

# Socio-Economic-Factors Affecting Fresh Tomato Marketing in Kitgum Main Market, Uganda

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## Abstract

This study examined factors affecting fresh tomato marketing in Kitgum Main Market, Uganda, focusing on vendor characteristics, socio-economic and business environment factors, and key marketing challenges. Data were collected from 40 fresh tomato vendors (5 wholesalers, 35 retailers) using semi-structured questionnaires and focus group discussions. Descriptive statistics, Chi-square tests, and cross-tabulations were employed. Results showed that vendors were predominantly married women with primary-level education, aged 31–52 years, and managing households of 5–10 members. Socio-economic characteristics (age, education, marital status, household size) and business environment factors (credit access, business development services) significantly influenced sales. Major challenges included substandard stalls, lack of cold storage, poor transport, and produce theft. The study recommends improved market infrastructure, better access to credit, and training services to strengthen vendor resilience.

**Keywords:** Tomato, Marketing, Vendors, Kitgum, Uganda

## 1. Introduction

Tomato (*Lycopersicon esculentum* Mill.) is among the most widely grown vegetables in Uganda, valued both as a food crop and a source of household income [2,5]. Despite its importance, marketing challenges such as poor infrastructure [3,7], perishability, and low bargaining power hinder its potential. This paper examines factors affecting fresh tomato marketing in Kitgum Main Market.

## 2. Problem Statement

Tomato farmers and vendors in Uganda, particularly in Kitgum Main Market, face persistent challenges including inadequate storage, high postharvest losses, unreliable transportation, and limited access to credit. These challenges reduce profitability and sustainability, yet little empirical research has been conducted to quantify the key factors influencing fresh tomato marketing [1,6] in this context.

## 3. Objectives

The overall objective of the study was to analyze the factors affect-

ing fresh tomato marketing in Kitgum Main Market. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Characterize fresh tomato vendors in Kitgum Main Market.
2. Assess the socio-economic and business environment factors influencing fresh tomato sales.
3. Identify key challenges affecting fresh tomato marketing.

## 4. Methodology

A cross-sectional survey design was applied, integrating both qualitative and quantitative methods. The study sample consisted of 40 fresh tomato vendors (5 wholesalers and 35 retailers) selected through simple random sampling. Primary data were gathered using semi-structured questionnaires and focus group discussions. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS (version 16.0) for descriptive statistics, Chi-square tests, and cross-tabulations, while qualitative data were thematically analyzed.

## 5. Results

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent	Total
Gender	Female	40	100%	40
Marital Status	Married	23	57.5%	40
Marital Status	Single/Other	17	42.5%	40
Education	Primary	20	50%	40
Education	Other	20	50%	40
Age range	31–52 years	28	70%	40
Household size	5–10 members	30	75%	40

**Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Fresh Tomato Vendors**

Findings showed all fresh tomato vendors were female, mostly married, with primary-level education. The majority were middle-aged (31–52 years) and managed large households [8].

Factor	Statistical significance	Effect on sales
Age	Significant (p<0.05)	Older vendors recorded lower sales
Education level	Significant (p<0.05)	Higher education increased sales
Marital status	Significant (p<0.05)	Married vendors recorded higher sales
Household size	Significant (p<0.05)	Larger households correlated with higher sales
Credit access	Significant (p<0.05)	Vendors with credit access had more stock and higher sales
Business services	Significant (p<0.05)	Access to training increased efficiency
Vendor association membership	Not significant	No statistical influence on sales

**Table 2: Key Factors Influencing Fresh Tomato Sales**

Socio-economic and business environment factors strongly influenced sales, especially education and credit access, while vendor association membership showed no significant effect.

Challenge	Frequency (%)	Impact
Substandard market stalls	30.5%	Inadequate shelter and sanitation
Lack of cold storage facilities	27.4%	High postharvest losses
Poor/unreliable transportation	11.6%	Delays and reduced quality
Theft of produce	14.7%	Loss of income

**Table 3: Major Challenges in Fresh Tomato Marketing**

## 6. Discussion

The study demonstrates that fresh tomato marketing in Kitgum Main Market is heavily influenced by vendors' socio-economic characteristics and the prevailing business environment. Consistent with earlier studies education and access to credit were critical for improving business performance [4,9]. The challenges identified—particularly inadequate storage and infrastructure—mirror those faced by vegetable markets in other developing countries [1,7 and 10].

## 7. Conclusion and Recommendations

Fresh tomato marketing in Kitgum is hindered by socio-economic constraints and inadequate infrastructure. Addressing these issues could improve vendor livelihoods and reduce postharvest losses.

### Recommendations

- Strengthen vendor access to affordable credit facilities.
- Provide regular training and business development services.
- Improve market infrastructure, especially cold storage facilities.
- Enhance security and stall quality in the market.

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