

ASSESSING FACTORS ENHANCING SALES REVENUE FOR STREET FOOD VENDING ENTREPRENEURS: CASE OF MOBILE PHONE ADOPTION IN BUKOBA MUNICIPAL, TANZANIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the use of mobile phones in enhancing sales revenue for street food vending Entrepreneurs: Mobile Phone Adoption in Bukoba Municipal, Tanzania. Increased access to mobile technologies has significantly contributed to almost all types of business. Mobile phones are one of the useful technologies that have been adopted and used by street food vendors as a tool for increasing sales revenues. Qualitative data were collected using in-depth interviews with 50 street traders, followed by 14 focus group discussions with 56 customers found in food kiosks eating. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. The qualitative data collected through interviews and focus group discussion was analysed by using ANOVA while the quantitative data collected through questionnaires were analysed by using SPSS software. The results show that using mobile phones to search for new markets is scarcely practiced due to certain challenges, such as high costs, technical problems, misuse of mobile contact by customers, and a concentration of similar products in one location. The findings call for a reduction of mobile service costs, improvement of mobile infrastructure, and provision of education to street traders and customers so that they learn how to use mobile phones for business communication more effectively as well as to abide by communication ethics. Due to a number of reasons some food vendors are using mobile technology and are generating high revenue, while others do not and remain with large quantities of unsold food every day, hence the researcher was motivated to explore the factors behind it.

Keywords: Mobile phone technology, Sales revenue, Street food vending, Street food vending, Mobile phone adoption and Local Government Authorities.

INTRODUCTION

Mobile phones have become an integral part of people's daily lives, and the use of mobile devices has become increasingly popular in recent years. In the food industry, mobile phones have been used to promote sales revenue and increase customer engagement. However, the effectiveness of mobile phone usage in promoting sales revenue in the food vending industry remains unclear. There is a need to investigate the impact of mobile phone usage on food vending sales revenue. A study on the use of mobile phones in promoting sales revenue of food vending could provide insights into the potential benefits and challenges of using mobile phones in the food vending industry. The study intends to explore the different ways that mobile phones can be used to promote food vending sales revenue, such as through mobile apps, text messaging, or social media by the support of internet access (Pipitwanichakarn & Wongtada 2019). This study therefore examines the factors that influence the effectiveness of mobile phone

usage, for soliciting issues such the type of food, location, and customer demographics relative to promoting sales revenue of women's food vending in the study area. Furthermore, the study intends to provide recommendations on how to optimize mobile phone usage to promote food vending sales revenue, such as developing targeted marketing campaigns, improving mobile app functionality, and providing incentives for mobile users. In this regard overall, a study on the use of mobile phones in promoting food vending sales revenue could provide valuable insights for food vending businesses and contribute to the development of effective mobile marketing strategies in the food industry by street vending entrepreneurs.

Street vending activities are a popular form of self-employment in many parts of the world, particularly in developing countries. Street vendors sell a wide variety of goods and services, including food, clothing, electronics, and handicrafts. These vendors often operate informally, without a license or legal recognition, and are often subject to harassment and eviction by local authorities. Despite these challenges, street vending activities offer a crucial source of income and livelihood for many individuals and families, especially those who lack formal education or job skills. Street vending can be a means of survival for those who are unable to secure formal employment, and it provides a way for individuals to earn a living without the need for substantial start-up capital or formal business training.

Street food vending activities along the Manispal play an important role in the informal economy, which encompasses a wide range of unregulated economic activities that are not accounted for in official statistics (Arámbulo et al. 1994) The informal economy is estimated to account for a significant share of economic activity in many developing countries, and street vending is a key component of this sector. However, it has been noted Mramba et al. (2014) that street vending activities relied on mobile phone applications to promote their good, but are facing numerous challenges, including lack of access to credit as well as lack of attitude relating with food hygiene education Sezgin & Şanlıer (2016) limited market opportunities and brand mark as marketing strategy Mariotti (2010) and vulnerability to exploitation and harassment (Batsell 2017). To address these challenges, there is a need for policies and programs that support the formalization and professionalization of street vending activities, while also protecting the rights and livelihoods of vendors (Mitullah, 2006).

Establishment of Street Vending Business

Usually, street food vendors establish their business in very strategic points, near factories and hospitals, certain streets and main roads Williams & Gurtoo (2012) and Mwove et al. (2023) near offices Sezgin & Şanlıer (2016) commercial centres and markets(Eckhardt and Shane 2003). Since, the value of the informal sector is contributing to economic welfare, it was anticipated the income generated would supplement other family expenditures (Mwove et al., 2023). However, these types of business are poorly organised, formally unregistered, and characterised by limited legal activities (Maglumtong & Fukushma, 2022). In developing countries, people who are engaged in informal business are also called entrepreneurs (Swanson, 2017).

Kumburu et al. (2019) stressed the importance of small entrepreneurs in the livelihood and economic growth of developing countries (Mariotti, 2010). In addition, Kennerley & Neely, (2003) denoted that, the growth of small entrepreneurs is needed through operational performance assessment of the resources available in ensuring that they are fully utilised. As Black et al. (2000) proposed the traditional assessment method of operational performance by looking at the increase in sales volume, capital return on investment, and profit. Similarly

Mhede (2016) added land, capital, labour, and entrepreneurship training as the determinants factors that influence sales revenue among street business sellers. Based on the reviewed literature there are several issues that determine the potential growth of small entrepreneurs in Tanzania. Among them are associated with inadequate, insufficient business. Training capital, competition, anti-entrepreneurial culture, bureaucratic procedures in business registration, high taxes, technological backwardness, lack of trust among entrepreneurs themselves, and poor infrastructure.

Uses of Mobile Phones in Promoting Sales Revenue of the Food Business

According to Mariotti (2010) in their book discussed Promotion as one among five 'P's such as 'People, Product, Place, Price and Promotion that is a type of communication and persuasion we find throughout our daily lives that is very important in the market plan. On top of that, mobile phones are one among cheap devices used for business promotion. There are various ways in which mobile phones are used in promoting the sales revenue of food businesses. This is providing customers with easy access to food products. With the use of mobile apps, customers may browse menus and place orders, as well as make payments conveniently from their mobile phones. Using such an app increases the likelihood of customers engaging more in business and making purchases of the products as a result ultimately boosting sales revenue Mramba et al. (2014) In this regard according to Batsell (2017) in his study shows Mobile phones enable entrepreneurs for instance food vending to implement targeted marketing strategies. By capturing customer data, businesses can send personalised offers, promotions, and discounts directly to customers' phones through SMS marketing, push notifications, or email marketing. This targeted approach ensures that marketing efforts are reaching the right audience, resulting in higher conversion rates and increased sales revenue.

According to Stump et al. (2008) Mobile phones facilitate direct and interactive communication between food businesses and their customers. Social media platforms, messaging apps, and catboats enable businesses to engage with customers, respond to inquiries, and address concerns promptly. This engagement builds customer loyalty and satisfaction, leading to repeat purchases and increased revenue. As underscored by Ros et al. (2017) that mobile phones provide a convenient platform for implementing and managing loyalty programs. Through mobile apps, businesses can offer rewards, discounts, and exclusive offers to customers who frequently order or visit their establishments. These loyalty programs incentivize repeat purchases, drive customer retention, and ultimately contribute to higher sales revenue.

In the same vein Ros et al. (2017) emphasised that mobile phones allow food businesses to provide real-time updates on menu changes, types of food, price, menu-location, parking space, reviews and photos, new offerings, and limited-time promotions. Push notifications or social media posts can alert customers to special deals, discounts, or events. By keeping customers informed and creating a sense of urgency, businesses can encourage immediate purchases and boost sales revenue. Moreover Stump et al. (2008) highlighted a significant role in shaping customer perceptions through online reviews and recommendations. He argued that, "Mobile enables consumers to stay in constant contact with others; allows them to gather information, entertain themselves, and engage in transactions; and serves as an important element of identity construction and expression for many individuals". Positive reviews and user-generated content shared on social media platforms can influence potential customers' decision-making process whereas by using mobile phones street food vendors can accept mobile services such as orders and payment so that they expand customer-base (Pipitwanichakarn &

Wongtada, 2019). By actively engaging with customers and encouraging them to leave reviews, food businesses can enhance their online reputation, attract new customers, and increase sales revenue.

Despite the increasing popularity of mobile phone adoption and its potential impact on enhancing sales revenue among street food vending, there is a notable research gap in understanding the specific implications and outcomes of mobile phone usage for street food vending entrepreneurs in Bukoba Municipal, Tanzania. Limited studies have explored the relationship between mobile phone adoption and its effects on sales revenue in this particular context. Thus, a comprehensive investigation is necessary to bridge this research gap and provide valuable insights into the benefits, challenges, and strategies associated with mobile phone adoption for street food vendors in Bukoba Municipal.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

General Objective

The aim was to evaluate the factors that contribute to the enhancement of sales revenue for the street food vending business in Bukoba Municipal, Tanzania, with a specific focus on the utilisation of mobile phone applications.

Specific Objectives

- I. To investigate the impact on using mobile applications to increase sales revenue among food vending businesses.
- II. To investigate the extent to which the usage of mobile applications contributes to the increase in sales revenue among food vending businesses.
- III. To identify the benefits and challenges experienced by street food vending businesses in the study area with regard to the use of mobile phones?

Research Questions

- i. How does the adoption of mobile applications impact the growth of sales revenue in food vending businesses?
- ii. What are the benefits and challenges experienced by street food vending businesses in the study area with regard to the use of mobile phones?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The essential contribution of the entrepreneurs' performance in the economy motivates researchers to investigate key factors affecting the success of the sector. As, Raguž et al. (2016) highlighted some factors that influence the prospecting aspect success of small businesses into three groups; namely entrepreneurial characteristics, start-up business behaviour, and the firm's overall strategy. He urged also to consider entrepreneurial traits and business plans among the determinants of the growth of any firm. A similar finding was revealed by Hyder & Lussier (2016) in a study conducted in Pakistan, the professional advisors; planning, education, family business ownership, capital, financial control, business duration, and marketing skills determine the sustainability of sales revenue among street food vending. In addition to that a study conducted in Ghana by Tuffour et al. (2020) denoted challenges facing small business growth in developing countries are access to finance, experience in business, policy, regulations, and limited access to business information.

Though, the advancement of technology among the influencing factors in improving the business performance, which is mostly lacking in the developing world. While in a study by

Nkwabi & Mboya (2019) which was conducted in Tanzania highlighted a number of factors that hinder the entrepreneurs vending revenue performance in a country, these challenges were the limited capital, unaffordable regulations, and limited use of modern technologies, however, Katungunya et al. (2016) associated these challenges with individual attitudes, values, beliefs, perceptions in other words, this notion may be viewed from the social perspective which affects other economic sectors.

However, developing countries like Tanzania are favored by the existing political encouragement from leaders. In this regard, the leaders help entrepreneurs with access to the market and the access to capital. For example in the past ten years, according to Danga & Yusuph (2019), the political leaders in Tanzania were promoted by locating accessible business locations and their business skills as well as regulating the legal frameworks. The promotion of the business skills enabled firms or individuals to focus on available resources while considering the product mix strategy within the greatest potential for their growth, share markets, and increased revenues. In a study by Hyder & Lussier (2016) on factors influencing the changes in product mix, denoted determinants such as the change in customer preferences, fashion, purchasing power, income, and individual attitudes. In this regard, the importance of individual selling traits cannot be ignored, which is among factors promoting the positive performance of the business in the short and long run business bottom lines. The duration of business also attracts interactions among buyers and sellers as well as builds customer trust while nurturing long-term relationships (Raguž et al., 2015). Notwithstanding various studies mentioned above highlighted a number of issues that are affecting the street vending business activities, but the women's street food vending business is understudied, this research therefore intends to fill such gaps.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-method approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative techniques, while strictly adhering to the corresponding guidelines. The research was conducted in Bukoba municipality, specifically focusing on 14 selected wards within the municipality. These wards were purposely chosen based on their proximity or remoteness from Bukoba municipality and the significant presence of street food vending activities. The sample for the study was determined using a combination of purposive and convenience sampling methods, utilising Kish's 1965 formula for sample size in cross-sectional studies. A sample size of 170 street food vendors was determined, with a 95 percent confidence interval and a margin error of five (5). The proportional sample was allocated to each ward based on their representation within the total population. In this study, a total population of 106 participants was involved. Respondents were selected using a combination of purposive and convenience sampling techniques. Specifically, 56 permanently located food vendors were administered questionnaires and interviews to gather additional insights. Additionally, 50 food customers who were found eating in food kiosks were conveniently selected for interviews. To supplement the data, documentary reviews, and observations were employed as additional sources of information. The qualitative data collected through interviews and focus group discussions were analysed using ANOVA (analysis of variance), while the quantitative data collected through questionnaires were analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software.

FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

Demographic Characteristics

Distribution of gender of street food vending traders in Bukoba Municipal: The study findings in Table 1 show a variation in gender participation in street food trading between females and males. Based on the finding, 80(75.47%) of street traders, who participated in this research, were female, and 26(24.52%) were male.

Table 1		
RESPONDENT GENDER DISTRIBUTION		
Gender of respondents	Frequency	Percent
Male	80	75.47
Female	26	24.52
Total	106	100

Though researchers tried to find more male street food vendors, this effort was not successful because most male are not interested in participating in food vending activities. Among other reasons, such business was associated with women's undertakings. In this regard, males are not in harmony with cooking-related activities which are associated with traditional female gender activities Tundui (2012) In this regard, there are various reasons why females are engaged in the food vending business more than males, particularly in the study area. First of all, we need to note that gender roles and participation in certain industries can vary across cultures and societies; however there is an exception to the general trends based on cultures where women are traditionally associated with food preparation and cooking. The expertise with food-related activities among women in the study area contributes to women's interest and engagement in food vending businesses that man. During an interview with street food vending, the researcher informed that food stalls or catering services are relatively low-cost as they provide flexibility in cooking entrepreneurial opportunities. Women who prefer flexible working hours or seek self-employment found food vending businesses appealing.

Distribution of ages of street food vending traders in Bukoba Municipal: The findings show that the majority of street food traders were in the 36-40 age range (37.73%). In most developing countries like Tanzania, there is a group representing youths who are self-employed or do other entrepreneurship activities (Haji, 2007). The problem of unemployment which is facing developing countries was necessitating the majority of youth to work in informal sectors. For example, in Bukoba Manispal the researchers found out that, the majority of young women of such ages are engaged in street food vending activities while youth males are engaged in fishing and other small street trading activities. While there were very few females ranging in 50 years found in streets selling senene (7.54%). Street food vending provides young women with an opportunity to earn income and support themselves financially and allows for flexibility in terms of working hours and location one street food vending informed Table 2.

Table 2		
RESPONDENT DISTRIBUTION BY AGE		
Age of respondents (years)	Frequency	Percent
25–30	20	18.86
31–35	22	20.75
36–40	40	37.73
41–45	10	9.43
50 and above	8	7.54
Total	106	100

Distribution of education levels of street food vending traders in Bukoba Municipal:

The study results show that the majority, 61.32% of street food traders had secondary education, while 19.72% had bachelor's degrees in various specialisations. However, fewer females who were possessing bachelor's degrees are involved. Contrary to the perception those street food traders are for people with low education, who have a low chance to be employed in formal sectors Table 3.

Table 3		
RESPONDENT DISTRIBUTION BY AGE		
Education Level	Frequency	Percent
Primary school	15	14.15
Secondary	65	61.32
Certificate	5	4.71
Diploma	2	1.8
Degree	19	17.92
Total	106	100

Impact on Using Mobile Applications to Increase Sales Revenue among Food Vending Businesses

The first research question aimed to examine the impact on mobile phone usage on sales and revenue in the food vending business. The study aims to analyse how the adoption and use of mobile phones by food vendors promote their sales performance and overall revenue. This question seeks to understand the specific ways in which mobile phones are employed in the food vending process, such as for customer order management, communication, payment transactions and marketing. Additionally, data was gathered through interviews and surveys to explore the subjective experiences and perspectives of food vendors regarding the impact of mobile phone usage on their business success.

Based on the finding the study revealed the street food vending are effectively employ mobile app in promoting their business, ranged from Voice calling; Using Texting SMS; Payment apps; Social media apps, (WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, YouTube and emails). The study examined the usage of mobile phone applications among street food vendors in Bukoba municipality for various purposes. The results revealed that a significant proportion of food vendors (97.16%) employed voice calling and communication features to interact with their customers. This indicates that the traditional method of direct communication through phone calls remains the most prevalent means of customer engagement. However, according to Mramba et al. (2015) uses of Voice calls depend on business potentials or the long-term relationships and engagements between the traders and their regular customers. This was corresponding with the qualitative data whereby food sellers confirmed calling only the prominent customers Table 4.

In this regard, calling customers allows for direct and personalised communication as it enables food vendors to address specific customer inquiries, concerns, or requests in real-time, providing a higher level of customer service and satisfaction, which is promoting an increase in food-selling revenue. According to Ferrier & Mays (2017) calling customers can be crucial to confirm their orders and ensuring that all details are correct. This helps in preventing misunderstandings or errors in order for ensuring the customer's satisfactions. One respondent informed that during a phone call, food vendors can grasp the opportunity to suggest additional menus or promotions that may complement the customer's order. Which leads to upselling and

cross-selling opportunities, increasing the average order value and revenue? Moreover, personalised interactions through phone calls are fostering a sense of connectivity and trust among the food vendors and their customers. In connection to the customer's experiences with any issues that went wrong or raised any complaint, voice calls allow having immediate resolution. Therefore, by addressing concerns promptly and providing satisfactory solutions, food vendors can turn a potentially negative experience into a positive one, through calling as a way of improving customer satisfaction and retention.

As was also informed by one of the respondents in a study area the phone calls provide a path to solicit customers' feedback on the food products and tests, this brings an opportunity of engaging the conversations with our customers. This is corresponding with the information provided by one customer that we as customers can ask or order according to our preferences and or suggest any improvement of services in one way or another it brings a sense of trust and gain a valuable sense of services offering. Regular enrichment to customers through phone calls brings commitment and is maintaining a strong relationship with customers to excise customer loyalty while increasing sales revenue.

Voice call is another mobile application that is somewhat preferred by food vending sellers because it conveys messages in real-time although it involves costs to some extent. Moreover, texting SMS emerged as another popular communication method, with 94.33% of food vendors utilising this feature. This finding highlights the importance of written communication in conveying information and maintaining customer relationships. some of the street food vendors informed on having text messages from their customers every day asking if food is ready or looking for its deliveries. However, Ferrier & Mays (2017) underscored that sending and receiving mobile messages depends on the initial customer-trader agreements. Moreover, the researcher noted that young female food vendors did not habitually prefer messages from their customers because it takes fear in their marriages. A young woman told a researcher that some of our customers are misusing mobile numbers by sending something unethical contrary to an intended business. Another woman added that the last two days surprisingly a customer sent a message at midnight asking me to visit his home premises in the Nyakanyasi area.

Nevertheless, the researcher denoted the use of mobile payment apps for business transactions. In terms of financial transactions, approximately three-fourths of the food vendors (74.54%) reported using payment applications on their mobile phones. This indicates a growing trend of adopting digital payment methods, providing convenience and efficiency for both vendors and customers. The finding corroborated to Ros et al. (2017) that mobile payment apps offer a convenient way to make purchases without the need for physical cash. In this regard, with a few taps on a smartphone, a buyer can complete transactions securely and efficiently. So, it saves time and effort compared to the traditional payment methods.

Social media is not a popular application used by street food vendors to promote their business specifically for those who owned smartphones. Among the various social media platforms available, WhatsApp was the most widely used by food vendors, with 53.77% utilising it for communication and promotional purposes. This is followed by Facebook, which was used by 57.54% of vendors, and YouTube, which was utilised by 73.58%. These findings suggest the significance of social media as a means of marketing and expanding the reach of street food vending businesses. According to Covey (2010) use of social media facilitates communication and connection, as it brings platforms to transform the way people communicate and connect with others. In other words, it provides instant and accessible channels for staying in touch with

friends, family, and colleagues, regardless of geographical barriers. Social media platforms facilitate real-time conversations, sharing of thoughts and ideas, and fostering new relationships. Johnson et al. (2018) and Auxier & Anderson (2021) added that Social media allows users to follow news outlets, influencers, and experts, enabling them to access a wide range of perspectives and updates on various topics. The high usage rates of voice calling and texting SMS indicate the importance of direct and written communication for effective customer engagement and satisfaction. In this regard, the widespread adoption of payment applications among food vendors signifies the increasing acceptance of digital payment methods, which contribute to streamlined transactions and improved financial management. So, the dominance of WhatsApp as the primary social media platform used by food vendors emphasises its effectiveness in establishing communication channels and promoting their businesses. Moreover, Facebook and YouTube play significant roles in marketing and expanding the customer base for street food vendors. Nevertheless, the lower usage rates of Twitter, Instagram, and other social media platforms suggest the need for further investigation into their suitability and effectiveness in the street food vending context. It is crucial to understand the specific dynamics and target audience of these platforms to determine their potential for business growth. However, limited usage of email among food vendors indicates that it may not be a preferred mode of communication within the street food vending sector. Further exploration is required to understand the reasons behind this and to identify alternative communication methods that are more aligned with the preferences and requirements of food vendors and their customers.

The study also found that Twitter, Instagram, and other social media platforms were less frequently used by food vendors, with usage rates of 42.45%, 32.07%, and 33.01% respectively. This indicates a lower level of engagement on these platforms, possibly due to their specific target audience or limitations in functionality for street food vendors. Furthermore, the study revealed that only a small proportion of food vendors (13.20%) utilised email for communication purposes. This suggests that email is not widely adopted as a means of interaction within the street food vending context. Mobile phones are used for calculations among the street food vending business, as one of the said “this phone is also used for calculating issues as you know we are poorly mathematically. The use of mobile calculators is also corresponded by Njau & Njuga, (2015) that is convenience available on smartphones that makes users easily accessible whenever s/he needs to perform calculations. It means there is no need for food vendors to carry a separate physical calculator when they need to make quick calculations.

Table 4 IMPACT ON USING MOBILE APPLICATIONS TO INCREASE SALES REVENUE AMONG FOOD VENDING BUSINESSES		
Frequencies	Responses	Percentages
Voice calling communicating with customers	103	97.16
Using Texting SMS	100	94.33
Payment applications	79	74.54
WhatsApp,	57	53.77
Twitter,	45	42.45
Instagram,	34	32.07
Facebook,	61	57.54
YouTube,	78	73.58
Emails	14	13.20
Other uses of mobile phone (use phone as calculator)	35	33.01

Benefits of Mobile Phone Usage in street food Vending Business in a Study Area

Based on the findings obtained from interviews, FGDs revealed that mobile phone usage offers a number of returns for food vending businesses since it increases individual visibility, convenience, and real-time communication. As it also noted, the researcher noted that street food vendors who are using mobile phones easily spread to a wider customer compared to others. During the interview with one of the food sale vendors, the researcher told that Mobile phones enabled the customers to conveniently place orders and make payments for food items in advance. This is in line with Ukpere et al. (2014) that mobile phones facilitate real-time communication between customers and food vendors. In this regard, food vendors may provide updates on specials, and menus as well promoting products directly to an intended customer's device. Likewise, the customers confirmed providing immediate feedback and making orders for food. Belanche et al. (2020) regarded such success as mobile marketing, resulting in higher sales revenue as well as increased customer loyalty. Various studies correspond to Belanche et al. (2020) and Ukpere et al. (2014) that mobile phones play a significant role in e-commerce. Basically according to Ngubelanga & Duffett, (2021) Statistical reports that mobile commerce (e-commerce) sales accounted for 58% via mobile payments in South Africa of total e-commerce sales in 2020 and forecasted to reach almost USD 4.6 billion in 2021 and will grow to USD 6.3 billion by 2025. As Ferrier & Mays (2017) and Silver & Huang (2020) added that 82% and 32% of smartphone users consult their phones while in a store deciding which product to buy or for sale so as they may seek discount offers or best customers. And Njau & Njuga, (2015) on their study revealed that smartphones have an influence on purchasing decisions, for instance cash deposit, cash withdrawal, airtime purchase, paying bills and money transfer via M-Pesa, Tigo-Pesa, Airtel-money whereby about 68% of respondents finding from Tanzania confirm that they have made purchases on their mobile devices.

Challenges of Mobile Phone Usage in Street Food Vending Business in a Study Area

Based on the findings related to the challenges faced by street food vendors in Bukoba Municipality in relation to mobile phone usage. The majority of street food vendors (94.33%) expressed concerns regarding their technological literacy. This finding suggests that a significant number of vendors lack the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively use mobile phone applications for business purposes. Addressing this challenge would require providing training and support to enhance their technological literacy, empowering them to leverage the benefits of mobile phone usage for sales promotion.

Street food vending is primarily a traditional business model that relies on face-to-face interactions and manual processes. Therefore, many vendors may have limited exposure to and experience with using digital technologies and mobile phone applications for business purposes. They may be more accustomed to traditional methods of selling food and may not have received formal training or education on using mobile phone applications.

In this regard, approximately three-fourths of the street food vendors (74.54%) reported facing challenges related to inconsistent internet connectivity. This indicates that the availability and reliability of internet access are significant obstacles in utilising mobile phone applications for sales promotion. Improving the internet infrastructure in Bukoba Municipality would be crucial to overcome this challenge and ensure that street food vendors have consistent and reliable internet access. A study conducted by Chib & Lwin (2013) on small businesses in developing countries found similar findings limited internet access which was a major barrier to utilising mobile phone applications for business purposes. Similarly, street food vendors in

Bukoba Municipality are facing challenges in accessing the internet consistently and at affordable rates, hindering their ability to effectively use mobile applications for sales promotions.

The lack of access to formal technology training or educational opportunities in the region may contribute to the low technological literacy among street food vendors. The focus of education and training programs in the area may not have emphasised digital literacy skills or keeping up with the latest technological advancements. In this regard, the fast-paced nature of technological advancements makes it challenging for individuals in a study area, especially those with limited exposure or resources, to keep up with the rapid changes, which leads them to lack confidence and proficiency in using mobile phone applications for business purposes. According to Riegler & Holzmann, (2018) the complexity of some mobile phone applications, especially those designed for business and marketing purposes, can be overwhelming for individuals who are not technologically motivated. The unfamiliarity with features, settings, and functionalities can contribute to the concerns expressed by street food vendors regarding their technological literacy. Moreover, over half of the vendors (53.77%) highlighted limited access to smartphones as a challenge. This finding implies that a significant portion of street food vendors in Bukoba Municipality do not have smartphones, which restricts their ability to leverage mobile phone applications for sales promotion. Initiatives such as providing affordable smartphone options or facilitating access to shared devices could help overcome this challenge.

The language barriers were identified as a challenge by 42.45% of the vendors. This suggests that language support in mobile phone applications may be limited, hindering effective communication and utilisation of these platforms for sales promotion. Addressing this challenge would involve providing language options or localization features in mobile applications to cater to the diverse linguistic needs of street food vendors in Bukoba Municipality. Not only that but also one-third of the vendors (32.07%) reported financial constraints as a challenge. This indicates that limited financial resources hinder their ability to invest in mobile phone applications or paid advertising for sales promotion. Introducing affordable options or supporting vendors with funding opportunities could help alleviate this challenge. However, a considerable proportion of vendors (57.54%) expressed concerns about security and privacy when using mobile phone applications. This finding highlights the importance of addressing these concerns by raising awareness about data security measures, providing guidance on privacy settings, and ensuring that mobile applications comply with privacy standards Table 5.

Furthermore, the majority of vendors (73.58%) reported challenges related to time management when utilising mobile phone applications for sales promotion. This suggests that vendors struggle to balance their time between core business activities and managing online platforms. Providing time management strategies or support could assist vendors in effectively allocating their time and efforts. Moreover, managing online platforms and executing mobile marketing strategies require regular updates, responding to customer inquiries, and monitoring campaign performance.

Table 5 CHALLENGES OF MOBILE PHONE USAGE IN STREET FOOD VENDING BUSINESS IN A STUDY AREA		
Frequencies	Responses	Percentages
Technological Literacy:	100	94.33
Inconsistent Internet Connectivity	79	74.54
Limited Access to Smartphones	57	53.77
Language Barriers	45	42.45
Financial Constraints:	34	32.07

Security and Privacy Concerns	61	57.54
Time Management:	78	73.58
Limited Access to Smartphones	14	13.20
Technological Literacy	35	33.01

RECOMMENDATIONS

The research study presents recommendations as follows;

- I. To enhance mobile phone applications for market search among street traders. These recommendations include prioritising the provision of education and raising awareness about the potential benefits of mobile phone usage in daily activities. By leveraging mobile phones, street traders can conduct various marketing activities online, eliminating the need for physical customer searches.
- II. The cost associated with mobile phone use poses a significant barrier for street traders in adopting and utilising certain mobile applications. Policymakers should explore strategies to address this issue, such as encouraging investment in domestic mobile phone manufacturing industries. Creating favourable environments that attract investors and providing necessary resources would lead to reduced smartphone prices by eliminating import tariffs imposed by the government.
- III. To ensure responsible communication practices, policymakers should introduce communication ethics and regulations. This would raise user awareness about complying with prescribed guidelines for communication, including understanding the importance of mobile contact exchange between buyers and sellers.
- IV. In designing mobile artefacts, stakeholders in the mobile communication industry should tailor them to the specific context of street traders. Considering that street traders often lack education and operate in challenging environments, technological innovations should be developed with their needs in mind. This includes incorporating their common spoken language, ensuring user-friendliness, and affordability, and aligning with sociocultural ethics

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