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ПРОДВИЖЕНИЕ РУАНДИЙСКОГО СПЕШЕЛТИ-КОФЕ НА РОССИЙСКОМ РЫНКЕ: НА ПРИМЕРЕ БРЕНДА GORILLA'S COFFEE

Аннотация. Российский рынок кофе демонстрирует устойчивый рост в течение последнего десятилетия, характеризующийся увеличением спроса на премиальные и спешелти-сорта кофе [4; 7]. В то же время Руанда стала одним из ведущих производителей спешелти-кофе сорта арабика в Африке, получив международное признание благодаря высокому качеству продукции, полной прослеживаемости происхождения и уникальному вкусовому профилю [4; 5; 9]. Несмотря на свою растущую мировую репутацию, руандийский кофе остается относительно малоизвестным среди российских потребителей по сравнению с кофе из Бразилии, Колумбии, Эфиопии и Вьетнама [7].

В данной статье рассматриваются возможности и вызовы, связанные с продвижением руандийского спешелти-кофе на российском рынке, с особым акцентом на **Gorilla's Coffee** — флагманский премиальный кофейный бренд Руанды [2; 3]. В исследовании анализируются характеристики руандийского кофе, предпочтения российских потребителей, рыночные возможности и конкурентные преимущества продукции Руанды [4; 5; 7]. Полученные результаты свидетельствуют о том, что Руанда обладает значительным потенциалом для проникновения в сегмент премиального кофе в России

благодаря высокому качеству продукции, устойчивым методам производства, эффективному брендингу и стратегическому сотрудничеству с российскими дистрибьюторами и предприятиями спешелти-кофе [2; 4; 6].

В статье делается вывод о том, что бренд **Gorilla's Coffee** может стать важным инструментом укрепления позиций Руанды на российском кофейном рынке и повышения добавленной стоимости экспорта руандийского кофе [2; 3; 10].

Ключевые слова: Руанда, спешелти-кофе, Gorilla's Coffee, российский рынок, арабика Бурбон, экспорт кофе, премиальный кофе, международный маркетинг.

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PROMOTING RWANDAN SPECIALTY COFFEE IN THE RUSSIAN MARKET: THE CASE OF GORILLA'S COFFEE

Abstract: The Russian coffee market has experienced significant growth over the last decade, characterized by increasing demand for premium and specialty coffee products [7]. At the same time, Rwanda has emerged as one of Africa's leading producers of specialty Arabica coffee, recognized for its high quality, traceability, and unique flavor profile [4; 5; 9]. Despite its international reputation, Rwandan coffee remains relatively unknown among Russian consumers compared to Brazilian, Colombian, Ethiopian, and Vietnamese coffee [7].

This article examines the opportunities and challenges associated with promoting Rwandan specialty coffee in the Russian market, with particular emphasis on Gorilla's Coffee, Rwanda's flagship premium coffee brand [2; 3]. The study analyzes the characteristics of Rwandan coffee, Russian consumer preferences, market opportunities, and competitive advantages [4; 5; 7]. The findings indicate that Rwanda possesses significant potential to penetrate the Russian premium coffee segment through quality differentiation, sustainability, effective branding, and strategic partnerships with Russian distributors and specialty coffee retailers [2; 4;

6]. The article concludes that Gorilla's Coffee can serve as an important instrument for strengthening Rwanda's presence in the Russian coffee market and increasing the value of coffee exports [2; 3; 10].

Keywords: Rwanda, specialty coffee, Gorilla's Coffee, Russian market, Arabica Bourbon, coffee exports, specialty coffee, international marketing.

1. Introduction

Coffee has become one of the most consumed beverages in the Russian Federation. Although tea remains culturally important, coffee consumption has increased steadily due to urbanization, changing lifestyles, and the rapid expansion of coffee shop culture [7]. Large cities such as Moscow, Saint Petersburg, Kazan, and Yekaterinburg have witnessed substantial growth in specialty coffee consumption and demand for premium imported coffee products [7].

Simultaneously, Rwanda has transformed its coffee industry into one of Africa's most successful specialty coffee sectors. Following the reforms implemented after 1994, the country shifted from quantity-oriented production toward quality-focused specialty coffee production through investments in coffee washing stations, quality control systems, farmer training, and export promotion initiatives [4].

Today, Rwanda produces predominantly Arabica Bourbon coffee grown at elevations between 1,200 and 2,200 meters above sea level [5; 9]. Approximately 400,000 farming households depend on coffee production as a source of income, while coffee remains one of Rwanda's leading agricultural exports [5; 9].

Despite Rwanda's success in international specialty coffee markets, its presence in Russia remains limited. Most Russian consumers are familiar with coffee originating

from Brazil, Colombia, Ethiopia, and Vietnam, while awareness of Rwandan coffee remains relatively low [7]. Consequently, there is a need to examine how Rwanda can strengthen its position in this growing market.

The purpose of this article is to assess the opportunities for promoting Rwandan specialty coffee in Russia and to analyze the role of Gorilla's Coffee as a premium brand capable of enhancing Rwanda's competitiveness in the Russian coffee market [2; 3; 10].

2. Literature Review

The global specialty coffee market has expanded significantly due to changing consumer preferences and increasing demand for high-quality, traceable, and sustainably produced coffee. According to Clay et al., specialty coffee markets reward producers who differentiate their products through quality, origin identity, and effective branding strategies [6].

Research conducted by World Coffee Research demonstrates that Rwanda possesses favorable agroecological conditions for specialty coffee production. The country's volcanic soils, high altitudes, moderate temperatures, and Bourbon Arabica varieties contribute to distinctive flavor characteristics that are highly valued by specialty coffee consumers [5].

International Coffee Organization reports that Rwanda's coffee sector has undergone significant modernization during the past two decades. Investments in processing infrastructure, farmer cooperatives, and quality assurance systems have enabled Rwandan coffee producers to access premium international markets and obtain higher prices for specialty-grade coffee [4].

Studies on Russian coffee consumption indicate a gradual transition from instant coffee toward roasted and specialty coffee products. Younger consumers, particularly in urban areas, increasingly seek premium coffee experiences and show growing interest in single-origin coffees, ethical sourcing, and sustainability [7].

These trends create favorable conditions for introducing Rwandan specialty coffee into the Russian market.

3. Characteristics and Competitive Advantages of Rwandan Specialty Coffee

The international reputation of Rwandan coffee is based on its unique sensory characteristics and production methods.

Table 1: Characteristics of Rwandan Specialty Coffee and their relevance to the Russian Market

Characteristic	Description	Importance for Russian Consumers
Coffee Variety	Arabica Bourbon	Premium quality and superior flavor
Growing Altitude	1,200–2,200 meters	Increased bean density and complexity
Soil Type	Volcanic soils	Enhanced sweetness and aroma
Aroma	Floral and fruity	Distinctive sensory experience
Flavor Notes	Citrus, berries, honey, caramel	Attractive to specialty coffee consumers
Acidity	Bright and balanced	Appreciated in premium coffee culture

Body	Medium and smooth	Suitable for espresso and filter brewing
Specialty Score	Above 85 points	Internationally recognized quality
Traceability	Farm-to-cup transparency	Builds consumer trust
Sustainability	Ethical production practices	Appeals to environmentally conscious buyers

As shown in Table 1, Rwandan coffee possesses several attributes that align with the preferences of modern Russian specialty coffee consumers. The coffee's floral aromas, bright acidity, and fruity flavor profile differentiate it from traditional coffee products commonly available in Russia [8; 10].

Furthermore, Rwanda's emphasis on traceability and sustainability corresponds with global consumer trends favoring ethically sourced agricultural products [4].

4. Gorilla's Coffee as a Flagship Brand for Russia

Gorilla's Coffee represents one of Rwanda's most successful value-addition initiatives. Produced by Rwanda Farmers Coffee Company (RFCC), the brand offers roasted and instant coffee products manufactured domestically from premium Arabica Bourbon beans [2].

The company works directly with coffee cooperatives and thousands of smallholder farmers, ensuring quality consistency and supporting rural development. This business model contributes to sustainable economic growth while enhancing product traceability and authenticity [3].

One of Gorilla's Coffee's strongest competitive advantages is its connection to Rwanda's mountain gorillas. This association creates a unique brand identity that links premium coffee consumption with environmental conservation and Rwanda's tourism success [2; 10]. For Russian consumers, Gorilla's Coffee offers more than a beverage. It provides an authentic African coffee experience supported by a compelling story of sustainability, conservation, and farmer empowerment [2; 3; 10]. Such branding can help distinguish the product from competitors originating from Brazil, Colombia, Ethiopia, and Vietnam, particularly within the growing Russian specialty coffee market, where consumers increasingly value product authenticity, traceability, and ethical sourcing practices [6; 7].

5. Opportunities and Challenges in the Russian Market

Several factors create opportunities for the expansion of Rwandan coffee exports to Russia. First, specialty coffee consumption is growing rapidly among younger Russian consumers. Coffee shops, artisanal roasters, and online retailers actively seek unique coffee origins capable of differentiating their product offerings [7]. Second, Russian consumers increasingly appreciate premium products with strong sustainability credentials and transparent supply chains, creating favorable conditions for specialty coffees from Rwanda [4; 6]. Third, digital commerce platforms provide cost-effective channels for market entry. Online marketplaces and specialized coffee retailers allow foreign brands to reach consumers without extensive physical distribution networks [7].

Despite these opportunities, several challenges remain. The primary challenge is limited awareness of Rwanda as a coffee-producing country. Many Russian consumers have little knowledge of Rwanda's coffee industry and its achievements in specialty coffee production [5; 9]. Another challenge is strong competition from

established coffee exporters. Brazilian, Colombian, Ethiopian, and Vietnamese coffees dominate the Russian market and benefit from stronger distribution networks, higher levels of brand recognition, and long-established trade relationships [7].

To overcome these challenges, Rwanda should pursue several strategic initiatives. These include participation in coffee exhibitions and trade fairs in Russia, collaboration with Russian coffee roasters and distributors, implementation of Russian-language digital marketing campaigns, partnerships with coffee bloggers and influencers, organization of coffee tasting events and cupping sessions, and promotion of Gorilla's Coffee as a premium African specialty brand [2; 3; 7; 10].

These measures would improve brand visibility, strengthen consumer awareness, and facilitate the successful penetration of Rwandan specialty coffee into the Russian market [2; 7; 10].

6. Conclusion

Rwanda has successfully positioned itself among the world's leading producers of specialty Arabica coffee. Through sustained investments in quality improvement, farmer support programs, and international marketing, the country has established a strong reputation within the global specialty coffee sector [4; 5].

The Russian market presents substantial opportunities for the expansion of Rwandan coffee exports due to growing demand for premium coffee products, increasing interest in specialty coffee, and changing consumer preferences.

Gorilla's Coffee serves as an effective flagship brand capable of introducing Russian consumers to Rwanda's coffee industry. The combination of exceptional quality,

sustainability, traceability, and strong branding creates significant competitive advantages.

To achieve long-term success in Russia, Rwandan coffee exporters should focus on market education, strategic partnerships, digital promotion, and participation in industry events. These efforts will strengthen Rwanda's position within the Russian coffee market and contribute to increased export revenues and rural economic development.

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