

**MARKETING MIX STRATEGY AND PERFORMANCE OF SELECTED
SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTREPRISES IN EMBU COUNTY, KENYA**

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DECLARATION

This scholarly endeavor embodies my original work and has not been presented for academic credit at any other tertiary education establishment.

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Date 28th September 2025

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This scholarly endeavor has been presented for assessment under my endorsement as the academic advisor.

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DEDICATION

This scholarly endeavor is lovingly devoted to my whole kin, most notably my departed spouse, for the inspiration and backing they graciously provided me.

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Initially, I must express gratitude to our omnipotent God for guiding me throughout this endeavor, alongside my kin. I surmise that without their backing, I would not have progressed this much. Particular appreciation goes to my mentor, Dr. Elishiba Murigi, who instructed me in the principles of crafting this project. I am also thankful to my daughters, Sandra and Shanice, and my son, Mark, for their affection as they observed my work. I hold profound gratitude for my departed spouse, Caroline, who encouraged me to commence my master's program.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS.....	xi
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS.....	xii
ABSTRACT.....	xiii
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.1.1 Performance of Small and Medium Enterprises.....	3
1.1.2 Marketing Mix Strategies	4
1.1.3 Small and Medium Enterprises in Embu County	6
1.2 Statement of the Problem	7
1.3 Objectives.....	8
1.3.1 General Objectives	8
1.3.2 Specific Objectives	8
1.4 Research Questions	9
1.5 Research Hypothesis	9
1.6 Significance of the Study	10
1.7 Scope of the Study.....	10
1.8 Limitations of the Study.....	11
1.9 Organization of the Study	11

CHAPTER TWO	12
LITERATURE REVIEW	12
2.1 Introduction	12
2.2 Theoretical Framework.	12
2.2.1 Dynamic Capability Theory	12
2.2.2 Innovation Diffusion Theory	14
2.2.3 Systems Theory	15
2.2.4 Firm Performance Theory	16
2.3 Empirical Review	17
2.3.1 Product Strategy and Performance of SMEs	17
2.3.2 Pricing Strategy and Performance of SMEs	18
2.3.3 E- Promotion Marketing Strategy and Performance of SMEs	20
2.3.4 Distribution Decision Strategy and Performance of SMEs.	21
2.4 Summary of Literature Review and Research Gaps	22
2.5 Conceptual Framework	25
CHAPTER THREE	27
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	27
3.1 Introduction	27
3.2 Research Design.....	27
3.3 Target Population	27
3.4 Sampling Design and Sample Size.....	28
3.5 Data Collection Instruments.....	29
3.6 Pilot Study.....	29
3.6.1 Validity of the Research Instrument	30
3.6.2 Reliability of the Research Instrument	30
3.7 Data Collection Procedure	31
3.8 Data Analysis and Presentation.....	31

3.9 Ethical Considerations.....	32
CHAPTER FOUR.....	33
RESEARCH METHODS.....	33
4.1 Introduction	33
4.2 Response Rate	33
4.3 Demographic Information	34
4.3.1 Educational Qualifications	34
4.3.2 Number of Years Worked in SMEs.....	35
4.3.3 Number of Employees in the Business.....	36
4.3.4 Estimated Daily Sales	36
4.4 Descriptive Analysis	37
4.4.1 Product Strategy and Performance	37
4.4.2 Pricing Strategy and Performance	40
4.4.3 E-Promotion Strategy and Performance	41
4.4.4 Distribution Decision Strategy and Performance	43
4.4.5 SME Performance.....	45
4.5 Correlation Analysis.....	46
4.6 Regression Analysis	48
4.7 Testing Hypothesis.....	51
CHAPTER FIVE	54
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	54
5.1 Introduction	54
5.2 Summary of the Study.....	54
5.3 Conclusions of the Study.....	56
5.4 Recommendations of the Study	57
5.5 Suggestions for Further Research	58
REFERENCES.....	59

APPENDICES	63
Appendix I: Introduction Letter	63
Appendix II: Questionnaire	64
Appendix III: Research Approval Letter.....	68
Appendix IV: Permit from NACOSTI.....	69

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: Summary of Literature Review	22
Table 3.1: Target Population.....	28
Table 3.2: Sampling size.....	29
Table 3.3: Reliability Results.....	31
Table 4.1: Respondents Educational Qualifications	34
Table 4.2: Number of Years Worked in the SMEs.....	35
Table 4.3: Number of Employees in each SME	36
Table 4.4: Average Daily Sales	37
Table 4.5: Product Strategy and Performance	39
Table 4.6: Pricing Strategy and Performance	40
Table 4.7: E-Promotion Strategy and Performance	42
Table 4.8: Distribution Decision Strategy and Performance	44
Table 4.9: Performance of SMEs.....	45
Table 4.10: Correlations.....	47
Table 4.11: Model Summary	49
Table 4.12: Coefficients of Regression.....	50

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework	26
Figure 4.1: Marketing Mix Strategies	38

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

E- Promotion marketing strategy:	Coming up with a plan by putting in place the appropriate digital technology so that the firm is able to manage its digital communications
Marketing Strategy:	Approach taken by a particular SME to channel its diverse resources the best way it can so that it may increase its sales volume
Performance:	Deployment of accessible assets by a small business to generate superior results
Pricing marketing strategy:	Planning on what prices should be pegged on products, and this may depend on the market type, type of product, channels being used in distribution of the product among others.
Product marketing strategy:	Plan focusing on company products in terms of quality, technology used, branding and packaging so that it fits well into the firms larger vision
SMEs:	A business entity that employs between 10 to 99 people and with an annual turnover of between KSh. 500,000 to KSh. 30,000,000

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BERR	British Enterprise and Regulatory Reforms
BSC	Balanced Score Card
DCT	Dynamic Capability Theory
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
MSE	Micro and small Enterprises
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
US	United States
SPSS	Statistical package for social sciences

ABSTRACT

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) contribute significantly to Kenya's economy by creating employment, generating income, and driving innovation. In Embu County, however, many SMEs struggle to sustain growth and achieve optimal performance, with high failure rates attributed to challenges such as inadequate market penetration, declining sales, and limited profitability. While marketing mix strategies are critical drivers of firm performance, their application and impact among SMEs in this region remain underexplored. This study examined the effect of four marketing mix elements—product strategy, pricing strategy, e-promotion strategy, and distribution decisions—on the performance of selected small and medium manufacturing enterprises in Embu County, Kenya. Guided by the Dynamic Capabilities Theory, Business Performance Theory, Systems Theory, and Diffusion of Innovations Theory, the study adopted a descriptive survey design targeting 53 SMEs. A census approach was used, with business supervisors as the primary respondents. Data were collected using structured questionnaires, which underwent pilot testing to ensure clarity, validity, and reliability, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceeding the 0.7 threshold. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) and inferential analyses (Pearson correlation and multiple regression) were applied. Results revealed that product strategy ($\beta = 0.091$, $p = 0.041$), pricing strategy ($\beta = 0.600$, $p = 0.000$), and e-promotion strategy ($\beta = 0.534$, $p = 0.000$) had positive and statistically significant effects on SME performance, while distribution decisions had a positive but non-significant effect ($\beta = 0.041$, $p = 0.540$). The study concludes that product differentiation, competitive pricing, and effective e-promotion significantly enhance SME performance in Embu County. It recommends that SME managers prioritize innovative product development, adopt competitive and flexible pricing models, and leverage digital promotion platforms to expand market reach. Although distribution decisions were not statistically significant, improving logistical efficiency could indirectly boost customer satisfaction and long-term competitiveness.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

SMEs are very important to economy of any nation in the world due to their huge contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and increased employment (Adan, 2022). All economies in the world depend on SMEs to remain stable as noted in the World Bank Report (2023). The reason behind this assertion by World Bank is due to the fact that majority of the businesses across the globe are controlled by the SMEs and at the same time, the SMEs are the main employers as they account for more than 50 percent of total employment on the globe. The sector also comprises of more than 90 percent of the all businesses established on the globe. The SMEs contributes about 40 percent of the GDP in developing countries and about 60 percent to the developed nations (World Bank, 2023).

In China SMEs account for 60% of the GDP while in United States of America (USA), the SME impact on GDP is around 65 % (Kimathi, Mukulu & Odhimbo, 2019). On employment status, SMEs account for 99 % of employment in both European Union (EU) and United States (US) (World Bank, 2022). In United Kingdom, the SME sector accounts for about 99% of the country's GDP and has a workforce of more than 34 million people. Japan has the highest SME proportion among the developed nations at more than 99 percent of total enterprises (British Enterprise and Regulatory Reforms, BERR, 2021; Runde, Savoy, Staghun, 2021).

SMEs in Africa have created more than half of the total jobs on the continent and take more than 90 % share of the total enterprises on the continent (Adan, 2022; Muli & Wachira, 2019). For instance, the SME sector accounts for 70 % of the gross

employment in the country and more than 50 % nation's GDP (Kawira, Mukulu & Odhiambo, 2019). SME sector has been found to contribute to almost 91 % of the business workforce and entities in South Africa and contribute to almost 55 % of the nation. In Ghana the SMEs are the backbone of the country's economy as they contribute to almost 70 percent of the GDP (Muli & Wachira, 2019; World Bank, 2023).

The SME sector in Kenya is estimated to employ 15 million people (Kimathi, Mukulu & Odhimbo, 2019). The sector accounts for 88% of the jobs created in the country and is the main player towards the GDP of the country as it contributes to more than 40 % of the country's GDP (Sansa, 2019; Runde, Savoy & Staguhn, 2021). The SME sector has been identified under vision 2030 as one of the major players that will steer the nation's dream of solving the employment problems. Odenyo and Rosemary (2018) also assert that SMEs play very critical role in providing jobs to the populations and improving not only their economy but also the entire country's economy.

Although SMEs play a very critical role to the economy of country, they face significant challenges that deprive them from growth and performance. In various economic sectors, the growth and performance of SMEs has consistently been an issue discussed by various stakeholders in different economic sectors among them being non-governmental organizations (NGOs), monetary institutions, manufacturing sector, capital corporations among others. Inadequate cash flows and working capital have also been singled out as among the contributors that prevent the entities from remaining profitable and grow (Makundi, 2021). The report by Deloitte Kenya (2024) revealed that the SME sector in Kenya experience numerous challenges which make them experience reduced growth and dismal performance. The report further established that only 15 percent of the SMEs celebrate their fifth year in operation with more than 40

percent being unable to carry out their operations for more than two years due to declining performance.

For the SMEs to realize the desired performance, they have to ensure they plan early and focus on the best marketing strategies that may be very useful in achieving both short –term and long- term goals. When the SMEs plan early and focus on their best marketing strategies, there are higher chances that they may be able to achieve their much-desired performance as they may have planned it (Amin, 2021). According to Etuk *et al.* (2022) for SMEs to improve performance, they need to be more aggressive and explore numerous marketing strategies which are competitive.

1.1.1 Performance of Small and Medium Enterprises

Output denotes the utilization of accessible resources to yield superior results. Ceglinski (2020) contends that a firm's potential to realize exceptional output hinges on the novel and distinctive strategy it adopts. A performance gauge merging functional and fiscal measures is the Balanced Score Card (BSC) (Ceglinski, 2020). Four viewpoints serve to evaluate a company's output: the client viewpoint, the monetary viewpoint, the viewpoint of specific functional assessments, and the viewpoint of novelty and development. It is interesting to note that disagreements persist about the best way to operationalize performance despite the abundance of research on company performance (Njoroge *et al.*, 2020). Indicators that provide details on the ability of procedures used by businesses to accomplish their goals are used in measurement (Gavrea & Stegorean, 2011).

The majority of academics use dimensions such as total assets, market share, return on assets, share price, profit before tax, and sales revenue to operationalize the performance of firms based on financial factors (Muchemi, 2014). Atikiya (2015)

delineates three benchmarks for assessing a firm's achievements. Initially, fiscal efficacy, gauged by revenue size and earnings; subsequently, commercial success, evaluating market penetration, novelty, variety, and enhanced procedures via integrated monetary and functional outcomes; and thirdly, institutional efficiency, appraising managerial accomplishment concerning financial, commercial, staff contentment, and ecological accountability.

For any economy to reap from the SME sector, there must be good performance among the SMEs. The firms should be able to attain their goals (Mahmudova & Kovacs, 2018). The success and accomplishment of each SME forms the basis of its performance. Most firms measure performance based on profits, growth and effectiveness. Over the recent half-decade, the efficacy of small businesses in Kenya has been declining. Numerous SMEs, previously crucial for supplying 40% of Kenyan jobs, have ceased operations due to difficulties in running minor ventures (Makundi, 2021). This research gauged effectiveness by increases in market dominance, sales figures, and client contentment.

1.1.2 Marketing Mix Strategies

Marketing strategy is the approach taken by an entity to channel its diverse resources the best way it can so that it may increase its sales volume (Amin, 2021). Marketing strategies are normally designed, managed and carried out by the enterprises so that they are able to achieve their intended goals among them being, increased market penetration high performance, increase in revenue, improved customer satisfaction and increased diversification (Etuk, Usani, Usani & Udoh, 2022). An entity has to come up with various marketing strategies so as to increase its performance since no single marketing strategy can be best for any organization. Marketing strategy can therefore

be summarized as the tactical design that enterprises implement so as to achieve their target goals such as increased market penetration.

The SMEs have to develop their marketing strategies that may play key role in making sure they improve on their market performance. The best strategies may enable them to boost their sales revenue, dominate new markets and increase their market share. Some of the marketing strategies an SME can adopt include electronic marketing strategy, micromarketing strategy (Usani, Sampson, Essien, Christopher & Effiong 2024), digital marketing strategies (Kasimu, 2017; Kimathi *et al.*, 2019), distribution decisions, product strategy and pricing strategy (Dambo & Igoni, 2023), promotional strategies (Githinji & Njagi, 2022), E-promotion, online/digital marketing strategy (Kawira *et al.*, 2020) among others. There are therefore numerous marketing strategies that an SME can explore and a strategy that may be working for one SME may not automatically work for another. This study focuses on product strategy, pricing strategy, e-promotion marketing and distribution decision strategy.

Product strategies which take into consideration, the technology used in developing the product and the channels used in distributing the products determine an organization's operations. The product strategy determines the goods and services supplied for sale or consumption. Some of the components that make up product strategy include product quality, labeling, packaging and branding (Dambo & Igoni, 2023; Kimathi, Muluku and Odhiambo, 2020)

Pricing strategy is the main decision that an entity has to make. Pricing is considered to be a very important element of any marketing strategy and is one of the most adopted elements of marketing that enables value addition for the shareholders. It is paramount for the businesses to set prices of their products targeting different customers and

considering commissions or margins for compensating retailers, wholesalers and agents as they play a critical role in moving the products to the final users. Pricing will normally depend on the target market, product type and distribution procedures used. Pricing decisions may mainly depend on price setting, compensation margins and the customers being targeted (Dambo & Igini, 2023).

E- Promotion marketing system also referred to as digital or online marketing system has been adopted by many entities towards targeting specific customers as either a primary marketing strategy or to supplement other marketing strategies. E-marketing strategy refers to the efforts by an SME to market its services and products and obtain strong customer perceptions towards the entity and its products over the internet. Some of commonly used media include social media, search engines optimization and websites and blogs. (Eni, 2017; Usani *et al.*, 2024).

Placement strategy, also termed distribution decision strategy, integrates all the instruments and choices involved in guaranteeing goods and services reach consumers. Enacting a sound placement strategy could empower the small business to efficiently circulate its offerings across diverse marketing avenues like shops and bulk purchasers (Venugopal, Getenet & Yalew, 2017).

1.1.3 Small and Medium Enterprises in Embu County

A Kenyan SME is categorized based on its workforce size and yearly revenue. As per the MSE Act of 2012, a small business is identified as a commercial organization engaging 10 to 49 individuals and possessing an annual revenue ranging from Ksh. 500,000 to Ksh. 5,000,000. A medium enterprise is defined as a business entity that employs between 50 to 99 people with an annual turnover of between Ksh. 5,000,000

and KSh. 30,000,000. An SME is therefore a business entity that employs between 10 to 99 people and with an annual turnover of between KSh. 500,000 to KSh. 30, 000,000.

Embu County is a home to about 600 SMEs (Embu County Trade and Industry department, 2023) operating in diverse areas such as cash crop farming, transportation industry, private hospitals, schools and colleges, hotel industry, wholesale and supermarkets, manufacturing industry, manufacturing, real estate among others (Embu County Trade and Industry department, 2023; Makundi, 2021). According to Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS, 2021), the SME sector employs almost 88 percent of the households in Embu County. The SME performance has however been weakening with most of the SMEs (close to 40 %) closing down due to not being to operate the small enterprises (GOK report, 2019).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The SME sector in Kenya is estimated to employ 15 million people. The sector accounts for 88 % of the jobs created in the country and is the main player towards the GDP of the country as it contributes to more than 40 % of the country's GDP (Sansa, 2019; Runde, Savoy & Staguhn, 2021). The SME sector has been identified under vision 2030 as one of the major players that will steer the nation's dream of solving the employment problems.

SMEs have however been claimed to face significant challenges that deprive them from growth and performance. In various economic sectors, the growth and performance of SMEs has consistently been an issue discussed by various stakeholders in different economic forums. Inadequate cash flows and working capital have also been singled out as among the contributors that prevent the entities from remaining profitable and grow (Makundi, 2021). The report by Deloitte Kenya (2024) revealed that the SME

sector in Kenya experience numerous challenges which make them experience reduced growth and dismal performance. The report further established that only 15 percent of the SMEs celebrate their fifth year in operation with more than 40 percent being unable to carry out their operations for more than two years due to declining performance. World Bank Survey points out that almost 90 % of the SMEs in developing countries face growth challenges exposing them to credit constraints in any case they intent to increase their investment (Kirikiru & Kalui; Wangui, 2020).

Several studies have been conducted to fill the gaps on performance of SMEs but many gaps have not been filled by the studies. The studies by Mukundi (2021), Kamau and Kyalo (2022) all overlook the role of marketing strategies in determining the financial performance of SMEs. Although the study by Dambo and Igoni (2023) focuses on marketing strategies, it does not involve marketing strategies such as E-marketing strategy. The study by Usani *et al.* (2023) established positive relationship between marketing strategies and SME performance. However, the study was conducted in Nigeria. The current study focuses on how marketing strategies affect SME performance while taking into consideration product strategy, pricing strategy, e-promotion and place marketing strategy.

1.3 Objectives

1.3.1 General Objectives

To examine how the marketing blend approach influences the results of small and medium-sized production businesses within Embu County, Kenya.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To investigate the effect of product marketing strategy on performance of small and medium manufacturing enterprises in Embu County, Kenya

- ii. To examine the effect of pricing marketing strategy on performance of small and medium manufacturing enterprises in Embu County, Kenya
- iii. To determine the effect of E-promotion marketing strategy on performance of small and medium manufacturing enterprises in Embu County, Kenya
- iv. To examine the effect of distribution decisions on performance of small and medium manufacturing enterprises in Embu County, Kenya

1.4 Research Questions

- i. Product marketing strategy does not significantly affect performance of small and medium manufacturing enterprises in Embu County, Kenya?
- ii. Pricing marketing strategy does not significantly affect performance of small and medium manufacturing enterprises in Embu County, Kenya?
- iii. E-promotion marketing strategy does not significantly affect performance of small and medium manufacturing enterprises in Embu County, Kenya?
- iv. Distribution decision strategy does not significantly affect performance of small and medium manufacturing enterprises in Embu County, Kenya?

1.5 Research Hypothesis

- i. Ho1: Product marketing strategy does not significantly affect performance of small and medium manufacturing enterprises in Embu County, Kenya?
- ii. Ho2: Pricing marketing strategy does not significantly affect performance of small and medium manufacturing enterprises in Embu County, Kenya?
- iii. Ho3: E-promotion marketing strategy does not significantly affect performance of small and medium manufacturing enterprises in Embu County, Kenya?
- iv. Ho4: Distribution decision strategy does not significantly affect performance of small and medium manufacturing enterprises in Embu County, Kenya?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study reveals how various marketing strategies may impact. The study is important first to the management and owners of the SMEs as they will be able to get guidance based on the study on the study findings on the most appropriate marketing strategies they should adopt in order to improve on their performance. It has been noted that the SMEs are the major employers and contribute to more than 40% of the national GDP, and hence the national government may also benefit from the study findings as it will be able to formulate policies concerning various marketing strategies that may be affecting the performance of SMEs in one way or another. The study will also benefit the researcher and academicians as it will add knowledge on marketing strategies and performance of SMEs.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This research centers on promotional approaches and effectiveness of industrial SMEs within Embu County, Kenya. The promotional approaches considered in this research encompass goods strategy, cost strategy, and digital promotion. The study focuses on manufacturing SMEs in Embu County, since apart from playing a key role on the national GDP, they are also the key employers in the county and also influence positively on the economy of the county. The study is supported by dynamic capability theory, economic pricing theory, systems theory and innovation diffusion theory and targets the manufacturing SMEs that fulfill the threshold spelt under the MSME bill 2012 and fully registered to operate in the county. According to Embu County Trade and Industry department report (2023) the county has 53 SMEs operating in manufacturing sector driven by specific areas such as textile production, food processing and chemical manufacturing. The 53 manufacturing SMEs therefore form the target population for this study. The study was conducted between January 2025

and February 2025. The investigation utilized firsthand information, which shall be gathered through the application of research surveys.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

Performance of SMEs is often a sensitive subject, as owners or managers may be reluctant to disclose key details such as profitability levels, sales volumes, or growth rates due to concerns over confidentiality or competitive exposure. In this study, participants were assured that the research was conducted purely for academic purposes and that all data collected would be handled with the highest level of confidentiality. To foster openness and accuracy in responses, the researcher emphasized that no information provided would be shared with other SMEs, competitors, or any third party. Additionally, data would be reported in aggregated form, ensuring that the identity and individual performance metrics of each enterprise remained anonymous. This assurance was crucial in encouraging respondents to provide honest and complete information on aspects related to product strategies, pricing approaches, e-promotion efforts, and distribution decisions, thereby enabling the study to meet its objectives effectively.

1.9 Organization of the Study

The undertaking was structured into five sections: part one, part two, part three, part four, and part five. Part, one initiated the research. Part two examined prior scholarly works relevant to the field of investigation and explored the foundational principles supporting the research. Part three detailed the study's methods, which included the intended participants, information-gathering tools, information acquisition processes, and the interpretation and presentation of the collected data.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This segment of the research showcases the literature synthesis, encompassing the guiding theory, prior studies, and the conceptual model employed herein. The theories underpinning the study are discussed and the research gaps are identified.

2.2 Theoretical Framework.

2.2.1 Dynamic Capability Theory

The first proposers of the dynamic capability theory (DCT) were Teece, Pisano & Shuen (1997). DCT outlines the ways in which an organization in business adapts and creates heterogeneous resource positions in the situations when the business environment is deemed to be dynamic. According to the proponents, the present economic dynamics have exposed businesses to more challenges than it had ever been witnessed before. This has been mainly occasioned by the continuous business environment shifts in technological, competitive, regulatory, marketing and social domains. Business performance among the enterprises is negatively affected in any case the stated environmental changes are not addressed (Kiveu & Ofafa, 2013; Kimathi, Mukulu & Odhiambo, 2020).

Dynamic Capability Theory is argued to be an extension of RBV of an entity (Teece *et al.*, 1997). Even as RBV tries to expose the circumstances that may influence a firm to achieve competitive advantage depending on the amount of resources and capabilities it may have, it is argued to be static in nature making it not adequate to explain the entity's performance in any business environment that is experiencing constant changes. This is the reason behind coming up with DCT to fill the identified gaps.

Dynamic Capability Theory portrays the concept's attribute as potential (skill), thus proposing a distinct form of proficiency. The intended outcome of this proficiency is further defined as the construction, combination, and restructuring of outside and inside proficiencies. The theory also emphasizes the external notion of the enterprise, characterized as the swiftly evolving context, as a means to address the identified limitations of the Resource-Based View theory. The business capabilities are further assumed to be typically built and not bought implying that how they are made or evolve are linked with the firm's processes that are determined by the entity's position on status and the business paths that were adapted in the past. The theory also believes that the dynamic capabilities are diverse across companies and the way they are dealt with affects the performance as it is a direct outcome of dynamic capabilities (Kimathi, Mukulu & Odhiambo, 2020; Galvin, Rice & Liao, 2014).

Teece (2007) contends that dynamic aptitudes can be segmented into the ability to cultivate, institute, and utilize three distinct proficiencies crucial for sustaining organizational effectiveness amidst a setting characterized by intense rivalry. They are; ability to seize opportunities, shape and sense opportunities and ensure the firms are able to maintain competitiveness by protecting, combining, reconfiguring and if possible enhancing the firm's intangible and tangible assets. DCT gives an outline of the current business environment that is consistently faced with high competition. In such an environment, it is not easy to attain equilibrium thereby creating a space to consistent and continuous customer engagement through various marketing strategies so as to attain superior performance in the firm. The business has to seize notable opportunities by re-examining its distribution decisions by finding out how its products reach the targeted clients from the production stage to customers and also come up with ways of ensuring that most of the target customers are well aware of their products through

promotional services. This theory is useful as it explains the need for exploring marketing strategies especially in a business environment that is characterised by high competition and based on the current digital and technological shifts in marketing. This theory is therefore very relevant in addressing the e-promotion strategy and distribution decisions that the SME has to adopt in order to ensure the products reach the target clients, ensure there are proper compensation margins and the clients are well aware of the products by the firm.

2.2.2 Innovation Diffusion Theory

Innovation diffusion theory received much developments from Rogers (1995) who views innovation as a project or an idea that can be accepted to be new. The theory is basically founded on an assumption that an innovative idea is adopted by planned or sudden spread of new ideas. In adopting a new idea, it is basically the need for change that the developers consider to be much important. Innovations may refer to ideas, products, practices, technologies that are new to the society and are shared or spread via communication by the society members (Rogers, 2009).

The choice to adopt to a new idea or innovation lies with the expected advantages, the compatibility to the current processes and systems, the nature and complexity, how easy it might be in trying it and if the outcomes of the trial stage are clearly visible. This theory gives an idea that the SMEs have to be innovative for them to come up with new products or products that may be considered to be new by the clients. The SMEs that may consider to adopt to product strategy may consider adopting new technologies and be much innovative, at the same time source information that may prevent them from the uncertainties that may come with adopting product strategy.

The theory further points out that the SMEs may also apply innovation theory in targeting new markets for their products and improving customer relations (Kithinji, 2014; Minama, 2016). The theory is relevant to the study as it addresses product strategy as a way of ensuring the firm improves its performance. The quality of the products, branding and labelling can be done well and appropriately when the SME considers coming up with new ways of ensuring that they deliver improved and differentiated products to the clients.

2.2.3 Systems Theory

Systems theory was first suggested by Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1928) and went further developments by Ross Ashby (1956). Hartman (2010) views systems theory as a theory that is very key in any organization operations and further considers it to be a good tool for entrepreneurs since it provides a base for analysing external and internal business dynamics. The theory recognizes all entities as comprising of processing inputs and outputs. These organizations are likewise deemed to possess internal and external components and frameworks that offer substantial value in depicting a practical summary of any commercial enterprise. Furthermore, a system is regarded as an assembly of elements connected to guarantee the intended objective is attained. Eliminating a single component of the framework ultimately alters the essence of the framework (Smit & Cronje, 2002).

In management the effect of systems theory is that the shareholders of the business look at the business from a wider perspective (Rue & Byars, 2004). Rue and Byars further argue that's systems theory considers numerous organization parts and to be specific, the relations of the parts in the system. A good example is how the tastes and preferences from the customers and competition affect its strategic goals.

Based on systems theory, pricing approach is shaped by the interplay and interconnectedness of pricing objectives alongside both internal and external pressures. The degree of intersection among these elements offers a lucid depiction of the impact level of each of these factors on the pricing approach as a promotional tactic and general organizational success (Jangeta, Faitira, Edson & Miriam, 2015; Kimathi *et al.*, 2020). This theory is significant to this study since it puts into perspective on how the owners of the SMEs may ensure their SMEs have increased or improved performance by adopting pricing strategy in making firms attain a competitive edge over the rival businesses.

2.2.4 Firm Performance Theory

The theory suggested by Penrose (1959) with an argument that business entities must make use of both internal and external resources so as to attain an edge over their competitors in marketing of their products and achieving profitability status. Based on firm performance theory, an enterprise profitability index may go up to a maximum level as time moves though it may not play a role in constraining it in size.

The bottom line of a firm mainly relies on the efficiency of the managers or entrepreneurs in formulating various policies and putting them into practice so as to ensure that the firm has increased performance. The business operations in this case depend on the opportunities in production and they may increase depending on the available feedback loop between the business and its surroundings. The business opportunities that may be directly linked with increased performance or growth may be deemed to be very relevant to firm performance theory (Toromo, 2020). Penrose (1959) asserts that the performance which may have a long time effect on the success of any business may rely on how well and effectiveness of coordination and communication by the business managers.

Borrowing from the firm performance theory, the capacity of the resources available to enterprise managers, and specifically the ability of the managers ensuring that there is proper coordination of activities and policies and integrating new members and policies or strategies in the business has been a major contributor to declining business performance for many enterprises. SMEs mainly operate as organizations or individual owned business and their management has to come up with proper measures and policies to ensure they achieve higher performance and remain stable in the current market faced with globalization, increased competition and unforeseen economic crisis. Puts performance of the firm mainly on the policies and strategies that the top management have to utilize so as to ensure the business improve on its performance.

2.3 Empirical Review

2.3.1 Product Strategy and Performance of SMEs

Kimathi, Muluku, and Odhiambo's (2020) research aimed to assess the premise that new product development lacks a notable impact on Kenyan SME performance. Employing a descriptive survey method, the study focused on MSMEs within Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. It utilized both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze data gathered via questionnaires. Through hypothesis assessment, the research determined a robust positive link between a product innovation strategy and MSME performance. This study however focused on MSMEs and was done in Thraka Nithi County thereby creating a contextual gap. The current study specifically targets the SMEs and will be conducted in Embu County.

Kenu's (2019) research on how marketing mix tactics influence SME success aimed to ascertain the degree to which product novelty strategy forecast SME performance. The investigation employed a causal research approach to expose the magnitude of product innovation's impact on success. The study validated the alternate assertion that product

strategy significantly correlated with SME performance. Nevertheless, that research centered on SMEs in Ethiopian southern region's urban centers. The present study broadens the population scope by focusing on SMEs in both town and country locations within Embu County, Kenya.

The study on marketing strategies and performance of SMEs in Port Harcourt by Dambo and Igoni (2023) had a null hypothesis framed that product strategy did not have a significant relationship with performance of SMEs. Through hypothesis testing, it was established that product strategy had a moderate relationship with SME performance. The study therefore rejected the null hypothesis and recommended the SME managers to develop strategies that were key to enabling them provide solutions to the problems customers face. The study was however conducted in Nigeria.

Igbaji and Eke (2022) executed a probe to ascertain the connection between service promotion tactics and efficacy of retirement savings managers. The research employed a descriptive survey method and gathered data via personally delivered questionnaires. Through regression analysis, a robust positive correlation between service promotion and efficacy was discovered. Nevertheless, the investigation centered on retirement savings managers, not the small business domain, thus establishing a conceptual divergence that this present study seeks to resolve.

2.3.2 Pricing Strategy and Performance of SMEs

The study by Dambo and Igini (2023) on marketing strategies and performance of SMEs in Port Harcourt was framed on a null hypothesis that pricing strategy did not significantly affect performance. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The researchers established that there exists positive and moderate relationship between pricing strategy and performance of SMEs in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. The study further

established that when the pricing strategy is better, there are higher chances of improved SME performance. The findings agreed with that of Virvilaite, Saladiene and Skindaras (2019) who also established that there was positive significant effect between pricing strategy and customer loyalty.

The study conducted by Agboola, Adeola and Ayo (2024) on pricing strategy and profitability aimed to establish how pricing strategy affected profitability of SMEs in Agricultural approach and calculated the sample using Slovin;s technique. that the innovative pricing strong statistical significant effect on profitability of Agricultural SMEs. The study therefore concluded that by the SMEs adopting novel pricing strategies, they could enhance their financial performance. This study was however done in agricultural sector thereby creating a conceptual gap that the current study aims to bridge by conducting the study in manufacturing sector.

Osano's (2019) Kenyan SME growth study concerning global marketing strategy scrutinized the impact of marketing approaches, notably product quality tactics, on SME enlargement. The research assessed the premise that marketing approaches had no operative link with Kenyan SMEs' global growth. Surveys were utilized to gather data, which underwent both inferential and descriptive analytical methods. Kenyan producers situated in Nairobi formed the study's focus. The research determined a noteworthy positive correlation between product quality marketing tactics and SME expansion, thus disproving the initial premise. The study however focused on SMEs in manufacturing sector. SMEs operate in diverse market spectrum and the current study targets the SMEs irrespective of the spectrum in which they operate.

Kenu (2020) study examined the relationship between pricing strategy and performance of SMEs. The study conducted hypothesis testing thereby testing the null hypothesis

that stated: pricing hypothesis has no significant effect on performance. The study rejected the null hypothesis as it was established that pricing strategy played a significant role in strengthening the SMEs performance. This study however concentrated on SMEs in urban towns in southern region of Ethiopia. The current study expands the base of the population by targeting on SMEs in both urban and rural settings in Embu County, Kenya

2.3.3 E- Promotion Marketing Strategy and Performance of SMEs

Kimathi, Mukulu, and Odhiambo's (2020) research sought to explore digital promotion's influence on Kenyan small business outcomes. Employing a descriptive survey structure, the investigation focused on micro, small, and medium enterprises within Tharaka Nithi County. Descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized to dissect both narrative and numerical information. The research determined that while electronic promotion explained merely 39% of the MSMEs' performance fluctuation, it exhibited a robust positive link with results. Nevertheless, that study solely examined digital promotion as a marketing tactic. The present research encompasses additional promotional approaches, given the prior study's finding that digital promotion only impacted 39% of the performance.

The study by Usani *et al.* (2024) examines the impact of electronic marketing on SMEs performance in Cross River State, Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive survey design and used questionnaires in collecting primary data. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis. The study came to a finding that electronic strategy had a significant positive impact on the SMEs performance. The study recommended SMEs to be more aggressive so as to explore electronic marketing strategies and any other marketing strategies that may come with advancements in technology. Electronic marketing has seen very minimal attention from the previous studies conducted on

marketing strategies in Kenya and the current study aims to narrow this gap by determining the impact of electronic marketing on performance of SMEs.

Etuk et al.'s (2022) research on how marketing tactics affected Bolt taxi service uptake in Calabar, Nigeria, employed a causal design with questionnaires for data collection. Their findings indicated that digital promotion significantly impacted riders' decisions to use Bolt. However, their work centered solely on the transport industry, specifically taxi services, unlike this study's focus on manufacturing SMEs in Embu County, Kenya.

Sunday et al.'s (2021) investigation sought to determine e-marketing's influence on SME outcomes. They used a cross-sectional survey and questionnaires to gather primary data from 295 SME owners, revealing a substantial positive link. Nevertheless, their study examined performance from the operators' perspective, neglecting e-marketing's impact on consumer views and contentment, a gap this research intends to fill.

2.3.4 Distribution Decision Strategy and Performance of SMEs.

Abebe (2019) conducted a study to determine how distribution decision (place) strategy affected performance of SMEs among the selected SMEs in the manufacturing sector in Ethiopia's Southern region. The study adopted casual research design and used questionnaires as a primary data collection instrument. The study used correlation analysis to establish the relationship between the variables. It was established that there was significantly negative relation between distribution decision strategy and performance of the SMEs. The study recommended further research on the negative relationship between place strategy and performance of SMEs.

Amin (2021) examines the effect of the everchanging market forces on embracing creative strategies. The study explores how place strategy affects SMEs performance

in Abuja while utilizing the mixed research method and involving 166 SMEs. The study findings revealed positive relationship between place marketing strategy and organizations entrepreneurial orientation. The study however focused on a different concept entrepreneurial orientation hence creating a conceptual gap. Also a different geographical scope. Study narrows on these gaps by focusing on performance of smes in embu county, kenya.

2.4 Summary of Literature Review and Research Gaps

With businesses being aggressive and being able to adopt to various marketing strategies, there are high chances that they may see an increased customer base and also increase their sales volume. The SMEs have to be very aggressive on which strategies that they may find effective in their business since the strategy that may work for another SME may not necessarily work for the other. Although various research has been done in line to marketing strategies and performance, various research gaps still exists. Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Summary of Literature Review

Author (Year)	Focus of the Study	Findings	Noted Gaps	Focus of Current Study
Usani <i>et al.</i> (2024)	Impact of electronic marketing on SMEs performance in Cross River State, Nigeria	Electronic strategy had a significant positive impact on the SMEs performance	Electronic marketing has seen very minimal attention from the previous studies conducted on marketing strategies in Kenya	The current study aims to narrow this gap by determining the impact of electronic marketing on performance of SMEs
Agboola, Adeola and Ayo (2024)	Pricing strategy and profitability aimed to establish how pricing strategy affected	The innovative pricing strategy had a strong statistical significant effect	This study was however done in agricultural sector thereby creating a conceptual gap	The current study aims to bridge by conducting the study in manufacturing sector.

	profitability of SMEs in Agricultural sector	on profitability of Agricultural SMEs		
Dambo and Igoni (2023)	Product strategy and SME performance	Product strategy had a moderate relationship with SME performance	The study was however conducted in Nigeria	The current study focuses on SMEs performance in Embu County
Etuk <i>et al.</i> (2022)	Marketing strategies on adoption of passengers of Bolt's taxi services in Calabar, Nigeria	Electronic marketing has a significant influence on the passengers adoption to riding on Bolt's services	The study however focuses on Transport sector alone and specifically on taxi business	The current study focuses on all the SMEs and is also conducted in Embu County, Kenya.
Githinji and Njagi (2022)	Marketing strategies and the growth of SMEs	Marketing strategies influenced growth of SMEs	This study did not however disintegrate marketing strategies and how various strategies affect performance	The current study targets various marketing strategies and aims to fill this gap by establishing how each marketing strategy effects performance of SMEs.
Amin (2021)	Effect of the ever changing market forces on embracing creative strategies	Positive relationship between place marketing strategy and organizations entrepreneurial orientation	The study however focused on a different concept entrepreneurial orientation hence creating a conceptual gap	The current study narrows on these gaps by focusing on performance of SMEs in Embu County, Kenya
Sunday, Eka, Nnana and Olesegun (2021)	E-marketing and performance of SMEs	E-marketing had a significant positive effect on SME performance	However done on performance of SMEs through the point of view of operators and thereby not explaining the effect of E-marketing strategy	Aims to address the noted research gap

			on consumer's perception and satisfaction	
Kimathi, Muluku and Odhiambo (2020)	Product innovation and SME performance	There was strong positive correlation between product innovation strategy and performance of MSMEs	This study however focused on MSMEs and was done in Thraka Nithi County	The current study specifically targets the SMEs and will be conducted in Embu County.
Kenu (2020)	Pricing strategy and performance of SMEs	Pricing strategy played a significant role in strengthening the SMEs performance	This study however concentrated on SMEs in urban towns in southern region of Ethiopia	The current study expands the base of the population by targeting on SMEs in both urban and rural settings in Embu County, Kenya
Osano (2019)	Role of global marketing strategy on growth of SMEs in Kenya	There was a significant positive relationship between product quality marketing strategies and SME expansion	The study however focused on SMEs in manufacturing sector	targets the SMEs irrespective of the spectrum in which they operate
Kimathi, Mukulu and Odhiambo (2019)	Effect of digital marketing on performance of MSMEs in Kenya	Although digital marketing contributed to only 39 % of the MSMEs performance variation, it strongly and positively correlated with performance	This study focuses only on digital marketing as the marketing strategy	The current study includes other marketing strategies

Kenu (2019)	Marketing mix strategy on performance of SMEs	Product strategy had significant relationship with performance of SMEs	However concentrated on SMEs in urban towns in southern region of Ethiopia	The current study expands the base of the population by targeting on SMEs in both urban and rural settings in Embu County, Kenya
Abebe (2019)	How distribution decision (place) strategy affected performance of SMEs among the selected SMEs in the manufacturing	It was established that there was significantly negative relation between distribution decision strategy and performance of the SMEs	The study recommended further research on the negative relationship between place strategy and performance of SMEs	The current study seeks to determine the effect of place strategy 1on performance of SMEs

Source: Author 2024

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The independent variables for the study are marketing strategies (product strategy, pricing strategy and electronic marketing strategy) while the dependent variable is the performance of SMEs. The predictor variables associate with the dependent variable as shown in figure 2.1

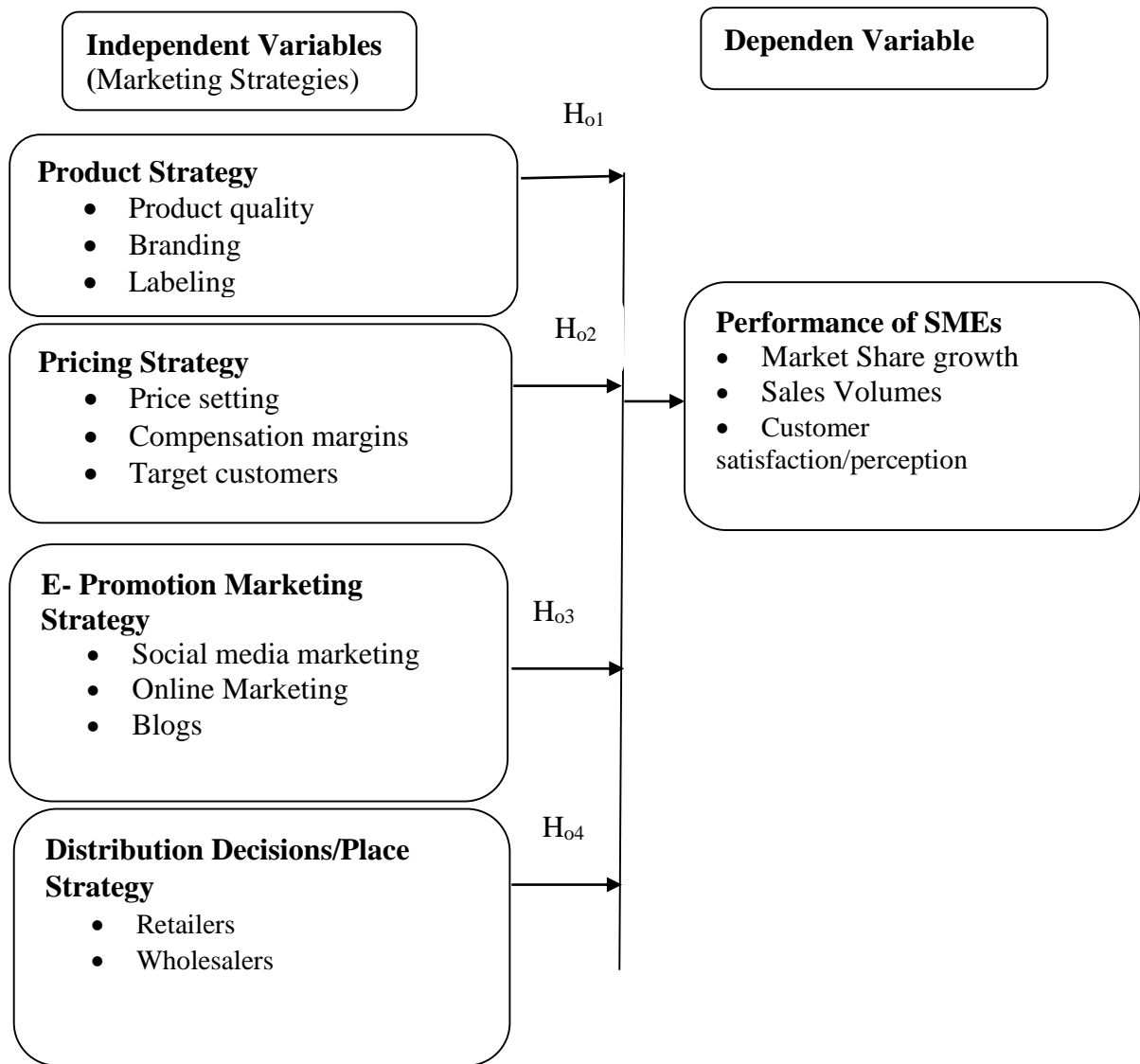


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author 2024

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This part elaborates on the approaches and processes the investigation employed throughout the research timeframe.

3.2 Research Design

A research design is a pathway that directs the study process. According to Carr and Griffin (2010) and Goeffrey (2019), research design is the main plan that outlines the procedures and methods that the researcher uses in collection of data and analyzing the data. This study used descriptive survey design. Through descriptive survey design, the study chooses a representative sample who take part in the study and inferences are made on the whole population based on the outcomes from the sample that took part in the study. Descriptive survey design is also good in describing a circumstance and establishing relationship between the variables (Lans *et al.*, 2002). According to Kothari (2014) descriptive survey design gives the information as it is. Going by the descriptive survey design, the data was collected from the managers of the SMEs in Embu County, from a specific target population.

3.3 Target Population

Categories groups, businesses, people or elements that have similar traits and the researcher considers them appropriate to be involved in the study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2019; Sekran & Bougie, 2010). The study targeted the SMEs that fulfill the threshold spelt under the MSME bill 2012 and fully registered to operate in the county. According to Embu County Trade and Industry department report (2023) Embu County has 53 manufacturing firms operating as SMEs in various sectors such as chemical manufacturing, food processing, and textile production. Consequently, the 53 within

the production constitute the intended group for this research. The directors of the surveyed SMEs served as the informants (observation unit) for this investigation, whereas the SMEs represent the examination unit for the study.

Table 3.1: Target Population

Sector	Number of SMEs
Chemical Manufacturing	12
Food Processing	28
Textile Production	13
Total	53

3.4 Sampling Design and Sample Size

Sampling is the process of coming up with enough number of appropriate items from the population (Bougie & Sekran, 2013). The study arrived at sample size by using census design. Census design is very appropriate sampling design where the researcher wants to include all the elements in the target population in the actual study due to their relatively small number (Kumar & Singh, 2014). Since the target population of this study is relatively small, all the 53 SME firms operating in manufacturing sector will be included in study. This brought the sample size to 53.

Table 3.2: Sampling size

Category of Manufacturing SMEs	Population (N)	Sample Size (n)	Sampling Technique
Chemical Manufacturing	8	8	Census
Food Processing	27	27	Census
Textile Production	18	18	Census
Total	53	53	Census

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

Data collection instruments referred to the tools used in gathering information. In this study, data from the SMEs was obtained using structured questionnaires. According to Kothari and Gaurav (2014), questionnaires are ideal when the researcher seeks to collect data from a large population or intends to obtain substantial information within a short period. They can be widely applied in economic and business surveys and are generally free from interviewer bias (Cooper & Schindler, 2012). Questionnaires were chosen for this study because they facilitated the efficient collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, enabled standardization of responses, and enhanced comparability across respondents. The questionnaires were framed in both close-ended and open-ended formats, and in some instances, incorporated a 5-point Likert scale to capture the intensity of respondents' views.

3.6 Pilot Study

In order to test reliability and validity of the research questionnaires, piloting was done so as to determine the accuracy of the research instrument. Piloting should involve 10% of the sample (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2019), and going by this rule, the study involved

5 SMEs in piloting. The ambiguous questions will be noted and removed or edited prior to the actual study.

3.6.1 Validity of the Research Instrument

Accuracy denotes tool assesses its intended constructs (Magigi, 2015). Through validity process it becomes possible to detect any weaknesses in questions framed, flaws and limitations. Research instruments validity can be improved by focusing on content validity. Content validity is the measure of which a research instrument provides enough reporting on a certain topic that is being studied. Content validity can be improved by use of expert judgement (Orodho, 2017). The researcher consulted experts, academicians, peers, professors and supervisor on their opinion concerning the designed questions. Their opinions were taken into considerations so as the questions.

3.6.2 Reliability of the Research Instrument

A dependable data-gathering tool can yield identical information across numerous trials (Orodho, 2017). Instrument reliability can thus be gauged by the research tool's consistency degree. The questionnaires' internal consistency was ascertained via Cronbach's Alpha metric. A calculated value exceeding 0.7 indicates the research instrument possesses reliability. Table 3.1 displays the dependability outcomes.

Table 3.3: Reliability Results

Variable	Cronbach'sAlpha
Product	.783
Pricing	.767
E-Promotion	.845
Distribution decisions	.880

Source: Research Data (2025)

Based on Table 3.1, all the variables were used in the study since they attained the minimum threshold of 0.7 Cronbach’s alpha coefficient, implying that they met the required reliability index.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

The investigator commenced the information gathering phase following acquisition of all necessary research authorizations from pertinent institutions, as guided by the university's postgraduate faculty. Given the county's expanse and the varied industries encompassing the manufacturing SMEs, the researcher engaged three research aides who assisted in distributing the research tools. The surveys were handed out and subsequently retrieved for scrutiny and interpretations. The research aides received training on the data gathering tool, ethical considerations of the study, and were further supported to guarantee procurement of the requisite data.

3.8 Data Analysis and Presentation

After data has been were examined so as to find out if there were any questionnaires that were not fully responded to and if in any case the such questions may affect the study outcomes. Thereafter, the data was organized and then keyed into computer excel

spread sheet. The data was then transferred to the SPSS which will facilitate the analysis. The study used descriptive analysis tools (mean and standard deviation) in analyzing quantitative data. Qualitative data was grouped and presented in form of write ups and will be key in supplementing the quantitative data. In order to determine the degree of relationship between the variables, the study used inferential analysis tools (regression coefficients and Pearson correlations). The study conducted regression and correlation analysis on each independent variable and dependent separately. A multiple linear developed as shown in. Frequency tables and charts were further used in data presentations.

Equation 3.1

Where;

Y = Performance of SMEs

X_1 = Product Innovation Strategy

X_2 = Pricing Strategy

X_3 = E- Marketing Strategy

X_4 = Distribution decision strategy

ϵ = Error term

β_0 = Coefficient of the intercept (Constant)

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$, respective variables regression coefficients

3.9 Ethical Considerations

All the data sourced from the SMEs remained confidential and never shared with any other SME or any party whatsoever. The data was also only used to facilitate the study. The researcher also obtained all the required research permits prior to embarking on the actual study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODS

4.1 Introduction

The discussions and findings of this study as directed by the data collection, analyzing and interpretation are exclusively presented in this chapter. Descriptive analysis tools such as means standard deviations, frequencies and inferential analysis tools which are regression coefficients and correlation coefficients have been used in the study to provide responses to the research hypothesis in the study. The chapter focuses on key areas like, demographic information of the responses, descriptive and inferential analysis of the data on the variables in the study.

4.2 Response Rate

By use of census design as the sampling design, the study targeted 53 managers who were the unit of observation in the 53 firms (unit of analysis). From the 53 research questionnaires the researcher distributed during the field study, it was possible to receive 45 of them which had been dully filled as required. The filled questionnaires that were returned represented 84.91% of the total research questionnaires distributed implying that the study achieved a response rate of 84.91%. Adhering to the proposals from Orodho (2014) and Mugenda and Mugenda (2019), this return proportion is adequate for an investigator to execute a thorough examination. The research undertaken by Kamau and Mwenda (2020) attained a return proportion of 50.8%, the investigation performed by Wakaba and Thuo (2021) registered a return proportion of 53.5, while Odenyo and Rosemary (2018) reached a return proportion of 53.02%. This suggests that the return proportion realized in this investigation satisfied the benchmark for a comprehensive examination to be conducted.

4.3 Demographic Information

The demographic information concerning the unit of observation and unit of analysis for those who took part in the study is presented in this section. Educational qualifications of the respondents, number of the years they have served in the SMEs, the ownership of their businesses and estimated daily sales are the demographic information presented in this sub section.

4.3.1 Educational Qualifications

Educational qualification and level of specialized training play a very key role for the managers to be able steer their SMEs in the right direction through adopting the appropriate and unique strategies meant to ensure that their business perform and meet the expected outcomes. Consequently, the research aimed to ascertain the respondents' educational attainment. Table 4.1 presents a synopsis of the outcomes.

Table 4.1: Respondents Educational Qualifications

Level of Education	Frequency	Percent
Certificate	8	17.8
Diploma	20	44.4
Bachelor's Degree	17	37.8
Masters	0	0
Total	45	100

Source: Research Data (2025)

The findings from Table 4.1 show that majority of the manufacturing SME managers (20) had at least a diploma level of education (44.4%). Those with certificate level of education (who were 8) accounted for 17.8% while those with the first degree were 17 representing 37.8 %. Cumulatively, the findings indicate that majority of the respondents (82.2%) had attained at least a diploma level of education. This implies

that most of the respondents were therefore of higher academic qualification and could interpret the research instrument without much difficulties and in turn provide the answers accordingly.

4.3.2 Number of Years Worked in SMEs

The research aimed to ascertain the duration respondents had been employed within their manufacturing SMEs in their respective roles. The outcomes are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Number of Years Worked in the SMEs

Number of Years	F	%
1-2	9	20
3-5	19	42.3
6-8	11	24.4
More than 8	6	13.3
Total	45	100

The data presented in Table 4.2 indicates that 19 (42.3%) participants had worked at their respective organizations for a duration spanning 3 to 5 years. Eleven respondents, constituting 24.4%, had been employed for a period of 6 to 8 years, while 9 (20%) had held their positions for 1 to 2 years. Only 6 individuals (13.3%) had worked for over 8 years. Cumulatively 80 % in their capacities in their firms for at least 3 years. This is an indication that the respondents were well aware of all the marketing strategies that their businesses were adopting in order to attain their objectives and hence were best suited to respond to the structured questionnaires to facilitate this study.

4.3.3 Number of Employees in the Business

Considering the operational definition of SMEs in this research, the investigator aimed to ascertain the workforce size of each SME to ensure the analysis unit strictly aligns with the classification employed herein. Table 4.3 presents a synopsis of the employee count within the surveyed enterprises.

Table 4.3: Number of Employees in each SME

Number of Employees	F	%
10-20	22	48.9
20-30	14	31.1
30-50	6	13.3
More than 50	3	6.7
Total	45	100

The data from Table 4.3 shows that all the firms involved in this study fell under the SME sector as per the classification of this study. Furthermore, majority of the unit of analysis (48.9%) had number of employees ranging from 10 to 20 employees, 31.1 % had employees' numbers between 20to 30 while 13.3 % of the firms had between 30-50 employees. It was also noted that only 6.7% of the firms had more than 50 employees.

4.3.4 Estimated Daily Sales

The study estimated the daily sales the firms were able to make each day on average. Figures shown in Table 4.4 shows the average daily sales for the firms that took part in this study.

Table 4.4: Average Daily Sales

Average Daily Sales (KShs.)	Frequency	Percent
Less than 10,000	0	0
10,001-25,000	0	0
25001-35,000	7	15.6
35,001-50,000	14	31.1
More than 50,000	24	53.3
Total	45	100

Source: Research Data (2025)

On daily basis, the manufacturing smes in the study (53.3%) recorded average daily sales of more than Kshs. 50,000. It is also established that 31.1 % of the SMEs had daily average sales of between KShs 35,001 and KShs.50, 000 and 15.6% of the SMEs recorded daily average sales of between KShs. 25001-35,000.

4.4 Descriptive Analysis

In order to come up with an explanation on, a descriptive analysis was performed on each variable. The descriptive statistics employed in this research, which aims to examine how marketing blend tactics influence the success of SMS production businesses within Embu County, Kenya, consist of averages and dispersion measures.

4.4.1 Product Strategy and Performance

The study requested the respondents to indicate the marketing strategies their firms had adopted so as to ensure they attained the projected performance. Figure 4.2 Shows the responses based on the categorization of the marketing strategies.



Figure 4.1: Marketing Mix Strategies

Source: Research Data (2025)

From Figure 4.1, it is clear that most of the firms embraced to E-promotion strategy in order to improve the sales thereby improving their performance. When asked why they preferred this strategy, majority noted the advancements in technology, targeting a specific group of clients who are very popular with evolution in social networks and being able to reach very many potential clients using a single platform. Other strategies that the firms had adopted were pricing strategy followed by product strategy in that order. Some other marketing strategies that firms adopted included packaging, process and place strategies.

The respondents were further asked to rate on the scale of 1-5 how they agreed or did not product strategy.

Table 4.5: Product Strategy and Performance

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Improving the quality of our products has increased our sales	45	4.24	.529
Coming up with new products in the market has increased the number of our sales	45	4.31	.557
Branding has made our market share growth increase	45	4.31	.557
Labeling has increased customer loyalty	45	4.09	.557
Good packaging of our products has improved customer satisfaction	45	4.11	.438
Valid N (listwise)	45		

Source: Research Data (2025)

According to Table 4.5, most participants concurred that enhancing product quality boosted their firms' sales (M= 4.24; SD= 0.529). Participants also agreed that novel market offerings augmented sales (M= 4.31; SD= 0.557). Furthermore, most participants assented that branding elevated the firm's market share (M= 4.31; SD=0.557), labeling improved customer allegiance (M= 4.09; SD= 0.557), and suitable packaging enhanced product loyalty (M= 4.11; SD= 0.438). The low standard deviations suggest minimal response variations. Dambo and Igoni (2023) posit that product strategy dictates offered goods and services. These results align with Igbaji and Eke (2022), who affirm that product strategy enables a firm to fortify its performance, evidenced by greater customer loyalty and market dominance.

4.4.2 Pricing Strategy and Performance

The respondents gave their ratings on various statements on pricing strategy and performance.

Table 4.6: Pricing Strategy and Performance

Statement	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
I consistently check on the prices of competitor items prior to setting prices for our products so as to increase sales volumes	45	4.02	.543
Our pricing decisions normally affect the market share that our SME control	45	3.96	.424
The pricing is mostly determined by the targeted market	45	4.13	.505
The pricing normally depends on the type of the product the firm sales to the clients	45	4.20	.405
Composite mean and standard deviation		4.077	.469

The outcomes in Table 4.6 illustrate that most supervisors concurred that examining competitor-set costs before establishing their own boosted their sales figures (M=4.02; SD=0.543). Participants also acknowledged that cost-setting choices influenced their held market proportions (M=3.96; SD=0.424). Furthermore, participants agreed that costing largely hinged on the intended consumer base (M=4.13; SD=0.505), and also depended on the nature of goods the entities offered to that base (M=4.20; SD=0.405). The element showed a total combined mean and standard deviation of M=4.077;

SD=0.469). This outcome clearly suggests that most participants agreed that pricing approach significantly impacted sales quantities and market share, consequently affecting SME performance. The small standard deviation implies minimal variations in the received responses. These results also corroborate the findings of Agbola, Adeola, and Ayo (2024), who contended that pricing approach considerably affected firm profitability, their performance metric.

4.4.3 E-Promotion Strategy and Performance

Participants were asked to assess the assertions regarding digital promotion tactics using a 1-5 scale indicating their level of agreement or disagreement with the statements on electronic promotion methods as a marketing blend approach. The outcomes are presented in Table 4.7

Table 4.7: E-Promotion Strategy and Performance

Statement	N	Me an	Std. Devi ation
Social media enables us reach more clients through various platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, etc	45	3.96	.601
We have the company website which has enabled many clients get information on our products and increased our market share	45	3.96	.475
We use personal blogs to reach more customers and improve the sales	45	3.09	1.083
Internet marketing has enabled the SME sell most of its products	45	4.16	.673
Mobile phones have made it easier to reach more clients	45	4.18	.535
		3.87	.6734

The outcomes evident in Table 4.7 indicate that a significant portion of the participants concurred that social media was a very important tool that enabled them reach various clients through platforms such as Facebook, whatsapp , Instagram, X among others through promotion of their products and advertisements on the said platforms with (M=3.96; SD= 0.601). Had the company websites that enabled the clients get access to information concerning their products which further improved their sales (M= 3.96; SD=.475). The managers further agreed that internet marketing had increased their sales (M= 4.16; SD= .673) and also agreed that it was easier to reach clients through

mobile phones (M= 4.18; SD= .535). However, most of the respondents did not have SMEs' personal blogs that could reach their clients and improve their sales with mean and standard deviation (M=3.09; SD=1.083).

The variable had an overall composite mean and standard deviation (M= 3.87; SD=.6734). This gives an indication that most of the managers agreed that e-promotion strategy greatly affected the performance of the firms evidenced by increased sales volumes, being able to reach many possible clients thereby increasing their market share. There were also very minimal disparities on the responses given evidenced by a small standard deviation of 0.6737. However, the main challenge to e-promotion was incorporating blogs to reach more clients as most of the firms did not have personal blogs targeting the clients. The findings agree with findings from the study conducted by Usani et al. (2024) who note that e-marketing is a very useful strategy that enables the firms to increase their performance. The SMEs however need to be more aggressive with the advancements and changes in technology so as to tap more using this marketing strategy.

4.4.4 Distribution Decision Strategy and Performance

The respondents were required to rate on a scale of 1 to 5 on how various statements on distribution decision strategy and performance. Table 4.8 summarizes the findings

Table 4.8: Distribution Decision Strategy and Performance

Statement	N	Mea n	Std. Devia tion
The distribution channels affect the amount of profits generated from sales	45	2.46	.785
Wholesalers have enabled our products easily reach the customers	45	3.64	.570
By ensuring our products are available to retailers, it has enabled the products to reach a wider customer base	45	4.18	.650
		3.42	0.668

Based on Table 4.8, participants did not concur with the assertion that supply routes influence the level of earnings derived from sales within their various organizations, noting a (M= 2.46; SD= 0.785). Conversely, participants affirmed that intermediaries facilitated easier access to consumers for their merchandise (M= 3.64; SD= 0.570).

Participants also concurred that making the firms' goods available to retailers allowed their offerings to reach a broader consumer segment (M= 4.18; SD= 0.650). The combined mean and standard deviation for the element was (M= 3.42; SD= 0.668), suggesting that the majority of participants were uncertain if the supply routes led to increased sales quantities or broadened the reach of their products to a larger clientele. Although it has been argued by Venugopal, Getenet & Yalew (2017) that distribution channels increase the sales thereby improving performance, contradictions have also been noted by Abebe (2019) who argue that distribution channels do not improve the performance of SMEs.

4.4.5 SME Performance

The respondents were requested to rate various statements attributing to the performance of the SMEs which they managed. The results are as presented in Table 4.9

Table 4.9: Performance of SMEs

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Adopted market strategies have Increased market share	45	4.36	.484
Adopted market strategies have Increased sales volumes	45	4.33	.522
Adopted market strategies have Increased customer satisfaction	45	4.22	.420
Adopted market strategies have Reduced customer defections	45	3.91	.417
Adopted market strategies have Increased production	45	4.09	.358
Valid N (listwise)	45		

Source: Research Data (2025)

Based on Table 4.9, participants concurred that the promotional tactics their businesses employed had resulted in greater market dominance (Mean= 4.36; Standard Deviation= 0.84) and also acknowledged that sales figures had risen owing to suitable promotional tactics utilized (Mean= 4.33; Standard Deviation= 0.522). It was additionally found that participants agreed that client contentment had improved due to the applied tactics (Mean= 4.22; Standard Deviation= 0.420) and promotional tactics had caused a

decrease in client attrition (Mean= 3.91; Standard Deviation= 0.417). Moreover, participants agreed that their output had expanded due to the employed tactics (Mean= 4.09; Standard Deviation= 0.358). These outcomes align with Amin's (2021) research, which also determined that using a pertinent promotional strategy in commerce can significantly aid in realizing both immediate and enduring company objectives, with all enterprises aiming for lasting success.

4.5 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficient was used in the study to predict the correlations between the independent variables and the depended variable (Kothari, 2014). Table 4.10 shows.

Table 4.10: Correlations

		Performa nce	Produ ct	Pricin g	E Promotio n	Distribut ion
Performan ce	Pearson	1	.388**	.602**	.501**	.133
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2- tailed)		.008	.000	.000	.382
	N	45	45	45	45	45
Product	Pearson	.388**	1	.126	.449**	.278
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.008		.409	.002	.064
	N	45	45	45	45	45
Pricing	Pearson	.602**	.126	1	.022	-.052
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.000	.409		.885	.737
	N	45	45	45	45	45
E Promotion	Pearson	.501**	.449**	.022	1	.165
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.000	.002	.885		.278
	N	45	45	45	45	45
Distributio n	Pearson	.133	.278	-.052	.165	1
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.382	.064	.737	.278	
	N	45	45	45	45	45

The interrelations from Table 4.10 illustrate that Product promotion exhibits a substantial positive association of moderate strength with success (Pearson's $r = 0.388$).

This affirmative correlation index suggests that a rise in product promotion will yield a

noteworthy improvement in the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises within Embu County, Kenya.

Pricing strategy had strong significant positive correlation with performance (Pearson correlation coefficient = 0.602). This indicates that adopting pricing strategy will greatly increase performance of SMEs in Embu County, Kenya. E-promotion strategy = 0.501). The positive significant correlation give an indication that increasing E-promotion strategy will greatly increase the performance of SMEs in Embu County, Kenya.

Distribution Decision strategy had a positive but non-significant correlation on performance (Pearson correlation coefficient = 0.133). This indicates that although there may be a positive correlation between the two variables, the relationship is insignificant.

4.6 Regression Analysis

The research executed a series of regression analyses to ascertain how promotional tactics influenced the success of small and medium-sized enterprises within Embu County, Kenya. Table 4.11 presents the determination coefficient and the adjusted determination coefficient.

Table 4.11: Model Summary

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.784a	.615	.577	.271	.615	15.982	4	40	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Distribution, Pricing, E Promotion, Product

The correlation was found to be 0.784, signifying positive links between the predictor and outcome variables. Given the p-value was below 0.05, the research inferred that marketing blend tactics showed a positive association with results.

The R-squared value of 0.615 suggested that 61.5% of the variation in SME results is explained by the studied factors: product approach, pricing approach, digital promotion, and distribution choices. This suggests that beyond the marketing blend, other unexamined aspects influence 38.5% of SME results. Nonetheless, these discoveries aligned with the study conclusions of Etuk et al. (2022) and Amin (2021), who also observed that marketing tactics favorably impact results. Furthermore, the research aimed to ascertain the predictive power of each predictor variable on the outcome variable. To attain this, the study used coefficients of regression. Table 4.12, presents the coefficient of regression for the variables in the study.

Table 4.12: Coefficients of Regression

		Coefficients ^a				
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-1.039	.659		-1.577	.123
	Product	.091	.100	.103	.905	.041
	Pricing	.600	.102	.583	5.865	.000
	E Promotion	.534	.136	.431	3.918	.000
	Distribution	.041	.065	.064	.619	.540

a.

The coefficients of regression as directed by Table 4.12 leads us to the equation;

$$Y = -1.039 + 0.091X_1 + 0.600X_2 + 0.534X_3 + \varepsilon,$$

Where:

Y = Performance of SMEs

X_1 = Product Innovation Strategy

X_2 = Pricing Strategy

X_3 = E- Marketing Strategy

Going by the equation, by keeping all the other factors at constant, the performance of SMEs in Embu County would be at – 1.039. It further explains that by setting all the independent variables in this study (product marketing, pricing, E-promotion and distribution decisions) at zero, the projected value of performance of SMEs in Embu County will be at -1.039.

4.7 Testing Hypothesis

Elementary linear regression served to assess the premise. The research either dismissed or affirmed the null supposition following the principle that if the probability value exceeds 0.05, the null premise H01 is not dismissed; conversely, should the probability value be below 0.05, then the null premise H01 is dismissed.

H01: Marketing tactics for products do not substantially influence the results of small and mid-sized production businesses within Embu County, Kenya

From Table 4.12, product marketing has a positive significant effect on performance of SMEs ($\beta=0.091$; $p=0.041$). The result thus gives an implication that by strengthening product marketing, it will result in performance by 0.091 units. The product strategy is very key in determining the goods and services supplied for sale or consumption and needs to be considered by the management when coming up with strategies to boost the performance of a firm (Kimathi, Muluku and Odhiambo, 2020).

The research employed a null supposition stated as: Product promotion approach shows no considerable impact. Per Table 4.12, the probability value was found to be 0.041, which is below 0.05, and based on this outcome, the research dismissed the null supposition. By dismissing the null supposition, the research concurs with the alternate supposition that product promotion approach considerably impacts the results of SMEs in Embu County, Kenya. The finding from this study agrees with the outcomes from the study by Kimathi, Muluku and Odhiambo (2020) and Igbaji and Eke (2022) who also.

Ho2 Price-setting promotional tactics do not considerably influence the success of SMEs production businesses within Embu County, Kenya

Pricing marketing strategy ($\beta=0.600$; $p=0.00$). This result therefore implies that when pricing strategy is increased by 1 unit, it would result to performance increasing by 0.600 units.

The study's initial premise stated: Price-setting promotional tactic shows no notable impact. Examining the data in Table 4.12, the probability value was 0.00, below the 0.05 threshold, indicating rejection of the initial premise. This rejection suggests that price-setting promotional tactic exerts a considerable influence on the success of production SMEs within Embu County, Kenya. In order to ensure the firms increase their sales, increase their profitability and sustain their operations, it is very important for the marketing managers to tap into this pricing strategy by forging their best pricing strategy. The study is in line with the findings by Dambo and Igini (2023) and Agboola, Adeola and Ayo (2024), who also found out that pricing strategy had a significant positive effect on performance.

Ho3: Online promotional approaches do not substantially influence the operational outcomes of small and mid-sized production businesses within Embu County, Kenya

E- promotion has a of manufacturing SMEs in Embu County, Kenya as depicted by the coefficients ($\beta=0.534$; $p= 0.000$). An implication of this statistical value is that by increasing e- promotion strategy by one unit, it would lead to an increase in performance of manufacturing SMEs by 0.534 units, all other factors held constant. Similar results are also noted by Sunday, Eka, Nnana and Olesegun (2021) and Kenu (2020) who also argue that E- promotion strategy is a novel strategy that the firms have

to be conversant with and appropriately apply it so as to increase their firm's performance since it directly affects the performance.

The study's null hypothesis was: E-promotion marketing strategy does not significantly affect performance of small and medium manufacturing enterprises in Embu County, Kenya. The results from Table 4.12 give a clear indication that $p=0.000 < 0.05$. The study therefore rejects the null hypothesis, meaning that e- promotion marketing strategy has a significant effect on performance.

Ho4: Channels of distribution planning exhibits no considerable influence on the operational outcomes of small and mid-sized production businesses within Embu County, Kenya?

Distribution decisions strategy ($\beta=0.041$; $p= 0.540$). Although distribution decisions have non-significant effect on performance, increasing distribution decisions by 1 unit would result to an increase in performance of manufacturing SMEs in Embu County by 0.041 units.

The study's zero supposition stated: Channel choice approach shows no noteworthy impact on results of small and mid-sized production firms within Embu County, Kenya. Considering the outcomes of this research, the p-value stood at $0.540 > 0.05$, indicating that at a 95% confidence level, the study does not dismiss the null supposition. By not dismissing the zero supposition, it suggests that channel choice approach lacks significant influence on results of small and mid-sized production firms in Embu County. While these results align with Abebe's (2019) findings of no positive significant link between the factors, they contrast with Amin's (2021) argument that channel choice approach exerts a substantial positive influence on results.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The concluding section of this research, chapter five, presents a synopsis of the investigation, derived inferences, and proposed suggestions.

5.2 Summary of the Study

This research aimed to examine how marketing mix tactics influenced the results of small and medium production businesses within Embu County, Kenya. The investigation assessed these research suppositions: product promotion tactic shows no notable impact on results, pricing promotion tactic shows no notable impact on results, digital promotion tactic shows no notable impact on results, and placement choice tactic shows no notable impact. The investigation focused on 53 production companies functioning as SMEs across diverse industries like chemical production, food processing, and fabric creation. A census method was utilized to survey all the intended companies. The research depended on firsthand information gathered via organized surveys. The surveys incorporated both fixed-response and open-ended formats, occasionally using a 5-point Likert scale. The leaders of the surveyed SMEs served as the informants (observation unit), while the SMEs constituted the analysis unit for this research. Of the 53 questionnaires distributed, the study managed to collect back 45 questionnaires that were dully filled representing 84.9% questionnaire return rate.

To come up with a measure for performance of the manufacturing SMEs, the study used market share growth, sales volume and customer satisfaction as the indicators for performance. Product strategy was measured based on product quality, branding and labeling. The indicators of the pricing strategy were price setting, compensation

margins and target customers. E-promotion was measured based on social media marketing, online marketing and blogs while distribution decisions were based on products being availed to retailers and wholesalers so as to reach the target market. Descriptive analysis tools were used in order to come up with an explanation on and inferential analysis tools were used so as to predict the relationship between marketing mix and performance. Statistical package for social sciences (SPSS version 24) was used to run the analysis. The study conducted a pilot testing prior to the actual study and also ensured the research instrument met the required reliability and validity standards.

The initial aim of the research was to explore how merchandise promotion tactics influence the success of small and medium production businesses within Embu County, Kenya. Via statistical testing, the study ascertained that merchandise promotion tactics notably impact SME success in Embu County, Kenya. The regression assessment additionally revealed that enhancing merchandise promotion tactics by a single unit would lead to a 0.091 unit rise in success.

The subsequent aim of this research was to scrutinize how cost-setting promotion tactics affect the success of small and medium production businesses within Embu County, Kenya. Through hypothesis testing, it was established that pricing marketing strategy has a significant effect on performance of manufacturing SMEs in Embu County, Kenya. The results from regression analysis further depict that when pricing strategy is increased by 1 unit, it would result to performance increasing by 0.600 units.

The third aim of the research sought to ascertain how electronic promotion marketing tactics influenced the results of small and medium manufacturing businesses in Embu County, Kenya. The investigation evaluated a nil premise that was dismissed,

suggesting that digital promotion marketing strategy significantly impacted performance. Regression analysis further indicated that a single unit increase in digital promotion strategy would yield a 0.534 unit rise in manufacturing SME performance, assuming other elements remained unchanged.

The fourth aim of the research was to explore how placement choices affected the results of small and medium manufacturing businesses in Embu County, Kenya. The investigation assessed a nil premise and, at a 95% confidence level, did not dismiss it, implying that placement decision strategy does not significantly impact the results of small and medium manufacturing businesses in Embu County. Although placement choices have a non-significant effect on performance, regression analysis showed that a one-unit increase in placement choices would lead to a 0.041 unit rise in manufacturing SME performance in Embu County.

5.3 Conclusions of the Study

By reviewing the first objective of this study, the results from the study indicate that product marketing strategy significantly affects performance of SMEs in Embu County, Kenya. Product strategy determines the goods and services supplied for sale or consumption and managers have to ensure that they incorporate product marketing strategy since the firm may be able to strengthen its performance which is evident by increased customer loyalty and market share that the firm controls as a result of product strategy.

Considering the second objective of the study, the study results give an impression that pricing marketing strategy has a significant effect on performance of manufacturing SMEs in Embu County, Kenya. By adopting pricing strategy, the firms may be able to improve their profitability through increased sales volumes and controlling huge market

share and hence increase their performance. In order to ensure the firms increase their sales, increase their profitability and sustain their operations, it is very important for the marketing managers to tap into this pricing strategy by forging their best pricing strategy

The third aim guides the research to the inference that digital promotion marketing tactic exerts a notable influence on the productivity of manufacturing. Electronic promotion strategy represents an innovative approach that administrators must be knowledgeable about and suitably implement to enhance their company's output, given its direct impact on the performance of manufacturing SMEs. Regarding the fourth aim, the research concludes that the channel choice tactic does not considerably impact the productivity of small and medium manufacturing businesses in Embu County, Kenya.

5.4 Recommendations of the Study

Goods promotion approach displayed a noteworthy affirmative influence. It urges executives to factor in this tactic when formulating their promotional blend to guarantee its substantial impact is leveraged in enabling the companies to realize their established goals and operate as anticipated. Goods promotion approach holds a crucial position in ascertaining the merchandise and services offered for trade or utilization, and executives must confirm its robust reinforcement to secure the company's sustained results.

Cost-setting tactic represents a vital component in the promotional combination and considerably and favorably impacts the results of small and mid-sized production businesses within Embu County, Kenya. The executives must devise the optimal cost-setting tactic to ensure the companies augment their sales, elevate their earnings, and

collectively enhance their results. Employing a cost-setting tactic will assure the companies boost their sales quantities and command substantial market dominance.

E- Promotion marketing strategy has a significant effect on performance of manufacturing SMEs in Embu County, Kenya. With evolution in technology and emergence of social media and websites, E- promotion has to be incorporated into marketing mix so as to ensure performance is improved. The managers have to be well equipped with the changing trends in technology so that they utilize well the E-promotion marketing strategy due to its huge contribution on performance.

Distribution decisions marketing strategy has non-significant effect on performance of manufacturing SMEs in Embu County, Kenya. Marketing managers should therefore put most of their time and resources in other marketing strategies that have been discussed as they have been found to play a huge role in strengthening performance.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

The current study focused on marketing mix and performance of manufacturing SMEs in Embu County, Kenya. Based on the findings from this study, the factors discussed in this study accounted for only 61.5 % of the predictors of performance. The implications that 38.5 % of the predictors of performance in manufacturing SMEs in Embu County remain not part of the current study. More research can be done on these factors and comprehensively address how they impact performance. The study also noted contradicting findings on distribution decisions marketing strategy. More research can be done on this variable and do a comparison with the findings from this study. This study only targeted manufacturing SMEs in Embu County, and cannot be generalized to all other business or the wider SME sector. Similar research can therefore be done on the other SME sectors and also in different localities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Introduction Letter

October 2024

REF: REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH STUDY

I am enrolled and in pursuant to the award of this degree it is a requirement that I conduct a research project. Am conducting a study titled: marketing strategies and performance of small and medium enterprises in Embu County, Kenya. It is a kind request that you support this study presented in the research. Shared on the questionnaire will remain confidential furthermore, it will only be used to facilitate the study.

Thank you in advance.

Sign.....

John Fundi Nzioka

Appendix II: Questionnaire

Meant to collect data to support the study titled: marketing strategies. Kindly give the information as accurate as possible. No need of writing your name or the name of your SME.

SECTION A: Background Information

1. Highest education level
Certificate [] Diploma [] Bachelors [] Masters []
2. Number of years worked in the SME
1-2 [] 3-5 [] 6-8 [] more than 8 []
3. Number of employees in the business
10-20 [] 20-30 [] 30-50 [] more than 50 []
4. What are your estimated daily sales volumes in KShs.
Less than 10,000 [] 10,001-25,000 [] 25001-35,000 [] 35001-50,000 []
more than 50,000 []

SECTION B: MARKETING STRATEGIES

5. Which marketing strategies have you adopted in your organization_____. Give reason for your answer_____
6. Has your business tapped in any of the following marketing strategies? If yes indicate which

Product strategy [] Pricing strategy [] E- marketing promotion strategy [] others [] Please specify_____

7. Each firm has a desire to increase its sales volumes, increase its revenue, attract more customers, retain the existing market and sustain their operations.

On the scale of 1-5 how can you rate the following statements on various marketing strategies in any case your SME has deployed any of them? Skip to the next table in any case you have not deployed the indicated strategy. 5= strongly agree, 4= agree, 3= not sure, 2= disagree, 1= strongly disagree

8. Product Strategy (Skip to 14 if you have not deployed this strategy)

Characteristic	1	2	3	4	5
Improving the quality of our products has increased our sales					
Coming up with new products in the market has increased the number of our sales					
Branding has made our market share growth increase					
Labeling has increased customer loyalty					
Good packaging of our products has improved customer satisfaction					

9. Pricing Strategy (Skip to 15 suppose you have not deployed this strategy)

Characteristic	1	2	3	4	5
I consistently check on the prices of competitor items prior to setting prices for our products so as to increase sales volumes					
Our pricing decisions normally affect the market share that our SME control					

The pricing is mostly determined by the targeted market					
The pricing normally depends on the type of the product the firm sales to the clients					

10. E-Promotion Marketing Strategy (Skip to 15 suppose you have not adopted to this strategy)

Characteristic	1	2	3	4	5
Social media enables us reach more clients through various platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, etc					
We have the company website which has enabled many clients get information on our products and increased our market share					
We use personal blogs to reach more customers and improve the sales					
Internet marketing has enabled the SME sell most of its products					
Mobile phones have made it easier to reach more clients					

14. Distribution Decision Strategy

Characteristic	1	2	3	4	5
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The distribution channels affect the amount of profits generated from sales					
Wholesalers have enabled our products easily reach the customers					
By ensuring our products are available to retailers, it has enabled the products to reach a wider customer base					

SECTION C: Performance

11. To what extent has the marketing strategies deployed by your SME led to increased performance?


Not at all [] very small [] moderate [] large [] very large []

12. On the scale of 1 to 5, to what extent can you rate on how marketing strategies have led to the following statements in your SME. 1= not at all, 2= small, 3=moderate, 4= large, 5= very large.

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Increased market share					
Increased sales volumes					
Increased customer satisfaction					
Reduced customer defections					
Increased production					

Appreciations.

Appendix III: Research Approval Letter


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Tel. 810901 Ext. 4150

Internal Memo

FROM: Executive Dean, Graduate School **DATE:** 24th February, 2025

TO: John Fundi Nzioka **REF:** D53/OL/EMBU/28785/2013
C/o Business Administration Dept.

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROJECT PROPOSAL


This is to inform you that Graduate School Board at its meeting of 19th February, 2025 approved your Research Project Proposal for the M.B.A Degree Entitled, **“Marketing Mix Strategy and Performance of Selected Small and Medium Enterprises in Embu County, Kenya.”**

You may now proceed with your Data Collection, Subject to Clearance with Director General, National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation.

As you embark on your data collection, please note that you will be required to submit to Graduate School completed Supervision Tracking and progress report Forms per semester. The Forms are available at the University’s Website under Graduate School webpage downloads.

Also, please ensure that you publish article(s) from your project before submitting it to Graduate School for examination as per the Commission for University Education and Kenyatta University guidelines.

Thank you.



RUTH SARAH ACHIENG
FOR: EXECUTIVE DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL

c.c. Chairman, Business Administration.

Supervisors:

1. Dr. Elishiba Mutigi
C/o Department of Business Administration
Kenyatta University

RSA/mo

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Page 1 of 1

