Original Research

Enhancing Competitive Advantage: A Blend of Marketing Strategies for Micro and Small-Scale Fishery Businesses in Mwanza City

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Abstract

Tanzanian micro and small-scale fishery businesses struggle with limited market share and competitiveness due to ineffective marketing strategies. The purpose of the study was to investigate a blend of marketing strategies enhancing the competitiveness of micro and small-scale fishery businesses. The study utilized a mixed-method research design, combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Quantitative data, collected from 188 respondents through simple random sampling and structured questionnaires, underwent descriptive and regression analysis. Qualitative data derived from eight focus group discussions through purposive sampling, was subjected to thematic analysis. The quantitative study revealed a strong positive correlation between traditional marketing strategies and gaining a competitive edge (p<0.000). Also, the study found a similar strong positive correlation between modern marketing strategies and gaining a competitive edge (p< 0.000). The qualitative study revealed that traditional marketing strategies placed emphasis on customer interaction, flexible pricing, product quality, and efficient stock management, while modern approaches prioritized mobile communication, customer relationship management, and social media presence. The findings imply the crucial role of traditional marketing strategies in shaping Mwanza City's micro and small-scale fishery business, while stressing the increasing importance of integrating modern strategies with traditional approaches to ensure sustained competitiveness and success in the local market. The study unveils fresh insights by emphasizing the blending of traditional and modern marketing strategies for gaining a competitive edge in Tanzanian micro and small-scale fishery businesses.

Keywords: Competitive advantage, marketing strategies, small and micro-scale fishery businesses, Mwanza city, Tanzania.

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Introduction

Aquaculture production mainly fish accounts for 46 percent of total global production and 62 percent of total global sales value (Sheng & Wang, 2020). Fishery sector is the source of income, provides employment and fish contributes to 20 percent of global total per capita intake of animal protein (FAO, 2020). Based on existing statistics, global fish consumption is increasing rapidly due to population growth, making it crucial for the micro and small-scale fishery industry to develop effective marketing strategies to meet the demand (Medard, Dijk, & Hebinck, 2019; Mutambuki, 2011; Viswanathan, Yadav, Sharma, & Dornadula, 2023). Fish consumption in Tanzania contributes to 30 percent of total animal protein intake (Peart, et al., 2021). In Tanzania, the fishery sector employs approximately 200,000 people and accounts for approximately 35 percent of rural employment. Fishermen, processors, traders, intermediaries, laborers, brokers, drivers, transporters, and overseers in the vicinity of Lake Victoria sustain their livelihoods through participation in the micro and small-scale fishery businesses (Medard, Dijk, & Hebinck, 2019).

Despite the high demand for fish products globally and within Africa, 91% of micro and small-scale businesses in Tanzania sell their produce within their immediate vicinity due to poor marketing strategies and lack of knowledge in the field (Korving, 2019). In Tanzania, micro and small-scale fisheries enterprises engage a workforce ranging from 1 to 49 individuals, with a capital investment ceiling of up to TZS 200 million (MIT, 2003). In Tanzania, Lake Victoria has the highest number of fishermen. Mwanza region has the most significant share at 45.7%, followed by Kagera (22.4%), Mara (21.8%), and Geita (8.5%) (URT, 2021). Mwanza city boasts a diverse range of micro and small-scale fish selling markets scattered in various streets. The fish markets in Mwanza are saturated with an abundance of fish and fishery products, leading to intense competition among micro and small-scale businesses engaged in the fish and fishery product industry (Director-MCC, 2017; Issa, 2022). The utilization of less effective marketing strategies exacerbates the situation, hindering micro and small-scale fish and fishery product businesses from expanding their market share and competing with larger industry players. As a result, the effects of aforementioned problem are significant, including limited sales in the local area, limited market share, loss of capital, job losses, and economic instability (Director-MCC, 2017; Issa, 2022).

Existing literature acknowledges that the competitive edge in contemporary fishery businesses requires the integration of both traditional and modern marketing strategies (Eksoz, Mansouri; Fadila, Lupikawaty, Saputra, Nastiti, & Aprianti, 2022; Lalabadi, Sadeghi, & Mireei, 2020; Viswanathan, Yadav, Sharma, & Dornadula, 2023). Nevertheless, there is insufficient evidence in the literature in Tanzania to substantiate the aforementioned claim (Director-MCC, 2017; Issa, 2022). The research problem and gap are rooted in the insufficient information regarding the traditional and modern marketing strategies utilized by micro and small-scale fishery businesses in Mwanza City. Specifically, there is a scarcity of research investigating how these businesses can effectively integrate both traditional and modern marketing approaches to increase their market share and enhance competitive advantage (Issa, 2022; United Republic of Tanzania, 2021). While traditional methods may be well-established and culturally

significant, there is a need to explore how they can be complemented or enhanced by modern marketing techniques to address evolving consumer preferences and market dynamics. Thus, the research problem revolves around identifying the optimal fusion of traditional and modern marketing strategies to enhance the competitive advantage. To answer the problem in question, objective one aimed to identify traditional marketing strategies and their effect in enhancing competitive advantage within the micro and small-scale fishery business in Mwanza City. The second objective focused on identifying modern marketing strategies and their effect in enhancing competitive advantage within the micro and small-scale fishery business in Mwanza City. This research was not only expected to benefit the micro and small-scale fishery industry in Tanzania but also contribute to the global efforts towards sustainable economic growth and development though fishery sector.

Theoretical Literature Review

The Resource-Based Simple View (RBV) theory, originating from Penrose in 1959 and refined by researchers like Barney (1991), serves as a foundational framework for comprehending the role of marketing strategies as sources of competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Penrose, 1959). Competitive advantage, in this context, include increased customer base, higher sales volumes, improved profitability, enhanced customer satisfaction, stronger brand recognition, and increased customer loyalty. This theory posits that a firm's competitive advantage and long-term profitability are tied to its unique and valuable resources. According to RBV, resources and capabilities meeting the criteria of being valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) form the basis for sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Barney, Ketchen, & Wright, 2011). In the context of the micro and small-scale fishery business, where differentiation is crucial, the theory aligns with the study's focus on understanding how distinct resources contribute to competitive advantage. The study utilizes the RBV theory to understand how marketing strategies contribute to gaining a competitive advantage by focusing on the acquisition and utilization of valuable resources.

A fish seller can create a unique selling proposition, differentiate themselves in the market, and build a competitive advantage. The key is to understand customer preferences, adapt to market trends, and consistently deliver high-quality products and services. Resources such as fishing equipment, storage facilities, brand reputation, and marketing expertise become critical components that contribute to the competitive advantage of businesses. Through this study, the research seeks to identify the most effective and unique marketing approaches or combinations thereof that enhance competitive advantage within micro and small-scale fishery businesses.

Empirical Review of Traditional and Modern Marketing Strategies

The Role of Traditional Marketing Strategies in Enhancing Fishery Business Competitive Advantage

In the world of micro and small-scale fishery businesses, traditional marketing strategies are vital for shaping consumer behavior (Mutambuki, 2011). Understanding these strategies is essential for businesses aiming to meet diverse consumer needs and

preferences. For instance, by offering a wide range of fish species and varieties, businesses can enhance consumer satisfaction and loyalty. Freshness plays a crucial role, linked closely to consumer contentment and perceived product quality (Lalabadi, Sadeghi, & Mireei, 2020). Proper storage facilities are essential for maintaining freshness and influencing consumer preferences. Consumers tend to trust fish sourced from natural, reputable locations over domesticated options, emphasizing the significance of authenticity and origin in their choices (Wu & Sun, 2019).

Furthermore, the presence or absence of unpleasant odors significantly affects purchase decisions, highlighting the essence of product quality (Lalabadi, Sadeghi, & Mireei, 2020). The vibrant color of fish gills serves as a visual indicator of freshness, influencing consumer trust and purchasing decisions (Wu & Sun, 2019). Additionally, consumer awareness of the health benefits associated with fish consumption drives their purchasing behavior (Verza, et al., 2023). Health-conscious consumers tend to prefer fish products, underscoring the importance of health-related marketing strategies. In the realm of pricing, finding the right balance between affordability and quality is crucial (Rodriguez & Martinez, 2018). Competitive pricing attracts budget-conscious consumers, while strategic pricing appeals to price-sensitive consumers without compromising profitability.

Brand recognition fosters consumer confidence and trust, distinguishing products and encouraging repeat purchases. Clear and informative packaging is essential, guiding consumers with vital details and influencing their buying decisions. Offering various fish sizes and portions caters to diverse consumer needs, and providing pre-cut options enhances convenience and satisfaction, leading to increased sales (Fadila, Lupikawaty, Saputra, Nastiti, & Aprianti, 2022). Direct transactions, reflecting authenticity and trust, resonate with consumers, fostering strong community connections and encouraging willingness to pay premium prices for quality products (Mutambuki, 2011). In this interplay of marketing strategies, these elements illuminate a path toward consumer satisfaction and enduring loyalty, defining the essence of successful micro and small-scale fishery businesses.

The Role of Modern Marketing Strategies in Enhancing Fishery Business Competitive Advantage

In the ever-changing world of modern marketing, innovative strategies have ushered in a transformative era of dynamic customer engagement, reshaping how businesses connect with their customers. For example, social media platforms have become essential tools, enabling businesses to interact with their customers, enhance brand awareness, and nurture a sense of community (Fadila, Lupikawaty, Saputra, Nastiti, & Aprianti, 2022). Simultaneously, online advertisements strategically placed across websites and social media platforms serve as drivers of targeted traffic, propelling sales and offering a cost-effective means to reach potential customers (Viswanathan, Yadav, Sharma, & Dornadula, 2023). An online shoe retailer, through targeted Facebook ads based on user behavior data, maximizes the likelihood of conversion and advertising investment returns.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) techniques play a pivotal role, enhancing a website's visibility on search engines and ensuring businesses feature prominently in

relevant search results, attracting organic traffic (Fadila, Lupikawaty, Saputra, Nastiti, & Aprianti, 2022). For example, a local bakery implementing SEO ensures its website appears at the top of search results for local customers, driving foot traffic to the store. E-commerce platforms have revolutionized transactional methods, providing digital storefronts that facilitate effortless sales, product displays, and customer interactions (Jizdny, 2020; Sajeev, 2018). A global fashion retailer, through user-friendly interfaces and secure payment gateways, offers a seamless online shopping experience, ensuring convenience and customer satisfaction. Content marketing has become indispensable, involving the creation and dissemination of valuable content designed to captivate and engage specific customers, establishing brand authority and trust (Scott, 2022). A nutritional supplements company, for instance, positions itself as an industry authority by providing expert advice and reliable information, earning customer trust and increasing sales (Verza, et al., 2023). Email marketing campaigns have evolved to deliver personalized messages directly to consumers, intensifying customer engagement and bolstering retention rates. An online bookstore, through personalized email recommendations based on customers' past purchases, enhances customer interaction, increasing the likelihood of repeat purchases.

Mobile marketing strategies, optimized for handheld devices, effectively reach consumers on smartphones and tablets (Kurniawan, Dzikri, & Herman, 2023; Raufjonov, 2023). A food delivery app, by sending timely notifications about discounts and new restaurant additions, keeps users engaged and encourages continued app usage. Efficient database management tracks consumer behaviour, preferences, and purchase history, enabling personalized communication and strengthening customer relationships (Huggins, White, Holloway, & Hansen, 2020; Viswanathan, Yadav, Sharma, & Dornadula, 2023). Gathering customer feedback through surveys provides invaluable insights, steering product and service enhancements (Pascual-Fernández, Pita, Josupeit, Said, & Rodrigues, 2019). For example, an online software company conducts user surveys to understand customer concerns and implements necessary improvements, leading to higher customer satisfaction and positive reviews. Loyalty programs and incentives, like a coffee chain's mobile app offering points for purchases, foster customer allegiance and brand loyalty (Ponnam, Sreejesh, & Balaji, 2015).

Conceptual framework

The variables and their indicators in the conceptual framework figure 1 were derived from both theoretical and empirical literature review. The framework uses traditional and modern marketing strategies as independent variables and competitive advantage as the dependent variable. From the literature review (Lalabadi, Sadeghi, & Mireei, 2020; Mutambuki, 2011; Verza, et al., 2023; Wu & Sun, 2019), traditional marketing strategies for selling fish encompass factors like emphasizing species variety, freshness, and source, evaluating smell and gill color, and promoting health benefits, while also considering storage, pricing, brand name, size grouping, and the advantage of buying directly from fishermen. These strategies aim to create a comprehensive approach that addresses both product quality and consumer preferences in the fish market.

According to Fadila et al. (2022) and Viswanathan et al. (2023), modern marketing strategies capitalize on digital channels, including social media, online ads, SEO, and e-

commerce, while integrating personalized communication, customer feedback mechanisms, loyalty programs, and a commitment to excellence in customer service to create a comprehensive and dynamic approach. These strategies prioritize the online landscape, leveraging technology and customer data to build lasting connections and drive business growth. The dependent variable, competitive advantage, is achieved by surpassing rivals in the number of customers, sales volume, and profitability, while concurrently prioritizing and excelling in customer satisfaction, bolstering brand recognition, and fostering customer loyalty to establish a stronger market position.
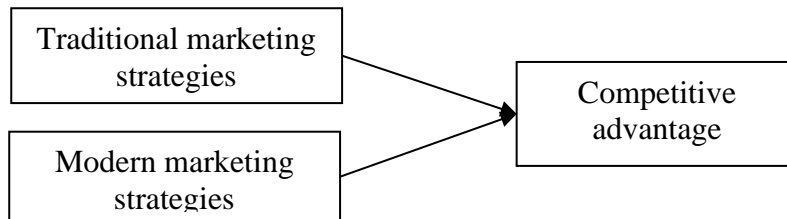

Figure 1. Conceptual framework

Basing on a theoretical and empirical literature review on role of traditional marketing strategies in enhancing fishery business competitive advantage, this study hypothesized that:

Ha$_1$: Traditional marketing strategies have significant effect on enhancing competitive advantage in the micro and small-scale fishery business in Mwanza City.

Ho$_1$: Traditional marketing strategies have no significant effect on enhancing competitive advantage in the micro and small-scale fishery business in Mwanza City.

Also, basing on a theoretical and empirical literature review on the modern marketing strategies in enhancing fishery business competitive advantage, this study hypothesized that:

Ha$_2$: Modern marketing strategies have a significant effect on enhancing competitive *advantage in the micro and small-scale fishery business in Mwanza City.*

Ho$_2$: Modern marketing strategies have no significant effect on enhancing competitive advantage in the micro and small-scale fishery business in Mwanza City.

Research Methods and Materials

Research Design and study population

This study employed a mixed-method research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches, to investigate the role of marketing strategies in enhancing the competitive advantage within the micro and small-scale fishery business in Mwanza City (Creswell, 2014). The quantitative data was leveraged to examine the effect of marketing strategies in enhancing the competitive advantage within the micro and small-scale fishery business in Mwanza. Conversely, qualitative data provided new information which could not be captured by quantitative data on marketing strategies employed by

Micro and small-scale Fishery Business in Mwanza City (Yin, 2014). By employing the mixed-method approach, the study aimed to address potential limitations associated with relying solely on quantitative data by complementing it with qualitative data. This complex approach facilitated a more holistic understanding of the subject matter at hand.

The Mwanza region was intentionally chosen from among the five regions of Tanzania surrounding Lake Victoria due to its preeminent concentration of fishermen, accounting for 45.7% of the total, with Kagera (22.4%), Mara (21.8%), and Geita (8.5%) following suit, while Simiyu boasts the smallest proportion of fishermen at 1.6% (URT, 2021). Also, the study centred its focus on Mwanza City due to its significant presence of micro and small-scale fishery businesses and a thriving market for fish products. Targeting these micro and small-scale fishery businesses operating in Mwanza City, the research pursued two key objectives. The first objective aimed to assess the effect of traditional marketing strategies in enhancing competitive advantage within the micro and small-scale fishery business in Mwanza City. The second objective focused on examining the effect of modern marketing strategies in enhancing competitive advantage within the micro and small-scale fishery business in Mwanza City. The ultimate goal of the study was to provide practical and effective emerging marketing strategies that can differentiate these businesses from their competitors, attract a larger customer base, and ultimately contribute to their long-term success and growth.

Sampling techniques and sample size

The sample size was determined using the Cochran (1977) formula for unknown population size, denoted as equation (1), wherein n represents the sample size, z represents the critical value corresponding to the desired confidence level (1.96 for a 95% confidence level in this case), p represents the proportion in the population of interest (assumed to be 50%), q represents 1-p, and e represents the acceptable margin of error, typically set at 0.05.

$$n = \frac{Z^2}{e^2} * pq \qquad (1)$$

$$\text{Then, } n = \frac{1.96^2}{0.05^2} * \frac{0.5*0.5}{} = 384 \text{ respondents}$$

The study employed a mixed-methods approach to investigate marketing strategies used by micro and small-scale fish businesses in Mwanza City. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 384 respondents from the population of micro and small-scale fish business owners, managers and employees, ensuring diverse representation. Purposive sampling targeted micro and small-scale fish business owners or managers with specific knowledge of marketing strategies for focus group discussions.

Data collection tools

A structured questionnaire was administered to micro and small-scale fishery Businesses in Mwanza City to collect quantitative data, utilizing a five-point Likert scale for both independent and dependent variables. Each structured questionnaire based on established scales and tested to ensure robustness using Cronbach's alphas. The questionnaire, comprising 12 items on traditional marketing strategies, investigated

respondents about the factors that entice them to purchase fish. These factors included the sale of various fish species and fresh products, the emphasis on quality and health benefits, pricing strategies, brand identity, trustworthiness, remote delivery services, storytelling, industry experience, and the utilization of loyal customer bases. In contrast, the modern marketing strategies section, consisting of 13 items, also inquired about the factors that attract respondents to buy fish. These factors involved the use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. Other factors investigated include usage of blogging, email marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), content marketing, GPT chat, personalized communication, customer feedback and surveys, loyalty programs, customer service excellence, and customer database management. Objective two of the study employed two FGD guide questions to qualitatively explore the marketing strategies utilized by small-scale fish businesses in Tanzania to attract customers. The first question was: "Can you describe the traditional marketing strategies your small-scale fish business currently employs within the Tanzanian market to attract customers?" The second question was: "Alongside traditional methods, what modern marketing strategies does your small-scale fish business utilize to attract customers?". The number of participants for qualitative data collection through FGDs was determined by reaching data saturation, where after eight group discussions, no new insights were obtained.

Data analysis

The quantitative data collected through the structured questionnaire, the study used descriptive statistical analysis to summarize and interpret the data. Regression analysis was used to examine the relationships between marketing strategies and competitive advantage variables as indicated in equation (2).

$$Competitive\ advantage = \beta_0 + \beta_1\ tms + \beta_2\ mms + \varepsilon \qquad (2)$$

In the regression equation, the intercept (β_0) represents the baseline level of competitive advantage in the absence of marketing strategies. The coefficients β_1 and β_2 for traditional marketing strategies (tms) and modern marketing strategies (mms) assume a linear relationship, signifying the expected change in competitive advantage for a one-unit change in each respective strategy. The error term ε covers unobserved factors influencing competitive advantage. The assumptions imply a constant impact of marketing strategies on competitive advantage and that unobserved factors follow a normal distribution with a mean of zero.

The qualitative data collected through purposive sampling and FGDs went a rigorous thematic analysis to uncover patterns and themes within the data. This analytical approach involved identifying significant concepts, categories, and themes that emerge from the data, and organizing them into a coherent framework (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014). By employing thematic analysis, the study aimed to gain valuable insights into the experiences and perspectives of the participants, providing a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Moreover, the qualitative data served to supplement and enrich the findings from the quantitative data.

Research Results

Respondents' Response rate

Prior to analysis, rigorous data cleaning was conducted. A total of 384 questionnaires were distributed to micro and small-scale fishery businesses in Mwanza City, with 240 (62.5%) successfully returned. However, 52 incomplete questionnaires were excluded, leaving 188 valid questionnaires for entry into SPSS and analysis.

Demographic factors

In investigating participant demographics and business characteristics (as indicated in Table 1), a balanced gender ratio emerged, with 54.5% males and 45.5% females, showing that both males and females should be encouraged to invest in micro and small-scale fishery business. Targeted strategies for the 54.5% male demographic are crucial. Education-wise, 52.9% had primary school, and 41.8% attended secondary school, emphasizing the need for tailored training initiatives. Business experience varied, with 48.7% having less than 5 years, 43.9% between 6-10 years, and 2.6% with 11-15 years, indicating a dynamic entrepreneurial environment and potential for mentorship programs. Designation showed 57.7% as business owners, 10.6% in managerial positions, and 31.7% employees, reflecting workforce diversity. The high business ownership percentage (57.7%) highlights a vibrant entrepreneurial spirit, necessitating supportive policies. Investment patterns revealed 83.6% with investments below TZS 5 million, 15.8% within TZS 5-200 million, and only 0.5% above TZS 200 million, indicating a focus on micro and small-scale fishery business investments. This information emphasizes the importance of implementing supportive policies, government interventions, training programs, and customized financial assistance mechanisms for micro and small-scale fishery businesses. These measures are essential for creating an environment that promotes their growth and prosperity.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics

Category	Sub-Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	102	54.3%
	Female	86	45.7%
Education level	Primary school	100	52.9%
	Secondary school	78	41.8%
	Certificate	4	2.1%
	Diploma	3	1.6%
	Others	3	1.6%
Experience in the business	Below 5 years	92	48.7%
	6-10 years	83	43.9%
	11-15 years	5	2.6%
	Above 15 years	9	4.8%
Designation	Owner	108	57.4%
	Manager	20	10.6%
	Employee	60	31.9%

Category	Sub-Category	Frequency	Percent
Invested capital	Below TZS 5 million	163	86.7%
	Above TZS 5-200 million	14	7.4%
	Above TZS 200 million	6	3.2%

Reliability and validity tests

A reliability analysis was conducted to determine whether the measured variables were devoid of errors. Prior to actual data collection, the pilot study was done using a sample size of 30 respondents to test the reliability and validity of the data collection instruments. The full-scale study was conducted with 12 traditional marketing strategies items and 13 modern marketing strategies items as discussed in the data collection tools using 188 respondents. The findings for reliability test are indicated in Table 2.

Table 2. Reliability test

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	N of Items
Traditional marketing strategies	.840	12
Modern marketing strategies	.846	13

The findings in Table 2 demonstrate that all Cronbach's alpha values for the variables, Traditional marketing strategies (0.840) and Modern marketing strategies (0.846), surpass the threshold value of 0.7. This indicates a high level of internal consistency and reliability in the data collected, underscoring the robustness of the measurement instruments for assessing traditional and modern marketing strategies.

Table 3. Validity test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.627
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	200.222
	df	3
	Sig.	.000

The results presented in Table 3, which include the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy (0.627) and Bartlett's test of sphericity ($\chi 2 = 200.222$, df $= 3$, $p < 0.001$), were obtained as part of a validity test. The KMO value, although moderate, signifies a sufficient level of common variance among the variables, while the significant Bartlett's test emphasizes the presence of relationships within the dataset. These findings collectively confirm the dataset's suitability.

Findings for multiple linear regressions

Table 4, 5, and 6 present the results of the multiple linear regressions, displaying the model summary, ANOVA, and coefficients respectively. These tables provide a comprehensive overview of the regression findings.

Table 4. Summary of results

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.768[a]	.590	.586	4.65580

The provided model summary in Table 4 explores the connection between traditional marketing strategies (v1) and modern marketing strategies as independent variables (v2), focusing on gaining the competitive advantage as the dependent variable (v3). The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.768 indicates a moderately strong positive correlation between the predictors and the outcome. With an R Square value of 0.590, it suggests that around 59% of the variance in gaining the competitive advantage can be attributed by the blend of traditional and modern marketing strategies. Even after adjusting for the number of predictors, the adjusted R Square remains high at 0.586, emphasizing the model's strength. The standard error of the estimate, measuring the average disparity between observed and predicted values, is 4.65580. These results emphasize the substantial impact of both traditional and modern marketing strategies on the process of gaining the competitive advantage, underscoring their pivotal role in determining the study's outcome.

Table 5. ANOVA findings

NOVA[a]					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	5810.727	2	2905.363	134.033	.000[b]
Residual	4031.823	186	21.676		
Total	9842.550	188			
a. Dependent Variable: v3					
b. Predictors: (Constant), v1, v2					

The ANOVA results presented in Table 5 illustrate the statistical evaluation of the model. In this analysis, v1 (representing traditional marketing strategies) and v2 (representing modern marketing strategies) act as independent variables, impacting the process of gaining a competitive advantage (v3) as the dependent variable. The regression model shows significant effectiveness, indicated by the large F-statistic of 134.033 associated with a very low p-value (p < .000), highlighting a highly significant relationship between the predictors and the outcome. The sum of squares for the regression (5810.727) substantially surpasses the residual sum of squares (4031.823), emphasizing the substantial influence of v1 and v2 on explaining the variation in gaining a competitive advantage. These findings emphasize the crucial role of both traditional and modern marketing strategies in determining the competitive advantage (v3) in the study.

Table 6. Coefficients of multiple linear regression

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	3.957	1.785		2.217	.028
v1	.368	.051	.371	7.212	.000
v2	.505	.048	.538	10.464	.000

The multiple linear regression equation (2) findings to examine the relationships between marketing strategies and competitive advantage variables is expressed as:

$$Competitive\ advantage = 3.957 + 0.371\ tms + 0.538\ mms + \varepsilon \qquad (2)$$

In the provided model in Table 6, v1 (representing traditional marketing strategies) and v2 (representing modern marketing strategies) serve as independent variables, influencing the process of gaining a competitive advantage (v3) as the dependent variable. The unstandardized coefficients reveal the impact of each predictor on the dependent variable. For v1, the unstandardized coefficient (B) is 0.368, indicating that for each unit increase in traditional marketing strategies, there is a corresponding 0.368 unit increase in gaining a competitive advantage. Similarly, for v2, the unstandardized coefficient is 0.505, suggesting that each unit increase in modern marketing strategies results in a 0.505 unit increase in gaining a competitive advantage.

The standardized coefficients (Beta) provide insight into the relative importance of each predictor. In this model, v2 (modern marketing strategies) has a higher standardized coefficient (0.538) compared to v1 (traditional marketing strategies) with a coefficient of 0.371. This indicates that modern marketing strategies have a stronger positive effect on gaining a competitive advantage compared to traditional marketing strategies, when considering the relative scales of the variables. The t-statistics assess the significance of the coefficients. Both v1 and v2 have t-values well above 2, indicating that their impact on gaining a competitive advantage is statistically significant ($p < 0.000$). In summary, our findings emphasize the importance of striking a balance between traditional and modern marketing strategies for enhancing the competitive advantage in the micro and small-scale fishery business in Mwanza City.

Discussion of the Results

The role of traditional marketing strategies in enhancing competitive advantage in the micro and small-scale fishery business in Mwanza city

The study emphasizes the significant role of traditional marketing strategies in enhancing the competitive advantage of micro and small-scale fishery businesses in Mwanza City ($p < 0.000$). Therefore, null hypotheses (Ho_1) that traditional marketing strategies have no significant effect on enhancing competitive advantage in the micro and small-scale fishery business in Mwanza City is rejected. The impact of these strategies, indicated by the unstandardized coefficient (B) of 0.368, emphasizes their influence in gaining a competitive edge within the local market. Examining existing literature reveals both confirmations of established beliefs and subtle distinctions, enriching the understanding of these strategies in Mwanza City's specific context. Several empirical studies support the impact of these strategies. Eksoz, Mansouri, Bourlakis, and Önkal (2019) research highlight the importance of direct sourcing from local fishermen, focusing on authenticity and freshness. This direct connection not only enhances product quality but also establishes a unique selling proposition, fostering customer trust and loyalty. Similarly, Fadila, Lupikawaty, Saputra, Nastiti, and Aprianti (2022) emphasize the significance of community engagement and participation in local events, which build relationships and trust among customers, granting businesses a distinct competitive edge.

However, Fadila, Lupikawaty, Saputra, Nastiti, and Aprianti (2022) challenge the traditional emphasis on packaging and labelling. In markets like Mwanza City, where freshness and authenticity are prioritized, customers value the product's source and quality over branded packaging. These understanding prompts businesses to concentrate on essential product qualities, challenging the notion that standardized packaging guarantees a competitive advantage. Additionally, Lalabadi, Sadeghi, and Mireei (2020) examination of grouping fish based on size questions the homogenization of products for market appeal. Acknowledging diverse culinary traditions in specific markets, where consumers appreciate various fish sizes for different dishes, necessitates a strategic approach that accommodates this diversity. Also, Verza, et al., (2023) emphasize the delicate balance required in marketing health benefits. In markets influenced by factors like pricing and freshness, businesses must weigh health benefits against other customer priorities to genuinely gain a competitive edge. Specifically, these findings shed light on the dynamics of traditional marketing strategies in micro and small-scale fishery business. Direct sourcing, community engagement, and understanding local preferences emerge as pivotal factors contributing significantly to competitive advantage. Adapting these strategies based on empirical insights enables businesses to address the complexities of the local market, ensuring sustainable growth and success.

Apart from the quantitative data, qualitative data were gathered through eight focus group discussions, enriching the quantitative findings significantly. On the contrary, qualitative data provided crucial insights that quantitative measures could not capture regarding the traditional marketing strategies utilized by micro and small-scale Fishery Businesses in Mwanza City. This information is presented in Tables 7, which depict the frequency of mentions and percentages based on the saturation point from eight FGDs.

Table 7. Qualitative results for traditional marketing strategies

Theme	Mention Frequency	Percent
Customer Interaction and service - Warm welcome to customers (12.55%) -Good language (11.31%) -Handling customer's complaints (9.14%) - Persuading/convincing customers (7.90%) - Satisfying customers (e.g., discounts, credit sales) (6.88%) -Use of referrals (5.81%) - Being faithful (4.72%) -Speaking to customers diligently (3.50%) -Additional value (e.g., free packages) (2.08%)	23	63.89%
Pricing Strategies -Lowering price (flexible prices) (16.74%) -Alowing price bargaining (4.08%) - Slicing bigger fish into small pieces and sell to a number of customers (2.08%)	08	22.22%
Product Quality	03	8.33%

Theme	Mention Frequency	Percent
-Explaining to customers the quality of fish (3.20%) -Freshness of fish from natural water sources (2.82%) -Cleanliness (preparation and environment) (1.56%) -Selling quality fish (0.74%)		
Stock Management -Storage of large stock (2.84%) -Selling large quantity of fish (1.32%)	02	5.56%
Total mentions and percent	36	100%

One prominent theme revolves around customer interaction and service (63.89%). Strategies such as using good language, effective handling of customer complaints, providing discounts and credit sales, and utilizing referrals emphasize the businesses' focus on building trust, loyalty, and positive relationships with their customers. The emphasis on warm welcomes and diligent communication highlights a customer-centric approach, crucial for retaining a loyal customer base. Another significant theme is the flexible approach to pricing (22.22%). Businesses demonstrated a keen understanding of market dynamics by employing strategies like lowering price, allowing bargaining, and, notably, slicing bigger fish into small pieces and sell to a number of customers. The frequent use of price reductions indicates a willingness to adapt pricing to meet customer expectations and market demands, attracting price-sensitive customers and enhancing competitiveness. Product quality and preparation emerged as a fundamental theme (8.33%). Businesses emphasized explaining the quality of their fish, ensuring freshness, and maintaining cleanliness during both the preparation process and in their environment. These practices highlight the importance of offering high-quality, fresh fish that meet customer expectations. Prioritizing quality and cleanliness not only attract customers but also ensures their satisfaction, encouraging repeat purchase. Efficient stock management was highlighted as a strategic approach (5.56%). Practices such as storing large quantities of fish and managing inventory effectively enable businesses to consistently meet customer demands, avoid stockouts, and maintain product freshness. Hence, small-scale fishery enterprises that leverage the aforementioned traditional marketing strategies stand a chance of drawing a substantial customer base, thereby ensuring sustained growth and success.

The role of modern marketing strategies in enhancing competitive advantage in the micro and small-scale fishery business in Mwanza City

Modern marketing strategies, as represented by the variable v2, have a significantly higher impact ($p < 0.001$) on gaining a competitive advantage, with an unstandardized coefficient (B) of 0.505. Therefore, null hypotheses (Ho_2) that modern marketing strategies have no significant effect on enhancing competitive advantage in the micro and small-scale fishery business in Mwanza City is rejected. This finding underscores the growing importance of digital marketing, online platforms, and data-driven approaches in the micro and small-scale fishery business in Mwanza City. The higher standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.538 for modern marketing strategies compared to traditional ones

further emphasizes their greater influence. Empirical studies consistently emphasize the significance of modern marketing strategies. For instance, research by Jizdny (2020) demonstrated that micro and small-scale businesses leveraging social media platforms experienced a considerable increase in customer reach and engagement. Similarly, a study by Verza, et al., (2023) illustrated those businesses utilizing online advertisements witnessed a significant boost in brand visibility and customer interest, leading to a competitive advantage in the market.

Studies focusing on search engine optimization (SEO) further corroborate the importance of online visibility. Also, Fadila, Lupikawaty, Saputra, Nastiti, and Aprianti (2022) found that businesses investing in SEO strategies appeared prominently in search results, attracting more potential customers. This highlights the critical role of SEO in enhancing online presence and, consequently, competitive advantage. However, there are contradictory findings as well. Some studies, like the one conducted by Lalabadi, Sadeghi, and Mireei (2020), suggested that an excessive reliance on online platforms might lead to a disconnect with local customers, particularly in regions where personal relationships hold cultural significance. This implies that while online strategies are powerful, they need to be balanced with localized, interpersonal approaches to maintain a competitive advantage. Moreover, a study by Wu and Sun (2019) refuted the notion that digital marketing alone guarantees a competitive edge. The study argued that without adequate investment in customer service excellence and personalized communication, online marketing efforts might not yield the desired results. This challenges the belief that a strong online presence automatically translates into a superior competitive position without considering other essential aspects of the business.

The research on e-commerce platforms has consistently shown positive outcomes. Businesses implementing user-friendly e-commerce interfaces, as evidenced by studies by Jizdny (2020), have reported substantial growth in sales and customer satisfaction. Similarly, studies focusing on content marketing and mobile marketing have highlighted the effectiveness of engaging content and mobile-friendly approaches in capturing consumer interest, further enhancing competitive advantage. Furthermore, the management of customer databases has proven to be instrumental. Pascual-Fernández, Pita, Josupeit, Said, and Rodrigues (2019) found that businesses using customer feedback, surveys, and loyalty programs gained insights into customer preferences, leading to personalized communication and increased satisfaction. These modern marketing strategies are crucial for competitive advantage in Mwanza City's micro and small-scale fishery industry.

Furthermore, qualitative data were gathered through eight focus group discussions, enriching the quantitative findings significantly. On the contrary, qualitative data provided crucial insights that quantitative measures could not capture regarding the modern marketing strategies utilized by micro and small-scale Fishery Businesses in Mwanza City. This information is presented in Tables 8, which depict the frequency of mentions and percentages based on the saturation point from eight FGDs.

Table 8. Qualitative results for modern marketing strategies

Theme	Mention Frequency	Percent
Mobile communication	24	57.14%
Customer relationship management	10	23.81
Social media and online presence	08	19.05
Total mentions and percent	42	100%

The FGD findings offer a comprehensive overview of the modern marketing strategies adopted by micro and small-scale ale fishery businesses in Mwanza City. These strategies have been categorized into three key themes mobile communication and engagement (57.14%), customer relationship management (23.81%) and social media and online presence (19.05%). A significant focus is observed on mobile communication methods, including mobile calls, text messages, and WhatsApp, indicating their pivotal role in direct customer engagement. These methods enable real-time updates, price negotiations, and efficient handling of customer inquiries. Moreover, mobile communication fosters personal connections with customers, ensuring high engagement levels and overall satisfaction. Effective customer relationship management emerges as a crucial aspect of modern marketing strategies. Businesses prioritize providing excellent customer service, maintain positive relationships, and offer personalized services. Maintaining a customer database allows businesses to understand customer preferences and tailor their offerings accordingly. Seeking feedback from customers demonstrates a commitment to meeting their needs, building trust, loyalty, and positive word-of-mouth, all of which are vital for sustaining a competitive edge in the market.

The study highlights the importance of social media platforms, particularly WhatsApp and Instagram, in the marketing efforts of micro and small-scale fishery businesses. Businesses leverage the aforementioned platforms to post fish pictures, creating visual marketing content that reaches a wider audience. Such online presence enhances visibility, attracts potential customers, and contributes to brand recognition. incorporating brand names into the aforementioned online platforms elevates professionalism and credibility, bolstering the business's online reputation. Embracing digital technologies and social media platforms can thus broaden market reach and enhance customer engagement for micro and small-scale fishery businesses, potentially leading to significant sales growth. However, businesses must strike a balance between online interactions and maintaining personal relationships to ensure that the human touch is not lost in the digital realm. Continuous adaptation to emerging technologies and customer preferences is essential for maintaining competitiveness in the dynamic market.

Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to investigate which traditional and modern marketing strategies enhance the competitiveness of micro and small-scale fishery businesses. The quantitative findings revealed a strong and significant positive correlation between traditional marketing strategies and gaining a competitive edge ($p < 0.000$). Therefore, null hypotheses (Ho_1) that traditional marketing strategies have no significant effect on enhancing competitive advantage in the micro and small-scale fishery business in Mwanza City is rejected. The qualitative findings show that traditional marketing

strategies placed emphasis on customer interaction, flexible pricing, product quality, and efficient stock management. Hence, these strategies are critical for a competitive edge in the local market, ensuring sustained success and highlighting the dynamics of traditional marketing in Mwanza City's micro and small-scale fishery business, advocating for strategic adaptation to ensure growth.

Additionally, the quantitative study found a strong and significant positive correlation between modern marketing strategies and gaining a competitive edge (p < 0.000). Therefore, null hypotheses (H_{o2}) that modern marketing strategies have no significant effect on enhancing competitive advantage in the micro and small-scale fishery business in Mwanza City is rejected. The qualitative findings show that the modern marketing approaches prioritized mobile communication, customer relationship management, and social media presence. The findings emphasize the growing importance of digital marketing, online platforms, and data-driven approaches in the micro and small-scale fishery business in Mwanza City.

The study revealed a robust positive correlation between traditional and modern marketing strategies and competitive advantage, marking a significant contribution to the field. Traditional strategies emphasized customer interaction, flexible pricing, product quality, and efficient stock management, while modern approaches prioritized mobile communication, customer relationship management, and social media presence. The research emphasizes the pivotal role of traditional marketing strategies in shaping Mwanza City's micro and small-scale fishery business and stresses the importance of blending modern strategies with traditional approaches for sustained competitiveness and success in the local market. The strategic importance of both traditional and modern marketing strategies is emphasized by the VRIN criteria of the Resource-Based View theory, which emphasizes the need for resources to be Valuable, Rare, Inimitable, and Non-substitutable to provide a sustained competitive advantage. These findings have several implications for marketing strategies in the micro and small-scale fishery business in Mwanza City. Businesses should focus on integrating both traditional and modern marketing approaches, as a blend of these approaches can create a comprehensive marketing strategy that caters to a diverse customer base. In the broader context of strategy theory and practice, these findings highlight the evolving nature of competitive advantage. Relying solely on either traditional methods or modern technologies is no longer adequate for businesses; instead, a strategic blending of both approaches is necessary to thrive in the dynamic market environment. The relevance of this research to Tanzania lies in its focus on a region with a unique economic and cultural context, where the growing micro and small-scale fishery sector plays a vital role in the local economy, akin to many other African countries.

The study acknowledges several limitations, including its geographical focus on micro and small-scale fishery businesses in Mwanza City, which may restrict the generalizability of findings to other regions within the Tanzanian fishery industry. Data collection constraints, privacy concerns, and reliance on a specific timeframe may have affected the study's depth and applicability to future market dynamics. The research also did not extensively explore cultural and social factors influencing consumer behavior in Mwanza City, and it primarily focused on traditional and modern marketing strategies independently, lacking a comprehensive comparative analysis of their effectiveness.

Future research endeavours may explore conducting cross-regional comparative analyses across different regions of Tanzania to assess the effectiveness of revealed marketing strategies in enhancing business performance. Additionally, there is a need for investigating cultural factors that influence consumer behaviour, and implementing longitudinal studies to track the evolution of marketing strategies and consumer preferences over time.

Author Contributions

All researchers made equal and significant contributions throughout the entire research process, actively participating in conceptualization, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and report writing. Our collaborative efforts ensured a comprehensive and rigorous approach to every stage of the research.

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