

Determinants of Mobile Marketing Adoption among Small and Medium Enterprises in Tanzania's Tourism Sector

Felix Joseph Chille ^{a*}

^a College of Business Education, Department of Marketing, P.O.Box 1968 Dar Es salaam, Tanzania.

*Corresponding author

E-mail address: felix.chile@cbe.ac.tz or taffundraisers@gmail.com

Abstract

The study objective was to identify the determinants of mobile marketing adoption among Tanzania's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the country's tourism industry, specifically in the cities of Dar es Salaam and Arusha. Anecdotal evidence reveals that customers are less likely to adopt mobile marketing for SMEs in Tanzania's tourism sector. The technology acceptance model (TAM) was employed in this study. The study used the survey strategy, in which 80 respondents returned the questionnaires after a sample of 100 was selected from the study population. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were used to assess quantitative data. Perceived usefulness, attitude, and perceived ease of use were found to have significant statistical power in predicting mobile marketing uptake. The results prove that the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is the predictor of technology uptake. The results, therefore, shed light on how SMEs' attitudes towards mobile usage. Ease of use and adoption of mobile marketing can help marketers and technologists devise effective communication strategies for the tourism sector. Therefore, the study findings can support the government, policymakers, and the business community in developing appropriate plans to enhance the adoption of mobile application technology, thereby improving business growth and national economic development.

Keywords: Tourism, Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, Mobile Marketing, Attitude, Adoption.

1.0 Introduction

Tourism plays a greater role in global economic growth (Kara & Mkwizu, 2021). According to data from Tanzania Invest (2023), Tourism contributed 5.7% of GDP and 25% of foreign currency earnings in Tanzania in 2021 (Tanzania Invest, 2023). The sector employs between 500 and 1 million direct and indirect employees in Tanzania. Advancements in science and technology, specifically in information technology, have facilitated breakthroughs that have driven significant growth in SMEs through the worldwide adoption of mobile technology by customers. The use of mobile marketing applications and platforms has promoted and facilitated business growth by streamlining marketing and business transactions within organisations, thereby helping attract more customers and increase revenues and sales in the tourism sector (Chille & Amanda, 2024; Mushi & Lillis, 2016).

Despite breakthroughs in mobile marketing adoption among SMEs in developed countries, there remains a paucity of mobile uptake among SMEs in developing countries (Lailat & Chille, 2023). Past studies in South Africa have indicated that poor infrastructure development, high investment costs for Information technology equipment, and limited understanding of mobile technology skills among SME users contribute to the lower uptake of mobile marketing technology among SMEs (Chivizhe, 2019). Previous scholars in the Tanzanian context have indicated that poor adoption of mobile marketing among SMEs can be attributed to weak competition among SMEs and a lack of customer pressure (Lailat & Chille, 2023).

Studies by Bakari et al. (2014) and Chille et al. (2021) specified the correlation between knowledge and technology adoption among SMEs in the tourism and telecommunication sectors in Tanzania. It

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should be understood that the tourism and information technology sectors are interlinked in business growth (Lailat & Chille, 2023). There are few studies regarding the factors influencing mobile marketing adoption among SMEs in both developed and developing countries, including Tanzania, guided by the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Chille et al., 2021; Davis et al., 1989; Lailat & Chille, 2023). This study therefore investigated the influence of perceived usefulness (PU), attitude (ATT), and perceived ease of use (PEOU) on mobile marketing uptake among SMEs in Tanzania's tourism sector. The study did not include Behavioural intention as a construct in TAM, as previous studies have shown that actual use of the mobile technology system and intention to use are not always related to confirmed adoption of the technology (Ajibade, 2018; Chille et al., 2021). Therefore, this study assessed the effects of perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PEOU), and attitude (ATT) towards technology adoption among SMEs in Tanzania. The tourism sector contributes significantly to both the economy and foreign exchange transactions in developed and developing countries, including in Tanzania (Ardahaey, 2011; Manel, 2022; Kara & Mkwizu, 2021).

Nevertheless, disparities in contributions to GDP between developed and developing countries remain. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) Report of 2021, tourism has a higher economic impact in developed countries than in developing countries. According to the WTTC Report of 2021, the economic impact of tourism in the United States accounted for 1871 USD billion in GDP and supported 34.6 million jobs in the country. At the same time, China and Japan contributed 814.3 USD billion and 206.3 USD billion to the GDP, respectively.

Scientific and technological upheavals have influenced the adoption of mobile technology in developed countries (Eriksson, 2013; Maduku, 2017; Lailat & Chille, 2023; Chille, 2024). With the use of mobile marketing technology, businesses can design an appropriate business development product that would attract more customers and drive business growth (Maduku, 2017).

Despite numerous regulations and business reforms in Tanzania's tourism sector, little has been achieved in enhancing the adoption of mobile marketing among SMEs, thereby hindering the intended utilisation of the tourism sector (Bakari et al., 2014; Chille & Daffi, 2025; Mapunda, 2021; WTTC, 2021). However, there are few studies on the influence of Perceived Usefulness, perceived ease of use, and attitude on mobile marketing adoption among SMEs in Tanzania. The study by Bakari et al. (2014) showed the relationship between knowledge and technology uptake in Tanzania; Mkwizu (2019) unveiled only the opportunities of the tourism sector by using digital technology; however, the study was literature review-based and content analysis, without elaborating on the clear theoretical stance influencing the use of ICT adoption in Tanzania among SMEs. It was important to undertake this research to fill the gap by examining the effects of PU, PEOU, and attitude (ATT) on mobile marketing adoption among SMEs in the tourism sector in the Tanzanian context.

Many studies have reported inconsistent findings regarding the effects of attitude and perceived ease of use (Chille et al., 2021; Manel, 2021; Lailat & Chille, 2023; Musa et al., 2016). This indicates a lack of practical knowledge regarding the theoretical stance on the key factors influencing mobile marketing uptake in the tourism SMEs sector. For instance, Ghanem et al. (2017), Ismael et al. (2016), and Sarmah et al. (2017) found that Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) and Perceived Usefulness (PU) affect mobile uptake in the tourism sector. In contrast, Kushwaha and Agrawal (2016) and Musa et al. (2016) suggested that attitude does not play a role in the adoption of mobile technology within the tourism industry. Given these conflicting results, additional research is necessary to examine the impact of PU, PEOU, and Attitude (ATT) on the factors influencing mobile marketing adoption among SMEs in Tanzania.

2.0 Literature Review

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and its extended version, TAM2, have been applied in various empirical studies across different domains. In education, TAM has helped understand technology adoption in statistical learning (Song & Kong, 2017). In the banking sector, both TAM and TAM2 have been employed to study the adoption of mobile banking and payments (Kumar et al., 2017; Shankar & Datta, 2018). Additionally, TAM has been utilised in the healthcare industry to examine the adoption of technologies such as human resource information systems in hospitals (Kamaludin &

Kamaludin, 2017).

In marketing, both the original and extended TAM models have been used by scholars to investigate technology adoption. Researchers have employed these models to study various aspects of technology adoption in marketing, including factors influencing the adoption of technology, such as mobile marketing, in different contexts (Ahmat et al., 2017; Chille et al., 2023; Renko & Popovic, 2015; Thiga et al., 2016; Yadav and Mahara, 2017).

Scholars lack consensus on the factors influencing technology adoption. For instance, some studies have found a positive influence of attitude on technology adoption in the tourism sector (Erawan, 2016; Garay et al., 2018; Ghanem et al., 2017; Hua et al., 2017; Ismail et al., 2016; Li, 2016; Lou et al., 2017; Mendes Filho et al., 2017; Miao, 2015; Sarmah et al., 2017; Vladimirov, 2015; Ziadat, 2015), while others have found insignificant results (Kushwaha & Agrawal, 2016; Mussa et al., 2016). Similarly, Ziadat (2015) found that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use had no influence on tourists' intention to revisit a tourist site, and Mendes Filho et al. (2017) found the same for tourists' intention to adopt a mobile app while travelling. Due to conflicting thoughts and findings on the existence of adoption of technology in various fields, and specifically in the tourism sector regarding technology adoption in the global context, with Tanzania as no exception, this study enhanced the novelty in knowledge contribution by validating the TAM model, hence giving a robust description of the effects of mobile marketing adoption among SMEs in the tourism sector in Tanzania. Given these disparities and based on these conflicting results from the literature review, which create a research gap that calls for further investigation, the following hypotheses were developed:

Ha₁: Perceived Usefulness (PU) has a positive effect on the adoption of mobile marketing among SMEs.

Ha₂: Attitude (ATT) has a positive effect on the adoption of mobile marketing among SMEs.

Ha₃: Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) has a positive effect on the adoption of mobile marketing among SMEs.

3.0 Research Methodology

This research adopted a deductive approach, which entails moving from general observations to specific settings within the research paradigm. This was achieved through testing theories (Saunders et al., 2023; Kothari & Garg, 2014). The deductive approach was relevant in this study, since it ascertains its conclusions by observing, hence formulating hypotheses and testing the theory by confirming or disproving the defined hypothesis. This study adopted a survey strategy to describe relationships among variables by administering questionnaires (Saunders et al., 2023).

SME owners located in Dar es Salaam and Arusha on the Tanzanian mainland were the study population. The research was conducted in Dar es Salaam and Arusha. Dar es Salaam was selected because it is the most conducive and attractive tourist destination in Tanzania (URT, 2023). The study used Convenience Sampling. Convenience sampling is generally considered a non-probability sampling method; it is a form of purposive sampling commonly used in quantitative research, especially when practical constraints limit participant selection (Kothari & Garg, 2012). In determining the sample size, the study adopted the formula presented by Green (1991), which indicates that, for calculating the sample size required for multiple regression analysis, the sample should be greater than $50 + 8m$ by $N > 50 + 8m$; where N = sample size and m represents the number of independent variables, since the study has three independent variables. The required sample size, based on the formula, was 74. However, the sample size exceeded 74: a sample of 100 was drawn from the population, and 80 respondents returned the questionnaire.

The independent variables were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to agree strongly. Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and attitude were the independent variables, and the adoption of mobile marketing among SMEs in Tanzania's tourism sector was the dependent variable. The researcher sent the self-administered questionnaire to the respondents to ensure it reached the right people. The time required to complete the questionnaire ranged from 20 to 30 minutes, depending on individual and situational differences.

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Data were processed by validating the measuring instrument reliability and validity tests, editing them, classifying the data and tabulating them (Saunders et al., 2023). Also, the data passed through several activities, from summarising and combining them to bringing meaning to answer the research hypothesis (Saunders et al., 2023). Data were checked to ensure they complied with the normality assumption. Multiple regression analysis was conducted using SPSS to test the hypotheses.

The Ethical issues were adhered to by the researcher throughout the study as recommended by (Saunders et al., 2023). Some of the issues include ensuring clear communication with participants to ensure they are aware of the research aim before it is conducted. Respondents who were given the questionnaire were informed of the study's aim, and their consent to participate was sought. Further, the researcher presented the data as obtained from questionnaires without falsifying them.

3.1 Data Analysis

The data were analysed through thematic analysis. The researcher conducted multiple readings of the transcripts to gain familiarity with the data. Codes were inductively identified from participants' statements about the use of Swahili, workplace communication, motivation, belonging, and business operations. Those codes were then grouped into themes reflecting patterns emerging during interviews and focus groups. The analysis process was conducted in four steps: becoming familiar with the transcripts, coding, developing themes, and refining the themes. Peer debriefing was used to discuss the emerging themes with an experienced qualitative researcher, thereby improving the credibility of the interpretation and reducing researcher bias.

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1 Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

The study's sample characteristics included tourist SME owners, both domestic and foreign, who accounted for 70% (70) of the respondents from Dar es Salaam and 30% (30) of SME owners in the tourism sector from Arusha, respectively.

4.2 Reliability Test Results

The reliability of the scale for measuring internal consistency of each variable was tested using Cronbach's alpha. The Cronbach's alpha reliability was 0.939, indicating that the values were above the minimal cut-off point of 0.7 (Saunders et al., 2023).

Factor analysis was performed to measure how latent factors explain the observable variables. In assessing sample adequacy, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (BTS) generally use cutoff values of 0.6 and significance, respectively, indicating that the items are suitable for factor analysis (Basto and Pereira, 2012). The data in the study showed values of <0.001 and 0.885, indicating that the dataset was suitable for factor analysis, as shown in Table 1. During factor analysis, a cutoff point of 0.3 or higher for factor loadings was used, as recommended by Basto and Pereira (2012). Hence, factor loadings retained items above 0.3 during the factor analysis. Based on the available data, Adoption of Mobile Marketing (AMM), Perceived Usualness (PU), Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU), and Attitude (ATT) were the subject of a factor analysis, as indicated in Table 2.

Table 1. Validity and Reliability of the Data

Reliability: Cronbach's alpha	KMO	BTS (P-Value)
0.989	0.885	<0.001

Source: Field Data (2024)

Table 2. Factor loadings for PU, PEOU, ATT & AMM

Perceived Usefulness (PU) variables		Attitude (ATT) variables	
Variable	Factor loadings	Variable	Factor loadings
PUS7	0.755	ATT5	0.761
PUS2	0.720	ATT6	0.701
PU5	0.677	ATT4	0.669
PU6	0.615	ATT3	0.656
PU3	0.580	ATT2	0.656
PU1	0.568	ATT1	0.599
Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) variables			
Variable	Factor loadings		
PEOU3	0.808		
PEOU6	0.743		
PEOU5	0.690		
PEOU2	0.667		
PEOU4	0.597		
PEOU1	0.641		
Adoption of Mobile Marketing (AMM) variables			
Variable	Factor loadings		
AMM2	0.802		
AMM4	0.734		
AMM5	0.715		
AMM1	0.790		
AMM3	0.684		

Source: Field Data (2024)

Principal Component Analysis was the extraction technique applied. The rotation technique applied was Kaiser Normalisation, Using Varimax, A single component was extracted from the associated variables for each construct. There was no rotation of the solution (no rotated component matrix).

4.3 Correlation Analysis Results

As Table 3 further illustrates, there appears to be a causal association between the Adoption of Mobile Marketing among SMEs in the Tourism sector (AMM) and the independent variables, with r values ranging from 0.779 to 0.839 at $p < 0.01$. It is important to note that the research did not reveal any instances of multicollinearity.

Table 3. Inter- Correlation among Variables (N=80)

Correlations					
		AMM	PU	PEOU	ATT
Pearson Correlation	AM	1.000	.839	.809	.819
	M				
	PU	.839	1.000	.786	.784
	PEO	.809	.786	1.000	.779
	U				
	ATT	.819	.784	.779	1.000

**r is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); Source: Fieldwork (2024)

4.4 Outcomes of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

The model fit revealed adjusted R² and R² values of 0.793 and 0.785, respectively, indicating that the independent variable explains 79% of the variance in the dependent variable. The F-statistic was 109.603 at p<0.001. The Durbin-Watson statistic was close to 2. Given the value displayed in Table 4, it indicates that each data point was independent, as Durbin-Watson ranges from 0 to 4 (Daud, 2018)

Table 4. Model Summary & Regression Outputs

R	R squared	Adjusted Squared	The std error of estimate	Durbin-Watson	F	Sign(P-value)	
0.795	0.793	0.785	0.552	1.674	109.603	(<0.001)	
Constant	B	Std Error	Beta	t	Sig	Tolerance	VIF
PU	.445	.101	.392	4.422	.000	.307	3.253
PEOU	.289	.098	.260	2.959	.004	.313	3.193
ATT	.419	.118	.310	3.553	.001	.316	3.162

Source: Fieldwork (2024)

4.5 Influence of PU on AMM

Table 4 shows that Perceived Usefulness is a significant predictor of Adoption of Mobile Marketing (p=0.000), indicating that Perceived Usefulness has an influence on Adoption of Mobile Marketing. The alternative hypothesis is accepted, and the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that Perceived Usefulness influences the adoption of mobile marketing in the Tanzania Tourism sector.

4.6 Influence of PEOU on AMM.

Table 4 shows the results at p=0.004, indicating that perceived ease of use is a significant predictor of Adoption of Mobile Marketing. The alternative hypothesis is accepted, and the null hypothesis is rejected. This entails that Perceived Ease of Use influences the adoption of mobile marketing in Tanzania's Tourism sector.

4.7 Influence of ATT on AMM

Table 4 shows the results at p=0.001, indicating that Attitude is a significant predictor of Adoption of Mobile Marketing. The alternative hypothesis is accepted, and the null hypothesis is rejected. This entails that attitude influences the adoption of mobile marketing in Tanzania's Tourism sector.

4.8 Discussion

The findings have indicated that consumer attitudes significantly influence the adoption of mobile marketing devices. According to these results, mobile marketing devices help people complete tasks

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more quickly, produce more, and forecast customers' daily and weekly activities on service providers, all of which lead to more marketing opportunities for the service provider (Kotler, 2012), provided SME owners have positive attitudes toward using the mobile marketing gadgets. The results of the study align with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which explains how attitudes influence the adoption of technology by individuals and organisations (Venkatesh et al., 2012).

On the other hand, the study has demonstrated that consumers need to change their perspective for mobile marketing products to be widely adopted. This could be achieved when mobile marketing service providers implement an effective marketing strategy, regularly monitor customer attitudes through customer feedback, and increase their use of content marketing to gather additional customer feedback on how consumers perceive mobile marketing applications in the tourism business.

The results of the study align with research by Mahattanakhun and Suvittawat (2023) on the impact of attitude on the adoption and use of technology in agricultural products. However, the findings conform with the study which indicated that attitude have influence on technology adoption in the tourism sector by (Erawan, 2016; Garay et al., 2018; Ghanem et al., 2017; Hua et al., 2017; Ismail et al., 2016; Li, 2016; Lou et al., 2017; Mendes Filho et al., 2017; Miao, 2015; Sarmah et al., 2017; Vladimirov, 2015; Ziadat, 2015). This suggests a relationship between customers' perceptions of mobile marketing users in tourism services and their considerations of the benefits they sought in adopting technology (Lailat & Chille, 2023). The same study supports the findings of Shanmugam et al. (2014) in Malaysia, who examined how attitudes affect Malaysians' adoption of technology on bank financial products. However, the findings contradict the studies by Kushwaha and Agrawal (2016) and Mussa et al. (2016), which reported insignificant results for attitude toward tourism mobile marketing adoption.

On the other hand, these findings contradict those of Tahar et al. (2020), whose research in Indonesia showed that perceived usefulness does not influence technological adoption. Furthermore, the findings contradict the research by Pratista et al. (2024), which found that perceived ease of use does not predict perceived usefulness regarding Indonesians' intention to purchase products or services. The results can be inconsistent due to variations in contextual and cultural standards, as well as variations in market environmental elements that influence how an individual perceives their choices of goods and services (Wamuyu, 2014).

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The study has revealed that SMEs in Tanzania's tourism industry are likely to adopt mobile marketing, largely due to the perceived usefulness and user-friendliness of mobile devices, which reinforce positive attitudes toward its adoption in the tourism sector. Additionally, the study supports the main assumptions of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by validating the customer's perceptions of the usability, usefulness, and user-friendliness of mobile applications, as well as their attitude towards technology adoption. The study recommends that stakeholders in the technology and business of mobile devices should develop mobile marketing platforms that address customer needs, offer easy-to-use, user-friendly information devices, and ensure data accessibility. These actions could facilitate the adoption of mobile marketing by businesses in Tanzania's SME tourism sector.

6.0 Areas for further Studies

This study acknowledges that many variables affecting the adoption of mobile marketing in the SME tourism sector remain unaddressed. Further research on factors such as perceived online negotiation, culture, the level of society's technology, and behavioural intention regarding tourists' mobile marketing adoption is recommended for future studies. By taking these factors into account, we may be able to better assess how to enhance further the adoption of mobile marketing in Tanzania's SME tourism industry. Furthermore, the study is not representative of the full population because it was limited to two locations, Arusha and Dar es Salaam, on the Tanzanian mainland, out of 31 regions of Tanzania. Therefore, to gain a more thorough understanding of mobile marketing adoption in the nation's tourism industry, future research should aim to include a more diverse sample across different locations.

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