

## **Effect of Digital Marketing Strategies on the Sales Growth of Coffee Export in Kenya**

By

<sup>\*1</sup> Ninah Makena Muriuki, <sup>2</sup> Nancy Rintari, <sup>3</sup> Wilson Muema,

<sup>1</sup>Postgraduate Student, Kenya Methodist University, <sup>2</sup>Department of Business Administration, Kenya Methodist University

<sup>3</sup>Department of Business Administration, Kenya Methodist University

\*Corresponding author's Email: kiambi.ninah@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

Kenya benefits from the export of coffee because it creates jobs, strengthens international bonds, brings in foreign currency, and fosters economic and physical development in the country. However, over the past two decades, Kenya's coffee sector has experienced both highs and lows. Scholars have discussed factors that affect exports in general, highlighting areas like GDP per capita, real exchange rates, world production, export capability as well as foreign direct investment. However, digital marketing strategies have not been investigated as whether they are effective ways of increasing sales for coffee export in Kenya. Uganda was among the top ten countries that produced coffee for widespread consumption around the world and in order to increase chances of success in the face of competition, they capitalized on domestic market, established a profitable worldwide market, and automated their coffee production methods. It is through this understanding, that the study sought to evaluate the effect of digital marketing strategies on sales growth of Coffee export in Kenya. Cross-sectional survey was adopted as the blueprint, while target population were all 157 coffee marketing firm in Kenya. Respondents were randomly selected to a sample size of 384 units. To assess multiple correlation problems, correlation matrix was applied and Multiple linear regression for analysis. The study revealed that digital marketing strategies had a positive and significant effect on sales growth of Coffee exports in Kenya ( $\beta_2 = 0.821$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Hence, hypothesis was rejected. Regression analysis revealed the same positive effect of digital marketing on sales growth at ( $P < 0.000$ ) significant. The study concluded that digital marketing strategies played a significant role in the sales growth of coffee export in Kenya. Therefore, recommending that coffee exporters in Kenya should use digital marketing strategies like search engine optimization (SEO), social media marketing (SMM), and email marketing to increase their sales.

**Keywords:** Kenya, Digital Marketing Strategies, Sales Growth, Coffee Export.

## **Effect of Digital Marketing Strategies on the Sales Growth of Coffee Export in Kenya**

By

\*<sup>1</sup> Ninah Makena Muriuki, <sup>2</sup> Nancy Rintari, <sup>3</sup> Wilson Muema,

### **1.0 Introduction**

#### **The Background of the Study**

Digital marketing strategies means creating a plan to market a product or service online. This can be done through various online channels such as social media, email, and website (Parkin, 2016). The goal of digital marketing is to reach more potential customers and convert them into sales. There are many digital marketing strategies that coffee exporters can use to increase sales and grow their business (Kotabe, & Helsen, 2022). Some of these strategies include using social media platforms to promote their products, using online advertising to reach a wider audience, and using search engine optimization techniques to ensure that their website appears as the top result for relevant keywords (Kotabe, & Helsen, 2022). Digital marketing strategies help coffee exporters to increase their sales growth in several ways. The digital marketing help to reach new markets and customers that may be unaware of the coffee exporter's products (Peng, 2017). Also it helps to create a more engaging and interactive relationship with customers, which leads to increased sales. The digital marketing as well helps to track and analyze customer behavior, allowing the coffee exporters to adjust their marketing strategies and tactics to better suit the needs and wants of their target market.

Globally, the digital marketing strategies has helped coffee exporters in China to boost their sales growth (Neilson, & Wang, 2019). By using digital platforms such as social media and search engines, coffee exporters in China has been able to reach out to more potential customers and promote their products more effectively. Additionally, digital marketing strategies has helped coffee exporters in China to better understand the needs and preferences of their target customers, which allows them to tailor their marketing campaigns more effectively (Ye et al., 2018). In addition to search engine optimization (SEO) and social media marketing, Chinese coffee exporters have also been making use of email marketing, pay-per-click (PPC) advertising, and other online marketing tools to reach their target audience. Farther, digital marketing strategies has helped coffee exporters in Australia to boost their sales growth by creating awareness of the coffee exporter's brand and products, which led to increased sales. Due to the protracted drought and frost-damaged crops in Brazil, the known top producer, it was expected that demand for coffee would exceed supply for the next two to three years. Since coffee plants can take up to four years to grow, this was expected to lead to higher coffee prices (ICO, 2022). Therefore, this raised the question of whether or not Kenyan coffee was well advertised to take advantage of the high prices.

Regionally, in Nigeria, the coffee exporters use digital marketing to reach new markets and grow their sales. By using online tools to connect with buyers and promote their products, coffee exporters in Nigeria have been able to reach a wider audience and sell more of their coffee (Onwusiribe et al., 2022). Additionally, digital marketing enables them to build relationships with buyers and create a more personal connection with their customers. This leads to repeat sales and a loyal customer base. Digital marketing has a positive impact

on the sales growth of coffee exporters in Ethiopia (Kabeta, & Dangia, 2022). Exporters have been able to reach new markets through online channels, which has resulted in increased sales (Endeshaw, 2017). Moreover, digital marketing has allowed exporters to connect with buyers directly, which has also helped to boost sales. Overall, digital marketing has played a significant role in the sales growth of coffee exporters in Ethiopia. Exporters who have embraced digital marketing have been able to reach new markets and connect with buyers directly, which has resulted in increased sales (Gafesa, 2018).

In Kenya, coffee exporters on the minimal have been able to increase their sales growth through use of digital marketing tools such as email marketing, social media marketing, and search engine optimization, therefore, reaching a larger audience and generate more leads. Additionally, digital marketing allows coffee exporters to track their results and measure their success over time (Kurgat Kipkorir, 2016). By using data from digital marketing campaigns, coffee exporters can adjust their strategies and tactics to further improve their sales, as well as expand in more countries. In the month of July 2021, the amount of coffee sales in Kenya were recorded at 1.2 thousand metric tons, showing a recovery in comparison to previous months. The same month, auction price increased to 6.23 U.S. A \$ per kilogram, which had hiked from previous 5.5. These prices had been fluctuating with 6.34 as the highest recorded in January 2021. A farmer was expected to earn above Kshs 640000 per acre per year according to Coffee Research Institute (CRI, 2018), which did not manifest to most farmers.

The main challenge faced by coffee export firms in Kenya when using digital marketing strategies to enhance their sales growth is the lack of infrastructure in the country. The lack of access to the internet, lack of digital literacy, and lack of access to digital devices all make it difficult for coffee export firms to leverage digital marketing strategies to reach potential customers. Additionally, the lack of payment infrastructure makes it difficult for customers to make payments, limiting the ability of coffee export firms to make sales. The lack of resources and expertise to execute and maintain digital marketing strategies can make it difficult for coffee export firms to realize their desired sales growth (Roland, 2019).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Smallholder farmers control and dominate over 75 percent of land under coffee production in Kenya. The continuous fall in prices, lack of balance between production and consumption, impediment of scarce transportation, as well as marketing has resulted to smallholder profitability challenges. The drawback to these issues has been laboriously exploitation of coffee farmers leading to crop substitution, leading to low production. Many farmers in Meru County in 1990 and 2000, uprooted coffee plants and replaced them with tissue culture and indigenous bananas because of better market than coffee (Sabari, 2020). Businesses in Kenya benefit from the export of coffee because it creates jobs, strengthens international bonds, brings in foreign currency, and fosters economic and physical development in the country (Mordor Intelligence, 2018; Pendant, 2014). These have helped the Kenyan government's "big four" agenda, which includes things like making sure there is plenty of food within the borders of Kenya, and therefore helping the country accomplish its "vision 2030" goal of achieving annual growth of 10 percent. However, over the past two decades, Kenya's coffee sector has experienced both boom and bust. Unlike other manufactured goods, such horticultural products, whose prices maintain a constant value for an economically significant period of time, this phenomenon was not observed in coffee items (Karanja, 2018). As a result, coffee seed farmers felt the strain of the industry's price fluctuations, which led to financial losses and a decline in their commitment to the land and, ultimately, a decrease in output (Kenya Coffee Producers and Traders Association [KCPTA], 2012). This study therefore sought to evaluate the effect of digital marketing strategies on the sales growth of Coffee export in Kenya.

### **Review of Related Literature**

#### **Digital Marketing Strategies and Sales Growth**

Erdoğan and Çiçek (2012) did a study on how social media marketing had an effect on consumer brand loyalty. The study results indicated that social media marketing had a positive effect on consumer brand loyalty where the media provides advantageous campaigns, offers relevant and popular contents, and also appears on various platforms and provides applications on social media. Jain (2014) did a study on how social media marketing had an impact on SME businesses in India. The study results indicated that small and medium enterprises can achieve the following through digital marketing: create leads and drive sales, reach new customer groups, improve brand awareness, drive customer engagements, gain customer insights, and improve productivity. Onyango (2016) did a study on the influence that digital marketing strategies had on the performance of cut flowers exporting firms in Kenya. From the analysis, the results indicated that digital marketing significantly improved revenue, improved market share, and increased profitability. Firms using digital marketing showed better performance than their counter parts using conventional marketing strategies. It also noted that digital marketing's major benefit emanates in its exceptional capability to give personalized and interactive information without the restriction of time and place.

Bajaj and Bhanot (2016) did a study to understand social media marketing concept and its role in the micro, small and medium enterprises sector. The study results indicated that participation in social media creates a strong impact on brand awareness and brand trust, which results in a strong influence on customer acquisition and retention. The study also indicated a positive relationship between the time spent on social media and amount of sales

**Citation:** Muriuki, N. M; Rintari, N & Muema, W. (2022). Effect of Digital Marketing Strategies on the Sales Growth of Coffee Export in Kenya. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 7(1), 60 – 75.

made. It concluded by stating that social media marketing strategies had a positive impact on customer acquisition and retention which results to market share increase. Yasmin, Tasneem and Fatema (2015) conducted a study on the impact of various forms of digital marketing on a firm's sales. The study results indicated that there was a positive relationship between digital marketing and sales increase. It also indicated that all digital marketing elements such as online advertising, search engine optimization, email marketing, and social media had a positive effect on firm's sales. Njau and Karugu (2014) did a study to determine how e-marketing has impacted on the performance of SMEs in the Kenyan manufacturing industry. The study findings indicated their email marketing, online marketing, search engine marketing, and blog marketing as digital marketing techniques had a significant influence on business performance. The study findings also indicated that SMEs in Kenya which are keen in adopting e-marketing as a marketing strategy, achieved above average business performance.

Taiminen and Heikki (2015) did a study on the SMEs' usage of digital marketing channels. The study results indicated that SMEs had not been maximizing the full capability of digital tools available, and therefore not gaining benefits from the opportunities they present. From the study results, queries were raised on whether SMEs understand how digital marketing brings about essential changes in the nature of communication. Kithinji (2014) also did a study to determine the impact of internet marketing use on SMEs performance in Nairobi county. The study indicated that a large number of SMEs stated that their biggest challenge in the usage of internet marketing was the fear of losing their current customers who could not access internet. With regards to impact of internet marketing on SMEs performance, the study indicated that there was increased profitability, market share increase and the ability to expand their market growth. Jagongo and Kinyua (2013) in another study sought to establish the impact of social media on SME growth in Nairobi, Kenya. The study findings indicated that social media tools provided greater accessibility to the market and CRM subsequently had a significant effect on SMEs growth. Additionally, businesses through social media, experience fast and cheap communication with customers that allows them to create a database which business may use to generate leads that might eventually lead to increased sales and growth to the SMEs.

For the three chosen coffee shops in Muscat, Oman—Starbuck Café, Costa, and Tim Horton's—Roland (2019) examined the effects of social media advertising on consumer product brand recognition. The study also examined how companies use social media advertising platforms to reach their target customers with accurate information about their products and services and how those adverts appeal to those customers using the platform. Additionally, it will gauge how well-aware consumers are of the brand and whether they are inclined to buy from it as a result of the advertisement. According to research, creating an original commercial and using all available information on social media can increase attention and build brand awareness among the target market. Additionally, it was discovered that a significant portion of customers used social media to get information about the company's products. As a result, it is crucial to leverage these tools to increase customer awareness.

In order to determine which, type of digital marketing strategy was a better business investment than the others, Jerico, Nicole, and Fulepro's (2021) study sought to gauge the perceived effectiveness of various digital marketing strategies based on the supervisors and managers of coffee shops in the city of Tagaytay during the pandemic. Thirteen responses to

**Citation:** Muriuki, N. M; Rintari, N & Muema, W. (2022). Effect of Digital Marketing Strategies on the Sales Growth of Coffee Export in Kenya. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 7(1), 60 – 75.

an online survey were used by the researchers to gather data. The findings indicated that different types of digital marketing strategies were perceived to be more or less effective than one another, with social media marketing being viewed as both the most and most frequently used digital marketing strategy, and pay-per-click advertisements as both the least and least frequently used. The results showed that people believed social media marketing, search engine optimization, and content marketing were some of the better options for companies when promoting brand awareness. These strategies can actively help to increase sales, develop potential endorsements, and be adaptable enough for long-term use.

Francis, Robert, and Susan (2017) investigated how marketing strategies affect small-scale coffee production in Kenya's Machakos county's Kangundo sub-county. The purpose of the study, which used a descriptive survey approach, was to demonstrate the impact of marketing procedures on Surveys were used as a primary source. 11,348 small-scale coffee producers in 6 cooperative organizations in the Kangundo Subcounty were the target group. All 6 of the societies in Kangundo Sub-county were surveyed for the study. Through the use of basic random approach, two components were sampled. To choose the right sample of coffee farmers to be included in the study, the study used the sample size table developed by Krejcie and Morgan in 1970. 370 small-scale farmers who were chosen at random from among 11,348 farmers were involved in the study. Selected farmers were given a validated and reviewed questionnaire with the aid of a translator. Using descriptive statistics, data analysis included both qualitative and quantitative components. According to the study's findings, there were a number of marketing factors that deterred farmers from growing coffee, including poor management of coffee societies, debts owed by societies, a lack of timely marketing information, the presence of middlemen, and delayed payments to the farmers for their coffee after the auction.

The empirical review, lists comparable investigations that have already been conducted by researchers. Onyango (2016) conducted research on the effectiveness of Kenyan enterprises that export cut flowers and how it relates to digital marketing techniques. The study used semi-structured interviews to conduct qualitative and quantitative research on 30 Kenyan companies that export cut flowers. The analysis findings showed that using digital marketing had a considerable positive impact on sales, market share, and profitability. Businesses who used digital marketing outperformed their competitors that used traditional marketing tactics. It was also mentioned that the primary advantage of digital 13 marketing stems from its extraordinary ability to provide interactive and individualized content without regard to space or time restrictions.

In 2015, Roshetko looked into the marketing and production of Indonesian smallholder coffee. The survey's goal was to gather data from farmers in the Indonesian villages of Campaga and Pattaneteang in the Bantaeng District of South Sulawesi. A questionnaire was used in two focus groups with coffee farmers to promote conversation. According to the report, coffee growers in Indonesia can sell their product to big distributors, small distributors, or private consumers. When coffee is sold to distributors, it can be either cherries or beans, but when it is sold to individual customers, it is powdered and packaged in various sizes. Therefore, it can be inferred that Indonesian smallholder farmers are free to sell their products, which may account for the industry's continued expansion.

In order to comprehend social media marketing and its significance in the sector of micro, small, and medium firms, Srinivasan, Bajaj, and Bhanot (2016) conducted a study. In order to determine the social media marketing strategies MSMEs utilized to attract and keep

**Citation:** Muriuki, N. M; Rintari, N & Muema, W. (2022). Effect of Digital Marketing Strategies on the Sales Growth of Coffee Export in Kenya. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 7(1), 60 – 75.

clients, exploratory research was conducted in the study. Information was gathered from fifty micro, small, and medium-sized businesses using judgmental sampling (MSMEs). According to the study's findings, using social media significantly affects brand awareness and trust, which in turn significantly affects customer acquisition and retention. The study also found a link between the quantity of purchases produced and the amount of time spent on social media. It said in its conclusion that social media marketing techniques have a favorable effect on client acquisition and retention, which leads to a gain in market share.

The industries are still expanding. In the Jimma zone of Ethiopia, Asefa, Mulugeta, and Hadji (2016) looked at the factors that influence farmers' preferences for coffee market outlets. 156 randomly selected rural households from three districts provided cross-sectional data. Four primary coffee market outlets, including informal purchasers, official traders, brokers, and cooperatives, are present in the study area. The findings indicate that informal purchasers, official coffee traders, brokers, and farmer groups/cooperatives are the most frequently used coffee markets. Farm gate purchasers and consumers are examples of informal coffee buyers, whereas licensed and recognized formal coffee sellers include village and urban coffee traders. Therefore, it can be inferred that coffee producers have a variety of marketing options, which may be the reason for Ethiopia's coffee industry's ongoing expansion.

The factors impacting coffee producers' marketing plans in Uganda's Ggolo Parish were examined by Abtew, Leitz, Tamubula, and Oyugi in 2014. In order to select between selling their coffee at the farm gate or to the local dehusking factory located in Uganda's Ggolo parish's Mpigi District, small coffee farmers must consider a number of variables. Semi-structured interviews, cross-sectional surveys, participant observation, individual interviews, and one focus group discussion were used to collect the survey's data. Results indicate that 58% of farmers use both approaches, while 25% sell to rural traders and 16% sell just to the local industry. From the results of this study, it can be inferred that Ugandan farmers are free to sell their coffee to either rural traders or the local factory, and this may be the reason why farmers keep raising their output. Nduati (2012) looked into the variables that affected how cooperative societies in Muranga County's Kigumo District provided services. Randomized sampling was used in the study along with a descriptive research methodology. A systematic questionnaire was utilized to gather primary data from 199 coffee growers, and secondary data from the management committee was used to offer information on the topics being investigated. According to the study's findings, farmers who were unhappy with the cooperative society's management chose not to supply their coffee to it. This study looked into the potential effects on coffee production of whether or not farmers in Kangundo Sub-county are happy with their cooperative societies.

Kuguru (2016) looked on how Kenya's Mathira constituency's coffee business performed in relation to marketing processes. A mixed-mode research strategy that combined a correlation and descriptive research design was adopted. The sample, which included 385 respondents, was drawn using a simple random sampling procedure. Primary data were gathered for the study from coffee farmers and managers of coffee cooperative societies. According to the study's findings, 67.90% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed that the coffee industry's marketing strategy had a major impact on performance. The regression study also revealed that an increase in 0.162 in the marketing process corresponds to an increase of one unit in the performance of Kenya's coffee industry. According to the report, there needs to be significant marketing effort made in order to achieve a productive coffee

**Citation:** Muriuki, N. M; Rintari, N & Muema, W. (2022). Effect of Digital Marketing Strategies on the Sales Growth of Coffee Export in Kenya. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 7(1), 60 – 75.

sector. According to the study's findings, there is a strong correlation between Kenya's coffee sector performance and its marketing strategy.

The use of social media for sales, relationship development, and brand and product awareness is examined by Nengieh, Ngange, Babatunde, and Daphne-Carol (2020) in their investigation of the relationship between social media marketing and the performance of small enterprises in Buea, Cameroon. Findings also suggest that Small and Medium-sized Enterprise (SME) operators who use social media marketing reap rewards that much outweigh the expenses since they have included promotional tactics and even delivered goods to customers' doorsteps. According to this study, the government should support the development of a home numbering system to make it easier to deliver online-purchased goods to customers' doorsteps. This study offers some suggestions on social media platforms as the best way to sell.

In order to determine how agribusiness assistance projects in Machakos County affected coffee output, Mutua and Kioko (2016) conducted a study. A descriptive survey design was used for the investigation. Out of 320 coffee growers chosen from the management committees of several cooperatives, convenient and census sample procedures were used to choose 2 districts, each with 100 respondents. The instrument used to collect the data was a questionnaire. According to the study's findings, farmers who were involved in agribusiness support programs had an advantage over farmers who weren't in any support programs when it came to information access. For instance, 63.4% of the respondents said they often receive market information once a week, while 5.4% said they receive it once a month or less. Nearly a third (31.2%) of farmers enrolled in non-support programs said they regularly acquire market data that is connected to the annual general meetings at which the payment rate is set in accordance with subsequent sales and cherry deliveries at the factory level. It is evident from the study's findings that most cooperatives don't give farmers timely information.

Low coffee production was attributed to inadequate management of cooperative societies and a lack of financial support from the government, according to Lugando and Omukoko's (2017) study on the reasons causing a reduction in coffee production in Vihiga County. Smallholder farmers' insistence that they must only sell their coffee through cooperatives appears to demotivate productivity anytime they believe their society is not managed effectively.

Gichichi, Mukulu, and Odhiambo (2019) have out a descriptive study on the impact of market circumstances on the performance of micro and small agribusinesses owned by coffee smallholders in Murang'a County, Kenya. The results of the study demonstrate that one of the crucial market circumstances that affects the profitability of micro and small agribusinesses is simple access to markets. Another is client preferences. The results of the correlation and regression analyses demonstrate a positive and significant association between market conditions and the success of the coffee agribusiness.

A study on the effects of various forms of digital marketing on a company's sales was undertaken in 2015 by Yasmin, Tasneem, and Fatema. The effectiveness of digital marketing was examined using primary data from a sample of 150 businesses and 50 managers who were chosen at random. Correlation tests were among the statistical methods and tools used to analyze the data. The findings of the study suggested a link between increased sales and digital marketing. It also demonstrated that all aspects of digital marketing, including social

**Citation:** Muriuki, N. M; Rintari, N & Muema, W. (2022). Effect of Digital Marketing Strategies on the Sales Growth of Coffee Export in Kenya. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 7(1), 60 – 75.

media, search engine optimization, email marketing, and online advertising, have a beneficial impact on a company's sales.

In a study published in 2015, Adegbuyi, Akinyele, and Akinyele investigated the impact of social media marketing on small firms' performance. Owner-managers and staff members of particular SMEs in Ota Metropolis were given 150 copies of a questionnaire as part of the study. ANOVA, correlation testing, and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. The study's findings suggested that networking with other companies and building relationships with them boost brand exposure. In exchange for you promoting their company or product, they might do the same for you. The survey also revealed that social interaction with others makes firms visible to their audience, which creates opportunity to connect with numerous potential clients.

In 2015, Taiminen and Heikki conducted research on how SMEs use digital marketing platforms. The study gathered information through semi-structured interviews with SMEs in Central Finland, including 16 managers and 421 respondents. The study's findings suggested that SMEs have not been utilizing digital tools to their full potential and have not taken advantage of the opportunities they bring. SMEs' comprehension of the fundamental changes in communication that digital marketing brings about has been questioned in light of the study's findings.

In order to ascertain how e-marketing affects the performance of SMEs in the manufacturing sector in Kenya, Njau and Karugu (2014) conducted a study. The study specifically aimed to examine the effects of email marketing, online marketing, search engine marketing, and blog marketing on a SME's performance. 500 small and medium-sized manufacturing businesses made up the target demographic for the study, which used a survey research design. Data was collected from the sample after a sample representative of the target population was chosen using a random sampling procedure. The study's conclusions showed that digital marketing strategies like blog marketing, search engine marketing, email marketing, and internet marketing all had a big impact on how well businesses performed. The results of the study also showed that SMEs in Kenya are eager to implement e-marketing as a marketing strategy since they experienced above average business success. According to the report, the government should collaborate with the private sector to launch a campaign that informs SMEs about the framework and policies for e-marketing, as well as about success stories, best practices, and possibilities and difficulties related to the use of ICTs and e-marketing.

Additionally, Wanjuki (2014) conducted research to ascertain how the development of digital marketing has affected customer service at Barclays Bank of Kenya. The study used a case study methodology to examine the Meru branch of Barclays Bank. Utilizing content analysis, the data was analyzed. The study's findings revealed that 59% of respondents said digital marketing improves the bank's brand recognition, 26% said it raises customer awareness of the products it offers, and 12% said it makes people psychologically believe that the bank's services are superior to those of other companies on the market.

In a different study, Jagongo and Kinyua (2013) tried to determine the effect of social media on SME growth in Nairobi, Kenya. The study used a descriptive research design, and 246 small and medium-sized businesses in Nairobi were given questionnaires to fill out. The respondents might be managers or business owners. Cluster sampling was utilized in the study to divide the target population, and then a basic random sampling procedure was employed to determine the particular firms that were used in the study. According to the

study's findings, social media technologies make the market and CRM more accessible, which has a substantial impact on SMEs' growth. Additionally, social media gives businesses a quick and inexpensive way to communicate with clients. It also enables them to build a database they can utilize to generate leads that could potentially result in higher sales, which helps SMEs expand. According to the report, policymakers should continue to keep an eye on how SMEs are utilizing technology now in order to develop best practices-encouraging policies for the expansion of the SME sector.

An investigation by Erdomuş and içek (2012) examined the relationship between social media marketing and consumer brand loyalty. Customers in Turkey who followed at least one company on social media made up the study's target audience. A structured questionnaire with a sample size of 338 respondents was used to gather the pertinent data, and multiple regression analysis was used to analyze the results. According to the study's findings, social media marketing has a favorable impact on customer brand loyalty when it offers beneficial campaigns, popular and relevant content, as well as appearances on numerous platforms and social media applications.

Jain (2014) conducted a study on the effects of social media marketing on SME companies in India. According to the study's findings, small and medium-sized businesses can increase productivity, reach new client segments, raise brand awareness, encourage customer involvement, and generate leads and sales through digital marketing.

In order to ascertain the effect of internet marketing use on SMEs performance in Nairobi county, Kithinji (2014) also conducted a study. A sample size of 90 SMEs was used in this descriptive survey study approach. Utilizing questionnaires, primary data was gathered from the SMEs' top management. 16 pieces of data were gathered and subjected to factor and regression analysis. According to the study, many SMEs reported that their largest obstacle to using internet marketing was the worry that they would lose their current clients who could not access the internet. According to the study, internet marketing has a positive effect on SMEs' performance in terms of higher profitability, greater market share, and the capacity to grow their market.

Odhiambo (2012) in her case study Social Media as a Tool of Marketing and Creating Brand Awareness in Kenya revealed that social media is a phenomenon that has become an important aspect in marketing mix and revolutionizing the way companies interact with customers. It is a new research field and a quick literature scan reveals that not many studies exist. Nevertheless, these few existing studies without scientific evidence with industry data, have rushed to conclude that the emergence of social media has led to the demise of the traditional advertising mainstream media. Study conclude that even though social media is more effective than some of the traditional advertising channels, it cannot be implemented in isolation without augmenting it with other forms of traditional advertising channels. The implications are that social media alone cannot single handedly create brand awareness or even develop business.

## **2.0 Materials and Methods**

A positivistic philosophy approach was adopted in the study, simply for the reason that it takes a stance that knowledge developed is grounded on mindful observation and mensuration of focus to real life together with problems scrutiny viewed as unconstrained and disparate (Joslin & Muller, 2016). A cross-sectional survey was adopted as the blueprint because a study on coffee market penetration strategies on sales growth could not be possible

without promptly data collection so as the researcher could establish patterns of influence of performance of coffee export in Kenya. The target population were all 157 coffee marketing firms in Kenya. Staff involved in marketing were randomly selected from all the exporters in Kenya. The study therefore used a sample size of 384 units. The assembled data had to be probed through expository and deductive statistics. Data were summarized using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Means as well as medians were applied as measures of central tendency for quantitative and qualitative variables respectively. Standard deviation and inter-quartile range was used in measurement of spread for quantitative and qualitative variables respectively. Multiple linear regression was used for analysis.

### **3.0 Results and Discussions**

#### ***Respondents Rate***

The sample size was set at 384 respondents. The questionnaire returned rate was  $(311/384*100)$ , which was 81%. This was a fairly good response rate.

**Table 1: Questionnaire Response Rate**

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>NUMBER INTERVIEWED</b>
Coffee dealer	168
Coffee miller	29
Commercial WAREHOUSEMEN	28
Commercial marketing agents	21
Grower marketers	43
Management Agents	8
Private coffee warehouse men	14
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>311</b>

**Source: Author 2022**

#### **Descriptive Statistics**

##### **Digital Marketing Strategy (DMS)**

This is a plan for establishing an internet presence through online channels such as organic search, social media, paid ads and other web-based mediums including personal website,

**Table 1: Website marketing strategy**

<b>Opinion</b>	<b>Disagreed</b>	<b>Agreed</b>
Our enterprise has a functional website	212 (68%)	99 (32%)
Our web page was connective and amiable to buyers and sellers	167 (54%)	144 (46%)
All our company goods and services are remitted on the website	161 (53%)	150 (47%)
Our Clients feedback and communiques are responded to on the website	164 (53%)	147 (47%)
Our website allows messaging between the firm employees and clients	166 (60%)	145 (40%)
Our management posts current issues on new products, location and promotions on the website	186 (60%)	125 (40%)

**Source: Author 2022**

The results found out that enterprise had no functional website with 68% in disagreement. Also company website was not interactive and friendly to the users and clients as presented by 54% that disagreed with the statement. Farther results disagreed that all firm products and services were posted on the website with 53% disagreeing. The results on client feedback and orders being responded to on the website was not agreed to by 53% declining. This brought about the lack of knowledge as far as digital marketing is concerned and was supported by Olonde (2017) who indicated that lack of digital media knowledge was the greatest challenge for SMEs in the adoption of digital marketing, followed by lack of suitable digital marketing techniques and the lack of finances. As far as website allowed interaction between the firm employees and clients was discussed, majority at 60% disagreed with the statement.

The findings concur with Oukhayi (2021) on the impact of digital marketing and artificial intelligence on the sales growth of Moroccan companies who showed that the biggest challenges which hindered the adoption of digital marketing in Morocco was lack of digital marketing competences, limited financial capabilities and time for planning and implementation. Results proved that 60% disagreed that company management posts updates on new products, location and promotions on the website. This shows a discord with the researcher since in the current generation Technology should be embraced. This creates the reasons behind the firms not performing well as far as sales are concerned. Tsopatsa (2020) revealed that digital marketing channels such as social marketing, online marketing, greatly contributed to the growth of SMEs in Cameroon in general and Jumia. In addition, Saul (2021) found out that to a great extent online advertising was the most used digital marketing

platform and that digital marketing had increased brand awareness and recognition. Kalei (2020) concluded that digital marketing strategies had a significant influence on the marketing performance of SMEs.

### Hypothesis Testing

***H<sub>01</sub>: Digital marketing strategies have no statistically significant influence on the sales growth of Coffee exporters in Kenya***

The second (**H<sub>01</sub>**) hypothesis postulated that digital marketing strategies does not significantly affect the sales growth of Coffee exporters in Kenya. However, the findings in Table 2 showed that digital marketing strategies had a positive and significant effect on sales growth of Coffee exporters in Kenya ( $\beta_2 = 0.821, p < 0.05$ ). Hence, hypothesis was rejected. This was explained further by assessing the value of the t-test which indicated that digital marketing strategies would be attributed to the regression model 13 times more compared to the effect of the standard error associated with the estimated coefficient ( $t = 13.111$ ). The findings further indicated that the variation in sales growth of Coffee exporters in Kenya was attributed by 44% change in digital marketing strategies.

**Table 2: Digital Marketing Strategies**

	Unstandardized	Standardized			
	Coefficients	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	0.304	0.157		1.943	0.053
Digital marketing strategies	0.821	0.064	0.661	13.111	0.0000
Model Summary statistics					
R	0.661				
R Square	0.443				
Adjusted R Square	0.435				
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.659				
Model Fitness Statistics (ANOVA Results)					
F	172.673				
Sig.	0.000				

***a Dependent Variable: Sales Growth***

***Source: Author 2022***

### Multiple Linear Regression

#### Digital Marketing Strategies (DMS)

Most of the digital marketing strategies had a significant effect on sales growth of Coffee exports in Kenya, as reflected in the model at ( $P < 0.000$ ) significant. The model accounts for 67% of the total variability in the response variable ( $R\text{-sq.} = 0.6701$ ) as indicated in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Multiple Linear regression of digital marketing strategies**

**Model Summary**

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.8186	.6701	2.0329	50.7712	6.0000	150.0000	.0000

*Source: Author 2022*

**4.0 Conclusion**

Based on the descriptive analysis, the study concluded that strategies proposed under the digital marketing strategies were not appropriate based on the responses. Website marketing and email marketing was disagreed upon, while social media was fifty-fifty. On regression analysis the study concluded that digital marketing strategies had a positive impact on the sales growth of coffee exports in Kenya.

**5.0 Recommendations**

The study recommended that Kenyan coffee exporters should increase their online presence in order to reach a larger number of potential customers. This can be done by creating a strong web site marketing and investing in digital marketing campaigns. The study also recommended that in order to attract and retain customers, it is important to create engaging and informative content. Kenyan coffee exporters should focus on creating blog posts, infographics and videos that showcase their products and highlight the unique aspects of their business. The study further recommended that in order to encourage engagement of customers, Kenyan coffee exporters should increase customer interaction on their website. This can be done by responding to comments and questions in a timely manner and offering exclusive deals and promotions. More so, to encourage customers to purchase Kenyan coffee, exporters should offer incentives such as discounts, free shipping and loyalty programs. Lastly, the study recommended that to reach a larger number of potential customers, Kenyan coffee exporters should invest in digital marketing campaigns. These campaigns should be targeted and focused on driving traffic to the exporter’s websites.

**Citation:** Muriuki, N. M; Rintari, N & Muema, W. (2022). Effect of Digital Marketing Strategies on the Sales Growth of Coffee Export in Kenya. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 7(1), 60 – 75.

## References

- Al-Rahmi, W. M., Yahaya, N., Aldraiweesh, A. A., Alamri, M. M., Aljarboa, N. A., Alturki, U., & Aljeraiwi, A. A. (2019). Integrating technology acceptance model with innovation diffusion theory: An empirical investigation on students' intention to use E-learning systems. *Ieee Access*, 7, 26797-26809.
- Berry, F. S., & Berry, W. D. (2018). Innovation and diffusion models in policy research. *Theories of the policy process*, 253-297. Routledge. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 40(3), 429-451. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sjtg.12279>
- Dearing, J. W., & Cox, J. G. (2018). Diffusion of innovations theory, principles, and practice. *Health affairs*, 37(2), 183-190. <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff>.
- Denić, N., Petković, D., Vujović, V., Spasić, B., & Vujičić, I. (2018). A survey of internet marketing by small and medium-sized enterprises for placing wine on the market. *Physica A: Statistical Mechanics and its Applications*, 506, 718-727. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.physa>.
- Endeshaw, T. (2017). Assessment of coffee Export Marketing Strategy and practice in Ethiopian Trading Business Corporation [Doctoral Dissertation, St. Mary's University]. <http://hdl.handle.net/123456789/3529>
- Erdoğan, İ. E., & Cicek, M. (2012). The impact of social media marketing on brand loyalty. *Procedia-Social and behavioral sciences*, 58, 1353-1360. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.10.028>
- Gafesa, F. E. (2018). Aggregation for Sustainable Traceability in Smallholder Coffee Producers: Cases of Ethiopia. In *RAIS COLLECTIVE VOLUME–ECONOMIC SCIENCE* (pp. 47-71). Scientia Moralitas Research Institute.
- Galati, A., Crescimanno, M., Tinervia, S., & Fagnani, F. (2017). Social media as a strategic marketing tool in the Sicilian wine industry: Evidence from Facebook. *Wine Economics and Policy*, 6(1), 40-47. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wep.2017.03.003>
- Hanlon, A. (2019). Digital marketing: strategic planning & integration. Sage. Kabeta, T., & Dangia, M. (2022). Effects of COVID-19 on Coffee Market Participation of Smallholder Coffee Producers' in Godere District, Southwestern Ethiopia. *Advances in Agriculture*. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/6993380>
- Kotabe, M. M., & Helsen, K. (2022). *Global marketing management*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Kurgat Kipkorir, F. (2016). Marketing Strategy for an E-business for Entering the Kenyan Market. [Bachelors, Thesis-Laurea University] <https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/112543>
- Min, S., So, K. K. F., & Jeong, M. (2021). Consumer adoption of the Uber mobile application: Insights from diffusion of innovation theory and technology acceptance model. In *Future of Tourism Marketing* (pp. 2-15). Routledge.
- Neilson, J., & Wang, J. H. Z. (2019). China and the changing economic geography of coffee value. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*. Volume 40, Issue 3, 429-451.
- Njau, W. and Karugu, N. (2014). The Impact of E-marketing on Marketing Performance as Perceived by Customers in Jordan. <https://digitalcommons.aaru.edu.jo/isl>
- Onwusiribe, N. C., Mbanasor, J. A., & Oteh, O. U. (2022). Dynamics of coffee output in Nigeria. *Gestão & Produção*, 29. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1806-9649-2022v29e7621>
- Onyango, K. E. N. N. E. D. Y. (2016). Influence of digital marketing strategies on performance of cut flowers exporting firms in Kenya. *Journal of Economic and*

**Citation:** Muriuki, N. M; Rintari, N & Muema, W. (2022). Effect of Digital Marketing Strategies on the Sales Growth of Coffee Export in Kenya. *Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies*, 7(1), 60 – 75.

- Management Strategy, 2(1)112-121.  
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/jems.12141>
- Parkin, G. (2016). *Digital marketing: Strategies for online success*. Fox Chapel Publishing
- Peng, Y. (2017). Affective networks: How WeChat enhances Tencent's digital business governance. *Chinese Journal of Communication*, 10(3), 264-278.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17544750.2017.1306573>
- Roland, H. (2019). Impact of Social Media Advertisement To The Customer Product Brand Awareness Of Selected International Coffee Shops In Muscat, Oman: An Inquiry To The Customer. *Asian journal of management sciences & education*, 8(1), 11-19.  
<https://doi: 10.5281/ zenodo.3596116>
- Roshetko, K. (2015). Effectiveness of digital marketing in the challenging age: An empirical study. *International journal of management science and business administration*, 1(5), 69-80. DOI:10.14738/abr.73.2.6367
- Sia, S. K., Soh, C., & Weill, P. (2016). How DBS Bank Pursued a Digital Business Strategy. *MIS Quarterly Executive*, 15(2), 105-121. <https://web.p.ebscohost.com>.
- Srinivasan, R., Bajaj, R., & Bhanot, S. (2016). Impact of social media marketing strategies used by micro small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) on Customer acquisition and retention. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, 18(1), 91-101.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2017.02.004>
- Taiminen, H. M., & Karjaluo, H. (2015). The usage of digital marketing channels in SMEs. *Journal of small business and enterprise development*, 22(4), 633-651.  
<https://doi.org/10.1108/JSBED-05-2013-0073>
- Torga, G. N., & Spers, E. E. (2020). Perspectives of global coffee demand. In *Coffee Consumption and Industry Strategies in Brazil* (pp. 21-49). Woodhead Publishing.  
<https://www.amazon.com/Digital-Marketing-Strategies-Online-Success/dp/1847734871>
- Varadarajan, R., Welden, R. B., Arunachalam, S., Haenlein, M., & Gupta, S. (2022). Digital product innovations for the greater good and digital marketing innovations in communications and channels: Evolution, emerging issues, and future research directions. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 39(2), 482-501.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar>
- Wanjuki, C. W. (2014). The growth of digital marketing and its impact on customer service at Barclays Bank of Kenya, Meru Branch (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi): <https://digitalcommons.aaru.edu.jo/isl/vol11/iss6/5>
- Ye, Y., Lau, K. H., & Teo, L. K. Y. (2018). Drivers and barriers of omni-channel retailing in China: A case study of the fashion and apparel industry. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*. 46(7), 657-689. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJRDM>.