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Leveraging Digital Technologies to Unlock the Economic Potential of “Mama Lishe” Business in Tanzania: What and How?

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Women are increasingly starting informal businesses, primarily in urban areas, to raise income for generate income for sustaining their livelihoods. One such business is “Mama Lishe”, also known as “Mama Ntilie”; an informal catering service provided to consumers at local markets, construction sites, universities or other training institutions. Despite its informal nature, the business plays a crucial role in the economy and livelihood of the poor particularly less educated women. However, the “Mama Lishe” business faces several challenges that hinder its potential economic benefits. This study explores the business practices and challenges faced by “Mama Lishe”. aiming to identify and leverage existing digital technologies to improve their operations. The paper presents findings from a preliminary study in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania’s economic hub. A qualitative data collection method was employed, gathering data from randomly selected “Mama Lishe” operators in the outskirts of Dar es Salaam. The study results highlight the unique characteristics of the “Mama Lishe” business and underscore the need for digital technologies and related policy interventions to unlock its full economic potential, not only in Tanzania but also in other countries with similar contexts.

Keywords: Economy , Digital technologies , Leveraging , “Mama Lishe.”
