

# Identifying the Challenges Associated with the Orange Money Services for Issam Students at Njala University, Sierra Leone- West Africa

Sualiho Sheriff

School of Social Sciences and Law, Njala University, Bo Campus, Sierra Leone-West Africa

Email of the Corresponding Author: [Sualiho@njala.edu.sl](mailto:Sualiho@njala.edu.sl)

## Abstract

The study's primary focus was identifying the challenges associated with the Orange Money services among ISSAM students at Njala University, Bo Campus, Towama Location. The research area is the Institute of Social Studies, Administration, and Management (ISSAM), anchored in the School of Social Sciences and Law at Njala University, Bo Campus. The study espoused a random sampling selection technique and sampled 72 respondents from the target population of six-hundred (600), including every department and academic level in the selection process, and 72 questionnaires administered were filled out and returned, accompanied by a semi-structured interview guide for analysis using a four-point Likert scale (Likert, 1932). A mixed-method approach was employed, with results analyzed and discussed through qualitative and quantitative methods. The key findings of the research paper include: (86.3%) of the respondents are female; (98.6%) of the respondents have active Orange Money accounts, while few do not have android phones to access internet services; (56.9%) positively agreed that they encountered enormous challenges with Orange Money Platform; (84.7%) disclosed that there are few agents and points of service at Njala University; (84.7%) indicated transaction failures; (93.1%) indicated high transaction costs; (50%) reported poor customer service; (70.8%) reported security threats; and (84.7%) of the majority of the respondents frequently experienced network problems. The key findings were presented in tables and analyzed into frequencies and simple percentages to describe the different characteristics of respondents using Kobo Collect, Excel, and version 29 of SPSS. The study concludes that Orange Money faces enormous challenges and that its impact on the platform's success should not be overlooked, as frequent system breakdowns affect customer service delivery. However, Orange Money is considered the fastest means of cash transactions for ISSAM students at Njala University. Finally, the research paper recommends that Orange Company in Sierra Leone implement financial literacy programs, organize public lectures for university students, facilitate frequent radio discussions for the wider populace, assist with Android phones for digital financial literacy services, and adjust the extra charges and GST (Goods and Services Tax) for the Orange Money Platform.

**Keywords:** Orange Money, Challenges, Platform, Service, Students, University

**Acronym:** Institute of Social Studies, Administration and Management (ISSAM), Njala University

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## 1.1 Introduction

Orange Money has become fundamental to daily life for many Sierra Leoneans, including students pursuing their academic endeavors at Njala University. Despite the growing adoption of mobile money services like Orange Money among ISSAM students at Njala University, a gap remains in understanding the challenges this financial tool places for students' welfare. Mobile money services have gained adhesion among university students in developing countries, offering various benefits and significant challenges. Previous Studies have identified factors influencing adoption, including students' attitudes, social pressure, and facilitating conditions (Ndekwa et al., 2018). The demand for Orange Money services among universities is gradually fading due to increased transaction costs, frequent network problems, and high fees for cash-ins and cash-outs. Limited policies and procedures exist for operating the Orange Money service in Sierra Leone. However, government regulations continually impact the service by introducing the Goods and Services Tax (GST) system, which affects the cash disbursement process. Similar studies conducted in Ghana (2014) identified key factors affecting university students in Ghana when adopting mobile banking, particularly as more banks begin connecting with customers through mobile phones. Orange Money is the electronic wallet the company offers customers for various financial transactions (Armah et al., 2021). Orange Money features simplicity, speed, autonomy, and traceability. Orange Money helps manage accounts by allowing deposits, withdrawals, and transfers. Non-Orange Money subscribers pay for goods and services, buy airtime and data bundles, proceed with DSTV payments, and purchase EDSA prepaid electricity and loan services using mobile phones. According to (Graft J.D., 2020), Orange Money is an innovative mobile phone-based payment system that allows customers to complete financial

transactions electronically. (Ndekwa et al. 2018) further examined how service providers should leverage peer pressure and address the identified challenges to promote adoption, creating a conducive environment for mobile money among university students. The Orange Company developed the system and conforms to global security standards and protocols. It has undergone risk analysis and audits by external parties to ensure that its security meets international mobile banking standards. (Mugisha et al. 2019) conducted a study in Uganda to examine university students' financial behaviors and practices using mobile money.

The study revealed that mobile money users exhibit more proactive financial management practices, including regular savings, budgeting, and tracking expenses. The system is developed in partnership with commercial banking in Sierra Leone. It works with the Orange Company to ensure controls, adherence to transaction security, and compliance with the Bank of Sierra Leone regulations. The Orange Company strictly complies with the following policies: anti-money laundering, know-your-customer procedures, and transaction monitoring, where all transactions are PIN-protected. Similar research conducted by (Ochumb et al., 2018) identified students' attitudes, social factors, and facilitating conditions as key factors influencing the adoption of mobile money services among university students in Tanzania.

## **1.2 Brief Background of ISSAM Njala University Sierra Leone**

The Institute of Social Studies, Administration, and Management (ISSAM) is the largest in the School of Social Sciences and Law. The Institute was established in 2005 to run short courses and train public and business administrators and accounting professionals for institutions. The Institute offers programs in accounting and finance, human resource management, marketing management, project management, and public administration at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Njala University, as an incubator of higher educational institutions in Sierra Leone, is situated in a dynamic educational environment and has contributed significantly to the academic and socio-economic development of Sierra Leone. A higher education institution must provide quality education through teaching, research, and community service and produce skilled graduates who contribute to the workforce or labor force. Njala University, established in 1964, stands as a beacon of higher education in Sierra Leone, renowned for its academic excellence and commitment to fostering intellectual growth and innovation, located in the Moyamba District, the university is a melting point of cultures and ideas, attracting students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds to pursue their academic career.

## **1.3 Theoretical Framework -Technology Acceptance Model (Davies, 1989)**

Davis developed the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) in 1989 to explain how users adopt and use new technologies. TAM postulates that perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) are the key determinants of users' intention to use a technology, predicting actual usage behavior. The model has been widely used to study technology adoption in various contexts, including mobile money services (Davis, 1989). In the context of mobile money adoption in Zambia, perceived usefulness refers to the extent to which users perceive mobile money services as beneficial for their financial transactions, while perceived ease of use refers to the extent to which users see mobile money services as easy and convenient. Another factor that may influence the adoption of mobile money services is trust. Trust is an essential factor in adopting e-commerce and mobile payment systems. In the context of mobile money services, trust refers to the degree to which individuals believe that their transactions are secure and that their personal information is protected (Mapolisa et al., (2012).

## **1.4 Research Methodology**

The study adopted a mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to comprehensively understand the challenges associated with the Orange Money Platform for ISSAM students at Njala University. The sample size was 72 respondents, with a target population of six thousand students (600 students) for the survey portion of the study. A study of (O'Brien, 2012) examined a sample size of more than 50%, which gives results that can be replaced as representing a significant proportion of the population. The sample population was selected through a random sampling technique to ensure representation from each department within ISSAM. For the study, random sampling ensures representation from different departments and academic levels. The research instruments included a structured questionnaire and Focused Group Discussion, which were pre-tested and validated by experts to provide clarity, comprehensive, and relevance to the research objectives. The administered questionnaire includes closed-ended questions with multiple-choice options and a four-point Likert scale (Likert, 1932). A structured interview guide was utilized to conduct in-depth interviews within a subset of ISSAM students to explore their challenges, experiences, perceptions, and attitudes toward the Orange Money platform at the university. The key findings were presented in tables and analyzed as frequencies and percentages to describe the different characteristics of respondents using Kobo Collect, Excel, and version 29 of SPSS.

## 1.5 Results and Discussion

**1.5.1 Results:** The data from the field are presented in the tables below:

**Table 1: Gender of Respondents**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
<b>Valid:</b>	Female	47	65.3	65.3
	Male	25	34.7	34.7
	<b>Total</b>	72	100.0	100.0

Table 1 above shows that 65.3% of the respondents were females and 34.7% were males at ISSAM, Njala University. This study revealed that more females utilized orange money platforms at ISSAM, Njala University, and Bo Campus than their male counterparts.

**Table 2: Active Orange Money Account**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
<b>Valid:</b>	No	1	1.4	1.4
	Yes	71	98.6	98.6
	<b>Total</b>	72	100.0	100.0

Table 2 above shows that 98.6% of the respondents utilized the Orange Money service at ISSAM Njala University. In comparison, 1.4% opposed the claim that they do not have access to active Orange Money accounts due to a lack of Android phones and other related facilities to access the platform.

The study revealed that almost 100% of the respondents fully know the orange money services or platforms used by Njala University students at the Institute of Social Science Administration and Management. This implies the institute's awareness of orange money usage is high, with more females always utilizing the service.

**Table 3: Rating Challenges Associated with the Orange Money Services**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
<b>Valid:</b>	Negatively	7	9.7	9.7
	Neutral	13	18.1	18.1
	Positively	41	56.9	56.9
	Very Positively	11	15.3	15.3
	<b>Total</b>	72	100.0	100.0

Table 3 above shows that 56.9% of the respondents positively represented the highest number of students who rated the challenges associated with orange money among students at Njala, and 15.3% very positively decided they had enormous challenges in utilizing the orange money platform of ISSAM students at Njala University. In comparison, 18.1% of the respondents remained neutral, and 9.7% negatively opposed or disagreed with the view that there are challenges in using the orange money service at ISSAM, Njala University.

**Table 4: Limited Accessibility (Few Agents/Points of Service)**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
<b>Valid:</b>	Agreed	61	84.7	84.7
	Disagreed	11	15.3	15.5
	<b>Total</b>	72	100.0	100.0

Table 4 above shows limited access to the use of orange money services at Njala University, with 84.7% disagreeing that there is limited access to orange money services at Njala University due to persistent network and system problems. The research paper revealed that more needs to be done to improve the Orange Money Platform by expanding facilities or access to cash points with more agents. At the same time, 15.3% disagreed or opposed the claim that there is no limited access to the points-of-service and agents of orange money service at Njala University.

**Table 5: Difficulty in Utilizing Orange Money Service**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
<b>Valid:</b>	Agreed	61	84.7	84.7
	Disagreed	11	15.3	15.5
	<b>Total</b>	72	100.0	100.0

<b>Transaction Failure</b>		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
<b>Valid:</b>	Agreed	61	84.7	84.7
	Disagreed	11	15.3	15.3
	<b>Total</b>	72	100.0	100.0

Table 5 above shows that 84.7%, representing the highest number of the respondents, agreed they had experienced frequent transaction failures with the Orange Money Service. In comparison, 15.3% similarly disagreed that using the Orange Money service at Njala University is challenging. The study also revealed that most respondents agreed they experienced transaction failures or frequent network problems with the Orange Money service. Meanwhile, 15.3% disagreed that there are slight challenges to Orange Money usage among ISSAM students at Njala University. This implies that much must be done to overcome these challenges associated with the Orange Money service by improving the network systems, addressing poor customer service, mitigating security threats, and reducing frequent transaction failures.

**Table 6: High Transaction Costs**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
<b>Valid:</b>	Agreed	31	43.1	43.1
	Disagreed	41	56.9	57.7
	<b>Total</b>	72	100.0	100.0

Table 6 above shows that 56.9% of the majority of the students opposed or disagreed with the claim that the transaction costs or service charges of Orange Money usage are not high but favorable. In comparison, 43.1% of the respondents disclosed that the transaction fee or cost is high for Orange Money usage among university students, especially the Goods and Services Tax (GTS), introduced for the platform. This implies that both charges levied by the government and the Orange Company burden the customers where the service delivery is very poor.

**Table 7: Poor Customer Service and Security Threats**

**Poor Customer Service:**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
<b>Valid:</b>	Agree	36	50.0	50.0
	Disagree	36	50.0	50.7
	<b>Total</b>	72	100.0	100.0

<b>Security Threats:</b>		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
<b>Valid:</b>	Agree	51	70.8	70.8
	Disagree	21	29.2	29.6
	<b>Total</b>	72	100.0	100.0

Table 7 above shows that 50% of the respondents agreed that there is poor customer service through Orange Money usage, and 50% also disagreed that there is no poor customer service through Orange Money usage. Still, the formality required when a transaction fails is too much on the customers. This scenario could be attributed to poor customer service, frequent network problems, etc. Also, 70.8% of the respondents agreed that the security threat for Orange Money usage is very high, and 29.2% disagreed that there are few security threats with the Orange Money platform at Njala University. (Lambongang, J.M. 2023) identified key challenges with mobile money usage, including financial, security, privacy, performance, time, convenience, and psychological issues.

**Table 8: Frequent Network Problem**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
<b>Valid:</b>	Agree	61	84.7	84.7
	Disagree	11	15.3	15.5
	<b>Total</b>	72	100.0	100.0

Table 8 above shows that 84.7% of the respondents agreed that frequent network problems are one of the key challenges associated with the Orange Money Service at Njala University. In comparison, 15.3% of the respondents opposed that they experienced few network problems during their Orange Money usage. This implies that most respondents agreed that Orange Company needs to improve its network system with modern technology.

### 1.5.2 Discussion of Results

For the research paper, the results above are discussed below:

- More female students utilize the orange money service than their male counterparts at ISSAM Njala University. Gender and customer satisfaction significantly moderate the relationship between service quality and customer loyalty, while banking status does not moderate this relationship, according to a study by (Nyarku et al. 2018).
- The research paper revealed few agents and cash points at the campus, where more cash is frequently disbursed to female students than to their male counterparts.
- The study also disclosed that ISSAM students are highly aware of the orange money service at Njala University. However, it is difficult to generate or access cash for basic necessities due to the limited number of agents and cash points available to hundreds of students at Njala University, despite the high transaction costs or fees associated with the platform. A previous research paper by (Ali et al. 2020) identified challenges in using and adopting mobile phone money services, including a lack of national ID cards, few agents, inadequate cash/e-floats, awareness, and language barriers.
- The research paper disclosed that the majority of the students at the institute have active orange money accounts to buy food items, print lecture notes, and fulfill other financial obligations. On the other hand, few respondents opposed or disagreed that they lack an active money account due to the absence of Android phones and infrequent access to funds to utilize the service. Similar research by Michael et al. (2020) examined standard services, including mobile banking, payments, and entertainment, related to mobile money usage.
- The study revealed substantial challenges in utilizing the Orange Money service due to frequent network issues, few cash points-of-service, insufficient cash-out amounts for large transactions, security threats, and frequent transaction failures. Meanwhile, one-third of the respondents expressed that the charges associated with accessing orange money are manageable. However, Michael et al. (2020) discussed that students face high costs, security concerns, slow internet speeds, and a lack of payment systems.
- The study disclosed that two-thirds of the respondents had experienced transaction failures and spontaneous network issues. In contrast, one-third of the respondents opposed the claim that the challenges are endless and can be managed rather than relying on non-orange money services.
- The study revealed that two-thirds of the respondents disagreed with government regulations regarding GST or high transaction costs on the Orange Money service. The suggested introduction of GST on the platform and the high service costs are serious concerns for mobile money users at Njala University.
- The study revealed that one-third of the respondents agreed that there had been poor customer service since the inception of the Orange Money service, and one-third also disagreed that there had been less or poorer customer service using orange money. According to (Kante, 2021), each mobile money stakeholder has unique drivers and challenges that require tailored attention from mobile service operators across various countries.
- The study also disclosed that poor customer service is an anticipated platform challenge due to frequent transaction failures and password exposure during cash-outs, as most customers inadvertently expose their orange money passwords to the agents during transactions. A similar research paper by (Nyarku et al., 2018) identified the main challenges associated with the mobile money platform for university students, including security

### 1.6 Conclusion

The study concludes that orange money services are vital in financial systems, especially those at universities. This is evidence that almost all students at Njala University have active orange money accounts for easy access to settle their educational costs, such as feeding, printing, and other necessities. The awareness level of the

Orange Money platform as a financial management tool has gained momentum over the years among university students.

The study concludes that ISSAM students at Njala University face challenges such as poor customer service, insufficient cash-out money, high transaction costs, security threats, poor networks, and few agents and cash points for all transactions. The Orange Money platform is an informal financial structure with established policies, procedures, and regulations for access. Empirical evidence by (Ali G. et al., 2020) evaluated key security issues associated with mobile money systems in Uganda, including identity theft, authentication attacks, and agent-driven fraud. However, Orange Company faces challenges, and its relevance to university students in Sierra Leone cannot be overlooked. System breakdowns on the platform regularly affect customer service delivery. Therefore, Orange Money is considered the fastest means of cash transactions among university students.

### 1.7 Recommendations

The following recommendations are paramount for improving the Orange money Services of University students in Sierra Leone:

- The study recommends that more be done to ease the access to the Orange Money services with the expansion of facilities or access to points of service with an increase in the number of agents to facilitate transactions.
- The study recommends installing a 5GB Internet system through all Universities in Sierra Leone to improve the network system with modern technology and address system breakdowns.
- The study recommends developing a system or framework to reduce transaction failures and security threats and to lower the platform's tariff.
- The study recommends improving customer service and creating customer relationship management (CRM) to align their affairs when quickly challenged with system breakdowns.
- The study recommends adjustments in GST and extra-service charges for the Orange money platform because most customers do not withdraw above Ten Thousand Leones because of the substantial transaction costs.
- The study recommends financial literacy programs, public lectures on the Orange Money platform, frequent radio discussions to help the wider populace, and assistance with Android phones, which are preferred for Internet banking since most students cannot afford the cost of these phones.

### 1.8 Scope Limitation and Longitudinal Research

The study was planned to identify the challenges associated with the Orange Money platform for the university, including all schools and departments for the Bo and Njala Campuses. However, due to financial constraints, data availability, and the influx of students, the study focused on ISSAM students at Njala University. Therefore, future studies should focus on all universities in Sierra Leone, considering all departments and schools.

### 1.9 Conflict of Interests

The author declared no conflict of interest in the publication of this paper, and it has not been forwarded to any publishing house for similar publication.

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