



# Strengthening Marketing Capabilities to Foster the Growth of Sewing Entrepreneurs in Dodoma City, Tanzania

Danford Ahadson Sanga  
Local Government Training Institute, Tanzania  
Local Government Accounting and Finance Department  
Email: [dasanga72@gmail.com](mailto:dasanga72@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** Sewing entrepreneurship is a key element of the informal economy in Tanzania, generating employment and livelihoods, especially among women and youth. However, poor marketing potential has constrained the growth and competitiveness of sewing entrepreneurs in Dodoma City. The paper examines how enhancing marketing potential through branding, customer relationship management, pricing, and e-marketing can foster the growth of sewing entrepreneurs. Using a mixed-methods approach, sewing entrepreneurs were interviewed and surveyed to gather data. The findings suggest that, although entrepreneurs recognize the importance of marketing, they are faced with limitations such as low knowledge levels, low digital literacy, and low access to promotion channels. Entrepreneurs who employed basic methods such as interaction with customers and social media usage reported an increase in visibility and sales. The study concludes that the development of marketing capabilities through training, digital technologies, and support initiatives can significantly improve the growth and sustainability of sewing businesses in urban Tanzania. Hence, practical recommendations are given to policy makers, business support organizations, and development partners who aim to empower micro and small-scale sewing entrepreneurs.

**Keywords:** Sewing, Digital, Entrepreneurship, Marketing, Stakeholders, Literacy

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## 1. Introduction

Sewing entrepreneurs contribute a significant role in supporting livelihoods and national economies in the majority of nations, albeit under diverse circumstances. For instance, in India, sewing and tailoring entrepreneurs form a significant sector of the textile and garment industry, particularly among home-based women workers and small-scale urban tailors. The government has introduced several support schemes such as the Prime Minister's Employment

Generation Programme (PMEGP) and Skill India to offer training and financial assistance, even though there are still challenges related to gender barriers, financial literacy, and market access (Ministry of MSME, 2022; NITI Aayog, 2021).

In comparison, Italy has a more developed entrepreneurial ecosystem for sewing and fashion companies, founded upon the country's strong artisanal and luxury fashion heritage. Despite this, small fashion entrepreneurs are likely to experience high labor costs, regulatory stress, and

global competition from fast fashion. Nonetheless, they benefit from European Union funding, fashion incubators, and institutional support that aim to safeguard and enhance Italian craftsmanship (European Commission, 2022; ISTAT, 2023). These unequal experiences call for tailored policy support, market access, and capacity building to improve the development of sewing entrepreneurs operating in different socioeconomic contexts.

Urban sewing businesses in Kenya do custom garments, school uniforms, workwear, repairs/alterations, and bridal/eventwear. Their proximity to consumers and lead time make them viable for made-to-measure or small-batch orders; some also redesign "mitumba" purchases to fit/style, which keeps them relevant irrespective of cheap imports. (This corroborates broader findings on Kenya's creative/fashion micro-enterprises.). Clothing entrepreneurs constitute a booming sector of the informal economy, providing employment to thousands of individuals, especially in urban regions like Nairobi. However, they face significant challenges like inadequate access to finance, competition from imported second-hand clothes (commonly known as mitumba), and inadequate marketing abilities (UNCTAD, 2020; Njuguna, 2024).

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) sewing entrepreneurs who are primarily informal or semi formal fashion designers and tailors in Tanzania play a great role in employment generation, income creation, and access to affordable clothing services in urban localities (URT, 2021; ILO, 2020). In Dodoma City, urbanization, growth in population, and shifting consumer preferences have expanded the market for locally produced garments, offering enormous opportunities for industry. Despite this potential, most sewing businesses are not expanding, primarily due to the fact that they have limited access to business development services, particularly marketing (Mutalemwa, 2015; NBS, 2022). Even though there have been many studies on the operations and challenges of SMEs in Tanzania, they have taken a generalized research direction. As a result, sector-specific forces such as those shaping small-scale sewing firms are not visible. Generalization of SMEs conceals valuable insights that can be utilized to inform targeted interventions for production capacity enhancement, competitiveness, and sustainability of the sewing subsector.

Marketing is essential knowledge that enables entrepreneurs to find out customers' needs, position products appropriately, and differentiate in competitive markets. Sewing entrepreneur marketing involves not only product presentation and pricing, but also brand communication, customer relationship management, and the use of promotional tools such as social media (Kotler & Keller, 2016). The study draws on the Resource-Based View (RBV), which posits firms gain competitive

advantage by developing unique resources and capabilities (Barney, 1991). Marketing capabilities are intangible resources sewing entrepreneurs can leverage to sustain growth. Dynamic Capabilities Theory (Teece, 2007) also emphasizes the ability of entrepreneurs to adapt marketing strategies to dynamic environments, such as taking up digital marketing based on shifting customers. Theory-wise, the Resource-Based View (RBV) of the firm argues that internal competencies such as marketing knowledge, strategic planning, and customer orientation are ultimate determinants of competitive advantage and business growth (Barney, 1991). The theory is highly relevant in the context of sewing entrepreneurs, who prefer using word-of-mouth and informal networks to reach customers. Without enhanced marketing capacity, such enterprises cannot grow or adapt to the demands of an evolving urban market. Therefore, the overall objective of this study is to investigate how enhancing marketing capacity can foster the growth of sewing entrepreneurs in Dodoma City. The objective can be achieved with the following specific objectives:

- (i) To examine contemporary marketing practice sewing entrepreneurs in Dodoma City
- (ii) To assess Marketing knowledge effect on the growth of sewing businesses in Dodoma City, Tanzania policymakers.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Overview

Small and micro enterprises play a critical role in employment creation and income generation in developing economies, particularly in urban areas. In Tanzania, sewing and tailoring enterprises constitute a significant segment of the informal and micro-enterprise sector, especially in cities such as Dodoma. Despite their economic importance, many sewing entrepreneurs experience slow growth, limited market reach, and low profitability. Prior empirical studies suggest that inadequate marketing capabilities are among the major constraints affecting the growth of such enterprises. This literature review synthesizes empirical evidence on marketing capabilities and their role in fostering the growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), with particular relevance to sewing entrepreneurs in Dodoma City.

### 2.2 Marketing Capabilities in Small Enterprises

Marketing capabilities refer to a firm's ability to effectively sense market needs, design appropriate

marketing strategies, and implement actions that create value for customers and sustain competitive advantage (Kotlers, 2012). Empirical studies in emerging economies demonstrate that marketing capabilities are multidimensional, encompassing activities such as market analysis, product positioning, pricing, promotion, customer relationship management, and selling skills. Research on SMEs indicates that firms with stronger marketing planning, implementation, and selling capabilities tend to achieve superior performance outcomes compared to those with weak marketing systems (Chachage, 2025). These findings highlight marketing capabilities as strategic resources that are particularly critical for small enterprises operating in highly competitive and resource-constrained environments.

### **2.3 Marketing Capabilities and SME Performance**

A growing body of empirical literature confirms a positive relationship between marketing capabilities and SME performance. Studies conducted in African (Wachira, et al, 2022; Chachage, 2025; Kiyabo & Isaga, 2019) emerging markets show that SMEs with well-developed marketing capabilities record higher sales growth, improved customer retention, and enhanced adaptability to market changes. Quantitative analyses using survey data and structural equation modeling reveal that marketing implementation capability and customer-focused selling practices significantly influence competitive performance (Wachira, et al, 2022). These findings imply that for sewing entrepreneurs, the ability to understand customer preferences, promote products effectively, and maintain strong customer relationships is essential for enterprise growth.

Empirical research conducted in Tanzania provides context-specific insights into the role of marketing-related capabilities in SME growth. Foresentence, a study of Chachage, (2025) on entrepreneurial marketing among Tanzanian SMEs revealed that customer intensity and proactive market engagement positively affect business performance. Evidence from agro-processing and service-oriented SMEs suggests that entrepreneurs who actively seek customer feedback, anticipate market trends, and adapt their offerings accordingly achieve better performance outcomes (Kiyabo & Isaga, 2019).

In addition, a recent study of Mushi (2024) on digital marketing strategies in Tanzania indicate that the use of social media platforms, online advertising, and digital communication tools significantly enhances SME performance. These findings are particularly relevant for sewing entrepreneurs, who increasingly rely on digital

platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook to showcase designs, reach new customers, and receive orders. The evidence suggests that strengthening both traditional and digital marketing capabilities can contribute substantially to enterprise growth in urban Tanzanian settings.

### **2.4 Market Orientation and Entrepreneurial Marketing**

Market orientation, which emphasizes customer focus, competitor awareness, and inter-functional coordination, has been empirically linked to small business success in Tanzania. Studies show that SMEs with strong market orientation achieve better marketing effectiveness and business sustainability. Similarly, entrepreneurial marketing literature emphasizes innovativeness, proactiveness, and value creation as key drivers of SME performance. Empirical findings from East African countries indicate that entrepreneurial marketing capabilities enable small firms to overcome resource limitations by leveraging creativity, networking, and close customer relationships.

### **2.5 Regional Evidence from East Africa**

Regional evidence from East Africa suggests that marketing capabilities play a significant role in improving the performance and growth prospects of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) facing competitive markets and resource constraints. Empirical studies in Kenya, for example, have found that entrepreneurial marketing capability which encompasses market sensing, customer-focus strategies, and proactive market engagement positively and significantly influences SME performance. In a study of SMEs in Thika town, Kenya, Wachira, Ngugi, and Nyang'au (2022) reported that firms with stronger entrepreneurial marketing capabilities experienced better overall performance outcomes, highlighting customer focus and market sensing as key drivers of success.

Complementing this, research on micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Kenya demonstrates that digital marketing practices, relationship marketing, and product innovation all components of broader marketing capabilities are significantly associated with improved business performance. This study emphasized that effective marketing interventions help firms connect with customers, build brand visibility, and enhance competitiveness in dynamic market environments.

Although such studies are not specific to Tanzania, the shared socio-economic context of East African economies including comparable market dynamics, limited access to resources, and similar structural constraints on SMEs suggests that these findings are informative for understanding the challenges and opportunities faced by sewing entrepreneurs in Dodoma City. Furthermore, research conducted within Tanzania's SME sector indicates that market orientation and customer intensity are important strategic factors influencing business success, reinforcing the applicability of regional evidence on marketing capability–performance linkages. Together, this body of empirical research suggests that strengthening marketing capabilities can enhance opportunity recognition, customer engagement, and market responsiveness, thereby supporting growth and sustainability for sewing entrepreneurs in Dodoma and similar urban contexts across East Africa

## 2.6 Marketing Capability Development

Beyond direct performance effects, empirical literature highlights the role of entrepreneurial networks in developing marketing capabilities. A Study of Oduro & Mensah-Williams, (2023). revealed that networking with suppliers, customers, and business associations facilitates access to market information, skills, and resources that strengthen marketing capabilities. For small sewing enterprises, participation in local business networks and associations can enhance learning, innovation, and marketing effectiveness, thereby supporting long-term growth.

## 2.7 Synthesis and Research Gap

Overall, the reviewed empirical studies consistently demonstrate that marketing capabilities play a crucial role in enhancing SME growth and performance in emerging economies. Evidence from Tanzania and the broader East African region indicates that customer orientation, entrepreneurial marketing, digital marketing, and networking are key capability dimensions influencing enterprise success. However, despite the abundance of SME-level studies, there is limited empirical research focusing specifically on sewing and tailoring entrepreneurs in Dodoma City. This gap justifies the current study, which seeks to examine how strengthening marketing capabilities can foster the growth of sewing entrepreneurs within this unique urban context.

# 3. Methodology

## 3.1 Research Approach

This study employs a mixed approach combining both qualitative and quantitative methods. A mixed approach is optimal for capturing the complexity of the sewing entrepreneurs' efforts and Local Government officers involving in administration in different social economical activities in Dodoma city. Quantitative data can provide statistical evidence of the correlation between social media use and increased awareness, while qualitative data offers deeper insights into operational experiences and challenges (Creswell, 2020).

### 3.1.1 Study area

The study area, Dodoma City, was chosen due to its rapid urban growth and emerging sewing enterprise sector. Being a city with a vibrant tailoring culture that specializes in kitenge fashion, uniform, and event outfits, Dodoma is fertile ground for interventions to enhance marketing capacity and sewing enterprise development

### 3.1.2 Data Collection Methods

In this study, mixed sampling techniques will be employed to gather data from both quantitative and qualitative respondents. Quantitative data were gathered randomly through the use of structured questionnaires from 273 sewing entrepreneurs. Likewise, qualitative data were gathered through in-depth interviews with 9 key informants from sewing business owners and Local Government officers. The participants were chosen on purpose based on the expertise and engagement in the business

### 3.1.3 Population and Sample Size

In this study, the population includes all staff members from the selected Tanzania corporations. A total of 278 sample size from population size of 912 was achieved. In the selections of respondents, a simple random sampling technique was applied. Moreover, the Yamane's formula (1967) was applied which is suitable for determining the sample size for a finite population. In The formula is:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

### 3.1.4 Data analysis

Analysis of data involved data preparation, descriptive and inferential statistics. Alternatively, Coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) was used in determining the goodness of fit of different models by indicating whether the proportion of SMTes growth explained by all the predictor variables collectively was equal to, greater than or less than the population of each predictor variable. Regression

analysis is a technique used to examine how enhancing marketing potential through branding, customer relationship management, pricing, and e-marketing can foster the growth of sewing entrepreneurs. All qualitative data were analyzed thematically to compliment quantitative data.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Results

#### 4.1.1 Demographic characteristics of the respondents

In this research, the finding in Table 4.1 indicates that approximately 63% of all the respondents were women whereas 27% of them were men. This indicates that more women are involved in sewing small scale entrepreneurship than men. The results are consistent with the observation of (Mpambije & Samiji, 2023). The reports show that women enterprises are mainly micro and small, and the majority of them are outcompeted by male-owned enterprises. The disparity was explained through in-depth interview that most women are drawn to sewing activities because it is simpler to enter the tailoring business compared to other small-scale enterprises. It typically requires at the beginning only a simple hand-held sewing machine, which is not extremely expensive, and

elementary sewing skills, and can often be done at home. This thus presents itself as a feasible option for homemakers and housemaids who culturally are shouldering more household responsibilities than men. Women are supposed to manage time for business and time for completing home needs such as making breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Apart from that, women have to look after children and other home-based activities at home. Nevertheless, even though it is relatively easy to start such a business, it does not necessarily ensure growth. Running a sewing business and entering the garment industry is typically more complex and difficult than it may appear (Elisa, 2010).

However, it should be mentioned that the aim of the research was not to compare men and women engaged in SMETs but to understand the status level of the respondents of the study. On the other hand, outcome shows that (53%) sewing owner had completed primary school while 30% of the respondents had informal education. 8% of the respondents had reached secondary school level. The survey also revealed that only 07% of the respondents attended Vocational or Technical Training and the last category of the respondents were only 02 % who had first degree and above. These result patterns show that most of the respondents had sufficient knowledge which has contributed to giving valid and reliable information to this current study. This serves to enhance the validity and reliability of findings.

**Table 1: Social Economic information of the respondents**

SN	Item	Frequency(%)
1	<b>Sex of the respondents</b>	
	Male	87(32%)
	Female	186(68%)
2	<b>Education level of respondents</b>	
	Informal	83(30%)
	Primary	146(53%)
	Secondary	24(8%)
	Vocational or Technical Training Diploma	20(07%)
	Degree and above	5(02%)
3	<b>Age of the respondents</b>	
	18 – 25	88(32%)
	26 -45	156(57%)
	45 above	26(10%)

Source field survey2025

### Marketing practices

#### 4.1.2 Descriptive analysis

One of the objectives of this study was to establish the impacts Marketing practices on sewing business growth in Dodoma City, Tanzania. Thus, marketing practice was explained by the following sub variables verbal referrals, roadside displays and social media according to Table 2. Results of this research show that the majority (92%) rely on word-of-mouth referrals from customers satisfied with the service offered. Relying more on verbal referrals signifies that customer follow-up and loyalty-building activities to their business remain weak. The findings of the study also disclose that about (92%) sewing entrepreneurs habitually display their wares on shop-front or roadside to market their customers. Respondents also noted that they

cannot afford advertising budgets (radio, flyers, online adverts). Additionally, a portion (35%) of the entrepreneurs were utilizing social media occasionally to promote their products the common products, ng WhatsApp, Facebook, or Instagram. It is, however, clear that most of the sewing entrepreneurs lack sufficient know-how in digital tools, social media management, and content creation. The partial usage of social media by sewing entrepreneurs reflects the early stages of digitalization.

### 4.1.3 Marketing strategies

**Table 2: Descriptive analysis of Marketing and Strategies Practices**

Perceived importance (n =273)	SA	A	N	SD
Verbal referrals	190(70%)	60(22%)	20(07%)	3(01%)
Roadside Displays	160(59%)	85(31%)	20(07%)	8(03%)
Social Media Promotion	155(57%)	95(35%)	20(07%)	3(01%)
Defined pricing strategy	173(64%)	60(22%)	20(07)	20(07%)
Formal branding	23(8%)	73(27%)	87(32%)	90(33%)
	93(34%)	55(20%)	40(15%)	85(31%)

**Note:SA=Strongly Agree, A-Agree, N-neutral, D=Disagree, SD=Strongly Disagree**

#### Source field survey2025

### 4.1.4 Inferential Analysis

The study used the regression model for data analysis, the dependent variable was the growth of sewing businesses, measured either through a self-reported growth item. The study had two independent variables included Marketing Knowledge and Marketing Practices . The model will help determine the extent to which marketing-related factors predict business growth. A significant positive coefficient for marketing knowledge or practices would suggest that improved skills and consistent promotional efforts foster growth, whereas a negative relationship with challenges would highlight barriers. Support needs, if significant, would indicate the role of external interventions (training, financing, networking) in strengthening entrepreneurs' capacity to expand their businesses.

### Hypothesis Testing

In order to confirm the influence of Marketing capabilities on growth of Sewing Entrepreneurs the following hypotheis were developed as stated below:

**H<sub>1</sub>:** *Marketing practices have statistically positive and significant effect on the growth of sewing businesses in Dodoma City, Tanzania*

The results indicate a positive and statistically significant effect of market practices on the growth of sewing businesses in Tanzania. This is also supported by the p-value, which is less than 0.05 ( $\beta = .187, t = 5.623, p = .008$ ), as shown in Table 3.3. These findings confirm that market practices are an important factor in the growth of sewing companies in Tanzania. The stated hypothesis is thus accepted. The study therefore infers that the expansion of small sewing businesses is largely a function of the utilization and effectiveness of market practices, including roadside displays, roadside displays and social media.

**H<sub>2</sub>:** *Marketing knowledge has statistically positive and significant effect on the growth of sewing businesses in Dodoma City, Tanzania*

The findings reveal a positive and statistically significant relationship between market practices and the expansion of sewing businesses in Tanzania. This is supported by the p-value being less than 0.05 ( $\beta = .187, t = 5.623, p = .008$ ), as shown in Table 3. These findings confirm that market knowledge play a crucial role in the growth of sewing businesses in Tanzania. Therefore, the stated hypothesis is accepted. The study therefore indicates that the development of small sewing businesses largely depends on the application and effectiveness of market strategies, including roadside displays, roadside displays and social media

**Table 3: Regression Model summary**

	Unstalized coefficients		standardized	t	sig	Correlation mode			tolerance	VIF
	b	Std Error	$\beta$			Zero order	Partial	part		
(Constant)	3.826	.669			.000					
MP	.153	.057	.187	5.623	.008	.304	.187	.175	.785	1.274
MK	.242	.035	.136	2.697	.013	.312	.138	.144	.571	1.272

## 4.2 Discussion

### 4.2.1 Marketing practices

One of the aims of this study was to find out the impact of market practices on sewing entrepreneurship business growth at Dodoma City. The study notes that the majority of the entrepreneurs were operating their ventures under retail production and selling the product. However, opportunities for expansion into new markets, bulk orders, and uniforms were secured by some of them. The study also noted that fabric and accessories supplies are acquired mainly from wholesalers linked with Dar es Salaam and Arusha areas, though access to equipment servicing and spare parts that is reliable still remains a problem. The entrepreneurs are competing against informal tailors, small boutiques, imported ready-made garments, and second-hand clothes, and hence they differentiate based on fit, design, and consistency of service. In order to assess the marketing practices of a growth sewing enterprise, three marketing areas were assessed as an indicator of marketing practices. These include verbal referrals, roadside displays, and social media.

#### 4.2.1.1 Verbal referrals

The findings of this study indicate that most sewing entrepreneurs in Dodoma City rely primarily on word-of-mouth communication from satisfied customers. While this indicates the importance of service quality in securing repeat business, it also suggests that more structured efforts at customer follow-up and loyalty-building are very underdeveloped. Word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing has been largely recognized as one of the most credible and potent forms of promotion, primarily because it rides on interpersonal recommendations that are more credible than impersonal ads. Arndt (1967) referred to WOM as informal, person-to-person communication with a powerful impact on consumer behavior, outperforming in many cases a number of traditional paid promotional tools. In the Tanzanian context, this reliance is explained by prevailing

cultural values that favor interpersonal trust, social relations, and social networks as key determinants of decision-making (Sizwe & Charles, 2017).

WOM, then, not only builds customer loyalty and credibility but also resonates with culturally embedded patterns of communication and exchange. Excessive dependence on word-of-mouth advice, however, has challenges. Its scope is limited in nature, in the sense that it is confined to the entrepreneurs' immediate social networks and therefore scaling up and expansion into new markets becomes difficult. Scholars such as Keller (2013) & Aaker (2011) believe that strong branding systems institutionalize trust and credibility, which allows firms to transcend personal networks and to establish recognition in broader markets. In this perspective, branding is a formal process that augments WOM by encoding the values of quality and reliability into explicit symbols such as logos, slogans, and consistent service experiences. Kotler & Keller (2016) further note that branding initiatives create mental associations that transcend direct customer experience, thereby extending the range of WOM. Social media offers additional possibilities for integrating WOM with branding efforts: WhatsApp Business, Instagram, and Facebook can transform personal recommendations into testimonials, online reviews, and customer stories, solidifying the brand image while increasing market visibility (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In this way, WOM is transformed from an informal, localized promotional process into a powerful, brand-integrated marketing tool that serves both customer loyalty and entrepreneurial growth.

#### 4.2.1.2 Roadside displays

The findings showed that sewing entrepreneurs normally display their products at shop-fronts or roadsides as a means of attracting potential buyers. This is an indication of the utilization of low-budget, traditional visibility-based promotion techniques, given that the utilization of budgets for advertisements on television, radio, or even posters is

normally seen to be financially out of reach. By situating their merchandise in areas of high visibility, particularly on major roads, entrepreneurs utilize physical visibility to increase unplanned walk-in customers. This practice is in line with the place component of McCarthy's (1960) 4Ps of marketing, which emphasizes the part played by location and accessibility in influencing the purchasing decisions of customers. However, while roadside stands provide an easy and direct method of advertisement, their usefulness is geographically constrained and narrow in scope. Exposure is restricted to passersby in the immediate vicinity, so it is difficult for entrepreneurs to extend beyond local markets.

In addition, roadside displays are subjected to environmental factors such as weather, theft, and evolving urban bylaws, which undermine their effectiveness as standalone strategies. Branding scholars such as Keller (2013) and Sizwe & Charles (2017) hold that creating strong brand equity requires more than visibility it also requires consistency, credibility, and differentiation. From this perspective, disorganized roadside displays risk conveying disjointed or unprofessional messages to customers, and thus compromise entrepreneurs' ability to create durable brand identities. Kotler & Keller (2016) further point out that effective marketing efforts combine physical presence with branding efforts that institutionalize recognition and trust within consumers' minds.

Therefore, to increase competitiveness, roadside presentations must be supported with brand-oriented developments. This could be in the form of integrating standardized signage, logos, and color schemes into physical presentations, thereby rendering them brand touchpoints rather than product displays. Besides, internet platforms such as Facebook and Instagram can stretch roadside displays beyond geographic boundaries, enabling businesspersons to blend traditional accessibility with broader market reach (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In so doing, roadside displays become more than mere, localized visibility tactics, evolving into full-fledged components of a hybrid marketing strategy that integrates physical accessibility with formal branding and digital engagement.

#### **4.2.1.3 Social media**

The findings also revealed that some sewing entrepreneurs do use social media such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram to sell their products occasionally. However, the majority lack adequate familiarity with digital tools, social media handling, and content creation skills, thus the moderate success of such activities. The occasional usage of these platforms shows that most sewing entrepreneurs in Dodoma are still in the early stages of digital adoption. Rogers' (2003) Diffusion of Innovations Theory

characterizes this behavior as typical of early adopters, who are willing to test new technologies but often face barriers before general acceptance. Though social media offers high advantages, including cost-effective promotion, wider market coverage, and the possibility of interactive customer engagement (Russum, 2019), under-utilization in this context reflects structural and capacity-related constraints such as low digital literacy, inadequate infrastructure, and erratic internet connectivity. This scenario exhibits a broader "digital divide" that constrains small-scale entrepreneurs in the majority of developing economies (Oyedemi, 2012).

Moreover, the evidence verifies that low levels of digital literacy among sewing entrepreneurs discourage business growth, as stated by Mwangi and Namusonge (2014). Despite these limitations, entrepreneurs who used social media marketing practices on a frequent basis reported tangible benefits, including increased customer bases, better earnings, and enhanced business opportunities.

These findings are consistent with Mutalemwa's (2015) implication that African SMEs must actively react to technological progress and position themselves strategically in the competitive global economy. However, the potential to leverage such opportunities is linked directly to entrepreneurs' capacities to adopt modern marketing strategies and apply them to business activities. From a broader perspective, it is possible to reason that the continued reliance on low-cost, traditional approaches such as word-of-mouth referrals and roadside displays is a case of pragmatic adaptation on the part of entrepreneurs to resource constraints. While such methods entail minimal monetary outlay and can be sustained in the short term, their excessive use portends stagnation. As consumer culture increasingly shifts to digital media, particularly for the younger generation, sewing entrepreneurs will be left behind if they do not embrace aggressive online marketing strategies. A hybrid model that takes advantage of the trust and cultural closeness of traditional methods and the scope and efficiency of digital marketing could therefore provide a more level and stable path for entrepreneurial growth.

#### **4.2.2 Marketing Knowledge**

Another key specific goal of this research was to determine the impact of marketing knowledge on sewing entrepreneurship business development at Dodoma City. Marketing knowledge is defined as the awareness and utilization of basic principles, techniques, and tools necessary to successfully identify, reach, and retain customers. The findings in Table 2 indicates that, market knowledge have a significant contribution towards the growth of sewing businesses in Tanzania implies that the growth of small sewing businesses largely depends on the

application and effectiveness of market knowledge among the sewing entrepreneurs. For the sake of this research the market knowledge was only measured by two dimensions, namely price strategy and formal branding.

#### 4.2.2.1 Defining Pricing strategy

The findings of this study highlight the implications that pricing strategy is a valuable component that can strengthen marketing capability and build the sewing entrepreneurs of Dodoma City. A well-crafted pricing strategy assists entrepreneurs in striking a balance between affordability for customers and profitable margins for their ventures. Evidence in the study shows that those sewing businesses that engage flexible and customer-oriented pricing structures are likely to experience steady growth compared to businesses that employ rigid or cost-plus pricing solely. Implications of empathy align with those indicated by Njoki Chege et al. (2019) This aligns with Kotler & Keller (2016), who argue that pricing is not only a source of revenue generation but also a strategic tool for positioning companies in competitive markets. Similarly, Nagle *et al* (2016) note that value-based pricing where prices are established according to customer perceptions of value rather than cost enhances profitability along with customer satisfaction.

For Dodoma sewing entrepreneurs, this means that understanding customers' needs and price alignment is instrumental in responding to perceived value for sustained growth. Practically, sewing entrepreneurs who price according to market demand, customer willingness to pay, and seasonality are more likely to acquire and retain customers. This supports Avlonitis & Indounas's (2007) study, which found that businesses that employ flexible pricing outperform those that apply fixed pricing, particularly in dynamic and competitive environments. For instance, offering promotional price reductions during holiday seasons or pricing based on the purchasing power of different customer groups has been found to boost sales volumes and strengthen customer loyalty. Besides, competitive pricing helps small sewing businesses to compete favorably in the local market against both formal garment retailers and informal operators.

This resonates with research conducted by Cant & Wiid (2013), who confirmed competitive pricing to be one of the most useful marketing tools for small businesses, especially in developing nations where customers are highly price sensitive. The strong and positive correlation of pricing strategy with business growth in this study reinstates that this skill is not merely an issue of low prices but is indeed a function of providing value to customers and making the business viable. Entrepreneurs who connect pricing with other marketing practices, such as

promotion and product differentiation, are more apt to achieve growth in the long run. As Porter (1985) suggested in his model of competitive strategy, pricing in combination with differentiation creates a more sustainable competitive advantage than pricing alone. Therefore, empowering sewing entrepreneurs in Dodoma with strategic pricing skills and knowledge will directly lead to enhancing their overall marketing potential, hence strengthening their contribution to the local economy. Government agencies, NGOs, and business development service providers can direct capacity-building interventions through training in value-based pricing, cost management, and competitor analysis to facilitate entrepreneurs to make efficient pricing decisions.

#### 4.2.2.2 Formal branding

Formal brand strategy is increasingly being recognized as a platform on which to develop the marketing capabilities of small and medium enterprises and sewing entrepreneurs in Dodoma City are no different. The findings displayed in Table 1 show the utilization of digital marketing in promoting sewing products, which was low among sewing entrepreneurs. The study observed that none of the sewing entrepreneurs, particularly youth, had established and applied formal brand of their businesses and products. Despite the weak applications of formal branding in their businesses respondents agree that there is room for expanding coverage rather than their customary method practices. Participants also confirm that business people who have put more into digital product branding and customer engagement experience tangible sales boost in comparison to the past, supporting the RBV theory's emphasis on internal competencies. Previous comparable studies have argued that branding provides not only a visual identity but also a strategic platform through which firms communicate their value propositions and secure the trust of customers (Keller, 2013 and Aaker, 2011).

Consistent with these facts, sewing entrepreneurs in Dododoma City can leverage branding elements such as names, logos, and packaging to professionalize their enterprises and stand out in a competitive business landscape. Authors like Kotler & Keller (2016) point out that branding enhances market positioning and loyalty, which finds a direct application in the need for sewing entrepreneurs to create unique value propositions on affordability, craftsmanship, and cultural tailoring. Also, the integration of digital branding through utilization of social media platforms such as Instagram, WhatsApp Business, and Google profiles aligns with Kaplan & Haenlein's (2010) view that social media is a necessity for SMEs to increase market awareness and customer engagement. Similarly, research by Berthon *et al.* (2012) focuses on the application of storytelling in branding, where personal stories of entrepreneurs and their

contributions to society can create emotional connections with clients, thereby facilitating loyalty.

Other scholars have argued that collective branding initiatives, especially in developing economies, pool together bargaining power and market recognition (Luseno & Siringi, 2014), an idea shared by the conviction that sewing enterprises in Dodoma would benefit from collective branding affiliation and participation in local trade fairs. Cumulatively, these perspectives demonstrate that a systematic brand strategy is not only theoretically informed but also practically necessitated to facilitate improved market visibility, sustainable business growth, and the capacity of sewing entrepreneurs to balance cultural conservation with modern fashion demands.

In general, for small-scale tailoring businesses in Dodoma city, understanding marketing enables entrepreneurs to move beyond intuitive or trial-and-error approaches to selling and transition to structured, evidence-based approaches. Authors such as Kotler and Keller (2016) emphasize that marketing knowledge is crucial in developing competitive advantage because it provides entrepreneurs with the ability to research market needs, divide the customers, and tailor products to match diverse tastes. In a similar opinion, Ndubisi (2007) notes that in developing economies, entrepreneurs with better knowledge in marketing stand greater opportunities to build trust, loyalty, and long-term customer relationships.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusion

Sewing entrepreneurship is also seen as the keeper of the traditional skill and innovation necessary to penetrate or widen markets. It is also able to create permanent employment and income for the various local communities and individuals with different levels of education. For instance, there were some sewing entrepreneurs who were given the chance to diversify into uniforms, bulk orders, and new markets but appear to have constraints with the above-mentioned challenges. However, if governments and development partners are to harness this potentially economically vibrant industry, then an understanding of marketing skills' needs is a priority. Thus, this study concludes that marketing competencies are a core aspect in developing sewing entrepreneurs in Dodoma City. Although there is an awareness of the necessity of marketing, there are significant barriers to its effective implementation. Capacity-building programs, computer literacy classes, and access to affordable marketing tools can empower sewing entrepreneurs to scale up their businesses.

### 5.2 Recommendations

The study recommends improving the marketing capabilities of small-scale sewing entrepreneurs in urban Tanzania by providing tailor-made training workshops, launching digital literacy campaigns for effective use of social media and mobile marketing, and promoting branding and product differentiation with the help of local governments and NGOs. It further suggests facilitating access to inexpensive advertising media and cooperative marketing initiatives while inducing further research on sector-specific strategies in coherence with the local context.

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