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(JEPM) Social Factors as a Necessity for the Operation of
Hairdressing Salons in Lira City, Mid-North Uganda



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Social Factors as a Necessity for the Operation of Hairdressing Salons in Lira City, Mid-North Uganda

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aimed to investigate the influence of social factors on the operation of hairdressing salons within the Central Business District (CBD) of Lira City, Uganda.

Methodology: A mixed-methods approach was employed, utilizing questionnaires for salon operators and key informant interviews with salon owners, targeting a total sample size of 191 respondents.

Findings: Findings revealed that social expectations, such as respect for elders, community identity, and cooperation, play a crucial role in shaping the quality of service and client relations. Lifestyle trends, especially the shift toward beauty enhancement, digital engagement, and cultural pride, significantly influence customer preferences and salon innovation. Interpersonal relationships, including family and community ties, were shown to foster customer loyalty, staff morale, and overall business sustainability.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Policy and Practice: The findings provide valuable insights for entrepreneurs, researchers, and development partners interested in the intersection between social behavior and informal business operation. It is thus, recommended that enhanced training on cultural sensitivity, digital marketing, and community engagement for salon practitioners. Policymakers and educational institutions are encouraged to support the sector through strategic interventions and vocational education tailored to these emerging social dynamics.

Keywords: *Social Factors, Social Expectations, Lifestyle Trends, Interpersonal Relationships, Hairdressing*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Hair Salon (HS) industry is a multi-billion-dollar sector that plays a crucial role in personal grooming and self-expression worldwide. The global market for hair care and salon services has seen significant growth, driven by increasing consumer demand for beauty and wellness treatments (Kabuya, 2023). Social media platforms have revolutionized how salons promote their services, allowing for Personalized Marketing Strategies (PMS) that resonate with diverse customer bases. Trends toward customization and niche services, such as Eco-Friendly Products (EFP) and specialized hair treatments, have emerged, reflecting broader cultural shifts toward individualism and sustainability (Matić, 2022). Understanding these global trends provides a framework for analyzing Local Salon Operations (LSP), as businesses must adapt to shifting consumer preferences in an increasingly interconnected world.

In Africa, the Beauty and Personal Care (BPC) industry is expanding rapidly, fueled by rising disposable incomes and changing lifestyles. The demand for beauty services, including hair care, has grown as urbanization increases and more individuals seek to enhance their appearance (Bhadmus, 2023). Hair Salons (HS) in Africa not only serve aesthetic purposes but also act as cultural hubs where traditional practices intersect with modern trends. The continent's rich cultural diversity is reflected in its hair styling techniques, which vary significantly across different ethnic groups. This diversity presents both challenges and opportunities for salon owners as they navigate the unique preferences of their clientele (Haykal, et al, 2023).

Sub-Saharan Africa is experiencing a demographic transition characterized by a youthful population and urban growth (Mwesigwa & Wahid, 2021). This demographic shift has contributed to a burgeoning middle class that prioritizes Personal Grooming and Beauty Services (PGBS). Hair salons, therefore, have become vital in urban centers, providing employment opportunities and contributing to local economies (Park, & Hong, 2024). However, the industry faces challenges such as inadequate regulation, competition from informal markets, and fluctuating economic conditions that can impact consumer spending. Understanding the social factors affecting salon operations in this region requires a nuanced examination of these dynamics, particularly as they relate to cultural identity, economic stability, and access to resources (Jefferson, 2024).

In East Africa, the hair salon industry is thriving, with cities like Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, and Kampala serving as major hubs for beauty services. The region's cultural richness is reflected in the variety of hair care practices, which often blend traditional methods with contemporary styling techniques (Kabuya, 2023). Salons in East Africa (EA) are not merely places for grooming; they also function as social spaces where community interactions occur. The influence of globalization has introduced new styles and products (Adoko, Agech, Ekwang, Eron, Akullu, Nakiru & Mwesigwa, 2021), yet many salons still honor traditional practices that resonate with local communities. This duality presents unique opportunities for salon owners to cater to diverse customer preferences while maintaining cultural relevance (Walker & Clacherty, 2023). There are clear statistics about the size of the hairdressing industry in Uganda, however, the industry appears to be booming as a means to cutting poverty especially among young people in the country,

however, a number of salons and hairdressing trainers and training institutions continue propping up on a daily basis across the country. The study will consider social factors as the independent variable and salon operation as the dependent variable. Accordingly, salon operation refers to the day-to-day activities and processes involved in running a beauty salon, including managing appointments, customer service, staff training, and maintain the salon's environment. It may also encompass aspects such as marketing, financial management and ensuring compliance with regulations. Social factors encompass the cultural, societal and interpersonal influences that shape individual behavior, attitudes and beliefs. Such factors include cultural norms, social expectations, lifestyle trends and demographics. These factors play a fundamental role in affecting the operation of a hairdressing salon.

Uganda's beauty and personal care (BPC) sector has expanded in recent years, driven by a growing middle class and an increasing focus on personal grooming. The hair salon industry, in particular, has seen significant growth, with urban centers like Kampala and Lira experiencing a surge in demand for hair services (Kabuya, 2023). The country's rich cultural diversity, with over 56 ethnic groups, contributes to a vibrant salon culture where different Hair Care Practices (HCP) coexist. However, the industry faces hurdles such as regulatory challenges, competition from informal salons, and economic fluctuations that can impact consumer spending on beauty services. Understanding these factors is crucial for salon owners seeking to thrive in this competitive landscape (Willson, 2024). Lira City, located in the Northern Region of Uganda, presents a unique case study for investigating the social factors affecting hair salons. Formerly part of Lira District, the city has a rich cultural heritage shaped by various ethnic groups, including the Acholi. The Hair Salon (HS) industry in Lira has evolved significantly, particularly following the economic liberalization of the late 20th century, which fostered entrepreneurial spirit and localized service industries. The demand for hair services in Lira has surged, driven by a diverse population with varying aesthetic preferences and cultural practices (Kabuya, et al 2023).

The social fabric of Lira is characterized by its vibrant community dynamics, where traditional hairstyles coexist with modern trends. Salons in Lira City cater to a wide range of clientele, reflecting the cultural diversity and social preferences of the population. However, challenges such as access to quality products, training for salon staff, and competition from informal sectors persist. Understanding the interplay of these social factors is essential for grasping how hair salons operate and thrive in Lira City. The investigation of social factors affecting the operation of hair salons in the Central Business District (CBD) of Lira City necessitates a comprehensive analysis that spans global, continental, regional, national, and local contexts (Ongom, Otim, Ogwale, Omonya, Nakiru, Akullu, Owa, Onyek, Ogwale, Aceng & Mwesigwa, 2021). By examining these dimensions, this study aims to provide valuable insights into the dynamics influencing the hair salon industry, enabling salon owners and policymakers to make informed decisions that enhance the sector's growth and sustainability.

1.1 Problem Statement

Although there are many hair salons in the Central Business District of Lira City, the impact of social factors on their operations has not been thoroughly examined. Statistics from UBOS indicates that the area features 405 hair salons, each with varying levels of stock and differing customer volumes. This suggests that social factors may play a role in these discrepancies. An analysis of the factors that affect the operation of hair salon enterprises is necessary to inform the possible ways to ensure the growth of these enterprises owing to the huge contribution they make to the overall employment of young people. While there are several issues, this study sought to establish the social factors affecting the operation of hair salon enterprises in the central business area of Lira city. Consequently, the purpose of this study was to examine the social factors that affect the operation of hairdressing salons in the Central Business District of Lira city. To achieve the general objective, three specific objectives were addressed, namely: [a] To examine the effect of social expectations on the operation of hairdressing salons in Lira city. [b] To examine the effect of lifestyle trends on the operation of hairdressing salons in Lira city. and [c] To examine the effect of interpersonal relationships on the operation of hairdressing salons in Lira city.

1.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework outlines the relationship between the social factors and hair salon operation in the Central Business District, Lira City. It identifies key independent variables that directly influence dependent variables that reflect the essential aspects of hair salon operations. Furthermore, the framework acknowledges the existence of intervening variables that may indirectly affect the relationship between social factors and salon operations. Overall, the conceptual framework provides a structured approach to understanding how social factors influence salon operations, emphasizing both direct and indirect influences. Thus, social factors versus salon operations in Lira city is key in this study.



Figure 1: Relationship between social factors and hairdressing salons

Source: Adopted from Orora (2022) and modified by the researcher (2025).

Figure 1 is a scheme of concepts that have been operationalized in order to achieve the specific objectives. From the figure, the independent variable is social factors and the dependent variable is operation of the hairdressing salons (Fowler & Wareham-Fowler, 2025). It is assumed that a

number of social factors, such as social expectations, lifestyle trends and interpersonal relationships can affect the operation of a hairdressing salon in Lira city, though, this will be discovered by the end of the study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Operation of hairdressing salons

Operating a hairdressing salon involves managing both the creative and the business sides of the operation. Specifically, this operation revolves around issues such as licensing and legal requirements, salon setup, staffing, customer care, marketing and financial management (Straughan, 2010). The licensing and legal requirements involve: one, business license where a salon is registered with local authorities where it is located. Two, cosmetology licenses in which one needs to ensure that both the owner and the staff have valid, approved licenses (Trench, 2017). Three, insurance in which one needs to obtain liability, property and possibly workers' compensation insurance including protection against any occupational hazards (Ramirez-Martinez, Granda-Torres, Wesolek, Ficheux & Roudot, 2016; Straughan, 2010), this serves as an idealized consideration, which later translates into enhanced performance (Komakech, Obici & Mwesigwa, 2021). And four, health and safety compliance in which one needs to follow local regulations for sanitation and hygiene. To this end, the salon setup involves looking at the location by choosing a high-traffic, visible location with easy access to clients. Also, focusing on interior design by ensuring that the space is welcoming, clean and matches with the brand (White, Khan, Lau, Leung, Montgomery & Rohiman, 2015). Relatedly, it calls for equipment whereby one has to invest in styling chairs, wash stations, mirrors, tools and storage. But also, focusing on products by stocking a variety of shampoos, conditioners and styling products is key (White, 2015). Staffing is central in terms of recruiting skilled stylists with great client interaction skills, offering continuous training so as to keep up with trends and improve service. But as well deciding on appropriate salaries and or wages.

Customer care is key in terms of ensuring that the booking system uses salon software such as vagaro or square or better making analogue-based appointments. Correspondingly, client experience is important in terms of creating a relaxing atmosphere and ensuring high-quality service. As well, one needs to encourage repeat business through discounts or rewards to frequent clients. Relatedly, is the issue of marketing, which involves having a clear logo, business name and service niche in terms of color specialists and natural hair. Also, building a website and maintaining active social media platforms is important (Ourahmoune & Jurd, 2020). Moreover, running offers for first-time clients, referral bonuses or seasonal specials is a positive aspect (McCann, 2023). Finally, is the issue of financial management, which involves tracking income and expenses carefully, setting competitive yet profitable prices, and using software such as QuickBooks to manage payroll and taxes.

2.2 The effect of social expectations on the operation of hairdressing salons

Social expectations refer to the implicit or explicit rules and norms that a society or community holds about how people should behave, think or present themselves in different situations. These expectations can shape everything from personal appearance and communication styles to career choices, family roles and moral behavior (Barlow & Hawdon, 2015). The main aspects of social expectations include cultural norms, gender roles, age-related expectations, professional conduct, and social etiquette (Ourahmoune & Jurd, 2020). All the above have both positive and negative impact. Social expectations have a significant impact on how salons operate, influencing everything from services offered to customer service, staffing and even marketing. First, salons often tailor services based on traditional gender roles such as haircuts, shaves and grooming for men, and coloring, styling and nail services for women. Secondly, societal ideals about beauty influence popular treatments such as skin lightening in some cultures or anti-aging treatments (McDonald, 2014). Thirdly, expectations driven by influencers and online trends push salons to keep up with new styles such as nail art and lash extensions. Fourthly, clients often expect personalized pampering experiences especially in urban salons. Also, there is a social expectation of friendliness, politeness and professionalism from staff. In addition, cultural norms also effect the level of formality, physical touch and interaction in the salon atmosphere. Relatedly, the physical environment is influenced by expectations for cleanliness or décor and comfort. As well, clients may expect worth interiors or luxury touches depending on the market segment. Evidence suggests reveals that social expectations tend to affect salon operations in several ways namely service offerings, customer standards, salon atmosphere, staff presentations, operating hours and accessibility as well as diversity. Despite all, none of the literature appears to come from Lira city yet they are relevant to salon operations something key to the proposed study.

2.3 The effect of lifestyle trends on the operation of hairdressing salons

Lifestyle trends have a strong and often immediate effect on salon operations as salons adapt to shifting customer habits, preferences and values so as to stay relevant and competitive in terms of health and wellness focus, lifestyles and convenience culture, technology integration, eco-conscious living and beauty personalization. Also, Health and wellness focus affects salons in several ways: first, services such as offering organic, non-toxic or cruelty product, introducing spa-like services such as scalp therapy, aroma therapy or wellness facials, marketing services as self-care or mental health boosters rather than just aesthetic treatments. Health and wellness are key to customers, value propositions, key resources, and key activities within the salon operations. Second, lifestyle and convenience culture affect salon operation in terms of introducing express services such as manicures; online booking, mobile apps and even home service options; and extended operating hours or availability even if this integration depends on a number of factors such as efficiency, cost and quality (Quansah, 2024; Nasir, Timur & Gurel, 2019). Third, technology integration affects salon operation in terms of using of appointment booking apps,

digital payment and loyalty programs (Conley, 2019); online consultation for hairstyle previews or skincare analysis; and active social media presence for trend updates, bookings and client engagements. Four, eco-conscious living affects salon operation in terms of switching to biodegradable products, energy-saving equipment and waste reduction programs; promoting green salon practices; and partnering with eco-friendly product lines. Thus, lifestyle trends are very significant to salon operation across many countries although none of them appears to reveal the conditions in Lira city, which this study will labor to address.

2.4 The effect of interpersonal relationships on the operation of hairdressing salons

Interpersonal relationships have a major effect on salon operations because the salon business is deeply rooted in personal interaction, trust and repeat service (Nasir, Timur & Gurel, 2019). The relationships between clients, staff and management influence not only daily operations but also customer retention, team morale and overall business reputation (Conley, 2019). First, through client-stylist relationships, interpersonal relationship affects salon operation through more predictable bookings and steady income from loyal clients, word-of-mouth referrals, which are critical for growth, and stylists with strong client relationships often have more influence over service choices and upsells (Hanson, 2019). Second, in terms of team dynamics and staff morale, interpersonal relationships affect operations in a way that it promotes collaboration, shared responsibilities and a healthy work environment (Conley, 2019); reducing turnover, which is a big issue in the salon industry.

In addition, a study conducted by Gordon (2024) among Jamaican women-entrepreneurs on interpersonal communication interactions with other business settings reveals that the women's interpersonal communication patterns show a partiality toward the self-presentation and relationship objectives of interpersonal communication exchanges. Also, the participants' self-construal of their communication styles seems to impose limitations on the ways in which they negotiate business interactions in the Jamaican context and relatedly, that the women's interpersonal interactions in business settings are mediated by the prevailing gender as well as cultural values governing communication expectations in a place. On the contrary, it leads to workplace drama, poor communication or competition that harms productivity, and can create a tense environment that clients will sense and avoid (Tran, 2025; Jessani, Ngo & Lau, 2024; Nasir, Timur & Gurel, 2019). Third, through client experience and atmosphere, interpersonal relationship affects salon operation through friendly, welcoming interactions where clients expect a warm, engaging atmosphere, small talk, active listening and remembering client preferences all contribute (Sharma, Hult, Morgeson, Sharma, Schrock & Redd Sleep, 2024; Hanson, 2019). This encourages longer visits and more services per visit such as adding manicure or product purchase and, affects online reviews and customer satisfaction scores. Obtainable literature indicates the effect of interpersonal relationships on salon operations across nations nonetheless, these literatures lack connection with Lira city, which motivated the research to look into.

2.5 Research Gaps

Despite the growing body of literature on social factors and their influence on hair salon operations, several research gaps remain: Most of the studies reviewed are based in various African countries, such as South Africa, Kenya, and Tanzania, with little attention given to Lira City or Northern Uganda. This creates a gap in understanding the unique socio-economic and cultural dynamics of salon operations in Lira City. While the relationships between customers and stylists are well-documented, there is less information available about how interactions among customers within the salon environment affect the service experience and customer loyalty in the context of Lira. While factors such as physical attractiveness and gender dynamics have been mentioned, they have not been thoroughly explored concerning local perceptions of professionalism and trust within the salon industry in Lira. Although existing literature focuses on branding and brand loyalty, there is limited investigation into how small-scale salons in informal economies effectively use branding strategies, particularly in emerging urban settings like Lira. Furthermore, although some studies suggest that salons could serve as potential venues for health interventions, there is a notable absence of empirical research assessing the feasibility and effectiveness of these initiatives within Lira's sociocultural context.

3.0 MATERIAL AND METHODS

3.1 Research Design

The study utilized a mixed-method research design to collect, analyze, and report data. This approach enhanced the study by providing a more comprehensive representation of the populations in the geographical areas and subjects under investigation (Leavy, 2022). A cross-sectional case study design was employed. The researcher concurrently collected quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

3.2 Study Population

The study population included hair salon owners and operators in the Central Business District, Lira City. The target population of the study included all the hair salon owners (21) and operators (384) in the Central Business District, Lira City. From the target population, the sample was drawn.

Table 1: population and sampling techniques

S/N	Respondent Category	Target Population N =	Sample Size S =	Sample tech.
1	Salon Operators	384	196	Simple Random
2	Salon Owners	21	6	Purposive

3.3 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

This is the description of the strategies that was used to select representative respondents from the target population. The study employed both purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Under the purposive technique, the researcher decides who to include in the sample. This technique has the advantage of collecting only focused information and selecting only useful cases, which saves time and money (Raifman, 2022). The simple random sampling technique of probability sampling selects a sample without bias from the target population in such a way that each unit has an equal and independent chance of being included in the sample. Much as this technique is easily affected by attrition and can be expensive in some studies, it is the ideal procedure for selecting a representative sample as it ensures that each member of the target population has an equal and independent chance of being included in the sample. The sample size is the number of respondents that took part in the study, which was obtained from the population (Rahman, 2023). The study was conducted among the salon owners, operators, and customers in the Central Business District, Lira City. A sample size of 202 respondents was determined through purposive and random sampling methods. This is because the nature of the data to be generated requires different techniques for a better understanding of the research problem under investigation. The approach is also commonly known for achieving a higher degree of validity and reliability, as well as the elimination of biases.

The Slovens formula (1978) is used to determine the minimum sample size.

$$n = N/1+Ne^2$$

$$n = 405/1+405(0.05)^2$$

$$= 202$$

$$n = 202 \text{ Respondents}$$

Where: n = Sample size

N = The population size

e = Level of significance, fixed at 0.05

3.4 Data Collection Methods and Instruments

Data collection is the methodological process of gathering information about a specific subject. It's crucial to ensure that your data is complete during the collection phase and that it's collected legally and ethically (Mohammad & Mustafa, 2022). A questionnaire was used as the primary data collection tool. The researchers administered 196 structured questionnaires to collect data from the hair salon operators and clients focussing on Social Dynamics Among Customers, Salon Branding and Community Engagement, and Socio-Economic Factors. Also, Key Informant Interviews

(KII) were conducted with individuals (key informants) recognized for their insider knowledge or unique perspectives on a specific topic (Kibuacha, 2024).

3.5 Validity and reliability of instruments

To ensure the content validity of the instruments, a variety of items were constructed for each objective. We consulted with the supervisor and other research experts from the Department of Public Administration and Management at the Faculty of Management Sciences at Lira University to assess and verify content, construct, and face validity. The data collection instruments were pre-tested to measure their reliability. A pilot study of a 10% sample was conducted. The data from the pilot study was used to compute the Cronbach alpha reliability of the questionnaire (Kothari et al.,2021).

3.6 Data processing and analysis

The data collected using the questionnaire was coded to assign numerical values, allowing for statistical analysis and enhancing user-friendliness. This was followed by data entry, utilizing Excel. After entering the data into the computer, the researcher edited the data to ensure that what is input corresponds with the data collected from the field. Once the data was ready for analysis, it was exported from Excel to Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS - version 26) for analysis. Qualitative data was collected through key informant interviews with hair salon owners. Content analysis was employed to edit the data and reorganize it into meaningful, shorter sentences. The data was thematically analyzed and organized based on patterns, repetitions, and commonalities into themes aligned with the study variables and was used to reinforce information obtained from questionnaires to draw conclusions and make recommendations.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The major ethical issues that were addressed included informed consent, deception, and confidentiality, as outlined in Bailey's book. The proposal was presented to the department of Public Administration and Management of Lira University and the corrections were made, thereafter an Introductory Letter was obtained from the faculty to for data collection. Secondly, the researchers did not use identifiers like names, actual salon and phone numbers in questionnaires. The data collected from the field was coded and fed into a computer with passwords. And thirdly, attention of the participants was drawn to the purpose, methods, and duration of the research and to any potential harm that might come to them.

4.0 FINDINGS

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The researcher wanted to know the gender or sex distribution of the respondents and this is shown in the following table. This section indicates the both sexes with the community.

Table 2: Table showing gender distribution of the respondents who participated in the study

	Frequency	Percent
Male	70	30.6
Female	120	60.4
Total	190	91.0

Source: *Primary Data (2025)*

The findings in Table 2 indicate that 60.4% of the respondents were female while 30.6% were male. This shows that the majority of those involved in the hairdressing salon business in Lira City's CBD are women. It highlights the gendered nature of the beauty industry, where women dominate both as operators and clients, reflecting broader social and economic trends regarding gender roles in personal grooming enterprises. 53.96% of respondents were married, followed by 36.14% who were single, and 9.90% who were divorced. This indicates that most salon operators have familial responsibilities, which may affect their business practices, time commitment, and motivation to sustain salon operations as a primary source of income (Komakech, Obici & Mwesigwa, 2021). Regarding education level indicates that 171.1% had attained primary education, 144.1⁰ secondary education, 11.016⁰ vocational training, and 8.928⁰ had never been to school. This reflects that while most operators have basic education, there is limited access to vocational or specialized training, which may affect the professionalism and innovation in salon services.

Table 3: Nature of Salon

	Frequency	Percent
Ladies' Saloon	90	40.0
Men's Saloon	50	26.0
Unisex	50	25.0
Total	190	91.0

Source: *Primary Data (2025)*

The findings show that 40.0% of salons serve women, 26.0% serve men, and 25.0% are unisex. This suggests market segmentation in the beauty industry in Lira City, with a strong focus on services tailored specifically for women.

4.2 Effect of Social Expectations on Salon Operations

Majority of the respondents that is 47.0% agreed that they have respect for the elderly clients, while 22.0% are not sure while the least percentage that is 9.0% disagree to respect to the elderly clients. Also, majority of the respondents that is 156.816% agreed that they seek guidance from the elderly, 7.128% of the respondents disagreed to seeking elders' guidance while 63.86% of the respondents were not sure whether they seek elderly guidance. Further, majority of the respondents

that is 14.52% agreed that they strongly identify with the community where they operate, 16.92% are not sure of their identity with the community where they operate while only 151.488⁰ of the respondents disagree to their identity with their community of their operation. Correspondingly, more than 75% of the respondents, that is 86.14% agreed that their cooperation within the community is valued, only 11.86% of the respondents disagree with their cooperation within the community while only 1.98% of the respondents are not sure whether their cooperation within the community is valued or not. Likewise, the majority though less than a half of the respondents that is 48.02% agreed that they are generous to their clients, while a large number of respondents that is 32.18% are not sure whether they are generous to their clients or not while 19.80% disagreed that they are not generous to their clients.

4.3 Effect of Lifestyle Trends on Salon Operations

Results suggested that 30.0% of respondents agreed and 21.0% strongly agreed that there is a shift towards salons for beauty. A combined 51.0% therefore believe that salons are increasingly being used for beauty enhancement purposes rather than solely for grooming. Meanwhile, 20.0% disagreed, and 4.0% strongly disagreed, with 15.0% being unsure.

These findings suggest that salon services are evolving to meet a broader set of customer desires, including aesthetic and wellness needs. This trend reflects an increasing awareness of personal appearance and self-care practices among urban populations in Lira City. Salons must therefore adapt to deliver comprehensive beauty services to meet this growing demand. Also, 34.0% agreed and 31.0% strongly agreed that more people are visiting hairdressing salons. A total of 65.0% of respondents noticed an upward trend in salon visitation, whereas only 14.0% disagreed and 11.0% were not sure. Thus, the increase in salon visitors may be attributed to lifestyle changes, social influences, and improved access to beauty services. This growing customer base implies heightened competition and greater opportunity, urging salon owners to upgrade their services and customer experience. Also, a total of 73.08⁰ of respondents (Agree and strongly agree) expressed a positive view toward digital technology, suggesting a moderate level of acceptance or recognition of its relevance. However, 80.028% (Disagree + Strongly Disagree) still showed resistance or scepticism, and 57.28% were undecided. This mixed response could reflect varying levels of access, familiarity, or trust in digital tools among the participants. A combined 94.4% believe there is a growing interest in fitness and wellness, while 121.176% (Disagree and Strongly Disagree) do not perceive such a trend. A significant portion (73.08%) remain uncertain. This suggests emerging interest in health and wellness, but it may not yet be widespread or uniformly acknowledged. Similarly, a strong majority (76.3%) of participants (Agree + Strongly Agree) recognize a revival of cultural pride, indicating a significant positive trend in cultural awareness and appreciation among clients. Only 15.9% disagreed, and a small fraction (7.9%) were uncertain. This reflects a growing reconnection with cultural identity, which may have implications for social cohesion, branding, or community development efforts.

4.4: Effect of Interpersonal Relationships on Salon Operations

A total of 50.0% of the respondents agreed and 19.0% strongly agreed that they are connected to their families. In contrast, 14.0% disagreed, while 17.0% were not sure thus, underscoring the importance of familial relationships in shaping salon operators' behavior and work ethics. Strong family bonds likely provide emotional and even financial support, which can contribute to business continuity, dedication to service, and long-term sustainability of the salon. Operators grounded in family values may exhibit higher responsibility, ultimately improving customer satisfaction.

Additionally, 36.0% of respondents agreed and 28.0% strongly agreed that they are connected to their friends. Only 4.0% strongly disagreed, and 19.0% were uncertain suggesting the relevance of friendships and informal networks in salon operations. Friendships often lead to strong referral networks, moral support, and knowledge sharing. Operators who are well connected to friends may benefit from customer referrals and mutual support, which enhances both personal and business resilience. Correspondingly, 158.6% agreed and 44.2% strongly agreed that they are connected to their spouses. However, 46.3% strongly disagreed, 50.3% disagreed, and 64.2% were not sure. Spousal support can influence salon operations by providing emotional stability, business encouragement, and at times, financial backing. While a significant number of respondents affirm this connection, the notable percentage of those who disagreed or were unsure suggests that not all salon operators benefit from spousal involvement, which may influence business commitment differently among individuals.

Accordingly, 137.2% of respondents agreed and 58.8% strongly agreed that they are connected to professional friends. On the other hand, 99.7% disagreed and 164.1% were not sure. Connections with professional peers are important for learning, innovation, and collective problem-solving. Operators who engage with others in the profession can exchange ideas, keep up with trends, and collaborate for mutual growth. However, the relatively high proportion of those who disagreed shows that a significant number of salon operators may be isolated from professional networks, limiting their exposure to industry knowledge and opportunities. Additionally, 32.2% agreed and 28.2% strongly agreed to being connected to their community. A smaller group, 13.9%, disagreed, and 5.9% strongly disagreed, while 19.8% were not sure. Community engagement is crucial for local business success. Salon operators who are embedded in their communities are more likely to gain trust, benefit from word-of-mouth advertising, and receive consistent client support. These social ties enhance customer loyalty and can serve as a buffer during economic downturns or business challenges. Overall, the data confirms that interpersonal relationships: family, friends, professional networks, spouses, and the broader community, play a central role in influencing the operations of hairdressing salons in the Central Business District of Lira City. Positive social ties tend to correlate with stronger customer loyalty, enhanced service quality, emotional well-being, and business growth.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Social expectations, grounded in cultural norms and community values, contribute significantly to building trust, strengthening client loyalty, and enhancing the reputation of salons. Lifestyle trends are reshaping the nature of salon services, with increasing demand for beauty-oriented treatments, wellness services, and integration of digital engagement tools. Interpersonal relationships serve as a foundation for sustaining salon operations. Strong ties with family, friends, and the community offer both emotional and practical support, while professional networks present opportunities for innovation and shared growth. It can therefore be concluded that the operational success of hairdressing salons in Lira City is closely linked to the broader socio-cultural context within which they operate. Salon owners who integrate cultural sensitivity, adapt to emerging lifestyle trends, and cultivate strong interpersonal relationships are more likely to achieve business sustainability and growth.

5.2 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Salon Operators should incorporate cultural sensitivity and customer relations training to enhance service delivery across diverse client groups diversify services to include wellness-oriented and beauty enhancement packages that cater to emerging lifestyle preferences and embrace digital tools for appointment booking, marketing, and customer engagement to remain competitive in a modern marketplace. The Policymakers and Development Partners should develop vocational training programs that combine technical hairdressing skills with customer relationship management and digital literacy and facilitate access to affordable technology and business management tools tailored for small-scale salons. The Community and Industry Associations should create platforms for salon operators to share experiences, exchange innovations, and build professional networks and organize cultural and beauty events that promote community pride, showcase local talent, and strengthen the salon sector's visibility.

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Declaration of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest was registered.

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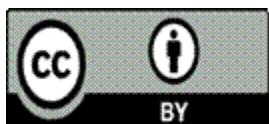
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