**THE INFLUENCE OF 4Ps MARKETING STRATEGIES ON SALES PERFORMANCE OF ROUND POTATO IN NJOMBE REGION IN TANZANIA: MODERATING ROLE OF FARMERS’ MARKETING SKILLS**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA**

**2025**

# CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certify that they have read and, at thereby recommend for acceptance by the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) a dissertation entitled **“The influence of 4Ps of marketing strategies on the sales performance of round potato produce in Njombe Region in Tanzania: The moderating role of farmers’ marketing skills”** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Business Management of the Open University of Tanzania (OUT).

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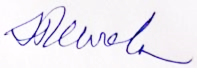
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I, **Yono Stanley Kevela**, declare that the work presented in this dissertation is original. It has never been given to any other University or Institution. Where other researchers' works were used, it was cited. It is in this regard that I declare this work as originally mine. As a result, this dissertation is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD).



………………………………………

Signature

…………………………..……………..

Date

# DEDICATION

The Glory be to the Almighty God, the Creator and Provider of everything. With you, the impossible become possible. God, you have been the encourager and my strength through valley and mountains of my PhD study program and now you have made it a reality. God you are really Great and above all creatures. This work is also dedicated to my parents: The late Mr Jilaoneka Mwadanda Kevela (Father) and Anumye Abelinego Mtanga Mlyapatali (Mother), you will be remembered forever, for lying solid foundation of my life and education.

My Children, Sons and Daughters you deserve the dedication of this work. I believe my PhD have catalyze you to attain the higher level of education. My children, may this work inspire you, and may it encourage you to attain this advanced intellectual level. My beloved wife, Scholastika Christian Kevela, this work is dedicated to you, it is your efforts, encouragement, and determination that made this research successful.

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**ABSTRACT**

The study examined the influence of the 4Ps (product, pricing, promotion, place) of marketing strategies on the sales performance of round potato produce under the moderating role of farmers’ marketing skills in the Njombe region. The study used Resource-based view (RBV) theory to highlights the need of utilizing internal resources in performance improvement. A multi-stage sampling method was used to purposively select the areas with the highest round potato yields while a simple random sampling provided a sample size of 260 respondents. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and observations, and then analysed using content analysis, descriptive statistics, multiple regression and hierarchical regression analysis. The study uncovered that farmer encounter difficulties in establishing prices that respond to market needs, this was due to fluctuating market demands for the round potato produce. Multiple regression analysis and hierarchical regression results indicated that promotion and pricing significantly influenced the sales performance of round potatoes, while place and product were positive but not significant. The study concluded that only promotion and pricing marketing strategies were effective enough to improve farmers’ skills and promoted the round potato sales performance. The study recommends that the policymakers should establish policies that help farmers to sell round potato at an appropriate price. Moreover, for ensuring reliable round potato distribution, the government should strengthen the transportation infrastructures.

***Keywords:*** *4Ps of marketing strategies, round potato sales performance, marketing skills.*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

CERTIFICATION ii

COPYRIGHT iii

DECLARATION iv

DEDICATION v

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT vi

ABSTRACT vii

LIST OF TABLES xv

LIST OF FIGURES xvi

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS xiii

CHAPTER ONE 1

INTRODUCTION 1

1.1 Chapter Overview 1

1.2 Background to the Study Problem 1

1.3 Statement of the Research Problem 8

1.4 The objectives of the study 10

1.4.1 The general objectives 10

1.4.2 Specific Objectives of the Study 10

1.5 Research Questions 11

1.6 Research Hypotheses 11

1.7 Significance of the Study 12

1.7.1 The Practical Significance 12

1.7.2 Theoretical Significance 13

1.7.3 Methodological Significance 13

1.7.4 Policy Significance 13

1.8 The Scope of the Study 14

1.9 The Organization of the Study 14

CHAPTER TWO 16

LITERATURE REVIEW 16

2.1 Chapter Overview 16

2.2 Definition of Operational Terms 16

2.2.1 Marketing Strategy 16

2.2.2 Sales Performance 17

2.2.3 4Ps of Marketing Strategies 17

2.2.4 Product Strategies 18

2.2.5 Pricing Strategy 19

2.2.6 Promotion Strategy 19

2.2.7 Place/Distribution Strategies 20

2.2.8 Marketing Skills 20

2.3 Theoretical Literature Review: the Resource-Based View (RBV)

Theory 21

2.3.1 Use of RBV Theory in Marketing Strategies Studies 23

2.3.2 Strengths of the RBV Theory 25

2.3.3 Weaknesses of RBV Theory 26

2.3.4 Theoretical Gaps 27

2.4 Empirical Literature Review on Marketing Strategies and Sales

Performance 28

2.4.1 The Influence of Marketing Strategies on Sales Performance 28

2.4.2 Studies on Round Potato Produce 33

2.4.3 The influence of Moderating Variables between Marketing Strategies and Sales Performance 38

2.5 The Study Gaps 41

2.5.1 Contextual Gaps 41

2.5.2 Empirical Gaps 42

2.5.3 Theoretical Gaps 43

2.5.4 Methodology Gaps 43

2.5.5 Knowledge Gaps 44

2.5.6 Conceptual Framework 44

CHAPTER THREE 47

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 47

3.1 Chapter Overview 47

3.2 Research Philosophy 47

3.3 Research Approach 48

3.4 Research Design 48

3.5 The Study Area 49

3.6 Study Population 51

3.6.1 Sampling Design 51

3.6.2 Sample Size 52

3.7 Data and Collection Procedures 55

3.7.1 Primary Data 55

3.7.2 Data Collection Techniques 55

3.7.3 Data Cleaning and Processing 57

3.8 Data Analysis 57

3.8.1 Qualitative Data Analysis 58

3.8.2 Quantitative Data Analysis 59

3.8.3 Ordinary Regression Analysis 59

3.8.3.1 Moderation of Marketing Skills 60

3.8.3.2 Testing of Multiple Regression Assumptions 60

3.8.3.3 Durbin Watson Measure for Autocorrelation 60

3.8.3.4 Test for Multicollinearity 61

3.8.3.5 The -Pagan Test of Heteroscedasticity 61

3.8.3.6 Outlier Test Using Mahalanobis Distance 61

3.8.3.7 Normality Test 62

3.9 Variables and Measurement 63

3.10 Data Validity and Reliability 66

3.10.1 Validity 66

3.10.2 Reliability 66

3.11 Ethical Considerations 67

CHAPTER FOUR 68

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION 68

4.1 Chapter Overview 68

4.2 Response Rate 68

4.3 Demographic Information 68

4.3.1 Age of Respondents 69

4.3.2 Sex of Respondents 70

4.3.3 Marital Status 71

4.3.4 Years of Participation in Potato Production 71

4.3.5 Level of Education 72

4.4 Relationship Between Marketing Strategies and Sales Performance Components 73

4.4.1 Relationship Between Product Strategy and Sales Performance 73

4.4.2 Relationship Between Pricing Strategy and Sales Performance 75

4.4.3 Relationship Between Place/Distribution Strategies and Sales

Performance 79

4.4.4 Relationship Between Promotion Strategies and Sales Performance 82

4.5 The Relationships Between Marketing Strategy, Sales Performance, and

the Moderation Effect of Marketing Skills 86

4.5.1 The Regression Analysis on the Relationship Between the Marketing Strategies and Sales Performance 86

4.5.2 The Moderating Influence of the Marketing Skills on the Impact of

Pricing Marketing Strategies on the Sales Performance of Round Potato Produce 90

4.5.3 The Moderating Influence of the Marketing Skills on the Impact of Product Marketing Strategies on the Sales Performance of Round Potato Produce 92

4.5.4 The Moderating Influence of the Marketing Skills on the Influence of Promotion Marketing Strategies on Sales Performance of Round Potato Produce 93

4.5.5 The Moderating Influence of the Marketing Skills on the Influence of Place/Distribution Marketing Strategies on Sales Performance of Round Potato Produce 94

4.5.6 The Moderating Influence of the Marketing Skills on the Impact of

Pricing, Product, Promotion, and Place/Distribution Marketing

Strategies on the sales Performance of Round Potato Produce 95

4.6 Interaction Effects Between the 4Ps of the Marketing Strategies, the Marketing Skills and Sales Performance of the Round Potato Produce in Njombe Region. 98

4.7 Hypotheses testing results 100

CHAPTER FIVE 106

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS 106

5.1 Chapter Overview 106

5.2 Summary of Main Findings 106

5.2.1 The Influence of Market Strategies on Sales Performance in the Round Potato Farmers 106

5.2.2 What is the Marketing Status of Round Potato Produce in the Njombe Region? (Findings from qualitative analysis 108

5.2.3 The Moderation Role of Farmer’s Marketing Skills on the Relationship Between Marketing Strategies and Sales Performance 110

5.3 Conclusion 111

5.4 Implication of the Study Findings 112

5.4.1 Practical Implications 112

5.4.1 Recommendations for farmers 113

5.4.2 Policy Implications 115

5.4.3 Theoretical Implications 117

5.7 Limitations of the Study 120

5.8 The Direction for Future Studies Study 120

REFERENCES 123

APPENDICES 143

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 3. 1: Sampling Sample Size 54

Table 3.2: Tests of Normality 63

Table 3.3: Variables and Measurement 65

Table 3.4: Reliability Test Results 67

Table 4.1: Response Rate 68

Table 4.2: Demographic Characteristics (n=260) 70

Table 4.3: Descriptive Analysis on the influence of Product Strategy on Sales Performance (n=260) 75

Table 4.4: Descriptive Statistics on the Relationships Between Pricing and

Sales 77

Table 4. 5: Place/Distribution Strategies and Sales Performance (n=260) 82

Table 4.6: Promotion Strategies and Sales Performance, n=260 85

Table 4.7: Ordinary Regression Model, Tolerance and VIF Coefficients 87

Table 4.8: Summary of Regression and Hierarchical Analysis 91

Table 4.9: Summary of Interaction Effects 100

Table 4.10: Hypotheses Testing 101

**LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 2.1: The Conceptual Framework 46

Figure 3.1: Sketched map of Njombe Region Indicating Selected Districts 51

Figure 3.2: Mahalanobis Distance Testing Results 62

Figure 4.1: The Truck Showing the Extraordinary Packaging (Lumbesa) of

Round Potato Bags Ready for Transportation 79

**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

4Ps Product, Pricing, Place, Promotion

IBM International Business Machines

OLS Ordinary Least Square

OUT The Open University of Tanzania

RAS Regional Administrative Secretary

RBV Resource-Based View Theory

SAGCOT Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania

SMEs Small and Medium Enterprises

SPSS Statistical Package for Social Sciences

SSA Sub-Saharan Africa

TAHA Tanzania Horticultural Association

URT United Republic of Tanzania

USAID United States Agency for International Development

# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

# 1.1 Chapter Overview

The study aimed to assess the influence of the 4Ps of marketing strategies on the sales performance of round potato produce under the moderating role of farmers’ marketing skills in Njombe Region, Tanzania. Chapter one presents the study’s background, the problem statement, the objectives, the research questions, and the research hypotheses. The chapter also describes the study's scope, significance, and structure.

# 1.2 Background to the Study Problem

According to Ndumia et al. (2020), market strategy is a technique that a firm applies to attain considerable sales through products, pricing promotion, distribution, and customer servicing strategies. Marketing of agricultural products is essential to developing and strengthening Tanzania's economy (Sanga et al., 2023).

Various scholars globally have reported the challenges facing round potato production, restricting its improved sales performance. Goffart et al. (2022) revealed that transaction costs were the primary barrier to round potato marketing in the United Kingdom, Belgium, France, Germany, and the Netherlands. Scott et al., (2013) mentioned the marketing challenge of round potatoes for developing countries in Central Africa. Milkias and Keba (2021) stated that the high marketing cost hindered the round potato marketing in Ethiopia. Bonabana-Wabbi et al. (2013) reported the challenges of round potato production in Uganda.

Round potato farmers in the Tanzania region operate in dynamic modern environments that is influenced by advancements in technologies, market trends, and consumer behaviour (Rahko, 2016). The contemporary environment forces farmers to use proactive techniques to overcome this situation (Huang et al., 2023). Despite the dynamic revelation of technological advancements, many farmers in Tanzania still face challenges in effectively marketing their produce (Omari, 2015). By improving their sales, farmers significantly enhance the profitability and sustainability of their operations (Mpogole, 2013). Mpogole et al. (2023) evidenced that poor marketing skills restrained farmers from commercializing the round potato produce in Southern highlands in Tanzania.

According to Mwatawala et al. (2020), round potatoes are the global most significant staple food after maize, rice and wheat in developing countries. Berney et al. (2010) evaluated the table stock in promoting round potatoes in the United States. The study concentrated on quality assurance mechanisms, grading, sizing, and postharvest activities. Moreover, Mickiewicz et al. (2022) analyzed the marketing for new potato varieties in Australia, but the study focused only on customer segmentation based on the quality of round potatoes. Franken et al. (2012) concentrated on crop production contracts and marketing strategies and not the 4Ps of marketing in the Netherlands. Singha (2019) evaluated the Bangladesh's production, storage, and marketing system of round potato produce. Kirsten et al. (2004) assessed the role of strategic alliance in enhancing the performance of round potato crops in Egypt. Reves et al. (2012) assessed the level of farmer's participation in round potato sales in Angola. Geremewe (2018) and Yohannes (2019) gauged Ethiopia's round potato supply chain and marketing performance factors. Woin et al. (2019) estimated the roles of processing techniques in promoting the marketing of round potatoes in Cameroon. Mosese (2020) studied the vertical price transmission of potato markets in South Africa. In Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), Eastern Africa produces 71% of the region's total potato output. Southern and West Africa produces 21% and 8% of the crop (Muthoni & Shimelis, 2023). Okello et al. (2015) appraised Sub-Saharan Africa’s potato production micro and meso marketing factors. Moreover, Hailemariam (2020) in Ethiopia, Cheruiyot, and Wambua (2016) focused on the 4Ps’ influence of the Kenyan postal bank performance.

Studies done in African countries such as Ngendahayo (2019) in Uganda, Ndumia et al. (2020) in Kenya, and Dzisi and Ofosu (2014) in Ghana focused on the influence of packaging, branding, products, and marketing strategies on sale performance of manufacturing firms, printing firm. These studies concentrated on one or two variables of the 4Ps. However, the studies were done in the service sector and bixa Orellana crops.

Maingi (2015) assessed the value chain around potato demand in East Africa. Bonabana et al. (2015) and Tatwangire and Nabukeera (2016 Kyomugisha et al. (2018) focused on round potato market access, value chain, post-harvest management, demand, and efficiency in Uganda. Kasina and Nderitu (2013), Korir (2018), and Wakaba et al. (2022) in Kenya determined the round potato smallholder’s policy role, market participation, and the influence of round potato on the generation of income in Kenya. The findings indicated that the studies that integrated the marketing strategies and round potato crop sales performances are missing.

Over 70% of Tanzanians are employed in smallholder agriculture, which provides 25% of the country's GDP (Sseguya et al., 2021). Agriculture is the prime income source for the most of the Tanzanians (Harris et al., 2024). Sales performance is central to the success of agribusiness enterprises (Bone, 2015). Marketing strategy is essential for promoting sales performance of agribusiness products (Yusi & Idris, 2018). According to Nkwabi et al. (2019), market accessibility was still a challenge in the sales of agribusiness products in Tanzania-a challenge caused by poor infrastructure and high competition. Wineman et al. (2020) also reported that long distances from the producing site to the market, stagnant productivity, and low income due to low sales of agricultural products are the contemporary challenges of the crop sector in Tanzania. Sanga et al. (2023) argued that pricing agricultural products is the major challenge that diminishes the sales performance of farm crops in Tanzania. In Tanzania, farmers fail to sell their produce at reasonable prices to achieve a higher sales performance because of inadequate capital to buy inputs and dependence on rainfed agriculture (Adam, 2023). Despite Sanga et al. (2023) mentioning the role of marketing mix variables in marketing agricultural products, the study did not analyze how they influence the marketing of the round potato sector in Tanzania.

The Njombe region was selected because 70% to 80% of the round potato output in Tanzania comes from the southern highlands of Tanzania (TAHA, 2018). The Tanzanian southern Highlands zone had an 88% of round potato production commercialized rate in 2023 (Mpogole et al., 2023). Round potatoes are known as food security crops grown in Tanzania southern highlands in these regions; Iringa, Njombe, Mbeya, and Songwe with rising urban demand, but still the round potato production and selling remain informal (TAHA, 2018). SAGCOT (2023) stated that potatoes rank among Tanzania's top ten staple food crops. Njombe region is the second-round potato producer, producing 19%, after the Mbeya region, which produce 49.8%. Iringa and Songwe regions produce 10.8% and 3.9% of round potatoes in Tanzania, respectively. Njombe region has been selected for the study because 90% of its population depends on agricultural production for survival (URT, 2022).

Studies done on round potato crops in Tanzania, such as Godfrey and Mwakaje (2012), Rahko (2012), Mpogole (2015), Mpogole et al. (2012), Daniel (2015) and Omari (2015) focused on selling volume pricing, varieties versus market preference, economic analysis and value chain of round potato, farmers behavior and the relation of production practices and marketing. Mende et al. (2016) focused on the profitability of round potatoes. Lumililo (2018) concentrated on the round potato commercialization determinants in the Rungwe district. Lyattu (2022) assessed the

impact of round potato production on smallholder farmers’ livelihoods in the Meru district. Mwatawala et al. (2020) examined the round potato productivity- profitability enhancement strategies. Ngozi and Feleke (2023) analyzed consortium agribusiness models' role in retaining youth in round potato farming enterprises. The empirical literature shows that none of the studies examined the role of 4Ps marketing strategies in promoting the sale performance of round potato farmers’ produce in Tanzania.

The literature shows that only few studies have examined the market strategies in Tanzania. For instance, Kessy (2019) studied how the performance of commercial banks was influence by marketing strategies in Tanzania. However, this study did not integrate marketing skills as a moderating variable, showing that there is less coverage in strategic marketing dynamics. However, the study was done in the banking sector and not in the round potato sector. Matiku and Magali (2021) assessed how the SACCOS clients perceived on the role of product, promotion, pricing and place marketing strategies in promoting the profitability of the Tanzanian savings and credits cooperative societies. However, the study was not done in the round potato sector. Moreover, the marketing skills moderating role was not considered. Mushi (2024) examined the how the SMEs performance in Tanzania was influenced by the digital marketing strategies. Again, the study was not done in the crop sector and role of marketing skills as a moderator variable was not measured.

The literature indicates that marketing studies use moderating roles such as managerial and marketing capabilities for micro and small businesses (Acquaah et al., 2015) and dysfunctional competition for Sub-Saharan African export performance (Boso et al., 2019). Other moderating variables include leadership and environment for sales strategy’s performance implications for firms in Greece (Panagopoulos et al., 2010). Cacciolatti (2016), who conducted his study in London, used marketing strategy, market orientation, and organizational power. The literature indicates that none of the previous studies applied marketing skills as the moderating role in market strategy studies. However, Kimosop et al. (2016) determined the moderation effects of demographic characteristics on strategic competences and the women-based entrepreneurial firms’ performance in Kenya. Moreover, studies in another sector, such as Johannesson and Jorgensen (2017), treated professional skills and employee education as moderators between entrepreneurial orientation and performance. Jaoua and Radouche (2014) used leadership skills to moderate variables in strategic management and global performance. Khan and Khan (2021) recognized the efficacy of marketing skills as a promoter of the performance of export marketing firms. Some studies, such as Manan et al. (2023) and Mardatillah et al. (2023), did not apply marketing skills as a moderating variable to recognize the role of marketing and sales skills in promoting sales performance.

This study applied the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, which asserts that a firm’s valuable and distinctive internal resources are the basis of its long-term competitive advantage (Olutola et al., 2023). The theory was proposed by Edith Penrose in 1959. However, it was developed by Wernerfelt (1984), who argued that disparities in firm resources are the foundation for comprehending and gaining competitive advantage. Barney (1991) established the theory by demonstrating value, rarity, imitable nature, and non-substitutability (VRIN) framework, specifying resources for RBV theory. RBV theory classifies resources into tangible and intangible resources (Ndirangu et al., 2023). This study classified the market strategies and marketing skills as intangible assets. Several studies assessed the role of marketing strategies on sales performance, such as Boso et al (2019), Cheruiyot and Wambua (2016), Cacciolatti (2016), Hailemariam (2020), Getachew (2022), Olawunmi and Clarke (2023), Gadisa et al. (2023) Mahadewi and Suasana (2023) used the RBV to assess the linkage between export marketing capabilities and export performance, competitive advantages mediation between the marketing strategy and performance, marketing communication on performance of sales.

Despite Resource-Based View (RBV) strength the firm performance variables, the studies linking both the 4Ps, sales performance, and the moderating role of marketing skills and Resource-Based View (RBV) relationship between 4Ps marketing strategies with the sales performance of round potato produce for farmers are missing (Cooper et al., 2023). Nevertheless, its significant weaknesses are its narrow practical application in some sectors, tautology, the paucity of qualitative research, and its concentration on Western-centric studies (Kruesi & Bazelmans, 2023). Therefore, this study applied marketing skills as a moderating variable between the 4Ps of the marketing strategies and sales performance of round potatoes in the Njombe region, Tanzania.

# 1.3 Statement of the Research Problem

The issue of marketing strategy has been of little concern to most agribusiness value chain participants in Tanzania due to a combination of factors, including limited research on the impact of marketing strategies on sales performance and systemic issues within the market (Mpogole et al., 2023). Kayunze et al. (2014) highlighted the lack of research on how marketing strategies influence agribusiness sales performance, leaving a significant gap in understanding and addressing these critical elements. Small-scale round potato producers, in particular, are often price takers in a market dominated by intermediaries who benefits from the market information imperfections (Adam, 2023). Therefore, farmers find themselves relying on middlemen for transportation and sales, due to the far location of market centres from farmers’ areas (Mpogole et al., 2023). This reliance reduces their profit margins and limits their control over pricing and market access (Mnukwa et al., 2023). This opportunistic behavior suppresses farm gate prices, as Mende et al. (2016) noted, thereby diminishing the profitability and sustainability of round potato farming. Furthermore, Nkwabi et al. (2019) explained that farmers sales performance of round potato is hindered by inadequate marketing skills and high transportation costs.

The contemporary challenges affecting the sales performance of agricultural products in Tanzania, including round potatoes, are well-documented by various studies (Mpogole et al., 2023). Wineman et al. (2020), Adam (2023), and Sanga et al. (2023) have all recognized the low sales of agricultural products as a persistent issue that hampers the growth and development of the crop sector. Although Sanga et al. (2023) mentioned the role of marketing mix variables in the marketing of agricultural products; their study did not examine how these marketing strategies specifically influenced the sales performance of the round potato sector.

The Tanzanian government reported significant price fluctuations for round potatoes, with prices declining by 3.9% in September 2023 and rising again in November 2023 (URT 2023). These fluctuations indicate a volatile market environment that complicates farmers' efforts to achieve consistent sales performance and profitability.. In Njombe region, where round potato farming is prevalent, several challenges impede the practical application of marketing strategies (Omari, 2015). Despite the region's substantial production volumes, with Njombe being the second leading potato-producing area in Tanzania, farmers still needed access to reliable market information, inadequate marketing infrastructure, and the dominance in manipulating prices (URT, 2022).

The absence of a coherent and strategic approach to marketing has left many farmers unable to promote their produce by setting competitive prices or reaching broader markets (Mnukwa et al., 2023). Data on potato production in the Njombe region highlights the region's potential, with substantial quantities produced annually. However, this potential was not fully realized without effective marketing strategies, and farmers struggled to maximize their returns (URT, 2022). Therefore, the study aimed to fill the gap on price fluctuations by assessing the influence of 4Ps marketing strategies on the sales performance of round potato produce in Tanzania, specifically focusing on the moderating role of marketing skills.

# 1.4 The objectives of the study

The section comprises the general and specific objectives of the study.

# The general objectives

The study's general objective is to assess the influence of the 4Ps marketing strategies on the sales performance of round potato produce with the moderating role of farmers’ marketing skills in Njombe Region, Tanzania.

# 1.4.2 Specific Objectives of the Study

Specifically, the study intended to attain the following objectives

* + - 1. To assess the influence of farmer's product strategies on the sales performance of round potatoes in the Njombe region.
      2. To examine the influence of farmers' pricing strategies on the sales performance of round potato produce in the Njombe region.
      3. To assess the influence of farmers' promotion strategies on round potato production sales performance in the Njombe region.
      4. To assess the influence of place/distribution strategies on round potato produce sales performance in Njombe region
      5. To explore the status of the round potato marketing in the Njombe region.
      6. To assess the moderating role of marketing skills on the relationship between 4Ps of farmers' marketing strategies and round potato produce sales performance in the Njombe region.

# 1.5 Research Questions

The following research question guided the study.

i. What is the status of round potato produce marketing strategies application in the Njombe region?

# 1.6 Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study:

* + 1. H1: Product strategies positively influenced the sales performance of round potato produce in the Njombe region.
    2. H2: Pricing strategies positively influenced round potato produce sales performance in the Njombe region.
    3. H3: The promotional strategies positively influenced round potato produce sales performance in the Njombe region.
    4. H4: Place/Distribution strategies positively influenced round potato produce sales performance in the Njombe region.
    5. H5: Marketing skills positively moderated the relationships between product strategies and round potato produce sales performance in the Njombe region.
    6. H6: Marketing skills positively moderated the relationships between pricing strategies and round potato produce sales performance in the Njombe region.
    7. H7: Marketing skills positively moderated the relationships between promotional strategies and round potato produce sales performance in the Njombe region.
    8. H8: Marketing skills positively moderate the relationships between place strategies and round potato produce sales performance in the Njombe region.

# 1.7 Significance of the Study

This section explains the study’s theoretical, methodological, policy and practical

significance.

**1.7.1 The Practical Significance**

The practical significance of this study lies in its potential to provide useful insights for farmers, policymakers, and stakeholders in the agribusiness sector and for farmers in the Njombe region. The findings highlight critical areas where improvements in marketing strategies directly enhance sales performance. By understanding the deficiencies in current products, pricing, promotion, and distribution strategies, farmers can adopt more effective practices. For example, addressing packaging issues and learning better pricing techniques can help farmers negotiate fair prices and reduce reliance on intermediaries, thus increasing their profitability. Additionally, the study is helpful because it emphasizes the usage of social media and digital marketing tools to a broader audience. Policymakers can use these insights to develop training programs that enhance farmers' marketing skills, thereby improving the overall marketability of round potato produce.

**1.7.2 Theoretical Significance**

The application of RBV highlights the importance of intangible assets, such as marketing skills and techniques, in realizing competitive advantage and enhancing sales performance. The current study validates the RBV theory by demonstrating that internal resources, particularly marketing skills, play a moderating role in the effectiveness of marketing strategies. The findings extend the theory's applicability to traditional businesses and small-scale agricultural enterprises. This integration offers a comprehensive framework for future research on the role of marketing strategies in agribusiness, inspiring researchers to explore new horizons in their field.

**1.7.3 Methodological Significance**

Methodologically, the study offers a comprehensive and integrated approach through a mixed- method design. Moreover, the use of hierarchical regression analysis evaluates the interlinkages between marketing strategies and sales performance, moderated by marketing skills, demonstrates a robust analytical approach. This technique presents a detailed study of how different marketing strategies interact with farmers' skills to impact sales performance. The qualitative content analysis also provides deeper insights into farmers' experiences and challenges, enriching the quantitative findings. This mixed-method approach served as a model for future research in similar contexts, offering a comprehensive way to study.

**1.7.4 Policy Significance**

The study suggests an amendment of the current marketing strategies of round potato farmers in the Njombe region to promote optimal sales performance. Therefore, there is a need for policies that support the development and implementation of more effective marketing strategies. Policymakers should consider establishing training programs to enhance farmers' marketing skills, particularly in digital marketing, pricing strategies, and efficient distribution methods. Additionally, policies that improve market accessibility, such as infrastructure development to reduce transportation costs and enhance market reach, would be beneficial. By addressing these areas, policymakers can create a more supportive environment for farmers, leading to improved sales performance and overall economic development in the region.

# 1.8 The Scope of the Study

The study focused on the influence of the 4Ps of marketing strategies, also known as the 4Ps of marketing mix, namely product, pricing, place, and promotion, on the sales performance of round potato produce. The study also assessed how the farmers’ marketing skills moderated the product, pricing, place, and promotion relationship. The scope of the study was the Southern Highlands Zone, particularly the Njombe region, due to the largest round potatoes production of about 19% of the round potato crop in Tanzania (URT, 2022).

# 1.9 The Organization of the Study

The five chapter’s organization of this thesis is as follows: Chapter one articulates the study’s background then narrates the statement of the study’s problem. It further outlines the objectives, significance, scope of coverage, and the report’s structure. Chapter two reviews the agricultural produce marketing strategies and elucidates the small-scale farmers' constraints issues theoretically and empirically. The chapter defines key research terms and synthesizes the study gaps, and the depict the conceptual figure. Chapter three describes how the study was conducted. It entails the study’s methodological concepts. It covers research philosophy, study design, approach, study population, data related collection techniques, data analysis models, findings’ validity, research instrument’s reliability, measurement of study’s variables and ethical issues considerations. Chapter four largely presents and discusses the major findings on how the marketing strategies affect the sales performance of round potato produce under the moderating role of farmers’ marketing skills in the Njombe region. Lastly, chapter five comprises the findings summary. It concludes the study and offers specific recommendations, implications to policy, theoretical contributions, research limitations, and future studies’ directions.

# CHAPTER TWO

# LITERATURE REVIEW

# 2.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter reviews the literature on the influence of the 4Ps of marketing strategies on the sales performance of round potato produce under the moderating role of farmers’ marketing skills in the Njombe Region. The literature discusses round potato production in Tanzania and the adoption of marketing strategies, the meaning of operational terms, theoretical framework, and empirical studies on round potato marketing strategies, as well as sales performance of round potato produce under the moderating role of farmers’ marketing skills as the burning issue among marketing researchers. The chapter also presents the research gaps, conceptual framework, and a summary of the cited empirical studies.

# 2.2 Definition of Operational Terms

The following section presents the definition of the key terms and concepts used in the study. Defining key terms enhances understanding and clarifying the terms and concepts used in this study.

# 2.2.1 Marketing Strategy

Marketing strategy is the mean that the business firm uses to accomplish its profitability goals (Varadarajan, 2020). Bintu (2017) asserted that marketing strategy comprises the set of marketing tools used by firms to attain the marketing objectives in the target market. According to Owomoyela et al*.* (2013), who argued that marketing strategy establishes, builds, defends, and maintains firms’ competitive advantages. The researcher hypothesized that farmers’ use of the marketing strategy promotes attainment of higher sales performance of the round potato produce, hence the adopted definition of the study by Varadarajan (2020).

# 2.2.2 Sales Performance

Performance articulates the desired achievement attained after performing a certain task or work by an individual (Njomo & Margaret, 2016). Oktaviyanti et al. (2015) contextualized the performance by considering the process and the quantification of outputs when the work is performed. Yusi and Idris (2018) defined sales performance as the company’s sales achievement level measured in the form of results or performance outcome, sales performance is measured using marketing share and profitability. Rotich, 2016 defined sales performance as the sales volume made during a predefined duration, in comparison to the predetermined sales levels. Asih et al. (2023) used the sales volume to explain the performance of the snack. This study adopted the definition of Yusi and Idris (2018), who defined sales performance by considering profitability. The definition has been adopted because the round potato production in the Njombe region was assumed to be sustainable when the farmers could cover the production, marketing, and other costs.

# 4Ps of Marketing Strategies

The 4Ps of marketing strategies or Marketing mix are strategies that promote sales performance, and all begin with a P (Malau, 2020). Kanoga (2016) considered the product to comprise the first P. This P can be described by feature, design and by looking the competitors of the product. The price is the second P. This P articulates the different techniques in setting the price of the product that determines sales, profit margin, and shares of the market (Kotler, 2015). The third P is the promotion. Promotion provides awareness to the customer that a certain product exists (Joshi et al., 2016). The fourth P is place, sometimes also known as the distribution strategies. This P asserts that the place where the product is located and the way to distribute it determine the sales of the product (Bintu, 2017). Adopting the “4 Ps” is paramount for achieving high sales performance and maximizing profitability (Yusi & Idris, 2018).

Wed (2016) contends that achievement of the firm’s marketing objectives cannot be detached with well-planned the marketing strategies. Hence, the firm should set adequate resource to enhance the implementation of the marketing strategies. Preminus and Wilson (2017) revealed that the relationship between promotion and business performance is significant but inversely related. Revino et al. (2015), in their study on the influence of promotional mix on organizational sales performance, revealed that proper promotion application increases market share and improves organizational growth and profit in the face of intense competition. The following sections highlight the contents of each P.

# 2.2.4 Product Strategies

Product strategies involve all techniques that make the product viable and appealing (Kanoga, 2016). Kotler (2015) asserted that a product attracts a market attention and hence the customers usually acquire, use, or consume it to satisfy their needs or wants. Consumers usually buy products frequently by considering their planning and compare product brands based on quality prices or styles. Therefore, viability of the product can be explained in terms of sizes, quality, brand name design or features (Kanoga, 2016). Njomo and Magret (2016) stated that labeling information, physical appearance and packaging pattern, may motivate a customer to purchase a product. Product influences significantly impact business performance (De Toni et al*.,* 2017). Thus, making the product appealing to the customers requires strategic packaging. Packaging is a fundamental marketing strategy that glamorizes products to attract consumers' consideration. Therefore, the packaging reflects the cost or pricing of the product (Sajuyigbe et al*.,* 2013). Kotler (2015) asserted that packaging enhances presentation, protection, containment and product delivery. Packaging promotes well product transportation, storage and selling. Hence, packaging is an inevitable communication tool influencing buying behavior and enhancing business performance (Muthengi, 2015).

# 2.2.5 Pricing Strategy

Kotler (2015) asserted that price the product’s cost of production, promotion, delivering, and profit attained by the firm. Hence, good pricing of the product is vital for ensuring the profitability and sustainability of the product (De Toni et al*.,* 2017). The pricing of the product reflects the monetary value on the exchange between the product and money (Bintu, 2017). Price and business performance have a positive and significant relationship (Muchiri, 2016).

# 2.2.6 Promotion Strategy

According to Joshi et al. (2016), promotion facilitates the process of market exchange, since it communicates on the existence of the products with buyers, market stakeholders and the public. Cheruiyot and Wambua (2016) recognized the role of promotion in marketing mix since it delivers the product information and promotes the product brand. Kotler (2015) stressed that promotion entails personal selling, advertising, public relations, sales promotion, and marketing the product directly to consumers. The promotion strategies promote the profitability and products’ sale performance (Cheruiyoti & Wambua (2016); Uloko and Ikwue, 2022).

# 2.2.7 Place/Distribution Strategies

Place strategies emphasize that the product sale point should be accessibility, reachable and properly displayed (Bintu, 2017). Teece (2023) articulated that a product place should be convenient reachable by all groups of customers and this is essential for a product re-purchase. Kotler (2015) stressed that place strategies also entail the distribution strategies. The product place should provide enough space for product display. Moreover, the distribution strategies should promote easily availability of product. The regular availability of the product should be considered as essential components of the place and distribution strategies. The well-planned place strategies promote the availability of the products to both retailers and wholesalers (Nirusa, 2017). Uyanik (2023) agrees that place significantly and positively affects business performance.

# 2.2.8 Marketing Skills

Khan and Khan (2021) defined marketing skills as an intangible asset that facilitates efficient market segmentation and targeting and the creation of innovative marketing management procedures. Marketing skills entail skills in marketing planning, segment and targeting, marketing management, marketing strategies, and marketing processes (Kotler, 2015). Johlke (2006) associated marketing skills with the job performance of the salesperson. The findings indicated no influence of marketing skills on the salesperson's job performance. Some studies, such as Johannesson and Jorgensen (2017), assessed professional skills and employee education that moderated the effect of entrepreneurial orientation and the performance of firms.

However, the farmers' marketing skills significantly influence the effectiveness of the 4Ps of the marketing strategy. Skilled farmers can better implement these strategies by understanding market dynamics, negotiating prices effectively, and utilizing modern promotional tools like social media (Mardatillah et al., 2023). Thus, marketing skills play a moderating role, enhancing the impact of the 4Ps on sales performance by enabling farmers to execute these strategies more effectively.

# 2.3 Theoretical Literature Review: the Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory

This study applied the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory. The RBV theory is a framework for strategic management proposed by Edith Penrose in 1959. The theory asserts that a company's valuable and distinctive internal resources are the basis of its long-term competitive advantage. The RBV emphasizes the significance of firm-specific resources and competencies as the main forces behind sustained market success (Olutola et al., 2023).

The (RBV) theory was particularly relevant for this study because it provides a robust framework for understanding how round potato farmers' internal resources and capabilities, particularly the 4Ps of marketing strategies and marketing skills, enhanced the sales performance of round potato produce. By applying the RBV theory, this study recognized the critical role of marketing strategies (the 4Ps: product, price, promotion, and place) and marketing skills as intangible resources that drive competitive advantage and improve sales performance. Previous research has demonstrated the effectiveness of the RBV in analyzing various aspects of firm performance across different sectors and regions, highlighting its strength in providing insights into the strategic management of resources. Therefore, in this study, the RBV theory explains the strategic potential of marketing resources in the unique context of round potato marketing in the Njombe region.

Wernerfelt (1984) contributed significantly to the RBV by arguing that disparities in firm resources are the foundation for comprehending and gaining competitive advantage. By offering a thorough framework for assessing resources according to their value, rarity, imitable nature, and non- substitutability (VRIN), Barney (1991) built on these concepts. VRIN framework evaluates the business resources' strategic potential and competitive advantage (Parboteeah & El-Farr, 2023).

This study contributes to the Resource Based View (RBV) theory by covering its application to the smallholder agricultural setting among round potato farmers in the Njombe region. The study shows that intangible resources such as marketing strategies (the 4Ps) and farmers’ marketing skills can serve as key internal resources or drivers that can be used to improve the sales performance, since internal capabilities are important for competitive advantage (Ndirangu et al., 2023).

# 2.3.1 Use of RBV Theory in Marketing Strategies Studies

Boso et al (2019) used the RBV to assess how export marketing capabilities influence export performance in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, the study did not concentrate on marketing strategies. Cheruiyot et al. (2019) analyzed how value chain policy moderated Kenya's marketing mix strategies and sales performance. However, the role of marketing skills was beyond the scope of the study. Cacciolatti (2016) examined the marketing capabilities of firm performance in London. In this study, marketing strategies were considered to have a moderating role. Hailemariam (2020) assessed how the marketing strategies impacted the sales performance of Ethiopia's small and medium-sized enterprises. However, the study concentrated on SMEs and not farmers.

Similarly, Gadisa et al. (2023) studied how competitive advantages mediated the marketing strategy and performance of firms in Ethiopia. Nevertheless, the role of marketing skills was not under focus. In the same vein, Getachew (2022), using RBV theory, analyzed the influence of marketing communication on sales performance in Ethiopia. Nonetheless, the study did not concentrate on marketing strategies and skills. Chatterjee et al. (2022), using RBV in India, investigated the mediating influence of customer relationship management on strategic sales. However, the study was not conducted on the crop sector, and the role of marketing skills was not. Most concentrate on the firm level of examination (Kozlenkova et al., 2014).

Varadarajan (2020) assessed the relationship between customer information resources, marketing strategy, and business performance. However, the role of marketing skills was not covered. Baker and Sinkula (2005) linked the environmental marketing strategy and performance of firms in the United States. However, the current study integrates the 4Ps product marketing strategies and sales performance of round potatoes in the Njombe district with the moderating role of marketing skills. Uloko and Ikwue (2022), using RBV and regression analysis, indicated that product strategy negatively and insignificantly influenced the sales performance of small-scale enterprises in Nigeria. However, the findings revealed that pricing and promotion strategies positively and significantly influenced sales performance. However, the agribusiness enterprises, including the round potato products, were not included in the analysis. The nature of the perishability of round potato products might produce contradicting findings.

Olawunmi and Clarke (2023) found that United Kingdom fish farming companies could boost sales by branding their products, selling products at premium prices, fostering customer confidence, and using premium packaging to keep fish fresher for a longer time. Using the RBV theory, the marketing strategies were treated as strategic resources to achieve higher fish sales. However, the study was conducted in fishing farming instead of the round potato business. Moreover, it is possible to get different results since the survey was done in developing countries. Mahadewi and Suasana (2023) revealed that competitive advantage had a positive and significant effect on the marketing performance of the Indonesian Florist industry. However, the study did assess the influence of marketing strategies on the sales performance of round potatoes. Moreover, the study linked the variables of entrepreneurship orientation, market orientation, and marketing performance.

# 2.3.2 Strengths of the RBV Theory

According to Cooper et al. (2023), RBV is still a significant theory that gives insights into fostering firm-specific performance outcomes such as internationalization, innovation, product development, business model, organizational performance, financial performance, sustainability, and performance. Resource-based theory is a widely employed theoretical framework to study the impact of marketing on enterprise performance (Uyanik, 2023).

Cooper et al. (2023) acknowledged technological resources as necessary-the potential technological resources foster the marketing strategies and, hence, the firm's business performance. RBV recognizes the dynamism of the resources as one of its strengths. This dynamism aligns with the current corporate environment, emphasizing the value of creativity and adaptation for sustained success (Huang et al., 2023). The evolution of the dynamic capabilities’ framework is a strength for the original RBV because it accommodates the changes and uncertainties in the corporate environment. The RBV emphasizes the significance of static resources and skills that support a company's competitive advantage. However, it could only partially reflect how dynamic marketplaces are and how businesses must constantly change (Teece, 2023).

The Resource-Based View (RBV) is a strong theory when applied to marketing strategies since it emphasizes utilizing firm-specific resources and competencies to establish a long-term competitive advantage. RBV helps businesses match marketing initiatives with 4Ps strengths by identifying and using distinctive internal assets like customer connections, brand recognition, or proprietary technology. With this customized strategy, businesses may stand out from the competition, connect with their target consumer, and secure a unique place in the market. Additionally, RBV directs the strategic allocation of resources, helping businesses focus on the areas that most directly contribute to their competitive edge and saving money on marketing expenditures (Uyanik, 2023).

# 2.3.3 Weaknesses of RBV Theory

Some limitations of RBV theory include limited RBV’s practical application, its tautology, the paucity of qualitative research, the narrow application in some sectors, and its concentration on Western-centric studies **(**Kruesi & Bazelmans, 2023). RBV is accused of offering little instructions on how to turn its ideas into workable tactics. Although it emphasizes the value of firm-specific resources, it does not provide managers with a methodical way to find, create, or use them efficiently in a competitive market (Barney, 1991). RBV frequently ignores the impact of external elements, including market circumstances, industry dynamics, and macroeconomic developments, and concentrates primarily on internal issues. Some who disagree contend that a thorough comprehension of competitive advantage necessitates striking a balance between internal capabilities and adaptability to external change (Otache et al., 2023).

There are difficulties in identifying and valuing resources, mainly intangible ones like tacit knowledge or corporate culture. Intangible resources are more difficult to quantify and assess than tangible assets, which makes it challenging for managers to use the RBV framework successfully in real-world situations **(**Kruesi & Bazelmans, 2023).

# 2.3.4 Theoretical Gaps

The theoretical gaps for the RBV theory within the context of round potato crop farmers' strategies are presented. Based on Zhou et al. (2017), the theoretical gaps cover what was missing in the previous study and include using the earlier theory on contemporary contexts. Therefore, the theoretical gaps in RBV theory are explained in the following settings. Firstly, according to Mpogole et al. (2023) the absence of studies explicitly concentrating on the strategies of round potato crop farmers within the RBV framework represents a crucial gap. Understanding how these farmers' unique resources and capabilities contribute to their competitive advantage and subsequently influence sales performance is imperative for fostering the growth of the agricultural sector (Mpogole et al., 2023). Secondly, the theoretical gap is related to the absence of the studies that explain how market skills depicts the relationship between the marketing strategies and sales performance in the context of the round potato sector (Jaoua & Radouche, 2014). Market skills, encompassing elements like sales, promotion, product, pricing, and communication skills, play a pivotal role in shaping the outcomes of marketing strategies (Khan & Khan, 2021). This study assessed the efficiency of marketing skills and market responsiveness in the marketing performance of emerging market exporting firms in advanced markets, not round potato produce.

Finally, most studies that focused on the 4Ps of marketing strategies, such as Adeniran et al. (2016), Hailemariam (2020) Cheruiyot and Wambua (2016), were conducted outside Tanzania. Hence, the researcher was motivated to apply the theory to the context-specific aspects of the Tanzanian agricultural landscape. The socio-economic and environmental factors unique to Tanzania significantly impact the applicability and effectiveness of RBV-based strategies for round potato farmers. Bridging these theoretical gaps contributes to the academic understanding of RBV in the agricultural sector. It holds practical implications for developing targeted and culturally relevant marketing strategies to enhance sales performance among round potato crop farmers in Tanzania.

The resource-based view (RBV) theory was used in this study to predict the formulated hypotheses by emphasizing that marketing skills as the internal resources and capabilities, are key drivers of competitive advantage and performance (Hailemariam, 2020). In this situation, enhancement of sales performance of round potato produce in Njombe region is done by valuing marketing resources which are product, pricing, promotion, and place strategies.

# 2.4 Empirical Literature Review on Marketing Strategies and Sales Performance

Studies have established relationships between marketing strategies and performance (Owomoyela et al., 2013; Bintu, 2017). These have been done in the round potato crops, other agricultural produce, and other sectors. The empirical literature review is presented in the following sections.

# 2.4.1 The Influence of Marketing Strategies on Sales Performance

Yusi and Idris (2018), using path analysis, revealed that the marketing mix, competitive advantage, and marketing environment positively and significantly promoted the sales performance of the agribusiness enterprises in Indonesia. The sales performance was measured using profitability and market share. However, the study was not confined on agribusiness enterprises and not specifically on the round potato sector. Moreover, the study was not only conducted outside Tanzania but it did not assess how the market skills moderated the relationship between the marketing strategies and sales performance.

Muthengi (2015) examined the influence of marketing strategies on bank performance in Kenya. Multiple regression analysis was adopted to test the relationship between the explained and the explanatory variables. The findings revealed a positive relationship between the marketing strategies variables and the bank's returns. However, the findings of the banks' marketing strategies cannot be generalized to the round potato crop. Ngendahayo (2019) assessed the influence of marketing strategies and sales performance of steel manufacturing firms in Uganda using regression analysis. The findings demonstrated that packaging design increased product recognition and visibility. However, the study did not assess how the pricing, promotion, and distribution affected the performance of the steel business.

Ndumia et al. (2020) assessed how marketing strategy influenced the sales performance of commercial Kenyan printing firms using regression analysis and 135 respondents. The findings unveiled that printing firms experienced poor branding, product design, and specifications quality. However, the study did not examine how pricing and promotion strategies influenced sales performance.

Dzisi and Ofosu (2014) weighed the effects of marketing strategies on SMEs' performance in Ghana using 900 respondents and regression analysis. The study uncovered that branding, drivers of the firm’s positioning, new products, and services development contributed to the performance of SMEs in Ghana. However, the pricing, distribution, and promotion strategies were not under study.

Hailemariam (2020) associated SME service sector marketing strategy and sales performance in Ethiopia using regression analysis and 163 respondents. The findings indicated that product, place, and promotion significantly influenced the sales performance of the SME service sector businesses. However, the findings suggested that the place did not substantially affect the sales performance of the service sector SMEs. Moreover, the study was not conducted on the round potato crop, and the role of marketing skills as moderating was not included.

Franken et al. (2012) measured the influence of crop production contracts as marketing strategies to improve sales performance in the Netherlands using factor analysis. The findings bared that attitude towards risk, product proportion of corn, soybean sales, futures, forward production, options, contracts, contract complementarity, and substitutability influence sales performance. However, the study did not specify the influence of the 4Ps of marketing strategies on sales performance.

Bintu (2017), in Nigeria, conducted a study to examine the strategic influence of promotional mix on organization sales turnover in the face of strong competitors. The sample size included 257 respondents, who were workers and customers. The researcher used the descriptive analysis and regression model. The findings revealed that the strategic promotional mix influenced sales turnover by a slight 25%, while other variables not included in the analysis. Nevertheless, the study was conducted in small businesses and round potato crop.

Adeniran et al. (2016) studied the association between marketing, mix, and customer decision among Indonesian travel agents located in Palembang region. The study assessed how the 4Ps: product, promotion, price and, place influenced the travel agent’s customer decision. The study used a sample size 215 customers. Pearson correlation, and regression analysis analyzed the data. The results exposed that travel agents’ decisions were only determined by the price. The study concluded that pricing and product strategies were the significant factors influencing sales performance. However, the study was done on travel agents and round potato crops.

Ebitu (2016) assessed how the performance of Nigerian small and medium enterprises were determined by marketing communication, product quality and relationship marketing. The sample size included 240 respondents. The data obtained was analyzed using Pearson product-moment correlation. The findings revealed that product quality strategy and relationship marketing strategy significantly impacted profitability and increased the market share of SMEs in the study area. Nonetheless, the study involved only one P, which is product.

Antunes et al. (2013) assessed how the performance of Portuguese SMEs were influenced by international marketing strategy and national culture. Multiple regression analysis revealed that companies adapt their products to meet the target market's needs and demand, thus increasing customer satisfaction and overall performance. However, they focused only on international marketing strategies.

Nirusa (2017) investigated the impact of marketing strategy on performance of SME businesses Oluyole region in Ibadan, Nigeria. One hundred three respondents participated in the study. Correlation analysis and multiple regression technique revealed that place product, price and promotion significantly promoted the business performance in terms of expansion, market share, profitability and return on investment. Again, the study was done in SMEs instead of round potato crops.

Okyere et al. (2011) studied how the sales performance of Vodaphone Telecom in Ghana was determined by marketing communication. The research used 40 derived from sales recovery of Vodaphone. The descriptive analysis was used. Also, the multiple regression analysis determined how the dependent variable was influenced by independent variable. The results revealed a positive and significant relationship between advertising budgets, sales promotion and total sales. However, the study focused on marketing communication, not marketing strategy.

De Toni et al. (2017) examined the effect of marketing strategies on the corporate performance of estate surveying and valuation firms in Brazil. The findings from multiple regression analysis revealed a positive relationship between the approaches adopted and the corporate performance of the firms. Nevertheless, the study concentrated on corporate firms and not on potato farmers. Kamau (2013) examined the effect of marketing strategy on sales performance in supermarkets in Kakuru town in Kenya. The sample size was 256 respondents, and correlation analysis revealed that product differentiation strategy positively correlates with sales performance. However, the study concentrated on supermarkets and not round potato crops.

The empirical literature led to the formulation of the following hypotheses:

H1: Product strategies positively influenced the sales performance of round potato produce in the Njombe region.

H2: Pricing strategies positively influenced the sales performance of round potato produce in the Njombe region.

H3: The promotional strategies positively influenced round potato produce sales performance in the Njombe region.

H4: Place/Distribution strategies positively influenced the sales performance of round potato produce in the Njombe region.

# 2.4.2 Studies on Round Potato Produce

Prakash (2010) focused on the challenges developing countries’ round potato value chain, particularly in India. The study applied the Mann-Whitney U test data analysis technique. The findings disclosed that market integration caused a higher cost transactions and supply risk. The findings further bared that round potatoes were marketed through uneven chains because the marketing lacked coordination and exchanges of information. Secondly, there were not adequate production strategies. Moreover, yields were insufficient for marketing. Thirdly, the prices offered at the farm point were not negotiated by farmers. However, the study did not focus on the 4Ps of the marketing strategies.

Akter et al*.* (2016) analysed the potato value chain in Bogra District in Bangladesh. A sample size of 120 value chain actors were interviewed. The findings through linear regression analysis revealed a significant difference in gross margin (GM) by market players, where farmers received the lowest, and wholesalers received the most important share of GM, especially for those who used to transport round potatoes to urban markets. Wholesalers were more informed about market prices and trends than farmers and had significant capital to run the business. Regression model analysis revealed that parameters of selling volumes and selling price were critical factors in farmers' determination of GM. These studies, however, did not consider the influence of the marketing strategies on the sales performance of round potato marketing.

Makoni et al. (2013) examined the impact of value chain constraints on potato farmers in Nyanga District in Zimbabwe. The sample size was 432 respondents. Correlation analysis of data revealed that constraints faced by the smallholder round potato farmers include production and marketing constraints, such as limited access to input and scarcity of marketing information. The farmers could not access other lucrative markets as they did not have the means to transport their produce to markets in different regions of the country. However, the study did not concentrate on the marketing strategies.

Rahko (2016) examined the value chain of potatoes in Tanzania and factors that prevent the industry’s development and evaluated potato policies affecting the potato value chain. A sample size of 114 respondents participated in the study, and thematic data analysis revealed that bad seed quality is most likely the most significant challenge on the production part. However, the study did not analyze the influence of marketing strategies on sales performance. Mende et al. (2014) studied the contribution of round potato production to household income in Mbeya and Makete Districts; a sample of 233 respondents participated. Using regression analysis, the findings indicated that round potato income positively and significantly contributed to the increase in household income. However, nothing was reported on the influence of marketing strategies on the sales performance of the round potato produce.

Mwakaje and Nyunza (2012) analyzed the benefits obtained by players in the potato marketing chain in Tanzania and the factors affecting crop profitability. Samples of 120 farmers were selected randomly for interview. Regression analysis revealed that selling volumes (p=0.005 and selling price (p=0.01) and selling price were crucial factors in determining Gross Margin by farmers.

Omari (2015) assessed the production and marketing of round potatoes in the Babati and Mbulu districts in Tanzania using linear regression analysis and 120 farmers. The findings indicated poor farming practices, management, and long marketing channels lead to low production and returns for round potato farmers in the Mbulu and Babati districts. The influence of marketing strategies on the round potato crop sales performance was not considered.

Kyomugisha et al. (2018) evaluated marketing efficiency, potato market access, and on-farm value addition in Uganda using 180 farmers and descriptive analysis. The findings revealed that round potato farmers’ market access was positively and significantly influenced by the size of owned land, contract with buyers, number of forked hoes owned, and types of variety grown. The concentration on marketing strategies on sales performance of the round potato crop was ignored. Mickiewicz et al. (2022) estimated the market analysis for new potato varieties using factor analysis. The findings showed that the segmentation of consumers and the quality of potatoes influenced the sales of the round potato crops. However, the study did not analyze how the pricing and distribution strategies influenced the sales performance of the round potato crop.

Using regression and thematic analysis, Lumililo (2018) determined the factors influencing the commercialization of round potato production in the Rungwe district of Tanzania. The findings indicated that socio-economic factors, commercialization farmers’ perception, and biological and environmental factors negatively influenced the commercialization of round potato production. However, the influence of marketing strategy was not covered.

Yohannes (2019) assessed the round potato supply chain determining factors in Ethiopia by using correlation and regression analysis in Ethiopia. The findings demonstrated that the round potato supply chain production was determined by employing Transportation, market information effectiveness, and market channels. However, nothing was reported on the influence of market strategies on the sales performance of the round potato crop. Okello et al. (2015) appraised the micro and medium factors affecting potato production and marketing in Sub-Saharan Africa using regression analysis. The results showed that unceasing cropping, declining land size, poor soil fertility, and shifting cultivation reduced the production and marketing of round potato crops in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, the assessment of the market strategy's influence on sales performance was beyond the scope of the study.

Woin et al. (2019) examined the influence of processing techniques on the sales performance of round potatoes in Cameroon by using descriptive and content analysis. The findings disclosed that round potato tuber quality affected the quality and sales performance of the round potato produce. However, the influence of marketing strategies on sales of the round potato produce was not covered.

Mosese (2020) analyzed the influence of the vertical pricing approach on the marketing of round potatoes using regression analysis. The findings revealed selling using retail was more responsive to farmers than other pricing techniques. The study, however, did not examine the influence of product, place, and promotion strategies on sales performance. Using thematic analysis, Singha (2019) rated the production, marketing approach, and storage of round potatoes in Bangladesh. The findings confirmed that inadequate storage facilities, poor transportation system, lack of knowledge, capital, and intermediaries syndicate encouraged inefficient potato marketing in Bangladesh. Nevertheless, the influence of marketing strategies on the sales performance of round potatoes was not under assessment.

Using content analysis, Lyatuu (2022) checked out the smallholder farmers’ round potato production on their welfare in district of Meru in Tanzania. The findings exhibited increased income, cultivation area, and farming capital. The study, however, did not assess how the marketing strategies influenced the sales performance of the round potato crop.

# 2.4.3 The influence of Moderating Variables between Marketing Strategies and Sales Performance

Acquaah et al. (2015) assessed how managerial and marketing capabilities moderated the relationship between competitive strategy and performance of micro and small businesses in Ghana using regression analysis and 581 respondents. The findings revealed that managerial and marketing capabilities moderated the relationship between competitive strategy and business performance in Ghana. Boso et al. (2019) examined how dysfunctional competition moderated the relationship between the role of export marketing capabilities and export performance in Sub-Saharan Africa using confirmatory factor analysis. The findings disclosed that market responsiveness influenced export performance when product innovation skills existed. However, marketing skills were not used as a moderating variable. Panagopoulos et al. (2010) assessed the performance brought by sales strategy at the moderating role of leadership and environment in Greece using confirmatory factor analysis. The findings showed that sales strategy positively influenced performance. However, customer solution orientation, transformational leadership, and demand uncertainty moderated the relationship. However, the marketing skills were not used as a moderator.

Cacciolatti (2016) evaluated how the marketing strategy, market orientation, and organization moderated the relationship between marketing capabilities and firm performance in London using confirmatory factor analysis. The results showed that strategy, market orientation, and organizational power moderated the relationship between marketing capability and organizational performance relationship. However, the study did not use marketing skills as a moderator. Chatterjee et al. (2022) assessed how big data analytics influenced strategic sales performance under the mediating role of customer relationship management capability and moderating influence leadership support in India. The study revealed that the strategic sales performance of big data analytics was positively influenced by customer relationship management capability, while leadership support moderated the strategic sales performance. Nonetheless, marketing skills were not used as a moderating variable.

Using logistic regression and structural equation modelling, Cacciolatti et al. (2016) determined how the marketing strategy, market orientation, and organizational power moderated the relationship between marketing capabilities and firm performance in Europe. The findings highlighted that marketing capabilities positively influenced the firm performance. Moreover, marketing strategy, market orientation, and organizational power moderated the relationship between the marketing capabilities and performance of the firm. However, the marketing was not used as a moderator. The literature indicates that the studies did not use marketing skills as a moderator between market strategies and sales performance. Significant role of marketing skills as moderators in the relationship between marketing strategies and firm performance has been further discussed by the following studies. Khan et al. (2021) examined emerging market exporting firms and found that marketing skills, when mediated by market responsiveness, positively influenced marketing performance. Mostafa and Kasamani (2022) explored how sales people's skills, including salesmanship, technical knowledge, and emotional intelligence, affected selling behaviors. They discovered that the use of social media moderated this relationship, enhancing the impact of these skills on adaptive and cross up-selling behaviors. Additionally, Omar (2016) investigated the moderating roles of selling skills and knowledge on customer satisfaction and organizational performance. The study proposed that components like salesmanship skills, technical knowledge, and interpersonal skills significantly influence organizational outcomes, especially when aligned with a market driven approach. The literature indicates no study has used a marketing skill as moderator, despite these studies collectively affirm that marketing skills not only directly impact performance but also enhance the effectiveness of marketing strategies. Moreover, despite Omar (2016) using the selling skills as moderator is not the same as market skills because market skills comprise the variety range of skills such as selling, advertising, promotion, product, place and distribution skills (Kotler, 2015).

The following hypotheses are formulated based on the moderating variables of the marketing skills:

1. H5: Marketing skills positively moderated the relationships between product strategies and the sales performance of round potato produce in the Njombe region.
2. H6: Marketing skills positively moderated the relationships between pricing strategies and the sales performance of round potato produce in the Njombe region.
3. H7: Marketing skills positively moderated the relationships between promotional strategies and the sales performance of round potato produce in the Njombe region.
4. H8: Marketing skills positively moderated the relationships between place/distribution strategies and the sales performance of round potato produce in the Njombe region.

# 2.5 The Study Gaps

This section presents the study's contextual, empirical, theoretical, and methodological gaps.

# 2.5.1 Contextual Gaps

Most studies on the 4Ps of marketing strategies: Product, Price, Place, and Promotion have been conducted outside Tanzania. Moreover, the studies such as those by Mpogole (2015), Omari (2015), Mende et al. (2016), Lyattu (2022) and Feleke (2023) do not concentrate specifically on the 4Ps of marketing strategies. Instead, these studies focus on aspects like production, profitability, the value chain, or general marketing performance rather than concentrating on the individual components of the 4Ps. Furthermore, many of these studies address only one or two elements of the 4Ps rather than comprehensively analyzing all components of four Ps. This study evaluated the impact of the 4Ps of product marketing strategies on the sales performance of round potato produce, focusing on the moderating role of farmers’ marketing skills.

# 2.5.2 Empirical Gaps

The studies done on round potato crops both outside Tanzania and Tanzania, such as Okello et al. (2015), Tatwangire and Nabukeera (2016 Kyomugisha et al. (2018), Ethiopia Woin et al. (2019) Mosese (2020), Wakaba et al. (2022), Lyattu (2022), Mwatawala et al. (2020) Ngozi and Feleke (2023) focused on one or two variables of the 4Ps. Those who used the 4Ps, such as Hailemariam (2020) and Cheruiyot and Wambua (2016), focused on the 4Ps in the service sector and bixa Orellana crops. Moreover, the studies did not integrate marketing skills as a moderating variable.

The literature indicates that marketing studies use different moderating roles, such as managerial and marketing capabilities (Acquaah et al., 2015) and dysfunctional competition (Boso et al., 2019). Also, the studies use leadership and environment for sales strategies and selling skills as moderating variables (Panagopoulos et al., 2010; Omar, 2016). Marketing strategy, market orientation, and organizational power were also used as moderators (Cacciolatti, 2016). Kimosop et al. (2016) confirmed demographic characteristics to moderate strategic capabilities and performance. The literature indicates that none of the previous studies used marketing skills to moderate marketing strategy and sales performance. Johannesson and Jorgensen (2017) considered professional skills and employee education as moderators between entrepreneurial orientation and performance. Jaoua and Radouche (2014) used leadership skills as a moderating variable of strategic management and global performance. Khan and Khan (2021) recognized the efficacy of marketing skills as a promoter of the performance of export marketing firms. Moreover, some studies, such as Manan et al. (2023) and Mardatillah et al. (2023), asserted that sales skills promoted sales performance, although they did not consider marketing skills as a moderating variable.

# 2.5.3 Theoretical Gaps

The research highlights the theoretical gaps in the RBV theory for round potato crop farmers' marketing strategies. The lack of studies examining marketing strategies as a resource to improve sales performance for round potato farmers is the unique gap in RBV theory application for farmers in Tanzania (Omari, 2015). The study also considers market skills as a moderating variable between marketing strategies and performance without specifying the sales performance (Johannesson & Jorgensen, 2017). The study applied RBV by considering unique social, economic, and environmental factors influencing farmers' achievements in Tanzania. Hence, applications of RBV enlighten farmers on the marketing strategies they can use to improve the round potato sales performance. The study depicted the role of imparting the farmer's marketing skills to enhance crop potato sales performance.

# 2.5.4 Methodology Gaps

The methodological gaps in the existing literature are evident in the absence of studies that have explored the role of marketing skills as a moderator between product, pricing, place, and distribution strategies and sales performance. This study marks a pioneering effort to fill this void by introducing marketing skills as a moderating variable, shedding light on its potential influence on the relationship between key marketing strategies and sales performance. Additionally, the methodological gap uses a mixed-method design, which prior studies have not used. By employing a mixed method approach, this study innovatively combines quantitative and qualitative methodologies to provide a more comprehensive understanding of round potato marketing strategies, marketing strategies and sales performance, allowing for a deeper exploration of the complex relationships between marketing strategies and sales performance that previous studies did not manage. In doing so, this research addresses the identified gaps in the literature and contributes methodological advancements to the field by leveraging a more holistic research design.

# 

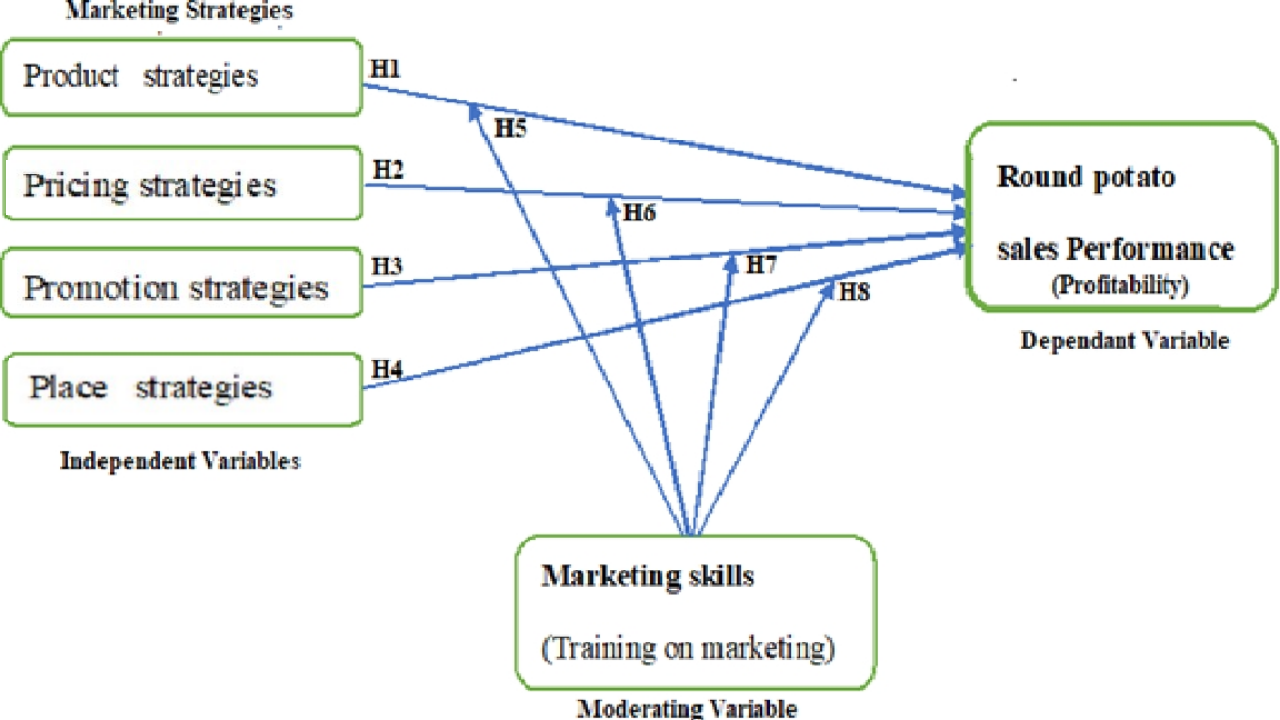
# 2.5.5 Knowledge Gaps

The Tanzanian agricultural sector, particularly for round potato crops, must understand the 4Ps of marketing, particularly in marketing strategies and sales performance. Existing studies have mainly focused on isolated aspects of marketing and agriculture without analyzing all four components. This study aims to fill this gap by applying the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory to Tanzanian round potato farmers' unique socio-economic and environmental contexts. The study also employs a mixed-method approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative data, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how marketing skills can influence the relationship between the 4Ps of marketing and sales performance.

# 2.5.6 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is the foundation for the entire research project as a map that indicates conceptual relationships among variables and guides research (Engelbart, 2023). The success of round potato production in the market hinges on a complex interplay of independent variables: Product, pricing, place, and promotion strategies and their collective influence on sales performance (Yusi & Idris, 2018). The quality, packaging, and branding decisions are integrated into product strategies to improve consumer preferences. In contrast, pricing strategies arouse attention and sensitivity for a customer to buy the round potato products. Promotion strategies create awareness of the presence of the round potato crop in the market product (Cheruiyot & Wambua, 2016). Place strategies focuses on distribution channels and accessibility, enhancing consumer reach. The harmonious integration of these strategies is pivotal, as it directly correlates with the market's response to round potato production, ultimately influencing sales performance (Malau, 2020). Profitability is the measure of revenue minus cost (Jayathilaka, 2020). Profitability metrics offer valuable insights into the efficiency and effectiveness of sales activities, making them essential for a holistic assessment of sales performance (Dyhdalewicz, 2015). A strategic alignment of these variables is critical to meeting consumer demands, maximizing product availability, and fostering positive market outcomes for round potato producers (Baratovich, 2024. Profitability can be used to indicate sales performance (Sam & Hoshino, 2013). By examining profitability alongside sales metrics, firms can better understand the impact of their sales strategies on their overall financial success.

As a moderating variable, marketing skills promote the proficiency, expertise, and knowledge of individuals or teams responsible for executing marketing strategies (Khan & Khan, 2021). Marketing skills are assumed to positively increase the relationship strengths between the independent variables (product, pricing, place, and promotion strategies) and the dependent variable (sales performance). Figure 2.1 depicts the relationship between marketing strategies, marketing skills, and round potato crop sales performance.



**Figure 2.1: The Conceptual Framework**

**Source:** Compiled from empirical literature review (2024)

# CHAPTER THREE

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

# 3.1 Chapter Overview

The chapter narrates the research methodological terminologies. The chapter comprises thesis’s philosophy, guiding approach, convenient design, and justification of study location. It also outlines procedure of the sampling, data gathering and interpretation progression, variables reliable patterns, and reliability of research instruments. Ethical issues also covered as important methodological aspects.

# 3.2 Research Philosophy

This study is relied on the philosophical assumption that guides qualitative and quantitative pattern that is mixed-method research approaches; hence, it applies the pragmatism philosophy. Pragmatism combines the quantitative philosophy of positivism from specific objective 1 of the study and the qualitative philosophy of interpretivism from specific objective 2 to 6 of the study (Saunders et al., 2019). Pragmatism emphasizes actual results and consequences in the real world as the standard by which concepts and deeds should be judged. It promotes a dynamic approach to decision-making by emphasizing problem-solving, open-mindedness, and empirical testing (Allemang et al., 2022). Pragmatism helps to steer clear of inflexible ideologies and toward flexible, context-dependent answers (Allmark & Machaczek, 2018).

Pragmatism multidisciplinary approach promotes a desirable comprehension of problems together with valuable foundation for negotiating uncertainty group decision-making, range of viewpoints and challenging circumstances (Saunders et al., 2019). Pragmatism provides a practical and adaptable framework for people and communities and tackles real-world challenges (Gobo, 2023).

# 3.3 Research Approach

The study applied the abduction approach, which combines induction and deduction is supported by its exceptional capacity to address intricate issues and produce tenable answers when ambiguity predominates (Barrett & Younas, 2024). Abduction determined the most likely explanation for a collection of observed occurrences, as opposed to deduction, which begins with presumptions, and induction, which draws generalizations from particular observations (Sántha & Gyeszli, 2022). This method is especially useful in complex or unclear settings, enabling heuristic and creative thinking to investigate several possibilities (Saunders et al., 2019). Abduction considers the inherent ambiguity and imperfect knowledge frequently present in real-world situations. Abduction encourages flexibility and creativity by prioritizing the creation of hypotheses that most closely align with the data, making it a vital tool for handling complex problems in various fields (Osman et al., 2018).

# 3.4 Research Design

This study used mixed-method design procedures for collecting and analyzing data. The mixed methods integrated the quantitative and qualitative designs. According to Hirose and Creswell (2023), mixed designs are procedures for collecting and analyzing data by mixing quantitative and qualitative data in a single study. Quantitative and qualitative data (numerical, text, and images) were collected. The process involved data gathering by integrating qualitative and quantitative data concurrently. Combining both forms of data provide a better understanding of the research problem than quantitative or qualitative data by itself (McBeath, 2023).

On the other hand, the explanatory research design provided inferences about the causal relationships between and among the variables. Hence, a reasonable level of explanation between independent and dependent variables and the moderating variable was achieved using a descriptive design such as regression data analysis. This study aimed to identify the relationship between marketing mix variables (Product, pricing, promotion and place/distribution, the 4Ps, and sales performance in the round potato value chain). The study also assessed the moderation role of marketing skills. The study used the cross-sectional design, where data were collected simultaneously due to financial constraints.

# 3.5 The Study Area

In Tanzania, round potato farming is grown in high altitude areas. The major highly production areas are near Mount Kilimanjaro, close to Usambara mountains, Eastern zone mountainous area, and the Southern Highlands. However, most potato production in Tanzania is from the southern highlands’ zones, including the Iringa, Mbeya, Songwe, and Njombe regions (SAGCOT, 2023). Wanging’ombe, Ludewa, Njombe, and Makete were the Njombe Region districts purposively selected based on their relatively high level of potato yields (URT, 2022). Njombe region is the second largest producer of round potatoes, 19% production of the round potato crop in Tanzania is from this region. Also, 90% of the people in the Njombe region rely on agricultural output, the area has been chosen for the research because it had the challenge of inadequate infrastructure, which constrained its economic activities, including agriculture (URT, 2022). Hence, the study examined how the sales performance of round potato produce was affected by the implementation of marketing strategies. The first producer of round potatoes in Tanzania is Mbeya rural district. The study was conducted in the Njombe region, the second-largest producer of round potatoes because most existing research has focused on the Mbeya region, which is the leading producer. Njombe, a peripheral and relatively infancy region (established in 2012) with less advanced infrastructure, has yet to receive adequate attention from scholars despite its significant production potential; by evaluating how the 4Ps of marketing strategies, when moderated by the marketing skills of local farmers, influence the sales performance of round potatoes in Njombe. By exploring the relationship between marketing strategies, the moderating role of marketing skills, and sales performance, the study sought to provide a deeper understanding of how marketing strategies could be optimized to enhance sales, particularly in regions still in the developmental phase.

The districts of Ludewa, Njombe, Makete, and Wanging’ombe forms the Njombe region with a total area of 24,994 km2. According to the census of 2023, is about 889,946; Males = 420,533 Females= 469,413) (URT; 2024). The region has a robust workforce, and the area's people are economically active and involved with the cultivation of crops such as round potatoes, maize and beans, timber and electric poles production, livestock keeping, and (URT, 2024). The location of the study area is presented in Figure 3.1.

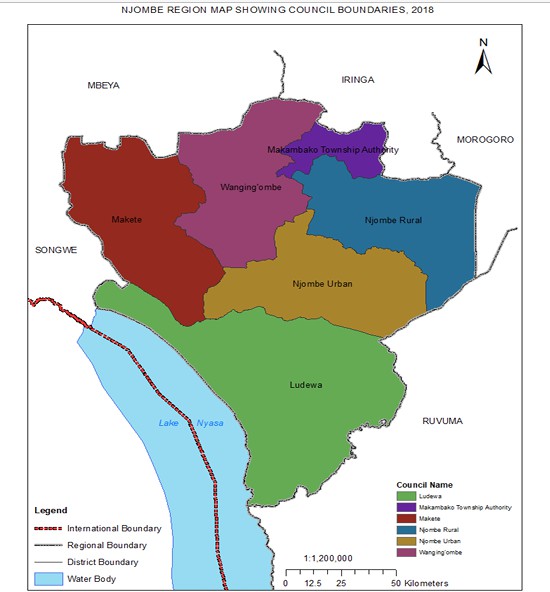


Figure 3.1: Sketched map of Njombe Region Indicating Selected Districts

**Source:** URT (2018)

# 3.6 Study Population

According to Singh and Masuku (2014), a population is the entire set of relevant units or elements that a researcher tends to study. The target population of this study was round potato farmers. The total population of round potato farmers in the four districts of the Njombe region in 2022 was 2373 (Njombe Regional Secretariat, 2022)

# 3.6.1 Sampling Design

Sampling is the process of selecting a suitable or representative part of a population to determine the parameters or characteristics of the whole population (Singh & Masuku, 2014). The study was conducted in all four districts of the Njombe region: Wanging’ombe, Makete, Njombe, and Ludewa. Multi-stage sampling was used to select divisions, wards, and villages with the highest round potato yields. The round potato farmers were selected by simple random sampling among the towns with high round potato yields (Table 3.1). Because the number of farmers differed from one district to the other, the proportionate sampling technique was applied to compute the number of farmers participating in the study. After computing the sample size, the list of round potato farmers was obtained from village executive officers for the selected villages. Each round potato farmer was given a number on paper through simple random sampling. Then, the papers were folded and mixed up. Then, the researcher randomly selected the farmers who participated in the study. Through this exercise, farmers were chosen until the intended sample size was obtained.

# 3.6.2 Sample Size

The sample size required for a particular study is usually difficult to establish. However, there must be a rational sample size estimation method (Lund, 2023). According to Hair et al. (2018), the alternative way of estimating the required sample size is by comparing the number of variables in the multivariate model and the number of cases per variable. The more the variables included in the analysis, the larger the sample size required.

Based on Cochran (1963), the sample size (n) was calculated according to the formula: The sample size (n) is calculated according to the formula:

n=

Where: z = 1.96 for a confidence level (α) of 95%, p = proportion (expressed as a decimal), N = population size, e = margin of error.

z = 1.96, p = 0.25, N = 2373, e = 0.05

n = [1.962 \* 0.25 \* (1 - 0.25) / 0.052] / [1 + (1.962 \* 0.25 \* (1 - 0.25) / (0.052 \* 2373))]

n = 384.16 / 1.1619 = 330.634

n ≈ 331

The sample size (with finite population correction) is equal to 331. Cochran (1963) presented the proportionate sample size for each district in Table 3.1. The sample size was calculated as a base to 331 as follows:

1. In Njombe district, the sample size was 620/2373 x311=87
2. In Ludewa district, the sample size was 520/2373 x331=72
3. In the Wanging’ombe district, the sample size was 580/2373 x331=81
4. In Makete district, the sample size was 653/2373 x331=91

Table 3. 1: Sampling Sample Size

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Districts in Njombe Region | Total number of wards | Wards grown  round potato | Wards selected | Total number of villages | Village selected | Total number of farmers | Sample size |
| Njombe | 12 | 7 | Kichiwa | 6 | 2 (Kichiwa  & Maduma) | 620 | 86 |
| Ludewa | 26 | 3 | Madope | 3 | 2 (madope  & Lusitu) | 520 | 73 |
| Wanging’ombe | 21 | 5 | Makoga | 7 | 2 (Makoga & N’ganda | 580 | 81 |
| Makete | 23 | 21 | Kitulo | 3 | 2 (Ujuni &  Nkenja) | 653 | 91 |
| TOTAL | 82 | 36 |  | 19 |  | 2373 | 331 |

**Source**: Njombe Region Statistics from the office of RAS, Njombe (2022)

# 3.7 Data and Collection Procedures

Data collection is a methodological process of gathering and analyzing specific information to find solutions to relevant questions and evaluate the results. The underlying need for data collection is to capture quality evidence that seeks to answer the research questions posed (Bhandari et al., 2023). Two types of data were collected in this research: primary and secondary data.

# 3.7.1 Primary Data

Primary data also refers to data collected by the researcher through a methodology designed to answer their specific research question. The strengths of primary data lie in its freshness, relevance, and direct applicability to the specific research objectives. Since primary data is collected firsthand for a particular study, it reflects the most current and accurate information available, minimizing the risk of outdated or irrelevant findings (Ajayi et al., 2023).

This data type is tailored to the researcher's unique needs and research questions, focusing precisely on the variables of interest. Additionally, primary data provides greater control over the research process, from the design of data collection instruments to selecting participants or sources. The researcher employs various methods, such as surveys, interviews, or experiments, to gather data that aligns with the study's objectives. It is possible to enhance the reliability and validity of the findings since the researcher has complete control (Bhandari et al., 2023).

# 3.7.2 Data Collection Techniques

The following section presents the data collection techniques.

1. **Questionnaire**

The study used a questionnaire to collect data. A questionnaire is a structured research instrument with questions designed to gather information or opinions from individuals or respondents for the quantitative studies. The questionnaire aimed to systematically collect data on specific variables or topics by asking participants standardized questions. This process involved collecting data through instruments consisting of a series of questions. They were administered to a large number of respondents, and they were cost-effective. This technique made it easy to visualize and chapter the information related to the specific objectives (Lund, 2023). The questionnaire consisted of closed and open-ended questions. The survey strategy was applied, and the researcher distributed the questionnaires to potato farmers. The questionnaire is presented in Appendix 1.

1. In-depth interview

This study applied the in-depth interview to explore the current status of round potatoes in the Njombe region. An in-depth interview is a qualitative research technique that usually entails a thorough one-on-one discussion between a participant and a researcher (Roller, 2020). This method investigated and fully comprehended the participant's ideas, viewpoints, and experiences of the round potato marketing in Njombe region. In-depth interviews facilitated adaptability and the generation of fresh ideas during the discussion. Open-ended questions enabled participants to express their opinions freely. This approach yielded rich and valuable information based on individual experiences. The interviews assisted the researcher in getting a deep understanding of the current status of round potato marketing in the Njombe region.

1. Observation

This study also used the observation method to collect data. In the observational data-collecting method, researchers observe and document the field's events, behaviours, or phenomena without changing or modifying the data (Pope & Allen, 2020). Observational methods offered a chance to examine the marketing of round potato crops in Njombe regional environments. It enabled a more realistic and sound portrayal of actual circumstances. The method has portrayed real-world round potato marketing situations. Furthermore, it provided a complete picture of how round potato crops were marketed in the region.

# 3.7.3 Data Cleaning and Processing

Data cleaning involves locating and fixing a dataset's mistakes, inconsistencies, and inaccuracies to guarantee its dependability and quality (Costanzo, 2023). Firstly, the data were screened to check the missing values in the questionnaire. Since the researcher introduced the research objectives well and the enumerators were adequately trained, the researcher did not find the missing values in the data. Then, the researcher reviewed the dataset to find missing data. The researcher used the Mahalanobis distance to verify if there were outliers. Unfortunately, no outliers were found through this technique. The data collected from the survey questionnaires were coded and entered into the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 21.0).

# 3.8 Data Analysis

The study incorporates both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. The analysis is comprehensive and complements the weaknesses of each method.

# 3.8.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis involved content and pictorial analysis, enabling the researcher to interpret the more significant meaning of the findings. The observed data were analyzed using content analysis. The analysis involved examining textual and visual data to find the contents' themes, patterns, and meanings, to obtain comprehensive knowledge, researchers first become familiar with the data. Themes were designed based on 4Ps of marketing strategies (Product, price, promotion, and place/distribution). A visual representation of a truck carrying round potatoes in Figure 4.1 show the exact product packaging challenges that farmers experience during round potato selling. The image highlights the common practice of transporting produce over long distances, however, without proper packaging. As Rabitti et al. (2024) recommended, the information with similar themes was manually coded. Then, findings with recurrent ideas and patterns were categorized. Qualitative content analysis assisted the researcher in exploring deeply the existing marketing circumstance of the round potato in the Njombe region. The qualitative content analysis gave the reseacher room to clarify concepts and situations. Hence, the researcher supplemented the information from the qualitative analysis with quantitative findings. The combination of qualitative and quantitative findings enhanced the holistic conclusion on the influence of the 4Ps of marketing strategies on the sale performance of the round potato produce under the moderating role of farmers' marketing skills in the Njombe region.

# 3.8.2 Quantitative Data Analysis

The researcher used frequencies, mean, variance, and standard deviation to analyze descriptive data. Inferential analysis was applied to the Ordinary Least Square (OLS) for the multiple and hierarchical regression analyses.

# 3.8.3 Ordinary Regression Analysis

Hair et al. (2018) approved that the sample size of 50 individuals or above permits the conduction of the regression analysis. The researcher analyzed how independent variables (Product, Price, Promotion, and Placement) were correlated with the dependent variable of sales performance. The hierarchical regression model also analyzed the moderation role of marketing skills in modelling the relationship between the independent (X) and the dependent variable (Y). According to Hayes (2018), the moderation variable can either weaken or strengthen the relationship between the two variables; the effect of X on Y is conditional to the moderating variables. Based on Njonjo (2022), the multiple regression equation was presented as follows;

Where;

Y= Sales performance

β0= Profitability

βn = coefficients of independent variables

Xi=independent variables (X1=Product, X2=price, X3=promotion, and X4=place/distribution strategies)

𝜇 = Error term

# 3.8.3.1 Moderation of Marketing Skills

The moderating role equation due to marketing skills (M) was written as follows:

Where;

Y represents sales Performance measured by the profitability

M represent Marketing skills (moderator)

Xi​×M represents Interaction terms that test moderation effects

X1, X2, X3, and X4 represent the independent variables (Product, Pricing, Promotion Place/Distribution strategies, respectively).

represents Direct effects of each of the 4Ps

represents independent contribution of marketing skills

represents moderation effects showing how marketing skills strengthen or weaken the influence of each strategy on sales performance, μ represents the error term.

# 3.8.3.2 Testing of Multiple Regression Assumptions

Since multiple regressions were used in this study for data analysis, it was necessary to test the assumptions involved in regression analysis, including linearity, normality, outliers, autocorrelation, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity.

# 3.8.3.3 Durbin Watson Measure for Autocorrelation

As Ghasemi et al. (2023) recommended, the findings from the regression analysis (Appendix 3) indicate that the Durbin-Watson coefficients range between 1.5 and 2.5, proving no autocorrelation in the data. The Durbin-Watson values were supposed to range beyond the specified ranges to certify the presence of autocorrelating.

# 3.8.3.4 Test for Multicollinearity

To ascertain the nonexistence of multicollinearity, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values should be greater than one, and the tolerance level should be less than 0.1 (Kyriazos & Poga, 2023). The findings from Appendix 3 signify that the values of VIF and tolerance level do not prove the presence of multicollinearity problems.

# 3.8.3.5 The -Pagan Test of Heteroscedasticity

The presence of heteroscedasticity was measured by using the White test. The study usually involves calculating the value of Breusch-Pagan. The study wanted to prove the absence of heteroscedasticity. The Breusch-Pagan coefficient's P value should be greater than 0.05. The study results mean that the model demonstrates homoscedasticity ([Zach](https://www.statology.org/author/admin/), 2020). The Breusch-Pagan coefficient is calculated by computing the R-square value and the sample size. From the analysis: R-Square 0.792, the value of Breusch-Pagan= 0.822x260 =213.72, which lies at 0.100 significance, proving no heteroscedasticity problem in the model.

# 3.8.3.6 Outlier Test Using Mahalanobis Distance

The researcher used Mahalanobis distance to test the presence of outliers. The values of Mahalanobis distance were calculated through linear regression analysis in SPSS within the dataset as recommended by Rafiq et al. (2023). The data set values (Figure 3.2) indicated no data has a p-value of less than 0.001. Therefore, the analysis confirmed there was no outlier in the data set.

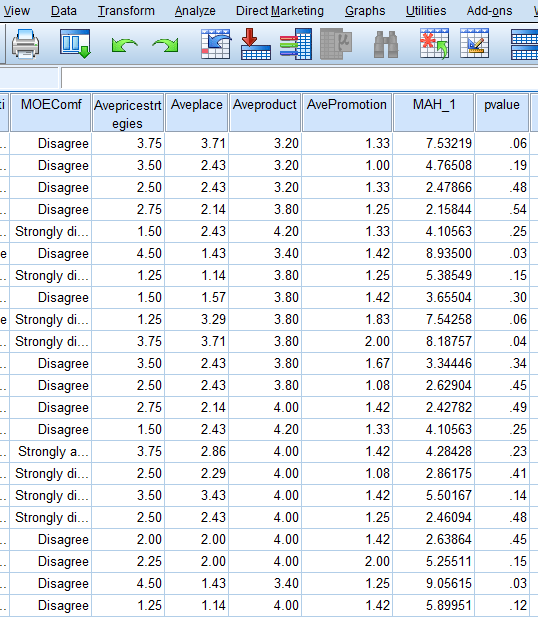


Figure 3.2: Mahalanobis Distance Testing Results

**Source:** Field Data (2022)

# 3.8.3.7 Normality Test

The normality test was done using the values Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk, as recommended by Piçarra and Glocker (2023). The findings of the two coefficients have significant levels of 0.000, indicating that the dataset was normally distributed.

Table 3.2: Tests of Normality

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Average pricing strategies | Kolmogorov-Smirnova | | | Shapiro-Wilk | | |
|  | Statistic | df | Sig. | Statistic | df | Sig. |
| My market strategy influences sales volume. | 1.00 | .513 | 8 | .000 | .418 | 8 | .000 |
| 1.25 | .508 | 28 | .000 | .333 | 28 | .000 |
| 1.50 | .513 | 29 | .000 | .430 | 29 | .000 |
| 1.75 | .435 | 7 | .000 | .600 | 7 | .000 |
| 2.00 | .386 | 25 | .000 | .689 | 25 | .000 |
|  | 2.25 | .272 | 19 | .001 | .802 | 19 | .001 |
|  | 2.50 | .398 | 35 | .000 | .611 | 35 | .000 |
|  | 2.75 | .346 | 22 | .000 | .753 | 22 | .000 |
|  | 3.00 | .338 | 12 | .000 | .779 | 12 | .005 |
|  | 3.25 | .349 | 5 | .046 | .771 | 5 | .046 |
|  | 3.50 | .360 | 28 | .000 | .736 | 28 | .000 |
|  | 3.75 | .397 | 22 | .000 | .692 | 22 | .000 |
|  | 4.50 | .462 | 16 | .000 | .546 | 16 | .000 |

1. Lilliefors Significance Correction
2. Market strategy influences sales volume to be constant when Average pricing strategies = 4.00. It has been omitted.
3. Market strategy influences sales volume to be constant when Average pricing strategies = 4.25. It has been omitted.
4. Market strategy influences sales volume to be constant when average pricing strategies = 4.75. It has been omitted.

**Source:** Field Data (2022)

# 3.9 Variables and Measurement

This section presents the variables for measuring the relationship between marketing strategies and sales performance and the moderating role of marketing skills. The variables of the Likert scale follow the ranges provided by Joshi et al. (2015), which has five scales: Strongly Disagree (SD = 1), Disagree (D = 2), Neutral (N = 3), Agree (A = 4) and Strongly Agree (SA = 5).

Table 3.3: Variables and Measurement

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **Independent variable** | **Sub –variables** | **Source** | **Measureme nt scale** | **Model used** |
| 1 | Product strategy | Quality in production packaging, storage, sorting | Boso et al., 2019; De Toni et al., 2017). | Ordinal\* | Multiple Regression  Analysis |
| 2 | Pricing strategy | Cost plus pricing, lower price selling,  intermediaries price based; negotiation price based | Adeniran et al. (2016; Akter et al*.* (2016) Nirusa, 2017) | Ordinal | Multiple Regression analysis |
| 3 | Promotion strategy | Personal selling, Advertising on radio, blog, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter (X), TV, newspaper, influential people, posters, small gift giving, selling at a low  price, good customer care | Revino et al., 2015; Preminus and Wilson, 2017; Hailemariam, 2020) | Ordinal | Multiple Regression analysis |
| 3 | Place/distribution strategy | Farm located near the road, self-transportation, selling to retailers, wholesalers, intermediaries, institutions,  royal customers | Adeniran et al., 2016; Nirusa*,* 2017;  Hailemariam, 2020) | Ordinal | Multiple Regression analysis |
| 4 | Marketing skills | skills in marketing planning, segment and targeting, marketing management, marketing strategies, marketing  processes | Khan and Khan (2021) | Ordinal | Hierarchical regression analysis |
| 5 | Sales Performance | Profitability | Ebitu, 2016; Yusi and Idris, 2018) | Ordinal | Multiple  Regression analysis |

**\*** Five Likert-like scales (1 strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3-Neither agree or disagree, four agree, 5 strongly agree)

**Source:** compiled from Empirical Literature Review (2024)

# 3.10 Data Validity and Reliability

The validity was enhanced, and reliability was measured in this study. The following section describes the producers for validity enhanced and reliability measurement.

# 3.10.1 Validity

Cohen et al. (2017) asserted that validity is the ability of the research instrument to measure precisely what it is supposed to measure. The study used triangulation by concurrently using interviews, questionnaires, observation, and secondary data analysis. The data collection instruments were also designed to measure respondents' attitudes and opinions towards round potato value chain marketing strategies. Furthermore, the experts on marketing experts were consulted for the improvement of the research tools. The specific objectives' variables were also drawn from the previous studies to enhance the criterion validity.

# 3.10.2 Reliability

According to Cohen et al. (2017), reliability involves getting similar results when the study is repeated using the same research instrument. Mohajan (2017) states that reliability refers to the degree to which a measurement technique can depend on securing consistent results upon repeated application. Therefore, reliability is a cornerstone of making a successful and meaningful study. To measure internal consistency, the researcher estimated Cronbach’s alpha Coefficient by the founder Lee Joseph Cronbach in 1951, who determined it and used it for reliability testing.

According to Sharma (2016), the acceptable coefficient value (Cronbach’s alpha) of about 0.7 and above signifies data reliability. In this study, reliability test results from the reliability analysis were conducted in the SPSS to test for the reliability of the research tool (Table 3.3). The value of the Cronbach’s alpha obtained is beyond 0.7 (Table 3.3). The results indicate that this study's research tools were reliable and valid.

Table 3.4: Reliability Test Results

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of Variable** | **Number of indicators** | **Cronbach Alpha** |
| Product strategy | 5 | 0.764 |
| Pricing strategy | 4 | 0.785 |
| Promotion strategy | 6 | 0.813 |
| Place/distribution strategy | 6 | 0.778 |
| Moderating variables | 5 | 0.791 |

**Source:** Field data (2022)

# 3.11 Ethical Considerations

Ethics is a branch of philosophy that deals with one’s conduct and guides behavior (Dobrick et al., 2018). The researcher sought the clearance letter from the university before the data to research in the field. The researcher also ensured the safety of the respondents during the data collection. Respondents sought consent before the data protection, and the participants were allowed to withdraw at any point during the research. Their privacy was also maintained. The participants' information was confidential, and the numbers were used to identify the respondents instead of their names. The respondents were ensured that the information given would be handled with the utmost confidentiality and used for academic purposes only. Furthermore, the researcher avoided presenting fake data and falsifying it. All the references used were cited throughout the document, and copying others’ work without citation, i.e., plagiarism, was avoided.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

# 4.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter provides the analysis of findings obtained from the field. This chapter demonstrates the effects of marketing mix on sales performance. Also, it presents the findings on the moderation role of marketing skills in the relationship between marketing strategies (4Ps) and sales performance.

# 4.2 Response Rate

The researcher issued 331 questionnaires, and only 260 were filled and returned, giving a response rate of 77.34%. Based on Hair Jr. et al. (2010), a 77.34% rate of response is desirable since the analysis can be executed if a response rate is 30%. Table 4.1 gives the information on the response rate.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Variable** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| Filled and returned | 260 | 78.54% |
| Non-response and incomplete information | 71 | 21.46% |
| Total | 331 | 100% |

**Source:** Field Data (June, 2022)

# 4.3 Demographic Information

This section analyzes the results of demographic factors of the respondents who participated in this study.

# 4.3.1 Age of Respondents

The researchers sought to investigate the age of respondents (Table 4.2). Findings revealed that 37.3% of the interviewed farmers were aged between 18 and 35 years old, while 48.8% had an age between 36 and 45 years old, and 10.8% had an age between 31 and 35 years old. Findings also indicate that 10.8% of the interviewed farmers were between 46 and 60 years old, and 3.1% were those aged 60 years and above. (Table 4.2). These findings imply that the round potato production in the southern highlands of Tanzania was dominated by the active age production category of 18 and 45 years. The findings are in tandem with those of Mpogole et al. (2012), who found that most farmers (58%) in the Njombe district were 30 to 44 years old. The data shows that the increased percentage of farmers involved with round potato production was still in this age category. The data signifies that most active-age productive farmers in the Njombe region were involved with round potato production. The findings suggest that marketing strategies could focus on techniques attracted by this age category, such as social media and other digital platforms. Modern marketing techniques could foster market access, thereby boosting sales performance.

Table 4.2: Demographic Characteristics (n=260)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Age Range | Frequency | Per cent |
| 18-35 years | 97 | 37.3 |
| 36-45 years | 127 | 48.8 |
| 46-60 years | 28 | 10.8 |
| Over 60 years | 8 | 3.1 |
| Sex |  |  |
| Male | 117 | 45 |
| Female | 143 | 55 |
| Marital Status |  |  |
| Single | 71 | 27.3 |
| Married | 142 | 54.6 |
| Divorced | 22 | 8.5 |
| Widowed | 25 | 9.6 |
| Level of education |  |  |
| Illiterate | 66 | 25.4 |
| Primary | 102 | 39.2 |
| Secondary | 92 | 35.4 |
| Experience in round potato production | | |
| Less than two years | 92 | 35.4 |
| 2-5 years | 53 | 20.4 |
| 6-10 years | 55 | 21.2 |
| 11-14 years | 60 | 23.0 |

**Source:** Field Data (2022)

# 4.3.2 Sex of Respondents

The researcher sought to investigate the distribution of respondents by sex. Findings revealed that 55% were females and only 45% were males (Table 4.2). The results imply that round potato production and marketing in the study area is a business that many females dominated. Thus, any intervention to improve productivity and efficiencies in marketing the crop product in question would improve the females' livelihood and reduce dependence on the males for income, consequently reducing income disparity between these gender categories. Mpogole et al. (2012) found that 62% of round potato producers in Njombe district were males. Therefore, the current data indicates an increased proportion of female farmers in round potato production. The data highlights the viability of the round potato production in the Njombe region.

# 4.3.3 Marital Status

The researcher sought to investigate the marital status of the respondents in the study location. Findings revealed that 142 respondents were married, which represents 54.6% of the total sampled respondents; 71 respondents were single, which represents 27.3% of the respondents, while 22 respondents were divorced, which represents 8.5% of the total sampled farmer respondents, about 25 respondents were widowed this represents 9.6% of the total sampled farmer respondents (Table 4.2). These findings imply that with round potato farm enterprises, most households with married people are one of their primary sources of income through the production and marketing of the round potatoes. The data signify that round potato production was a vital income source for married people with a high number of dependents compared to other marital statuses. The findings align with Mpogole et al. (2012), who revealed that 86% were married. The data shows a decreased trend of married people involved with round potato production. The results signify that the round potato production has attracted more other marital status.

# 4.3.4 Years of Participation in Potato Production

The researcher sought to investigate the duration of time respondents participated in potato production. The findings revealed that 55 respondents had been in the potato value chain for 6-10 years, representing 21.2% of the total population, whereas 60 respondents had been in potato production for 11-14 years, representing 23%. Moreover, 53 respondents produced the round potato for 2-5 years, representing 20.4% of the total respondents, and 92 respondents produced round potato for less than two years, representing 35.4% (Table 4.2). These findings imply that many farmers had experience in the production and marketing of round potatoes and that they knew how to deal with the business of producing and marketing the crop product in question. As recommended by Lysaker and Lysaker (2021), farmers’ experience promoted the provision of information regarding the influence of marketing strategies on sales performance.

# 4.3.5 Level of Education

The researcher sought to investigate the level of literacy among the participants in the potato value chain. The findings revealed that 92, about 35.4% of the participants, had ordinary secondary education, and 102 respondents had primary education, accounting for 39.2% of the sampled respondents. Findings also revealed that 66 respondents were illiterate, about 25.4% of the sampled respondents (Table 4.2). These findings imply that, to a large extent, many farmers who produced and marketed round potatoes in the study area had primary education and thus could be trained in producing and marketing the round potato crop product. The findings are consistent with Mpogole et al. (2012), who demonstrated that 82% of round potato farmers in the Njombe district had primary education. The current findings show that despite having a relatively high number of farmers with secondary education, the level of illiteracy has increased compared to that reported by Mpogole et al. (2012).

# 4.4 Relationship Between Marketing Strategies and Sales Performance Components

The following sections present the descriptive and qualitative analysis findings on the influence of market strategies on the sales performance of the round potato crop in the Njombe region.

# 4.4.1 Relationship Between Product Strategy and Sales Performance

Respondents were asked several questions regarding the influence of product strategy on the sales performance of round potato produce. The analysis findings revealed that the majority (26.9%) of the respondents agreed that they grew the round potato variety required by the customers. In addition, round potato packaging seemed to be a challenge that affected many farmers' ability to sell their produce. The results were witnessed by 13.5%, who reported that packaging influenced the sales performance of round potato produce in the Njombe region. The findings show that 19.2% of farmers did not mix small and large potatoes in the same bags or containers. The data indicates that most farmers recognized the importance of round potato sorting in increasing sales performance. However, the findings indicated that only 17.3% of farmers agreed they did not mix the rotten and un rotten round potatoes. These findings show that many farmers did not understand the role of product quality in sales performance well.

The declaration by 23.1% of farmers in the Njombe region that they managed their farms well to produce quality round potato crops suggests a high level of competence and proficiency in agricultural practices among the round potato farmers. The findings indicate farmers’ commitment to ensuring that round potato crops’ quality contributes positively to the sales performance. Findings signify the implementation of effective farming strategies, which increase yields and sales performance of the round potato produce to farmers.

These findings align with what Akter et al. (2016) reported on the potato value chain analysis, which revealed that product quality was the key factor in determining gross margin by farmers in Bangladesh. The researcher asked some farmers open-ended questions to gather in-depth information on how farmers apply product strategies to promoted the sales performance of the round potato crop. Respondent Number 1 stated,

*“Packaging is a problem because the customers force us to practice extraordinary packaging commonly known as Lumbesa. The results make us sell the large volume at a lower price. This type of packaging does not align with farmers’ expectations. Through* *Lumbesa packaging, farmers face challenges in recovering production costs and, therefore, lower the farmers’ profitability of the round potato produce”*.

When the researchers wanted to know why sometimes farmers mixed rotten and unrotten potatoes and failed to carefully grade their round potato produce to achieve higher sales performance, Respondent Number 5 reported,

*"Because most of us lack marketing skills, we cannot achieve higher sales performance. Inadequate understanding of effective marketing strategies, including the importance of product presentation and differentiation in the market, is a barrier to us. This deficiency in marketing knowledge contributes to inadequate packaging practices. Sometimes, farmers unintentionally mix rotten and unrotten potatoes during packaging. However, some farmers do this intentionally to increase sales without understanding that they distort the future round potato markets. The absence of marketing skills hampers our capacity to maintain the quality of our round produce to potential buyers, resulting in a low sales performance. Therefore, marketing knowledge is imperative for empowering farmers to enhance their sales strategies, properly differentiate their products, and ultimately improve the overall quality of round potatoes in the market in the Njombe region. By doing this, the sales performance of round potatoes will increase".*

Table 4.3: Descriptive Analysis on the influence of Product Strategy on Sales Performance (n=260)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Product strategies | Frequency | Percentage |
| I grow the type of variety required by customers | 70 | 26.9 |
| I manage my farms well to produce quality round potato  crops | 60 | 23.1 |
| I pack my round potato well to attract customers | 35 | 13.5 |
| I do not mix small and large potatoes in the same bag/container | 50 | 19.2 |
| I do not mix the rotten and un rotten round potatoes | 45 | 17.3 |

**Source:** Field Data (2022)

# 

# 4.4.2 Relationship Between Pricing Strategy and Sales Performance

The findings (Table 4.4) show that only a small number of farmers (31.5%) managed to charge the prices above the production costs. The findings demonstrate that most farmers received the price charged by the buyers. The findings signify that most farmers had no control over the price and were price takers. The findings showed that a small number of farmers (15.8%) charged a low price to sell large produce volumes. It seemed that these farmers did not plan well to sell their produce at a profitable price. Additionally, the findings indicate that 34.9% of farmers were selling by using intermediaries and hence did not have influence on setting the prices. The findings further suggest that 30.8% of farmers sold their round potato produce based on the customers' financial capacity.

When the researcher asked farmers what the effects of round potato sales performance would be if most farmers could not set selling prices, Respondent Number 7 replied,

*“Usually, village brokers approach the producers, when they have set the price already. Usually, the produce is sold in cash at the farm, and the farmers are usually price takers*. *The lack of capacity among most round potato farmers in Njombe to set selling prices greatly affects the sales performance of our round potato produce. Failure to set selling prices prevents us from maximizing profits and making our round potato produce competitive. The lack of farmers' price setting reduces the overall sales performance of round potatoes in Njombe. Empowering farmers with the skills to set appropriate and market-responsive prices is crucial for ensuring sustainable sales growth and economic stability within the round potato farming sector in the Njombe region".*

The information is supported by facts from a study by Mende et al. (2016), who showed that the round potato value chain is characterized by poor market structure and opportunistic behavior that suppresses potato farm gate prices.

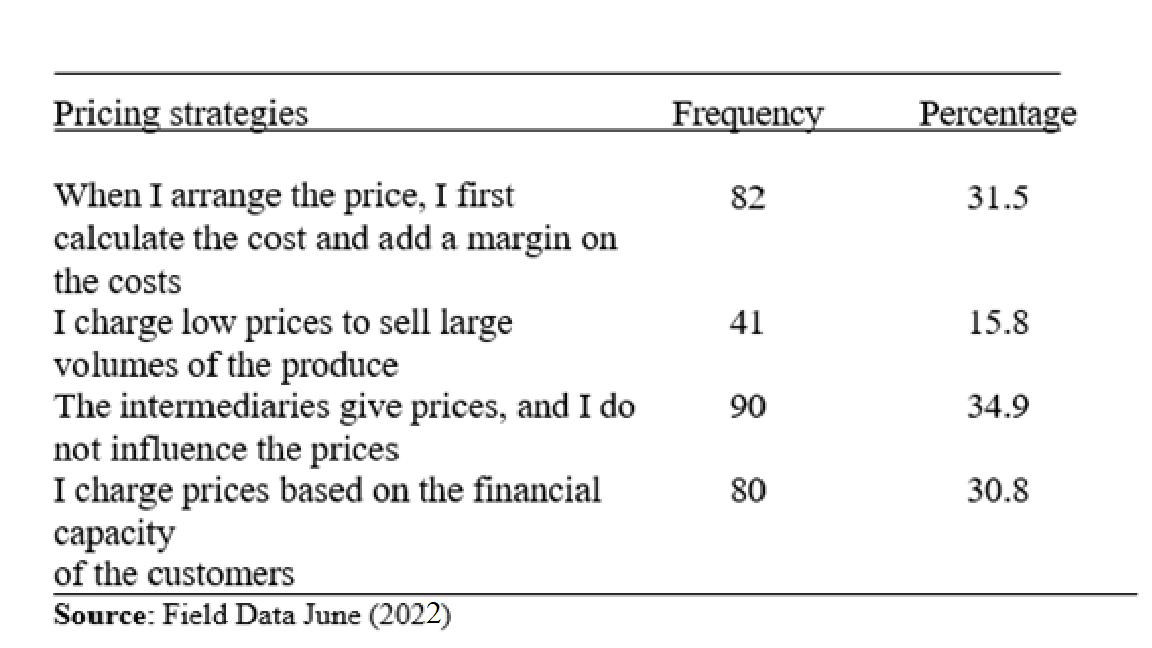
Respondent Number 4 stated,

*“Our round potato price setting has remained oligopolistic. That means few market participants, such as rural brokers, urban brokers, and transporters, have the market power. The findings also revealed that most round potato value chain actors cannot access reliable markets and limited transformation. The results imply that the value chain has low profitability and complex interaction among actors and service providers”.*

The researcher observed that some farmers sold round potato produce around the roadside or at village markets and retailers. The researcher pointed out that the extended bag is sold at a price similar to the ordinary suitcase, and no references to weight were made. The respondent number 4 believed that

“*The farm gate prices are low, and the marketing system of round potato is dominated by middlemen (brokers). The findings imply that farmers in the value chain have no bargaining power. Moreover, there is a substantial variation in price between producers*.

In general, results show that pricing strategy had no positive impact on the sales performance of round potatoes in the Njombe region. The findings are consistent with those of Adesola and Ayewale (2016), who revealed that value-based pricing was lacking among producers. The findings reconcile with Matan (2016) that organizations use a penetration pricing strategy to price their product lower than average. Organizations use a penetration pricing strategy to price their products lower than usual. Akter et al. (2016) revealed that the pricing strategy improved the sales volume of round potatoes in Bangladesh. De Toni et al. (2017) revealed that pricing strategy and decisions significantly affect sales performance.

Table 4.4: Descriptive Statistics on the Relationships Between Pricing and Sales

Respondent Number 9 stated,

“*Offering the product to the customer at a reduced price from regular price increases sales volume but not profitability*. *Price discounts are used when the potatoes cannot serve shelf life because some varieties become easily perishable, especially during the rainy seasons. The use of price discounts in round potato crops leads to a significant reduction in sales performance.” However*, *the lower prices offered by buyers make us not to recover the costs high cost of agriculture inputs, transport cost, and desirability of the product, which is the reason behind the nonuse of price reduction as a marketing strategy to enhance sales performance”.*

The results suggest that round potato farmers sometimes reduce the selling to attract buyers without considering sales profitability for fear of losing moisture content and becoming perishable.

When farmers were probed further about who sets the price of potatoes, the respondent stated, “*The product is sold at farm gate, traders and brokers set the price as directed by district Agriculture officers*”. However, the researcher perceived that this farmer had no information on the role of the market forces in determining the price of round potato produce in the Njombe region. Previous findings indicated that buyers were almost the ones who set the prices of the round potato crop. The researcher observed that the standard bag of potatoes was 100 kg. However, there was no weighing scale at the farm gate to confirm the packaging of 100 kg bags. The researchers noted that traders packed the *Lumbesa* bag in their trucks, which is approximated to weigh up to 150kg (see photo in Fig 4.1), proving that farmers did not benefit from the round potato produce due to poor pricing and packaging. Laibuni and Omiti (2014) claimed that the marketing of round potato produce is usually dominated by intermediaries who purchase the produce on farms where farmers were not allowed to negotiate. Therefore, the researcher concludes that the round potato business in the Njombe region benefited more traders than the farmers. Traders purchased the round potatoes at lower prices and forced farmers to pack them in *Lumbesa* bags, and they bought them at the same price since there was no weighing scale to substantiate the weight of a 100 kg bag.



Figure 4.1: The Truck Showing the Extraordinary Packaging (Lumbesa) of Round Potato Bags Ready for Transportation

**Source:** Field data (2022)

# 4.4.3 Relationship Between Place/Distribution Strategies and Sales Performance

The study descriptively analyzed the influence of place/distribution strategies and sales performance. The findings indicate that only 13.5% of farmers their farmers were located nearest to the road. The findings suggest that most farmers faced the challenge of increasing the transport charges when they transported their round potato produce from their farms to the selling places. Moreover, the findings demonstrate that it was not easy for buyers to recognize the presence of round potatoes for sale. Hence, this challenge slowed the effective marketing of the round potato because the produce was far from the roads. The findings show that only 11.1% of farmers had round potato selling points nearest the road. The findings also indicate that most farmers faced increased transport charges and were required to search for buyers since their round potato produce was not readily displayed. The findings also highlight that only a few farmers (10.8%) sold their round potatoes by transporting them to market place. The results show that by doing so, the farmers incurred transportation charges and, in this way, reduced sales performance. The findings indicate that a relatively large percentage of farmers (46.2%) sold their round potatoes to intermediaries. The results suggest that most farmers were not benefiting much from the round potato production as specified by Mende et al. (2016); selling round potatoes using intermediaries benefits more intermediaries than farmers. The findings indicate that only 7.8% of farmers sold their round potatoes to institutions. Selling to the institution seemed more profitable because the institutions bought the round potato produce at relatively higher costs.

Farmers had different opinions on the influence of place/distribution strategies on the sales performance of round potatoes in the Njombe region.

Respondent Number 6 reported,

*“The location of potato farms away from roads in the Njombe region has an apparent negative impact on the sales performance of our round potato crops. The geographical remoteness of these farms hinders accessibility, posing challenges in transporting the round produce to potential marketplaces. The lack of proximity to roads increases transportation costs and extends the time and effort required to reach buyers. The distant farm's location affects the sales process's overall efficiency. Indeed, the geographical constraint contributes to a potential reduction in sales performance as it imposes logistical challenges on farmers in reaching broader consumer markets".*

Respondent No. 2 asserted,

*“The remoteness of these selling points not only limits the visibility of the produce but also deters potential customers from reaching these locations. Therefore, being far from the roads adversely affects the sales performance of our round potato crops by constraining potato round accessibility for buyers.”*

Respondent No. 3 declared*,*

*"The limited number of farmers transporting their round potatoes directly to marketplaces signifies a prevalent reliance on middlemen. This dependency results in farmers receiving lower prices for their produce as these middlemen seek to maximize their profits. This distribution strategy delays getting the round potatoes to market, further affecting the freshness and quality of the produce. Consequently, farmers' predominant utilization of middlemen influences sales performance negatively through potential price erosion and logistical bottlenecks".*

Respondent No. 4 proclaimed*,*

*"Middlemen often negotiate prices favouring their interests. They leave farmers with less returns for their hard work. Indeed, relying on intermediaries affects the overall sales performance of round potato crops by limiting the financial gains for most farmers who choose this distribution strategy.*

The qualitative findings affirmed that remote farm locations, distant selling points, and the prevalent use of intermediaries in the distribution network collectively contribute negatively to the sales performance of round potato crops in the Njombe region. Therefore, the qualitative findings indicate that the place/distribution strategies did not contribute favourably to the round potato sales performance in the Njombe region. The findings are consistent with URT (2022), who asserted that poor infrastructures and facilities constrain the adequate performance of economic activities in the Njombe region.

Table 4. 5: Place/Distribution Strategies and Sales Performance (n=260)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Item | Frequency | Percentage |
| My round potato farm is located near the road | 35 | 13.5 |
| The selling place of my round potato is located near the road | 29 | 11.1 |
| I sell my round potato myself by transporting it to  the marketplaces | 28 | 10.8 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| I sell my round potato by using the middlemen | 120 | 46.2 |
| I sell my round potato to institutions | 20 | 7.8 |

**Source:** Field Data (2022)

The findings concur with Laswai (2013), who reported that distribution channels influence sales, customers, and the financial performance of firms. Mende et al. (2014) revealed that distribution channels influence the round potato produce's sales, customer, and financial performance. De Toni et al. (2017) approved that distribution channels increase customer purchase of the product, hence increasing sales volume.

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# 4.4.4 Relationship Between Promotion Strategies and Sales Performance

The study analysed descriptively how the promotion strategies influenced the round potato crop sales performance in the Njombe region. The findings indicate that only 13.8% of the farmers walked around to search for customers. The findings suggest that only a few farmers searched for buyers. Hence, this strategy was not applied to many customers. Searching for customers required prior knowledge of where the buyers were found. Searching for customers involved the searching charges, too. The findings further show that despite social media, only 1.2% of the farmers used social media to promote the marketing of the round potato crops. The findings unveil the importance of training farmers on adequately using social media to market their round potato produce.

Moreover, the findings show that few farmers used the posters to inform buyers that they had round potatoes for sale. The findings disclose that only a few farmers were ready to sell at low prices and used this to attract buyers. Nevertheless, the findings show that some farmers (21.6%) volunteered to give some round potatoes free of charge to attract buyers. Furthermore, the findings indicate that most farmers (56.2%) relied on providing good language and customer care services to attract buyers.

Farmers gave the following opinions on the influence of promotion strategies on the sales performance of round potato crops in the Njombe region.

Respondents Number 6 stated,

*"Since we, farmers have no marketing skills, we refrain from walking around and actively searching for customers, which negatively influences our sales performance. Lacking customer searching skills makes farmers miss the opportunity to establish personal connections and build trust by not engaging in direct interactions with potential buyers. The absence of face- to-face engagement to search for buyers potentially reduces the likelihood of attracting buyers and limits the sales performance of potato products".*

When farmers were asked why they did not advertise round potatoes on social media.Respondent No. 8 *stated,*

*"We are unaware of using social media to advertise our round potato produce. However, advertising round potatoes through various digital platforms like blogs, WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter (X) could promote the farmers' ability to tap into a broader market. In this era, digital communication is crucial in increasing the number of potential business customers. By not leveraging the power of online promotion, we miss out on connecting with more extensive buyers, limiting the demand for our round potato produce and impacting sales performance".*

Respondents Number 9 declared the following concerning the poster usage:

"*We were unaware that posters might enhance the sales performance of the round potato produce in the Njombe region. The absence of posters to inform customers about the availability of round potato products for sale represents a missed opportunity for local visibility and promotion. By listening to you now, I understand that posters are a cost- effective means of reaching buyers. The absence of posters, which are visual expressions, could communicate the presence of their round potato products and increase the round potato sales performance.”*

Respondents asserted that

*"Selling round potatoes at deliberately low prices temporarily attracts potential buyers. However, it adversely influences sales performance and the overall economic viability of round potato farming in the Njombe region”.*

The findings indicate that farmers in the Njombe region did not effectively apply the marketing strategies to promote round potato farmers' sales performance. The findings indicated that most farmers were refraining from actively searching for customers, neglected digital platforms for advertising, did not use posters to inform potential buyers, and engaged in unsustainable pricing and promotional practices, which limited the sales performance of their round potato crops.

The absence of direct engagement using physical and online platforms reduced visibility and awareness of the existence of round potato buyers. Hence, it hindered the establishment of personal connections with potential buyers. The lack of promotional materials, such as posters, limited the farmers' ability to communicate the presence and availability of their round potato products. Additionally, deliberate price reductions and free quantities for a few farmers attracted short-term sales but reduced the profitability of the round potato produce in the Njombe region.

Cheruiyoti and Wambua (2016) established that promotion strategies enhanced the sales performance of the Bixa Orellana crop in Kenya. Uloko and Ikwue (2022) established a positive and significant relationship between promotion marketing strategies and small-scale enterprise's business performance in Nigeria. Adeniran et al. (2016) found that promotion strategies did not influence the sales performance of the Nigerian airline industry. Desta and Amantie (2023) demonstrated that promotion strategies affect the performance of SMEs in Ethiopia.

Table 4.6: Promotion Strategies and Sales Performance, n=260

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| I walk around searching for buyers | 36 | 13.8 |
| I advertise my round potatoes through social media blogs,  WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter | 6 | 2.3 |
| I use the poster to inform customers about my round potato  product | 4 | 1.5 |
| I sell my round potato at a low price deliberately to attract  many customers | 12 | 4.6 |
| I give customers small free of charge small quantities of round potatoes to attract them to buy again my round potato | 56 | 21.6 |
| I use excellent and attractive language so that customers may inform others about my products | 146 | 56.2 |

**Source:** Field Data (2022)

# 4.5 The Relationships Between Marketing Strategy, Sales Performance, and the Moderation Effect of Marketing Skills

This section presents the regression analysis of the relationship between the marketing strategy. The section also analyses the moderating effects of marketing skills on the relationship between marketing strategies and sales performance.

# 4.5.1 The Regression Analysis on the Relationship Between the Marketing Strategies and Sales Performance

The regression analysis was performed to analyze the strength of the relationship between the marketing strategies and sales performance (Table 4.7). The study shows that the regression model was well specified with an R-square of 0.822. The R-square indicates approximately 82.2% of the independent variables fit the dependent variables. The results imply that the 4Ps of the marketing strategies, i.e., product, place, promotion, and distribution, explained the sales performance of the round potato crop well in the Njombe region. An R-square of at least 10% is acceptable in social science research. An R-squared between 0.10 and 0.50 (or between 10 per cent and 50 per cent when expressed in percentage) is acceptable in social science research only when some or most of the explanatory variables are statistically significant. An R-squared between 0.50 and 0.99 is acceptable in social science research, especially when most explanatory variables are statistically significant. The only caveat is that the high R-squared should not be caused by spurious causation or multi-collinearity among the explanatory variables (Ozili, 2023). The findings also show that the standard error of estimate is small, and F-statistics is significant. The approach allowed the researcher to continue interpreting the data on the regression results. The Durbin-Watson value is within the acceptable range of 1.5-2.5, as Ghasemi et al. (2023) recommended, showing that the model does not exhibit the autocorrelation problem. The findings from Table 4.8 also demonstrate that the value of tolerance exceeds 1 and VIF value exceeds 10, as Kyriazos and Poga (2023) suggested. The findings indicate that the data did face the multicollinearity challenge.

Table 4.7: Ordinary Regression Model, Tolerance and VIF Coefficients

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Variable | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. | Collinearity Statistics | |
| B | Std. Error | Beta | Tolerance | VIF |
| (Constant) | 1.083 | .271 |  | 3.996 | .000 |  |  |
| Pricing strategies | 0.301 | 0.083 | .210 | 3.643 | .000 | .949 | 1.054 |
| place strategies | 0.030 | 0.015 | .015 | .257 | .797 | .939 | 1.065 |
| Product Strategies | 0.073 | 0.143 | 0.029 | .508 | .612 | .987 | 1.013 |
| Promotion strategies | 1.231 | 0.195 | 1.163 | 6.323 | .000 | .962 | 1.039 |

**R-Square= 0.822, Durbin Watson value is 1.843**

The findings from Table 4.7 show that pricing and promotion strategies positively influenced the sales performance of the round potato crop. In contrast, the product and distribution strategies showed a positive but insignificant influence. The study's findings reveal a fascinating interplay between pricing and promotion strategies and their impact on the sales performance of the round potato crop. These strategies were critical drivers in influencing purchase decisions within the potato market. The positive correlation suggests that a well-crafted pricing strategy and practical promotional efforts had the potential to boost the round potato crop sales in the Njombe region.

The significance of pricing as a determinant of sales performance highlights the sensitivity of consumers to the cost of the round potato crop. By strategically setting prices, producers and marketers can attract price-conscious consumers and differentiate their products in a competitive market. This finding underscores the importance of understanding market dynamics, consumer preferences, and competitors' pricing strategies to optimize the pricing techniques for the round potato crop. The findings are consistent with those of Ndumia et al. (2020), who revealed that pricing strategies positively promoted sales performance. Adeniran et al. (2016) concluded that pricing strategies promoted the travel agents; business in Indonesia. Mosese (2020) revealed that selling in retail was more responsive to farmers than other pricing techniques. However, Sanga et al. (2023) argued that pricing agricultural products was the major challenge that diminishes the sales performance of farm crops in Tanzania. Dzisi and Ofosu (2014) uncovered that branding and new product and service development contributed to the performance of SMEs in Ghana.

Positive and insignificant signs of the product and distribution strategies' effect on sales performance imply that these aspects could contribute positively to the overall sales performance of the round potato crop. However, their impacts were hindered by some factors. The findings indicate that more efforts were needed to improve product features, quality attributes, and distribution channels to fine-tune these strategies and enhance their significant influence on sales performance.

Uloko and Ikwue (2022) revealed that product strategy negatively and insignificantly influenced the sales performance of small-scale enterprises in Nigeria. Akter et al. (2016), in the analysis of the potato value chain, exposed that product quality was the key factor in determining Gross Margin by farmers in Bangladesh. Adeniran et al. (2016) concluded that pricing and product strategies were the major influencing factors of sales performance. Dzisi and Ofosu (2014) uncovered that branding and new product and service development contributed to the performance of SMEs in Ghana.

Moreover, the positive influence of promotion strategies on sales performance emphasizes the power of marketing promotion strategies in shaping buyers' perceptions and driving purchasing decisions. Advertising, discounts, or other promotion marketing initiatives, as well as successful promotional campaigns, can create awareness, generate interest, and ultimately lead to increased sales. The study suggests a well-executed promotional strategy can catalyze market penetration and brand visibility within the round potato crop industry.

Kotler (2015) asserted that promotions have become a critical factor in the product marketing mix for achieving the marketing objective. De Toni et al. (2017) approved that distribution channels increase customer purchase of the product, increasing sales volume. Uloko and Ikwue (2022) established a significant positive relationship between promotion and business performance. Preminus and Wilson (2017) revealed that the relationship between promotion and business performance is essential but inversely related.

The combined 4Ps studies by Nirusa (2017) found that product, promotion, place, and price predicted the SMEs' performance in terms of profitability, market share, return on investment, and expansion in Nigeria. Hailemariam (2020) revealed that product, place, and promotion positively and significantly influenced the sales performance of the SME service sector businesses in Ethiopia. Adeniran et al. (2016) studied the relationship between marketing, mix, and customer decision. The results revealed that only product and price influenced travel agents' sales performance in Palembang, Indonesia.

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# 4.5.2 The Moderating Influence of the Marketing Skills on the Impact of Pricing Marketing Strategies on the Sales Performance of Round Potato Produce

The findings from Table 4.8 show that the moderating role of marketing skills on the relationship between the pricing marketing strategies and sales performance of round potatoes in Njombe regions was significant. The R-square change caused by interaction was 0.039, showing the increase of R-square after inserting marketing skills as a moderator. Also, the coefficient of the interaction was significant at 0.01. The data analysis reveals a compelling relationship between marketing strategies, especially pricing strategies, and sales performance under the moderating role of marketing skills. The significant sign of this moderating factor suggests that effective pricing strategies positively and significantly affected the sales performance of the round potato crop.

Table 4.8: Summary of Regression and Hierarchical Analysis

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Variable | Model 1 | Model 2 | Model 3 |
| Constant | 1.083 |  | (P1, P2, P3, P4) \*MS |
| Price | 0.210\*\*\* |  | 0.163\*\*\* |
| Product | 0.029 |  | 0.011 |
| Place | 0.015 |  | 0.055 |
| Promotion | 1.163\*\*\* |  | 0.148\*\*\* |
| Price\*MS |  | 0.748\*\*\* |  |
| Product\*MS |  | 0.768\*\*\* |  |
| Place\*MS |  | 0.771\*\*\* |  |
| Promotion\*MS |  | 0.644\*\*\* |  |
| *R2* | 0.822 | 0.861\*\*\* | 0.851\*\*\* |
| *ΔR2* | 0.822 | 0.024 \*\*\* | 0.029\*\*\* |

**Source:** Filed Data (2021)

Key: \*\*\*Highly significant, \*\* Significant, \* Marginally significant

**Note**: Model 1: Independent variables without moderation Model 2: Each independent variable with moderation Model 3: All four variables with moderation. The R-square for model 2 is an average of the individual R-square for the four variables

This finding underscores the importance of having robust marketing strategies and training farmers on pricing settings. The marketing skills help farmers negotiate the price and determine which range is viable for selling their round potato produce. In this case, the farmers with marketing skills in pricing strategies potentially increased the sales performance of the round potato crop in the Njombe region. Khan and Khan (2021) found that marketing skills positively and significantly influenced the market performance of export firms. However, Sendeku, (2005), found that price did not display any statistically significant of crops sold.

# 4.5.3 The Moderating Influence of the Marketing Skills on the Impact of Product Marketing Strategies on the Sales Performance of Round Potato Produce

The hierarchical regression analysis was performed to analyze the significance of interaction and the influence of moderating skills on the relationship between product skills and the sales performance of round potatoes in the Njombe region. The findings indicate that when product strategies were analyzed with sales performance, the relationship was not significant. However, the change was substantial when the marketing skills variable was considered a moderator. The R-square change is 0.042, and the model and beta coefficients were significant. The findings indicate that if round potato farmers were trained in marketing strategies, they were likely to increase the sales performance of the round potato produce.

The findings imply that, in isolation, the chosen product strategies did not have a discernible impact on the sales outcomes for round potatoes in the Njombe region. However, the dynamics changed significantly when the variable of marketing skills was introduced as a moderator. The findings indicate that the effectiveness of product strategies in influencing sales performance depended on the level of marketing skills applied, suggesting that the interplay between product strategies and marketing skills was a significant factor in promoting the sales performance of round potatoes in the Njombe region's round potato market. Therefore, the findings highlight the importance of considering marketing skills as a crucial moderating factor in enhancing the impact of product strategies on sales performance in this particular agricultural context. The findings are consistent with those of Khan and Khan (2021), who found that marketing skills positively and significantly influenced the market performance of export firms. However, Kaganda (2015), provided contrasting findings that product strategies were not significant and hence did not influence sales performance in Ugandan clays company.

# 4.5.4 The Moderating Influence of the Marketing Skills on the Influence of Promotion Marketing Strategies on Sales Performance of Round Potato Produce

A hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to examine the moderating role of marketing skills on the relationship between promotion strategies and the sales performance of round potato produce in the Njombe region. The initial model revealed a significant relationship with R-square change of 0.096. This change was statistically significant suggesting that marketing skills enhanced the explanatory power of the model. These results indicate that farmers who possess or acquire marketing skills are more likely to effectively implement promotional strategies, which in turn leads to improved sales performance of round potato produce. The findings imply that while promotion strategies contribute to sales performance, their effectiveness is significantly amplified when combined with strong marketing skills. The findings align with that of Uloko and Ikwue, 2022 as they found that he promotion strategies promote the profitability and products’ sale performance. This interaction suggests that the practical application of promotional efforts such as advertising, community outreach, or branding relies heavily on the marketing competencies of the farmers. However, contrasting findings were reported by Adamu (2020), who found that promotion strategies were not significant and did not influence sales performance in the context of agribusinesses in North-Central Nigeria.

# 4.5.5 The Moderating Influence of the Marketing Skills on the Influence of Place/Distribution Marketing Strategies on Sales Performance of Round Potato Produce

The findings from the regression analysis indicate that the relationship between the place and distribution strategies on the sales performance is insignificant. However, when marketing skills are introduced, the relationship is significant. The findings indicate that the R-Square change is

0.137. The research findings suggest no statistically significant correlation between place and distribution strategies and the sales performance of round potatoes in the Njombe region, indicating that the geographical aspects and distribution channels alone do not have a discernible impact on sales outcomes. However, introducing the marketing skills variable as a moderator brings about a significant change in this relationship.

The findings imply that the effectiveness of place and distribution strategies on sales performance depended on the level of marketing skills applied. The findings display the interaction between place strategies, marketing skills, and sales performance. The non-significant relationship without the moderator suggests that place and distribution strategies were insufficient to drive sales performance in the round potato market in Njombe which is consistent to findings from Adamu (2020), who reported that place strategies had no significant effect and did not influence sales performance in the context of agribusinesses.​ Instead, the results emphasize the importance of considering and enhancing marketing skills to optimize the impact of place and distribution strategies on sales. The findings underscore the need for an integrated approach involving distribution strategies, marketing skills, and round potato produce sales performance in the Njombe region's round potato market.

# 4.5.6 The Moderating Influence of the Marketing Skills on the Impact of Pricing, Product, Promotion, and Place/Distribution Marketing Strategies on the sales Performance of Round Potato Produce

The regression analysis was also executed to analyze the moderation effects of the marketing skills when the pricing, product, promotion, and place/distribution marketing strategies are integrated with the sales performance of the round potato produce in the Njombe region. The findings show that the relationship is significant when all variables are combined. Moreover, the findings show a substantial sign of the R-square change. The findings signify that marketing skills are vital in boosting the marketing performance of the round potato produce in the Njombe region when pricing, product, promotion, and place/distribution marketing strategies are applied.

The research findings ascertain the essential relationship between the 4Ps of marketing strategies and the sales performance of round potato produce in the Njombe region under the moderating role of marketing skills. The findings suggest that pricing, product, promotion, and place/distribution marketing strategies when applied collectively with marketing skills, increase the sales performance of the round potato produce in the Njombe region. The findings demonstrate a collective and positive impact of pricing, product, promotion, and place/distribution marketing strategies when implemented with practical marketing skills on the sales performance of round potato produce in the Njombe region. The findings suggest that a synergistic approach. The findings mean that integrating various marketing strategies is crucial for optimizing sales performance. The significance of this collective influence indicates that a well-rounded marketing strategy incorporating multiple dimensions is essential for success in the region's round potato market. The findings highlight the importance of individual marketing elements and coordination among them to improve sales substantially. A significant sign of marketing skills moderation proves that the effectiveness of marketing strategies depends on the proficiency and strategic application of marketing skills. The findings emphasize the need for a holistic approach to integrating marketing strategies and marketing skills.

The significant signs of pricing and promotion coefficients indicate that these two market strategies influenced the sales performance of round potatoes relatively more than the pricing and place/distribution strategies. The findings demonstrate that pricing strategies contributed significantly to the number of round potatoes sold and the overall sales success. Moreover, the applied promotion strategies also contributed to the increased sales performance of the round potato produce in the Njombe region. The significance of the coefficients related to promotion strategies implies that targeted and effective promotional efforts considerably impact increasing sales performance. The findings emphasize the importance of a robust promotional strategy in increasing round potato produce sales performance.

Nevertheless, the non-significant coefficients for place and product strategies imply that, even with the moderating role of marketing skills, the geographical and distribution aspects might not independently influence sales performance significantly. The findings call for a deeper exploration into the local market dynamics to identify specific factors contributing to the success of place and product strategies in the Njombe region. The combination of significant and non-significant coefficients highlights the need for a tailored approach to marketing in the Njombe region. While pricing and promotion strategies significantly contribute to sales performance, the non-significant coefficients for place and product strategies indicate that these components require a more tailored and context-specific approach.

The literature shows that none of the studies has applied marketing skills as a moderating variable between the 4Ps of marketing strategies and sales performance. However, the studies considered marketing skills in different contexts. Johannesson and Jorgensen (2017) treated professional skills and employee education as moderators between entrepreneurial orientation and performance. Jaoua and Radouche (2014) used leadership skills to moderate variables in strategic management and global performance. Khan and Khan (2021) recognized the efficacy of marketing skills as a promoter of the performance of export marketing firms. Some studies, such as Manan et al. (2023) and Mardatillah et al. (2023), recognized the role of marketing and sales skills in promoting sales performance despite not having applied marketing skills as a moderating variable.

# 4.6 Interaction Effects Between the 4Ps of the Marketing Strategies, the Marketing Skills and Sales Performance of the Round Potato Produce in Njombe Region

Table 4.9 displays the interaction effects between the 4Ps of the marketing strategies, the marketing skills and sales performance of the round potato produce in Njombe region. The positive and significant signs of the pricing and promotion strategies influences on round potato sales performance are confirmed by the positive unstandardized coefficients that these variables were in positive association. small confident of the standard errors’ values indicate the precision and reliability of the estimates. The findings indicates that pricing and promotion t-value were adequately large, and were within the recommended range of acceptance. The values signify that indicate the interaction effects demonstrates well the exact estimated relationships. confidence intervals of lower and upper bounds for pricing and promotion support the hypothesis that round potato sales performance was contributed by pricing and promotion, marketing strategies.

Moreover, the place and product strategies indicated the positive but the insignificant relationship. Learning from the interaction Table 4.9, the findings indicates that the values of the beta, significant level, lower and upper confidence interval and standard error did not reach the sufficient level to affirm the significant outcome. Hence, there were not at the recommended precision ranges to enhance the significant influence. In other words, the values in the tables doe es not confirm the positive and significant explanation on the influence of the place and product strategies on the sales performance of the round potato produce in Njombe region. Hence, the hypotheses on the positive and significant influence could not be accepted.

The interaction on the moderation effect on the marketing skills on the sales performance of the round potato produce in Njombe region indicates that in the presence of the marketing skills the sales performance of the round potato is increased. Hence, the results display the low standard error, the higher the t-and p values and the increased value of better value. The results indicate that these interactions improved the standard errors and the upper and lower bound the confidence interval. Therefore, the introduction of the marketing skills promotes the sales performance of the round potato produce in Njombe region. The findings in the interaction Table 4 suggest that the market strategies of product, place, pricing and promotion performs well in the presence of the marketing skills. The findings disclose that the marketing skills is so powerful in the sense that it promoted the signs of the place and product strategies to be positive and significant.

Table 4.9: Summary of Interaction Effects

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Variable | Unbeta | se | Standbeta | t | P | LLCI | ULCI |
| Constant price | 1.020 | .235 |  | 4.336 | 0.000 | -0.421 | 0.219 |
| Pricing strategies | 0.222 | .056 | 0.155 | 3.971 | 0.000 | 0.112 | 0.333 |
| Int \_ price | 0.716 | 0.037 | 0.748 | 19.130 | 0.000 | 0.642 | 0.790 |
| Constant product | 2.095 | .562 |  | 3.729 | .000 | 0.105 | 1.347 |
| Product strategies | 0.055 | 0.101 | 0.022 | 0.546 | 0.585 | 0.254 | 0.144 |
| Int\_ product | 0.735 | 0.038 | 0.768 | 19.214 | 0.000 | 0.659 | 0.810 |
| Constant promotion | 1.099 | 0.315 |  | 3.488 | 0.000 | 0.245 | 0.618 |
| Promotion variables | 0.94 | 0.151 | 0.754 | 6.220 | 0.000 | 0.113 | 0.481 |
| Int \_ promotion | 0.712 | 0.043 | 0.644 | 16.737 | 0.000 | 0.628 | 0.795 |
| Constant strategies | 1.429 | 0.288 |  | 4.958 | 0.000 | 0.126 | 0.884 |
| Place Strategies | 0.038 | 0.081 | 0.019 | 0.470 | 0.638 | 0.196 | 0.121 |
| Int \_ place | 0.738 | 0.039 | 0.771 | 19.009 | 0.000 | 0.661 | 0.814 |
| Constant all variables | 1.115 | 0.467 |  | 2.387 | 0.000 | -0.934 | 0.904 |
| Int \_ all variable | 0.704 | 0.042 | 0.735 | 16.808 | 0.000 | 0.621 | 0.786 |

Source: Filed data (2022)

# 4.7 Hypotheses testing results

Table 4.10 provides the results of the hypotheses testing. The regression and hierarchical regression model tested the formulated hypotheses. The ordinary least square regression analysis tested the influence of product, pricing, promotion, and place or distribution strategies on the sale performance of round potatoes in the Njombe region. The result covers the hypotheses 1-4. Moreover, the hierarchical regression analysis tested the moderating role of marketing skills, the relationship between the product, pricing, promotion, and place or distribution strategies, and the sale performance of round potatoes in the Njombe region. The moderating variables covered hypotheses 4-8.

Table 4.10: Hypotheses Testing

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Hypothesis | Variables  Involved | Coefficient | Significance  Level | Decision |
| H1: Product strategies positively influenced sales performance. | Product | 0.029 | Not  significant | Fail to Accept  H1 |
| H2: Pricing strategies positively influenced  sales performance. | Price | 0.210\*\*\* | Significant | Accept H2 |
| H3: Promotional strategies positively  influenced sales performance. | Promotion | 1.163\*\*\* | Significant | Accept H3 |
| H4: Place/Distribution strategies positively influenced sales performance. | Place | 0.015 | Not  significant | Fail to Accept  H4 |
| H5: Marketing skills positively moderated the relationship between product strategies and sales performance. | Product\*MS | 0.768\*\*\* | Significant | Accept H5 |
| H6: Marketing skills positively moderated the relationship between pricing strategies and sales performance. | Price\*MS | 0.748\*\*\* | Significant | Accept H6 |
| H7: Marketing skills positively moderated the relationship between promotional strategies and sales performance. | Promotion\*MS | 0.644\*\*\* | Significant | Accept H7 |
| H8: Marketing skills positively moderated the relationship between place strategies and  sales performance. | Place\*MS | 0.771\*\*\* | Significant | Accept H8 |

**Source:** Field Data (2022)

The following paragraphs present the results of the hypotheses testing.

# H1: Product strategies positively and significantly influenced sales performance

The hypothesis that product strategies positively influence sales performance was tested but found to be not significant, with a coefficient of 0.029. This result indicates insufficient statistical evidence to support that product strategies positively impact sales performance. Despite the expectation that product strategies would enhance sales, the data did not confirm this relationship. Therefore, based on this analysis, the study concludes that product strategies were ineffective and could not promote the sales performance of round potato produce in the Njombe region.

# H2: Pricing strategies positively and significantly influenced sales performance

The data supported the hypothesis that pricing strategies positively influence sales performance, with a significant coefficient of 0.210. This finding reveals a robust and statistically significant positive relationship between pricing strategies and sales performance. Effective pricing strategies, therefore, are shown to contribute significantly to increased sales performance. The findings signify that the pricing strategies could potentially increase the sales performance of round potato produce in the Njombe region.

# H3: Promotional strategies positively and significantly influenced sales performance

The hypothesis that promotional strategies positively influence sales performance was accepted, as indicated by a significant Beta coefficient of 1.163. This substantial coefficient suggests a strong positive effect of promotional strategies on sales performance. The data strongly supports the idea that investing in promotional activities could significantly improve sales. Hence, promotional strategies are powerful for boosting sales performance, demonstrating their critical role among the 4Ps of marketing strategies.

# H4: Place/Distribution strategies positively and significantly influenced sales performance

The data did not support the hypothesis that distribution strategies positively influence sales performance, as the coefficient was 0.015 and insignificant. The findings imply that there was no substantial evidence to assert that place/distribution strategies positively impacted sales performance. The lack of statistical significance suggests that distribution strategies were ineffective in promoting the sales performance of round potato produce in the Njombe region.

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# H5: Marketing skills positively and significantly moderated the relationship between product strategies and sales performance

The hypothesis that marketing skills positively moderate the relationship between product strategies and sales performance was accepted, with a significant coefficient of 0.768. This finding indicates that marketing skills enhanced the effectiveness of product strategies and sales performance. Specifically, the positive impact of product strategies on sales was more substantial when marketing skills were higher. Thus, imparting farmers better marketing skills was likely to improve the sales performance of round potatoes in the Njombe region.

# H6: Marketing skills positively and significantly moderated the relationship between pricing strategies and sales performance

The hypothesis that marketing skills positively moderate the relationship between pricing strategies and sales performance was also supported by a significant coefficient of 0.748. The findings suggest that marketing skills promoted the positive effect of pricing strategies on sales performance. The findings further imply that pricing strategies were more effective when marketing skills were well-developed. In this case, investing in marketing skills promoted both the marketing strategies and sales performance.

# H7: Marketing skills positively and significantly moderated the relationship between promotional strategies and sales performance

The hypothesis that marketing skills positively moderate the relationship between promotional strategies and sales performance was accepted, with a significant coefficient of 0.644. This result indicates that marketing skills enhanced the positive impact of promotional strategies on sales performance. The findings suggest that the effectiveness of promotional strategies depended on adequate marketing skills. Therefore, training farmers on marketing skills could improve promotional marketing strategies and sales performance in the Njombe region.

# H8: Marketing skills positively and significantly moderated the relationship between place strategies and sales performance

The hypothesis that marketing skills positively moderate the relationship between place (distribution) strategies and sales performance was supported, with a significant coefficient of 0.771. This finding suggests that marketing skills significantly enhanced the positive effect of distribution strategies on sales performance. Therefore, the positive impact of distribution strategies on sales was more pronounced when marketing skills were higher. The findings imply that imparting round potato farmers' marketing skills promoted the application of place and distribution strategies, potentially increasing the sales performance of the round potato produce.

# CHAPTER FIVE

# SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

# 5.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter discusses the findings of the study regarding the following research objectives. The influence of marketing strategies on sales performance (i.e., price, product, promotion, and distribution strategies) and the study also assessed the moderation role of farmer characteristics on sales performance. The chapter also gives a conclusion and recommendations for improvements and further studies.

# 5.2 Summary of Main Findings

The study assessed the various marketing strategies for improving the sales performance of round potatoes within the specified region. This section entails the key findings, shedding light on the relationship between marketing strategies and sales performance in the Njombe region.

# 5.2.1 The Influence of Market Strategies on Sales Performance in the Round Potato Farmers

The product strategies displayed that 26.9% of farmers in the Njombe region grew the required round potato variety, but packaging challenges affect sales performance. 19.2% of farmers mixed small and large potatoes in the same bags or containers, but only 17.3% mixed the rotten and unrotten round potatoes. Despite this, 23.1% of farmers managed their farms well to produce quality round potatoes, indicating high competence and proficiency in agricultural practices. The findings confirm that implementing effective farming strategies can increase yields and sales performance of round potato produce. The regression analysis indicated that product strategies did not significantly influence the sales performance of the round potato produced in the Njombe region.

The pricing strategies indicated that traders and intermediaries were the leading price setters. The study showed that only 31.5% of farmers captured prices exceeding their production costs. Only 15.8% charged low prices to sell large volumes, 34.9% used intermediaries to set prices, and 30.8% sold potatoes based on customer financial capacity, indicating poor planning and pricing control. The regression analysis revealed that pricing strategies positively and significantly influence sales performance. The findings suggest that better pricing strategies could increase the sales performance of the round potato crop in the Njombe region.

The results on place/distribution strategies revealed that only 13.5% of farmers were nearest the road, causing increased transport charges and difficulty identifying buyers for sales. Only 11.1% had round potato selling points near the road, increasing costs. Only 10.8% sold round potatoes by transporting them to the market, reducing sales performance. The findings indicated that 46.2% sold round potatoes to intermediaries, which benefited intermediaries more than farmers- benefited more intermediaries than farmers. Only 7.8% sold round potatoes to institutions, as they bought the produce at higher costs. The study highlights farmers' challenges in marketing round potatoes due to distance and difficulty displaying their produce. The findings from the regression analysis revealed that the place strategies that influence the round potato crop sales performance in the Njombe region were insignificant. The findings demonstrate that the farmers’ place and distribution strategies did not significantly affect the sales performance. The findings showed that the place strategies were implemented so that they could not contribute to the sales performance of the round potato produce.

Results on the promotion strategies showed that only 13.8% of farmers used social media to promote their products, and only 2.3% used posters to inform buyers about their round potatoes. Only 4.6 per cent were willing to sell at low prices, but some farmers offered free round potatoes to attract buyers. Most farmers (56.2%) relied on good language and customer care services to attract buyers, emphasizing proper training on social media marketing. The findings from the regression analysis revealed that promotion strategies positively influenced the round potato sales performance. The findings indicate that sales performance depends much on promotion strategies.

# 5.2.2 What is the Marketing Status of Round Potato Produce in the Njombe Region? (Findings from qualitative analysis

The qualitative analysis allowed farmers to give different opinions on the influence of the 4Ps of the marketing strategies on the round potato sales performance in the Njombe region. The qualitative data on product strategies revealed that Lumbesa packaging, a method of selling large volumes at lower prices, was problematic for farmers as it did not align with their expectations, and it lowered the profitability of the round potato produce. Insufficient marketing skills, such as product presentation and differentiation, also hindered the sales performance. Farmers confessed to intentionally mixing rotten and unrotten potatoes during packaging, which caused low sales performance. The farmers disclosed that marketing knowledge was crucial to enhance the sales performance of round potatoes in the Njombe region.

The qualitative findings on the pricing marketing strategies revealed that a lack of bargaining power for farmers prevented farmers from maximizing round potato profits and making our round potato produce competitive. Farmers proclaimed that the lack of farmers' price-setting skills reduced the overall sales performance of round potatoes in the Njombe region. The qualitative findings on the promotion strategies demonstrated that farmers in the Njombe region had poor marketing potential benefits of digital marketing, such as advertising on social media. Therefore, a lack of marketing skills reduced the sales performance of the round potato produce.

The qualitative findings on the place and distribution strategies found that the lack of proximity to roads increased transportation costs and the time required to reach buyers, affecting the sales process's efficiency. The remote selling points limited the visibility of the produce and deterred potential buyers from reaching them. The limited number of farmers transporting round potatoes directly to marketplaces made farmers rely on intermediaries, leading to lower prices. The findings indicated that intermediaries often paid lower prices to farmers favouring their interests. The findings summarize that farmers’ have fewer returns for their complex work. The findings confirmed that remote farm locations, distant selling points, and the prevalent use of intermediaries in the distribution network contributed negatively to the sales performance of round potato crops in the Njombe region.

# 5.2.3 The Moderation Role of Farmer’s Marketing Skills on the Relationship Between Marketing Strategies and Sales Performance

The study revealed a positive and significant moderating role of marketing skills in the relationship between pricing strategies and sales performance of round potatoes in Njombe regions. The findings highlighted the importance of robust marketing strategies and training farmers on pricing settings to negotiate prices and determine viable ranges for selling round potato produce.

The study found a significant correlation between promotion strategies and round potato production sales performance in the Njombe region. The findings emphasize the importance of a holistic approach integrating marketing skills and promotional strategies for successful sales performance in the round potato industry.

The study found a positive and insignificant correlation between place/distribution strategies and the sales performance of round potatoes in the Njombe region. The findings indicate training on place and distribution skills and other marketing strategies were not at a level of effectiveness of place and distribution strategies did not manage to promote the sales performance of the round potato crop. The results suggest that enhancing marketing skills is crucial for optimizing the impact of place and distribution strategies on sales.

The study also assessed the moderating role of marketing skills on the relationship between pricing marketing strategies and round potato produce sales performance in the Njombe region. The results showed a positive and significant relationship between the moderation role of marketing skills and the relationship between marketing strategies and the marketing performance of the round potato produce. The findings suggest that training in promotion strategies could positively improve the sales performance of the round potato produce.

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# 5.3 Conclusion

In the Njombe region, a study revealed that farmers generally manage their farms well despite facing challenges in packaging. However, they encountered difficulties in setting market- responsive prices. The findings showed that only few farmers managed to cover the production costs. The findings further revealed that most of these farmers were situated far from roads, which resulted in higher transport expenses. Additionally, few farmers utilized social media for product promotion, while most tried to use good language and customer care services to attract round potato buyers. The study revealed that *Lumbesa* packaging, a method of selling large potatoes at lower prices, negatively reduced the farmers' sales performance. The findings show that this happened because farmers had insufficient distribution strategies. The findings further revealed that some farmers intentionally mixed the rotten and unrotten potatoes. The findings additionally disclosed that round potato farmers in Njombe faced challenges in setting selling prices and had no market power to negotiate the prices. The findings also indicated that remote farm locations, distant selling points, and reliance on intermediaries contributed to lower prices and reduced returns. The regression analysis results revealed that promotion and pricing positively and significantly influenced the sales performance of round potatoes in the Njombe region. At the same time, place and product signs were positive but insignificant. The moderation role of marketing skills in product, pricing, promotion, and place strategies also shows positive and significant results for the pricing and promotion strategies. However, when the marketing skills variables were integrated with the marketing strategies and sales performance, the influence was positive but insignificant.

# 5.4 Implication of the Study Findings

This study has theory, policy, and practical implications, concerning the influence of marketing strategies in improvement of the sales performance of round potato produce in the Njombe region.

**5.4.1 Practical Implications**

On a practical level, the study highlights a need for capacity building initiatives that focus on improving the marketing competencies of round potato farmers in the Njombe region. Training programs should focus on product packaging, pricing negotiation, customer engagement, digital marketing (social media use), and market research. For instance, the study found that only a small percentage of farmers used promotional tools like posters or social media. By equipping farmers with practical skills and marketing knowledge, they can better implement promotional strategies and respond to market demands, thereby increasing profitability.

Additionally, institutions such as NGOs, agricultural training centers, and local government units can play a major role in facilitating capacity building efforts. Cooperatives or farmer groups could enhance power and reduce reliance on intermediaries, who benefit more than the farmers through collective marketing strategies. The round collection centres in rural areas can be also established to foster selling of the round potato produce in the collective way.

Considering the moderating influence of marketing abilities on sales performance, farmers in the Njombe region should focus on enhancing their pricing and promotion strategies. Investments to train them on marketing capabilities are crucial for effectively deploying the marketing strategies. Also, strengthening sales performance can be achieved by prioritizing social media advertising, refining product presentation, and exploring dynamic pricing strategies. Collaborative efforts among farmers to share best practices and insights into efficient marketing techniques would be beneficial. Additionally, seeking direct market access and exploring alternative distribution channels can help bypass intermediaries, potentially enhancing profitability.

Regional authorities play a vital role in supporting farmers in their pursuits. There is a pressing need for regional support programs that offer farmers training and workshops to enhance their marketing skills. Moreover, establishing infrastructure such as cooperatives or farmer markets can facilitate direct market access for agricultural produce. Additionally, investing in upgraded road infrastructure is crucial to reduce transportation expenses and enhance market accessibility, especially for farmers located farther from critical roadways. Further support for farmers' marketing can be provided by promoting networking opportunities, disseminating market information, and fostering collaboration among farmers.

Low agriculture productivity, poor farming skills, restricted access to credit, markets, and price information, and cumbersome procedures of introducing new potato seed varieties tend to affect small-scale farmers in the Njombe region. Training opportunities on modern methods of farming value addition in processors will enable them to diversify to other potato products such as crisps, French fries, and round potato powder, ensuring the sustainability of sales performance and business growth.

In the round potato sector, the price fluctuates considerably depending on seasons. The result implies a wide range of profit margins and uncertain sales performance among value chain actors. One way of reducing price fluctuation would be to construct village storage facilities for farmers to enjoy the full benefits of a free market environment. This is only possible if farmers are organized into groups of associations, which will increase their bargaining power. Farmers could mobilize savings and credit facilities through associations, which can provide funds for urgent needs and speculate on higher prices when there is a low supply of potatoes in the market.

Assisting farmers in enhancing their marketing strategies, the Ministry of Industry and Trade stands as a valuable resource. Initiating workshops or tailored training programs to improve farmers' marketing proficiency could prove beneficial. Collaborating with academic institutions or industry leaders to offer specialized courses focusing on agricultural marketing techniques would also be advantageous. Establishing a platform or resource centre providing comprehensive market insights, trends, and best practices in agricultural marketing would aid farmers in making informed decisions and refining their marketing strategies.

The Ministry of Agriculture should collaborate with farmers and relevant stakeholders to develop all-encompassing agricultural policies and integrate marketing strategies. Supporting research and development initiatives could enhance marketing strategies and improve the technologies, making round potato produce profitable. Proactive involvement can be encouraged by providing grants or financial incentives to farmers investing in refining their marketing skills or adopting innovative marketing approaches. Moreover, fostering collaborations between farmers and business leaders for capacity-building projects and knowledge exchange would augment marketing capabilities within the agriculture sector.

**5.4.2 Policy Implications**

The study emphasizes the need for government institutions, agricultural extension officers, and development partners to design policies and incorporate marketing training into farmer support programs. Current support mechanisms tend to focus on production efficiency, overlooking post-harvest marketing and sales processes. The findings suggest the government to devise policy that enforce that training on pricing, promotion, and distribution of the round potato produce. The contemporary digital platforms should be emphasized in the policy since it significantly enhances the farmers’ market access and favourable price negotiations. Policies that support infrastructure development like road access and market linkages should also be prioritized to address challenges in place/distribution strategies, which were found to be ineffective. The policy also should prohibit the middlemen to buy the round potato without formal arrangement which encourage higher sales performance. Establishment of the practices such as warehousing techniques should emphasized. The polices should encourage value additional to the round potato produce to fosters its longevity.

The study's groundbreaking outcomes emphasize critical policy suggestions on place/distribution and product strategies for the agricultural sector, particularly concerning round potato farming in Tanzania's Njombe region. Specific policy actions are essential to address the discovery that product and place/distribution methods have a limited impact on sales performance, recognizing the influence of marketing skills on promotion and pricing strategies. The governments should prioritize enhancing farmers' marketing capabilities by offering focused training programs emphasizing pricing and promotion strategies. Establishing better infrastructure, such as improved road networks, is crucial, facilitating direct market access. Collaboration among farmers, industry stakeholders, and experts is vital through knowledge-sharing networks. These initiatives should also encourage innovation and research in sustainable marketing strategies specific to round potato farming**.**

To enhance marketing strategies and capabilities, initiatives aim to promote collaboration, enhance capacity, and allocate resources effectively. This collective effort will bolster sales performance and sustainably improve the Njombe region's capacity to produce round potatoes. The government should create a favourable environment regulating the round potato value chain operations by subsidizing the cost of farm inputs like fertilizers and pesticides to increase production. In addition, programs aimed at advancing seed varieties and modern farming should be supported to improve productivity and yields, boosting sales performance at the farm level. Further, the performance of the round potato value chain is closely linked to the price of round potato in domestic and regional markets. Therefore, minimizing the regulatory burden on agriculture trade could be a significant economic and social benefit in the Njombe region. This could not only lead to higher farm-gate prices that incentivize farmers to raise crop yields but would directly benefit some of the poorest individuals; most of particular note, many scales round potato farmers and small traders are poor women who are likely to be particularly disadvantaged by burdensome rules and regulations and due to low level of literacy, time-constraints due to family commitments and gender biases in distribution.

Insufficient and low-quality round potato storage continues to serve as a constraint to efficient round potato marketing. Weaknesses in risks and handling also result in health risks. The study recommends the government initiate interventions to provide credit and storage facilities for trades and processors. The results show that this will assist them in increasing the volume of sales. The increased sales volume will benefit producers, wholesale, and retailers and attract other farmers to invest in round potato production. The government should strengthen transportation infrastructure, and this will ensure reliable distribution channels for round potatoes. Also, prices will be achieved at the farm gates, and market information will be disseminated to benefit round potato value chain actors in the Njombe region.

# Theoretical Implications

The study's distinctive utilization of the four Ps of marketing strategy to assess their impact on the sales performance of round potato produce in Tanzania's Njombe region is its primary contribution to the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory. By integrating the RBV theory into its framework, the study explores marketing strategies as influential resources affecting sales performance.

Historically, the RBV theory has under 4Ps, a firm's capacity to strategically deploy its resources and competencies to attain a sustainable competitive advantage. In this context, the research creatively employs marketing tactics (specifically, the 4 Ps: Product, Price, Place, and Promotion) as fundamental tools within the RBV framework. It acknowledges that adept utilization of these marketing tactics can serve as crucial assets supporting sales of a round potato crop.

Moreover, the study extends the applicability of the RBV theory by incorporating marketing capabilities as a moderator in this investigation. This inclusion recognizes the significance of human abilities, particularly marketing skills, in augmenting and magnifying the impact of marketing tactics on sales performance. It underscores the strategies and the human competencies involved in their execution, which are pivotal in enhancing sales performance. It demonstrates the interaction between marketing strategies (promotion and pricing) and marketing skills in shaping sales outcomes.

Significantly advancing the theoretical understanding within the RBV framework, this research is the inaugural attempt to apply the RBV theory to analyze round potato produce sales performance using the 4Ps of marketing strategy and incorporating marketing skills as a moderator. This study enriches comprehension of how human and marketing resources collaborate to establish and sustain a firm's competitive advantage in the agricultural sector, specifically in the context of round potato farming in Tanzania's Njombe region.

The study contributed to the knowledge on agricultural marketing by confirming the moderating role of marketing skills in enhancing the influence of 4Ps strategies (Product, Price, Place, and Promotion). this study highlights the conditional effects of farmers’ marketing competencies, while previous literature has primarily focused on direct relationships between marketing strategies and sales performance. The results show that marketing strategies alone are insufficient for improving sales performance unless complemented by adequate marketing skills. This underscores the importance of marketing skills development into models that assess agricultural marketing performance in the developing economies.

The research contributed the RBV theory by treating the marketing skills as important internal resource that that promoted the sales performance of round potato crop with the assistance of product, place, pricing and promotion marketing strategies. The literature indicated lack of studies that considered the marketing strategies as a resource to improve sales performance for round potato farmers in Tanzania. This study elucidated how market skills explain the relationship between product, place, pricing and promotion marketing strategies and round potato sales performance. The study applied RBV to discern its application in the rural farmers environment to determine how product, place, pricing and promotion and marketing skills as internal resources influencing farmers' round potato sales performance in Njombe region in Tanzania. Hence, applications of RBV enlighten how the marketing strategies may be integrated with the farmer's marketing skills to enhance round potato sales performance in Tanzania.

# 5.7 Limitations of the Study

The present study has been comprehensive in its focus, primarily on exploring the marketing strategies that influence the sales performance of round potatoes. With a particular emphasis on investigating the moderation role of marketing skills, the study concentrated only on the 4Ps of marketing strategies, leaving out other marketing strategies.

Moreover, due to limitations caused by inadequate funding, the study concentrated only on the Njombe region. Ideally, adequate funding could facilitate the research coverage in multiple areas across Tanzania. This scenario could help comprehensively understand the marketing strategies employed in different contexts. As a result, the study's findings cannot be generalized to all potato- growing regions in Tanzania.

Furthermore, the study relied on cross-sectional data collected at once. This methodological design highlights the current state of marketing strategies and sales performance but does not capture changes and trends over time.

# 5.8 The Direction for Future Studies Study

There is a need for future studies to consider new developments in imparting knowledge and skills among other round potato value chain participants, such as wholesalers, retailers, and processors, with more emphasis on pricing strategy, product, pricing, place, and promotion strategies. The coming studies may focus on other marketing strategies, such as competitive or Porter’s forces. Future studies can further explore the reasons behind the apparent lack of impact observed in product and place/distribution strategies regarding sales performance. Examining specific nuances or contextual factors that might influence the effectiveness of these strategies within the round potato market could offer valuable insights. A detailed investigation into regional preferences, consumer behaviour, or market dynamics might elucidate these aspects further.

Additional research could concentrate on enhancing promotion and pricing strategies and their interaction with marketing skills concerning round potato sales. Investigating the particular components within these strategies that contribute to improved sales outcomes and exploring how marketing skills can augment their effectiveness could be an avenue for investigation. Moreover, conducting in-depth analyses of different promotional channels and pricing models might provide nuanced insights into enhancing sales performance. Considering the dynamic nature of these interactions, conducting longitudinal studies that track changes in marketing strategies and their impact on sales success over time may yield valuable data.

Future research could explore integrating technology and innovation into marketing strategies for round potato produce. An exciting focus could involve assessing the impact of supply chain enhancements, innovative packaging techniques, and digital marketing tools on sales performance. A more comprehensive approach considering marketing strategies and other management and operational factors influencing sales performance might provide deeper insights. Future research could concentrate on aligning marketing strategies and sustainable farming practices. It's essential to focus on the potential impact of sustainability initiatives, ethical considerations, and environmentally friendly methods on the sales performance of round potato markets.

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# APPENDICES

# APPENDIX I: FARMERS’ QUESTIONNAIRE

**Individual Sample Questionnaire for Round Potato Farmers**

Dear Respondents.

I am Stanley Yono Kevela, a PhD candidate at the Open University of Tanzania, currently researching the “Influence of Marketing Strategies on Sales Performance among Round Potato Value Chain Participants.” You have been selected to participate in this study. Kindly respond to the questions as carefully as possible. Complete information will be treated with strict confidence, and this data is purely for academic purposes. Thank you for your kind cooperation.

# SECTION A: Background Information

1.0 Region……………………………………. …..1.1 District………………….

1.2 Ward………………………………………1.3 village…………………..

1.4 Sub village…………………….…………………….

1. Sex of respondent 1= Male ( ) 2 = Female ( )
2. Age of Respondent …………………….
3. Marital status 1 = Married ( ) 2= Single ( ) 3 = Divorced ( ) 4 = Widowed ( )
4. Level of Education

1 = No formal Education ( ) 2=Primary Education ( ) 3 = Secondary education ( ) 4 = Tertiary education ( )

# SECTION B: The influence of marketing strategies on sales and profitability

1. **Product Strategies**
   1. Please explain the status of product strategies employed by farmers and how the product strategy influences the sales performance of round potato crop
   2. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements relating to product strategies and their influence on the sales performance of round potato crops in the Njombe region.

1= strongly disagree (SD) 2=disagree (D) 3=Neither agree nor disagree (N), 4=agree (A) 5=strongly agree (SA)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statements** | **1**  **SD** | **2**  **D** | **3**  **N** | **4**  **A** | **5**  **SA** |
| I grow the type of variety required by customers. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I manage my farms well to produce quality round potato crops. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I pack my round potato well to attract customers. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I do not mix small and large potatoes in the same bag/container. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I do not mix the rotten and un rotten round potatoes. |  |  |  |  |  |

**Promotion Strategies**

* 1. Please explain the status of promotion strategies employed by farmers and how the product strategy influences the sales performance of round potato crop. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements about promotion strategies and their influence on the sales performance of round potato crops in the Njombe region.

1= strongly disagree (SD) 2=disagree (D) 3=Neither agree nor disagree (N), 4=agree (A) 5=strongly agree (SA)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statements** | **1**  **SD** | **2**  **D** | **3**  **N** | **4**  **A** | **5**  **SA** |
| I wouldn't say I like the round potato myself by moving around searching for customers. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I advertise my round potato on the radio. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I advertise my round potatoes through a blog. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I advertise my round potato on WhatsApp |  |  |  |  |  |
| I advertise my round potato on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I advertise my round potato on TV. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I advertise my round potato in a newspaper. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I request influential people to advertise my round potato  produce. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I use the poster to inform customers about my round potato product. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I deliberately sell my round potato cheaply to attract many customers. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I give customers small gifts to attract them to buy again my  round potato. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I use excellent and attractive language so that customers may inform others about my products. |  |  |  |  |  |

**Pricing** Strategies

* 1. Please explain the status of pricing strategies employed by farmers and how the product strategy influences the sales performance of round potato crop
  2. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements relating to pricing strategies and their influence on the sales performance of round potato crops in the Njombe region.

1= strongly disagree (SD) 2=disagree (D) 3=Neither agree nor disagree (N), 4=agree (A) 5=strongly agree (SA)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statements** | **1**  **SD** | **2**  **D** | **3**  **N** | **4**  **A** | **5**  **SA** |
| When I arrange the price, I first calculate the cost and add a margin on the costs. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I charge low prices to sell large volumes of the produce. |  |  |  |  |  |
| The intermediaries give prices, and I do not influence the prices. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I charge prices based on the financial capacity of the customers. |  |  |  |  |  |

1. **Place/distribution** Strategies
   1. Please explain the status of pricing strategies employed by farmers and how the Place/distribution strategies influence the sales performance of round potato crop
   2. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements relating to Place/distribution strategies and their influence on the sales performance of round potato crops in the Njombe region.

1= strongly disagree (SD) 2=disagree (D) 3=Neither agree nor disagree (N), 4=agree (A) 5=strongly agree (SA)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statements** | **1**  **SD** | **2**  **D** | **3**  **N** | **4**  **A** | **5**  **SA** |
| My round potato farm is located near the road. |  |  |  |  |  |
| The selling place of my round potato is located near the road. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I sell my round potato myself by transporting it to the marketplaces. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I sell my round potato using intermediaries. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I sell my round potato to institutions. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I sell my round potato to retailers. |  |  |  |  |  |
| I sell my round potato to royal customers. |  |  |  |  |  |

**Moderating variables of marketing skills**

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements relating to the role of marketing skills and their influence on the sales performance of round potato crops in the Njombe region.

1= strongly disagree (SD) 2=disagree (D) 3=Neither agree nor disagree (N), 4=agree (A) 5=strongly agree (SA)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statements** | **1**  **SD** | **2**  **D** | **3**  **N** | **4**  **A** | **5**  **SA** |
| My skills in marketing planning promote round potato sales performance. |  |  |  |  |  |
| My skills in segment and targeting promote round potato sales |  |  |  |  |  |
| Performance |  |  |  |  |  |
| My skills in marketing management promote round potato sales performance. |  |  |  |  |  |
| My skills in the 4Ps of marketing strategies promote round potato sales performance. |  |  |  |  |  |
| My skills in marketing processes promote round potato sales  performance. |  |  |  |  |  |

**Sales performance**

Please indicate your level of agreement on the contribution of the 4Ps of strategies and their influence on sales performance (profitability) of the round potato crop in the Njombe

region.

1= strongly disagree (SD) 2=disagree (D) 3=Neither agree nor disagree (N), 4=agree (A) 5=strongly agree (SA)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statements** | **1**  **SD** | **2**  **D** | **3**  **N** | **4**  **A** | **5**  **SA** |
| The revenue obtained from the round potato sales promote the sales performance of round potato sales in the Njombe region |  |  |  |  |  |
| The farming costs and marketing costs are reasonable to promote sales performance of the round produce in Njombe region |  |  |  |  |  |
| The gross profit margin (Revenue-Costs) is reasonable to promote sales performance of the round produce in Njombe region |  |  |  |  |  |

# APPENDIX 2: OBSERVATIONAL CHECKLIST

**Product Strategies**

* Quality of round potato sold
* Packaging techniques

**Pricing Strategies**

* Pricing structure for round potato produce
* Pricing influence on round potato sales

**Promotional strategies**

* Presence of promotion materials such as posters, leaflets, brochures
* Presence of promotional pricing or discounts
* The use of customer care survives when selling the round potato produce

**Place/Distribution Strategies**

* Distance from farms to the market
* Major buyers of round potato produce
* Condition of the current market

# APPENDIX 3: RAW DATA

**Regression analysis without moderator all variables**

**Model Summary** **Regression analysis without moderator all variables**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Model Summaryb** | | | | | |
| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Durbin-Watson |
| 1 | 0.839a | 0.822 | 0.7980 | 0.77048 | 1.843 |
| a. Predictors: (Constant), Average Promotion variables, Average pricing strategies, Average Product Strategies, Average place strategies | | | | | |
| b. Dependent Variable: My market strategy influence sales volume | | | | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ANOVAa** | | | | | | |
| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| 1 | Regression | 98.013 | 4 | 24.503 | 15.181 | .000b |
| Residual | 411.599 | 255 | 1.614 |  |  |
| Total | 509.612 | 259 |  |  |  |
| a. Dependent Variable: My market strategy influence sales volume | | | | | | |
| b. Predictors: (Constant), Average Promotion variables, Average pricing strategies, Average Product Strategies, Average place strategies | | | | | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Coefficientsa** | | | | | | | | |
| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. | Collinearity Statistics | |
| B | Std. Error | Beta | Tolerance | VIF |
| 1 | (Constant) | 1.083 | .271 |  | 3.996 | .000 |  |  |
| Average pricing strategies | 0.301 | 0.083 | .210 | 3.643 | .000 | .949 | 1.054 |
| Average place strategies | 0.030 | 0.015 | .015 | .257 | .797 | .939 | 1.065 |
| Average Product Strategies | 0.073 | 0.143 | 0.029 | .508 | .612 | .987 | 1.013 |
| Average Promotion variables | 1.231 | 0.195 | 1.163 | 6.323 | .000 | .962 | 1.039 |
| a. Dependent Variable: My market strategy influence sales volume | | | | | | | | |

**Pricing strategies as moderator**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Model Summaryc** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Change Statistics | | | | | Durbin-Watson |
| R Square Change | F Change | df1 | df2 | Sig. F Change |
| 1 | 0.839a | 0.822 | 0.798 | 0.46121 | 0.822 | 17.037 | 1 | 258 | 0.000 |  |
| 2 | 0.893b | 0.861 | 0.823 | 0.37601 | 0.039 | 365.943 | 1 | 257 | 0.000 | 1.988 |
| a. Predictors: (Constant), Average pricing strategies | | | | | | | | | | |
| b. Predictors: (Constant), Average pricing strategies, Marketing skills influences the sales growth | | | | | | | | | | |
| c. Dependent Variable: My market strategy influence sales volume | | | | | | | | | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ANOVAa** | | | | | | |
| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| 1 | Regression | 31.568 | 1 | 31.568 | 17.037 | .000b |
| Residual | 478.044 | 258 | 1.853 |  |  |
| Total | 509.612 | 259 |  |  |  |
| 2 | Regression | 312.391 | 2 | 156.195 | 203.540 | .000c |
| Residual | 197.221 | 257 | .767 |  |  |
| Total | 509.612 | 259 |  |  |  |
| a. Dependent Variable: My market strategy influence sales volume | | | | | | |
| b. Predictors: (Constant), Average pricing strategies | | | | | | |
| c. Predictors: (Constant), Average pricing strategies, Marketing skills influences the sales growth | | | | | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Coefficientsa** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Model | | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | | | | Standardized Coefficients | | t | | Sig. | Collinearity Statistics | | | |
| B | | Std. Error | | | Beta | | Tolerance | | | VIF |
| 1 | (Constant) | | 1.020 | | .235 | | |  | | 4.336 | | 0.000 |  | | |  |
| Average pricing strategies | | 0.356 | | 0.086 | | | 0.249 | | 4.128 | | 0.000 | 1.000 | | | 1.000 |
| 2 | (Constant) | | 0.401 | | 0.162 | | |  | | 2..475 | | 0.000 |  | | |  |
| Average pricing strategies | | 0.222 | | .056 | | | 0.155 | | 3.971 | | 0.000 | .984 | | | 1.016 |
| Marketing skills influences the sales growth | | 0.716 | | 0.037 | | | 0.748 | | 19.130 | | 0.000 | .984 | | | 1.016 |
| a. Dependent Variable: My market strategy influence sales volume | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Excluded Variablesa** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Model | | | | Beta In | | t | Sig. | | Partial Correlation | | Collinearity Statistics | | | | | |
| Tolerance | | | VIF | Minimum Tolerance | |
| 1 | | Marketing skills influences the sales growth | | 0.748b | | 19.130 | .000 | | .766 | | .984 | | | 1.016 | .984 | |
| a. Dependent Variable: My market strategy influence sales volume | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| b. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Average pricing strategies | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Product strategies Model Summaryc** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Change Statistics | | | | | Durbin-Watson |
| R Square Change | F Change | df1 | df2 | Sig. F Change |
| 1 | 0.719a | 0.708 | 0.604 | 0.80518 | 0.708 | 12.092 | 1 | 258 | 0.762 |  |
| 2 | 0.768b | 0.726 | 0.687 | 0.20197 | 0.018 | 369.186 | 1 | 257 | 0.000 | 1.532 |
| a. Predictors: (Constant), Average Product Strategies | | | | | | | | | | |
| b. Predictors: (Constant), Average Product Strategies, Marketing skills influences the sales growth | | | | | | | | | | |
| c. Dependent Variable: My market strategy influence sales volume | | | | | | | | | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ANOVAa** | | | | | | |
| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| 1 | Regression | .181 | 1 | .181 | .092 | .762b |
| Residual | 509.430 | 258 | 1.975 |  |  |
| Total | 509.612 | 259 |  |  |  |
| 2 | Regression | 300.531 | 2 | 150.265 | 184.705 | .000c |
| Residual | 209.081 | 257 | .814 |  |  |
| Total | 509.612 | 259 |  |  |  |
| a. Dependent Variable: My market strategy influence sales volume | | | | | | |
| b. Predictors: (Constant), Average Product Strategies | | | | | | |
| c. Predictors: (Constant), Average Product Strategies, Marketing skills influences the sales growth | | | | | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Coefficientsa** | | | | | | | | |
| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. | Collinearity Statistics | |
| B | Std. Error | Beta | Tolerance | VIF |
| 1 | (Constant) | 2.095 | .562 |  | 3.729 | .000 |  |  |
| Average Product Strategies | 0.048 | 0.419 | 0.019 | 1.482 | 0.062 | 1.000 | 1.000 |
| 2 | (Constant) | 0.327 | 0.169 |  | 1.935 | 0.049 |  |  |
| Average Product Strategies | 0.055 | 0.101 | 0.022 | 0.546 | 0.585 | 1.000 | 1.000 |
| Marketing skills influences the sales growth | 0.735 | 0.038 | 0.768 | 19.214 | 0.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 |
| a. Dependent Variable: My market strategy influence sales volume | | | | | | | | |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Excluded Variablesa** | | | | | | | | |
| Model | | Beta In | t | Sig. | Partial Correlation | Collinearity Statistics | | |
| Tolerance | VIF | Minimum Tolerance |
| 1 | Marketing skills influences the sales growth | 0.768b | 19.214 | 0.000 | .768 | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 |
| a. Dependent Variable: My market strategy influence sales volume | | | | | | | | |
| b. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Average Product Strategies | | | | | | | | |

**Promotion variables moderation**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Model Summaryc** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Model | R | | R Square | Adjusted R Square | | Std. Error of the Estimate | | Change Statistics | | | | | | | | Durbin-Watson |
| R Square Change | F Change | | df1 | df2 | | Sig. F Change | |
| 1 | 0.883a | | 0.746 | 0.7143 | | 0.69844 | | 0.746 | 44.268 | | 1 | 258 | | 0.000 | |  |
| 2 | 0.859b | | 0.842 | 0.788 | | 0.49989 | | 0.096 | 280.143 | | 1 | 257 | | 0.000 | | 1.918 |
| a. Predictors: (Constant), Average Promotion variables | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| b. Predictors: (Constant), Average Promotion variables, Marketing skills influences the sales growth | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| c. Dependent Variable: My market strategy influence sales volume | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| **ANOVAa** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Model | | | | | Sum of Squares | | df | | | Mean Square | | | F | | Sig. | |
| 1 | | Regression | | | 74.634 | | 1 | | | 74.634 | | | 44.268 | | 0.000b | |
| Residual | | | 434.977 | | 258 | | | 1.686 | | |  | |  | |
| Total | | | 509.612 | | 259 | | |  | | |  | |  | |
| 2 | | Regression | | | 301.494 | | 2 | | | 150.747 | | | 186.154 | | 0.000c | |
| Residual | | | 208.118 | | 257 | | | .810 | | |  | |  | |
| Total | | | 509.612 | | 259 | | |  | | |  | |  | |
| a. Dependent Variable: My market strategy influence sales volume | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| b. Predictors: (Constant), Average Promotion variables | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| c. Predictors: (Constant), Average Promotion variables, Marketing skills influences the sales growth | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Coefficientsa** | | | | | | | | |
| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. | Collinearity Statistics | |
| B | Std. Error | Beta | Tolerance | VIF |
| 1 | (Constant) | 1.099 | 0.315 |  | 3.488 | 0.000 |  |  |
| Average Promotion variables | 1.298 | 0.195 | 1.183 | 6.653 | 0.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 |
| 2 | (Constant) | 1.186 | 0.219 |  | 5.41 | 0.000 |  |  |
| Average Promotion variables | 0.94 | 0.151 | 0.754 | 6.220 | 0.000 | 0.805 | 1.242 |
| Marketing skills influences the sales growth | 0.712 | 0.043 | 0.644 | 16.737 | 0.000 | 0.805 | 1.242 |
| a. Dependent Variable: My market strategy influence sales volume | | | | | | | | |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Excluded Variablesa** | | | | | | | | |
| Model | | Beta In | t | Sig. | Partial Correlation | Collinearity Statistics | | |
| Tolerance | VIF | Minimum Tolerance |
| 1 | Marketing skills influences the sales growth | .744b | 16.737 | .000 | .722 | .805 | 1.242 | .805 |
| a. Dependent Variable: My market strategy influence sales volume | | | | | | | | |
| b. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Average Promotion variables | | | | | | | | |

**Place/Distribution variables moderation**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Model Summaryc** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Change Statistics | | | | | Durbin-Watson |
| R Square Change | F Change | df1 | df2 | Sig. F Change |
| 1 | 0.672a | 0.613 | 0.509 | 0.69656 | 0.613 | 3.289 | 1 | 258 | 0.071 |  |
| 2 | 0.768b | 0.750 | 0.686 | 0.40210 | 0.137 | 361.339 | 1 | 257 | .000 | 1.529 |
| a. Predictors: (Constant), Average place strategies | | | | | | | | | | |
| b. Predictors: (Constant), Average place strategies, Marketing skills influences the sales growth | | | | | | | | | | |
| c. Dependent Variable: My market strategy influence sales volume | | | | | | | | | | |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ANOVAa** | | | | | | |
| Model | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| 1 | Regression | 6.414 | 1 | 6.414 | 3.289 | .071b |
| Residual | 503.197 | 258 | 1.950 |  |  |
| Total | 509.612 | 259 |  |  |  |
| 2 | Regression | 300.468 | 2 | 150.234 | 184.611 | .000c |
| Residual | 209.144 | 257 | .814 |  |  |
| Total | 509.612 | 259 |  |  |  |
| a. Dependent Variable: My market strategy influence sales volume | | | | | | |
| b. Predictors: (Constant), Average place strategies | | | | | | |
| c. Predictors: (Constant), Average place strategies, Marketing skills influences the sales growth | | | | | | |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Coefficientsa** | | | | | | | | |
| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. | Collinearity Statistics | |
| B | Std. Error | Beta | Tolerance | VIF |
| 1 | (Constant) | 1.429 | 0.288 |  | 4.958 | 0.000 |  |  |
| Average place strategies | 0.223 | 0.123 | 0.112 | 1.814 | 0.071 | 1.000 | 1.000 |
| 2 | (Constant) | 0.505 | 0.192 |  | 2.626 | 0.009 |  |  |
| Average place strategies | 0.038 | 0.081 | 0.019 | 0.470 | 0.638 | 0.971 | 1.030 |
| Marketing skills influences the sales growth | 0.738 | 0.039 | 0.771 | 19.009 | 0.000 | 0.971 | 1.030 |
| a. Dependent Variable: My market strategy influence sales volume | | | | | | | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Excluded Variablesa** | | | | | | | | |
| Model | | Beta In | t | Sig. | Partial Correlation | Collinearity Statistics | | |
| Tolerance | VIF | Minimum Tolerance |
| 1 | Marketing skills influences the sales growth | .771b | 19.009 | .000 | .764 | .971 | 1.030 | .971 |
| a. Dependent Variable: My market strategy influence sales volume | | | | | | | | |
| b. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Average place strategies | | | | | | | | |

**All four variables with a moderator**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Model Summaryc** | | | | | | | | | | |
| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Change Statistics | | | | | Durbin-Watson |
| R Square Change | F Change | df1 | df2 | Sig. F Change |
| 1 | 0.839a | 0.822 | 0.798 | 0.77048 | 0.822 | 15.181 | 4 | 255 | .000 |  |
| 2 | 0.896b | 0.851 | 0.810 | 0.47588 | 0.029 | 282.513 | 1 | 254 | .000 | 1.590 |
| a. Predictors: (Constant), Average Promotion variables, Average pricing strategies, Average Product Strategies, Average place strategies | | | | | | | | | | |
| b. Predictors: (Constant), Average Promotion variables, Average pricing strategies, Average Product Strategies, Average place strategies, Marketing skills influences the sales growth | | | | | | | | | | |
| c. Dependent Variable: My market strategy influence sales volume | | | | | | | | | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **ANOVAa** | | | | | | |
| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| 1 | Regression | 98.013 | 4 | 24.503 | 15.181 | .000b |
| Residual | 411.599 | 255 | 1.614 |  |  |
| Total | 509.612 | 259 |  |  |  |
| 2 | Regression | 314.749 | 5 | 62.950 | 82.054 | .000c |
| Residual | 194.862 | 254 | .767 |  |  |
| Total | 509.612 | 259 |  |  |  |
| a. Dependent Variable: My market strategy influence sales volume | | | | | | |
| b. Predictors: (Constant), Average Promotion variables, Average pricing strategies, Average Product Strategies, Average place strategies | | | | | | |
| c. Predictors: (Constant), Average Promotion variables, Average pricing strategies, Average Product Strategies, Average place strategies, Marketing skills influences the sales growth | | | | | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Coefficientsa** | | | | | | | | |
| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. | Collinearity Statistics | |
| B | Std. Error | Beta | Tolerance | VIF |
| 1 | (Constant) | 1.083 | 0.271 |  | 3.996 | 0.000 |  |  |
| Average pricing strategies | 0.301 | 0.083 | 0.210 | 3.643 | 0.000 | 0.949 | 1.054 |
| Average place strategies | 0.030 | 0.015 | 0.015 | 0.257 | 0.797 | 0.939 | 1.065 |
| Average Product Strategies | 0.073 | 0.143 | 0.029 | 0.508 | 0.612 | 0.987 | 1.013 |
| Average Promotion variables | 1.231 | 0.195 | 1.163 | 6.323 | 0.000 | 0.962 | 1.039 |
| 2 | (Constant) | 1.115 | 0.467 |  | 2.387 | 0.000 |  |  |
| Average place strategies | 0.109 | 0.080 | 0.055 | 1.367 | 0.173 | 0.929 | 1.077 |
| Average pricing strategies | 0.234 | 0.057 | 0.163 | 4.095 | 0.000 | 0.944 | 1.059 |
| Average Product Strategies | 0.029 | 0.099 | 0.011 | 0.293 | 0.770 | 0.983 | 1.017 |
| Average Promotion variables | 0.289 | 0.148 | 0.148 | 1.953 | 0.000 | 0.786 | 1.272 |
| Marketing skills influences the sales growth | 0.704 | 0.042 | 0.735 | 16.808 | 0.000 | 0.787 | 1.271 |
| a. Dependent Variable: My market strategy influence sales volume | | | | | | | | |

# APPENDIX 4: PRINCIPLE COMPONENT ANALYSIS

**Product strategies**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Communalities** | | |
|  | Initial | Extraction |
| I grow the type of variety required by customers | 1.000 | .830 |
| I manage my farms well to produce the quality round potato crops | 1.000 | .818 |
| I do not mix small and large potato in the same bag/container | 1.000 | .712 |
| I do not mix the rotten and un rotten round potatoes | 1.000 | .478 |
| I pack my round potato well in order to attract customers | 1.000 | .435 |
| Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Total Variance Explained** | | | | | | |
| Component | Initial Eigenvalues | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | | |
| Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 2.175 | 43.495 | 43.495 | 2.175 | 43.495 | 43.495 |
| 2 | 1.098 | 21.957 | 65.452 | 1.098 | 21.957 | 65.452 |
| 3 | .867 | 17.344 | 82.796 |  |  |  |
| 4 | .586 | 11.712 | 94.508 |  |  |  |
| 5 | .275 | 5.492 | 100.000 |  |  |  |
| Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. | | | | | | |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Component Matrixa** | | |
|  | Component | |
| 1 | 2 |
| I grow the type of variety required by customers | .778 | .474 |
| I manage my farms well to produce the quality round potato crops | .826 | .368 |
| I do not mix small and large potato in the same bag/container | -.513 | .670 |
| I do not mix the rotten and un rotten round potatoes | .670 | -.173 |
| I pack my round potato well in order to attract customers | -.419 | .509 |
| Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  a. 2 components extracted. | | |

**Promotion strategies**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Communalities** | | |
|  | Initial | Extraction |
| I use a good and attracting language so that customers may inform other s on my products | 1.000 | .837 |
| I walk around searching for customers | 1.000 | .779 |
| I give customers small gifts to attract them to buy again my round potato | 1.000 | .734 |
| I sell my round potato in a low price deliberately so as to attract many customers | 1.000 | .733 |
| I use the poster to inform customers about my round potato product | 1.000 | .694 |
| I advertise my round potato in the facebook, Instagram or twitter | 1.000 | .680 |
| Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Total Variance Explained** | | | | | | |
| Component | Initial Eigenvalues | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | | |
| Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 3.716 | 30.963 | 30.963 | 3.716 | 30.963 | 30.963 |
| 2 | 1.664 | 13.867 | 44.830 | 1.664 | 13.867 | 44.830 |
| 3 | 1.215 | 10.126 | 54.956 | 1.215 | 10.126 | 54.956 |
| 4 | 1.096 | 9.131 | 64.087 | 1.096 | 9.131 | 64.087 |
| 5 | .994 | 8.284 | 72.371 |  |  |  |
| 6 | .745 | 6.210 | 78.580 |  |  |  |
| 7 | .620 | 5.170 | 83.750 |  |  |  |
| 8 | .548 | 4.568 | 88.318 |  |  |  |
| 9 | .494 | 4.120 | 92.439 |  |  |  |
| 10 | .417 | 3.478 | 95.916 |  |  |  |
| 11 | .288 | 2.404 | 98.320 |  |  |  |
| 12 | .202 | 1.680 | 100.000 |  |  |  |
| Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. | | | | | | |

**Promotion strategies**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Component Matrixa** | | | | |
|  | Component | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| I use a good and attracting language so that customers may inform others on my products | .747 | .176 | -.378 |  |
| I walk around searching for customers | .722 |  | .286 | .123 |
| I give customers small gifts to attract them to buy again my round potato | .654 | -.280 | .132 | -.149 |
| I sell my round potato in a low price deliberately so as to attract many customers | .633 | .585 | -.157 | .107 |
| I use the poster to inform customers about my round potato product | .628 | -.243 | .406 | .275 |
| I advertise my round potato in the facebook, instagramor twitter | .623 | .578 | -.309 | .140 |
| I advertise my round potato in the whatsapp | .592 |  |  | -.295 |
| I advertise my round potato in a newspaper | .378 | -.123 | .145 | -.340 |
| I advertise my round potato in the radio | .542 | -.564 | -.258 |  |
| I advertise my round potato in TV | .321 | -.558 | -.187 | .532 |
| I advertise my round potatoes through blogu | .281 | .256 | .724 |  |
| I request the influential people toadvertise my round potato produce | -.236 | .322 | .203 | .675 |
| Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. | | | | |
| 1. 4 components extracted. | | | | |

**Pricing strategies**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Communalities** | | |
|  | Initial | Extraction |
| I charge price based on the financial capacity of the customers | 1.000 | .705 |
| When i arrange the price first i calculate the cost and add a margin on the costs | 1.000 | .692 |
| Prices are given by the middlemen and i do not have influence on the prices | 1.000 | .551 |
| I charge low price so as to sell large volume of the produce | 1.000 | .407 |
| Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Total Variance Explained** | | | | | | |
| Component | Initial Eigenvalues | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | | |
| Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 2.055 | 51.367 | 51.367 | 2.055 | 51.367 | 51.367 |
| 2 | .760 | 19.011 | 70.379 | 1.965 | 9.131 | 60.497 |
| 3 | .673 | 16.835 | 87.213 |  |  |  |
| 4 | .511 | 12.787 | 100.000 |  |  |  |
| Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. | | | | | | |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Component Matrixa** | |
|  | Component |
| 1 |
| I charge price based on the financial capacity of the customers | .778 |
| When i arrange the price first i calculate the cost and add a margin on the costs | .742 |
| Prices are given by the middlemen and i do not have influence on the prices | .702 |
| I charge low price so as to sell large volume of the produce | .638 |
| Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. | |
| a. 2 components extracted. | |

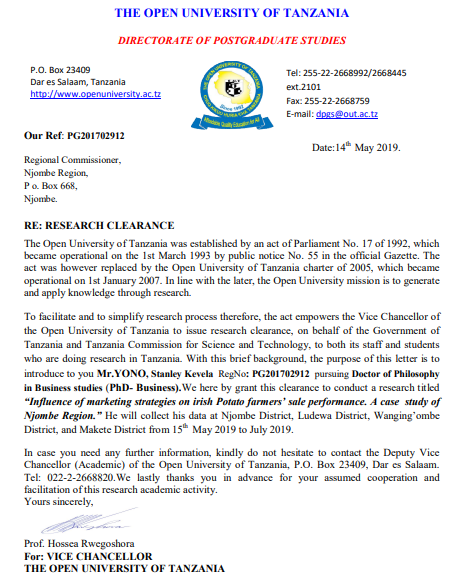
**Place strategies**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Communalities** | | |
|  | Initial | Extraction |
| I sell my round potato by using the middlemen | 1.000 | .825 |
| My round potato farm is located near to the road | 1.000 | .801 |
| My selling place of my round potato is located near to the road | 1.000 | .770 |
| I sell my round potato myself by transporting it to the market places | 1.000 | .760 |
| I sell my round potato to institutions | 1.000 | .649 |
| Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Component | Initial Eigenvalues | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | | | | | | |
| Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | | % of Variance | | | Cumulative % | |
| 1 | 2.335 | 33.356 | 33.356 | 2.335 | | 33.356 | | | 33.356 | |
| 2 | 1.434 | 20.485 | 53.841 | 1.434 | | 20.485 | | | 53.841 | |
| 3 | 1.253 | 17.898 | 71.739 | 1.253 | | 17.898 | | | 71.739 | |
| 4 | .756 | 10.799 | 82.538 |  | |  | | |  | |
| 5 | .584 | 8.347 | 90.885 |  | |  | | |  | |
| 6 | .382 | 5.450 | 96.335 |  | |  | | |  | |
| 7 | .257 | 3.665 | 100.000 |  | |  | | |  | |
| Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. | | | | | | | | | | |
| **Component Matrixa** | | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | Component | | | | |
| 1 | | 2 | 3 | |
| I sell my round potato by using the middlemen | | | | | .738 | | -.159 | -.281 | |
| My round potato farm is located near to the road | | | | | .717 | |  | -.364 | |
| My selling place of my round potato is located near to the road | | | | | .695 | | -.290 |  | |
| I sell my round potato myself by transporting it to the market places | | | | | .542 | | -.635 | .358 | |
| I sell my round potato to institutions | | | | | .486 | | .549 | .483 | |
| I sell my round potato to royal customers | | | | | .452 | | .545 | .509 | |
| I sell my round potato to retailers | | | | | .244 | | .569 | -.647 | |
| Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. | | | | | | | | | |

# APPENDIX 5: CLEARANCE LETTERS

**OUT CLEARANCE LETTER**



# LOCAL CLEARANCE LETTER

