

Entrepreneurial Marketing Approach and Growth of Smallholder Dairy Enterprises in Kenya

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Abstract

This study sought to investigate the influence of entrepreneurial marketing approach in conduct of market research, use of marketing technologies and application of marketing mix on growth of smallholder dairy enterprises in Kenya. Founded on market orientation theory, the study used descriptive and causal research designs and the survey method to collected data from a sample of 392 smallholder dairy farmers. Data analysis involved counts, frequencies and inferential statistics, with regression analysis used to establish relationship and quantify effect. The data was presented in tables and results suggest that entrepreneurial marketing approach has significant and positive influence on the growth of smallholder dairy enterprises in Kenya. Smallholder dairy enterprises should therefore strive to leverage on market research, adopt to use of market technologies and application of appropriate marketing mix as a strategy for enhancing their growth. The smallholder dairy enterprises should also prioritize their marketing resource allocation to achieve optimal benefits by investing on entrepreneurial marketing dimensions with the highest return on investment.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Marketing; Enterprise Growth; Smallholder Dairy Enterprises.

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1. Introduction

Smallholders in Kenya are major drivers of the dairy industry (1) making it one of the most successful in Africa (2) with an annual production of 5.2 billion litres of raw milk and an installed processing capacity equivalent to 7% of production. The smallholders, despite their domination of the industry, contribute a disproportionately low 56% of the global milk production (3), of which 50% is marketed (4,5). The smallholders are confronted with a variety of challenges ranging from small market size to low innovation capability with low contribution to overall milk supply. Reports by USAID link depressed performance of smallholder dairy enterprises to inadequate marketing capabilities, which compromises the enterprises' ability to be competitive.

Traditional marketing approaches, focusing primarily on the 4Ps of product, price, place, and promotion have been criticized for being exclusively customer-centric, delivering less value though consuming more resources (6). Entrepreneurial marketing is touted to offer vast potential for improving return on investments and performance (7), leading to a call for integration of entrepreneurial capabilities to deliver marketing objectives. Thus, it has been argued that entrepreneurial marketing is instrumental for businesses to remain relevant, competitive, and healthy under highly uncertain market conditions (8).

Nonetheless, smallholder dairy enterprises operate within the realms of micro, small and medium enterprises, a sector characterized by unique peculiar conditions. Mostly, smaller enterprises are faced with resource constraints, inadequate managerial capabilities and limited impacts on the market (9). Therefore, marketing processes in small and medium enterprises may not take a text book approach and neither do they necessarily follow the theoretical concepts applicable to the large-scale enterprises. Marketing process for small firms are characterized by haphazard, informal, loose, unstructured, spontaneous, reactive, more creative, alternative, instinctive actions mostly reliable on industry norms (10) and focused on customer engagement, networking and word of mouth communication (9).

Proponents of entrepreneurial marketing argue that due to these peculiarities, marketing challenges facing smaller enterprises can be overcome by adopting entrepreneurial marketing practices (7). The concept of entrepreneurial marketing has been defined as the process of regular assessment of the environment to find or establish new opportunities and exploiting the occasion effectively to gain or renew competitive advantage (11). As proposed by (12) in their seminal paper, the concept has seven dimensions of pro activeness, opportunity focused, innovativeness, risk taking, customer centric, resource leveraging and value creation.

Entrepreneurial marketing would therefore play a significant role in determining the success of smallholder dairy enterprises (13). Although there is evidence to indicate that all dimensions of entrepreneurial marketing are relevant in achieving better performance in small and medium enterprises, not all will always be significant (14). Thus, it is imperative to investigate the effects of these dimensions under different conditions and sectors. The objective of this paper was to investigate the influence of entrepreneurial marketing approach of conducting market research, use of marketing technologies and use of market mix strategies on growth of smallholder dairy enterprises in Kenya.

2. Research Hypothesis

H0: There is no influence of entrepreneurial marketing approach on growth of smallholder dairy enterprises in Kenya

3. Literature Review

Entrepreneurial marketing approach is mostly used by entrepreneurs and small enterprises when marketing in a fragmented, dynamic and hostile business environment (15). Market research provides insights into how dairy markets work, through gathering, analysis and interpretation of information about supply and suppliers of dairy products, customers, consumers, target market, the industry, and competitors. The smallholder producers, in their numbers, have the milk and other products from their farms and can opt to sell to one or several buyers (16).

Technology aids smallholder dairy enterprises access markets and information on inputs supply and prices, output pricing, connects them to suppliers, buyers or logistics providers, such as storage facilities and transport companies. In most emerging economies, the shortage of critical agriculture infrastructure for proper storage, transportation, and warehousing of agricultural produce constrains smallholder producers (17), especially of perishable products, to reach the market safely (18). In Kenya marketing technology has been introduced to aid in weighing of milk deliveries, cooling and heat treatment, storage, processing inward and outward payments as well in accessing supermarket procurement system and trading requirement (19).

The marketing mix in entrepreneurial marketing relies on people, purpose, practice, and process, which, as the pillars of a successful, creative and resource efficient market development, act as the tools to use and influence demand for a product. According to (20) farm-based entrepreneurs perform 4 key EM mix practices: that: transform the farm as the primary purpose; legitimize a local brand through the uniqueness of the person, purpose and place; use of a personal networking approach in the market development process; and flexible and controllable market expansion practices. In entrepreneurial marketing, entrepreneurs commit to first develop a new product/service, and then find a market for it. To promote a product, entrepreneurial marketers use informal interactive methods like references and word of mouth from consumers who have interacted with their product. To achieve a significant impact on achieving competitive advantage, price must be set right as it is the most effective (21).

The study investigated and measured the number of smallholders dairy enterprises that; conduct market research; use market technology and apply marketing mix actions.

3.1 Theoretical Review

The study was anchored on Marketing Orientation (MO) Theory. The two most prominent conceptualizations of market orientation theory are those given by (22), who acknowledge that intelligence generation involves anticipating customers' future needs, arguing that indeed, innovation is an outcome of market orientation. They, however, do not develop this thought further to provide clarity on the relationship between market orientation and innovation. On one hand, there is an argument that a market-oriented focus could be detrimental to innovation,

based on the idea that market orientation seduces the business to being narrowly interested in short-term customer needs.

On the other hand, it is proposed that models of market orientation should focus more on innovation. They suggest that, if market orientation requires the adoption of new behaviors, then innovation should be included in the existing models of market orientation. Marketing processes in entrepreneurial marketing did not follow traditional marketing mix variables of price, place, promotion, and product (23). Instead, entrepreneurial marketers “live” continuously with the market, their vision and customer preferences present in their minds, focusing on the entrepreneurial 4Ps of purpose, practices, process and people, constantly thinking of how to improve customer value.

We take cognizance of overlying concepts of marketing orientation as an important contributor to business and new venture performance (24), and acknowledge the significance of the interaction between entrepreneurship, innovation and marketing as a means to venture performance and growth. Distinct but complementary views of MO have emerged in the literature namely: MO as corporate culture that puts customers’ interests first, MO as a combination of customer orientation and competitor orientation and MO as the generation and dissemination of, and responsiveness to, market intelligence/information (23). Market orientation is seen as an organizational behavior that develops capabilities to acquire market intelligence, disseminating them within the company, and responding by developing products that fulfil market needs, all of which can result in a firm’s performance (25).

An additional view is a system-based perspective. It conceptualizes MO in terms of different organizational activities. The management system is divided into five subsystems: organization, information, planning, controlling, and human resource. Unlike production orientation and sales orientation, MO balances customer intensity, product quality and aggressive promotion. A firm practicing MO will exhibit three behavioral components: a customer orientation, a competitor orientation, and inter-functional coordination along with two decision criteria: a long-term focus and profitability. Customer orientation is the sufficient understanding of one's target` buyers to be able to create superior value for them continuously. Companies must have a customer value mindset and deliver exceptional value. Solid customer relationships ensure retention and improve business performance (26). Competitor orientation on the other hand requires that the organization must consider not only how well its products suit customer needs but how well it performs relative to its competitors. Companies must innovate, update and automate their systems so as to gather intelligence on the short and long-term strengths, weaknesses, capabilities and strategies of both the key current and the key potential competitors (27). The analysis of competitors' long-term capabilities, strengths and weaknesses is a key factor in determining MO and culture. Finally, inter-functional coordination is the coordinated utilization of company resources in creating superior value for target customers. Organizational resources often have conflicting perspectives, priorities, and strategies (28). Academics and practitioners have long argued that synergy among organizational members is needed so value for customers is continuously created. A culture of integrating all functions toward creating customer value should lead to MO within the organization and successful implementation of the marketing concept (29). Entrepreneurial marketing is about a proactive orientation towards new ways of gaining and retaining competitive advantage, continuous innovativeness, acquiring and retaining valuable customers, utilizing opportunities for satisfying new customer needs, risk management and value creation. This theory supports this study on the

influence of the entrepreneurial marketing approach on the growth of smallholder dairy enterprises in Kenya.

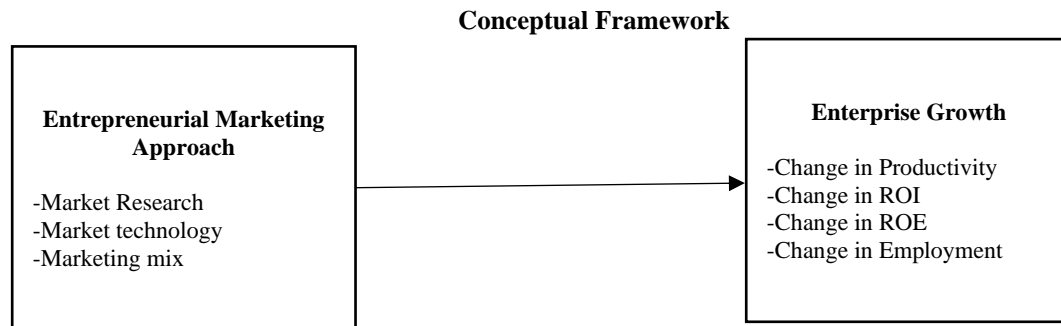


Figure 1

4. Methodology

The study adopted descriptive and causal research designs which enabled collection of data (30) and establish the relationship between entrepreneurial marketing approach and growth of smallholder dairy enterprises in Kenya. Data was collected from smallholder dairy farmers in four counties of Kiambu, Nyeri, Laikipia and Nyandarua in Kenya. The study used proportionate random sampling to select and draw a sample of 395 smallholder farmers drawn from an aggregated population of 29,300 smallholder dairy farmers who were registered with Githunguri, Nyala and Wakulima Dairy Cooperative Societies. A survey tool was used to collect data over a two-week span in the month of March 2023. The tool, consisting of a 5-point likert scale and open-ended questions was used to collect data from the respondents. Data was collected from the dairy farm owners. Data analysis involved data cleaning, frequencies and counts and inferential statistics. Data analysis application package, Stata was used to run the analysis. Before analysis, data was tested for sample adequacy, outlier testing, reliability and validity.

5. Findings and Discussion

The study achieved 98.9% response rate and Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.827 confirmed construct reliability. The study revealed that majority of the respondent were males (52%). The findings, fail to support the traditional belief that smallholder dairy sector in Kenya is highly dominated by the males as indicated by a study by (31), which showed 83.6% male dominance. However, the findings support argument by (32) that traditional cultures are slowly dying away as more women are seen to be engaged in areas previously dominated by men like managerial positions in the dairy value chain. A positive trend towards gender parity in rural economic development. The study also showed that, 32% of smallholder dairy farmers were aged between 51-60 years; 31.6% between 41 and 50 years; 20.2% above 60 years; 14.8% between 31 and 40 years and 1.3% below 30 years. The findings are in line with a study by (34), which established that average age of smallholder dairy farmers in Kenya is 56 years, indicating that dairy farming is still dominated by the elderly in Kenya. Majority (41.3%) of the respondents had attained secondary education as the highest academic qualification while 31.1% had primary education, 16.3% had college level, 6.1% had university degrees and 5.1% had no formal education. This did not support findings by (34) that majority of the smallholder dairy farmers in Kenya have primary education. The finding that majority of smallholder dairy farmers have secondary education indicate higher literacy levels, thus smallholder dairy farmers have capacity to make more informed decisions about their enterprises. Majority (32.1%) had an

experience of between 11 and 20 years in dairy farming; 29.3% had an experience of less than 10 years; 23.5% between 21 and 30 years; 7.4% between 31 and 40 years; and 7.7% above 40 years. The long years of experience corroborates findings that majority of the smallholder farmers were elderly and have been in the business for quite some time to gain valuable knowledge of their enterprises and the sector. Analysis in Table 1 revealed that 78% of the respondents agreed that they adopt entrepreneurial marketing approach. Comparatively, adoption of marketing technologies was at a higher mean ($M=3.93$, $SD=1.02$) than marketing mix ($M=3.58$, $SD=1.15$) and market research ($M=3.52$, $SD=1.16$). These findings fail to support assertion by (35) that many smallholder farmers are not able to realize meaningful economic returns from the dairy enterprise because of lack of entrepreneurial skills. Meaning that the smallholder dairy farmers are gradually acknowledging the key role played by entrepreneurial market approach and are slowly embracing the concept to improve on their enterprise performance.

Table 1: Entrepreneurial Marketing Approach

Constructs	Indicators	SDA	DA	SHA	A	SA	Mean	SDV
Market Research	Seeks information on prospective customers	0.0%	5.6%	13.0%	33.2%	30.9%	3.41	1.090
	Aware of what competitors are doing	0.0%	4.8%	13.3%	22.2%	41.1%	3.55	1.092
	Customers are willing to pay more for added value	0.3%	10.5%	9.9%	19.1%	31.6%	3.59	1.286
	Sub Total	0.1%	8.9%	15.4%	31.6%	44.0%	3.52	1.16
Marketing Technologies	Technology has made farm transactions easier	0.0%	1.3%	3.6%	14.8%	34.9%	4.20	.909
	Access more information from use market technology	0.0%	2.0%	6.6%	19.9%	36.7%	3.96	.992
	Marketing technology has increased farm earning	0.0%	5.1%	12.0%	25.5%	30.4%	3.62	1.152
	Sub Total	0.0%	4.4%	11.5%	31.2%	52.9%	3.93	1.02
Marketing Mix	Prices cover all costs and are affordable to customers	0.0%	8.2%	18.4%	25.0%	30.1%	3.32	1.208
	Have plans on improving how products are offered	0.0%	7.7%	8.9%	32.9%	34.4%	3.44	1.098
	Deliver products to where customers are	0.0%	4.1%	8.2%	16.8%	27.8%	3.97	1.148
	Sub Total	0.0%	8.9%	15.9%	33.6%	41.5%	3.58	1.15
Entrepreneurial Marketing Approach	Aggregate Score	0.03%	7.40%	14.27%	32.13%	46.13%	3.68	1.11

A regression analysis was run using Stata with enterprise growth as dependent variable and entrepreneurial marketing approach as the key predictor. Index of the constructs were calculated by averaging the individual

indicator scores. The study met the assumptions for Homoscedasticity (Cameron and Travedi's decomposition of information matrix (IM) test, $\chi^2(14, N = 392) = 4.01, p = .1349$); Autocorrelation ($D-W\ test = 1.859$) and Multi-collinearity ($VIF = 1.938$).

The study established a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurial marketing approach and growth of smallholder dairy enterprises in Kenya. Findings in Table 2 further shows that entrepreneurial marketing approach explained 36.1% variance in enterprise growth (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.361$, $F(1, 390) = 221.92, p < 0.01$). In support of the alternative hypothesis, the study found that entrepreneurial marketing approach significantly predicted enterprise growth ($\beta = .0308, t(390) = 14.90, p < 0.01$). These findings concur with those of (35, 36) who established a strong positive and significant relationship between entrepreneurial marketing and competitive growth of smallholder enterprises. The study thus confirms that smallholder dairy farmers can employ market research, marketing technologies and marketing mix practices to enhance their overall enterprise growth.

Table 2: Entrepreneurial Marketing Approach and Growth

Source	SS	df	MS	Number of obs	=	392
Model	.163856882	1	.163856882	F (1, 390)	=	188.54
Residual	.338943115	390	.000869085	Prob > F	=	0.0000
Total	.502799997	391	.001285933	R-squared	=	0.3259
				Adj R-squared	=	0.3242
				Root MSE	=	0.02948
Growth	Coef.	Std. Err.	t	P> t	[95% Conf. Interval]	
EMA	.0283999	.0020683	13.73	0.000	.0243335	0.0324663
_cons	.080182	.0077265	10.38	0.000	.0649912	0.0953728

The entrepreneurial marketing approach score was higher in Kiambu ($M = 3.85, SD = 0.58$) compared to Laikipia ($M = 3.82, SD = 0.73$), Nyeri ($M = 3.39, SD = 0.63$), and Nyandarua ($M = 2.81, SD = 0.97$). This could be attributed to nearness of Kiambu to the capital city of Kenya giving most farmers an opportunity to tap into the well-developed technology infrastructure in the city to facilitate entrepreneurial marketing approach. A development lacking in counties far from the city.

Table 3: Comparing Means between Counties

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Kiambu	229	3.853287	.5809355	.0383893
Nyeri	86	3.397079	.6373308	.0687251
Laikipia	45	3.829630	.7322919	.1091636
Nyandarua	32	2.815972	.9754491	.1724367
Total	392	3.665806	.7207961	.0364057

When sample sizes are unequal, Welch and Brown-Forsythe tests are recommended instead of the ANOVA test,

which relies on F-statistic to determine whether the means are significantly different. This is because if the difference between the sample sizes is too large, this can affect homogeneity of variance assumption tested by Levene's test. The one-way ANOVA of entrepreneurial marketing approach score on county revealed a statistically significant difference between counties, Welch's $F(3, 87.642) = 20.563, p < .001$; Brown-Forsythe's $F(3, 105.132) = 21.362, p < .001$

Table 4: Robust Tests of Equality of Means between counties

	Statistic ^a	df1	df2	Sig.
Welch	20.563	3	87.642	.000
Brown-Forsythe	21.362	3	105.132	.000
a. Asymptotically F distributed.				

Post hoc comparisons, using the Games-Howell post hoc procedure, were conducted to determine which pairs of county's mean scores differed significantly. These results show a significant difference between all counties except for Kiambu and Laikipia ($p=0.997$).

Table 5: Games-Howell Post Hoc between counties

(I) County	(J) County	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Kiambu	Nyeri	.4562081*	.0787203	.000	.251544	.660872
	Laikipia	.0236576	.1157171	.997	-.282850	.330166
	Nyandarua	1.0373150*	.1766583	.000	.560293	1.514337
Nyeri	Kiambu	-.4562081*	.0787203	.000	-.660872	-.251544
	Laikipia	-.4325504*	.1289955	.007	-.771077	-.094024
	Nyandarua	.5811070*	.1856274	.016	.084194	1.078020
Laikipia	Kiambu	-.0236576	.1157171	.997	-.330166	.282850
	Nyeri	.4325504*	.1289955	.007	.094024	.771077
	Nyandarua	1.0136574*	.2040860	.000	.472852	1.554463
Nyandarua	Kiambu	-1.0373150*	.1766583	.000	-1.514337	-.560293
	Nyeri	-.5811070*	.1856274	.016	-1.078020	-.084194
	Laikipia	-1.0136574*	.2040860	.000	-1.554463	-.472852
*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.						

6. Conclusion and Future Research

The study concludes that an entrepreneurial marketing approach is essential for growth of smallholder dairy enterprises in Kenya. An enterprise requires data generated through robust market research, need to adopt efficient technologies for marketing and use a mix of marketing approaches to achieve its marketing objectives.

The study also showed that it is important that marketing processes in entrepreneurial marketing do not stick only to the traditional marketing mix variables but instead entrepreneurial marketers need to relate continuously with the market. There should be a clear understanding of customer preferences present and constant improvement of customer value creation.

For future research, the study recommends expansion of the entrepreneurial marketing approach dimensions and variables beyond the current three explored (market research, marketing technologies, marketing mix) to give a holistic view of the effects.

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