analyze the effect of entrepreneurial practices on the success of small and medium agro-based youth entrepreneurs in Kenya. The research aimed to examine the effect of entrepreneurial marketing on the performance of small and medium-sized agro-based youth entrepreneurs in Kenya. This study used a mixed research design, using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The research focused on small and medium-sized agricultural youth entrepreneurs in Kenya, namely in Trans Nzoia, Kakamega, and Bungoma Counties. These counties were represented by the Kiminini, Nzoia, and Ndalu wards, respectively. There are a total of 48 agro-based youth small and medium enterprises (SMEs) registered in these wards, consisting of 1,500 individuals between the ages of 18 and 35. The research has a sample size of 306 respondents. This research used a two-step sample approach, starting with stratified sampling followed by simple random sampling. The research used structured questionnaires as the primary means of gathering data. The research used descriptive statistics, namely frequencies and percentages. The use of inferential statistics, such as correlations and regression, was implemented. The results demonstrated that entrepreneurial marketing practice has a favorable and substantial impact on the performance of small and medium agro-based youth firms in Kenya. The study further recommends that the government should prioritize support for MSMEs to buttress their marketing functions through reduction of the chargeable tariffs, levies and licenses and installation of relevant Internet infrastructure and capacity building so as to enhance their performance.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Marketing, Performance, Small and Medium Agro Based Enterprises, Youth Enterprises, Entrepreneurial Practices

1.1 Introduction

The progress of a country relies largely on the pivotal role performed by entrepreneurs (Abduvakhobov, 2023), via the establishment of small and medium-sized enterprises. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are often recognized as the fundamental support of any economy. They are regarded as key catalysts and participants in the advancement and progress of the country. The significant contribution they provide to both developed and developing nations has been strongly stressed. They serve as a crucial catalyst for economic growth (Manzoor, Wei, Nurunnabi & Abdul Subhan, 2019). More significantly, youth entrepreneurship development is vital for job creation, wealth and economic growth (Akande & Alabi, 2023). In order to do this, the implementation of entrepreneurship must be based on established or carefully considered entrepreneurial methodologies. Due to the intricate and interdisciplinary nature of

entrepreneurship, there is no one entrepreneurial approach that improves the performance of agro-based youth small and medium enterprises (SMEs) (Bignotti, Antonites & Kavari, 2021).

An entrepreneurial practice is how entrepreneurs get their firms operating in challenging situations (Sitienei, 2020). Entrepreneurial practices refer to regularly occurring, socially recognized, and coordinated human activities. These activities are carried out by individuals who possess certain talents and use specialized instruments to ensure the success of their firms (Caldera, Desha & Dawes, 2019). In addition, Cucchi, Lubberink, Dentoni, and Gartner (2022) provide a definition of entrepreneurial practices as a cohesive set of methods used in entrepreneurial endeavors. The performance of Small and Medium Enterprises is influenced by entrepreneurial activities. Furthermore, Delorme (2023) argues that entrepreneurial practices include a wider array of entrepreneurial actions that contribute to the operation of a business. Van Erkelens, Thompson, and Chalmers (2023) define entrepreneurial practices as established and systematic methods or a domain of activities that include the application of knowledge and the process of change in the area of entrepreneurship.

Kariuki (2023), claim that the SME sector has shown low adoption of entrepreneurial methods. Furthermore, the small number of youth SMEs in the agricultural sector who embrace entrepreneurial techniques tend to use informal, unorganized, and non-planned approaches. Evidently, according to Wanambisi (2022), entrepreneurial activities are required by SMEs to search for, choose and develop suitable entrepreneurial methods leading to enhanced performance. The current business landscape is characterized by volatility, fragmentation, uncertainty, complexity, pandemics, suboptimal entrepreneurial methods, and ambiguity. Therefore, adoption of entrepreneurial practices can be seen as a new paradigm which integrates critical aspects of entrepreneurship into a comprehensive concept where these entrepreneurial practices becomes a practice to be used by enterprises agro based youth small and medium (SMEs), inclusive for their better performance and success (Patterson, Pugalia & Agarwal, 2022).

Due to the intricate and interdisciplinary nature of entrepreneurship, there is no singular entrepreneurial approach that improves the performance of agro-based youth SMEs, as stated by Bignotti et al. (2021). Hence, it is essential for youth agro-based SMEs to embrace entrepreneurial strategies that are most suitable for their specific company circumstances in order to enhance their performance. Salem and Mobarak (2019), says that entrepreneurial activities and skills such as marketing practice, problem solving practices, financial management and information technology, interpersonal skills and risk taking practices would assist teenagers minimize various obstacles.

In addition, Manyi (2023) suggests that the performance of youth enterprises is greatly influenced by various entrepreneurial practices. Moreover, Shehata, Montash, and Areda (2021) argue that the performance of an organization is influenced by a blend of entrepreneurial techniques including financial practices, project management, marketing practice, and human resources management practices. In addition, Otika, Nwaizugbo, and Olise (2019) argue that entrepreneurial marketing practices, such as being proactive, taking calculated risks, being innovative, focusing on opportunities, leveraging resources, emphasizing customer intensity, and creating value, are crucial for positively influencing the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Several researchers have recommended doing further research on entrepreneurial activities, as noted by Salem and Mobarak (2019). Additionally, Adeyanju, Mignouna, Mulinganya, and Ashagidigbi (2023) suggest that it is necessary to consistently examine how entrepreneurial practices might enhance the performance of agro-based youth small and medium enterprises (SMEs). In addition, Bignotti et al. (2021) suggest that the current body of literature begs for more research on the impact of entrepreneurial behaviors on outcomes such as the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Clearly, Magaisa, Zhong, Srivastava, and Babu (2023) also acknowledge that there is a lack of research on the impact of entrepreneurial techniques on the performance of agro-based SMEs youth companies.

This research aims to analyze the impact of entrepreneurial marketing practice, on the performance of agro-based youth firms. Considering the worldwide acknowledgement of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as a catalyst for economic expansion (Passaro, Quinto, Scandurra & Thomas, 2023), Dwivedi and Pawsey (2023) argue that prosperous SMEs effectively implement efficient entrepreneurial strategies. According to Hossin, Azam, and Hossain (2023), these techniques are essential requirements for ensuring the strong performance of agricultural-based youth start-ups. Permatasari and Gunawan (2023) argue that entrepreneurial practices include a wide array of entrepreneurial actions that contribute to the operation of a business. Ibidunni, Ogundana, and Okonkwo (2021) highlight the significance of entrepreneurial activities as a crucial means of survival for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the ever-changing business landscape, particularly in developing nations.

Susanto, Hashim, and Abdullah (2023) suggest the need of ongoing research into the ways in which entrepreneurial activities might enhance the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Entrepreneurial practices have a crucial role in the survival of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in a rapidly changing environment (Njugunah, 2020). More crucially, Akomea, Agyapong, Ampah and Osei (2023), state that, these entrepreneurial strategies impact the success and thus performance of agro based small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Performance is a crucial aspect in Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) (Taufik & Restapa, 2023). Furthermore, the existence of small and medium firms is contingent upon their performance (Ismail, 2022). Indeed, the existence of these organizations fundamentally relies on their ability to engage in the market alongside other businesses (Ahmed & Ali, 2023). Moreover, enhanced performance reduces the likelihood of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) shutting down (Akomea, et al., 2023).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

According to Lux (2023), the biggest proportion of Kenya's population that is jobless or underemployed is comprised of young people inside the country. Evidently, young people make up 43 percent of the population in Kenya that is of working age and account for 70 percent of the country's overall unemployment rate (Lando, 2023). According to Kerubo (2023), this is due to the fact that the formal sector has not been able to meet the difficulties of job generation. In order to address the issue of youth unemployment in Kenya, the National and County Governments, along with donors, have crafted youth agro entrepreneurship development (Karuiki, 2023). This is accomplished by establishing small and medium agro-based youth enterprises, such as traders, producers, aggregators, and transporters, which are located at transitional points in the agriculture value chain (Odhiambo, Weke, & Ngare, 2020). Regrettably, while some SMEs grow, more than fifty percent of them fail to take off, collapse, and some fail to reach maturity. Specifically, the Kenya Economic Outlook (2022) survey findings reveal that more than fifty percent of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Kenya are recognized for their poor growth rate, low working capital, and low start-up amount. Moreover, the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics economic survey of 2019 indicates that the majority of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) witnessed a decrease of 4% on average, despite the fact that they produced more than 846,000 jobs in 2018, which accounts for 83.6% of the total informal employment created.

While Onsomu, Ngugi, Munga, Nyabaro, Sitati, Oduol, and Wanyama (2023) identified high vulnerability to market forces, Kenya Economic Outlook (2022) reports pointed out that the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is hindered by inadequate capital, limited market access, and inappropriate entrepreneurial practices. This is part of an effort to help address the failures of youth small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). In point of fact, these data demonstrated that a significant number of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) join and depart these marketplaces on an annual basis, with a turnover rate of around 32 percent. Therefore, Kariuki (2023) argued that entrepreneurial marketing technique is essential for agro-based youth small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Kenya to maintain a sustained competitive advantage. Further, in order to address the performance of youth small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the World Bank (2022) emphasized that entrepreneurial practices are an

important survival tool for agro-based youth SMEs that are operating in a dynamic environment. Njugunah (2020) emphasized the adoption of effective entrepreneurial marketing practice among agro-based youth SMEs in order to assist them in remaining in operation. Wanambisi (2022) emphasized that in order for agro-based youth SMEs to act entrepreneurially, they must adopt entrepreneurial practices.

In this respect, despite the fact that several academics advocate for the implementation of entrepreneurial techniques by young business owners and managers of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the general unemployment and underemployment rates among young people in the counties of Trans Nzoia, Kakamega, and Bungoma remain high. This is due to the fact that so few young people in these regions have attempted to start their own agricultural businesses. In this study, which aims to investigate the impact of entrepreneurial marketing practices on the performance of agro-based youth small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the counties of Trans Nzoia, Kakamega, and Bungoma, it was determined that this could be a result of a lack of effective entrepreneurial marketing practices among young people who operate small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the agricultural sector. The study tested the following null hypothesis:

H₀₁ Entrepreneurial marketing practice does not have a significant effect on performance of small and medium agro based youth enterprises in Kenya.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by performance theory. Hussain, Bhuiyan and Bakar (2014) as cited in Auslander (2019) were for the opinion that there are six important concepts that determines performance and improvement of a venture. To him, to perform is to produce valued results while a performer can be an individual or a group of people engaging in a collaborative effort. Developing performance is a journey, and level of performance describes location in the journey. Current level of performance depends holistically on six components: context, level of knowledge, levels of skills, level of identity, personal factors, and fixed factors. He proposes three axioms for effective performance improvements. These involve a performer's mindset, immersion in an enriching environment, and engagement in reflective practice. Performer's mindset includes actions that engage positive emotions. Example include setting challenging goals, allowing failure as a natural part of attaining high performance, and providing conditions in which the performer feels a right amount of safety. On the other hand, immersion is a social, physical and intellectual environment that can elevate performance and stimulate personal as well as professional development. Elements include disciplinary knowledge, active learning, social interactions, positive or negative emotions, and spiritual alignment. The section on creating performing ventures outlines strategies for fostering immersion. Moreover, the reflective practice involves actions that help people pay attention to and learn from experiences. Examples include observing the present level of performance, noting accomplishments, analyzing strengths and areas for improvements, analyzing and developing identity, and improving levels of knowledge.

This theory is related to the entrepreneurial marketing and SME performance. These concepts can be used to enhance entrepreneurial venture. This theory help agro based youth SMEs pay attention to selected entrepreneurial practices, observing level of performance and analyzing and developing identity, and improving levels of knowledge for performance of these SMEs. Marweshe (2022), was for the opinion that there are six important concepts that determines performance and improvement of a venture. To him, to perform is to produce valued results while a performer can be an individual or a group of people engaging in a collaborative effort. Developing performance is a journey, and level of performance describes location in the journey.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this research is to examine the relationship between entrepreneurial marketing as an independent variable and the dependent variable, showing how well agro-based small and medium youth

firms perform in terms of market share, customer satisfaction, sales revenue growth and adaptability to market conditions as shown in Figure 1.

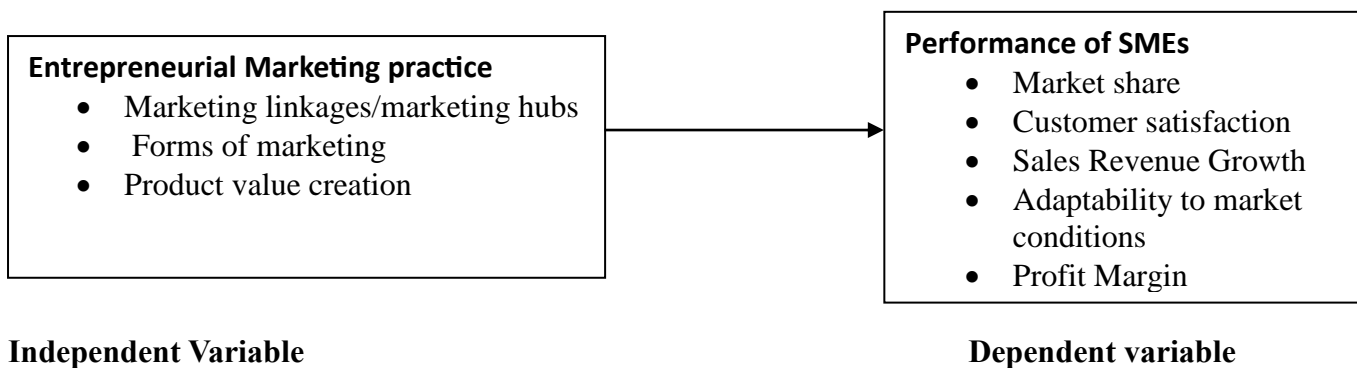


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

2.3 Empirical Literature

The aspect of entrepreneurial marketing practice especially under this difficult condition of COVID 19 cannot be overlooked. Indeed entrepreneurial marketing practice has a positive impact on SMEs performance (Ouragini & Lakhal, 2023; Alqahtani, Usay & Yenyurt, 2023; Alalwan, Baabdullah, Fetais, Algharabat, Raman, & Dwivedi, 2023, Sadiku-Dushi, Dana & Ramadani, 2019). Entrepreneurial marketing is “the proactive identification and exploitation of opportunities for acquiring and retaining profitable customers through innovative approaches to risk management, resource leveraging and value creation” (Nwankwo and Kanyangale, 2023; Gliga & Evers, 2023).

Additionally, Kawira (2020), defines entrepreneurial marketing practice as innovative marketing techniques. Further, Yu and Zhou (2023), allude that, entrepreneurial marketing is the proactive identification and exploitation of opportunities for acquiring and retaining profitable customers through innovative approaches to risk management, resource leveraging and value creation. This practice enables SMEs to chase opportunities in an uncertain market and under limited resources conditions. More so, Sukoco, Prihadini, Hermanto and Tresna (2021), propose entrepreneurial marketing as a ‘spirit, an orientation as well as a process of passionately pursuing opportunities and launching and growing ventures that create perceived customer value through relationships by employing innovativeness, creativity, selling, entrepreneurial marketing, networking and flexibility’. Lockdown measures have reduced business activity by more than half.

In terms of sectors, we find that businesses in agriculture have experienced the largest constraints in access to both inputs and markets for outputs due to COVID 19 control measures such as transport restrictions, quarantine, social distancing, and bans on weekly markets. Same restrictions have hit business operations hard (Lakuma and Sunday, 2020). Consequently, this marketing form emphasizes the maximization of accessible resources, the innovative and proactive execution of market opportunities as well as the usage of calculated risk and customer centricity to achieve greater marketing impact and growth (Gliga & Evers, 2023). This marketing form emanates from the desires, motives and needs of the entrepreneur, (Nijssen & Mullick, 2023). Consequently, entrepreneurial marketing practice attempts to acquire an upper hand by routinely making vivid innovations and taking risks (Turner, 2023)

According to Sibiya and Kele (2019), lack of access to market information is one of the main barriers impeding SMEs’ market expansion. Moreover, Nave and Ferreira (2023), categories these market information barriers into institutional knowledge, that is, information about the new markets’ institutional environment, and business knowledge, that is, information about competitors, markets and customers in new markets.

Effective entrepreneurial marketing practice requires marketing expertise, (Sukoco et al., 2021). Lack of marketing expertise, scarce use of specialists because of lacuna in marketing knowledge, lack of idea, or no

time enough to think about it, constrains the potential development of the marketing function (Amankwah-Amoah, Nyuur, Al-Tabbaa & Cunningham, 2023). Additionally, youth SMEs require marketing experts to source and avail updated market knowledge and information for decision making, (Tukamuhabwa, & Namagembe, 2023). Indeed, the marketing expert will undertake marketing planning and its execution to attract potential customers and also retain old customers, (Alfarsi, 2020; Sukoco, Prihadini, Hermanto & Tresna, 2021)

With the spread of COVID 19, many youth agro based SMEs have had to seek for alternative forms of marketing. However, these various forms of entrepreneurial marketing require resources (Wanambisi, 2022). Indeed, allocating marketing resources is a complex decision in a constantly evolving environment. Such forms include the emergence of new media such as online search and display advertising, video games, virtual worlds, social networking, online user-generated content, and word of mouth (Tukamuhabwa, & Namagembe, 2023). It is not easy to isolate the effect of a marketing instrument in this dynamic business environment where multiple factors influence sales and profits (Sukoco, Prihadini, Hermanto & Tresna, 2021). This inability to determine what source of information is relevant to their marketing decision making may be related to the scarcity of resources available to SMEs (Amankwah-Amoah, Nyuur, Al-Tabbaa & Cunningham, 2023). While in the same time, youth SMEs should therefore focus on their innovativeness, sometimes guided by an opportunity focus or not, to have something different from the competitors to offer (Alfarsi, 2020; Sukoco, Prihadini, Hermanto & Tresna, 2021)

Nora, Danab and Ramadania (2019), posit that, entrepreneurial marketing practice is a process of value creation and value creation is the main objective of innovation. Product/ service value applies when the customer value expectations are exceeded by offering better value to new markets through intentional and continuous innovation with the purpose of destabilizing the existing value balance. Furthermore, entrepreneurial marketing practice is innovative value creation, discovery of new sources of customer value and creation of unique combinations of resources to produce value. Agro based youth SMEs can create new value by using existing technology to serve customers in an unconventional manner either by use of emerging technology that satisfy customer's needs, (Sukoco, Prihadini, Hermanto & Tresna, 2021).

Hence, product value involves quality of the product, or consumer satisfaction and loyalty, (Turner, 2023) and minimizing number of complaints and delivery time (reflecting, for instance, quality or client satisfaction) from customers, (Dabija, Csorba, Isac & Rusu, 2023). This will enable youth SMEs to get the best out of contenders, hence fostering competitiveness, (Sukoco, Prihadini, Hermanto & Tresna, 2021).

The development of value creation for the product/service for the targeted market is of great importance to SMEs (Sukoco, Prihadini, Hermanto & Tresna, 2021). According to Latifi, Nikou and Bouwman (2021), this will involve innovation such as new product, product improvement, process improvement, new business model, business model improvement, revenue increase, profit margin increases and cost reduction. Consequently, SMEs must strive to outdo competitors through implementing the concept of valuable, rare, inimitable and differentiated products (Gatimu & Amuhaya, 2022; Semaan & Mostapha, 2020). Indeed, the SMEs entrepreneurs must ensure that their customers will be satisfied, because even if they do not show strong loyalty toward the product/service of the firm, they can act on the reputation of the firm (Anwar, Clauss & Issah, 2022; Sukoco, Prihadini, Hermanto & Tresna, 2021).

Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design:

The study utilized descriptive survey design where both quantitative and qualitative research approaches were employed (Yu & Zhou, 2023). According to Hendren, Newcomer, Pandey, Smith and Sumner (2023), use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches allows the researcher to compensate for the weakness of one single approach with the strength of the other in order to achieve the best results.

3.2 Population and Sampling Techniques

The target population for this study was 1,500 agro based small and medium youth enterprise owners, operators, or managers from the 48 registered agro based youth SMEs drawn from Trans Nzoia, Kakamega and Bungoma Counties. This category was considered because it is actively engaged in agro based entrepreneurial activities. The study used Stratified sampling techniques to differentiate the study sample of 306 youth agro based small and medium youth enterprise owners/ operators/ managers into the three homogeneous, mutually exclusive groups called strata (Yu & Zhou, 2023), representing the three essential categories of the agro based entrepreneurial activities in operation in Trans Nzoia, Kakamega and Bungoma Counties at the time of study. The sample size was determined using Morgan's table. From the Directors of trade lists from the Trans Nzoia, Kakamega and Bungoma Counties (as represented by Kiminini, Nzoia and Ndalul wards respectively) with a total of 1,500 active youths from 48 registered agro based youth SMEs, a sample of 306 (Morgan's table), were selected for the study, (Mutitu, 2023), as shown in table 2.

Table 2: Sample Size Distribution

S/no.	County	Agro dealers	Cereal banking	Agro forestry nurseries	tree	Total
1	Trans Nzoia	30	30	30		90
2	Kakamega	37	37	37		111
3	Bungoma	35	35	35		105
	TOTAL	102	102	102		306

3.3 Instrumentation

The researcher employed both the primary and the secondary data collection methods. In primary data, the researcher collected information from selected sample using pre tested questionnaires. The questionnaires were hand delivered to respondents at their places of work and were collected once the respondents are through with filling them. The questionnaires were structured according to the objectives of the study. Secondary data was acquired from relevant textbooks, journals, articles, operational records from selected organizations, magazines and relevant web sites. The Piloting of instrument was done in the nearby Moi's Bridge ward, Uasin Gishu County. This pilot study area shares same ecological zones, culture and same agricultural programmes. That is, 10% of study sample 306 is 30 respondents, implying that 30 respondents were selected from youths running agro based SMEs to participate in the pilot study. Cronbach's alpha reliability statistics were computed from the values of the first test score and compared to the second test score to establish if the variables are reliable for the study. As indicated by Cohen and Manion framework cited in Zhang (2023) that alpha value of more than 0.7 is enough to indicate the reliability of research instrument.

3.4 Data Analysis and Presentation

The data collected was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively using excel computer program. The data was screened to identify outliers that might have existed and need further attention. The data once coded and classified was arranged concisely and logically thus tabulation. Statistical package for Social Sciences (SPSS 26.0) was used to analyze the data. The data was cross-tabulated including percentages and subjected to testing using linear regression analysis and Pearson correlation coefficients to establish relationship, between independent variable, entrepreneurial marketing practice and the dependent variable, enterprises performance, the study variables concerned.

4.0 Findings and Discussions

4.1 Descriptive Statistics of Variables in the Study

To describe a distribution of the scores of measurements using indices or statistics the study entailed use of descriptive statistics to present findings using percentages, frequencies, means and standard deviation. The

respondents were asked to provide evidence of profit margin, sales turnover and customer base and the findings were as shown in Table 2.0, below.

Table 2.0: SME Performance

1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Fairly Agree, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree, S.D-Standard Deviation

Statements on SME Performance	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	S.D
The profit margins of the SME have increased over the time.	35.1 (84)	24.3 (58)	18.8 (45)	11.7 (28)	10 (24)	3.63	1.33
This enterprise has funded other capital investments such as land	28 (67)	31.4 (75)	18 (43)	14.6 (35)	7.9 (19)	3.57	1.26
This enterprise has created employment to other youths	40.6 (97)	26.8 (64)	13.4 (32)	12.6 (30)	6.7 (16)	3.82	1.27
This enterprise's daily sales have increased compared to last two years.	35.1 (84)	23.8 (57)	18.8 (45)	15.5 (37)	6.7 (16)	3.65	1.28
Growth level of sales over the last two years are satisfying	31.8 (76)	31.4 (75)	15.9 (38)	13 (31)	7.9 (19)	3.66	1.27
The enterprise's sales have contributed to increase in inventory and stock in the last two years.	24.3 (58)	28.5 (68)	25.9 (62)	10.5 (25)	10.9 (26)	3.45	1.27
The profit margin of sales has increase over the last two years is satisfying.	26.8 (64)	22.6 (54)	27.2 (65)	10.9 (26)	12.6 (30)	3.40	1.32
Amount of profits earned from total sales after total expenses have increased satisfactorily over the last two years.	24.3 (58)	38.9 (93)	15.5 (37)	12.1 (29)	9.2 (22)	3.57	1.23
This enterprise has facilitated employment creation for youths	36 (86)	27.2 (65)	14.6 (35)	15.1 (36)	7.1 (17)	3.70	1.29
There has been a high increase in the number of customers	25.5 (61)	31.4 (75)	20.1 (48)	16.7 (40)	6.3 (15)	3.53	1.21
Average level of SME Performance	Mean(%Mean)		Std. Dev.	Std. Error of mean		Minimum	Maximum
	3.5979 (72.0%)		1.12087	0.07250		1.00	5.00

As indicated in Table 2.0, a mean of 3.63 revealed that respondents agreed there the profit margins of the SME have increased over the time although there was significant variation among responses (S.D=1.33). This suggested that the profit margins of the SME have increased over the time. Additionally, a mean of 3.57 postulated that respondents agreed that their enterprise has funded other capital investments such as land although there was significant deviation among responses (S. D=1.26). This implied that SMEs have funded other capital investments such as land.

Besides, a mean 3.82 indicated that respondents agreed that their enterprise has created employment to other youths although with significant variation among the responses (S.D=1.27). This indicated that SMEs have created employment to other youths. Moreover, a mean of 3.65 posited that respondents agreed that their enterprise's daily sales have increased compared to last two years although there was significant deviation among responses (S. D=1.22). This implied that SME's daily sales have increased compared to last two years.

Furthermore, a mean 3.66 postulated that respondents agreed that growth level of sales over the last two years are satisfying although with significant variation among the responses (S. D=1.27). This indicated that growth level of sales over the last two years are satisfying. Likewise, a mean of 3.45 indicated that respondents fairly agreed that their enterprise's sales have contributed to increase in inventory and stock in

the last two years although there was significant deviation among responses (S. D=1.27). This suggested that their enterprise's sales have contributed to increase in inventory and stock in the last two years.

Moreover, a mean of 3.40 posited that respondents agreed that their profit margin of sales has increase over the last two years is satisfying although there was significant deviation among responses (S. D=1.32). This implied that their profit margin of sales has increase over the last two years is satisfying. Furthermore, a mean 3.57 postulated that respondents agreed that amount of profits earned from total sales after total expenses have increased satisfactorily over the last two years. although with significant variation among the responses (S. D=1.23). This indicated that amount of profits earned from total sales after total expenses have increased satisfactorily over the last two years.

Likewise, a mean of 3.70 indicated that respondents agreed that enterprises have facilitated employment creation for youths although there was significant deviation among responses (S. D=1.29). This suggested that their enterprise has facilitated employment creation for youths. Lastly, a mean 3.53 indicated that respondents agreed that there has been a high increase in the number of customers although with significant deviation among the responses (S. D=1.21). This indicated that there has been a high increase in the number of customers. Distinctly, the average level of SMEs performance according to the sampled respondents was at 72.0% mean response (mean=3.60, std. dev. =1.12) rated as shown in Table 2.0. This implies that the SMEs performance was at great extent although a significant standard deviation implied that the practice was not uniform among the sample SMEs

Table 2.0: Entrepreneurial Marketing Practice

1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Fairly Agree, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree

Statements on Entrepreneurial marketing practice	5	4	3	2	1	Mean	S.D
There is an established marketing hub for the enterprise	28.9 (69)	28 (67)	19.7 (47)	12.6 (30)	10.9 (26)	3.51	1.32
The enterprise engages in sales promotions and advertising on broadcast and social media	21.3 (51)	36 (86)	17.6 (42)	11.3 (27)	13.8 (33)	3.40	1.31
The enterprise dwells on marketing linkages to enable an increase in market share of its products	28.5 (68)	29.7 (71)	15.9 (38)	13.4 (32)	12.6 (30)	3.48	1.36
The enterprise engages in the creation of agro product collection centers	31.8 (76)	29.7 (71)	15.1 (36)	15.1 (36)	8.4 (20)	3.62	1.30
There is value creation to improve quality of products to retain customers hence increase sales	31.8 (76)	27.6 (66)	16.7 (40)	16.3 (39)	7.5 (18)	3.60	1.29
The enterprise connects with fellow youth in agro business to get customers	17.6 (42)	28 (67)	32.2 (77)	13.8 (33)	8.4 (20)	3.33	1.16
Generally, entrepreneurial marketing has really assisted in growing the agro-business enterprise	22.2 (53)	29.3 (70)	20.5 (49)	16.7 (40)	11.3 (27)	3.34	1.30
Average level of Entrepreneurial marketing	Mean(%Mean)		Std. Dev.	Std. Error of mean	Minimum	Maximum	
	3.4680 (69.4%)		1.14120	0.07382	1.00	1.00	

As indicated in Table 3, a mean of 3.51 revealed that respondents agreed that there is an established marketing hub for the enterprise although there was significant variation among responses (S.D=1.32). This suggested that there is an established marketing hub for the enterprise. In addition, a mean of 3.40 postulated that respondents fairly agreed that the enterprise engages in sales promotions and advertising on broadcast and social media although there was significant deviation among responses (S. D=1.31). This implied that

not all SMEs engage in sales promotions and advertising on broadcast and social media. Besides, a mean 3.48 indicated that respondents fairly agreed that the enterprise dwells on marketing linkages to enable an increase in market share of its products although with significant variation among the responses (S.D=1.136). This indicated that not all SMEs dwells on marketing linkages to enable an increase in market share of its products.

Moreover, a mean of 3.62 posited that respondents agreed that the enterprise engages in the creation of agro product collection centers although there was significant deviation among responses (S. D=1.30). This implied that the enterprise engages in the creation of agro product collection centers. Furthermore, a mean 3.60 postulated that respondents agreed that there is value creation to improve quality of products to retain customers hence increase sales although with significant variation among the responses (S. D=1.29). This indicated that there is value creation to improve quality of products to retain customers hence increase sales. Likewise, a mean of 3.33 indicated that respondents fairly agreed that the enterprise connects with fellow youth in agro business to get customers although there was significant deviation among responses (S. D=1.16). This suggested that not all SMEs connects with fellow youth in agro business to get customers.

Lastly, a mean 3.34 indicated that respondents fairly agreed that generally, entrepreneurial marketing has really assisted in growing the agro-business enterprise although with significant deviation among the responses (S. D=1.30). This indicated that not all of the SME generally, entrepreneurial marketing has really assisted in growing the agro-business enterprise. Evidently, the average level of entrepreneurial marketing practice according to the sampled respondents was at 69.4% mean response (mean=3.47, std. dev. =1.14) rated as shown in Table 3 This implies that the entrepreneurial marketing was fairly practiced although a significant standard deviation implied that the practice was not uniform among the sample SMEs.

4.2 Linear Regression between Entrepreneurial Marketing Practice and Performance

In order to determine the direct relationship between entrepreneurial marketing practice and the performance of small and medium agro-based youth enterprises in Kenya, the research involved the utilization of a straightforward linear regression. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the impact of entrepreneurial marketing practice on the performance of small and medium agro-based youth enterprises in Kenya.

Table 4: Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.686 ^a	.470	.468	.8178
a. Predictors: (Constant), Entrepreneurial marketing practice b. Dependent Variable: Performance				

The correlation coefficient for entrepreneurial marketing practice was 0.686, P=0.000, suggesting that there is significant positive relationship between entrepreneurial marketing practice and performance of small and medium agro based youth enterprises in Kenya. This implies that increase in entrepreneurial marketing practice would results to significant increase in performance of small and medium agro based youth enterprises in Kenya. The model (Entrepreneurial marketing practice) was able to explain 47.0% of the variation in the performance of small and medium agro based youth enterprises in Kenya as indicated by the R Square = 0.470 as shown in the model summary of Table 4.

Table 5: Model Fitness (ANOVA)

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	140.511	1	140.511	210.104	.000 ^b
	Residual	158.498	237	.669		
	Total	299.009	238			
a. Dependent Variable: Performance						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Entrepreneurial marketing practice						

The ANOVA test results from above Table 5 were $F(1, 237) = 210.104$, $P = 0.000 < 0.05$; an indication that the Simple Linear Regression model was a good fit to our dataset. Therefore, Entrepreneurial marketing practice is significant predictor of Performance of small and medium agro based youth enterprises in Kenya. The ANOVA test results, with a large F-statistic and a very small p-value, provide evidence to support the assertion that the Simple Linear Regression model is a good fit for the dataset. This implies that the model is statistically significant and contributes meaningfully to understanding the relationship between the variables under consideration.

Table 6: Regression Coefficient

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		β	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.263	.170		7.448	.000
	Entrepreneurial marketing practice	.673	.046	.686	14.495	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Performance						

The regression Coefficient results showed that $\beta = 0.673$, $t = 14.495$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$; therefore, entrepreneurial marketing practice had a statistically significant effect on the Performance of small and medium agro based youth enterprises in Kenya. Performance is predicated to improve by 0.673 when the entrepreneurial marketing practice variable goes up by one unit. To predict the Performance of small and medium agro based youth enterprises in Kenya when given the level of Entrepreneurial marketing practice, the study suggests the use of the following model;

$$\text{Performance} = 1.263 + 0.673 \text{ Entrepreneurial marketing practice}$$

4.3 Discussion of the Results

The level of the average level of entrepreneurial marketing practice according to the sampled respondents was at mean of 3.47 with a significant std. dev. = 1.14. This implies that the entrepreneurial marketing was fairly practiced although a significant standard deviation implied that the practice was not uniform among the sample SMEs. Majority of the respondents indicated there is an established marketing hub for the enterprise. The enterprise engages in the creation of agro product collection centers. There is value creation to improve quality of products to retain customers hence increase sales. The inferential results revealed that there is direct relationship between entrepreneurial marketing practice and performance of small and medium agro based youth enterprises in Kenya. This implies that increase in entrepreneurial marketing practice would results to increase in the performance of small and medium agro based youth enterprises in Kenya. These findings are consistent with past research. For instance, Nduati (2023) while examining the role of marketing practice on the performance of entrepreneurial ventures concluded that practices such as product/service innovation, market research and service quality and functionality do help establish competitive advantage. Mohammed (2023) concluded that product and process innovation positively and significantly affect firm performance. Further, Ramdan, Abd Aziz, Zakaria and Ong (2022) investigating the

relationship between firms' performance and its familiarity with innovation and research found out that outlook of firms towards innovation had a high score in the competitive environments so as to gain higher competitive lead.

The coefficient of determination through the R square indicated that up to 47.0% of change in performance of small and medium agro based youth enterprises in Kenya is significantly accounted for by entrepreneurial marketing practice. This implies that entrepreneurial marketing practice is a significant predictor of performance of small and medium agro based youth enterprises in Kenya. These results of this study agree with past studies that sought to examine the effect of entrepreneurial marketing on firm performance. For example, Yahaya and Dutse (2023) carried out a study on the relationship of entrepreneurial marketing and SMEs performance in Lagos State, Nigeria. Their results revealed a significant relationship between entrepreneurial marketing and organizational performance of SMEs. Gliga and Evers (2023). also established a significant relationship between entrepreneurial marketing and products' offering. Further, while examining the role of marketing practice on the performance of entrepreneurial ventures, Nduati (2023) established those practices such as product/service innovation, market research and service quality and functionality do help to establish competitive advantage in dynamic markets. A previous study done in Kenya by Kiwara, Gathungu, Ogutu and Njihia (2023) focusing on the influence of entrepreneurial marketing on growth of SMEs in Kiambu-CBD revealed that entrepreneurial marketing had significant positive influence on the performance of SMEs.

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

The study established that entrepreneurial marketing practice significantly affected performance of small and medium agro based youth enterprises in Kenya hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implied that increase in marketing linkages/marketing hubs, forms of marketing, product value creation, access to financing, education level and entrepreneurial experience would result to increase in profit margin, sales turnover and customer base. In conclusion, the study's findings present a compelling narrative on the transformative influence of entrepreneurial marketing practices on the performance of small and medium agro-based youth enterprises in Kenya. This conclusion resonates not only within the confines of the agro-industry but also extends its implications to the broader discourse on entrepreneurship, marketing, and youth empowerment. As agro-based enterprises continue to play a pivotal role in Kenya's economic landscape, the integration of entrepreneurial marketing emerges as a beacon of innovation, resilience, and sustainable growth, propelling the aspirations of the youth and contributing to the overall prosperity of the nation.

The study recommended that there is need to establish marketing hub for small and medium agro based youth enterprises. This may not be limited to creation of agro product collection centers, value creation to improve quality of products and connects with fellow youth in agro business to get customers. The study further recommended that the application of entrepreneurial marketing practice should not only be sustained but be integrated as an entrepreneurial strategy with the view to creating value for customers towards entrepreneurial growth and survival. Small and medium agro based youth should consistently adopt and review proactive measures, financial leveraging and calculative risk taking with the view to pursuing firms' immediate and strategic objectives. The study further recommends that the government should prioritize support for MSMEs to buttress their marketing functions through reduction of the chargeable tariffs, levies and licenses and installation of relevant Internet infrastructure and capacity building so as to enhance their performance.

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