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Effects of Promotion Mix Tools on Brand Equity of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in Ilala Municipality, Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to assess the impact of promotion mix tools, including advertising, sales promotion, and direct marketing, on brand equity in Tanzania, focusing on SME customers in the Ilala Municipality. A quantitative research approach and explanatory research design were employed, with a sample of 170 participants. The data was analysed using a stepwise regression model aided by SPSS version 25. Such an approach facilitated the broad investigation of the influence of promotion mix and communication tools (advertising, sales promotion and direct marketing) on brand equity for SME consumers in Ilala Municipality, Tanzania. The results indicated that advertisement, sales promotion, and direct marketing moderately affected brand equity except for direct marketing, which positively correlated to high. All hypotheses were accepted with a p -value < 0.05 . The study offers insights to managers by underscoring the need for purposeful design and execution of promotional measures affecting brand equity or indicating integration between promotional activity and higher-order strategic considerations. Policymakers are encouraged to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with the resources, knowledge, and infrastructure required to implement marketing strategies effectively. Nevertheless, one must bear in mind that some study limitations are associated with the limited scope of SME customers within Ilala

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Municipality, where respondent targets were made, which may limit generalisation to other areas. Moreover, following a quantitative approach may eliminate qualitative insights, which could be used to gain a deeper understanding of the effect of promotion mix tools on brand equity.

Keywords: *Sales promotion, Advertisement, Brand equity, Direct marketing, Small and medium-sized enterprises*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) are the backbone of the global economy, accounting for a considerable share of jobs and economic growth. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) make up about 70% of total employment, providing more than 50% of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), according to the International Labour Organization (2020). According to the World Bank (2017), SMEs play a crucial role in innovation and competition and are often described as the seedbed of entrepreneurial dynamism. Nevertheless, despite their vital role, SMEs face multiple global challenges, including access to finance, regulatory constraints and market competition (OECD, 2018). Such challenges can limit their ability to grow and innovate, resulting in pleas for better support systems and policies that would enable the development of a large variety of SMEs (Ayyagari et al., 2011). Thus, it is much needed for the world economy to overcome SME barriers to sustainable economic growth worldwide.

In Tanzania, the Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) sector is critical in creating employment, generating income, alleviating poverty, and serving as a foundation for industrial development (Nyamanza, 2019). According to a report by the Tanzanian government, SMEs are estimated to employ a significant portion of the country's youth and labour force (Danga et al., 2019; Kumburu et al., 2019; Nkwabi & Mboya, 2019). Though they have implemented particular development policies and interventions, SMEs have not benefitted. As a result, even when SMEs face marketing-related problems, covering these areas under the solution umbrella of Business Development Services takes time and effort. SMEs continue to be of central importance to the economic transformation in Tanzania, as they have since 2021, and their sustainability represents a key concern for policymakers and stakeholders (Kumburu & Mashenene, 2023).

Looking at the SME marketing practices in Tanzania, the studies have revealed that regardless of the challenges encountered in the marketing field, there have been improved business opportunities and marketing practices due to market trends, globalisation, and technological advancement (Mashenene & Rumanyika, 2021). Marketing practices play a significant role in business growth and viability, including improved profitability, sales performance, and return on investment (Kenu, 2019). This view is in line with Efiom (2018), who reveals that there is a gradual improvement in SMEs' perception regarding the contribution of marketing towards the business performance and satisfaction of needs and wants for the target market.

However, there are factors still retarding the growth and performance of SMEs in Tanzania. These include financial challenges, increased intensity of competition, marketing practices, and poor managerial skills, among others, which are among the challenges facing SMEs in Tanzania (Nkwabi & Mboya, 2019; Swallehe, 2022). Many SMEs in Tanzania need help utilising scarce resources and applying winning marketing strategies due to limited marketing knowledge (Swallehe & Mwilongo, 2021). Despite the challenges encountered by SMEs in Tanzania, there have been efforts made to solve the challenges, including the formulation of SME policy in 2003, which addresses the challenges of SMEs in the country and suggests possible practices for helping SMEs do better in their business, regardless of the efforts, SMEs are still going through challenges in their business (Nyamanza, 2019). Following the increased competition across different business fields, there is a need for intervention through business support systems to help train SMEs to formulate and implement winning marketing strategies (Anderson, 2020; Nkwabi & Mboya, 2019; Swallehe & Mwilongo, 2021). Other studies show that, generally, SMEs in Africa face marketing-related challenges; several SMEs in South Africa need help building a robust and reputable brand that can improve consumer recognition and trust because they need to implement marketing techniques properly (Anderson, 2021; Nkwabi & Mboya, 2019). Also, studies revealed that business ventures in other countries like Kenya, both service and manufacturing firms, have been heavily involved in using promotion tools to improve the performance of their brands, with studies revealing that using promotion tools positively affects brand equity, tracing advertisement as the critical tool in building brand equity for companies in Kenya. It has also been discovered that advertisements positively affect brand equity for hospitals in Nairobi, Kenya (Charanah & Njuguna, 2015).

Following the marketing challenges facing SMEs and businesses, studies show that branding via promotion mix tools is considered a core instrument in attaining the leading position in consumers' minds and achieving sustainable brand equity (Bu et al., 2021; Czinkota et al., 2021). Promotion mix tools are more helpful in blending and creating sustainable brand equity (Bu et al., 2021; El et al., 2020; Mahmudova & Kovacs, 2018; Samsudeen & Kaleen, 2020). Studies conducted in India and globally reveal how promotion mix plays a vital role towards building compelling and sustainable brand equity. It is the most popular strategy used by manufacturing and service organisations in India and other countries; the promotion mix affects brand performance, and companies use it to strengthen brand equity dimensions (Kumar & Patra, 2017). In their study, Samsudeen and Kaldeen (2020) postulated that SMEs face the biggest challenge of marketing, specifically branding, which has been a difficult practice for SMEs; many SMEs still need to prosper in the market despite the support given by the government. However, branding is seen as the best option to help SMEs in the success and growth of SMEs. Promotion is the means that marketers use to deliver critical messages or information concerning product brand, price, and distribution. It is the approach to positioning a product or brand in consumers' minds (Bu et al., 2021; Eldahmsheh et al., 2021; Nair & Gupta, 2021). Kotler and Armstrong (2008) define promotion mix tools as "the precise combination of advertising, public relations, personal selling, sales promotion, and direct-marketing instruments used by the organisation to express value to the customers and build customer relationships effectively." Advertising is a paid form of non-personal communication by an identified sponsor who intends to deliver the message or information to persuade the target audience (Chomiak-Orsa & Liszczyk, 2020). Kotler and Keller (2012) define advertisement as "any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of goods, ideas, and services by an identified sponsor. According to Kotler and Keller (2012), sales promotion is identified as the short-term incentives used by a company to encourage product purchases or trials. Direct marketing uses email, telephone, mail, fax, or the Internet to communicate directly with the customer and solicit a response (Kotler, 2012). According to Karaxha et al. (2016), direct marketing involves using emails, telephones, and festivals to communicate with clients directly and receive immediate feedback, which consists of communicating with customers in a personalised way. Aaker (1991, 1996) defines brand equity as a multifaceted notion associated with brand loyalty, awareness,

perceived quality, associations, and other proprietary brand assets. Most researchers agree that brand equity consists of brand awareness, loyalty, association, perceived quality, and knowledge (Kumar & Patra, 2017). Kingsnorth (2022) states that brand equity must be understood and investigated. In a broad framework that examines the incremental influences of the brand along the customer decision-making process, brand equity influences how knowledge is learned, retrieved, and used in making a decision. The impacts of information processing influence the production of choice sets and, ultimately, the decisions employed in making the final choice.

The standard terms used to represent SMEs in other countries are total number of employees, total investment, and sales turnover (Aji, 2020; Al-gharaibah, 2020; Bu et al., 2021; El et al., 2020; Mahmudova & Kovacs, 2018). SMEs are typically businesses whose number of employees falls within certain limits. However, the number of personnel varies from one industry to another. The leaders of SMEs are usually the founders and owners, while employed managers lead a few of them. The leader of SMEs has a central role in the success or failure of such a business; therefore, a leader is always required on a strategic basis to invest time, energy, and assets to lead the company to success (Al-Awlaqiet al, 2018; Kingsnorth, 2022).

They investigated three theories as discussed in this study. The theories covered under these include the impact of social media advertising, direct marketing, promotion mix and brand personality on brand equity. These theories provide us with relevant insights into the effectiveness of the varied approaches to marketing in increasing brand equity for businesses and SMEs. Third, these theories offer grounds for examining brand management dynamics and the function of marketing in SMEs. Such theories enable an overarching analysis of the current conditions that help to create and maintain brand equity in modern business.

The first theory employed is the hierarchy model. This marketing communication model was developed in 1961 by Robert J Lavidge and Gary A Steiner. The theory explains the six stages a consumer goes through; it demonstrates the transformation of a consumer from the time they are unaware of the brand or product until forming the attitude, commitment, recognition, and preference of the brand. Kotler (2012) described the hierarchy of effect model into three stages, namely the Cognitive stage (awareness, knowledge), the Affective stage (liking and preference), and the last one is connate/ Behavioral stage, which is made up of conviction and purchases.

This model appears in the hierarchy because a consumer enters a distinct stage from the beginning, where brand awareness is developed through advertising and marketing communication campaigns that focus on improving customer knowledge and understanding. Lastly, customers can become loyal and strengthen brand loyalty through a company's promotion strategies. This study employed this theory to show the effect and usage of marketing communication programs and how they influence consumers to develop awareness and improve customers' loyalty towards the brand. The hierarchy of effects model provides the guideline on how the customer is influenced by advertising and overall marketing communication tools towards brand or product knowledge, awareness, preference, and recognition.

Ajzen (1991) derived this theory from his 1970 Theory of Reason Action, which predicts an individual's ability to control their behaviour. According to this theory, individual behaviour in a society is influenced by definite factors that arise from specific causes and emerge planned (Shahwan & Erten, 2002). According to the theory, three factors can affect an individual's behaviour in one way or another: attitude toward behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, which stimulates the intention to do specific actions (Febrian et al., 2021; Lopes & Casais, 2022). The study has preferred this theory because it portrays the usage of marketing communication in influencing the decisions and choices of consumers in the market by making customers accept and adopt the brand through a promotion mix. The theory shows how planned actions like promotion campaigns affect the response and choice of the consumers, and it explains the outcome that arises from planned actions. Professor first developed the customer-based Brand Equity Model (CBBE Model). Kevin Lane Keller developed this model in his widely-used textbook, "Strategic Brand Management. This model holds that to build brand equity, a company needs to design and shape how customers think and feel about the offered products or services; Keller (2004) emphasises building the right experience around the particular brand so that customers have specific, positive thoughts, feelings, beliefs, opinions, and perceptions about it. The model holds that when the company has substantial brand equity, it will boost sales performance and increase brand loyalty, commitment, and preference. Customer The brand equity model, as explained by (Keller, 2004), is suitable for this study because it reveals how brand equity is created, starting with the brand identity through developing brand awareness, marketing communication campaigns and communicating the unique selling

proposition to the customers and ending with the last stage of the CBBE model which is a brand resonance that enhances brand loyalty and commitment which is achieved through the use of promotion tools and marketing communication campaigns.

The study by Sedaghat and Moaker (2012) on the impact of promotional mix elements on brand equity in Iran's Mazandaran province used the case of Samsung. The findings revealed that promotional mix positively and significantly influences brand equity. On the other hand, Hamidzera et al. (2014) conducted a study to test whether there is a relationship between promotion mix tools and brand equity on Samsung products, and the findings revealed that promotional tools have significant effects on brand equity dimensions. Kumar and Patra (2017) postulated that promotion had become a crucial strategy in business operations used by firms and business owners to influence and persuade their customers. The results concluded that the promotion mix elements play a vital role in enhancing brand equity, whilst direct marketing was found to have the potential to create brand awareness and brand image.

Othman et al. (2020) studied the effects of promotion-based advertising on brand associations focusing on durable goods; the study termed brand association as the conceptualisation of brand image, brand attitude, and consumer quality perception. Findings revealed the significant influence of promotion-based advertisement on brand association. Khizar et al. (2016) showed that integrated marketing communication significantly affected the company's brand equity. The Allaham (2015) assessed the impact of sales promotion on brand equity, and the study revealed the positive effects of sales promotion on brand image creation. Rahmani et al. (2012) surveyed the impact of advertising and sales promotion on brand equity. This study was conducted in Iran, and the findings revealed that these promotional tools positively contribute to building brand awareness, association, and perception in consumers' minds. Karunanity and Sivesan (2013) postulated in their study that brand equity is influenced by promotion mix tools by 52% while the other factors taken by 48% in determining the brand equity for SMEs.

You Tang and Mesfin (2020) studied the effect of Marketing mix on the competitive advantages of small and Medium Enterprises in Ethiopia; in the study, the focus was placed on identifying if the 4Ps of marketing mix influence the competitive advantage of SMEs, the findings in the survey indicated the existence of correlation and influence of marketing mix on competitive

advantages. Odunlami and Emmanuel (2014) revealed that using promotion tools positively influenced companies' brand awareness in the case of the brewery sub-sector of manufacturing companies in Nigeria. Charanah and Njuguna (2015) conducted a study on the effect of promotion tools on brand equity for hospitals in Nairobi, Kenya; the study findings revealed that promotion mix tools significantly impact brand equity for hospitals based in Kenya.

We use the following indicators to examine the impact of advertising on brand equity since it is believed to have a notable effect on brand equity dimensions as it improves brand awareness and strengthens consumer brand recall and recognition. Research demonstrates that the brand equity factor is significantly influenced by advertising. Adebé (2017) suggested that businesses' use of advertising enhances the brand equity of their particular brands. In addition, research indicates that consumers typically have a perception of the brand regarding the marketing communication expenditure made by the company. Promotion is used to persuade consumers to buy products and develop brand commitment. It is considered a vital element of the marketing communication mix (Karunanithy & Sivesan, 2013).

According to Aaker (2010), brand equity results from prior marketing investments such as sales promotion tools. Similarly, Keller (2012) revealed that consumers are highly influenced by investment in marketing activities that affect consumers' brand knowledge, perception, attitude, intention, and behaviour related to a specific brand in the market. This reveals that a company builds a strong brand by investing in marketing activities such as sales promotion. We developed the question using these sales promotion indicators to track the responses from study participants and test the impact of sales promotion on the brand equity of small and medium enterprises. Price discounts, seasonal discounts, quantity discounts, Free samples, and Loyalty Programs were key indicators of sales promotion.

Karaxha et al. (2016) highlight that direct marketing enhances sales performance by establishing trust-based client relationships and quickly introducing new products and services. Direct marketing involves communicating with clients via emails, phones, and events to obtain rapid feedback. This also visually depicts how direct marketing influences different brand equity measures in various industries. The literature review has enabled the researchers to summarise three specific objectives of the study and three hypotheses that will be tested and presented in the

results section. First is the causation between advertisement and brand equity, and next is the causation between sales promotion and brand equity. Finally, there is the causation of direct marketing on brand equity. As a result, the literature section elaborates on the role played by small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Tanzania's economy, as well as their marketing challenges and performance. SMEs are considered a significant source of jobs and wealth; however, they need more funds, face rising competition, and need better marketing skills. The review highlights marketing practices as fundamental to enhancing business growth, profitability, and general performance. It also emphasises the importance of interventions and support mechanisms to assist SMEs in preparing and executing effective marketing strategies. The literature also highlights the advantages of a robust brand for SMEs, as it enhances consumer recognition and trust (Chavis & Sohi, 2022; Nisha & Ramesh, 2021). Overall, the synthesis of the literature review underscores the importance of addressing marketing-related challenges and providing necessary support to enhance the sustainability and success of SMEs in Tanzania. According to the reviewed literature, the study has three hypotheses as follows;

The hypotheses developed from the literature:

H1: Advertising directly and positively affects the brand equity of SMEs in Tanzania.

H2: Sales promotion directly and positively affects brand equity in Tanzania. And the brand equity of SMEs in Tanzania.

H3: Direct Marketing directly and positively affects brand equity in Tanzania and the brand equity of SMEs in Tanzania.

Advertisement is an essential factor in enhancing brand equity in the SME context. Advertisements lead to higher brand visibility, awareness and recognition, which often translate into benefits for brand equity. In the same way, sales promotion provides such elasticity that consumers rush to buy incentive products, reinforcing brand loyalty and influencing brand equity. Direct Marketing Efforts are also instrumental in increasing brand equity because this form of marketing allows you to directly interact with your potential and actual customers and develop a personal relationship with them, all of which enhances the value and perception of the brand on the market.

2. METHODS

The study was conducted using a structured and systematic approach to ensure the reliability and validity of the research findings. Initially, an explanatory research design supported by a quantitative research approach was chosen. This design aimed to explore the causal and effectual relationships among the relevant variables related to the impact of promotional mix tools on brand equity within small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Ilala Municipality, Tanzania.

2.1 Study Population and Sampling

This study employed a cross-sectional research design to survey promotional tools' effect on SMEs' brand equity in Ilala municipality. Respondents were selected using probability sampling, a self-administered questionnaire was utilised, and 158 responses were used in data analysis. The survey was conducted among SMEs in Ilala municipality. The sampling design was simple random sampling, known for its minimal bias and potential for generalizability (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). It is to select sampling units, mainly when an entire sampling frame is not directly available in marketing research; thus, a multi-stage random sampling technique was pursued (Beri, 2013). In this study, the unit of analysis was SMEs in Ilala municipality, and the units of inquiry were owners/managers of those SMEs.

The population of this study was SME owners/managers in Ilala Municipality, who were the units of inquiry. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to select one hundred seventy participants. Different segments in the SMEs were represented using stratified sampling. In contrast, having identified strata by simple random sampling would have given each of them an equal chance to be selected. The selection of a sample size of 170 respondents from the Ilala Municipality is justified for several reasons. First and foremost, this figure significantly represents Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) within the municipality. Given the diversity and number of SMEs operating in Ilala, a sample of this size ensures that various business types, sectors, and demographics are included, enhancing the findings' reliability.

Additionally, the choice of Ilala Municipality is strategic. This area is recognised as a central hub for economic activities in the region, featuring a mix of established and emerging SMEs. By

focusing on this municipality, the research can capture a broad spectrum of entrepreneurial experiences and challenges specific to the local economic environment.

Furthermore, the 170 respondents balance statistical significance and practical feasibility. This sample size is manageable for data collection and analysis while still robust enough to yield meaningful insights. It allows for a comprehensive examination of the SMEs without making the research effort unwieldy, thereby facilitating thorough and focused analysis. Combining the sample size and the specific location enhances the study's validity and applicability to the SME landscape in the Ilala Municipality.

2.2 Data Collection Method

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire explicitly designed for this study. The questionnaire comprised closed-ended questions aimed at assessing the participants' perceptions regarding the effects of the promotional mix tools on the brand equity of SMEs. Each statement within the questionnaire utilised an ordinal scale, employing a Likert scale with five response options, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). This scaling allowed participants to express varying degrees of agreement or disagreement with specific statements, capturing nuanced views.

2.3 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Descriptive statistics were deployed to analyse the responses. The average scores based on the previous examples enabled the degree to which respondents accepted or rejected those statements to be gauged. According to this measure, a mean score of 4.5-5.0 indicated strong agreement with the point- that is, the market-oriented storytelling tools were thought to work effectively. However, scores below three might be taken as antagonistic responses, with 1-2.4 representing a simple form of no feeling at all or mixed emotions, which could also include some sense of disenchantment in the answers given. Later, it became clear that neutral replies could be identified through mean scores of 2.5-3.4. It was neither positive nor negative, just not enough to say in such a way and for sure amongst this crowd given what they had been told before about "There is no right or wrong answer but a multitude of possibilities."

2.4 Statistical Analysis

The study employed stepwise regression analysis to determine the relevance of various independent variables in predicting the dependent variable. This method allowed for the systematic addition or removal of independent variables based on their statistical significance about the outcome of interest. The stepwise approach facilitated the identification of the most impactful variables contributing to the prediction of brand equity.

We also used correlation analysis, ANOVA, and multiple regression statistical methods to examine the relationships between variables. The hypothesis test was performed at a 5% significance level, the criterion for retaining or rejecting the hypotheses. Typically, the ANOVA table indicates which hypothesis did not reach a p-value of 0.05, which is associated with a position effect in positive terms. Additionally, any value above this line was regarded as "insignificant ."

2.5 Validity and Reliability

Experts also recommended a test-retest that increased the reliability of the data collection tool by checking the consistency of responses over time between subjects. This systematic and granular design allowed the study to identify and compare the roles of promotion mix tools in building brand equity among SMEs across the Ilala municipality, gaining sound and vital insight into what matters most in this relationship.

3. RESULTS

This study investigated the effect of promotional tools on the brand equity of SMEs in Ilala municipality in Tanzania. The tools involved in the study were Advertising, sales promotion and direct marketing. The findings for the current study are presented based on the demographic characteristics of the respondents who are the owners/ managers of these establishments, followed by the descriptive analysis of the results and inferential statistics. The results are further organised based on the three hypotheses of the study presented in Section 1. The sample and response rates are presented in the first place.

A sample of 170 participants was used for our research, yet 158 people filled out the questionnaire, achieving a total degree of answers equal to 92.9%. As per Richardson (2005), we acknowledge that response rates greater than 50% are acceptable; thus, the 158 completed questionnaires were used for our data analysis. Methods In our methodology, we used descriptive and inferential statistics. The data from the 158 returned questionnaires were readily summarised in several tables that illustrated significant trends and comparisons for SMEs in Ilala Municipality, as would be expected. Descriptive statistics (i.e., means, medians and standard deviations) have been used to summarise our participants' demographics and responses. We also use inferential statistics to test our hypotheses and make generalisations about the larger population of SMEs based on our sample size. Results are shown in 7 tables, beginning with the demographics of the owners/managers who are units of inquiry for this study before proceeding to descriptive and inferential statistics.

Table 1: Response rate

Response rate	Frequency	Percentage
Number of Questionnaires	170	100%
Number of wholly filled questionnaires	158	92.9%
Number of Incomplete Filled Questionnaires	12	7.1%

Source: Researcher (2022)

The table shows the response rate for a questionnaire. Out of 170 questionnaires distributed, 158 were wholly filled, representing a response rate of 92.9%. However, 12 incomplete questionnaires accounted for 7.1% of the total questionnaires. This indicates a high level of completion for the questionnaires, with only a small percentage being incomplete.

3.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

In this part of the presentation, we present the demographic characteristics of the respondents in terms of gender, level of education, and marital status. Analysing the respondents' demographic characteristics is crucial in understanding the respondents' profiles for this study.

Table 2: Gender of respondents

		Gender			
		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	94	59.5	59.5	59.5
	Female	64	40.5	40.5	100.0
	Total	158	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher (2022)

The study considered using all gender categories in responding to questionnaires where 94 were male, and 64 were female. Also, education status was part of the demographic information, and Table 3 indicates that 63 of the respondents equals to 39.9 %, have the education level of bachelor's degree and above, followed by 25.9% of the respondents who have a diploma level of education, 20.9% have attained primary and secondary education level. In comparison, 13.3% of the respondents have a certificate level of education. These findings imply that the majority of the respondent's education level was satisfactory enough to enable them to have explicit knowledge and awareness of the effects of promotion tools (advertising, sales promotion and direct marketing) on the brand equity of SMEs.

Table 3. Level of Education

		Level of Education			
		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Primary & Secondary	33	20.9	20.9	20.9
	Certificate	21	13.3	13.3	34.2
	Diploma	41	25.9	25.9	60.1
	Bachelor's Degree and Above	63	39.9	39.9	100.0
	Total	158	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher (2022)

This table presents the distribution of respondents based on their level of education. The "Frequency" column shows the number of respondents, while the "Per cent" column displays the percentage of respondents for each education level. The "Valid Percent" column represents the valid percentage of respondents, and the "Cumulative Percent" column shows the cumulative

percentage. The "Valid" column lists the different education levels, including Primary and secondary, Certificate, Diploma, and Bachelor’s Degree and Above. Finally, the "Total" row provides the total number of respondents and the corresponding percentages.

Table 4. Marital status

		Marital Status			
		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Married	95	60.1	60.1	60.1
	Single	54	34.2	34.2	94.3
	Others	9	5.7	5.7	100.0
	Total	158	100.0	100.0	

Source: Researcher (2022)

The table provides information on the marital status of the surveyed individuals. It includes three categories: Married, Single, and Others. The "Frequency" column shows the number of individuals falling into each category. In contrast, the "Per cent" column indicates the percentage of individuals in each category relative to the total sample size. The "Valid Percent" column represents the percentage of individuals in each category relative to the total valid responses. The "Cumulative Percent" column shows the cumulative percentage as we move down the categories.

For example, 60.1% of the individuals surveyed are married, 34.2% are single, and 5.7% fall into the "Others" category. The "Total" row at the bottom provides the overall count and percentages for the entire sample.

3.2 Descriptive Statistics on Promotional Tools

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics on Promotion Tools

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Advertising	4.134	0.60922	Positive
Sales promotion	4.305	0.54413	Positive
Direct Marketing	4.177	0.52910	Positive

Source: Researcher 2022

Table 5 provides descriptive statistics on different promotion tools. The "Mean" column shows the average rating for each tool, while the "Std. Deviation" column indicates the variability or

dispersion of the ratings. The mean rating for "Advertising" is 4.134, but the standard deviation is 0.60922. A positive interpretation suggests that, on average, advertising is perceived favourably as a promotional tool. For "Sales promotion," the mean rating is 4.305, and the standard deviation is 0.54413. Again, the positive interpretation suggests that sales promotion is viewed favourably as a promotion tool. Lastly, for "Direct Marketing," the mean rating is 4.177, and the standard deviation is 0.52910. The positive interpretation indicates that direct marketing is generally seen as a positive promotion tool. The missing standard deviation values make it difficult to assess the spread of the ratings for each tool, but based on their mean ratings, all three promotion tools are perceived positively.

3.3.1 Inferential statistics-Correlations Analysis

The results presented in Table 6 show the correlation between brand equity and three marketing strategies: advertising, sales promotion, and direct marketing. The Pearson correlation coefficients measure the strength and direction of the linear relationship between these variables.

Table 6: Correlation Results

		Correlations			
		Brand Equity	Advertising	Sales Promotion	Direct Marketing
Pearson Correlation	Brand Equity	1.000	.349	.347	.534
	Advertising	.349	1.000	.316	.343
	Sales Promotion	.347	.316	1.000	.348
	Direct Marketing	.534	.343	.348	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Brand Equity	.	.000	.000	.000
	Advertising	.000	.	.000	.000
	Sales Promotion	.000	.000	.	.000
	Direct Marketing	.000	.000	.000	.
N	Brand Equity	158	158	158	158
	Advertising	158	158	158	158
	Sales Promotion	158	158	158	158
	Direct Marketing	158	158	158	158

Source: Researcher (2022)

The correlation coefficient ranges from -1 to 1, where 1 indicates a perfect positive correlation, -1 indicates a perfect negative correlation, and 0 indicates no correlation. This table shows a positive correlation between brand equity and each marketing communication strategy. Specifically, the correlation coefficients for brand equity with advertising, sales promotion, and

direct marketing are 0.349, 0.347, and 0.534, respectively. These positive coefficients indicate that as one variable (e.g., brand equity) increases, the other variable (e.g., direct marketing) also tends to increase. Additionally, the table provides the significance levels (Sig.) for each correlation coefficient. In this case, all the correlations have a significance level of .000 (or less than .001), suggesting that the observed correlations are statistically significant. The correlation results show a positive and statistically significant relationship between brand equity and advertising, sales promotion, and direct marketing strategies. These findings suggest that brand equity has a positive impact as companies invest more in these marketing strategies.

3.3.2 Inferential Statistics- Regression Analysis

The results presented in Table 7 show each predictor variable's unstandardised coefficients, standard error standardised coefficients, t-values, and significance levels. The "Model 1" section includes the constant value and the coefficients for the predictor variables (Advertising, Sales Promotion, and Direct Marketing). The "Dependent Variable" is Brand Equity. The results indicate that Advertising, Sales Promotion, and Direct Marketing significantly affect Brand Equity, as indicated by their respective t-values and significance levels.

Table 7. Regression Results

Model		Coefficients			T	Sig.
		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.647	.430		1.503	.135
	Advertising	.191	.089	.155	2.156	.033
	Sales Promotion	.163	.079	.149	2.069	.040
	Direct Marketing	.490	.083	.429	5.903	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Equity

Based on the regression analysis results, it is evident that advertising, sales promotion, and direct marketing significantly impact brand equity. The respective t-values and significance levels in the coefficients section support this. The coefficients provide information about the strength and direction of the relationship between the predictor and dependent variables. Additionally, the standardised coefficients in the table allow for a comparison of the relative importance of each

predictor variable in affecting Brand Equity. Overall, the results suggest that the marketing activities of Advertising, Sales Promotion, and Direct Marketing play a crucial role in determining the brand equity of SMEs in Ilala municipality. Direct marketing had more weight in explaining the dependent variable, 0.490, followed by advertising, 0.191 and sales promotion, 0.163.

3.4 Hypotheses testing

The hypotheses were tested using a stepwise regression model. All hypotheses were accepted, as the analysis yielded a p-value of less than 0.05, indicating statistically significant effects. However, the hypothesis related to direct marketing exhibited a strong positive correlation with brand equity. We individually present the findings related to the three promotion mix tools: advertising, sales promotion, and direct marketing. Below, we discuss each tool's impact on brand equity for small and medium-sized enterprises in the Ilala Municipality, Tanzania.

3.4.1 Effect of Advertising on Brand Equity of SMEs in Ilala Municipality

The study findings revealed that advertisement moderately affects the brand equity of small and medium enterprises. The findings showed that ads in print media and electronic media positively affect the brand equity of small and medium enterprises, with an average mean score of 4.134. Correlation results indicated a significant relationship between advertisement and brand equity, with a Pearson correlation coefficient value of 0.349, suggesting a moderate degree of relationship at a significance level of p-value < 0.01. Additionally, the regression analysis showed a regression coefficient of 0.195 with a sig-value of 0.033. The study establishes a positive relationship between advertisement and SME brand equity based on these results. The hypothesis that advertising affects the brand equity of SMEs is accepted as a sig-value of 0.033, which is less than 0.05. Furthermore, the R-Square of 0.195 suggests that advertising can explain the variance of brand equity by nearly 20%. This further justifies the fact that advertising is an important marketing strategy for SMEs to create a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

3.4.2 Effect of Sales Promotion on Brand Equity of SMEs in Ilala Municipality

The descriptive statistics of statements that measured the impact of sales promotion on the brand equity of small and medium enterprises reveal that sales promotion positively affects the brand equity of small and medium enterprises; it has an average mean score of 4.305 based on the

results in Table 5. This response falls within the response rate of 3.5- 4.4, indicating that sales promotion moderately and positively affects the brand equity of small and medium enterprises in Ilala Municipality. The study wanted to see if there was a significant relationship between the variables, so correlation was performed to determine the existence of a relationship between sales promotion and brand equity. As shown in Table 6, the analysis results show a Pearson correlation value of 0.347, indicating a moderate degree of relationship at a significance level of $P\text{-value} < 0.01$ and a regression coefficient of 0.163, as indicated in Table 7. The study establishes a significant positive relationship between sales promotion and SME brand equity based on the findings. The findings indicated and justified that sales promotion in the form of discounts by selling products at discounted prices can work significantly for SMEs in boosting sales. The findings also reveal that sales promotion can contribute around 16.3% in explaining the brand equity for SME customers in Ilala Municipality. Furthermore, the hypothesis that sales promotion affects the brand equity of SMEs in Ilala Municipality is accepted as the P-value is less than 0.05, as indicated in Table 7 above.

3.4.3 Effect of Direct Marketing on Brand Equity of SMEs in Ilala Municipality

Direct marketing involved testing the effects using descriptive statistics where the average mean score was 4.18, falling within the response category of 3.5-4.4; these results indicate that direct marketing positively affects the brand equity of SMEs. The study involved testing the relationship between direct marketing and brand equity of SMEs; the correlation was carried out to determine the existence of a relationship. The analysis results from Table 6 show a Pearson correlation value of 0.534, indicating a high degree of relationship at a significance level of $p\text{-value} < 0.01$, and regression analysis from Table 7 shows the regression coefficient of 0.490 at a sig-value of 0.01. Based on this analysis, an alternative hypothesis was accepted, and the study establishes a positive significant relationship between direct marketing and brand equity of SMEs. From the findings, Direct Marketing plays a vital role in explaining the brand equity of SMEs in Ilala Municipality. The findings show that direct marketing can explain brand equity by 49%, larger than advertising and sales promotion combined.

4. DISCUSSION

In this section, the effect of individual independent variables, namely advertising, Sales Promotion, and Direct marketing, on brand equity is discussed based on the study findings

compared with the existing literature. A comparison is made to establish similarities and differences and the reasons for them. The findings on the effect of advertising on the brand equity of the SMEs in Ilala Municipality align with the works of other researchers. This is supported by the findings of previous studies (Febrian et al., 2021; Rahmani et al., 2012; Sedaghat et al., 2013).

Moreover, the findings align with Quayson et al. (2024), who postulated that promotion-based advertisements in durable goods have significant effects on brand association; the study concluded that usage of advertising results in success for brand image, attitude and customer quality perception. This is supported by the findings of (Bu et al. (2021), El Kedra and Ener (2020), and Mahmudova and Kovacs (2018)), who investigated and revealed that advertisement and sales promotion positively affect brand equity dimensions; the researcher added that advertisement not only influences brand awareness and associations but also creates positive image and perception in consumer's minds. The study reflects the arguments of Makussi (2020), who revealed that usage of online adverts influences brand preference, awareness and customer loyalty; the research study was conducted in Vodacom Tanzania based In Dar es Salaam, where respondents agreed that the company participated in utilising online adverts in different platforms which in turn results into improved brand awareness and overall brand equity. The findings on the effect of sales promotion on the brand equity of SMEs in Ilala Municipality support the works of other researchers, for example, Akoglu et al. 2021; Febrian et al., 2021 Kumar et al., 2017.

The study findings reflect on Keller's (2010) Customer-Based Brand Equity Model; the model emphasises that businesses should build the right experience around a particular brand so that customers have specific, positive thoughts, feelings, beliefs, opinions, and perceptions about it. Also, Ajzen (1991), in the theory of planned behaviour, identified that the behaviour of consumers and society members can influence customers to behave in a certain way. Like any other business, this implies that SMEs should integrate sales promotion strategies to influence how customers feel and think about the product and brand. The findings above reveal the dominance of digital tools in enhancing businesses in a highly competitive business landscape. Direct marketing using modern technologies enables business owners and managers to reach

customers where they are. The acceptance of this alternative hypothesis aligns with the findings of Akoglu et al. (2021), Karaxha et al. (2016), and Swallehe (2022). These findings indicate that small and medium enterprises should use direct marketing to strengthen brand equity. This is reflected in the findings of Kumar and Patra (2017), who revealed that promotion is undeniably crucial in business operations and is used by organisations to influence and persuade potential customers. Also, the study is consistent with and correlated to the findings of Dameh and Ghadeer (2019), who identified the benefits of direct marketing in influencing brand awareness in Jordan. The study used 506 customers in the Jordanian city of Amman.

In addition, the findings present important implications for the brand equity literature and SME owners and managers who want a competitive advantage in their industry. This study also adds to the literature an understanding of the effects of advertising and sales promotions on brand equity concerning SMEs. It contributes to the literature by addressing smaller firms' unique challenges and context in brand equity development. Future research may build on these results by examining the persistence of distinct types of different marketing effects over time or conducting cross-comparative studies in other industries/regions to determine the generalizability of these strategies. This will have consequences for every SME owner and manager. According to the research, these organisations should take a lesson and integrate full-spectrum advertising strategies into their marketing arsenal. This allows them to create a stronger brand and increase customer engagement. Moreover, the results also recognise the new age of selling promotional means that stimulate consumer image and attract them toward brand loyalty. Through promotions like loose samples and discounts, SMEs construct their aggressive benefits by shopping for those customers and retaining them.

In addition, the results of this study indicate that direct marketing is not an approach that SMEs should ignore; instead, it should be employed as a complementary part of a diversified marketing strategy. Such personalised connections involve acquiring existing customers and nurturing their loyalty over time, building brand equity.

In conclusion, these findings call for SME owners and managers to improve advertising functionality, emphasise ability, and integrate brand name management into a more strategic

vision. This will allow them to adapt to the competitive ecosystem and use marketing as a continuing force for growth.

This study laid the foundation for how advertisement, sales promotion and direct marketing are crucial promotional tools that independently affect the brand equity of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) at Ilala Municipality. The results indicate that SME promotional strategies are vital in improving brand preference and customer loyalty. However, we acknowledge that our exploration of a selection of marketing mix elements—product, price, distribution, public relations, and personal selling—was necessarily narrow. While the narrowed focus of this research yields essential implications, it also suggests an evident opportunity for future work to examine these other marketing elements in more depth. A deeper understanding of how different marketing aspects (digital marketing, customer engagement strategies, and service delivery) interact to shape and jointly impact brand equity could benefit future research. Comprehension of these relations might reveal a more insightful perspective to SMEs in developing their marketing strategies according to their particular circumstances within the market.

Furthermore, it would be beneficial if future research extends the geographic scope of Dar Es Salaam to get broader insights into brand equity in Tanzania. This approach would show the regional behavioural differences and business atmosphere, whereas tackling the local condition would reveal numerous factors responsible for SME selection. Promotional tools' heterogeneity can be unravelled. This broader perspective will allow them to craft contextually relevant strategies that work and ultimately empower Tanzania SMEs to steer their marketing for meaningful growth and sustainability strategically. SONG — The proposed integrative framework of promotional tool selection will bring some understanding to the most influential factors in determining decisions on the use of those tools and provide valuable suggestions to SME practitioners closer to better development and success in a harsher environment.

5. CONCLUSION

The study " Advertisements, Sales Promotions & Direct Marketing Plays Positive & Significant Role in Augmentation of SME Brand Equity " reflects the need to use these marketing activities

wisely. Hence, a company achieves strong branding, impacts customer behaviour, and builds long-term brand equity in the ever-changing and competitive market.

Based on the findings, the study recommends that SMEs prioritise implementing an integrated promotion mix. In doing so, they can influence desirable business performance and brand equity outcomes beyond more common manifestations of brand value. However, to achieve these benefits, SMEs will require a solid foundation of well-informed policies and the appropriate experience and skills to select the most suitable promotional tools. This entails contemplating diverse parameters that influence these tools' exceptionality, associating personnel with the required expertise and skills, and enabling them to flourish depending on the design or scope of business in current competitive ecosystems. With these strategies, SMEs identify themselves for growth and resilience, creating an effective brand presence and a loyal customer base.

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