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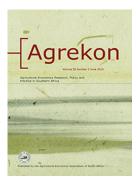
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Would you purchase milk from a milk ATM? Consumers' attitude as a kev determinant of preference and purchase intention in uganda

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ABSTRACT

Though consumer studies have received significant attention in the field of marketing management, research on consumer attitude towards food supply technologies is needed. This paper investigates the relationship between consumer attitude and preference towards the usage of a 'milk ATM' as the point of sale. Based on data obtained from 296 consumers (convenient sampling), PLS-SEM was used to analyse the proposed conceptual framework. Furthermore, multiple group analysis was conducted to test for group differences between male and female consumers. The findings reveal that whereas the consumer utilitarian and hedonic values are significantly related to preference towards milk ATM purchase intentions, the former are more strongly related to preference than hedonic values. Moreover, there are significant differences between male and female consumers regarding the effect of utilitarian consumer attitude on preference. As a response to consumption goals of trading pasteurised milk, the findings demonstrate that milk ATM consumers are motivated by numerous value dimensions. These dimensions additively contribute to preference and intentions to purchase milk from milk ATMs. This research informs the policy makers and practitioners about the potential of milk ATMs as a point of sale for milk. However, to realise this potential, it is necessary for investors to further examine the core values sought by the consumers and improve in that core value delivery.

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1. Introduction

One of the core values for food industries is safety and health (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2010). Globally, it is evidenced that a growing number of consumers are concerned about food safety and quality (Grunert, 2005; Aung & Chang, 2014). Modern milk consumers, for instance, are increasingly interested in healthy and safe milk in order to prevent illness (Mattila-Sandholm et al., 2002). Therefore, trading unpasteurised milk is prohibited because of its associated health risks (McDonald, 2015; Mungai et al., 2015). Consequently, there is rapid growth of innovative agri-food technologies in the food industry to improve quality and market accessibility for both consumers and suppliers (Verbeke, 2011; Caiazza et al., 2014; Chen et al., 2015; Verbeke et al., 2015; Esbjerg et al., 2016; La Scalia et al., 2016). In addition, through these technological innovations, food companies are increasingly seeking to improve food quality and accessibility (Zheng, 2014).

Market practices and agricultural policies have drastically changed due to market de-regulation and increased dominance of multinational new technologies and food quality scares. This has created the need for restructuring the internal environment of food and processing sector (Louw et al., 2008). In other competitive agri-food sectors, firms have continuously innovated and developed their supply chains in order to improve their competitiveness (Costa et al., 2013). For instance, Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) is a technology which provides appealing opportunities to improve the management of information flow within the supply chain and food safety in the agri-food sector. Nowadays, food safety is considered a major requirement in several countries, leading to laws on traceability of food products. This makes such technological implementation in the agri-food sector for quality and traceability crucial (Costa et al., 2013).

In Europe, several new agri-food technologies have been established, such as biotechnology and nanotechnology. However, at the time of establishment, many European consumers did not embrace them (Verbeke, 2011; Verbeke *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, it is important to involve consumers' judgement since they are key stakeholders in determining the success of food technologies in the agri-food industry (Frewer *et al.*, 2011). When it comes to food purchases, for example, agri-food companies need to examine the potential attributes that provide consumers an advantage to opt for food automated purchase systems over traditional market structures (*Hollands et al.*, 2011; Krewinkel *et al.*, 2016; Loeb *et al.*, 2016).

In Uganda, there is a significant increase in milk production and the growing demand is likely to improve productivity at the farm level (Sikawa & Mugisha, 2011). However, about 80 per cent of the marketable milk produced is marketed through traditional informal marketing channels, which are associated with quality problems (Ekou, 2014). It is important to note that the growing middle-class income earners demand quality milk of which informal market structures cannot deliver (Henriksen, 2009). Uganda is advocating for structured milk marketing systems directly from the farm level to the consumer (Balikowa, 2011). In addition, the Dairy Development Authority has concerted efforts to integrate the informal and formal sector in order to control milk quality and safety. As a result, the automated milk dispenser machine, also known as "Anytime Milk" (ATM), is currently being installed in several developing countries to improve milk quality and safety and profits for the dairy farmers. The milk ATM is a certified milk dispenser that distributes pasteurised fresh milk to consumers at an affordable price and with acceptable quality. The milk ATM has an inbuilt cooler to store milk under acceptable milk quality parameters. Since milk is a perishable food product, it is at risk of contamination with harmful bacteria and other germs if not properly stored within acceptable temperatures.

Within the context of this paper, the topic of consumer attitude as a determinant for preference and purchase intention is not new in the extant literature. However, most studies mainly focus on consumer attitude toward food choice motives, for instance Magnusson *et al.* (2001), Hughner *et al.* (2007), Wang *et al.* (2015), Hwang (2016) and Makanyeza and Du Toit (2016) focused on organic and non-organic, Schouteten *et al.* (2015), Hoek *et al.* (2017) and Lee *et al.* (2018) investigated food health labels, whereas Overby and Lee (2006), Wu and Ke (2015) and Yeo *et al.* (2017) examined online shopping attitude. In this regard, the question of how consumers perceive agri-food technologies such as milk ATMs is still an open question. Presently, little is known whether consumers would purchase milk from a milk ATM. In order to address this gap, this study aims to assess consumer attitude as a key determinant for preference and purchase intention of milk from a milk ATM in Uganda.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. Section 2 presents the theoretical and conceptual issues, followed by the research methodology in Section 3. Results and discussion are provided in Section 4, while Section 5 deals with the conclusions, together with the research contribution, implications, limitations and future research outlook.

2. Theoretical and conceptual background

The theoretical background informing this research draws from three prominent theories in the field of consumer behaviour: technology acceptance model (TAM), the theory of reasoned action (TRA),

and its predecessor, the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) (Venkatesh, 2000). Firstly, the TAM is an information system theory which elaborates how stakeholders accept a particular technology of innovation. It was developed by Davis et al. (1989) to explain computer-usage behaviour. The theory assumes that when people are presented with new technology their decision about how and when to use it is influenced by a number of factors; such as the usefulness of the technology, the easiness and behavioural intentions. Notably, it states that attitude towards a new product or technology innovation as well as the subsequent behaviour of using the technology or the product are determined by perceived usefulness and perceived ease to use.

Secondly, the TRA was developed in the 1950s, with the first published research in 1967 by Ajzen and Fishbein (1967). Since then TRA has been tested, developed and used extensively in numerous consumer studies and extended in various research fields (Mishra et al., 2014; Bagozzi et al., 2014; Paul et al., 2016; Hussain et al., 2016). Its extension resulted in the theory of planned behaviour. TRA has proven successful in predicting and explaining behaviour across a wide variety of domains. TRA assumes that consumers behave rationally and collect and evaluate systematically all the available information. Additionally, the theory assumes that people consider the effects of their possible actions to decide whether or not to take an action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). From the consumer perspective, one relevant element of TRA is its assertion that any other factors that influence behaviour are indirectly influenced by attitude. Similar to the TAM, beliefs influence attitudes, which in turn lead to intentions that guide consumer behaviour.

Thirdly, the TPB has gained significant attention in research over the past two decades (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006; Carman, 1990; Lee & Yun, 2015; Schouteten et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2015; Makanyeza and Du Toit, 2016). Nevertheless, most of these studies focus on organic and non-organic food choice motives (Magnusson et al., 2001; Hughner et al., 2007; Lee & Yun, 2015; Vainio et al., 2015; Hwang, 2016; Seegebarth et al., 2016). This theory proposes that motivational factors influence the behaviour of people and their willingness to try or not to try new products. For instance, how much effort people need to change their behaviour to purchase milk from milk ATMs instead of buying from non-automatic dispensers depends on the motivational factors exhibited by milk ATMs. The empirical support for the theory of planned behaviour comes from a host of studies demonstrating its ability to predict intentions and behaviour (Ajzen, 2011; Chen & Tung, 2014; Ajzen, 2015; Yadav & Pathak, 2016).

2.1 Conceptual issues and hypotheses

In order to examine the relationship between consumer attitudes, preference and purchase intentions, one must understand the meaning of consumer attitude and its related dimensions. Perner (2010) defines consumer attitude simply as a composite of consumer's beliefs, feelings and behavioural intentions toward some products or services within the context of marketing. In other words, a consumer can hold negative or positive beliefs or feelings toward a product or service.

Alternatively, Kinnear and Taylor (1996) argue that consumer attitude is the consumer's liking, endorsement or preference for product attributes. It summarises the criteria which consumers use to make decisions regarding what products to buy or not to buy. Consequently, recent researchers argue that consumer attitudes explain how people's beliefs and knowledge lead to attitudes. Furthermore, how the information is integrated to generate attitudes toward actions and influence people's intentions to perform behaviours is driven by consumer attitude (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006; Young et al., 2010; Ajzen, 2011; Kardes et al., 2017; Hung et al., 2018).

The school of thought holds the view that consumer attitudes are concerned with a predisposition of individuals to respond favourably or unfavourably to particular products or services. Therefore, it has been presented that personal functional judgement values and experiential benefits are combined to assess consumer attitudes (Howcroft et al., 2002; Overby & Lee, 2006; Wang et al., 2015). Thereby, two value dimensions, the utilitarian value and hedonic value, are universal in defining consumer attitudes (Overby & Lee, 2006; To et al., 2007).

2.1.1 Utilitarian consumer attitudes

Previous studies have shown that consumers become more involved with a product or service when personal consequences are highlighted and its importance is emphasised (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). In this regard, utilitarian consumer attitude is an overall assessment of judging functional benefits and sacrifices (Jones *et al.*, 2006; Porter & Donthu, 2006; Su *et al.*, 2013; Schade *et al.*, 2016). Thus, product price, quality attributes and time, can be considered as functional benefits and sacrifices by the consumers before actual purchase (Hoffman & Novak, 1996; Overby & Lee, 2006; Maehle *et al.*, 2015; Bilgihan *et al.*, 2016; Lee & Hosanagar, 2016;). Furthermore, utilitarian value incorporates more cognitive aspects of attitude such as the economic value (see Zeithaml, 1988); the usefulness of a product, e.g., Jarvenpaa and Todd (1996), Teo (2001), Prebensen *et al.* (2016); and freshness, e.g., Verbeke *et al.* (2015). It is important to note consumers can also purchase because of convenience (Verbeke *et al.*, 2015; Wang *et al.*, 2015). In brief, consumer behaviour driven by utilitarian value is typically satisfying. Consumers who place emphasis on utilitarian value in purchasing milk from milk ATMs are expected to be more likely motivated by its functionality and economic value.

2.1.2 Hedonic consumer attitude

Hedonic value is more subjective and personal than utilitarian value. It is the experiential and emotional motivations of consumer behaviour that can be derived from the multisensory, emotive and entertainment aspects experienced during consumption process (Hoffman & Novak, 1996; Overby & Lee, 2006). Consumers often purchase for appreciation of experience (Babin *et al.*, 1994). Hedonic attributes have been the subject of consumer research in regard to technology adoption (*Marr & Prendergast, 1993*, Lewis, 1991; Howcroft *et al.*, 2002; Dennis *et al.*, 2007). Purchasing processes associated with fun and excitement influence consumer's purchase intentions (Im *et al.*, 2015; Lee & Yun, 2015; *Kesari & Atulkar, 2016*). Consumers would not prefer exhausting purchasing processes since it is always not a good experience and preference could be deviated (Overby & Lee, 2006). Even Bagozzi (1992) and Hsu and Chen (2014) argue that unless preference is present, future purchasing intentions may not be activated. Thus, the hedonic value cannot be isolated from the influence of consumer preference and purchase intentions (Childers *et al.*, 2002).

Consequently, both utilitarian and hedonic values are higher-level consumption goals that motivate and direct consumers' behaviour and purchase decision-making (Gutman, 1997; Chiu *et al.*, 2014; Kang & Park-Poaps, 2010). These two regulate consumer actions including behavioural intentions of loyalty towards a service or product (Carver & Scheier, 1990). Similarly, Bridges and Florsheim (2008) identify utilitarian and hedonic values as the goals that guide consumer behaviour. For experienced customers, value judgements are derived from the past consumption experiences that facilitate or block the achievement of their purchase intentions (Woodruff, 1997). Then, purchase intention is formed according to how these value judgements help consumers to achieve their final goals.

Furthermore, Babin *et al.* (1994) suggest that hedonic and utilitarian values are important outcomes influencing future consumer decisions through feedback loops into the consumer decision processes. Consumers should have a greater future purchase intention towards a product if it provides higher utilitarian and hedonic values. Prior research has also shown the importance of utilitarian and hedonic values in driving preference and purchase intentions (Jones *et al.*, 2006; Ryu *et al.*, 2010; Prebensen & Rosengren, 2016). Similarly, Mathwick *et al.* (2001) found that utilitarian and hedonic value have a direct and positive effect upon preference for internet retailers. Early research by Kaplan *et al.* (1974) and Jacoby and Kaplan (1972) also show that utilitarian and hedonic value have a direct and positive effect preference. Basing on this theoretical background the following hypotheses are proposed:



H1: Utilitarian consumer attitude is positively related to preference for milk purchasers at the milk ATM.

H2: Hedonic consumer attitude is positively related to preference for milk purchasers at the milk ATM.

2.1.3 Preference and purchase intentions

Preference is believed to influence future consumer outcomes, including intentions, and willingness to buy (Dodds et al., 1991; Bagozzi, 1992; Chen & Chang, 2008; Chang & Liu, 2009). Although Fishbein and Stasson (1990) believe that intentions are motivational in nature just as preference, Bagozzi (1992) argues that preference is distinct from intentions. Bagozzi (1992) emphasises that preference is needed before purchase intentions occur. Chiu et al. (2014) state that purchase intentions refer to the subjective probability that a customer will continue to purchase a product from the same seller.

Similarly, initial purchase intention reflects the likelihood that a potential customer will purchase from a seller for the first time at a given point in time. This is why it is proposed that preference for the milk ATMs will positively influence consumer purchase intentions. This is consistent with research that has linked value to preference and purchase intentions (Mathwick et al., 2001; Chen & Chang, 2008; Shirdastian & Laroche, 2017; Thammawimutti & Chaipoopirutana, 2018). In similar research, preference has been linked to purchasing intentions (Andreassen & Lindestad, 1998; Erdem & Swait, 1998; Pritchard et al., 1999; Mohseni et al., 2018). Based on the proceeding literature review about preference and purchase intentions, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Preference for purchasing milk from milk ATM is positively related to purchase intention.

Furthermore, although it is anticipated that there will be a positive relationship between consumer attitudes (utilitarian and hedonic value) and preference towards milk ATM purchasers, the effect of consumer attitudes on preference to purchase milk from milk ATMs is expected to be stronger for males than for females. Males are described as task oriented and are more likely to seek functional utility aspects and experiential services than females (Yang & Lee, 2010; Jackson et al., 2011). Extant literature shows that males and females have different consumer attitudes (Darley & Smith, 1995; Fischer & Arnold, 1994). Consequently, males and females differ in many aspects of consumption, including product choice and product positioning (Zeithaml, 1988). Moreover, Chang et al. (2004) found that the role of hedonic value in consumer satisfaction differs between males and females.

Carpenter and Moore (2009) also found that, regardless of the type of store, females perceive significantly higher levels of hedonic value, as compared to males. Research has further shown that utilitarian purchasing values may be lower for males (Kavussanu & Roberts, 2001). Gender is considered a predictor of consumer activities as females are more likely than males to engage in preferences and purchase intentions (Oh et al., 2004). Since gender has been significant in consumption behaviour in the extant literature, we expect significant gender differences in the use of ATMs to purchase milk. In this regard, the following hypotheses are investigated:

H4a: The effect of utilitarian consumer attitude on preference is significantly different between males and females towards purchasing milk from milk ATM.

H4b: The effect of hedonic consumer attitude on preference is significantly different among males and females towards milk ATM.

H4c: The effect of preference on purchasing intentions of milk from milk ATM is significantly different among the two gender groups.

The conceptual framework (Figure 1), based on Overby and Lee (2006), maps the determinants of consumer attitudes, preference, and purchase intentions and test the hypothesised relationships.

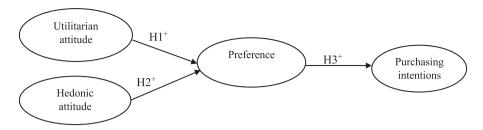


Figure 1. Conceptual model. Source: Own compilation based on Overby and Lee (2006).

3. Methodology

3.1 Data collection and measures

The measurement scales were developed from previously published studies. The seven items which measured utilitarian value were adopted from Lee *et al.* (2002), Overby and Lee (2006) and YuliaWardani and Warsono (2012). In addition, the hedonic value was measured by six items adapted from Voss *et al.* (2003), Arnold and Reynolds (2003) and Scarpi (2012). Four items measured preference and purchase intentions respectively as examined by Bagozzi (1992), Chen and Chang (2008), Chang and Liu (2009) and Chiu *et al.* (2014). A five-point Likert scale ranging from "1 = strongly disagree" to "5 = strongly agree" were used to measure all constructs. In order to assess its logical consistency, the scales were refined through expert review and a pre-test, where the sequence of items and contextual relevance was considered by 20 respondents with milk ATM buying experience. The final questionnaire was revised in terms of appropriate word selection in the context of milk ATM sample characteristics. A complete questionnaire is attached as Appendix A.

Purchasers of milk from milk ATMs were selected during purchasing hours. Convenience sampling was used because research enumerators easily gained access to the respondents. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where subjects are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher. It is the most appropriate sampling technique for consumer surveys (Kivela *et al.*, 1999). The convenience sample helps the researcher to gather useful data and information that would not have been possible using probability sampling techniques, which require more formal access to lists of populations (Janssens *et al.*, 2008). However, it is important to note that a convenience sample often suffers from biases, because the sampling frame is not known. The sample is not chosen at random, the inherent bias in convenience sampling means that the sample is unlikely to be representative of the population being studied. This undermines the ability to make generalisations from the study sample. The desire of the ongoing pilot project to improve short food supply chains in the dairy sector facilitated the choice to select ATM milk selling points.

After obtaining the consent of the respondents, they voluntarily answered the questionnaire without receiving any cash incentives. During questionnaire administration, respondents were asked to respond to 21 questions assessing consumer attitude, preference and intentions of buying milk from the milk ATM. A total of 303 questionnaires were collected, of which seven were incomplete and were discarded. The 296 complete questionnaires were entered into SPSS for descriptive data analysis. Data were then transferred into Smart-PLS 3.0 for further analyses.

3.2 Data analysis

In SMARTPLS-SEM, factor loadings are indicated within the measurement model as indicator loadings for each construct as outer loadings. We ran the measurement model including all factors. Indicators with low loading values do not support the measurement model. Hair *et al.* (2014) suggests that indicator loadings which are 0.50 or higher should be retained in the measurement model. In our case, two indicators of the latent variable utilitarian attitude are excluded from the measurement model.

Furthermore, rather than using a well-known LISREL model Jöreskog and Sörbom (1981), the method of latent variables Partial Least Squares (PLS) was employed (Wold, 1980). PLS places minimal restrictions on the measurement scales, sample size and residual distribution (Hair Jr et al., 2016). It requires the basic assumptions of least-squares estimation to be satisfied (Han et al., 2011). The estimation is distraction-free and does not pose identification problems. It can be used with all types of samples and permits the same freedom with respect to measurement scales as ordinary regression. To statistically evaluate the model, one can either invoke the traditional assumptions about residuals or use bootstrap in combination with the traditional measures of goodness-of-fit.

In PLS, bootstrapping is one of the re-sampling procedures used to examine the stability of estimates (Hair et al., 2014). N sample datasets are created in order to obtain N estimates for each parameter in the PLS model. The bootstrapping procedure utilises a confidence estimation procedure other than the normal approximation (Hair Jr et al., 2016). This procedure results in t-statistics, which help in judging whether the proposed relationships are significant or not. Following Henseler et al. (2009), a method of resampling bootstrapping with 500 samples were run. Lastly, multiple group modelling is used to determine whether or not the grouping variable gender has a significant effect on the observed variables.

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Measurement model evaluation

The individual item reliability and internal consistency (composite reliability) and the square root of variance extracted were examined following the criteria of Hair et al. (2012). The results of the individual item reliability are listed in Table 1. Low factor loading items were deleted from the subsequent analysis. During factor analysis, the items for the construct utilitarian value turned out to consist of five sub-items, instead of the original seven items. In particular, items affordable price (0.35) and

Table 1. Factor loadings for measurement items.

Variables	Factor loadings
Consumer utilitarian attitude	
Milk is safe	0.87
The price is affordable	0.35
The quality is trustworthy	0.93
It is time-saving to purchase from milk ATM	0.83
It offers good economic value	0.40
Milk purchased from milk ATM is ever fresh (usefulness)	0.72
It is convenient	0.78
Consumer hedonic attitude	
It is fun making a purchase from a milk ATM	0.92
It is exciting purchasing milk from a milk ATM	0.88
It is necessary to purchase from a milk ATM	0.91
Am delighted to purchase milk from a milk ATM	0.88
It is a solution to milk quality concerns (usefulness)	0.86
It is ease to purchase milk from a milk ATM	0.90
Preference	
Milk ATM is my first choice to purchase milk	0.88
I prefer buying milk from milk ATM	0.86
I recommend family and friends	0.90
Milk ATM is my primary source of fresh milk	0.88
Purchasing intentions	
I will buy milk from milk ATM in future	0.90
I intend to continue buying from milk ATM	0.87
I consider myself to be a loyal customer	0.88
I will recommend family and friend to purchase milk from ATM	0.89

Notes: A five-point Likert scale: Strongly disagree = 1; disagree = 2; neutral = 3; agree = 4; strongly agree = 5.

Table 2. Reliability and validity of the constructs.

Variables	Items	Cronbach's α	Composite reliability	AVE
Utilitarian attitude	5	0.94	0.93	0.74
Hedonic attitude	6	0.95	0.96	0.80
Preference	4	0.91	0.93	0.78
Purchase intentions	4	0.91	0.94	0.79

Notes: Fit statistics: $x^2 = 597.143$; df 108; CFI = 0.93; IFI = 0.92; GFI = 0.90; SRMR = 0.040.

economic value (0.40) were discarded. The remaining five items were loading higher than 0.7 suggesting that the items are a good measure of the variable utilitarian.

Furthermore, internal consistency was assessed by composite reliability. Composite reliability varies from 0 to 1, with 1 being perfect estimated reliability (Henseler *et al.*, 2015). In a model adequate for exploratory purposes, composite reliabilities should be equal to or more than 0.70 (Chin, 1998; Hock *et al.*, 2010). The result shows that the composite reliability value proves that the reflective indicators have more levels of internal consistency reliability. In addition, the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) ranges from 0.74 to 0.80 indicating that the variance captured by the construct was greater than the variance due to measurement error (Hair *et al.*, 2013; Byrne, 2013). The average variance explained R^2 for utilitarian value is 78 per cent and 69 per cent for hedonic value, which indicates robust exploratory power.

4.2 Hypothesis testing

PLS-SEM provides standardised path coefficients for the hypothesised relationships. It was observed that milk ATM purchasers' utilitarian value has a significant positive effect on preference (t = 9.109, p < 0.05). The finding supports hypothesis 1 (H1) as shown in Table 3. The results suggest that milk ATMs are perceived as useful in quality improvement and convenience options for purchasing milk. Furthermore, in regard to hypothesis 2 (H2), hedonic consumer value has a significant positive effect on preference (t = 4.103, p < 0.05). The results imply that experiential emotions of milk ATM purchasers such as fun, excitement and easiness, influence consumers' preference. Thus, H1 and H2 were both supported. The two variables significantly influence the preference for purchasing milk from milk ATMs. Overall, utilitarian value observed a higher coefficient on preference towards the milk ATM than hedonic values. These results are in accordance to previous studies on consumer attitude in relation to functional and pleasurable aspects of purchasing preference (Overby & Lee, 2006; Chiu et al., 2014; Lee & Yun, 2015). In addition, our results demonstrated that preference has a significant effect on intention (t = 22.501, p < 0.01). Thus, hypothesis 3 (H3) was also supported. TAM assumes that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use affect consumer purchase intention (Davis et al., 1989; Overby & Lee, 2006). The findings are in accordance with Haugaard et al. (2014), who found that innovative food technologies improve efficiency and customer convenience. In other words, consumers positively appreciate food technologies for improving food quality and safety.

4.3 Multiple group differences between males and females

The study hypothesis 4a, 4b, and 4c (*H4a*, *H4b*, *H4c*) examined differences in gender. The gender distribution was as follows: 144 (48.6%) males and 152 (51.4%) females. The results of the multiple

Table 3. Correlation coefficients.

Hypothesis	Standardised estimates	t -values	
Utilitarian attitude -> Preference	0.348	9.109*	
Hedonic attitude -> Preference	0.156	4.103*	
Preference -> Purchase intentions	0.837	22.501**	

Notes: *significant at p < 0.05; **significant at p < 0.01.

Table 4. Multiple group estimates for gender group differences.

Path coefficients	Males (<i>n</i> = 144) <i>t</i> values	Females $(n = 152)$ t values	Df	Hypothesis
Utilitarian attitude -> Preference	2.712*	1.962*	-0.75	Accepted
Hedonic attitude -> Preference	1.217***	0.859***	-0.358	Rejected
Preference -> Purchasing intentions	14.525**	16.627**	2.102	Accepted

Notes: p < 0.01; p < 0.05; ***insignificant.

group analysis indicate that there are significant differences among male (t = 2.712, p < 0.05) and female (t = 1.962, p < 0.05) purchasers with respect to the relationship between utilitarian consumer attitude and preference. Thus, H4a was supported. The results are in line with previous research showing that males and females exhibit different consumer attitudes and preferences (Yang & Lee, 2010; Jackson et al., 2011; Darley & Smith, 1995; Fischer & Arnold, 1994). Our results confirmed that male purchasers are more likely to seek utilitarian aspects of purchasing milk from a milk ATM than females.

The path coefficients in Table 4 predicting differences between male and female purchasers in relation to hedonic value and preference was not significant (t = 1.217, p > 0.05) for men and (t = 0.859, p > 0.05) for women. Thus, H4b was not supported. This suggests that hedonic values that deal with experience or emotions felt during the purchase process are similar for male and female purchasers. However, H4c revealed again significant gender difference, in this case regarding the effect of preference on purchasing intentions (males t = 14.525, p < 0.01, females t = 16.627, p < 0.010.01). Therefore, this hypothesis was supported. This was also reported in the studies of Carpenter and Moore (2009) and Kayussanu and Roberts (2001).

5. Conclusions and study implications

Using survey data collected from 296 milk ATM consumers in Uganda, the study investigated the relationship between consumer attitudes (utilitarian and hedonic values) on preference and purchase intention of milk ATMs. The result reveals that milk ATM purchasers attribute multiple value dimensions which contribute to preference. Thereby, the utilitarian value has a larger effect on preference than the hedonic value. Purchasers of milk from milk ATM primarily appreciate the utilitarian reasons because of its convenience and time-saving elements. In relation to the TRA, consumer decisions are based on the relative attractiveness of the available alternatives (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). This study demonstrates that utilitarian and hedonic value dimensions play similar roles in predicting the outcome for preference and purchase intention. Given the current study, policies that support short agri-food supply chains could increase investments in this technology (milk ATM) to increase the market for the dairy sector.

The study findings also revealed that female purchasers' utilitarian values significantly differ from male purchasers. It is confirmed that males are more likely to seek utilitarian values than females. In other words, male purchasers are more likely to be driven by new food technologies than females. This contradicts another recent study where females have shown to be significantly more positive towards technological aspects then males (Yang & Lee, 2010). Developers need to understand the importance males and females attach to (different) attributes that relate to utilitarian values. This is not so true for hedonic values, where the influence of hedonic values on preference and intentions to purchase is similar for both genders.

The study also showed that two specific utilitarian indicators, namely price affordability and economic value, were perceived weak factor loadings. While price and economic value information should be considered by the policy makers in order to monitor consumers' sustainable preference for purchasing milk from milk ATMs, consumers in our sample seem to prefer buying milk from ATMs, regardless of low attribution to price and economic value.



In conclusion, it is important to note that the current research was examined from a purchaser's perspective, targeting buyers' utilitarian value and hedonic value on preference and purchase intentions. A key future research question would be to evaluate the views of different stakeholders of the dairy value chain. Nevertheless, the study provides novel insights on milk ATMs at its infancy stage, which could lay a foundation for future research and further exploit the potential for investment in such short agri-food chains.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE ON MILK ATM New food (milk) supply Technology

DECD	nr·	
KENE	nr.	

Please, read carefully the following title before you answer the question below for this academic purpose "Would you purchase milk from a milk ATM? Consumers' utilitarian and hedonic attitudes as key determinants for preference and purchase intentions

Section 1

	Responder	nt's profile	
Q1	Please indicate your gender ☐ Female ☐ Male	Q2	What is your age? ☐ 18-36 ☐ 37-54 ☐ >55
Q3	What is your level of Education? Primary Secondary Vocational education University	Q4	Please indicate your occupation ☐ Self-employed ☐ Civil employee ☐ Student ☐ Private sector
Q5	Please indicate your income level ☐ Low ☐ Average ☐ High		

Notes: Low= 150\$-250\$ per month, Average=250\$-350\$, High=350\$-450\$



Section 2

Q1	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?						
		Neither					
		Strongly		agree nor	Strongly		
	Utilitarian attitude	disa	gree	disagree	ag	ree	
Q1a	I purchase milk from milk ATM because it is safe	1	2	3	4	5	
Q1b	Milk sold at this milk ATM is of good quality	1	2	3	4	5	
Q1c	I save time if I purchase milk from the milk ATM	1	2	3	4	5	
Q1d	Milk sold at milk ATM is affordable	1	2	3	4	5	
Q1e	Milk sold at milk ATM offer economic value	1	2	3	4	5	
Q1f	This milk at milk ATM is ever fresh	1	2	3	4	5	
Q1g	It is convenient to purchase milk from Milk ATM	1	2	3	4	5	
Q2	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the follow	ving statem	ents?				
	Hedonic attitude	-					
Q2a	It is fun making a purchase at milk ATM	1	2	3	4	5	
Q2b	It is exciting buying milk from milk ATM	1	2	3	4	5	
Q2c	It is necessary to buy milk from milk ATM	1	2	3	4	5	
Q2d	Am delightful to buy milk from milk ATM	1	2	3	4	5	
Q2e	It is a solution to milk quality concerns buying milk from milk ATM (usefulness)	1	2	3	4	5	
Q2f	It is easy to buy milk from milk ATM	1	2	3	4	5	
Q3	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the follow Preferences	ving statem	ents?				
Q3a	The first choice to buy milk is at Milk ATM	1	2	3	4	5	
Q3b	I prefer buying milk from milk ATM	1	2	3	4	5	
Q3c	Milk ATM is a primary source for fresh milk	1	2	3	4	5	
Q3d	I recommend family and friends	1	2	3	4	5	
Q4	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the follow	ving statem	ents?				
-	Purchase intentions	J					
Q4a	I will buy milk from milk ATM in the future	1	2	3	4	5	
Q4b	I intend to continue buying from milk ATM	1	2	3	4	5	
Q4c	I consider myself to be a loyal customer	1	2	3	4	5	
Q4d	I have a positive attitude toward milk ATM	1	2	3	4	5	