MARKETING STRATEGIES, FIRM CHARACTERISTICS, INDUSTRY COMPETITION AND EXPORT PERFORMANCE OF FRESH PRODUCE FIRMS IN KENYA

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my children, Peter Maina and Stella Wanjiku may this inspire you to work hard and be your very best in this adventure of life

and

My loving parents Mr. David Njonjo Mbugua and Nancy Waturi Njonjo. Thank you for always reminding me that the most valuable resource I can “inherit” from a parent is education

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ABSTRACT

The overall objective of the study was to determine the influence of firm characteristics and industry competition on the relationship between marketing strategies and export performance of fresh produce firms in Kenya. The specific objectives were: to establish the influence of marketing strategies on export performance of fresh produce firms; assess the effect of firm characteristics on the relationship between marketing strategies and export performance of fresh produce firms; examine the influence of industry competition on the relationship between marketing strategies and export performance of fresh produce firms and to determine the joint effect of marketing strategies, firm characteristics, industry competition on export performance of fresh produce firms. This study builds on export marketing literature by establishing the influence of marketing strategies, firm characteristics, industry competition on export performance of fresh produce firms. This research was anchored on the marketing mix theory and supported by the dynamic capability view and industry organization theory. A census survey was carried out on all the 100 fresh produce firms that were ordinary members of the Fresh Produce Export Association of Kenya as at 31st June 2019. Ordinary members are those actively involved in growing, consolidating and exporting of fruits, vegetables, herbs and spices. Affiliate members are the institutions that provide services such as marketing, capacity building to the ordinary members of Fresh Produce Export Association of Kenya. This study was guided by a positivist approach. A descriptive cross-sectional study design was adopted. Descriptive statistics established that a large number of the fresh produce firms were categorized as small and medium enterprises. Diagnostics tests revealed that assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity and homoscedasticity were met. Results indicated that the relationship between marketing strategies and export performance was positive and statistically significant. The moderation effects of firm characteristics on the relationship between marketing strategies and export performance were statistically insignificant. Industry competition was found to have a moderating influence on the relationship between marketing strategies and export performance. The joint effect of marketing strategies, firm characteristics, industry competition on export performance was found to be positive and significant. Findings of the study made contribution to theory, policy and management practice. Specifically, this research contributes to theory by empirically examining the moderating role of firm characteristics, industry competition on the relationship between marketing strategies on export performance. This research also recommends that policy makers should lobby for regional and bilateral trade agreements that seek to increase market share for fresh produce firms. To management practice the study provides guidelines to managers on how to design and implement marketing strategies for the export market. The study had certain limitations; the cross- sectional nature of data could not measure changes in marketing strategy, firm characteristics, industry competition on export performance over a long period of time. The study focused on identifying the role of the marketing strategies within the product industry. Due to the nature of product, findings could not be generalized to the service industry which display unique characteristics such as intangibility and heterogeneity. These limitations however did not affect the robustness of the study. Future studies may include and simultaneously analyze alternative modes of foreign market entry such as licensing, joint ventures, franchising, and strategic alliances. A much broader study that includes more developing countries/multiple industries that would allow generalization of findings to larger populations.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AFA	Agriculture and Food Authority
AIDA	Attention Interest Desires and Action
ASDS	Agricultural Sector Development Strategy
CMP	Contemporary Marketing Practices
CV	Coefficient of Variation
DCV	Dynamic Capability View
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
EPZ	Export Processing Zone
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
GAP	Good Agricultural Practices
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoK	Government of Kenya
HCD	Horticultural Crop Development Authority
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
FPEAK	Fresh Produce Exporters Association
IO	Industrial Organization Theory
IMC	Integrated Marketing Communication
KEPHIS	Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer Olkin
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
MNCs	Multinational Corporations
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science and Technology
NAFTA	North American Free Trade Agreement
PCA	Principal Component Analysis
PESTEL	Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal forces)
ROA	Return On Assets
RBV	Resource Base View
SD	Standard Deviation

SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SPSS	Statistical Passage for the Social Sciences
SSA	Sub Saharan Africa
TI	Tolerance Indices
USA	United States of America
UK	United Kingdom
VIF	Variance Inflation Factor

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Globalization, increase in technology and the unprecedented wave of trade liberalization has presented new business opportunities for domestic firms in the global markets (Chang & Fang, 2015). As a result, more firms are increasingly pursuing foreign markets to boost sales, diversify risks as well as defend their market position (Jin & Cho, 2018). Exporting remains the most popular mode of foreign market entry preferred by most businesses. This could be due to the advantages associated with low risk, requires minimal financial commitment and permits for greater flexibility and ability to adapt when compared to other modes of foreign market entry (Leonidou, Katsikeas & Coudounaris, 2010). Further, export represents an important segment of a country's balance of payment and is associated with increased employment opportunities, foreign exchange as well as improved living standards (Chen, Sousa & He, 2016). Despite the potential gains that accompany export trade, many firms are reluctant to conduct business in foreign environment and when they do, they often struggle to achieve satisfactory performance (Morgan, Vorhies & Schlegelmilch, 2006). As such, there is growing interest among businesses to examine factors that contribute to success of domestic firms in foreign markets (Morgan, Kaleka & Katsikeas, 2004)

According to Fang and Zou (2009), marketing strategy is one of the essential components that contributes to success of firms in international markets. It constitutes various marketing mix elements that translate marketing planning into practices. Hawkins (2011) further states that today's consumer is more informed and is faced with abundant choices. For this reason, long term success of firms depends not only on the design but implementation of effective marketing strategies. Firm characteristics capture the resources of an organization and have been reported to influence the organization's potential to draft and execute competitive marketing strategies (Barney, 1991). Liberalization of trade, increased competition has resulted to turbulent environmental conditions making the formulation of marketing strategies a challenge (Cassiman & Golovko, 2011). Industry competition is linked to possible threats and opportunities which exporters must respond to when designing marketing strategies (Vorhies, Orr & Bush, 2011).

Under these circumstances a better understanding and implementation of marketing strategies becomes critical for the expansion of domestic firms into foreign markets. This research was supported by the Marketing Mix Theory (McCarthy, 1964), Dynamic Capability View (Teece, Pisano & Shuen, 1997) and Industrial Organization Theory (Porter, 1980). The Marketing Mix theory proposes that the 4 P's namely; Price, Product, Place and Promotion are considered the basic pillars for achieving success in competitive markets (McCarthy, 1964). Dynamic Capability View states that the international market is depicted by a turbulent and unstable terrain. Therefore, the principal source of sustainable competitive advantage comes from continuous development, reconfiguration and alignment of firm specific assets. These capabilities and resources allow organizations to learn continuously, launch new products and be willing to take risks that are in line with the changing environment (Theodosiou, Kehagias & Katsikea, 2012). Industry Organization Theory is concerned with the attractiveness of an industry and how the collective strength of the five competitive forces influence profit potential within that industry. The porter's five forces have been identified as the bargaining power of buyer, bargaining power of seller, threat of new entrants, threat of substitutes and intensity of rivalry (Porter, 1980).

The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO, 2020), defines fresh produce to include nuts, legumes, starchy root and sugar crops. For purposes of this study, fresh produce industry was defined broadly to include vegetables, fresh fruits, nuts, medicinal and aromatic plants. The fresh produce industry has continued to experience unprecedented growth to become one of Kenya's leading export earner. In 2018, export earnings from this industry grew to Kshs 153.68 billion, a 33% growth over 2017 earnings (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2018). Further, it is estimated that more than 4.5 million Kenyan's benefit directly from the fresh produce industry and another 3.5 million benefit indirectly through trade and other related activities (KDLC, 2010). The fresh produce industry has also been singled out as the driving force towards achievement of the Kenya Vision 2030 and more recently as the President's big four agenda on extermination of food shortage and poverty reduction. Furthermore, the Government of Kenya (GoK) has developed a national implementation plan for the achievement of sustainable development goals (SDG's), where SDG 2 and SDG 3 representing zero hunger and good health respectively have been devolved to the County Government (GoK, 2017a).

Products such as beans, peas, vegetables, nuts, medicinal and aromatic plants account for more than 40 % of total exports from Kenya. Suggesting that there is room for more high value niche vegetable and fruits (CBI, 2015a, 2015b). Although Kenya has been relatively successful in the export of fresh produce, many other African countries have also ventured into the export market resulting to an increase in the intensity of competition (RSA, 2015a). Consequently, the viability and sometimes survival of fresh produce firms has become even more challenging. Expansion into export markets represent an opportunity for increased foreign exchange earnings, poverty alleviation as well as provision of raw materials to the agro-processing industry (HCDA, 2009). Despite the significance of fresh produce firms to the economy, knowledge on how to build and execute marketing strategies for the export market remains scarce. Furthermore, studies that explore the association between marketing strategies and export performance within the fresh produce industry are few. This study therefore sought to investigate how fresh produce firms can develop competitive marketing strategies for the export market.

1.1.1 Marketing Strategies

Marketing Strategy as described by Kotler (2011) is a road map that outlines how the firm is going to attain its marketing goals in a dynamic business setting. Rad and Akbari (2014) agree that marketing strategy is a guide used by firms to allocate resources, differentiate themselves while satisfying customer needs better than competition in a specific market segment. Varadarajan (2015) asserts that marketing strategies refers to organized effort through which the firm identifies its target group of customer and thereafter develops a set of market mix variables that allow for optimal value creation for its client. Thus, from the above definitions, marketing strategy is centered around identifying a target market and satisfying customers in those segments better than competition. Focus on a particular market segment results to more experience, which is communicated to the customer through low prices, products differentiation and product quality.

The concept of marketing strategy revolves around a set of controllable tools namely, product, price, promotion and place used by a firm to influence buyer response. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2014), product is the portfolio of goods or services for which the consumer is ready to pay for at a point in time. Cant and Van Heereden (2013), agree that product is the most

significant element of the marketing mix which must be properly developed to satisfy customer needs and achieve the firm's objectives. Apart from the actual goods and services, attributes such as superior quality, physical appearance, packaging and labeling information make up what the customer is actually buying and are used to enhance customer experience (Belch & Belch, 2007).

Monroe (2003) observed that price is one of the primary components among the marketing mix variables. It represents amount of economic outlay that consumers should give up to engage in a given transaction. Pricing strategies are normally long term and can be either cost based or market based. With cost-based pricing, total costs associated with production are allocated and thereafter a profit margin added to total production costs (Shipley & Jobber, 2001). This model is simple to calculate and understand. However, cost-based pricing places the firm's interest first over the consumer. Market based pricing pays attention to competition, consumer demand or both. Once price strategy has been identified, an implementation plan on how price will be charged, payment terms, volume discounts amongst other issues are examined (Kushwaha & Agrawa, 2015).

Kotler and Armstrong (2014) describe promotion as efforts by marketers to inform and persuade customers about their value propositions. Odunlami and Ogunsiji (2011) argue that sales promotion is particularly effective on products whose characteristics are easy to understand rather than complex expensive products that require demonstration. The promotion element consists of elements such as advertising, public relations, sales promotion, personal selling, direct marketing, events and sponsorship (Belch & Belch, 2007). Further, the objective is to convert the one off buyers into a long term consumer. Place as defined by Palmer (2011) are the decisions and actions related to making products or services available for consumption. Palmatier, Stern, El-Ansary, and Anderson (2014) argue that type of distribution channel depends on the distribution goals which can be classified into minimum distribution costs, maximum bargaining power and optimum access to markets. In this study, marketing strategy can be seen as a tool used by firms to differentiate themselves from competition, build market reputation and establish strong relationships with customers. Marketing strategies is the independent variable with product, price, place and promotion as its indicants.

1.1.2 Firm Characteristics

Zou and Stan (1998) defined firm characteristics as the demographic and managerial components that form the organization's internal environment. Eriotis, Vasiliou and Ventoura-Neokosmidi (2007) assert that firm characteristics are the unique components inherent in an organization. Kogan and Tian (2012) argue that firm resources enable organizations to conceive and implement strategy. Further, they form basis for competitive advantage. Williams (2011) notes that size can be seen as a proxy for advantages associated with access to credit, bargaining power, better trained staff, research and development. In the context of exports, size of the firm and experience in exporting are examples of characteristics exhibited by firms. To measure firm size three indicators are commonly used. These are sales volume, net assets and number of permanent employees (Vijh & Yang, 2012).

Yeoh (2004) define export experience as the practical knowledge gained during a particular time period. Di Maria and Ganau (2014) state that export experience is the expertise accumulated as a result of repeated interactions with little consideration to firm age. However, Barkema and Drogendijk (2007) argue that export experience lessens uncertainty in overseas markets and can therefore become an integral factor in explaining competitive advantage. It is this gaining of experience that encourages the development of skills needed for success in foreign markets (Fernando, Fitrianingrum, & Richardson, 2017).

According to Cadogan, Sundqvist, Puumalainen and Salminen (2012) export experience depends on two facets. First, is the firm's age calculated by duration of time that firm has engaged in export activities. Second, is number of foreign markets that firm exports to. Travelling across countries exposes the firm and its employees to different information and knowledge. In the current study, export experience was measured using two dimensions namely, time and scope. Time was calculated by years spent conducting export business. While scope was determined by number of foreign markets that firm exports to (Carlsson, Nordegren & Sjoholm, 2005). Number of permanent staff working in an organization was used to measure firm size. This is because number of permanent workers is considered stable and not influenced by fluctuations in price (Mittelstaedt, Harben & Ward, 2003). The term export experience and international experience have been used interchangeably.

1.1.3. Industry Competition

Industry as described by Pearce and Robinson (2000) refers to a collection/group of firms offering goods/services that are close substitutes. Competition can be characterized as a series of actions aimed at achievement of a goal by one actor, while restraining its rivals from accomplishing their goals (Deutsch, 1949b). Vickers (1995), describes competition as rivalry between players striving for something that all cannot obtain or possess. Porter (2008), opines that competition acts as a selection mechanism where inefficient incumbents are removed and resources allocated to their best use. Firms are mostly concerned with intensity of competition within its industry and tools such as the PESTEL model (Johnson, Scholes & Whittington 2005), SWOT analysis (Porter, 2008) and Porters five forces (Porter, 1980) have been used to assess the intensity of competition.

PESTEL model is an analytical instrument used to identify the Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal factors in which firms operate (Vasileva, 2018). SWOT is a framework that analyses the organization's internal and external business environment when developing strategy (Ying, 2010). The intensity of competition and profit potential within an industry is dependent on the Porters five forces namely, bargaining power of the customer, which refers to pressure buyers exert on businesses to get them to lower prices, provide higher quality goods and better customer service (Tavitiyaman, Qu & Zhang, 2011).

Bargaining power of suppliers also termed as market of inputs, describes pressure suppliers exert on participants by threatening to lower product quality, reducing product availability and raising costs (Wan & Beil, 2009). Threat of substitute's products refers to existence of products that perform same or similar functions (Porter, 2008). Hubbard and Beamish (2011) maintain that threat of substitutes is informed by switching costs, brand loyalty, current trends and relative price for performance of substitutes. Existence of substitute goods offers additional alternatives to consumers but restrict the prices that organizations can charge. Threat by new entrants, refers to efforts made by existing firms to limit entry of new firms in an industry. Nickell (2006) argue that positive abnormal returns attract new firms to join the industry. Rivalry amongst competitors refers to pressure from firms in the same industry thereby restricting profit potential.

According to Porters (1985) rivalry may take many forms including competitive price reduction, investments in innovation and new products, intensive advertising and service improvements. In the current study, intensity of competition was estimated using the five competitive forces. This is because establishing the strength of each individual force, would enable firms determine the best strategy to counter strongest individual forces.

1.1.4 Export Performance

According to Sousa (2004), export performance is described as the degree to which an organization's objective is achieved by selling goods/services in overseas markets. On their part, Navarro, Losada, Ruzo and Diez (2010) contend that export performance is the consequence of an organization's action in international markets and is considered one of the key indicators of success in foreign markets. Katsikeas, Leonidou and Morgan (2000) argued that export performance is a multifaceted construct where both objective and subjective measures should be used to increase the reliability of findings. To capture export performance, two principal measures are used: objective and subjective measures. Objective indicators can also be seen as financial metrics such as revenue, profit, sales volume measures and are often expressed in monetary terms (Zou, Fang & Zhao, 2003). The subjective measures are indicators such as customer loyalty, quality of services and firm reputation which provide performance information in non-monetary terms. They particularly focus on meeting customer expectations, satisfaction and marketing activities (Haluk Köksal & Kettaneh, 2011).

Export literature has viewed measures of export performance from different perspectives. Zou, Taylor and Osland (1998) introduced the EXPERF scale, which measured performance using three basic dimensions namely; financial, strategic and satisfaction. Later on, Lages and Lages (2005b) proposed the STEP scale which measured export performance for a single product or product line in the short term. STEP scale was however limited to use of subjective performance indicators. Okpara's (2009) scale used five items namely; export profits, sales volume, export growth, operations and overall export performance in the last three years. In the current study, export performance was measured using one objective measure namely, return on assets (ROA) and two subjective indicators namely export market share and customer retention rate. The major advantage of adopting ROA as a financial performance measure is because it evaluates how

efficiently the firm uses its assets to generate profits. It also enables comparison of firms in the same industry, but of different sizes (Issah & Antwi, 2017). Export market share and customer retention rate were built on the assumption that a positive disposition towards a product is a measure of subsequent long-term use (Lages & Sousa, 2010).

1.1.5 The Fresh Produce Industry in Kenya

Kenya is fundamentally an agricultural driven economy, as evidenced by its 25% direct contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 65% contribution to national exports (AFA, 2018). The agriculture sector consists of five major sub-sectors namely; horticulture, food crops, fisheries, industrial crops and livestock. Amongst this, horticulture is among the few sub-sectors that have continued to grow and is made up of floriculture, fruits, vegetables, nuts, medicinal and aromatic plants. Kenya's fresh produce industry plays an important role in providing food security, improved nutrition, foreign exchange earnings and income generation opportunities. In addition, the fresh produce industry generates important forward and backward linkages with other sectors thus contributing to economic growth (KNBS, 2018).

In the last two decades, the fresh produce industry has accomplished rapid growth in both volume sales and choice of fresh produce. This success has been attributed by ability to conform to international market standards and high unit prices in the export markets. Furthermore, Kenya's fresh produce industry is supported by a large number of institutions in the private and public sectors all geared towards growth of export business. The airfreight facilities located at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA) are also useful in promoting export trade. Despite this remarkable growth, export markets accounts for only 4% while the rest 96% is consumed locally; yet in terms of earnings, export segment generates large amounts of foreign exchange (GOK, 2010).

Liberalization and competition has resulted to an influx of fresh produce from neighboring countries such as Uganda, Tanzania and South Africa who enjoy low production costs. Stringent food safety standards, competition from other international suppliers, poorly organized market structure appear to be raising the bar for new entrants, while presenting challenges in the path of existing fresh produce firms (Agricultural Sector Coordination Unit, 2011).

In addition, export of fresh produce from Kenya is associated with small scale farmers who operate independently resulting to limited bargaining power in the market. Kenya enjoys favorable trade relations with Europe and more recently the UAE and USA markets. Shipments to the European markets account for more than 80% of total exports, suggesting that any disturbances in these markets would result to severe consequences on Kenya's fresh produce industry and the economy (HCDA, 2016).

More recently, there was the COVID-19 outbreak which curtailed exports to Europe. Despite this setback, export earnings for fresh produce stood at 42 billion shillings, a 5 % improvement compared to 2019 earnings. This improved performance was attributed to support by Government to continue export of fresh produce using cargo planes and increased demand for healthy living in Europe (Gain, 2020). This study therefore focuses on how fresh produce firms can utilize marketing strategies, firm characteristics and industry competition to stimulate export growth and diversify into new markets.

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1.2 Research Problem

Marketing strategies influence performance of firms in foreign markets (Morgan, Katsikeas & Vorhies, 2012). Firm Characteristics such as size, age and export experience constitute resources of an organization and have an influence on export performance through choice of marketing strategy (Kotler & Armstrong, 2014). Industry competition is characterized by rapid technological changes, changing consumer needs and is therefore important when developing marketing strategy and has an influence on subsequent export performance. While other studies argue the success of firms in foreign markets not only depends on the portfolio of resources, but also on the ability to respond to international uncertainties (Stoian, Rialp, & Rialp, 2011).

The global fresh produce industry has experienced remarkable increase in consumer demand. This increased demand of fresh produce globally has been fuelled by growth in income, rise of women in the workplace and health awareness (Rubin, Cummings & Harwood, 2005). In 2017, Kenya export earnings from fruits and vegetables stood at Kshs 9.0 billion and Kshs 24.06 billion respectively. This trend continued into 2018 with the earnings from exports of fruits and vegetables rising to Kshs 12.83 billion and Kshs 27.68 billion respectively (KNBS, 2018). Despite this rapid and sustained growth, the above figures represent only 4% of the produce exported, which is way below industry potential. It is in this context, that the role of marketing strategies within the fresh produce industry is investigated. Understanding the relationship between marketing strategies, firm characteristics, industry completion on export performance of fresh produce firms in Kenya will be used to inform exporters in other developing countries.

Studies linking marketing strategies to export performance present fragmented and contradictory results. In the United Kingdom, Blankson and Omar (2002) conducted a study on African - Caribbean businesses firms based in London. Findings from the study revealed that African - Caribbean businesses firms employed informal and unplanned marketing strategies that contributed to higher level of performance. This study was however exploratory in nature with a small sample of 26 firms. Similarly, Larson (2009) conducted a study on Whirlpool Corporation (U.S.A) and established that marketing strategies are essential for export success. The conclusion

by Larson (2009), was based on an in depth analysis of one firm and could therefore not be used to make conclusions about an entire population. Conversely, Coviello, Winklhofer and Hamilton (2006) conducted a survey of 242 Canadian firms within the service industry. The results established an insignificant link between contemporary marketing practices (CMP) and performance. Study by Coviello et al., (2006) investigated the role of marketing strategy within the context of a domestic economy, while current research considered the significance of marketing strategy in international markets.

Quansah and Bunyaminu (2017) studied the role of firm characteristics on export performance by collecting data from 326 respondents in the Ghanaian wood industry. Study outcome revealed that age and size had a negative influence on export performance. Similar findings were presented by Olawale, Ilo and Lawal (2017) who used panel data from 12 non-financial firms in Nigeria and established that firm size as measured by total assets had a negative effect on performance. Contrary findings were however observed by Bonaccorsi (1992) who found that size of firm did not hinder export trading among Italian manufacturing firms. Studies by Quansah and Bunyaminu (2017); Olawale, Ilo and Lawal (2017) and Bonaccorsi (1992) examined the direct link between firm characteristics and export performance. Empirical studies that seek to examine the moderating role of firm characteristics are limited. With increased competition, the role of firm characteristics as an important source of competitive advantage becomes critical hence the need to investigate this relationship further.

Kannadhasan and Nandagopal (2009) conducted a study on the moderating role of firm size on the link between strategy and performance of automobiles in India. Only 18 firms responded, which represented a 30 percent response rate. Output from the regression analysis showed that firm size moderated the strategy- performance relationship. This study was however conducted in India and within the automobile industry questioning the generalizability of findings in different contexts. Current study sought to replicate and extend the role of firm characteristic as a moderator on the marketing strategy and export performance link in a less developed country such as Kenya. Locally, Owino (2014) examined the moderating role of industry competition on the link between organizational culture and performance.

Findings revealed that industry competition had an insignificant influence on firm performance. This study conceptualized industry competition using the broader macro elements variables, while current study conceptualized industry competition using the immediate micro elements used to assess attractiveness and profitability of an industry. Auma (2017), investigated the moderating role of competitive environment on performance. The research was conducted on 155 telecommunication companies licensed by the Communication Authority of Kenya (CAK). The study outcome revealed that competitive environment significantly influenced e-marketing practices and performance link. This study findings were limited to marketing strategies that use internet technology (e -marketing practices). On the other hand, Nkari (2015) researched on the moderating role of operating environment on the branding practices and performance relationship of farmers in Kiambu County. Empirical results revealed that operating environment did not moderate the branding practices and performance link. Findings from the study were however limited to one county (Kiambu) and could therefore not be generalized. Secondly, Nkari (2015) focused on only one element (promotion) of the marketing mix. Current study investigated the four elements of marketing which are usually considered as interactive and integrative in nature.

The foregoing discussion highlights a number of knowledge gaps the current study sought to fill. First, studies by (Bonaccorsi, 1992; Coviello, Winklhofer & Hamilton, 2006) were conducted in developed/ emerging economies like North America, Europe and Asia which experience different political, social and economic environment. These differences limit generalization of research findings. Secondly, some of the studies were case studies (Larson, 2009), had small samples (Kannadhasan & Nandagopal, 2009) or were exploratory in nature (Blankson & Omar, 2002) thereby limiting generalizability and the external validity of the results. Finally, drawing from the above, scholars devoted a lot of attention in examining direct relationship between variables (Quansah & Bunyaminu, 2017; Olawale, Ilo & Lawal, 2017), studies that investigate the role of firm characteristics and industry competition as moderating variables are limited. The current study therefore sought to answer the following research question. What is the relationship between marketing strategies, firm characteristics, industry competition on export performance of fresh produce firms in Kenya?

1.3 Research Objectives

The overall objective of the study was to determine the influence of firm characteristics and industry competition on the relationship between marketing strategies and export performance of fresh produce firms in Kenya. The specific objectives were to:

i. Assess the influence of marketing strategies on export performance
ii. Examine the effect of firm characteristics on the relationship between marketing strategies and export performance
iii. Assess the effect of industry competition on the relationship between marketing strategies and export performance
iv. Establish the joint effect of marketing strategies, firm characteristics, industry competition on export performance

1.4 Value of the Study

The study findings add to the growing research on marketing mix theory by highlighting the role of marketing mix variables on export performance of fresh produce firms in Kenya, little is known on the marketing strategies and export performance relationship within this context. Secondly, results in this study extend current knowledge on dynamic capability theory by assessing the moderating role of firm characteristics on the marketing strategy and export performance link. Lastly, this study findings enrich industry competition theory by evaluating the moderating role of industry competition on the marketing strategy and export performance relationship.

The fresh produce industry presents enormous opportunity for job creation, foreign exchange earnings, thereby enhancing prosperity for the Kenyan population. Given the significance of fresh produce firms to the Kenyan economy. The output of this research will be used by policy makers to design innovative interventions that will spur growth in export markets, while taking into account the dynamic nature of the fresh produce Industry. Specifically, regulatory bodies such as Horticulture Development Authority (HCD), Ministry of Agriculture, Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) will use the study results to develop policies that focus on use of technology, appropriate training, appropriate infrastructure, food safety, market structure resulting to increased participation from fresh produce firms.

In this study, marketing strategies, firm characteristics, industry competition are proposed to contribute to export performance. Therefore, the conclusions derived from this study will enable managers particularly within the fresh produce industry to design marketing strategies that will promote superior performance in the international markets. By considering firm characteristics and industry competition as the moderating variables, business firms should not only focus on developing marketing strategies but on how to effectively utilize firm resources and the competitive environment to attain success in international markets.

1.5 Organization of the Thesis

This research is arranged in the following sequence. Chapter one starts off with a brief introduction and background of the study. An explanation of the study variables, discussion of the fresh produce industry in Kenya is also presented. The problem statement, objectives and value of the study concludes this chapter. The second chapter presents a discussion of the theoretical followed by the empirical literature. A summary of the gaps and contradictions observed from the reviewed literature are also highlighted with a description of how the current study seeks to close the gaps identified. Lastly, a conceptual framework and the hypothesis developed from the reviewed literature are also presented.

Chapter three provides the various philosophical orientation available, research design, target population and justification for adopting the same. Data collection procedures, tests of reliability and validity, the operationalization of study variables and a summary of the analytical models is also presented. Chapter four details the results of data analysis and a discussion of findings based on the data collected. It also ascertains whether the results obtained conform to reviewed literature in chapter two and provides possible explanation. Chapter five draws, a summary of the key points and implication emanating from the output of the research. In ending, the chapter examines study constraints and gives an outline on the proposed areas of future examinations.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Chapter two starts with a discussion of the relevant theories used to explain the study variables. Thereafter, there is a review of both local and international empirical studies that investigate the link between marketing strategies, firm characteristics, industry competition and export performance. Drawing from extant literature, the chapter provides a review of knowledge gaps, conceptual framework and lastly the hypothesis.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation of the Study

The overarching theory in this thesis is the Marketing Mix Theory, supported by Dynamic Capability View (DC) and Industry Organization Theory (IO). Marketing Mix Theory (McCarthy, 1964) postulates the key components of marketing strategy also known as the 4P's, represent marketing tools used by managers to influence buyers' response. Dynamic Capabilities View (DC) (Teece, Pisano & Shuen, 1997) takes an inside out approach and argues that firms need to develop specific capabilities and update them on a regular basis in response to the turbulent and unpredictable business environment. Industry Organization Theory (Bain, 1968) takes an outside in approach and postulates that competition in an industry not only relates to existing firms but also the structure of the five competitive forces that influence choice of marketing strategy.

2.2.1 Marketing Mix Theory

Marketing mix theory evolved from a single P (price) in economics (Chong, 2003). However, changes in customer and organization attitudes resulted to an increase in the number of "Ps" (McCarthy, 1964). Marketing mix theory postulates that the key components of marketing strategy also known as the 4P's, spell out key decision areas that managers should examine to satisfy customer needs and meet company objectives (Hakkak & Ghodsi, 2015). According to Low and Kok (1997) superior firm performance depends on the design and implementation of marketing mix elements. Festa, Cuomo, Metallo and Festa (2016) acknowledge that marketing mix is a powerful tool that allows marketing tasks to be separated from other activities within the

organization. Furthermore, marketing strategy is unique to each organization and is dependent on the firm's resources, external environment and changing customer needs.

To achieve company objectives, the marketing mix elements are blended to develop an integrated marketing strategy that will result to desired response in the target market (Kotler, 2011). The concept of 4P's has however been criticized for focusing on the product and paying little attention to building customer relationships. Furthermore, with changes in technology, a wider variety of marketing elements have emerged (Kent & Brown, 2006). Marketing mix theory was adopted in the current study because managers of fresh produce firms need to take into account the four key marketing elements when developing strategies for the export markets. Marketing mix theory sought to examine the linkage between marketing strategies and export performance.

2.2.2 Dynamic Capability View (DC)

Dynamic Capability View (DC) as propounded by Teece et. al., (1997) is an extension of the Resource Based View (RBV) (Barney, 1991). DC illustrates how organizations utilize firm characteristics (size, export experience) to develop competitive marketing strategies for the export market. Previously, RBV was used to explain superior performance among firms operating in a stable environment. However, DC postulates that today's businesses operate in a dynamic environment characterized by increased competition, global trade and high customer expectations. To gain a sustainable competitive advantage firms must create, develop and protect those competencies that differentiate their firms from competition (Feurer, 1996). The continuity of competitive advantage is dependent on how well and fast competitors can imitate these competencies (Davidsson, 1991). This is consistent with Leornard-Barton (1992) argument that DC's allows firms to avoid rigidities which hinder development, create inertia and impede innovation. DC's are not bought in the market, but are typically the result of experience and learning. According to Teece et al., (1997) this argument was founded on the realization that firms that were once successful were struggling or unsuccessful because of failing to adapt as their environment changes.

Though useful, the dynamic capability view is said to be lacking measurability and does not state the particular actions managers should take to develop and sustain dynamic capabilities (Helfat & Peteraf, 2015). In addition, there has been little empirical evidence since it is a concept that has proved to be resistant to measurement and observation (Dietmar, Jaegar & Staubmann, 2013). Dynamic Capability View is applicable in this study because it describes how fresh produce companies need to create, renew or alter firm resource so as to address the rapidly changing and competitive export environment. Dynamic Capability View sought to explain the moderating role of firm characteristics on the association between marketing strategies and export performance.

2.2.3 Industry Organization Theory

The Industry Organization Theory was first presented by Smith (1776), then later developed by Bain (1968) as a tool for industrial analysis. Industry Organization Theory offers an explanation on the role of the five forces prior to developing and implementing strategies for the export market. Industry Organization Theory is founded on the premise that firms within an industry are characterized by perfect competition, similar products or closely related substitutes (Fleisher & Blenkhorn, 2005). This theory places emphasis on understanding forces that shape the competitive landscape. The collective strength of these forces determines profitability and attractiveness of firms within a particular industry (Ferguson & Ferguson, 1994). As a result, it is important for managers to first assess the business environment before formulating strategy (Seaton & Bennet, 1996).

One of the shortcomings of this theory is that firms operate in an increasingly dynamic environment and therefore a snap shot of the industry is not enough to formulate strategy (McGahan, 1999)**.** In addition, every industry resides within a broader environment also known as the macro environment, which also has an influence on what actually takes place within the industry. Further, application of the industry organization theory is limited to firms operating in situations of perfect competition and selling similar products (Ferguson & Ferguson, 1994). Industry organization theory was considered important in the current study because sources of competitive pressure must be taken into account when developing strategies for the export

market. Industry Organization Theory sought to explore the moderating role of industry competition on the association between marketing strategies and export performance.

2.3 Marketing Strategies and Export Performance

Empirical studies on the link between marketing strategy and export performance are many. However, divergent and inconsistent findings have been reported. Sousa and Bradley (2008) collected data from 301 exporting firms in Portugal. Study results indicated that price had a considerable influence on export performance. A similar outcome was obtained by Chung (2008) who conducted a survey on a sample of 78 SMEs in New Zealand. These two studies examined pricing in isolation from the other marketing mix variables. While current study took into account the 4P's as a unified whole resulting to a clearer view of marketing strategy, particularly within an export marketing context. Using a sample of Brazilian exporters, Cunha and Rocha (2015) analyzed 173 micro and small business enterprises (MSE's) from various sectors. Respondents were identified using convenience sampling. Study findings revealed that marketing strategies made significant contribution in shaping export performance. Use of convenience sampling to collect data compromised on quality of research hence the need for a more rigorous survey. Current study adopted census which allowed for more accurate and sophisticated statistical analysis.

Sezgin, Uray & Burnaz (2015) gathered figures from 100 Turkish firms that exported clothes to the European Union (EU). The results from the study established that majority of the firms attributed their success to the marketing mix elements. Findings for this study were limited to the Turkish clothing Industry and the results could therefore not be generalized beyond this scope. In Chile, Bianchi & Garcia (2007) carried out a study across a broad range of sectors namely; wine, salmon and fruit. Data collection was done using secondary as well as qualitative sources. Output from the study revealed that top performers in the export market placed more emphasis on quality of product. Similarly, a study of 316 US electronic manufacturing companies performed by Namiki (2008), indicated that there was a close association between marketing strategy and export performance. Of the 316 targeted firms, only 99 (31%) firms responded. Study by Namiki (2008) was characterized by a low 99 (31%) response rate, while the study by Bianchi and

Garcia (2007) was exploratory in nature. For this reason findings from the two studies (Namiki 2008; Bianchi & Garcia, 2007) could not be generalized to the entire population.

In another study, Ogbu (2015) carried out a study on the association between marketing strategies and performance of Indigenous construction firms in Nigeria. Due to the difficulty in obtaining a comprehensive register, purposive sampling was used. Study results revealed that high performers used marketing strategies more frequently than the low and average performers in the construction industry. However, use of purposive sampling technique limits generalization of findings to the entire population. Elsewhere in Kenya, Nthege (2019) carried out a survey on 64 manufacturing firms. The study findings revealed that there was a positive link between marketing strategies and performance. Study by Nthege, (2019) was limited to performance within the domestic performance context while current study sought to investigate the role of marketing study within an international marketing context. Similarly, Odiko (2018) collected data from 270 tour firms in Kenya. Output from the research indicated a positive association on the marketing strategies and performance link. This study findings were confined to the tourism industry which is a different environment from the fresh produce industry.

In Malaysia, Adis (2010) examined the role of marketing strategy in influencing export performance. Research findings revealed that all the 4P's of marketing strategy did not influence performance of firms in foreign markets. These results were limited to firms in Malaysia, within the wood furniture industry. Shoham and Kropp (1998) carried out an evaluation in the United States on the marketing mix and international performance relationship. Study results revealed that marketing elements had a negative effect on export performance, except for channel support which had a positive relationship. This study was characterized by a (5%) response rate, which was considered low for a mail survey. Use of small samples questions external validity and generalization of findings, hence the need for more rigorous empirical research.

In Canada, Coviello, Winklhofer and Hamilton (2006) collected data from 242 firms in the accommodation industry. Findings from the study revealed that contemporary marketing practices specifically network marketing, data base marketing and e – marketing did not have any influence on performance. This study was in the service industry and conceptualized

marketing strategies along the contemporary marketing practices framework (CMP). Current study was in the goods industry and conceptualized marketing strategies using the traditional 4P's believed to be the theoretical framework for developing marketing strategies. Given this divergent and inconsistent findings, the marketing strategy and export performance link remains unresolved.

2.4 Marketing Strategies, Firm Characteristics and Export Performance

Firm characteristics are tied to export performance, empirical studies that seek to investigate firm characteristics as a moderating variable are few and present inconsistent results. In the U.S.A, Prasad, Ramamurthy and Naidu, (2001) conducted a survey on 381 firms in the manufacturing industry. Specifically, the study hypothesized that firm size moderated the association between marketing strategy and export performance. The study outcome revealed that firm size, as computed by total number of employees, moderate the marketing competencies and export performance relationship. Similar results were echoed by Ruzo, Losada, Navarro and Diez (2011) who used 150 Spanish firms to examine the role of firm resources on the international marketing strategy and performance link. These two studies were however carried out in developed economies, which experienced different economic, political and social setting making it difficult to generalize the results.

Morgan, Kaleka and Kaskieas (2004) carried out a study of 287 export ventures in U.S.A. Individual product lines were used as the unit of analysis, while current study adopted the firm. Results from the study showed that resources and capabilities affect export venture performance. Studies in export performance that have adopted the firm as unit of analysis are few, especially within the fresh produce industry. Elsewhere, Pla- Barber and Alegre (2007) explored the role of firm size as a significant success factor for 121 bio tech firms in Spain. Firm size was measured using logarithm transformation of two indicators namely; permanent employees and volume of sales. Study results revealed a statistically insignificant link between firm size and export performance. Elsewhere, Kalafsky (2004) collected data from 82 machine tool exporters in the U.S.A. The study outcome revealed that success of SMEs in foreign markets is determined by other factors not related to size. Studies by Pla- Barber and Alegre (2007); Kalafsky (2004) were

limited to the direct link between firm size and performance in overseas markets and ignored the role of firm characteristics as a moderator.

In Kenya, Mbugua (2015) did a survey of 184 deposit taking SACCO'S firms. The study outcome showed that the association market orientation and performance was not moderated by firm characteristics. Similarly, Ndambuki (2018) collected data from 42 commercial banks in Kenya and observed that organizational characteristics had a negative but significant moderating influence on the key account management practice and performance relationship. These two studies, Mbugua (2015) and Ndambuki (2018) were in the financial industry while current study was in the fresh produce industry. Findings from one industry cannot be generalized to another. Over the years, research findings on the moderating effects of firm characteristics appear to be fragmented and unclear. As such, the moderating role of firm characteristics on the marketing strategy and export performance link remains unanswered.

2.5 Marketing Strategies, Industry Competition and Export Performance

Empirical evidence has questioned the moderating role of industry competition on the marketing strategy and export performance link. In the United Kingdom, Jayawarna, Jones, Lam and Phua (2014) conducted an exploratory study on 128 entrepreneurs living in United Kingdom. Results confirmed that increased market competition influenced the link between marketing strategies and performance. Similarly, Nickell (1996) collected 670 survey responses from U.K manufacturing companies. Findings provided in the study established that industry competition was associated with a higher corporate performance. Study by Nickell (1996) investigated the direct link between industry competition and performance while current study investigated industry competition as a moderating variable.

Elsewhere in Malaysia, Ong, Ismail and Yeap (2018) collected data from 517 SMEs to explore the moderating effect of industry competition on the association between competitive advantage and export performance. Evidence from research posited that the association between competitive advantage and firm performance was moderated by industry forces. Likewise, analysis of 105 Indian based service providers by Lahiri (2013) established that competitive intensity positively moderates internal resources and firm performance. These two studies were

however conducted in emerging markets which experience different economic, political and social environment.

In Thailand, Suksri, Chobpichien and Aemsawas (2015**)** collected data from 154 hotels in Samui Island. Results from the study revealed that competitive intensity did not significantly moderate the competitive advantage and performance link. These findings were however confined to the hotel industry in Thailand. Similar results were reported by Ondari (2015) who studied the moderating effect of industry competition on the diversification strategy and performance link of 35 companies registered with the Nairobi Securities Exchange. The research by Ondari (2015) was however conducted in the financial industry, while current study was in the fresh produce industry which is a different environment.

A study of 35 state corporations in Kenya by Otieno (2016) revealed that the competitive environment did no moderate the link between strategy and performance. However, this study had a small sample size and findings were confined to state corporations in Kenya. Although empirical studies on the moderating role of industry competition exist, majority of the studies were conducted in developed economies, different industries, had small sample or were exploratory in nature. Consequently, the moderating effects of industry competition on the marketing strategy and export performance link remains unanswered.

2.6 Marketing Strategies, Firm characteristics, Industry Competition and Export Performance

Prior research has enhanced understanding on the key variables that affect export performance of firms. However, there are still some uncertainties in research on the determinants of success in export market. In the U.S.A, Schmalensee (1985) used 1975 data from the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and return on assets (ROA) to analyze performance differentials amongst American manufacturing firms. Findings from research demonstrated that industry factors made significant contribution when explaining the link between performance and competitive advantage, while firm factors were insignificant. In support, Wernerfelt and Montgomery's (1988) also established that industry factors played a superior role in explaining

performance. These findings were limited to firms in the developed countries which experience different economic, political and social environment.

Building on these studies, Kamasak (2011) carried out a study to compare firm verses industry factors in explaining performance differences. A survey of 259 Turkish firms from different industries was conducted. Results from the study indicated that firm factors played a bigger role in explaining performance variation. Similar results were found by Galbreath and Galvin (2008) who studied Australian firms from the manufacturing and services industry. The above studies Kamasak (2011); Galbreath and Galvin (2008) were conducted in industries different from the fresh produce industry hence findings could not be generalized. In another study, Houthoofd and Hendrickx (2012) collected data from 20 Belgium firms dealing in wholesale of electrical during the period 1998-2003. Findings from the study indicated that firm specific factors had a stronger impact in explaining performance variance than industry factors. This study however utilized a small sample thereby limiting the representative of findings.

Although significant advances in export literature have been made, conclusions drawn from the studies are contradictory and warrant further research. A major cause is that a large number of the studies focused on one or two variables at a time and not all of them jointly. Secondly, majority of these studies were conducted in developed economies which experience different economic, social and political backgrounds from developing countries. In addition, studies were conducted in industries different from the fresh produce which manifests different complexities leading to differences in the results. Empirical studies on the moderating effects of firm characteristics and industry competition on the link between marketing strategies and export performance have remained scanty. This investigation therefore varies from past research by examining the joint effect of marketing strategies, firm characteristics, industry competition on export performance which is distinct from the independent influence of the variables.

2.7 Summary of Knowledge Gaps

The above sections have discussed the relationships among the key study variables. Some studies have reviewed direct relationships, while others have focused on the moderating influences of key variables on export performance. A summary of gaps identified from literature is displayed in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Summary of Knowledge Gaps

Researcher (s)	Focus of the Study	Methodology	Research Finding	Gaps	Focus of Study
Ong, Ismail & Yeap (2018)	Moderating role of industry competition on the competitive advantage and performance link	Survey of 517 SMEs in Malaysia.	Industry competition moderates the effect of competitive advantage on performance.	Findings were limited to SMEs in Malaysia.	-Study focused on moderating role of industry competition in a developing economy (Kenya)
Ndambuki (2018)	The moderating role of organizational characteristics on the key account management practice and organizational performance link	A survey of 42 banks in Kenya	Organizational characteristics had a negative moderating effect on the key account management practice and organizational performance link	Study findings were limited to firms in Kenya within the financial industry	-Study was conducted within the fresh produce industry in Kenya
Auma (2017)	E-marketing practices and performance relationship of firms within the telecommunication industry	Data was collected from 155 telecommunication in Kenya	E -marketing practices had a positive influence on performance	Results were confined to marketing strategies that use internet technology	Study focused on all forms (off line and online) of marketing strategies

Table 2.1 Summary of Knowledge Gaps (Cont'd)

Researcher (s)	Focus of the Study	Methodology	Research Findings	Gaps	Focus of Study
Cunha & Rocha (2015)	Marketing strategy and export performance of SMEs in Brazil	Data from 173 micro and small business enterprises	Marketing strategies made significant contribution in shaping export performance	Convenience sampling used thus compromised on the rigor of the study.	A descriptive cross-sectional survey of all fresh produce firms in Kenya registered with (FPEAK).
Nkari (2015)	The moderating role of operating environment on the relationship between branding practices and performance of farmers	A survey of 140 farmers from Kiambu County	Operating environment did not moderate the branding practices and performance link	Study focused on only one element (promotion) of the marketing mix.	- Current study investigated the four elements of marketing mix.
Mbugua (2015)	The moderating role of firm characteristics on the relationship between market orientation and performance	A survey of 184 deposit taking SACCO's	Firm characteristics did not moderate the relationship between market orientation and performance	Study findings confined to performance within the domestic context	Current study looked at the moderating role of firm characteristics within an export context
Jayawarna, Jones, Lam and Phua (2014)	The moderating role of competition on the relationship between marketing strategies and performance of entrepreneurs living in United Kingdom.	A survey of 128 entrepreneurs	Competition significantly moderated the marketing strategy and performance relationship	Research was exploratory in nature. Hence findings could not be generalized	Current study was a quantitative survey of all Fresh produce firms in Kenya registered with (FPEAK).

Table 2.1 Summary of Knowledge Gaps (Cont'd)

Researcher (s)	Focus of the Study	Methodology	Research Findings	Gaps	Focus of Study
Owino (2014)	The moderating effect of industry competition on the link between organizational culture and performance	53 Micro finance from Kenya took part in the survey	Industry competition had an insignificant influence on firm performance.	Industry competition was conceptualized using the broader macro elements variables.	Conceptualized Industry competition using the immediate micro elements
Houthoofd and Hendrickx (2012)	Link between marketing practices, firm characteristics, industry competition and performance of Belgium firms within the electrical industry.	Data was collected from 20 firms in Belgium	Results demonstrate that firm specific factors had a stronger impact than industry factors	Findings were limited to electronic firms in Belgium.	Current study focused on all fresh produce firms in Kenya registered with (FPEAK).
Larson (2009)	Impact of global marketing strategy and performance relationship	Case study	Marketing Strategies influenced performance	Studied only one firm (case study). Hence findings could not be generalized to entire population	A descriptive cross-sectional survey with 69 fresh produce firms
Namiki (2008)	Marketing strategy and export performance link	A survey of 99 electronic firms in the U.S. A	Marketing strategy and export performance had a significant relationship	Findings were limited to direct relationship between marketing strategy and export performance.	Current study focused on both direct and indirect relationship between marketing strategies and export performance.

Table 2.1 Summary of Knowledge Gaps (Cont'd)

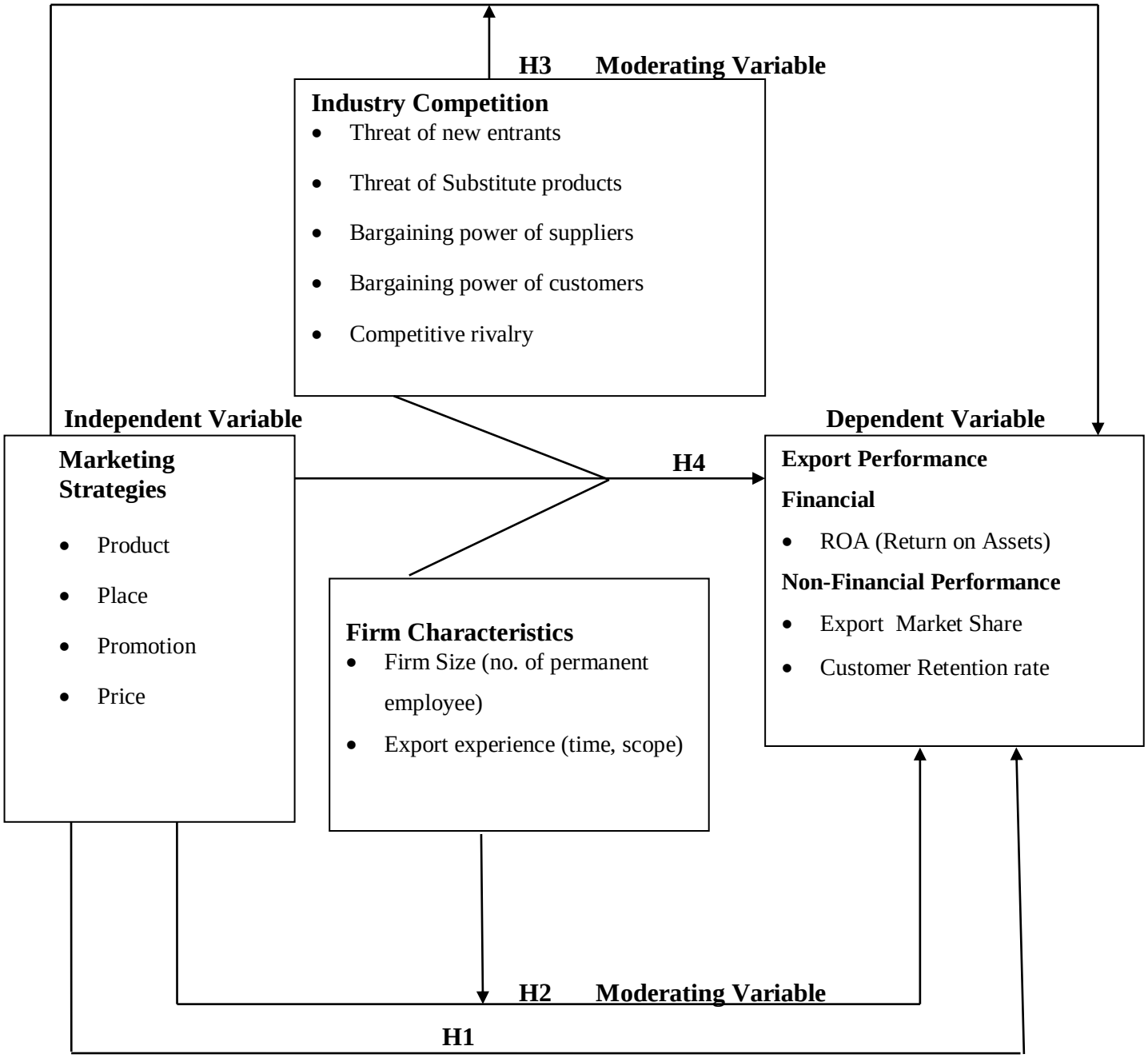
Researcher (s)	Focus of the Study	Methodology	Research Findings	Gaps	Focus of Study
Bianchi and Garcia (2007)	Marketing strategy and performance relationship	Used qualitative methodology and secondary sources to collect data	-Evidence of a relationship between export strategy and performance	Exploratory study hence findings could not be generalized	Current study was a quantitative.
Pla- Barber and Alegre (2007	The association between firm size and export performance	Data was collected from 121 firms within the Bio technology industry	There was no association between firm size and export performance	Findings were limited to the association between firm size and export performance	Study investigated both direct and indirect association between firm size and export performance
Coviello, Winklhofer and Hamilton (2006)	To determine relationship between contemporary marketing practices (CMP) and performance.	Data was collected from 242 Canadian firms within the service industry.	Findings from the study established an insignificant link between contemporary marketing practices (CMP) and performance.	Marketing strategies were conceptualized using the Contemporary Marketing Practices (CMP) framework as research conducted within the service industry	Current study conceptualized Marketing strategies using the 4P's of marketing.

Current Researcher, 2021

2.8 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual model depicted in Figure 2.1 was based on reviewed theoretical models namely; marketing mix theory, dynamic capability theory and industry organization theory. Marketing mix theory as espoused by McCarthy (1964) is based on the assumption that the 4P's spell out key decision areas that managers examine to satisfy customer needs and meet company objectives. Dynamic capability theory (Teece, Pisano & Shuen, 1997) states that to gain a sustainable competitive advantage firms must develop specific capabilities and update them on a regular basis in response to the turbulent and unpredictable business environment. Industry competition theory places emphasis on five competitive forces that influence choice of marketing strategy.

Figure 2.1 Conceptual Model



Source: Researcher, 2021

According to the conceptual framework in figure 2.1, marketing strategies is the predictor variable and has positive association with export performance which is the dependent variable. The framework further indicates that firm characteristics and industry competition moderate the marketing strategies and export performance link. In conclusion, marketing strategies, firm characteristics, industry competition are predicted to collectively influence export performance.

2.9 Conceptual Hypotheses

The following are the conceptual hypotheses developed from the relevant literature and conceptual framework:

H_1: Marketing Strategies have no statistically significant effect on Export Performance.

H_2: Firm Characteristics do not significantly moderate the relationship between Marketing Strategies and Export Performance.

H_3: Industry Competition does not significantly moderate the relationship between Marketing Strategies and Export Performance

H_4: Marketing Strategies, Firm Characteristics and Industry Competition do not have a Significant joint effect on Export Performance

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Chapter three starts by defining the different philosophical orientations and the underlying assumptions. It also presents a description of the research design, population of interest, data collection methods, tests of reliability and validity utilized. Finally, this chapter provides operational definition of variables under study, data analysis, diagnostic tests and a review of the analytical models.

3.2 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy is a significant part of research methodology that presents assumptions that guide the study. Consequently, these assumptions shape the researcher's choice of research questions, data collection procedures and the interpretation of findings during research (Jonker & Pennink, 2010). Research philosophies are distinguished by the differences in assumptions namely; ontology, epistemology and axiology. (Frankel, Naslund & Bolumole, 2005). Ontology is based on the nature of reality and this influences choice of what to investigate during research. Epistemology is the assumption of what represents valid and permissible knowledge and how to communicate knowledge to others. Axiology describes the role of values and ethics when conducting research (Creswell, 2014). The assumptions above help distinguish the various research philosophies namely; empiricism, positivism, pragmatism, phenomenology (Interpretivism), rationalism amongst others. Each paradigm however holds a different perspective on axiology, ontology and epistemology.

Pragmatism research paradigm posits there can be one or multiple truths open to empirical investigation (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Knowledge is based on experience and that each person's knowledge is constructed by the individual's experience (Morgan, 2014a). Rationalism states that knowledge of the world can be attained through reason rather than using sensory experience. These are forms of knowledge that an individual is born with. Empiricists argue that knowledge can be attained using the five senses (Uddin & Hamiduzzaman, 2009). The most common philosophies in the field of social sciences are phenomenology and positivism. Phenomenology (Interpretivism) methodology describes personal and lived experience rather

than one stipulated by pre-existing theoretical preconception. This view posits that individuals who have experienced a phenomenon perceive the world differently because of their own perceptions and lived experiences. It mostly applies qualitative methods to data collection (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008).

Positivism approach builds on several assumptions; that the world is composed of observable, measurable, perceptible and quantifiable phenomena which can be experienced using the five sensory organs (Creswell, 2013). It predominantly applies quantitative methods of data collection to ensure objectivity, reliability and generalizability of findings (Weinreich, 2009). It further assumes that researchers should take a neutral role to avoid influencing the phenomena being studied. Positivists use theories specified at the start of a study to develop hypotheses. Thereafter, these hypotheses were verified and confirmed using statistical techniques. The current study sought to explain the association between the predictor variables (marketing strategies), two moderating variables (firm characteristics and industry competition) and the dependent variable (export performance). In addition, this study involved a review of previous related studies and utilized existing theories to develop hypotheses. The hypotheses formulated were the basis for collecting and analyzing data that provided foundation for subsequent hypotheses testing. Drawing on the above insights a positivist approach was deemed to be the most appropriate.

3.3 Research Design

Creswell (2014) states that choice of research design is based on the data needed, the procedures to be utilized in data collection and how this provides an answer to the research question. This research employed a descriptive cross-sectional research design for various reasons. First, descriptive studies allows researcher to collect data from a sizeable population and identify hidden patterns/characteristics of the phenomena in question using a profile of factors (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Secondly, it allows researcher to generate hypotheses, identify possible research questions for further investigation. It also establishes strength of relationship between variables without inferring causality. On the other hand, cross sectional studies are carried to ascertain prevalence of a condition at one point in time.

The justification for adopting a descriptive cross- section design is because it allowed uniform collection of data from many subjects at a single point in time. Furthermore, this design facilitated researcher to describe the attributes of the key study variables namely, marketing strategies, firm characteristics, industry competition and export performance of fresh produce firms in Kenya. Other studies that have adopted the descriptive cross-sectional design include (Kimwomi, 2015, Kinoti 2012).

3.4 Population of the Study.

The population of study was developed from the Fresh Produce Exporters Association of Kenya (FPEAK) website. A source that provides regularly updated information of ordinary and affiliate members, firm demographics as well as contact person. A total of 100 fresh produce firms that were ordinary members of the association as at 31st June 2019 were selected for the study. FPEAK is a body that promotes export activities through overseas exhibitions, providing market information, technical support and training. Its members are categorized into two, ordinary and affiliate members. Ordinary members are those actively involved in growing, consolidating and exporting of fruits, vegetables, herbs and spices. Affiliate members are institutions that provide services such as marketing, capacity building to the ordinary members of FPEAK. The Fresh Produce Exporters Association of Kenya (FPEAK) has been used in related studies (Wanjiru, 2018; Kabano, 2017).

Fresh produce firms are spread across the country, but are predominant in Nairobi, which is the main industrial hub of Kenya. The complete list of these firms and their physical address is presented in Appendix 5. Given the relatively small size of the population a census study was undertaken on all 100 fresh produce firms. Israel (1992) argues that a census technique is preferred when the population is made up of 200 or less members. Fresh produce firms were deliberately chosen because of the contribution they make in terms of food security, export earnings, income and employment provision.

3.5 Data Collection

This study depended mainly on primary data. Semi structured questionnaire adapted from previous empirical surveys were used to pick data on the key study variables (Appendix 4). The advantage of consulting questionnaires used in previous studies is that they are less susceptible to misinterpretation and can also be used to compare findings. Questions were however modified to suit the specific research objectives. The questionnaire consisted of five major sections. Section 1 collected background information on both the firm and respondent. Section 2 focused on marketing strategies and was measured using four dimensions (product, pricing, distribution and promotion). Section 3 dealt with industry competition and had questions on the five competitive forces. The last section focused on export performance and used measures such as export market share, customer retention rate and ROA. Even though ROA is a financial indicator it was determined from perceptual rather than the actual measure. This was because most of the firms were privately held and were therefore reluctant to provide actual financial data. Similar performance measures have been utilized in the past where it was not possible to obtain actual financial data (Woodcock, Beamish & Makino, 1994).

The Chief Executive Officers, Managing Directors or Top line Managers in charge of export operations were the key informants in each fresh produce company. The choice of respondents was influenced by their roles within the firms, which indicated that they had the knowledge and understanding about the firm's marketing strategies and their relationship with the study key variables. Initial contact was done through introduction emails to all the 100 fresh produce firms. This was done to confirm the physical address, firm's eligibility, name and title of the key respondent. To enhance support from the target organizations, the researcher made follow up telephone calls and personal visits to the respondent organization. Two research assistants were also recruited and trained to assist in data collection after first contact with the firm. Researcher was lucky to have completed data collection before the COVID-19 pandemic, which was first reported in Kenya on the 12th March 2020.

3.6. Test of Reliability

Test of reliability is concerned with obtaining findings that are free from random errors even after repeated trials with a similar population (Nunally, 1978). According to Chakrabartty (2011) when a measure is reliable then the results are said to be more accurate and so is the ability to make comparisons. There are various methods for assessing reliability with each allowing the computation of a reliability coefficient. In this research, reliability was computed using the Cronbach alpha coefficient value expressed as a digit ranging from 0 to 1. This is a test technique that estimates correlation between answers by respondents in a questionnaire. When alpha coefficient reads 0 it indicates absence of a correlation while 1 signifies absolute internal consistency of items in the scale.

Different authors however hold different views on the acceptable cut off points for Cronbach alpha coefficient. Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2010) recommends that in the social science field Cronbanch alpha acceptable range is 0.6 and above. Bagozzi and Youjae (2012), argue that 0.5 is the acceptable minimum. On their part, Tavakol and Dennick (2011) suggest alpha values of 0.7 or higher to mean acceptable and sufficient. The current study used alpha coefficient of 0.6 and above to mean satisfactory reliability.

3.7 Test of Validity

Validity tests estimates that the data collected during the survey accurately measures what it purports to measure (Saunders, 2011). There are various ways to test validity namely; content validity, face validity and convergent validity (Babbie, 2010). To evaluate content validity ten fresh produce firms were randomly selected and thereafter a pilot study conducted. According to Hair, Ringle and Sarstedt (2011) a pretest of 5 to 10 respondents is useful in identifying flaws in a questionnaire. Feedback was requested on all items of the questionnaire including length, cognitive aspects, layout and order of the questionnaire. Findings from the pilot revealed that eight out of the ten fresh produce firms had reservations in providing actual financial data on return on investment (ROA). In other instances, respondents had difficulty in understanding issue at hand. From the feedback provided, some of the topics were rephrased and questions on financial data were assessed with the help of a Likert type scale. Cooper and Schindler (2011) argue that Likert scale allows the researcher to collect and analyze quantitative data with ease.

Construct validity provides researcher with confidence that the components in the questionnaire measure what they propose to measure. In practice, constructs are not readily observable items. The operationalization of a construct requires that a set of measurable attributes/behavior hypothesized to correspond with the construct are developed. In this survey, construct validity was determined using exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Hare and Neumann (2008) argue that factor analysis reduces the overall number of observations into a few variables that can best explain constructs under investigation. However, prior to performing EFA, Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) measure, sample size and Barlett's test of Sphericity were used to establish the appropriateness of the sample for EFA. According to Field (2009) to proceed with EFA, the KMO test statistic for each construct should be > 0.5, Barlett's test of Sphericity < 0.05 and sample size was based on a minimum of 5 subjects per variable (Coakes & Steed, 2007). Other studies that have adopted factor analysis to determine construct validity include (Mokhtar, Yusoff & Arshad, 2009; Owino, 2014).

3.8 Operationalization of the Study Variables

Each study variable was operationalized using measures developed from previous studies. Export performance is the outcome variable and was measured using subjective/perceptual measures as has been used in several other studies (Lisboa, Skarmeas & lages, 2013; Murray, Gao & Kotabe, 2011). Several factors support use of subjective measures. First, differences in market characteristics, technology intensity may lead to unfair comparison of financial data which may have different meaning to the various firms. Secondly, most studies adopt perceptual measures to measure financial performance, since secondary information is often not available for public consumption (Lages & Lages, 2004, Kimwomi, 2015). Third, according to Katsikeas et al., (2000) indicators of performance are more complementary than mutually exclusive. Marketing strategies is the independent variable and was measured using 28 attitudinal attributes adopted from previous studies (Njeru, 2013; Morgan, Katsikeas & Vorhies, 2012). However, several modifications were made to take into account specific characteristics within the fresh produce industry.

Firm characteristics is the first moderating variable and was measured directly using size and export experience. Firm size was determined using total count of permanent employee, thereafter

normalized by calculating the natural log. Export experience was measured using two dimensions namely, time and scope. Time was computed by calculating years spent conducting export business then normalized by a natural log. Scope was computed by the total sum of countries that the firm exports to then normalize by a natural log. The two log values (time, scope) were summed up and an average calculated to create the construct export experience (Pham, Monkhouse & Barnes, 2017). Industry competition is the second moderating variable and was conceptualized using the INDUSTRUCT scale which is made up of the five competitive forces (Pecotich, 1999; Porter, 1980). Table 3.1 presents data on the measurement scales and how variables under study have been operationalization.

Table 3.1: Operationalization of the study variables

Variable	**Nature**	**Indicator (s)**	**Measurement scale**	**Supporting evidence from literature**	**Investigating questions**
Marketing Strategies	Independent	• Product • Price • Place • Promotion	• Five-point rating scale	• Morgan et al., (2012) • Njeru (2013)	Section 11
Firm Characteristics	Moderating	• Size	• Number of permanent employees (Natural log)	• Banchuenvijit (2012)	Section 1
		• Export Experience	• Years spent conducting export business (Natural log) • Number of countries that the firm exports to (Natural log) The natural log values (for number of years and number of countries) were summed and averaged to create the construct export	• Cadogan et al., (2012) • Brouthers et al. (2008)	Section 1

Table 3.1: Operationalization of the study variables (Cont.)

Variable	Nature	Indicator (s)	Measurement scale	Supporting evidence from literature	Investigating questions
Industry Competition	Moderating	• Competitive rivalry • Threat of substitute products • Bargaining power of buyers • Potential new entrants • Bargaining power of suppliers	Five-point rating scale	• Porter (1980) • Pecotich et al., (1999)	Section 111
Export Performance	Dependent	• Export Market share • Customer Retention Rate • Growth in Return on Assets (ROA) from 2016 to 2019	Five-point rating scale	• Murray et al., (2011) • Lisboa et al., (2013) • Leonidou et al., (2011) • Kimwomi (2015); • Kinoti (2012)	Section IV

Source: Current Researcher, 2021

3.9 Diagnostic Tests

Statistical tests are based on assessment of underlying assumptions. Violation of these assumptions results to over or underestimating results. In the current study, regression analysis model was applied to test hypotheses. This is because linear regression is a multivariate statistical technique that allows a set of several independent variables to be analyzed simultaneously (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996). Assumptions that are of primary concern are; linearity, normality, absence of multicollinearity and homoscedasticity. Testing for normality was based on the premise that underlying residuals of the regression model follow a bell shape curve thus allowing researcher to make valid conclusions about the population. Residuals are the error terms that are not explained by the regression line (Shapiro, Wilk & Chen, 1968).

Test of normality was tested statistically using Shapiro –Wilk (S-W). Statistical results from the Shapiro –Wilk test indicated that the p- value for each of the variable was greater than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that data was collected from a normally distributed population was accepted. Although there are many statistical tests used to confirm normality, this study adopted Shapiro Wilk test, this is because it is said to provide better statistical power than the other goodness of fit tests (Razali & Wah, 2011).

Assumption of linearity was done to confirm that the link between the explanatory variables and outcome variable in the regression model form a straight line. When violated, results of the regression analysis risk Type 1 and Type 11 errors. Type 1 error referred as “false positive” arises when a true null hypothesis is rejected. Type 11 error also known as “false negative” arises when a false null hypothesis is accepted (Saunders et al., 2011). In this study, assumption of linearity was tested using ANOVA. Findings from the study showed that the p value for each of the three independent variables were > 0.05. For this reason, the link between the outcome variable and each of the predictor variable was assumed to be linear in nature.

Multicollinearity is the assumption that the independent variables are not highly correlated resulting to skewed or misleading results (Creswell, 2013). This was examined using variance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance indices (TI’s). The variance inflation factor (VIF) values which is the inverse for tolerance indices ranged from 1.230 to 1.062, suggesting that there was

an acceptable degree of multicollinearity among the independent variables. Chatterjee and Simonoff (2013) argue that when VIF value exceeds 10, the degree of multicollinearity is high resulting to unreliable estimates of individual coefficients. Assumption of Homoscedasticity occurs when the dependent variable displays the same variance (amount of error in the model), all through the values of the predictor variable. In this study, assumption of homoscedasticity was tested visually using scatter plot. The pertinent results are reported in chapter four.

3.10 Data Analysis

After field work, all the incomplete questionnaires were removed and a unique identifier assigned to each of the remaining questionnaires. Thereafter, data was keyed in by hand into SPSS versions 21 for quantitative analysis. Data analysis was conducted using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics involved calculating percentages, mean score, standard deviation and co efficient of variation (CV) to identify unique characteristics of the firm, participants and the key study variables. Inferential statistics were used to draw conclusions on the link between the variables. Hypotheses one (H_1), used simple linear regression to investigate association between marketing strategies and export performance. H_2 and H_3, used hierarchical regression to investigate the moderating role of firm characteristics and industry competition. H_4, used multiple linear regression to investigate the joint effect of Marketing Strategies, Firm Characteristics and Industry Competition on Export Performance. All the above analysis were conducted at 95 % level of confidence.

3.11 Analytical Models

To test hypothesis H_1, which predicted that marketing strategies did not significantly influence export performance, simple linear regression was adopted. Thereafter, the composite score of export performance was regressed against the composite scores of product, price, promotion and place (dimensions of marketing strategies). Composite scores were obtained by summing all items measuring the respective variables and dividing by total number of items to create a single score. The following liner regression model was used:

$$EP = \beta o + \beta_1 MS + \varepsilon$$

Where:

βo = y intercept/ constant

β_1= Beta Coefficients

EP = composite score of export performance

MS= composite score of marketing strategies

ε = the error term/ disturbance term

The coefficients β_1, β_2, β_3 … β_n measures the change in the response variable for every unit change in the explanatory variable, holding other factors constant.

To test hypothesis H_2, which predicted that firm characteristic (FC) did not significantly moderate the marketing strategies (MS) and export performance (EP) relationship, hierarchical multiple regression was adopted. According to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, and Lowe (2002) hierarchical multiple regression is a model for analysis which involves adding predictor variables in steps to establish whether addition of potential moderator has a significant increase in (R squared). Firm size and export experience were used as proxies for firm characteristics. Number of permanent staff (in logarithm form) was used to measure firm size. Export experience was measured using two dimensions namely, time and scope. Time was calculated by years in (logarithm form) spent conducting export business. While scope was determined by number of foreign markets (in logarithm form) that firm exports to. The two log values (number of year plus number of countries) were added and divided by two to create the construct export experience. Composite scores for FC were obtained by summing average score for FSZE and FEXP and dividing by two.

The general regression model for hypotheses H_2:

$EP = \beta_o + \beta_{10}MS$

$EP = \beta_o + \beta_{10}MS + \beta_{11}FC + \varepsilon$

$EP = \beta_o + \beta_{10}MS + \beta_{11}FC + \beta_{12}MS * FC + \varepsilon$

Where:

EP = composite score export performance

MS= composite score of marketing strategies

FC = composite score of firm characteristics

To test hypothesis H_3, which predicted that industry competition (IC) did not significantly moderates the marketing strategies (MS) and export performance (EP) relationship, hierarchical multiple regression was adopted. Dimensions of industry competition (IC) that were considered in this study were Porters five forces.

The general regression model of the study variables for hypothesis H_3 is:

$EP = \beta_o + \beta_{10}MS$

$EP = \beta_o + \beta_{10}MS + \beta_{11}IC + \varepsilon$

$EP = \beta_o + \beta_{10}MS + \beta_{11}IC + \beta_{12}MS * IC + \varepsilon$

Where:

EP = composite score of export performance

MS =composite score of marketing strategies

IC= composite score of industry competition

ε= Error term

Hypothesis H_4, which predicted that the joint effect of marketing strategies, firm characteristics, industry competition on export performance is not statistically significant**.** Multiple regression analysis was applied. The general regression model of the study variables for hypothesis H_4 was:

$EP = \beta_o + \beta_{12}MS + \beta_{13}FC + \beta_{14}IC + \varepsilon$

Where :-

EP = composite score of export performance

MS =composite score of marketing strategies

FC = composite score of firm characteristics

IC= composite score of industry competition

ε= Error term

Table 3.2 presents a summary of the research objectives, hypotheses, analytical models and the interpretation.

Table 3.2: Summary of Analytical Models

Objectives	Hypotheses	Analytical Model	Interpretation
Objective 1: To establish the influence of marketing strategies on export performance	H_1: Marketing Strategies do not significantly influence export performance	Simple linear regression model $EP = \beta_o + \beta_1 MS + \varepsilon$ Where: EP= composite index of export performance β_o = Y intercept/ constant β_1= regression coefficient MS = composite score of marketing strategies ε= Error term	• R^2 was used to assess change in export performance that was due to marketing strategies • F test was used to determine the overall robustness and significance of the simple regression model
Objective 2: To determine the influence of firm characteristics on the relationship between marketing strategies and export performance	H2: Firm characteristics do not moderate the relationship between marketing strategies and export performance	Hierarchical multiple regression model Step 1: $EP = \beta_o + \beta_{10} MS + \varepsilon$ Step 2: $EP = \beta_o + \beta_{10} MS + \beta_{11} FC + \varepsilon$ Step3: $EP = \beta_o + \beta_{10} MS + \beta_{11} FC + \beta_{12} MS * FC + \varepsilon$ Where: EP = composite score of export performance MS =composite score of marketing strategies FC=composite score Firm characteristics ε= Error term	• The moderator influence was present if the interaction term explains a statistically significant amount of variance in the dependent variable • A significant change in adjusted R^2 upon introduction of firm size confirms a moderating effect of the term • When p-value $\leq$ 0.05, is less than your significance level, reject null hypothesis

Table 3.2: Summary of Analytical Models (Cont'd)

Objectives	Hypotheses	Analytical Model	Interpretation
Objective 3 : To assess the influence of industry competition on the relationship between marketing strategies and export performance	H_3: Industry competition does not moderate the relationship between marketing strategies and export performance	Hierarchical regression model Step 1: $EP = \beta_o + \beta_{10}MS + \beta_{11}IC + \varepsilon$ Step 2 $EP = \beta_o + \beta_{10}MS + \beta_{11}IC + \beta_{12}MS * IC + \varepsilon$ Where: EP = composite score of export performance MS =composite score of marketing strategies IC =composite score of industry competition ε= Error term	• The moderator influence is present if the interaction term explains a statistically significant amount of variance in the dependent variable • A significant change in adjusted R^2 upon introduction of industry competition confirms a moderating effect of the term • P value for each independent variable tests the null hypotheses • When p-value ≤ 0.05, is less than your significance level, reject null hypothesis.
Objective 4 :To establish the joint effect of marketing strategies, firm characteristics, industry competition on export performance of fresh produce in Kenya	H_4: The joint effect of marketing strategies, firm characteristics, industry competition on export performance is not statistically significant	Multiple linear regression model Step1 : $EP = \beta_o + \beta_{12}MS + \beta_{13}FC + \beta_{13}IC + \varepsilon$ Where: EP = composite score of export performance MS =composite score of marketing strategies FC =composite score of firm characteristics IC = composite score of industry competition ε= Error term	• R^2 was used to assess change in export performance that was dues the joint effects by the independent variable • t test was used to determine significance of each individual variable • F test was used to determine the overall robustness and significance of the multiple regression model

Source: Researcher, 2021

CHAPTER FOUR
DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

Chapter four provides the outcome of the survey response rate. Tests of reliability and validity results are also presented. Thereafter, assumptions associated with linear regression namely; normality, linearity, multicollinearity and homoscedasticity are tested and findings provided. Descriptive statistics for both the respondent and the firm profile are discussed, followed by results of the inferential statistics.

4.2 Response Rate

A total of 90 questionnaires were administered to fresh produce firms that belonged to the Fresh Produce Export Association of Kenya (FPEAK) as at 31st June 2019. To avoid bias, response from 10 firms that took part in the pilot study was omitted from the final survey. Table 4.1 exhibits an output of the relevant results.

Table 4.1: Survey Response Rate

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Returned	69	76.7
Non response	18	20.0
Incomplete	3	3.3
Total	90	100

Source: Primary Data (2020)

The output displayed in Table 4.1 reveals that out of the 90 questionnaires dispatched only 69 questionnaires were returned, translating to a total of 76.7 % response rate. This was considered adequate and compares well with other studies on export performance. Brouthers and Nakos (2005) who studied 112 Greek owned companies obtained a response rate of 34%. Julian and Ahmed (2005) studied 122 Queensland export ventures had a completion rate of 18 %.

4.3 Reliability and Validity Tests

Test of reliability and validity are two important concepts used to evaluate quality of research. They ensure that data collected is replicable and the findings accurate thus making a contribution to the rigor of study. Reliability is about the similarity/consistency of results, while validity refers to accuracy of a measure (Creswell, 2014).

4.3.1 Reliability Test

Test of reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The output in Table 4.2 displays a summary of the output.

Table 4.2: Summary of Reliability Scores

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Marketing Strategies	28	0.710
Industry Competition	29	0.712
Export Performance	3	0.695

Source: Primary Data (2020)

The Cronbach's alpha values displayed in Table 4.2 ranged from 0.695 (Export performance) to 0.712 (Industry competition) suggesting that the test items were highly correlated and the questionnaire could therefore be used for further analysis. Firm characteristic was a direct measure hence no test of reliability test was conducted.

4.3.2 Validity Test

To conduct test of validity exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was carried out. The objectives of EFA is reduces data to only those items that measure the intended construct. However, Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) measure, Barlett's test of Sphericity and sample size were examined to assess the appropriateness of sample for EFA. Table 4.3 contains a summary of the output.

Table 4.3: Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) and Barlett's Test

Factors	KMO Test	Barlett's test of Sphericity		
		Approx Chi-Square	df	Sig
Marketing Strategies	.703	874.004	378	.000
Industry Competition	.707	621.250	406	.000
Export Performance	.704	24.718	6	.000

Source: Primary Data (2020)

The output contained in Table 4.3 reveals that the KMO measure of sampling adequacy for the three constructs namely; Marketing Strategies, Industry Competition and Export Performance > 0.5 the minimum recommended (Kaiser, 1974). Suggesting that the strength of association between variables was high. Bartlett's test of Sphericity for each of the three constructs was $p < 0.05$, an indication that they were statistically significant. Finally, sample size requirement was met at 69 responses. Having satisfied the minimum key requirements, it was deemed acceptable to proceed with exploratory factor analysis (EFA).

4.3.2.1 Factor Analysis for Marketing Strategies

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using principal component analysis (PCA) and varimax (orthogonal) rotation was conducted on all the 28 items of marketing strategy.

Table 4.4: Rotated Component Matrix for Measures of Marketing Strategies (N=69)

Factor 1: Product	**Factor loadings**
The company has ability to engage in value addition of its products	.888
The company deals with products that are of superior quality	.811
The company provides quality products with a high degree of consistency	.738
The company offerings are clearly differentiated from that of competitors	.727
The company has the capacity to meet the changing customer demands when required	.677
Factor 2: Pricing	
The company knows the competitors pricing tactics	.850
The company does an effective job of pricing its products	.795
The company monitors competitors' prices and price changes	.778
The company believes in providing a quality product at premium price	.740
The company quickly respond to competitor's pricing actions	.580
Factor 3: Promotion	
The international trade fairs are intended to attract new customers	.876
The International trade fairs are intended to seek new markets for the company produce	.834
The international trade fairs advocate for a conducive business environment, policies, tariffs and trade agreements	.798
The international trade fairs are intended to retain existing customers	.730
The international trade fairs are intended to provide timely market information	.671

Table 4.4: (Cont'd) Rotated Component Matrix for Measures of Marketing Strategies

Factor 4: Distribution (Place)	
The company attracts and retains the best suppliers	.861
The company provides high level of service support to suppliers e.g., providing seeds, timely information etc.,	**.**814
The company is selective when choosing suppliers	.782
The company has a strong working relationship with its suppliers	**.**667
The company provides training to its suppliers	.619

Source: Primary Data (2020).

Table 4.4 contains factor loadings for the rotated component matrix. Items in each factor were carefully examined so that only items with consistent meaning were retained for measuring the factors. In this study, 0.50 was used as the minimum factor loading criterion resulting to 20 out of the 28 items being used to evaluate marketing strategies. Four significant factors emerged from the analysis explaining 67.595% of the absolute variance (Eigen values> 1). They were interpreted as product, pricing, promotion and distribution.

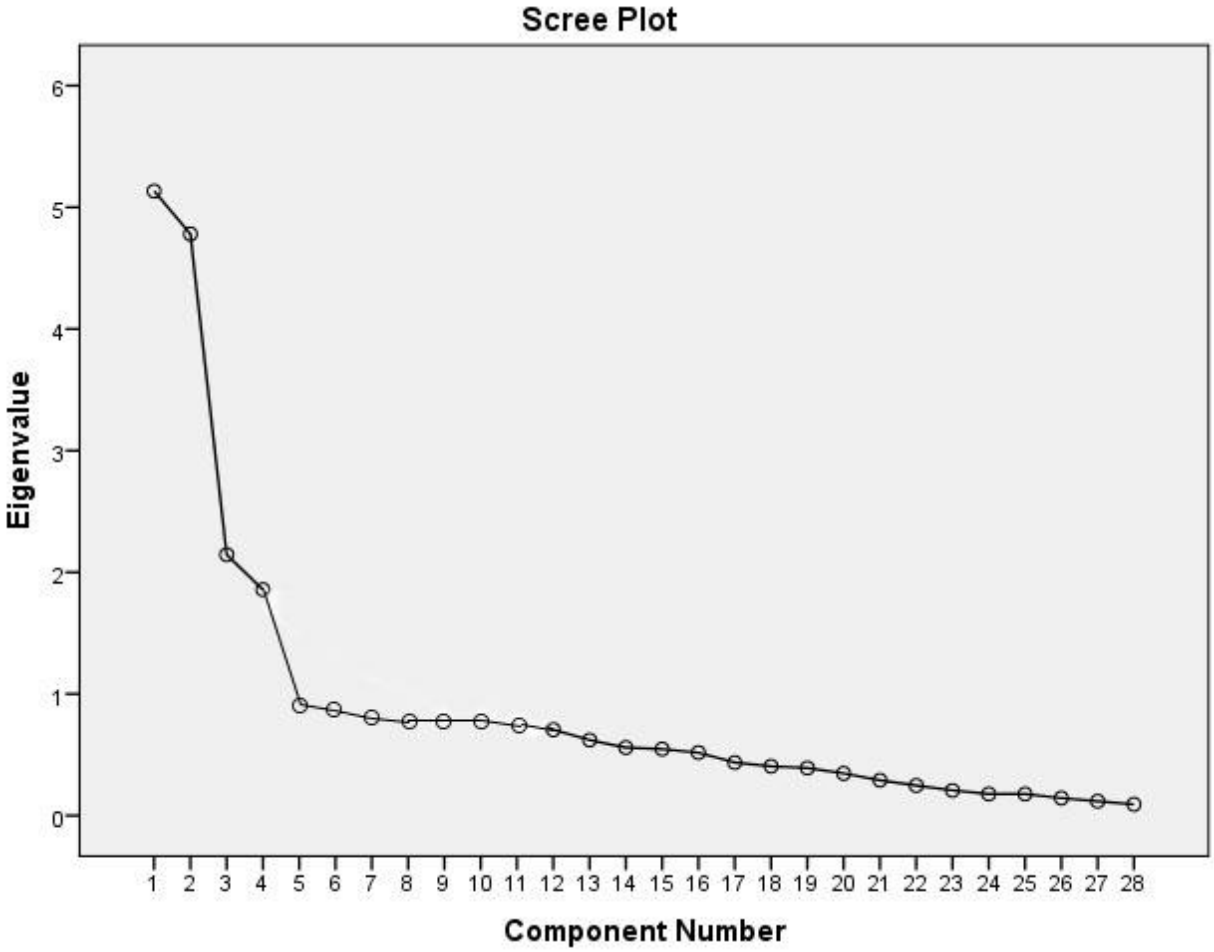
Table 4.5: Total Variance Explained for Marketing Strategies (N=69)

Factors	Initial Eigen values			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**	**Total**	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**
1	3.672	25.331	25.331	2.462	25.126	25.126
2	3.012	20.956	46.287	2.213	20.757	45.883
3	1.718	12.218	58.505	1.988	12.121	58.004
4	1.364	9.019	67.595	1.986	9.591	67.595
5	.998	4.113	68.708			
6	.976	4.102	69.810			
7	.960	4.013	70.823			
8	. 955	3.045.	71.199			
9	.945	3.373	72.403			
10	.914	3.263	75.666			
11	.835	2.982	78.648			
12	.706	2.520	81.168			
13	.621	2.217	83.386			
14	.559	1.995	85.381			
15	.546	1.950	87.332			
16	.517	1.847	89.179			
17	.436	1.556	90.735			
18	.405	1.448	92.183			
19	.391	1.397	93.580			
20	.347	1.238	94.817			
21	.290	1.037	95.854			
22	.247	.882	96.736			
23	.207	.738	97.475			
24	.177	.633	98.108			
25	.177	.631	98.739			
26	.143	.512	99.251			
27	.118	.420	99.671			
28	.092	.329	100.000			

Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis
Source: Primary Data (2020)

The data displayed in Table 4.5 shows that on the basis of (PCA) with varimax rotation, four factors accounted for 67.595 % of the variance.

Figure 4.1: Scree Plot for Marketing Strategies



The output contained in Figure 4.1 affirms that the first four factors had an eigen value that was greater than 1. Factors with scores (<1) explained a small proportion of the variability and were therefore left out.

4.3.2.2 Factor Analysis for Industry Competition

Principal factor analysis (PFA) with varimax rotation was conducted to assess industry competition construct. Table 4.6 contains factor loadings for each item.

Table 4.6: Rotated Component Matrix for Measures of Industry Competition (N=69)

Factor 1: Bargaining Power of Suppliers	**Factor Loadings**
The suppliers' product quality has great effect on quality of the company's products	8.8
The suppliers' products/offerings are an important input into the company's products/ offerings	8.6
The industry has a small number of suppliers who contribute to a large proportion of the industry's inputs	8.1
Factor 2: Threat of Substitutes	
There is considerable pressure from substitute products in the industry	8.4
The products in the industry have intrinsic characteristics from which it is difficult to find substitute	8.0
The needs that the industry products satisfy may be easily satisfied by products from many other sources and industries	7.6
All companies in the industry are aware of the strong substitutes that are easily available to our customers	6.9
Factor 3: Bargaining Power of Buyers	
Buyers and buyer groups are very powerful in the industry	8.6
Buyers in the industry dictate terms that companies offer	8.3
There is a small number of buyers in the industry that form a large proportion of our industry's sales	7.6
Buyers in the industry demand better services	7.1
Buyers in the industry's products are in a position to demand concessions and large discounts	6.7

Table 4.6 (Cont'd) Rotated Component Matrix for Measures of Industry Competition (N=69)

Factor 4: Threat of Entry	
New companies have to enter at a highly visible level to be recognized by customers	8.1
Setting up a company within this industry requires large start-up costs in form of finances, research and development, capital and human resources	7.4
Established companies in our industry have substantial resources which are used to prevent entry of new competitors	6.9
New entrants into the industry have to spend heavily to build their brands and overcome existing brand loyalties	6.5
Factor 5: Intensity of Rivalry	
Competition in the industry is described by terms like 'war-like', 'bitter', and 'cutthroat	8.0
Companies in the industry compete intensely to hold/increase their market share	7.4
Anything that one competitor can offer the market, others can readily match	6.5
Price competition is highly intense and price cuts are quickly and easily matched in the industry	5.9

Table 4.6 contains factor loadings for the rotated component matrix. Items in each factor were carefully examined so that only items with consistent meaning were retained for measuring the factors. In this study, 0.50 was used as the minimum factor loading criterion resulting to 20 out of 29 items being used to evaluate industry competition. Five significant factors emerged from the analysis explaining 66.04% of the total variance (Eigen values> 1). They were interpreted as bargaining power of suppliers, threat of substitutes, bargaining power of buyer, threat of entry, and intensity of rivalry.

Table 4.7: Total Variance Explained for Industry Competition (N=69)

	Initial Eigen values			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	**Total**	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**	**Total**	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**
1	1.661	5.727	47.953	2.108	7.269	41.208
2	1.538	5.304	53.257	1.929	6.651	47.859
3	1.333	4.598	57.855	1.848	6.373	54.231
4	1.217	4.196	62.051	1.815	6.259	60.490
5	1.156	3.988	66.038	1.609	5.548	66.038
6	.984	3.394	69.433			
7	.891	3.074	72.507			
8	.781	2.692	75.199			
9	.747	2.577	77.776			
10	.698	2.408	80.184			
11	.635	2.190	82.374			
12	.585	2.017	84.391			
13	.559	1.928	86.319			
14	.524	1.805	88.124			
15	.476	1.642	89.767			
16	.426	1.470	91.236			
17	.402	1.387	92.624			
18	.373	1.288	93.911			
19	.319	1.099	95.010			
20	.297	1.023	96.032			
21	.273	.940	96.973			
22	.256	.883	97.856			
23	.229	.789	97.644			
24	.205	.612	97.852			
25	.203	.604	97.756			
26	.229	.593	98.644			
27	.205	..512	99.352			
28	.188	..498	99.450			
29	.168	..348	100.000			

Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis
Source: Primary Data (2020)

The data displayed in Table 4.7 indicates that on the basis of (PCA) with varimax rotation, five factors explained a total of 66.04 % of the variance.

Figure 4.2: Scree Plot for Industry Competition

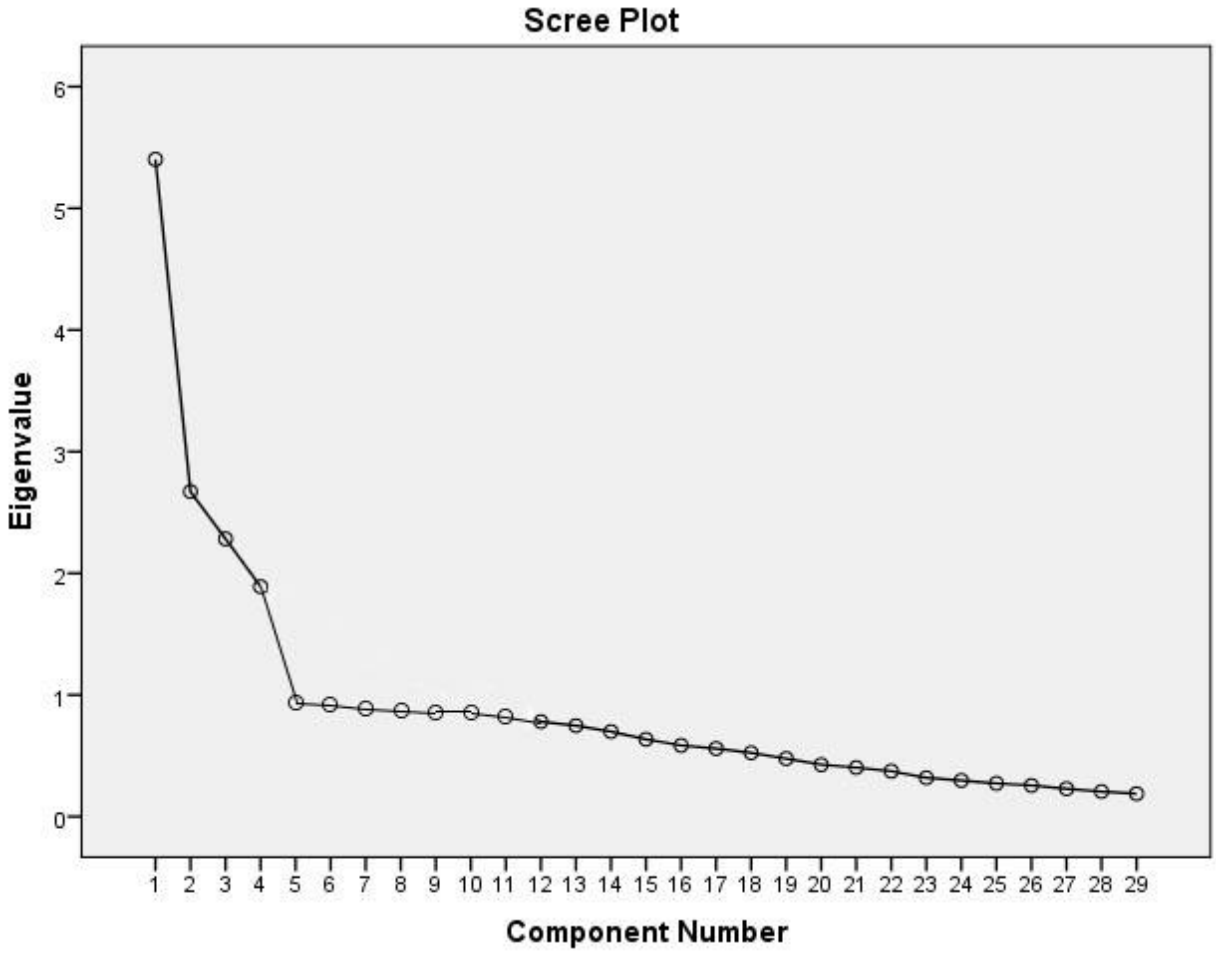


Figure 4.2 affirms that the first five factors had an eigen value that was greater than 1. The remaining factors had scores of <1 which explained a small proportion of the variability and were therefore left out.

4.3.2.3 Factor Analysis for Export Performance

Principal factor analysis (PFA) was run on the three items of export performance. Since only one factor was retained rotation was deemed unnecessary. Table 4.8 contains factor loadings for the three items.

Table 4.8: Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis for items of Export Performance (N=69)

	Factor Loadings
Return on assets (ROA)	.708
Export Market Share	.680
Customer Retention Rate	.644

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

1 component extracted

Source: Primary Data (2020)

The output presented in Table 4.8 presents a single component solution (loadings .708, .680, .675 and .644 respectively). Following recommendations by Meyer, Gamst and Guarino (2013), 0.50 was used as the minimum factor loading criterion resulting to all the 3 items being considered significant in evaluating export performance.

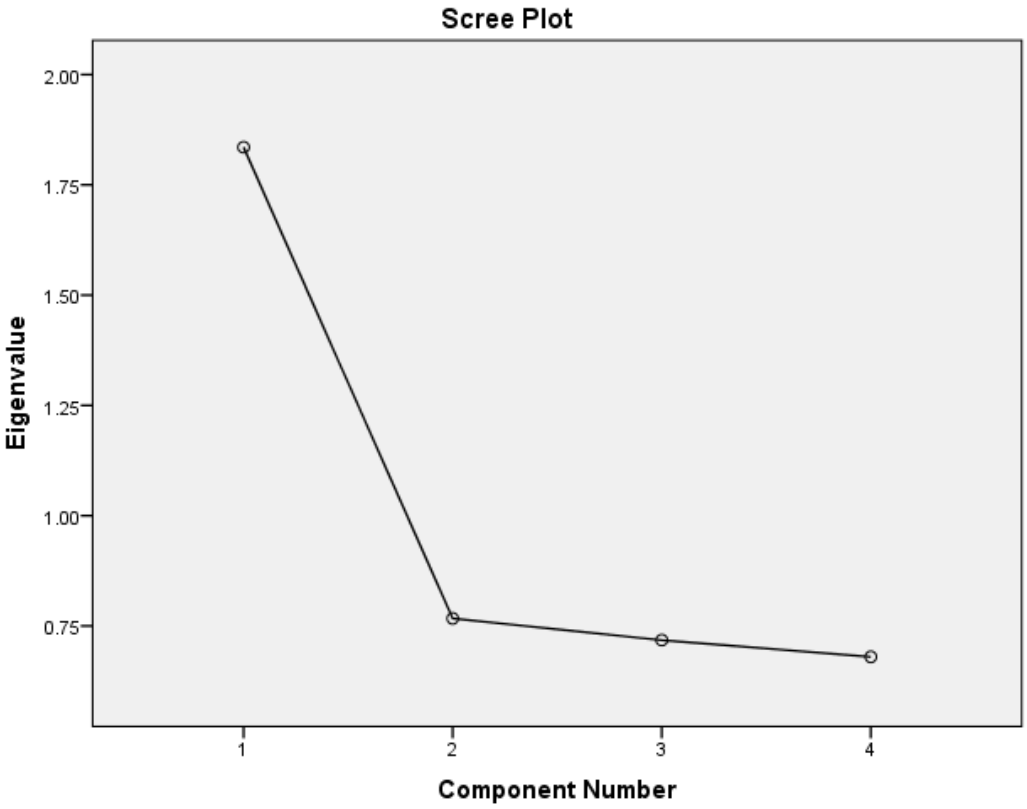
Table 4.9: Total Variance Explained for Export Performance

Component	**Initial Eigen Values**			**Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings**		
	Total	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**	**Total**	**% of Variance**	**Cumulative %**
1	1.835	45.883	45.883	1.835	45.883	45.883
2	.767	19.175	65.058			
3	.718	17.945	83.003			
4	.680	16.997	100.000			
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.						

Source: Primary Data (2020)

Table 4.9 shows that all three items loaded on a single factor and accounted for 45.883 % of the total variance.

Figure 4.3: Scree Plot for Export Performance



The output displayed in Figure 4.3 reveals that only one factor had an eigen value that was greater than 1. The remaining factors have low scores (< 1), which explained a small proportion of the variability and were therefore left out.

4.4 Regression Assumptions Tests

This study applied regression analyses to estimate both the magnitude and statistical significance of relationships between variables. Multiple regression is commonly applied when the researcher wants to estimate value of an outcome variable based on two or more predictor variables. However, prior to conducting the analysis, the assumptions for a multiple regression namely, linearity, normality, multicollinearity and homoscedasticity were tested and the output provided in the segment that follows.

4.4 1: Test for Linearity

Linear regression requires that the link between the outcome and predictor variable to be linear. Assumption of linearity was tested statistically using ANOVA. Table 4.10 depicts an exhibit of the findings.

Table 4.10: Results of Tests for Linearity

Variables	P– value for deviation from Linearity
Marketing Strategies	.148
Industry Competition	.514
Firm size	.350
Export Experience	.250

Source: Primary Data (2020)

Dependent Variable: Export Performance

The ANOVA output displayed in Table 4.10, indicates that the p values for each of the independent variables namely; marketing strategies, industry competition and firm characteristics was > 0.05. This therefore implied that the link between each of the predictor variables against the outcome variable was linear.

,

4.4.2 Test for Normality

Assumption of normality was tested statistically using Shapiro- Wilk tests. According to Hair et al., (2010) Shapiro Wilk tests is appropriate for samples < 50, however it can also be used for samples as large as 200. In addition, Shapiro Wilk tests is also said to provide better statistical power than the other goodness of fit tests. The hypotheses used were:

Ho: The sample data are not significantly different from a normal population

Ha: The sample data are significantly different from a normal population

Table 4.11: Results of Tests for Normality

Variables	Df	Sig
Marketing Strategies	69	.17
Industry Competition	69	.09
Firm Size	69	.06
Export Experience	69	.08
Export Performance	69	.12

Source: Primary Data (2020)

Table 4.11 indicates that the p- value for each of the variable was > than 0.05. For this reason, the alternative hypothesis was rejected in favor of the null hypothesis which states that data comes from a normal population.

4.4.3 Test for Multicollinearity

Multicollinearity refers to the condition where two or more predictor variables are highly correlated. To test multicollinearity variance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance indices were used and the output exhibited in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Results of Tests for Multicollinearity

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	4.041	1.186		3.407	.001		
	Marketing Strategies	.187	.299	.085	.627	.533	.813	1.230
	Industry Competition	-.395	.337	-.155	-1.171	.246	.860	1.163
	Firm Size	.067	.212	.014	.210	.413	.890	1.123
	Firm Experience	.058	.199	.037	.293	.770	.942	1.062

a. Dependent Variable: Export Performance

Source: Primary Data (2020)

The output in Table 4.12 indicates that the variance inflation factor (VIF) indices ranged from 1.230 to 1.062. This shows that the degree of multicollinearity amongst the independent variables was within an acceptable range. According to Chatterjee and Simonoff (2013) multicollinearity becomes a serious problem when VIF value exceeds 10 resulting to unreliable estimates of individual coefficients.

4. 4. 4 Tests for Homoscedasticity

Assumption of Homoscedasticity occurs when the dependent variable displays the same variance (amount of error in the model) throughout the values of the predictor variable. Tests of homoscedasticity was tested using scatter plot which provided visual inspection of the equal variance assumption.

Figure 4.4: Results of Tests for Homoscedasticity

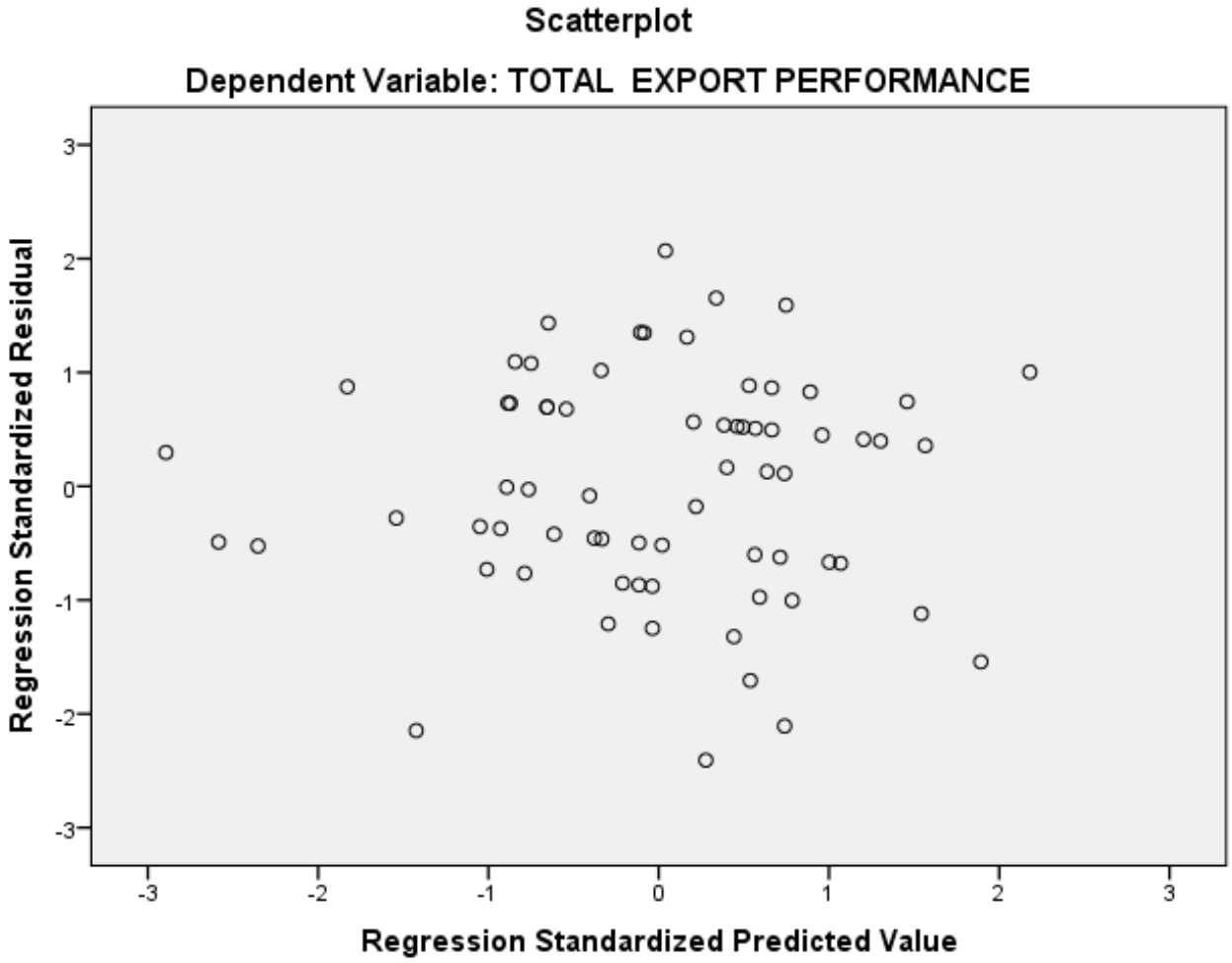


Figure 4.4 indicates that the scatter plots of standardized predicted value are spread equally above and below zero the x axis. The standardized residuals are also equally distributed on the left and right of the y axis. Therefore the premise of homogeneity of variance had been met.

4.5. Respondents' Demographic Profile

Respondent's demographic such as position held by respondent, length of service and level of formal education were used to identify characteristics that may influence responses and /or correlated with work experience within a fresh produce export firm. This section presents a summary of the respondent /participant attributes.

4.5.1 Position held by Respondent in the Firm

An individual's position sets clear guidelines for the title bearer, his colleagues and others with whom he comes into contact (Schneider & Bowen, 1985). In this study, respondents interviewed were export managers, sales managers, managing directors, owners or other managers involved with export operations of the company. This is because they were assumed to be well versed with the firm's export operations. Table 4.13 depicts a summary of the results.

Table 4.13: Distribution of Respondents by Position held in the Firm

Position held by Respondent	Frequency	%
Export Coordinator	13	18.8
Export Manager	14	20.3
Managing Director	11	15.9
Marketing Manager	24	34.8
Operations Manager	7	10.1
Total	**69**	**100.0**

Source: Primary Data (2020)

The output in Table 4.13 displays the distribution of participants by position held in the company. Majority of the participants were marketing manager (34.8 %), followed by export managers (20.3%), export coordinator (18.8%), managing directors (15.9 %) and lastly operations manager at (10.1%). This therefore reveals that respondents who took part in the survey were well informed about the organization export processes.

4.5.2: Respondent's Length of Service in Fresh Produce Firm

Respondent's length of service seeks to determine the number of years worked with the fresh produce firm. An individual's length of service has been used as a proxy for experience. According to Shrader, Oviatt and McDoughall (2000) experience enables individuals understand the complexities of export business, develop a network of customers abroad, demystify any negative attitudes and perceptions about foreign markets.

Table 4.14: Distribution of Respondent's by Length of Service in Present Organization

Years worked in the Fresh Produce Firm	Frequency	%
Up to 5 years	17	24.6
6 to 10 years	34	49.3
11 to 15 years	9	13.0
16 to 20 years	6	8.7
Over 20 years	3	4.4
Total	**69**	**100.0**

Source: Primary Data (2020)

Table 4.14 illustrates that a majority of the interviewees had between 6 to 10 years of experience (49.3%), followed by 24.6% of the participants who had worked for the same firm for less than 5 years, 13.0 % had between 11 to 15 years of experience, 8.7% between 16 to 20 experiences. Participants with more than 20 years of experience were the least at 4.4%. The above findings suggest that cumulatively, majority (79.3 %) of the participants had at least five years' experience and were therefore knowledgeable enough to take part in the survey. Schmidt, Hunter and Outerbridge (1986) concur that on-the-job experience provides individuals with the tacit, practical knowledge that is less frequently provided by formal education.

4.5.3: Respondent's Highest Level of Formal Education

Level of formal education refers to the academic credentials obtained by an Individual. Education is said to provide individuals with self-confidence, procedural knowledge likely to contribute to completing a task successfully. Most organizations consider level of education as a measure of a person's skill or productivity and frequently use it during appointment (Benson, Finegold & Mohrman, 2004).

Table 4.15: Distribution of Respondent's by Highest Level of Formal Education

Level of Formal Education	Frequency	%
O level	14	20.3
Certificate/Diploma	9	13.0
First degree	39	56.5
Second degree	7	10.2
Total	**69**	**100.0**

Source: Primary Data (2020)

Table 4.15 reveals that 20.3 % of the participants had completed 'O" levels, 13.0 % held certificate/diploma, 56.5% had attained a first degree, while only 10.2 % had second degree (master). Cumulatively, degree holders were made up of 66.7 % of the respondents. The observed level of education profile implies that participants who took part in the study had the cognitive ability to understand the job requirements and were also knowledgeable enough to understand the questionnaire.

4.6: Firm Demographic Profile

Firm's profile outlines important key information about the company. The demographic profile of fresh produce firms in this study consist of size of the company, years engaged in export trade, number of countries to which the firm exports. The results are exhibited in the-sub-sections that follow.

4.6.1: Size of Fresh Produce Firms

The basic assumption has often been that larger firms are able to achieve economies of scale, have greater bargaining power and other efficiencies making them more competitive in international markets (Akbas & Karaduman, 2012). Although firm size can be measured in several ways, number of permanent employees has been used in the current study. This is because number of permanent workers is considered stable and not influenced by fluctuations in price (Çavusgil & Naor, 1987). Table 4.16 presents a record of the fresh produce firms as measured by the percentage of permanent employees.

Table 4.16: Distribution of Firms by Number of Employees Permanently Employed

Number of Employees	Frequency	%
Up to 10 employees	36	52.1
11 – 50 employees	21	30.4
51 – 100 employees	7	10.1
101 and above	5	7.2
Total	**69**	**100.0**

Source: Primary Data (2020)

Table 4.16 illustrates that 52.1 % of the firms had a maximum of 10 permanent employees, 30.4 % had between 11 to 50 employees, 10.1 % had 51 to 100 employees, while only 7.2 % had more than 100 employees. The Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA) states that firms that employ 10 or fewer employees are referred to as micro enterprises. Those that employ 11 to 50 employees are referred to as small business. Medium firms employ 51 to 100 workers. While large firms employ more than 100 employees. These results indicate that there were 36 micro enterprises, 21 small businesses, 7 medium firms and 5 large firms.

Suggesting that a large number of the fresh firms were SME's. It further supports the argument by GoK (2010) that SME's make significant contribution in creating employment opportunities and improving living standards.

4.6.2. Export Experience

The duration of time that a firm has engaged in export business is seen as a source of competitive advantage. This view concurs with the dynamic capability theory which states that capabilities are a product of learning experiences that take place within the business (Teece et al., 1997). This measure was selected on the basis that exporting to other markets on a regular basis equips management with knowledge on how to do conduct in international market (Stoian et al., 2011). Table 4.17 presents a review of firm's export experience, expressed as a percentage.

Table 4.17: Distribution of Firms by Years of Export Experience

Export Experience	Frequency	%
Up to 5 years	10	14.5
6 to 10 years	19	27.5
11 to 15 years	32	46.4
16 to 20 years	5	7.2
Over 20 years	3	4.4
Total	**69**	**100.0**

Source: Primary Data (2020)

Table 4.17 shows that age of fresh produce firms ranged from one year to twenty years. In terms of percentage 46.4 % of the firms had been involved in export trade for a period of 11 15 years. The second largest 27.5 % had been exporting between 6 to 10 years, 14.5 % had been exporting between for a period of up to 5 years. 7.2% had between 16 to 20 years. While only 4.4% had over 20 years of experience in export. Cumulatively, 88.4 % of the firms had more than fifteen years' experience. They therefore had acquired the necessary experience within the industry.

4.6.3: Number of Export Destinations

According to Erramilli (1992) as a firm acquires more international experience it tends to be more geographically diverse. Increase in geographic diversification is often linked to resource availability (Casillas & Moreno-Menendez, 2013). Table 4.18 depicts a summary on the number of export destinations expressed as a percentage.

Table 4.18: Distribution of Firms by Number of Export Destination

Number of Export Destination	Frequency	%
Up to 5 Countries	34	49.2
6 to 10 Countries	30	43.5
Over 20 Countries	5	7.2
Total	**69**	**100.0**

Source: Primary Data (2020)

The results contained in Table 4.18 reveal that 49.2 % of the firms exported to a maximum of five countries. Followed by 43.5 % firms which exported to between 6 and 10 countries. While only 7.2 % exported to more than 20 countries. From this survey, a large number of firms were categorized as micro and small business enterprises (SME's). This could explain why fewer firms export to more than 20 countries. These findings lend support to an argument by Chen and Hsu (2010) which states that resources are a pre-requisite for international geographic expansion.

4.7: Descriptive Statistics for Marketing Strategies

This study sought to describe marketing strategies used by fresh produce firms to meet company objectives. To measure marketing strategies, the 4P's namely product, price, place and promotions were identified (Kotler, 2011). Participants used a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing not at all (1) and (5) very large extent. Thereafter, feedback was analyzed using mean score, standard deviation (SD) as well as coefficient of variation (CV). The following sub section presents a summary of the output.

4.7.1 Product Strategies

Product characteristics influence the marketing strategies adopted by a firm (O'Cass & Julian, 2005). Mohammad, Wang and Sunayya (2012) argue that marketers should identify products characteristics that enhance consumer experience and convert them into unique selling proposition. A total of five items were used to assess product strategy. Each attribute was rated on a scale ranging from 1- 5 where (1) represented not at all and (5) depicted very large extent. Coefficient of variation (CV) was used to describe variability from the mean. A high coefficient of variation represented a higher dispersion around the mean. Table 4.19 displays a summary of the results.

Table 4.19: Mean Score, Standard Deviation and Coefficient of Variation for Measures of Product Strategies

Product Strategies	N	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	CV (%)
1.The company provides quality products with a high degree of consistency	69	4.28	.639	14.93
2.The company deals with products that are of superior quality	69	4.23	.789	18.65
3.The company has the capacity to meet the changing customer demands when required	69	3.67	.741	20.19
4.The company offerings are clearly differentiated from that of competitors	69	3.45	.832	24.12
5.The company has ability to engage in value addition of its products	69	2.96	1.194	40.34
Average Score	**69**	**3.76**	**.086**	**23.68**

Source: Primary Data (2020)

The output in Table 4.19 indicates that a large number of the participants agreed that "firms provide quality products with high degree of consistency' as shown by the high mean score and low CV score (M = 4.28, SD = .639 CV = 14.93). Participants also seemed to agree that strategies such as consistency, quality and brand identity were significant to fresh produce firms as indicated by the high mean scores for item 2, 3, 4 respectively. A possible explanation would be fresh produce firms rely on differentiation advantages such as superior quality, consistency, brand identity, better performance to attain superior performance in the export market. However, respondents seemed to disagree that firms had ability to engage in value addition as depicted by the low mean score and high CV (M = 2.96, SD = 1.194, CV = 40.34). A possible explanation would be that majority of the firms that took part in the survey were categorized as small and medium enterprises (SME's) they therefore lacked the resources to innovate and engage in research activities.

4.7.2 Pricing Strategies

Pricing strategies are the policies adopted by firms to determine amount to charge for goods and services. It is the only element of the marketing mix that generates sales and profits (Murray et al., 2011). Five items were used to evaluate pricing strategies used by fresh produce firms. Each attribute was rated on a scale ranging from 1- 5 where (1) represented not at all and (5) depicted very large extent. A high mean score suggests strong degree of pricing strategies, while a low mean score indicates low degree of pricing strategies. Coefficient of variation (CV) was used to describe variability from the mean. A high coefficient of variation represents a higher dispersion around the mean. Table 4.20 depicts a summary of the results

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Table 4.20: Mean Score, Standard Deviation and Coefficient of Variation for Measures of Pricing Strategies

Pricing Strategies	N	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	CV (%)
1.The company believes in providing a quality product at premium price	69	3.59	1.034	28.80
2.The company does an effective job of pricing its products	69	3.58	1.090	30.45
3.The company knows the competitors pricing tactics	69	2.94	1.474	50.14
4.The company monitors competitors' prices and price changes	69	2.90	1.363	47.00
5.The company quickly respond to competitor's pricing actions	69	2.75	1.230	44.73
Average Score	**69**	**3.17**	**1.20**	**38.83**

Source: Primary Data (2020)

The output in Table 4.20 shows that participants seemed to agree that firms which produced quality products were able to charge a "premium price" as depicted by the high mean score and low CV score (M = 3.59. *SD* = 1.034, CV= 28.80). Participants also seemed to agree that firms did an 'effective job of pricing products' (M = 3.58, SD = 1.090, CV = 30.45). Although Porter (1995) argues that firms which produce similar products engage in price wars. Findings in this study suggest that though price is an important element within the fresh produce industry, firms derive competitive advantage from other attributes such as quality, brand identity and consistency.

4.7.3 Place (Distribution) Strategies

Distribution is an integral component of the marketing mix that ensures availability of products/services at the right place and time (Vorhies & Morgan, 2005). As with the other marketing mix components, five items were used to identify distribution strategies. Each attribute was rated on a scale ranging from 1- 5 where (1) represented not at all and (5) depicted very large extent. Coefficient of variation (CV) was used to describe variability from the mean. A high coefficient of variation represents a higher dispersion around the mean. Table 4.21 contains a summary of the findings.

Table 4.21: Mean Score, Standard Deviation and Coefficient of Variation for Measures of Place (Distribution) Strategies

Distribution Strategies	N	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	CV (%)
1.The company attracts and retains the best suppliers	69	3.87	1.136	29.35
2.The company has a strong working relationship with its suppliers	69	3.83	0.999	26.08
3.The company is selective when choosing suppliers	69	3.71	1.250	33.7
4.The company attracts and retains the best suppliers	69	3.71	1.139	30.7
5.The company provides high level of service support to suppliers e.g. providing seeds, timely information etc.,	69	3.71	1.099	29.62
Average Score	**69**	**3.58**	**1.13**	**30.11**

Source: Primary Data (2020)

The output in Table 4.21 revealed that participants agreed that firms "attract and retain the best suppliers" as depicted by the high mean score and low CV score (M = 3.87, SD =1.136, CV= 29.35). Respondents also agreed that "strong working relations with suppliers" was an important attribute as shown by the high mean score (M = 3.83, SD = 0.10, CV = 26.035). A possible explanation would be that suppliers within the fresh produce industry are an important link between exporters and the final consumer.

4.7.4 Promotion Strategies

Promotion strategies describe ways in which firms seek to inform and persuade its target market. According to Adetayo (2006), promotion strategies are often used by companies to differentiate a firm's products from its rivals. Trade fairs, internet marketing, personal selling are some of the channels used by fresh produce firms to stimulate consumers demand. Five items were used to measure promotion strategies. A high mean score suggests strong agreement, while a low mean score suggest disagreement amongst the respondents.

Table 4.22: Mean Score, Standard Deviation and Coefficient of Variation for Measures of Promotion Strategies

Promotion Strategies	N	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	CV (%)
1.The International trade fairs are intended to seek new markets for the company produce	69	4.09	.59	14.38
2.The international trade fairs are intended to provide timely market information	69	3.93	.73	18.68
3.The international trade fairs are intended to attract new customers	69	3.80	.87	22.81
4.The international trade fairs advocate for a conducive business environment, policies, tariffs and trade agreements	69	3.77	.81	21.41
5.The international trade fairs are intended to retain existing customers	69	3.48	.99	28.56
Average Score		**3.73**	**.86**	**23.55**

Source: Primary Data (2020)

The findings in Table 4.22 indicate that participants seemed to agree that "international trade fairs are intended to seek new markets" as evidenced by the high mean score and low CV score (M = 4.09, SD = .59, CV = 14.38). Respondents also concur that international trade fairs are intended to "provide timely market information" (M = 3.93, SD = .73, CV = 18.68). A possible explanation would be trade fairs provide a venue for exporters to market their products. Effective promotion strategies can therefore contribute to export success.

4.7.5 Summary of Marketing Strategies

To evaluate the significance of marketing strategies among fresh produce firms. A questionnaire consisting of four sections namely product, price, place and promotion was used and a summary of the findings presented in Table 4.23. A high mean score indicates the extent to which a construct was implemented by fresh produce firms.

Table 4.23: Mean Score, Standard Deviation and Coefficient of Variation for Measures of Marketing Strategies

Marketing Strategies	N	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	CV (%)
Product	69	3.76	0.07	23.68
Place	69	3.75	1.13	30.11
Promotion	69	3.73	0.86	23.55
Price	69	3.17	1.20	38.83
Average Score		**3.60**	**0.82**	**29.04**

Source: Primary Data (2020)

The output displayed in Table 4.23 shows that product strategies accounted for the highest mean score (M = 3.76, SD = 0.07, CV = 23.68) followed by "place" which had a mean score (M = 3.75, SD = 1.13, CV = 30.11) . "Promotion" accounts for a mean score (M = 3.73, SD 0.86, CV = 23.55) while "price" had the least mean score (M = 3.17, SD = 1.20, CV = 38.83). The average mean score for the construct marketing strategies was (M = 3.60, SD = 0.82, CV = 29.04). These findings suggest that although the 4P's made significant contribution in the design of marketing strategies, fresh product firms direct most efforts to developing product strategies.

4.8 Descriptive Statistics for Industry Competition

Porter's five model allows analyst to deduce the profit potential within an industry and also determine the best strategy to counter the strongest industry force. Based on the work of Pecotich et al., (1999), bargaining power of buyers, bargaining power of sellers, threat of new entrants, threat of substitute, rivalry amongst existing firms were used to determine intensity of competition and attractiveness of industries. Respondent's responses were rated on a scale ranging from 1- 5 where (1) represented not at all and (5) depicted very large extent. The pertinent results were analyzed using mean score, standard deviation (SD) as well as coefficient of variation (CV) and the results presented in the following subsections.

4.8.1 Bargaining Power of Buyers

Buyer power describes the ability of customers to impose pressure on businesses to lower prices, demand higher quality goods or better service (Porter, 1981). Within the fresh produce industry, bargaining power of buyers was measured using five question items. Each attribute was rated on a scale ranging from 1- 5 where (1) represented not at all and (5) depicted very large extent. A high mean score suggested high bargaining power, while a low mean score assumed low bargaining power. Table 4.24 depicts a summary of the findings.

Table 4.24 Mean Score, Standard Deviation and Coefficient of Variation for Measures of Bargaining Power of Buyers

Bargaining Power of Buyers	**N**	**Mean Score**	**Std. Deviation**	**CV (%)**
1. Buyers in the industry dictate terms that companies offer	69	4.07	1.062	26.09
2. Buyers in the industry demand better services	69	3.91	0.78	19.97
3. Buyers and buyer groups are very powerful in the industry	69	3.90	0.89	22.92
4. There is a small number of buyers in the industry that form a large proportion of our industry's sales	69	3.75	0.90	25.93
5. Buyers in the industry's products are in a position to demand concessions and large discounts	69	3.41	0.86	23.31
Average Score	**69**	**3.81**	**0.90**	**23.65**

Source: Primary Data (2020)

The output exhibited in Table 4.24 shows that respondents seemed to agree that within the fresh produce industry buyers "dictate terms that companies offer them" and "also buyers demand better services". These findings suggest a strong degree of bargaining power as depicted by the high mean score on item 1 and 2 (M = 4.07, M=3.91) respectively. A possible explanation would be buyers in Europe determine the products that get to enter the market by imposing Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). Similarly, respondents also agreed that there was a small number of buyers who form a large proportion of the sales as suggested by the high mean score of (M = 3.75). This too is a characteristic of strong bargaining power. Ability to demand concession and large discounts had a high mean score of (M = 3.41). The above characteristics affirm the assumption that degree of buyer power within the fresh produce industry was high.

4.8.2 Bargaining Power of Suppliers

Suppliers are a threat to profitability within an industry when they are able to charge higher prices, reduce product availability or lower quality of products (Porter, 1980). Within the fresh produce industry, bargaining power of suppliers was measured using three question items. Each attribute was rated on a scale ranging from 1- 5 where (1) represented not at all and (5) depicted very large extent. Results were analyzed using mean score, standard deviation and coefficient of variation. A high mean score indicated high bargaining power of suppliers, while a low mean score suggest low bargaining power of suppliers.

Table 4.25 Mean Score, Standard Deviation and Coefficient of Variation for Measures of Bargaining Power of Suppliers

Bargaining Power of Suppliers	N	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	CV (%)
1. The suppliers' products/offerings are an important input into the company's products/ offerings	69	4.26	0.68	16.0
2. In this industry, the suppliers' product quality has great effect on quality of the company's products	69	3.45	1.16	33.6
3. The industry has a small number of suppliers who contribute to a large proportion of the industry's inputs	69	1.99	0.83	27.76
Average Score	**69**	**2.62**	**0.83**	**27.48**

Source: Primary Data (2020)

The output displayed in Table 4.25 shows that participants seemed to agree that suppliers products made significant contribution to the company's products/ offerings as shown by the high mean score (M = 4.26, SD = 0.68, CV= 16.0). On whether supplier's product quality had great effect on quality, respondents seemed to agree as depicted by the high mean score (M = 3.45, SD= 1.16, CV= 33.6). However, on the question of industry has a small number of suppliers who contribute a large proportion of industry inputs. Respondents seemed to disagree that within the fresh produce industry there exists a small number of potential fresh produce suppliers.

4.8.3 Threat of Substitutes

Threat of substitutes occurs when there are products with lower prices that can perform similar function. Within the fresh produce industry, threat of substitutes was measured using four question. Each attribute was rated on a scale ranging from 1- 5 where (1) represented not at all and (5) depicted very large extent. The results were analyzed using mean score, standard deviation and coefficient of variation (CV) and the findings summarized in Table 4.26. A high mean score indicated threats from substitutes was strong, while a low mean score indicated that threats from substitutes was low.

Table 4.26 Mean Score, Standard Deviation and Coefficient of Variation for Measures of Threat of Substitutes

Threat of Substitutes	N	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	CV (%)
1. The products in the industry have intrinsic characteristics from which it is difficult to find substitute	69	3.01	.74	38.7
2. All companies in the industry are aware of the strong substitutes that are easily available to our customers	69	1.77	.55	31.1
3. The needs that the industry products satisfy may be easily satisfied by products from many other sources and industries	69	1.62	.89	54.9
4. The availability of substitute products in the industry limits the potential return on investment in the industry	69	2.96	.58	39.7
Average Scores	**69**	**2.25**	**0.7**	**39.7**

Source: Primary Data (2020)

The output displayed in Table 4.26 shows that participants agreed that fresh produce had intrinsic characteristics making it difficult to find substitutes represented by a mean score (M = 3.01, SD = .74, CV = 38.7). On availability of substitute products, respondents agreed that substitutes were not easily available as suggested by the low mean score (M = 1.77, SD = .55, CV = 31.1) and that it was difficult to get satisfaction from other sources (M = 1.62, SD = .89, CV = 54.9). The above characteristics suggest that threat of substitutes was relatively low. A possible explanation would be fresh produce provide essential nutrients that cannot be found in substitute products.

4.8.4 Threat of New Entrants

Threat of new entry refers to the ability of new, direct competitors to enter into an industry. According to Mintzberg (2003) companies depend on strategies such as customer loyalty, product differentiation, capital intensity as some of the factors that may hinder entry. In this study, threat by new entrants was measured using four question items. Each attribute was rated on a scale ranging from 1- 5 where (1) represented not at all and (5) depicted very large extent. Table 4.27 depicts a summary of the findings. A high mean score suggests that threat by new entrants is low, while a low mean suggest that threat by new entrants is high.

Table 4.27: Mean Score, Standard Deviation and Coefficient of Variation for Measures of Threat of New Entrants

Threat of New Entrants	N	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	CV (%)
1. Setting up a company within this industry requires large start-up costs in form of finances, research and development, capital and human resources	69	1.97	0.92	46.7
2. New companies joining the industry must spend a lot of resources on research and development	69	1.81	0.71	39.2
3. New entrants into the industry have to spend heavily to build their brands and overcome existing brand loyalties	69	1.83	0.95	52.13
4. Established companies in our industry have substantial resources which are used to prevent entry of new competitors	69	2.25	1.22	54.13
Average Score	**69**	**2.12**	**0.93**	**44.8**

Source: Primary Data (2020)

The results in Table 4.27 reveal that respondents disagreed on the question that setting up a company within the fresh produce industry requires large start-up costs as shown by the mean score (M = 1.97, SD = 0.92, CV = 46.7). Respondents further disagreed that new entrants had to spend lots of resources on research and development (M = 1.81, SD = 0.71, CV = 39.2).

On the question of firms must spend heavily to build brands and overcome existing brand loyalties, respondents also disagreed as represented by the mean score (M = 1.83, SD = 0.95, CV= 52.13). That could explain the existence of many small and medium enterprises (SME's) within the fresh produce Industry, since it was relatively easy for firms to enter/exit the fresh produce industry

4.8.5 Intensity of Rivalry

Rivalry amongst firms describes degree to which competing firms put pressure on one another. Within the fresh produce industry rivalry amongst firms was measured using four question items. Each attribute was rated on a scale ranging from 1- 5 where (1) represented not at all and (5) depicted very large extent. The results were analyzed using mean score, standard deviation and coefficient of variation (CV). A high mean score indicates high rivalry among competing firms while a low mean score shows slow rivalry among competing firms.

Table 4.28 Mean Score, Standard Deviation and Coefficient of Variation for Measures of Intensity of Rivalry

Intensity of Rivalry	**N**	**Mean Score**	**Std. Deviation**	**CV (%)**
1) Price competition is highly intense and price cuts are quickly and easily matched in the industry	69	3.64	0.94	25.82
2) Anything that one competitor can offer the market, others can readily match	69	3.07	1.48	48.21
3) Companies in the industry compete intensely to hold/increase their market share	69	2.62	1.06	40.46
4) Competition in the industry is described by terms like 'war-like', 'bitter', and 'cutthroat	69	1.42	0.78	54.93
Average Score	**69**	**2.23**	**0.90**	**42.32**

Source: Primary Data (2020)

The output in Table 4.28 shows that participants seemed to agree that anything that one competitor offered the market, others could easily match as represented by the high mean score (M = 3.07, SD = 1.48, CV= 48.21). This could be attributed to similarity in the product offering and low level of product differentiation. According to Hill and Jones (2012) when entry to an industry is relatively easy, competition rivalry is likely to be high and firms engage in highly intense price wars as suggested by the high mean score (M = 3.64, SD = 0.94, CV = 25.82). On advertising battles, promotion wars and competition being described as "war like' bitter and cut throat respondents seemed to disagree. A possible explanation would be advertising battles, promotion wars may prove to be more expensive in international markets than in the domestic context.

4.8.6 Summary of Industry Competition

The strength of all the five forces together determines profit potential of the firm either by influencing costs, prices and initial amount required to invest. The profit potential in every industry is different since it is determined by the collective strength of all the five forces. The output in Table 4.29 displays a summary of the proxies used to measure industry competition.

Table 4.29 Mean Score, Standard Deviation and Coefficient of Variation for Measures of Industry Competition

Industry Competition	N	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	CV (%)
"Bargaining Power of Buyers"	69	3.81	0.90	23.62
"Bargaining Power of Suppliers"	69	2.62	0.83	31.67
"Intensity of Rivalry"	69	2.23	0.90	40.35
"Threat of New Entrants"	69	2.12	0.93	43.85
"Threat of Substitutes"	69	1.73	0.70	40.46
Average Score	**69**	**2.50**	**0.69**	**35.99**

Source: Primary Data (2020)"

The output in Table 4.29 shows that all Porters five forces jointly influence industry competition with a mean score (M = 2.50, SD = 0.69, CV = 35.99). However, bargaining power of buyers had the highest mean score (M = 3.81, SD =0.90, CV = 23.62) and was therefore considered the most significant force when formulating marketing strategies among fresh produce firms. Based on the above findings, the Porters five competitive forces were considered important in formulating marketing strategies within the fresh produce industry.

4.9 Descriptive Statistics for Export Performance

Measurement of financial export performance was based on perceived rather than objective measures. This is because results from the pilot study revealed that most firms were privately held and were therefore reluctant to respond to questions regarding financial information. Export performance was conceptualized as a composite score of export market share, customer retention rate and average growth of return on assets (ROA) from 2016 to 2019. Composite scores were obtained by summing all components calculating the particular parameters and dividing by total number of items to create a single score. Responses were rated on a scale ranging from 1- 5 where (1) represented lowest 20% (1) to top 20% (5) so as to be consistent with the overall questionnaire design. A high mean score indicated high export performance, while a low mean score indicated low export performance. Likert scales have been used in past studies where it was impossible to collect actual figures/data. The pertinent results were analyzed using mean score, standard deviation (SD) as well as coefficient of variation (CV) and the results presented in the following subsection.

Table 4.30 Mean Score, Standard Deviation and Coefficient of Variation for Measures of Export Performance

Export Performance	N	Mean Score	Std. Deviation	CV (%)
Customer retention	69	3.84	0.96	25.0
Return On Assets (ROA)	69	3.36	1.03	30.7
Export Market Share	69	3.20	0.92	28.6
Average Score	**69**	**3.60**	**0.79**	**22.08**

Source: Primary Data (2020)

The output in Table 4.30 shows that participants seemed to agree that customer retention was a significant measure of export performance as indicated by mean score (M = 3.84, SD = 0.96, CV = 25.0). This confirms argument by Honts and Hanson (2011), that seeking new clientele is more costly than retaining existing consumers.

4.10 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis is used to discover the degree and strength of association between two continuous variables. There are various methods used to test correlation, in this study Pearson's product moment correlation which requires samples to be normally distributed and the relationship to be linear in nature was adopted. Table 4.31 depicts a summary of the results.

Table 4.31 Correlation Matrix for Marketing Strategies, Industry Competition, Firm Characteristics and Export Performance

		1	2	3	4
Marketing Strategies	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig.(2-tailed)				
	N	69			
Industry Competition	Pearson Correlation	.269**	1		.
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.001			
	N	69	69		
Firm Characteristics	Pearson Correlation	.199	.187	1	
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.101	.123		
	N	69	69	69	
Export Performance	Pearson Correlation	.349*	.321**	.380	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.003	.000	.113	
	N	69	69	69	69

Source: Primary Data (2020)

"*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)"

"**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)"

The output displayed in Table 4.31 shows the correlation matrix among the predictor variables. The findings indicate a significant and moderately positive link between marketing strategies and export performance, r = 0.349, n= 69, p < 0.003, two tailed. Similarly, the link between industry competition and export performance is also moderately positive and significant where r = .321, n= 69, p < 0.05, two tailed. The link between firm characteristics and export performance was positive but insignificant, r = 0.380, n= 69, p= 0.11, two tailed.

4.11 Test of Hypothesis

To investigate the relationship between the variables. Four hypotheses were developed and examined using different regression models. Simple and multiple regression analysis were used to test for direct relationships. While moderation effect was tested using hierarchical multiple linear regression analysis. Each of the hypothesis was tested at 95 % confidence level and p values used to determine significance level. Where the P values were less than or equal to 0.05 the null hypotheses was rejected in favor of the alternate hypothesis. Alternatively, when p value was greater than 0.05, then the null hypothesis was accepted.

4.11.1 Marketing Strategies and Export Performance

Objective one sought to investigate the association between marketing strategies and export performance of fresh produce firms in Kenya. Marketing strategies were conceptualized as a composite score of product, pricing promotion and price (distribution) strategies. Export performance was conceptualized as a composite score of export market share, customer retention rate and average growth of return on assets (ROA) from 2016 to 2019. To measure ROA subjective/perceptual measures were presented and feedback analyzed using a five-point Likert scale ranging from lowest 20 % (1) to top 20% (5) so as to be consistent with the overall questionnaire design. This approach has been used in previous studies by (Kimwomi, 2015; Shariffi & Charrakh, 2011). The following hypothesis was developed and tested:

H_1: Marketing Strategies have no significant effect on export performance

The model was stated as

Step 1: $Y = \beta_o + \beta_{10}MS + \varepsilon$

Where:

Y = composite score of export performance

MS =composite score of marketing strategies

ε= Error term

Marketing strategies were regressed on export performance and the results presented in the following output tables.

Table 4.32: Model summary on the relationship between Marketing Strategies and Export Performance

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.	.349[c]	.122	.109	.981	.122	9.281	1	67	0.003

Source: Primary Data (2020)

Predictors :(Constant), Marketing Strategies

"Dependent Variable: Export Performance"

The output displayed in Table 4.32 shows that R which measures the correlation coefficient was .349, suggesting that marketing strategies and export performance link was positive. R square for model 1 is .122, implies that 12.2 % of the variation in export performance could be explained by marketing strategies. While 87.8 % of the variability could be determined by other factors not captured in the model.

Table 4.33: ANOVA Results on the Relationship between Marketing Strategies and Export Performance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	17.432	1	8.930	9.281	.003[b]
	Residual	5.961	67	.962		
	Total	23.393	68			

Source: Primary Data (2020)

Dependent Variable: Export Performance

"Predictors (Constant), Marketing Strategies"

The ANOVA output contained in Table 4.33 reveals that marketing strategies significantly predicts export performance F (1, 67) =9.281, p <.05. This is demonstrated by the p value which is less than .05 for the predictor variable. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis which states that the association between marketing strategies and export performance was significant.

Table 4.34: Coefficients Results on the Relationship between Marketing Strategies and Export Performance

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-.900	1.277		-.704	.484
Marketing Strategies	1.508	0.347	0.349	3.046	.003

a. Dependent Variable: Export Performance

Source: Primary data (2020)

The coefficients results are used to establish how each individual predictor variable contributes to the model. The output in Table 4.34 indicates that marketing strategies significantly predict export performance (Beta =.349, t=3.046, p =0.003). The regression model that explains the relationship between export performance and marketing strategies is stated as:

Model: $Y = \beta_o + \beta_{10}MS + \varepsilon$

$Y = -900 + .349MS$

The standardized beta value suggests that the marketing strategies and export performance link was positive. When marketing strategies was increased by I unit there was a corresponding increase of export performance by .349 units holding the effect of all other predictor variables constant. The negative -900 (y intercept) means that the expected value of export performance will be less than zero when all independent variable are set to 0.

4.11.2 Marketing Strategies, Firm Characteristics and Export Performance

Objective two sought to establish the moderating role of firm characteristics on the marketing strategies and export performance relationship. Lai (2013) describes a moderator as an independent variable that may increase/decrease or change direction of related variables. Hierarchical multiple linear regression analysis was used to determine the moderating role of firm characteristics on the relationship between marketing strategies and export performance. According to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, and Lowe (2002) hierarchical multiple regression is a model for analysis which involves adding predictor variables in steps to establish whether addition of potential moderator has a significant increase in (R squared).

Marketing strategies were conceptualized as a composite score of product, pricing promotion and price (distribution) strategies. Export performance was conceptualized as a composite score of export market share, customer retention rate and average growth of return on assets (ROA) from 2016 to 2019. Firm characteristics were conceptualized as a composite score of log of firm size and log of export experience. The moderating role of firm characteristics on the marketing strategies and export performance link was determined using the centered approach (Wu & Zumbo, 2008). Step I, involved regressing the composite scores of predictor variable (marketing strategies) on the dependent variable. Step 2, involved regressing the composite score of marketing strategies and firm characteristics on export performance. Step 3, involved regressing the composite scores of the variables marketing strategies, firm characteristics and interaction term between marketing strategies and firm characteristics on export performance. To create an interaction, term the variables marketing strategies, firm characteristics were first centered and thereafter multiplied.

The model was stated as.

Step 1: $Y = \beta_o + \beta_{10}MS$

Step 2: $Y = \beta_o + \beta_{10}MS + \beta_{11}FC + \varepsilon$

Step 3: $Y = \beta_o + \beta_{10}MS + \beta_{11}FC+\beta_{12}MS * FC+ \varepsilon$

Where:

Y = composite score of export performance

MS =composite score of marketing strategies

FC= composite score of firm characteristics

ε= Error term

A summary of the results is presented in the following tables

Table 4.35: Model Summary on the Moderating Effect of Firm Characteristics on the Marketing Strategies and Export Performance Relationship

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	.349	.122	.109	.981	.122	9.281	1	67	.003
2.	.370[b]	.137	.111	.980	.015	3.539	1	66	.288
3.	.422[c]	.178	.140	.963	.041	0.907	1	65	.075

Source: Primary Data (2020)

1. Predictors: (Constant), Marketing Strategies (MS),
2. Predictors: (Constant), Marketing Strategies (MS), FC
3. Predictors: (Constant), Marketing Strategies (MS), FC, MS Centered*FC Centered

"Dependent Variable: Export Performance"

Model 1 in Table 4.35 indicates that when marketing strategies was regressed on export performance the model was positive and significant (R square =. 122, F =9.281, P < 0.05). Model 2 indicates that when marketing strategies and firm characteristics were regressed on export performance R square increased from .122 to .137 (R square =.137, F =3.539, P > 0.05). This increase was however statistically insignificant, since p > 0.05. Model 3 indicates that upon introduction of the interaction term, R^2 increased by .041 (from .137 to .178). The additional variation in export performance was statistically insignificant with P > 0.05. Consequently, the null hypothesis which states that firm characteristics do not significantly moderate the marketing strategies and export performance link was accepted.

Table 4.36: ANOVA Results on the Moderating Effect of Firm Characteristics on the Marketing Strategies and Export Performance Relationship.

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1.	Regression	17.432	1	8.930	9.281	.003[b]
	Residual	5.961	67	.962		
	Total	23.393	68			
2.	Regression	19.428	2	5.017	5.226	.008[c]
	Residual	3.965	66	.927		
	Total	23.393	68			
3.	Regression	21.026	3	4.356	4.694	.005[d]
	Residual	2.367	65	.928		
	Total	23.393	68			

Source: Primary Data (2020)

1. Predictors: (Constant), Marketing Strategies,
2. Predictors: (Constant), Marketing Strategies, FC
3. Predictors: (Constant), Marketing Strategies, FC, MS Centered*FC Centered

"Dependent Variable: Export Performance"

The ANOVA statistic model in Table 4.36 reveals that model (1, 2 and 3) are statistically significant at predicting the outcome. This is because the p – values, were less than $p<0.05$.

Table 4.37 Coefficient Results on the Moderating Effect of Firm Characteristic on the Marketing Strategies and Export Performance Relationship

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1.	(Constant)	-.900	1.277		-.704	.484
	Marketing Strategies	1 .508	.347	.349	3.046	.003
2	(Constant)	-1 .191	1.263		-0.943	.388
	Marketing Strategies	.982	.342	.323	2.922	.007
	FC	.269	.143	.125	1.881	.288
3.	(Constant)	-1.106	1.267		- .872	.361
	Marketing Strategies	.969	.344	.316	2.817	.008
	FC	.288	.144	.166	1.994	.162
	MS*FC	-.200	.210	-.207	-.953	.075

Source: Primary Data (2020)

1. Predictors: (Constant), Marketing Strategies,

2. Predictors: (Constant), Marketing Strategies, FC

3. Predictors: (Constant), Marketing Strategies, FC, MS Centered*FC Centered

"Dependent Variable: Export Performance"

The data contained in Table 4.37 reveals that each of the independent variables contributes to the overall model. Marketing strategies makes a significant contribution to the model since p values < 0.05 (Beta =.316, t=2.817, p =0.008). Firm Characteristics did not make any significant contribution since p values >.05 (Beta =.166, t =1.994, p =0.162). The interaction term (MS *FC) is negative and statistically insignificant (Beta =-207, t =-.953, p =.075). The regression model that explains the variation in export performance as a result of the moderating effect of firm characteristic was stated as:

Model: $Y = \beta_o + \beta_{10}MS + + \beta_{11}FC + + \beta_{12}MS * FC + \varepsilon$

$Y = -1.106 + .316MS + .166FC - .207MS * FC$

The standardized beta value for marketing strategies is .316, firm characteristics is .166 and interaction term (MS *FC) is -207. The negative constant -1.106 shows that expected value of the outcome variable will be negative when predictor variables are set to 0.

4.11.3 Marketing Strategies, Industry Competition and Export Performance

Hierarchical regression analysis was used to establish the moderating role of industry competition on the marketing strategies and export performance link. Henseler and Fassott (2010) described a moderator as a variable that affects the direction/and or strength between the independent and dependent variable. In step 1, the composite scores of marketing strategies were regressed on export performance. In step 2, composite scores of both marketing strategies and industry competition were regressed on export performance. Step 3, the composite score for the variables marketing strategies, industry competition and the interaction term were regressed on export performance. Interaction term was computed by standardizing the variables marketing strategies and industry competition and thereafter multiplied (Aiken & West, 1991).

The model was stated as

$Y = \beta_o + \beta_{12}MS + \beta_{13}IC + \beta_{14}MS * IC + \varepsilon$

Where:

Y = composite score of export performance

MS =composite score of marketing strategies

IC = composite score of industry competition

ε= Error term

The sub sequent tables provide a summary of the findings.

Table 4.38 Model Summary on the Moderating Effect of Industry Competition on the Marketing Strategies and Export Performance Relationship

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.	.349[a]	.122	.109	.981	.122	9.281	1	67	0.003
2.	.459[b]	.210	.186	.937	.089	7.406	1	66	0.008
3.	.506[c]	.256	.222	.916	.046	4.016	1	65	0.030

Source: Primary Data (2020)

1. Predictors: (Constant), Marketing Strategies,
2. Predictors: (Constant), Marketing Strategies, Industry Competition
3. Predictors:(Constant), Marketing Strategies, Industry Competition, MS Centered*IC Centered

"Dependent Variable: Export Performance"

The data contained in Table 4.38 reveals that when marketing strategies were regressed on export performance the model 1 was positive and significant (R square =.122, F =9.281 P < 0.05). Model 2 indicates that when industry competition was added, R^2 increased by .089 from .122 to .210 and the increase was statistically significant suggesting that both marketing strategies and industry competition explain 21.0 % of variation in export performance. Upon introduction of the interaction term, R^2 increased by 0.46 (from .210 to .256) and the model remained significant with p value =0.030. Consequently, the null hypothesis was therefore rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis which states that industry competition significantly moderates the association between marketing strategies and export performance

Table 4.39: ANOVA Results on the Moderating Effect of Industry Competition on the Marketing Strategies and Export Performance Relationship

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1.	Regression	17.961	1	8.930	9.281	.003[b]
	Residual	7.53	67	.962		
	Total	25.490	68			
2.	Regression	18.428	2	7.717	8.787	.000[c]
	Residual	7.07	66	.878		
	Total	25.490	68			
3.	Regression	19.026	3	6.269	7.464	.000[d]
	Residual	6.47	65	.840		
	Total	25.490	68			

Source: Primary Data (2020)

1. Predictors: (Constant), Marketing Strategies,
2. Predictors: (Constant), Marketing Strategies, Industry Competition,
3. Predictors: (Constant), Marketing Strategies, Industry Competition, MS Centered*IC Centered

"Dependent Variable: Export Performance"

The ANOVA statistic model in Table 4.39 indicates that the overall model is statistically significant since the p – value, for the model 1, 2 and 3 were less than p<0.05.

Table 4.40: Coefficient Results on the Moderating Effect of Industry Competition on the Marketing Strategies and Export Performance Relationship

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1.	(Constant)	-.900	1.277		-.704	.484
	Marketing Strategies	1.508	.347	.349	3.046	.003
2	(Constant)	-1 .561	1.244		-1.255	.214
	Marketing Strategies	-.996	.332	.328	2.996	.004
	IC	.297	.109	.298	2.721	.008
3.	(Constant)	-1.804	1.223		-1.475	.145
	Marketing Strategies	1.084	.328	.358	3.305	.002
	IC	.292	.107	.293	2.729	.008
	MS*IC	-.311	.155	-.216	2.004	.030

Source: Primary Data (2020)

1) Predictors: (Constant), Marketing Strategies,
2) Predictors: (Constant), Marketing Strategies, Industry Competition,
3) Predictors: (Constant), Marketing Strategies, Industry Competition, MS Centered*IC Centered

"Dependent Variable: Export Performance"

Table 4.40 shows the scores of how each of the independent variables contributes to the overall model. The regression coefficient indicate that marketing strategies significantly predicted export performance (Beta =.358, t =3.305, p = 0.02). Followed by Industry competition which significantly predicted export performance (Beta =.293, t =2.729, p = 0.08). The interaction term (MS *IC) was statistically significant to export performance (Beta =-.216, t =2.004, p =.030). The overall regression model that explains the variations in export performance due to the moderating influence of industry competition was stated as:

Model: $Y = \beta_o + \beta_{12}MS + \beta_{13}IC + \beta_{14}MS * IC + \varepsilon$

$Y = 1.084 + .358MS + .293IC - .216MS * IC$

The standardized beta values suggests that the marketing strategies and export performance link is positive and statistically significant. When industry competition is introduced, the relationship remains positive and statistically significant. However, when the interaction term (MS *IC) is introduced, there is a negative association between the interaction term and export performance. Among the predictor variables marketing strategies is said to make the largest contribution followed by industry competition and lastly the interaction term.

4.11.4 The Joint Effect of Marketing Strategies, Firm Characteristics, Industry Competition on Export Performance.

The last objective sought to establish the joint influence of marketing strategies, firm characteristics, and industry competition on export performance of fresh produce firms. To predict the joint effect hypothesis four was formulated as follows. The joint effect of marketing strategies, firm characteristics, industry competition on export performance is not statistically significant. To test the hypothesis multiple regression analysis was performed and the results presented in Table 4.41.

Table 4.41: Model Summary on the Joint Effect of Marketing Strategies, Firm Characteristics, Industry Competition on Export Performance.

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	.349	.122	.109	.981	.122	9.281	1	67	.003
2.	.370[b]	.137	.111	.980	.015	3.539	1	66	.288
3.	.468[c]	.219	.183	.939	.082	6.845	1	65	.011

Primary Data (2020)

a) Predictors (Constant) , Marketing strategies,

b) Predictors (Constant) , Marketing strategies, FC,

c) Predictors (Constant) , Marketing strategies, FC, IC

"Dependent Variable: Export Performance"

Table 4.41 shows that marketing strategies, firm characteristics and industry competition explain 21.9 % of the variation in export performance (R^2= .219). While 78. 1 % of the variability could be explained by other factors not captured in the model.

Table 4.42: ANOVA Results on the Joint Effect of Marketing Strategies, Firm Characteristics, Industry Competition on Export Performance

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1.	Regression	17.432	1	8.930	9.281	.003[b]
	Residual	5.961	67	.962		
	Total	23.393	68			
2.	Regression	19.428	2	5.017	5.226	.008[c]
	Residual	3.965	66	.927		
	Total	23.393	68			
3.	Regression	21.926	3	5.357	6.074	.001[d]
	Residual	1.467	65	.882		
	Total	23.393	68			

Source: Primary Data (2020)

1. Predictors: (Constant), Marketing Strategies (MS),

2. Predictors: (Constant), Marketing Strategies (MS), FC

3. Predictors: (Constant), Marketing Strategies (MS), FC, IC

"Dependent Variable: Export Performance"

The F statistic is used to test significance the overall regression model. The ANOVA output in Table 4.42 indicates that the model significantly predicts export performance F (3, 65) =6.074, p <.05. This is evidenced by the p value which is less than .05 for the predictor variable.

Table 4.43: Coefficient Results on the Joint Effect of Marketing Strategies, Firm Characteristics, Industry Competition on Export Performance.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1.	(Constant)	-.900	1.277		-.704	.484
	Marketing Strategies	1 .508	.347	.349	3.046	.003
2	(Constant)	-1 .191	1.263		-0.943	.388
	Marketing Strategies	.982	.342	.323	2.922	.007
	FC	.269	.143	.125	1.881	.288
3.	(Constant)	-1.712	1.259		-1.359	.179
	Marketing Strategies	.969	.340	.310	2.764	.007
	FC	.288	.260	.096	.850	.399
	IC	-.200	.110	.289	2.616	.011

Source: Primary Data (2020)

1. Predictors: (Constant), Marketing Strategies (MS),

2. Predictors: (Constant), Marketing Strategies (MS), FC

3. Predictors: (Constant), Marketing Strategies (MS), FC, IC

"Dependent Variable: Export Performance"

The individual coefficients in Table 4.43 suggest that marketing strategies made a positive and significant contribution to export performance (Beta =.310, t =2.764, p = 0.007). Firm characteristics did not make a statistically significant contribution to export performance at (Beta =.096, t =.850, p = 0.399) since P > 0.05. Lastly, Industry Competition significantly predicted export performance (Beta =.289, t =2.616, p =0.011). The overall regression model that explains the variations in export performance due to the joint influence of marketing strategies, firm characteristics and industry competition on export performance was stated as:

Model: $Y = \beta_o + \beta_{12}MS + \beta_{13}FC + \beta_{14}IC + \varepsilon$

$Y = -1.712 + .310MS + .096FC + 289IC$

The hypothesis that the joint effect of marketing strategies, firm characteristics, industry competition on export performance is statistically significant is therefore supported.

Where: -

Y = composite score of export performance

MS =composite score of marketing strategies

FC= composite score of firm characteristics

IC= composite score of industry competition

Table 4.44: Summary of Analytical Models

Table 4.44 gives an overall summary of the research objectives, hypotheses and the statistical analyses.

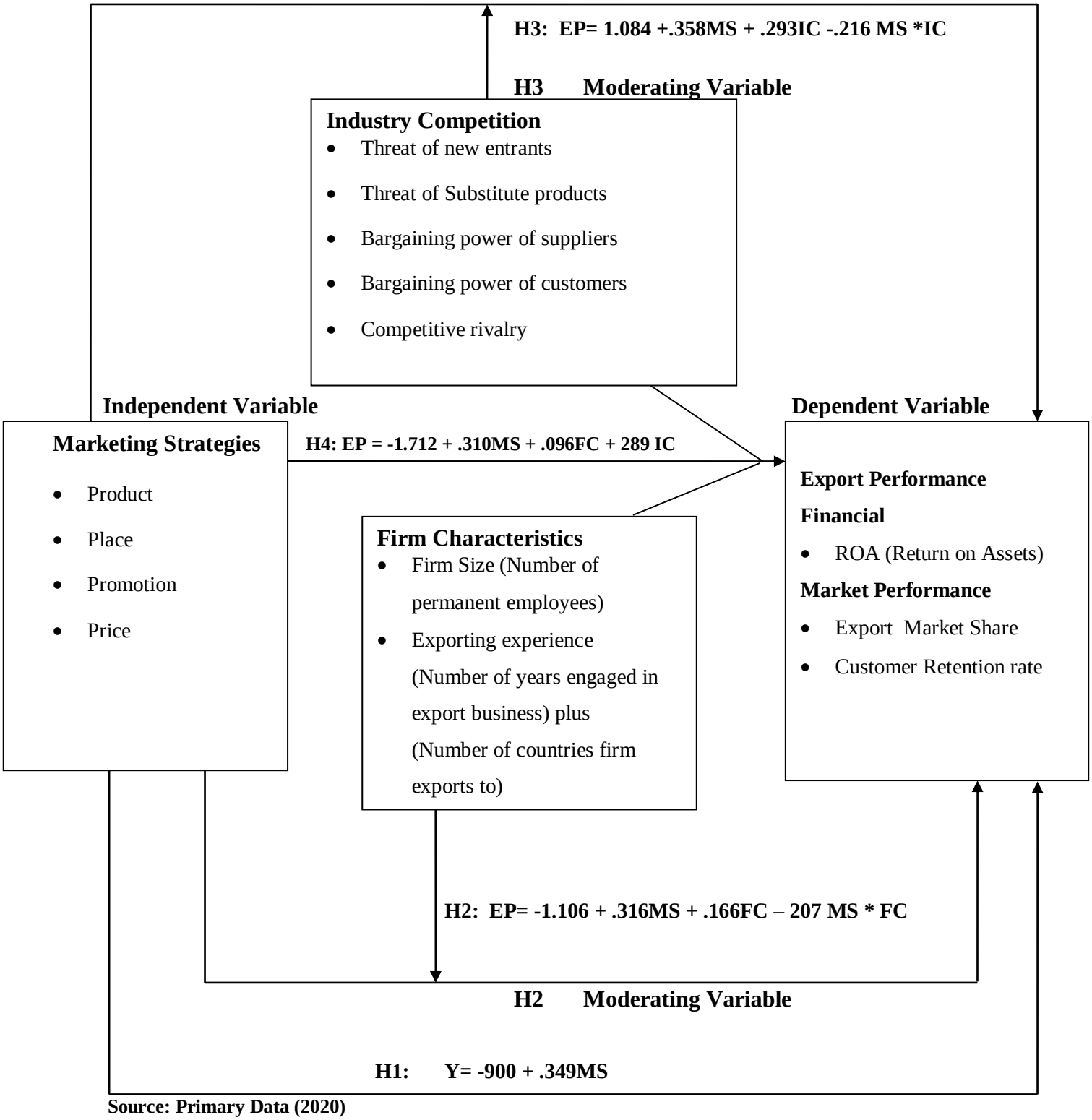
Objectives	**Research Hypotheses**	**Results Interpretation**	**Conclusion**
Objective 1: To establish the influence of marketing strategies on export performance	H1: Marketing strategies do not have a significant effect on export performance	• R= 0.349 • R^2= 0.122 • F= 9.281 • P-Value < 0.05. • There is a moderate but significant relationship between marketing strategies and export performance.	• Null hypotheses was rejected .
Objective 2: To determine the influence of firm characteristics on the relationship between marketing strategies and export performance	H2: Firm Characteristics do not moderate the relationship between marketing strategies and export performance	• R= 0.422 • R^2= 0.178 • F= 4.694 • P-Value > 0.05. • Upon introduction of the interaction term, R^2 increases by .041 (from .137 to .178). The additional variation in export performance is statistically insignificant.	• Failed to reject null hypotheses

Table 4.44: Summary of Analytical Models (Cont'd)

Objectives	Research Hypotheses	Results Interpretation	Conclusion
Objective 3: To assess the influence of industry competition on the relationship between marketing strategies and export performance	H3: Industry competition does not significantly moderate the relationship between marketing strategies and export performance	• R= 0.506; • R^2= 0.256 • F= 7.464 Significance at P-Value ≤ 0.05 • Upon introduction of the interaction term, R^2 increases by .046 (from .210 to .256). The additional variation in export performance is significant	• Null hypotheses was rejected
Objective 4: To establish the joint effect of marketing strategies, firm characteristics, industry competition on export performance of fresh produce in Kenya	H4: The joint effect of marketing strategies, firm characteristics, industry competition on export performance is not statistically significant	• R= 0.468 • R^2= 0.219 • F= 6.074 Significance at P-Value ≤ 0.05 • There is a significant joint relationship between marketing strategies, firm characteristics, industry competition on export performance.	• Null hypotheses was rejected

Source: Primary Data (2020)

Figure 4.5: Modified Empirical Model



Source: Primary Data (2020)

According to the modified empirical model in figure 4.5, Findings from the simple linear regression established that marketing strategies has a significant and positive relationship on export performance. Firm characteristics do not moderate the relationship between marketing strategies and export performance link. The framework further indicates that industry competition moderates the relationship between marketing strategies and export performance. In conclusion, the joint effect of marketing strategies, firm characteristics, industry competition on export performance is positive and statistically significant.

4.12 Discussion of the Findings

This segment provides an analysis of the research outcome in relation to the objectives of the study and hypotheses. It also gives an outline of the research findings in relation to what is already known in literature. New insights or understanding that emerge as a result of the research problem are also highlighted.

4.12.1 Marketing Strategies and Export Performance

Current study sought to establish the link between marketing strategies and export performance of fresh produce firms in Kenya. Findings from the study acknowledge that the association between marketing strategies and export performance of fresh produce firms were positive and significant. These findings support the assumption that the dimensions of marketing strategy namely; product, price, place and promotion contribute to better export performance of fresh produce firms. These results are consistent with findings of previous research. For instance, Cunha and Rocha (2015) noted that marketing strategies made significant contribution in shaping export performance of SMEs in Brazil. Similar results were obtained by Sezgin, Uray and Burnaz (2015) who examined the link between marketing strategy and export performance of Turkish clothing firms. Surprisingly, results of regression analysis revealed that only 12.2 % of the variation in export performance could be accounted for by marketing strategies. Suggesting that there were other variables not captured in the model that made a contribution to export performance.

Further scrutiny of the coefficient results revealed that an increase in marketing strategies would result to an increase in export performance when all other variables were held constant. An indication that marketing strategies made an important contribution in the export performance of fresh produce. Notably, output from descriptive statistics revealed that respondents placed more emphasis on implementing both product and place strategies which had a mean score (3.76, 3.75) respectively. A possible explanation would be that the key customers for fresh produce firms are resellers; for this reason, product and availability related advantages significantly influenced export performance. Another possibility could be stringent measures imposed on aspects such as traceability and best agricultural practices (GAP) by consumers from developed nations resulting to fresh produce firms placing more emphasis on product strategies.

4.12.2 The Moderating Effect of Firm Characteristics on the Relationship between Marketing Strategies and Export Performance

Objective two of this thesis sought to assess the moderating role of firm characteristics on the link between marketing strategies and export performance of fresh produce firms. Export performance was conceptualized as a composite score of export market share, customer retention rate and average growth of return on assets (ROA) from 2016 to 2019. Firm characteristics were conceptualized as a composite score of natural log of firm size and natural log of export experience. The two values (log of firm size plus log of export experience) were added together to create the variable firm characteristics. Output from the hierarchical regression analysis indicated that firm characteristics did not moderate the relationship between marketing strategies and export performance. These results support earlier findings by Mbugua (2015) who established that firm characteristics did not moderate the market orientation and performance relationship. A similar argument was put forward by Pla- Barber and Alegre (2007) who stated that competitive advantage can be found in both large and small firms and that a larger firm size does not guarantee increased export activities.

Wolff and Pett (2000) argue that it is not the amount of resources but the type of resources available to the firm that influence success in export market. Zhou et al (2003) agrees that it is possible that some resources are more significant than other in the development of competitive advantage. Subscribing to the argument above, firm size and experience may not be confirmed as a source of competitive advantage within the fresh produce industry for two main reasons. First, a close look at the descriptive statistics showed that majority of the fresh produce firms were categorized as small and medium enterprises (SME's). That could explain why export seemed as the preferred mode of foreign market entry due to advantages associated with low costs of entry, greater degree of flexibility and resource commitment compared to other forms of market entry (Leonidou & Katsikeas, 1998). Secondly, e commerce has resulted to new possibilities for export firms regardless of size. In terms of access to new markets, efficiency and inquiries. For this reason, size and experience do not seem to give firms within the fresh produce industry a competitive advantage and have otherwise explored alternative sources of competitive advantage such as product quality, differentiation and year-round product availability.

4.12.3 The Moderating Effect of Industry Competition on the Relationship between Marketing Strategies and Export Performance

Objective three of this study sought to investigate the moderating role of industry competition on the link between marketing strategies and export performance of fresh produce firms. Industry competition was conceptualized using Porter's Five Forces Model. Results from the hierarchical regression analysis demonstrated that when the interaction term between marketing strategies and industry competition was introduced, there was an increase in R Square and the increase was found to be statistically significant; suggesting that industry competition moderates the marketing strategy and export performance link. These findings are in line with Ong, Ismail and Yeap (2018) who reported that the five industry competitive forces moderate the competitive advantage and firm performance link.

The significant but negative interaction effects of industry competition on the marketing strategy and export performance relationship suggest that when industry competition is high, marketing strategies became an important source of competitive advantage for superior export performance. One possible reason could be that export of fresh produce could be considered a lucrative business, thus attracting a large number of fresh produce firms. Findings from the descriptive analysis further suggest that the fresh produce industry could be perceived as easy to join as characterized by low barriers to entry, low start-up costs resulting to a large number of fresh produce firms, who are small in size. Consequently, exporter's find it easy to switch from one firm to another, owing to the low products differentiation and unknown brands. Close scrutiny of the descriptive statistics, suggest presence of strong buyer bargaining power as manifested by ability to make large purchases, demand for quality product, concessions and discount. In this respect, Kenyan fresh produce firms should mitigate industry competition by choosing to invest in innovation and technology thereby undermining competitors' actions.

4.12.4 The Joint effect of Marketing Strategies, Firm Characteristics and Industry Competition on Export Performance

Objective four of this study sought to investigate the joint effect of marketing strategies, firm characteristics, industry competition on export performance of fresh produce firms. Results from the multiple regression analysis revealed that marketing strategies, firm characteristics and industry competition explain 21.9 % of the variation in export performance, while 78.1 % of the variation could be explained by other factors not present in the model. These findings are consistent with the results obtained by Wernerfelt and Montgomery's (1988) in the U.SA, who also established that both firm and industry factors played a significant role in explaining performance.

Output from these study however suggest potential for further research in export performance literature. This is because, the variables marketing strategy, firm characteristics and industry competition explain only 21.9 % of the variation in export performance, suggesting the presence of other variables not mentioned in this study that could explain the remaining 78.1 % of the variation in export performance.

CHAPTER FIVE:

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

Chapter five of the thesis presents a review of the critical results based on the study objectives. The conclusion and the implications that have emanated from this study are also discussed. The chapter concludes by providing research limitations and an outline on the future areas of research.

5.2 Summary of Study Findings

This thesis examined the direct and indirect relationship among marketing strategies, firm characteristics, industry competition and export performance. Four distinct objectives were put forward from which four corresponding hypotheses were developed. A conceptual model depicting the linkage among the variables marketing strategies, firm characteristics, industry competition and export performance was generated from reviewed literature. Findings from the study revealed that 93% of firms in the fresh produce industry were categorized as micro and small business (SME's). On export experience, 58% of the fresh produce firms had acquired more than 10 year experience within the fresh produce industry. An indication that the firms were knowledgeable and exhibited confidence when operating in the export market.

The association between marketing strategies and export performance was examined using simple regression analysis. Study outcome indicated that 12.2 % of the variance in export performance could be explained by marketing strategies. While 87.8 % of the variability could be determined by other elements not captured in the model. The standardized beta values indicated that the marketing strategies and export performance were positive and statistically significant (Beta =.349, t=3.046, p =0.003). When marketing strategies was increased by I unit there was a matched increase of export performance by .349 units while holding the other predictor variables constant.

To examine the moderating role of firm characteristics on the marketing strategies and export performance link hierarchical multiple linear regression was adopted. Contrary to literature, firm characteristics specifically size and export experience did not moderate the marketing strategies and export performance relationship. The interaction term (MS *FC) was negative and statistically insignificant (Beta = -.207, t =-.953, p =.075). Output from the regression analysis study indicated that marketing strategies, firm characteristics and the interaction term (MS *FC) explained 17.8 % of the variation in export performance. Conversely, the marketing strategies and export performance association was significantly moderated by industry competition. The interaction term (MS *IC) was negative but statistically significant (Beta = -216, t =- 2.004 p =.030). Output from the regression analysis study indicated that marketing strategies, industry competition and the interaction term (MS *IC) explained 25.6 % of the variation in export performance.

Output for the joint effect of marketing strategies, firm characteristics industry competition on export performance of fresh produce firms was found to be positive and statistically significant. Findings from the multiple regression indicated that marketing strategies, firm characteristics and industry competition explained 21.9 % of export performance (R^2= .219). Suggesting that 78. 1 % of the variability could be predicted by other factors not captured in the model. The individual coefficients indicated that marketing strategies made a positive and significant contribution to export performance (Beta =.310, t =2.764, p = 0.007). Firm characteristics did not make a statistically significant contribution to export performance (Beta =.096, t =.850, p = 0.399). While industry competition made a positive and significant contribution to export performance (Beta =.289, t =2.616, p = 0.011).

5.3. Conclusion

This thesis made a contribution to export performance by looking at the relationship between marketing strategies, firm characteristics, industry competition on export performance of fresh produce firms in Kenya. A summary of the study outcome is provided as follows. First, is that the association between marketing strategies and export performance was positive and significant to export performance of fresh produce firms in Kenya. The results further revealed that among the four elements of marketing strategy, fresh produce firms in Kenya regard product strategy as the most significant element when developing and implementing marketing mix strategy. This thesis also assessed the moderating role of firm characteristics on the association between marketing strategies and export performance. Firm characteristics were operationalized using both firm size and export experience. The research outcome showed that firm characteristics did not moderate the association between marketing strategies and export performance. Specifically, the interaction term was negative and statistically insignificant. This is a surprising finding because, past empirical studies have often cited small size and limited experience as barriers to international trade (Roper & Malshe, 2013).

This thesis also explored the moderating role of industry competition on the marketing strategies and export performance link. Study outcome showed that industry competition had a significant moderating effect on the marketing strategies and export performance association. Nevertheless, the beta coefficient was negative suggesting that a unit increase in the predictor variable was linked to a decrease in the dependent variable (export performance). Finally, the results indicate the joint effect of marketing strategies, firm size, export experience and industry competition on export performance were statistically significant. However, these variables explained only 21.9 % of the variation in export performance (R^2= .219). Beta values suggested that both marketing strategies and industry competition made the highest contribution to export performance Results from the multiple regression suggest the need for further research in export performance literature. This is because, the variables marketing strategy, firm characteristics and industry competition could only account for 21.9 % of the variation in export performance while 78.1 % could be predicted by other variables not mentioned in current study.

5.4. Implications of the Research Findings

This section of the thesis seeks to provide the conclusion and also provide explanations on how the findings will contribute to theory, policy and practice. A brief summary on how each makes a contribution to theory, policy and practices follows in the following subsection.

5.4.1 Implication to Theory

The empirical findings demonstrate that marketing strategies undertaken by fresh produce firms made a positive and significant contribution to export performance. These results reinforce the assumptions of the marketing mix theory which state that the 4P's of marketing spell out key decision areas that managers examine to satisfy customer needs and meet company objectives. Empirical results suggest that success of fresh produce firms is determined by successful development and execution of marketing strategies. Findings in this study also confirm that the marketing mix elements which comprise of the elements, price, place, produce and promotion are interrelated. Consequently, decisions made on one of the elements will have an impact on the other marketing elements. Product and place strategy appear to be the most significant among fresh produce firms.

The outcome of this study show that firm specific characteristics namely; size and export experience did not moderate the association between marketing strategy and export performance link. This empirical evidence contradicts the DC and shows that although firm resources such as size and export experience are deemed as significant, they do not provide competitive advantage within the fresh produce industry. To create efficient sources of dynamic capabilities or to obtain more output compared to competition, it is necessary for fresh produce firms to modify existing resources in response to the dynamic and unpredictable foreign environment.

The results of this study confirm that industry competition moderate the marketing strategy and export performance relationship. Findings in this thesis advance understanding of the industrial organization theory by providing empirical support on the moderating role of industry competition in export markets. These findings extend the work of Porter (1980) by providing empirical evidence that the competitive environment moderates the effectiveness of marketing

strategies. Findings from this study reveal the joint influence of marketing strategies, firm characteristics industry competition on export performance as an integrated framework. These findings have extended knowledge both empirically and theoretically relating to fresh produce firms within the Kenyan context. Most of the studies conducted in export marketing literature have examined only two variables with marketing strategy as the predictor variable and export performance as the outcome variable.

5.4.2 Implication to Policy

The fresh produce industry has stood out as one of the prosperous industries within the agricultural sector. In addition to providing food security, improved nutrition and foreign exchange earnings the industry plays an important role in generating employment opportunities (Agricultural Sector Coordination Unit, 2011). Empirical findings provide legitimacy that amongst the 4P's, fresh produce firms placed most emphasis on product strategies. This therefore implies that there is need for stake holders to enact policies and statutory bodies which collaborate with the fresh produce firms to improve productivity through provision of seeds, price subsidies, research and facilitate export of diversified fresh produce to the export markets.

This study further identifies the crucial role that marketing plays in the success of fresh produce firms in foreign markets. Consequently, government and key stake holders can stimulate regular export business at firm level by lobbying for regional and bilateral trade agreements that seek to increase markets for fresh produce firms. In addition, this study investigates the role that industry competition has in leveraging export performance. At the practitioner level, policy makers should push for budgetary allocations to enhance use of training programs, joint ventures between fresh produce firm owners and foreign buyers with the aim of reducing the high level of uncertainty associated with marketing decisions.

5.4.3 Implication to Marketing Practice

Results from this thesis have significant practical consequences for managers. First, the results confirmed that the association between marketing strategies and export performance were significant and positive. Consequently, managers should increase export performance by developing and implementing competitive marketing strategies. Descriptive analysis further revealed that the degree of emphasis given to each of the four-marketing mix element made significant contribution in the success of fresh produce firms. Product strategy was said to be the most significant element when developing and implementing the marketing mix strategy.

Secondly, the lack of significance results on the moderating role of firm characteristics is an indication that irrespective of size and export experience fresh produce firms are capable of attaining success in export markets. Consequently, export managers that seek to increase export performance within the fresh produce industry should seek alternative sources of competitive advantage. Similarly, results suggest that as industry competition increases, firms spend more on marketing strategies. It is therefore important for manager to identify opportunities and threat within the industry and later apply this data when formulating marketing strategy.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

The findings in this study have provided additional insights linking the associtions between marketing strategies and export performance of fresh produce firms and the moderating role of firm characteristics and industry competition on the link between marketing strategies and export performance was also explored

First, although researcher made all possible efforts including personal connection, frequent calls to collect financials on ROA. Findings from the pilot revealed that only two out of the ten fresh produce firms provided actual financial data. This is because respondents viewed data on ROA as confidential and not for public consumption. Consequently, ROA was determined from perceptual rather than the absolute measure. According to Venkatraman and Ramanujam (1987) there is a high degree of correlation between objective and subjective measures of performance. Therefore, use of subjective measures was justified in situations where objective data could not be obtained.

Secondly, this study adopted a cross sectional research design, where the variables marketing strategy, firm characteristics, industry competition and export performance were examined during a single time period. Given that the international environment is turbulent over a given time. A longitudinal study may provide a more in depth understanding of the dynamic aspects of export performance. Third, although this study adds to export performance literature in the developing countries. It focused on identifying the role of the marketing strategies (product, price, place and promotion) in achieving export success within the fresh produce industry. Due to the nature of product, findings could not be generalized to the service industry which display unique characteristics such as intangibility and heterogeneity.

5.6 Suggestions for Future Research

This research investigates the relationship between marketing strategies, firm characteristics, industry competition on export performance of fresh produce firms from a developing country - Kenya. Potential existing differences between countries, industries may hinder generalization of results. In this regard, inclusion of more export based firms in different industries, countries in analyzing the relationship between marketing strategies, firm characteristics, industry competition on export performance, would allow researcher to confirm whether the study outcome is dependent on the country or industry and can therefore be more generalized.

This study focusses on exports as the only mode of foreign market entry. Different characteristics, strategies, might be expected from the different modes of entry. Therefore, future research may include and simultaneously analyze additional modes of foreign market entry such as joint ventures, franchising, strategic alliances. Findings from the study revealed that marketing strategies, firm characteristics and industry competition explained only 21.9% of the variation in export performance (R^2= .219). While 78.1 % of the variability could be explained by other factors not captured in the model, Future studies should aim to include additional moderating/ mediating variables that may influence export performance.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Letter of Introduction

The Director,

Nairobi, Kenya.

7TH January, 2020

Dear Respondent,

RE: REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION AND SUPPORT ON DATA COLLECTION

I am a PhD Candidate at the School of Business, University of Nairobi. Research is a mandatory requirement for completing the doctoral programme. In this regard, I am undertaking a study titled "**Marketing Strategies, Firm characteristics, Industry Competition and Export Performance of Fresh Produce Firms in Kenya**".

Your firm has been selected to take part in this study due to its potential in revolutionizing the Kenyan Economy. The findings obtained will assist managers to continually improve firm performance in a dynamic and complex business environment. "All your responses will be treated with utmost confidence and the data collected used for academic purposes only". Identity of the respondent will also be kept anonymous.

Please answer the questions as precisely as possible. Clarification can be sought whenever there is need. Your participation is highly appreciated

Yours Faithfully

Anne Wambui Njonjo
"Faculty of Business and Management Sciences"
"The University of Nairobi"
Email: njonjoanne@students.uonbi.ac.ke
Phone: 0722770919

Appendix 2: "Researcher's Introduction Letter to the National Commission for Science and Technology (NACOSTI)"

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
DOCTORAL STUDIES PROGRAMME

Telephone: 418416011-5 Ext. 231
Email; dean-business@uonbi.ae.ke
P.o. Box 30197
Nairobi, Kenya

6 January 2020

National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation, P. O. Box 30623, 00100. Nairobi, KENYA.

Dear Sir/Madam,

INTRODUCTORY LETTER FOR RESEARCH

ANNE WAMBUI NJONJO - REGISTRATION NO.D80/50317/2016

"The above named is a registered PhD candidate at the University of Nairobi, School of Business". She is conducting research on **"Marketing Strategies, Firm Characteristics, Industry Competition and Export Performance of Fresh Produce Firms in Kenya "**."The purpose of this letter is to kindly request you to assist and facilitate the student with necessary data which forms an integral part of the thesis" "The information and data required is needed for academic purposes only and will be treated in strict confidence."

Your co-operation will be highly appreciated.

Prof. Mary Kinoti
Associate Dean, Graduate Business Studies
School Of Business

Appendix 3: Research License

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NACOSTI

NATIONAL COMMISSION FORSCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: **159630**

Date of Issue: **03/February/2020**

RESEARCH LICENSE

"This is to Certify that Miss.. ANNE NJONJO of University of Nairobi, has been licensed to conduct research in Nairobi on the topic: MARKETING STRATEGIES, FIRM CHARACTERISTICS, INDUSTRY COMPETITION AND EXPORT PERFORMANCE OF FRESH PRODUCE FIRMS IN KENYA for the period ending : 03/February/2021."

License No: **NACOSTI/P/20/3469**

159630

Applicant Identification Number

Director General
"NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY &INNOVATION
"

Verification QR Code

"NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application."

Appendix 4: Questionnaire

RESPONDENT AND FIRM PROFILE

Section 1:

A. Respondent Profile

1. "Please indicate the position you hold in your company" _____
2. "How long (in years) have you been in this position ?" _____
3. "What is your highest level of formal education? " (Tick one only)

"Highest education level of formal education"	
"O LEVEL"	
"A LEVEL"	
"Certificate/Diploma"	
First degree	
Second degree	
Others , please specify	

B. Firm Profile

4. Please indicate name of the firm _____ (Optional)

5. Please state how often the company is engaged in export of Fresh Produce**?**

Export of Fresh Produce	**Frequency of Export (Tick one only)**
All year round	
Seasonal	

6. Please indicate the approximate number of permanent employees currently employed by the company? _____
7. "Please indicate the numbers of years that the company has been engaged in export sales" _____

8. "Please indicate the approximate number of countries that the firm regularly exports to"? _____

Section 1I: Marketing Strategies

The statements in this section seek to understand how your organization makes use of the various marketing strategies. "Kindly indicate (by ticking one box for each statement) the extent to which your organization applies each of the following factors using a scale where": "1 = not at all, 2 = to a small extent 3 = moderate extent 4 =large extent 5 = very large extent"

a) Product Strategies

Indicators of Product Strategies	**"Not at all" (1)**	**"Small Extent" (2)**	**"Moderate Extent" (3)**	**"Large extent" (4)**	**"Very Large Extent" (5)**
1. "The company has ability to engage in value addition of its products"					
2. "The company ventures in products that have a broad market appeal"					
3. "The company offerings are clearly differentiated from that of competitors"					
4. "The company provides a broad product variety that is competitively priced"					
5. "The company deals with products that are of superior quality "					
6. "The company provides quality products with a high degree of consistency"					
7. "The company has the capacity to meet the changing customer demands when required"					
8. "The firm has strong concerns about developing brand identity"					
9. "The firm has a lot of experience with the product range"					
10. Others, Specify					

b) Pricing Strategies

Indicators of Pricing Strategies	"Not at all (1)"	"Small Extent (2)"	"Moderate Extent (3)"	"Large extent (4)"	"Very Large Extent (5)"
1) "The company knows the competitors pricing tactics"					
2) "The company does an effective job of pricing its products"					
3) "The company monitors competitors prices and price changes"					
4) "The company quickly respond to competitor's pricing actions"					
5) "The company effectively communicate pricing information to customers"					
6) "The company believes in providing a quality product at premium price"					
7) Others, Specify					

c) Distribution (Place) Strategies

Indicators of Distribution Strategies	"Not at all (1)"	"Small Extent (2)"	"Moderate Extent (3)"	"Large extent (4)"	"Very Large Extent (5)"
1) "The company has a strong working relationship with its suppliers"					
2) "The company attracts and retains the best suppliers"					
3) "The company provides high level of service support to suppliers e.g. providing seeds, timely information "etc,					
4) The company is able to sell directly to end users in export markets					
5) "The company provides training to its suppliers"					
6) "The company is selective when choosing suppliers"					
7) Others, Specify					

d) Promotion Strategies

Indicators of Promotion Strategies	"Not at all (1)"	"Small Extent (2)"	"Moderate Extent (3)"	"Large extent (4)"	"Very Large Extent" (5)"
1) "The company frequently attends international trade fairs in Europe and UAE"					
2) "The international trade fairs are intended to attract new customers"					
3) "The international trade fairs advocate for a conducive business environment, policies, tariffs and trade agreements"					
4) "The International trade fairs are intended to seek new markets for the company produce"					
5) The international trade fairs are intended to retain existing customers					
6) "The international trade fairs involve the company targeting a specific market segment (s) or customer"					
7) "The international trade fairs are intended to provide timely market information"					
8) Others, Specify					

Section 111: Industry Competition

One aspect of this study is on competitive environment and seeks to understand the competitive environment within which your organization operates and how it affects decision making by your management . "Please indicate with a tick (√) the extent to which your firm focuses on the following using a scale where: 1 = not at all, 2 = to a small extent 3 = moderate extent 4 =large extent 5 = very large extent."

a) The Intensity of Rivalry

"Refers to the extent to which firms within an industry put pressure on one another and limit each other's profit potential"

Indicators of Intensity of Rivalry	**Not at All" "(1)"**	**Small Extent" "(2)"**	**Moderate Extent" "(3)"**	**Large extent" "(4)"**	**Very Large Extent "(5)"**
1. "Companies in the industry compete intensely to hold/increase their market share"					
2. "Competition in the industry is described by terms like 'war-like', 'bitter', and 'cutthroat"					
3. "There are many promotion wars in the industry"					
4. "Advertising battles occur frequently and with high intensity in the industry"					
5. "Price competition is highly intense and price cuts are quickly and easily matched in the industry"					
6. "Anything that one competitor can offer the market, others can readily match "					
7. "Competitors react fast to moves by any single company within the industry"					
8. "Firms within the industry have massive resources for vigorous and sustained competitive action and retaliation against competitor"					
9. Other, Specify					

b). Threat of Entry

The statements below seek to determine how easy or hard it is for other players to join the industry

Indicators of Threat of Entry	**"Not at all" "(1)"**	**:Small Extent" "(2)"**	**Moderate Extent" "(3)"**	**"Large extent" "(4)"**	**"Very Large Extent" "(5)"**
1) "Setting up a company within this industry requires large start-up costs in form of finances, research and development, capital and human resources"					
2) "New companies have to enter at a highly visible level to be recognized by customers"					
3) "Established companies in our industry have substantial resources which are used to prevent entry of new competitors"					
4) "New companies joining the industry must spend a lot of resources on research and development"					
5) "New entrants into the industry have to spend heavily to build their brands and overcome existing brand loyalties"					
6) "New companies entering the industry as small scale firms must accept a considerable cost advantage"					
7) Others, Specify					

c). Bargaining Power of Buyers

The following statements seek to determine how much power customers have over company's offerings

Indicators of Bargaining Power of Buyers	"Not at all" "(1)"	"Small Extent" ""(2)	"Moderate Extent" "(3)"	"Large extent" "(4)"	Very Large Extent "(5)"
1. "Buyers and buyer groups are very powerful in the industry"					
2. "Buyers in the industry's products are in a position to demand concessions and large discounts"					
3. "There is a small number of buyers in the industry that form a large proportion of our industry's sales"					
4. "Buyers in the industry demand better services"					
5. "Buyers in the industry dictate terms that companies offer "					
6. Others, Specify					

d) Bargaining Power of Suppliers

Refers to the pressure that customers can put on businesses to get them to provide higher quality products, better customer service, and/or lower prices

	"Not at all" "(1)"	"Small Extent" "(2)"	"Moderate Extent" "(3)"	"Large extent" "(4)"	"Very Large Extent" "(5)"
1. "In this industry, the suppliers' product quality has great effect on quality of the company's products"					
2. "The suppliers' products/offerings are an important input into the company's products/ offerings"					

3."The suppliers' / supplier groups in the industry are very powerful"					
4. "Suppliers in the industry demand and gain high concessions"					
5."The industry has a small number of suppliers who contribute to a large proportion of the industry's inputs"					
6. Others, Specify					

e) Threat of Substitute Goods/Services

Refers to the level of risk that a company faces from replacement by its substitutes

Indicators of Threat of substitute goods/services	**"Not at all" (1)**	**"Small Extent" (2)**	**"Moderate Extent" (3)**	**"Large extent" (4)**	**"Very Large Extent" (5)**
1. "There is considerable pressure from substitute products in the industry"					
2. "All companies in the industry are aware of the strong substitutes that are easily available to our customers"					
3. "The needs that the industry products satisfy may be easily satisfied by products from many other sources and industries"					
4. "The products in the industry have intrinsic characteristics from which it is difficult to find substitute"					
5. "The availability of substitute products in the industry limits the potential return on investment in the industry"					
6. "Others, Specify"					

Section 1V: Export Performance

The table below presents dimensions of Export Performance." Please indicate with a tick '√' how you rate your firm's performance over the last three years relative to your closest competitor in the industry".

Percentage	1-20% (1)	21-40% (2)	41-60% (3)	61-80% (4)	81-100% (5)
Export Market Share					
Customer Retention Rate					
Average Growth in Return On Assets (ROA) from 2016 to 2019					

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

Appendix 5: FPEAK Ordinary Member List as at 31st June 2019

Ordinary Members	Product	Location
1.AAA Growers Limited Head office: Sadani House, Riverside Lane, Riverside Drive	Vegetables	"Nairobi":
2. Afri-fresh Horticultures Ltd.	French Beans, Snow Peas, Sugar Snap, Brocholli, Garden Peas, Basil, Chives, Mint, Rosemary, Sage, Oregano, Tarragon, Pasli, Corriander, Thime, Avocado, Mango.	Nairobi
3 Afri Herbs Kenya Ltd.	Basil, Thyme	Juja

4 Agri fresh Kenya Ltd.	Avocado, Fine Beans	Nairobi
5 "Avenue Fresh Produce Ltd"	Fine Beans, Avocado, Sugar Snap, Snow Peas	Nairobi
6 "Apex EPZ Ltd."	Mangoes, Avocado, Pineapple	Nairobi
7 .Belt Cargo Services Export Ltd.	Chives, Basil, Sage, Chervil	Nairobi

8	Benvar Estates Ltd.	Aubergine, Baby Vegetables, Baby Corn, Beans, Brassicas, Chillies, Peas, Chives, Coriander, Dill, Lemon Grass, Mint,	Nairobi
9	Bio Farms Ltd.	Parsley, Rosemary, Thyme, Avocado, Mango, Passion	Nairobi
10	Chriven Enterprises ..	Avocado, Passion Fruits	Nairobi
11	"Del Monte Kenya Ltd."	Pineapple, Passion, Mango	Kiambu

12 East African Growers Fresh Produce Ltd.	Capsicum, Carrots , Artichokes ,Spring Onions	Nairobi
13 EAG Fresh Produce	Capsicum, Carrots , Artichokes ,Spring Onions	Nairobi
14 Everest Enterprises Ltd.	Fine Beans, Broccoli, Sugar Snaps, Avocadoes, Baby Corn, Chilies	Nairobi
15 "Envisage Ltd."	Snow Peas, String (French) Beans, Bell Peppers (green, red & yellow), Broccoli, Spinach, Mangoes, Avocadoes, Passion Fruit, Strawberries	Nairobi

16 Emax Trading Ltd.	Capsicum Frutescens (Chillies)	Nairobi
17 Emax fresh fruits Ltd.	Fine Beans, Broccoli, Sugar Snaps, Avocadoes, Baby Corn, Chillies,	Nairobi
18 Ever fresh Produce Ltd	Vegetables	Nairobi
19 Evergreen Crops Ltd	Mint, Chives, Rosemary, Thyme, Sage, Oregano, Tarragon, Melissa, Marjoram, Coriander, Spearmint, Peppermint, Apple Mint, Pineapple Mint, Horse Mint, Calamint, Basil Mint	Nairobi

20 Exotic Peninah Fields Group	Basil, Oregano, Thyme, Corriander, Mint, Dill	Nairobi
21 Forever Green Growers Ltd	Avocado, French Beans, Baby Corns, Carrots, Mange Tout, Snow Peas, Sugar Snaps, Passion, Black Aubergine, Bullet Chilli, Dudhi, Egg Plant Ravaya, Karella, Okra, Papya, Rosemary, Turia, Birds Eye Chilli	Nairobi
22 Fresh and Juici Ltd	Fine Peas, Snow Peas, Baby Corn, Carrot, Sweet Corn, Sugar Snap, Pakchoi, Broccoli,	Nairobi

23 The Fresh Approach Ltd.	Passion Fruit, Mangoes, Avocados, Water Melon, Tomatoes, Cherry Tomatoes, Capsicum, Beans	Nairobi
24 Freshpak Hoticulture Limited	Sugar Snap, Aubergrine, Baby Carrot, Courgette, Baby Corn, Chillies, Snow Peas, Green Peas, Passion	Nairobi
25 Frigoken Ltd.	French Beans	Nairobi
26 Frank Fresh Foods Ltd.	Serenade Chillies, Snow Peas, Extra Fine Beans, Avocadoes, Sugar Snaps, Fine Beans, Baby Corn, Birds Eye Chillies,	Nairobi
27 "Garden Veg. Agencies"	Vegetables	Nairobi

28 Green Gold Enterprises Ltd	Fine Beans, Snow Peas	Nairobi
29 Green Blade Growers Ltd.	Snow Peas, French Beans, Garden Peas, Chives, Rosemary, Coriander, Parsley, Mint, Sage, Dill, Thyme, Taragon, Basil	Nairobi
30 Global earth gate Ltd	Fine Beans, Extra Fine Beans, Garden Peas, Snow Peas, Sugar Snap, Chillies	Nairobi
31 Global Fresh Ltd	French Beans, Snow Peas	Nairobi
32 ".Greenlands Agro Producers Ltd"	Fruits & Vegetables	Nairobi

33 Goshen Farm Exporters	Long Ravaya, Pink Ravaya, Aubergines, White Garden Eggs, Valour Beans, Gunda, Passion Fruits, Chillies	Nairobi
34 ."Henat Exporters "	French beans, snow peas ,sugar snaps dried mangoes, pineapples, carrots tomatoes and bananas and also banana flour.	Nairobi
35 Hill Side Green Growers and Exporters Ltd.	French Peas	Nairobi
36 Horizon Horticulture and Export Ltd.	Avocado, Mangoes,Vegetables	"Nairobi"

37 "Indu Farm EPZ ltd"	Avocadoes	Nairobi
38 InterVeg Exporter Ltd	French Beans, Snow Peas, Sugar Snaps, Passion, Courgette, Baby Carrots, Chillies, Baby Corn, Aubergines	Nairobi
39 Jade Fresh Ltd.	Snow Peas, Fine Beans, Sugar Snaps, Passion Fruits	Nairobi
40 Jefer Enterprises Ltd.	Avocadoes, Herbs,	Nairobi

41 Jims Fresh Vegetables and Growers ltd.	Vegetables, Avocadoes	Nairobi
42 Jotsen Horti Veges.	French beans both extra fines beans and fine beans, mangetout (snow peas), Sugar snaps, passion fruits, Baby (Okra,Ravaya,Brinjals and Dudhi) , Baby Carrots, Baby corn, Broccoli stems (tender stem Broccoli) , Herbs include: Mint, Basil, Thyme, Rosemary, Oregano, Coriander, Lemongrass, Chives and Dill.	Nairobi ,
43 Jungle Nuts Limited	Avocado, Macadamia nuts, Cashew nuts, Assorted dried fruits	Thika
44 Kakuzi ltd.	Avocado, Macadamia nuts, Blue berry	Thika

45 Kandia Fresh Produce Suppliers Ltd.	Avocado, Fine Beans, Snow Peas, Sugar Snaps, Chillies	Nairobi
46 Keitt Exporters Ltd	Avocado, Mango, Passion Fruits, Custard Apple, Pineapple, French Beans, Garden Peas, Brocolli, Snow Peas, Assorted Herbs	Nairobi
47 Keitt Fresh	Fine Beans, Snow Peas, Garden Peas Carrots, Brocolli, Baby Corn, Leeks, Assorted and Spices Herbs	Nairobi
48 Karendi Greens and Fruits Ltd.	Beans, Snow Peas, Garden Peas Carrots, Brocolli, Baby Corn, Leeks, Assorted and Spices Herbs	Nairobi

49 Kenya Fresh Produce Exporters Ltd.	Baby Corn, Baby Leeks, Broccoli, Garden Peas, Okra, Runner Beans, Sugar Snap, Butter Beans, Tender Stem Broccoli, French Beans, Snow Peas, Baby Carrots, Apple Mango, Avocado, Butter Nut, Courgette, Tamarillo, Passion Fruit, Basil, Bird Eye chilli, Bullet Chilli, Mint, Oregano, Rosemary, Sage, Tarragon, Thyme	Nairobi
50 Kenya Horticultural Exporters Ltd.	Fine Beans, Peas, Broccoli,Herbs	Nairobi
51 Kenya Vineyards Ltd	Bird Eye Chillies, Chives, Coriander, Dill, Fine Beans, Avocadoes, Mint, Lemongrass, Marjoram, Oregano, Parsley, Rosemary, Sage, Sugar Peas, Tarragon, Thyme, Basil	Thika

52 Key Export Co. Ltd.	Mangoes, Oranges	Nairobi
53 Lipcorn Investments ltd	Fine Beans, French Beans, Garden Peas, Tender Stem Broccoli and Lettuce	Nairobi
54 Makindu Growers & Packers Ltd.	Broccoli, French Beans, Snow Peas, Baby Carrots, Apple Mango, Avocado, Butter Nut, Courgette, Tamarillo, Passion Fruit, Basil, Bird Eye chilli, Bullet Chilli, Mint,	Nairobi
55 Mara Farming Ltd	Beans with Pod, Snow Peas, Sugar Snaps, Organic Avocado, Conventional Avocado, Tenders tem Broccoli	Nairobi

56 Marvel Greens Ltd	Sorrel, Sage, Fine beans, Chillies, Capsicum, Ravaya, Aubergine, Patra, Tarragon, Corriander	Kitengela
57 Mavuno Organics Limited	Avocado, Passion	Nairobi
58 Mboga Tuu Ltd.	Passion	Nairobi
59 Midlands Kenya Ltd.	Carrots, Kales	Nairobi

60 Mofarm Fresh Fruit Exporters	Vegetables	Nairobi
61 Miyonga Fresh Greens Ltd	Avocadoes, Passion Fruits, Beans, Peas, dried mangoes	Nairobi
62 Mt. Elgon Orchards Ltd.	Avocado, Cut Flowers	Nairobi
63 Muzuri Growers Ltd.	Banana, Mango, Avocado	Nairobi
64 Myner Export Ltd.	French Beans and Snow Peas	Nairobi

65 Namelok Exotics (K) ltd	Avocado, Passion	Nairobi
66 Ngong Vegetable Ltd.	Tenderstem® Broccoli, Fine Beans, Shelled Garden Peas, Mange Tout.Sugar Snap, Chillies - Serende / Birs Eye / Habanero / Jalapeno / Bullet, Passion Fruit, Ravaya - Baby Aubergines, Okra	Nairobi
67 Oka Fresh Exports Ltd	French Beans. Snow Peas	Nairobi
68 Olivado Fresh EPZ	Avocado	Kirinyaga

69 Phyma Fresh Produce Ltd.	Mint, Rosemary, Thyme, Thives	Nairobi
70 Prime Fruits Distributors	Avocado, Mango, French Beans, Sugar Snap, Snow Peas, Passion	Nairobi
71 Premier Fresh Ltd.	Herbs, Vegetables	Nairobi
72 Profresh Ltd	Avocado Fuerte, Apple Mango, Strawberries, Asparagus, Broccoli, Rocket Chilies, Cucumber, Pineapples, Papaya, Cauliflower, Kent Mango, Ngowe Mango, Potatoes, Cavendish Bananas, Fine Beans, Snow Peas, Passion Fruit, Sugar Snaps, Pumpkin, White Gourd.	Nairobi

73 Raayan Exports Ltd.	Avocado, Mango, Passion Fruits, Custard Apple, Pineapple, French Beans, Garden Peas, Brocolli, Snow Peas, Herbs	Nairobi
74 Reap Horticultural Exporters ltd	Vegetables	Nairobi
75 Romwa Company Ventures Ltd	Snow Peas, Sugar Snap, Baby Corn, Passion	Nairobi
76 Roy Pack Enterprises Ltd	Avocado	Nairobi
77 Rozzika Garden Center Ltd.	Vegetables	Nairobi

78 Sacco Fresh Ltd	Fine Beans	Nairobi
79 Scan Afria Exporters	Basil, Thyme, Rosemary, Mint, Tarragon	Nairobi
80 Sasini Avocado ltd.	Avocado	Nairobi
81 Signet Fruits and Vegetables Exporters ltd	Avocado	Nairobi
82 Sian Exports Kenya Ltd.	Vegetables	Nairobi

83 Simba Fresh Produce ltd	Thyme, Sage, Coriander, Parsley, Rosemary, Mint, Lemon grass, Marjoram, Oregano, Sugar Snaps, Snow peas, French peas, Baby Courgettes, Tender-stem broccoli, Sweetcorn, Babycorn, Avocado	Nairobi
84 Six Square Ltd.	Apples, Asparagus, Avocado, Bananas, Herbs, Green Beans, Broccoli, Butternut, Cabbage	Nairobi
85 Spintex Enterprises Ltd	Avocado, French Beans, Sugar Snaps	Nairobi
86 Spring Green Ltd	Beans, Brocolli, Sugar Snaps, Snow Peas	Nairobi

87 Stella RasMussen GMBH	Avocado, Harricort Vert, Mangetout, Snap Peas	Nairobi
88 Super Fresh Kenya Ltd.	Chillies, Okra, Kerala, Aubergine, French Beans, Sugar Snap,	Nairobi
89 Sun Mango Ltd	Snow Peas	Thika
90 Sunripe, 1976 Ltd.	French beans, mangetout, sugar snaps, baby corn, passion fruit, avocados, pineapples and mangoes	Nairobi
91 .Samawati Fresh Produce (K) Ltd.	Rosemary, Thime, Sage, Terragon	Nairobi

92 Taste Kenya Exporter	Basil, Thyme, Rosemary, Mint, Lemon verbena, Melissa, Sage, Corriander, Dill, Chives, Oregano, Marjoram, French Terragon, Mangetout, Fine Beans, Lovage, Birdeye Chilies, German Chamomile, Flat Parsley,	Nairobi
93 Veg Center ltd	French Beans	Nairobi
94 Vegpro Kenya Ltd.	Vegetables, Fruits, Herbs	Nairobi
95 Vert Limited	Mangetout, Fine Beans, Sugar Snap, Baby Corn, Passion Fruit	Nairobi

96 Victoria Imports & Exports EPZ Company	Avocado, Fine Beans, Passion fruits, Pawpaw	Nairobi
97 Vine Fresh (East Africa) Ltd	Avocado	Nairobi
98 Wamu Investments Ltd.	Beans, Asian Vegetables, Sugar Snaps, Snow Peas	Nairobi
99 Wilham Kenya Ltd	Capsicum, Carrots , Artichokes ,Spring Onions	Nairobi
100 Winfield Africa Ltd.	Vegetables, Avocado	Nairobi