



# Exploring women's use of mobile money in Ghana

The user journey, entrepreneurs and the impact of COVID-19



## GSMA Mobile Money

The GSMA is a global organisation unifying the mobile ecosystem to discover, develop and deliver innovation foundational to positive business environments and societal change. Our vision is to unlock the full power of connectivity so that people, industry, and society thrive. Representing mobile operators and organisations across the mobile ecosystem and adjacent industries, the GSMA delivers for its members across three broad pillars: Connectivity for Good, Industry Services and Solutions, and Outreach. This activity includes advancing policy, tackling today's biggest societal challenges, underpinning the technology and interoperability that make mobile work, and providing the world's largest platform to convene the mobile ecosystem at the MWC and M360 series of events.

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For this research, we partnered with Quality Control Afrika (QCA) for fieldwork. A marketing research agency based in Accra, Ghana, QCA are experienced in both qualitative and quantitative research, working with a variety of global companies to provide quality data.

The GSMA's Mobile Money programme works to accelerate the development of the mobile money ecosystem for the underserved.

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# Introduction

In low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), where people are less likely to have formal bank accounts, mobile money is critical to facilitating widespread financial inclusion.<sup>1</sup> Mobile money services are especially prevalent in Sub-Saharan Africa. In 2021, there were 161 live mobile money services reaching 605 million adults, a 17 per cent increase since 2020.<sup>2</sup> While wider coverage and mobile ownership is making mobile money more accessible and relevant in people's everyday lives, a persistent gender gap is leaving women behind.<sup>3</sup>

1 GSMA. (2017). State of the Industry Report on Mobile Money 2016.

2 See: [gsma.com/sotir/](https://www.gsma.com/sotir/)

3 For example, see: [gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/CW\\_Cote\\_Mali\\_gendergap\\_Phase2\\_V2\\_WEBOK.pdf](https://www.gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/CW_Cote_Mali_gendergap_Phase2_V2_WEBOK.pdf)

In Sub-Saharan Africa, women are 13 per cent less likely than men to own a mobile phone; while 75 per cent of women own a mobile, 74 million remain unconnected.<sup>4</sup> Women are also more likely than men to be unbanked. According to the 2017 World Bank Global Findex study, women in LMICs were 33 per cent less likely than men to have a mobile money account.<sup>5</sup> More recent data from the nationally representative 2021 GSMA Consumer Survey<sup>6</sup> in ten LMICs found wide-ranging gender gaps in account ownership, from seven per cent in Kenya to 71 per cent in Pakistan.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought this gender gap into even sharper focus as mobile money became a vital tool in supporting livelihoods<sup>7,8</sup> and those without access to it found themselves even more marginalised. For women, including women entrepreneurs, the pandemic has had a disproportionate impact. In LMICs, around 90 per cent of women work in informal employment, and approximately 30 to 37 per cent of SMEs are women-owned.<sup>9,10</sup> Women in informal

employment in India, for example, have experienced a severe income drop since the pandemic began, and in 12 cities around the world, women's earnings from informal employment during lockdown were only about 20 per cent of pre-pandemic levels.<sup>11,12</sup>

Ghana is one of the most mature mobile money markets in the world<sup>13</sup> and, despite having relatively low levels of gender equality,<sup>14</sup> progressive policy and regulatory reforms have improved financial inclusion for men and women since the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>15</sup>

This report focuses on the mobile money user journey in Ghana, highlighting the impact of COVID-19 on mobile money usage for men and women and the barriers to greater usage, with a specific focus on women entrepreneurs. The findings in this report highlight that beyond the high level numbers, women entrepreneurs lag behind in their awareness and usage of the non-core mobile money services in Ghana, which could add value to their businesses.



4 Based on modelling conducted in the GSMA Mobile Gender Gap Report 2021, see: [gsma.com/r/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/The-Mobile-Gender-Gap-Report-2021.pdf](https://gsma.com/r/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/The-Mobile-Gender-Gap-Report-2021.pdf)

5 See: <https://globalfindex.worldbank.org/index.php/#GF-ReportChapters>

6 See: [gsma.com/sotir/](https://gsma.com/sotir/)

7 GSMA. (2021). *Assessing mobile money consumer trends in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic*.

8 Lindsey, D. (2020). "Why Covid-19 has increased the urgency to reach women with mobile technology". GSMA Mobile for Development Blog.

9 Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. (2021). *Evidence review of Covid-19 and women's informal employment*.

10 International Finance Corporation. (2017). *Women entrepreneurs are essential for private sector development in emerging markets*.

11 *ibid.*

12 WIEGO. (2021). *COVID-19 and Informal Work*.

13 See: [gsma.com/mobilemoneymetrics/#prevalence-index](https://gsma.com/mobilemoneymetrics/#prevalence-index)

14 World Economic Forum. (2021). *Global Gender Gap Report 2021*.

15 Chadha, S. et al. (2020). "Tracking mobile money regulatory responses to Covid-19 – Part 2". GSMA Mobile for Development Blog.



## Key findings

**1 The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of mobile money services among men and women in Ghana.**

Around a quarter of respondents have adopted mobile money since the onset of the pandemic, with little difference by gender. Forty per cent of those who had an account before the pandemic report they are using it “much more”. However, those who signed up during the pandemic are more likely to use only core mobile money services.

**2 Mobile money is transitioning from an everyday cash replacement to a true banking alternative, but women entrepreneurs tend to use a narrower range of services than men.**

Since the pandemic began, non-core services like bill payments are being used more, especially among male entrepreneurs. However, increased usage among female entrepreneurs is more likely to be for core services, such as person-to-person (P2P) transactions, and they are significantly less likely than men to perceive mobile money services as convenient.

**3 Most male and female mobile money users anticipate that they will use mobile money as often, if not more, in a post-COVID world.**

Forty-four per cent of men and women in our sample reported they expect to use mobile money services more often after pandemic restrictions are lifted, because it makes payments, saving and managing their finances easier (significantly so among women entrepreneurs).

**4 There are opportunities to increase awareness and use of mobile money services beyond payments, particularly among women entrepreneurs.**

While female entrepreneurs who own a mobile phone are just as likely as their male counterparts to have a mobile money account and use it regularly, they are less aware of the full range of services they could use. There is an opportunity to increase women's usage by raising awareness of relevant services.

**5 Women, including entrepreneurs, need more support from others to learn about and use mobile money.**

Women, and women entrepreneurs in particular, are more likely to learn about mobile money services from family members and some rely on others, including agents, to transact on their behalf. This poses a significant barrier to more frequent use and inhibits their ability to reap the maximum benefits of mobile money.

**6 Sustaining mobile money usage among new male and female users who signed up during the COVID-19 pandemic will require overcoming some additional barriers.**

Users who adopted mobile money during the pandemic are less likely than longer term users to be aware of, and use, the full range of services available to them. Since they depend more heavily on agents and family to use their account and are less likely to handle transactions themselves, these users will need additional, on-going support.



# Methodology

This research was conducted from November 2021 to January 2022, to help determine the gender gap at different stages of the mobile money user journey, with a specific focus on entrepreneurs. It also examined the impact of COVID-19 on mobile money adoption and use. This included qualitative and quantitative research in all 16 regions of Ghana while observing strict COVID-19 safety protocols.

Qualitative fieldwork took place in November 2021 and consisted of a series of individual, face-to-face, in-depth interviews with 10 male and 10 female entrepreneurs in peri-urban (Ofankor) and rural (Kofi Kwei) locations. Two other interviews were conducted with local market experts to provide more context. The results of this research phase were used, in part, to inform the quantitative research phase.

Quantitative fieldwork was conducted in January 2022 over three weeks among a nationally representative sample of mobile phone owners<sup>16</sup> in Ghana (n=1663), as well as a booster sample of entrepreneurs<sup>17</sup> (n=809),

to gain more robust insights into mobile money use among male and female entrepreneurs. Among the mobile phone owners 851 women and 812 men were surveyed and among the entrepreneur booster sample 460 female entrepreneurs and 349 male entrepreneurs were surveyed. Computer-aided personal interviews (CAPI) were conducted in all regions of Ghana. The survey questions were partially based on previous gender-related mobile money research by the GSMA in Mali and Cote d'Ivoire<sup>18</sup> and on the qualitative fieldwork phase. Statistical significance testing (to 95% confidence or higher) was performed on results and is shown throughout this report.

<sup>16</sup> Mobile phone owners are defined as those who own their own mobile phone or use somebody else's in their household.

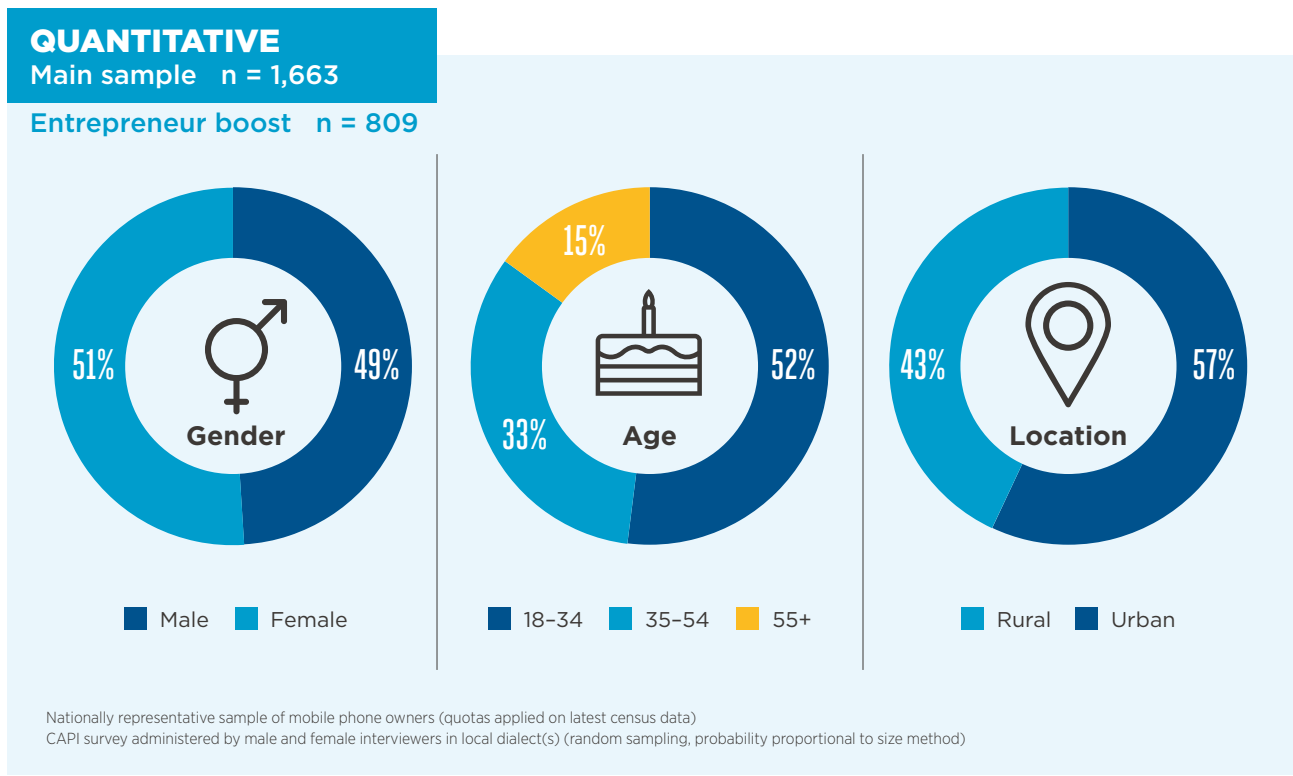
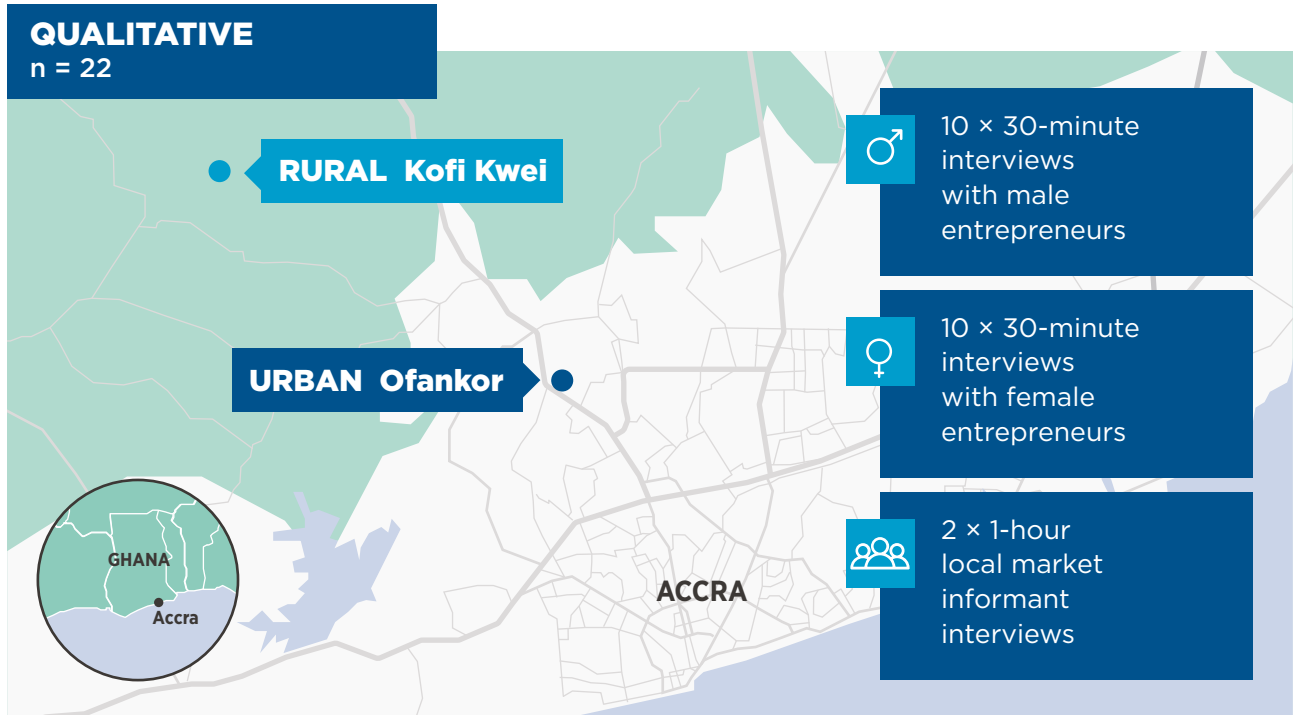
<sup>17</sup> The entrepreneur booster sample is composed of an additional representative entrepreneur sample plus entrepreneurs that naturally 'fall out' of the main nationally representative sample. Entrepreneurs are defined as a full-time or part-time (i.e. alongside other work) business owner / self-employed (i.e. work for myself / run my own business).

<sup>18</sup> GSMA. (2017). *Connected Women. Mapping the mobile money gender gap: Insights from Côte d'Ivoire and Mali.*

Figure 1

Source: GSMA

## Methodology



## ANALYSIS



**Sub-group statistical significance testing performed (≥95% confidence)**  
**Data weighted to quotas to ensure representativeness**





# The mobile money user journey in Ghana, by gender

Owning a mobile phone is a precursor to using mobile money. Across LMICs, women are still less likely than men to have access to a mobile or use mobile services. However, in Ghana, recent data show that women are now almost as likely as men to own a phone. Eighty-five per cent of women say they own a mobile phone compared to 87 per cent of men.<sup>19</sup> This means that there is almost no gender gap in mobile ownership in Ghana in 2021 compared to 2019, when women were 6 per cent less likely than men to own a phone. This increase in phone ownership may have been partly accelerated by the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions.

**In 2022, there is almost no gender gap<sup>20</sup> across the mobile money user journey in Ghana.** Encouragingly, once a woman owns a mobile phone, she is just as likely as a man to be aware of and understand mobile money, and to become a regular user (Figure 2).<sup>21</sup> **However, among consumers and entrepreneurs, gender differences emerge along the user journey and in patterns of usage.** These are explored later in the report.

Although nearly all mobile phone owners are aware of mobile money, there is a gap between awareness and usage, suggesting that both men and women face barriers to usage. These barriers are explored later in the report.

<sup>19</sup> This represents respondents that said 'Yes' to 'Do you have a mobile phone that you use to make and receive personal calls?' in the Gallup World Poll 2021.

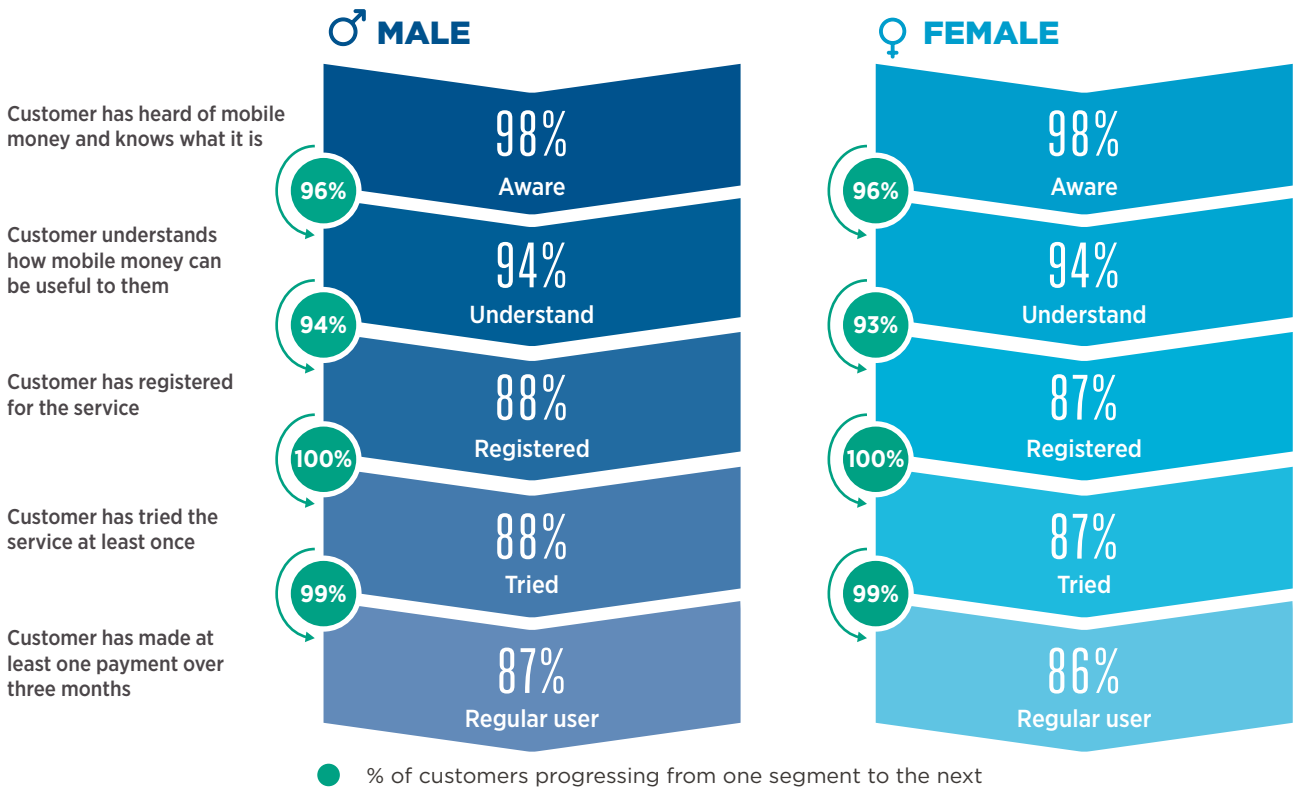
<sup>20</sup> See Glossary for definition of the gender gap.

<sup>21</sup> Regular mobile money use in this instance is defined as those who have made at least one transaction in the past three months.

Figure 2

Source: GSMA 2022 mobile money survey in Ghana, n=851 for women and 812 for men

### The mobile money user journey in Ghana by gender – for mobile phone owners



Base: all mobile phone owners, n=851 for women and 812 for men. Questions: Have you ever heard of mobile money services?; How familiar are you with mobile money?; Do you have access to a mobile money account?; And have you ever used any of the following mobile money services to which you are registered?; On average, how often do you currently use your main/business mobile money account? Note: no significant differences between genders.



## FINDING 1

### The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of mobile money services among men and women in Ghana

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, mobile money was already widespread in Ghana, with 77 per cent of current mobile money users reporting that they were already using it. However, COVID-19 lockdown measures have accelerated mobile money use, with 24 per cent of male users and 23 per cent of female users in our sample signing up for mobile money accounts since the onset of the pandemic.

#### Existing users’ mobile money usage patterns

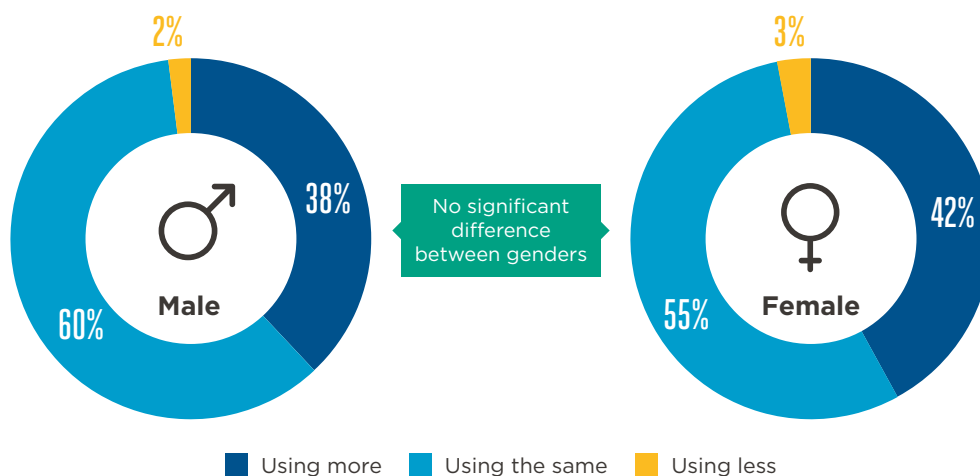
For mobile money users who had an account pre-COVID, analysis shows increasing reliance on the service during the pandemic. Forty per cent describe themselves as using mobile money “much more than before”, with only two per cent of existing users reporting they used it less during this time and the

remaining majority reporting they used it a similar amount. It is interesting to note that a slightly higher proportion of women report using mobile money services more during COVID-19, while more men report using the service the same as before.

Figure 3

Source: GSMA 2022 mobile money survey in Ghana, n=598 for women and 559 for men

#### Mobile money usage habits since the COVID-19 pandemic, by gender



Base: all mobile money users who have been using mobile money for at least two years (i.e. since before the Covid-19 pandemic), n=598 for women and 559 for men. Question: How, if at all, has your main/business usage of mobile money changed since the Covid-19 pandemic began?

When it comes to frequency of usage, some gender differences are apparent. While 27 per cent of male users report using mobile money services on a daily basis, female users are less likely to use mobile money services every day (22 per cent).

#### New users’ mobile money usage patterns

COVID-19 lockdown measures and social distancing prompted many men and women to use mobile money services for the first time. This may be due, in part, to existing trends in increasing mobile money usage in Ghana, but it is likely also driven by specific pandemic pressures. Notably, during the height of

the COVID-19 pandemic, many businesses were closed and individuals’ ability to travel was restricted. This made it difficult to make or receive payments using cash, while others may have wanted to avoid handling cash to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission (explained further in Finding 3).

**FINDING 1**

CONTINUED

The pandemic and lockdowns also inflicted substantial hardship on many households as business trading was severely curtailed and many saw their incomes drop significantly, especially entrepreneurs, and women in particular. For many, this was an additional motivation to adopt mobile money services to access credit during difficult times.

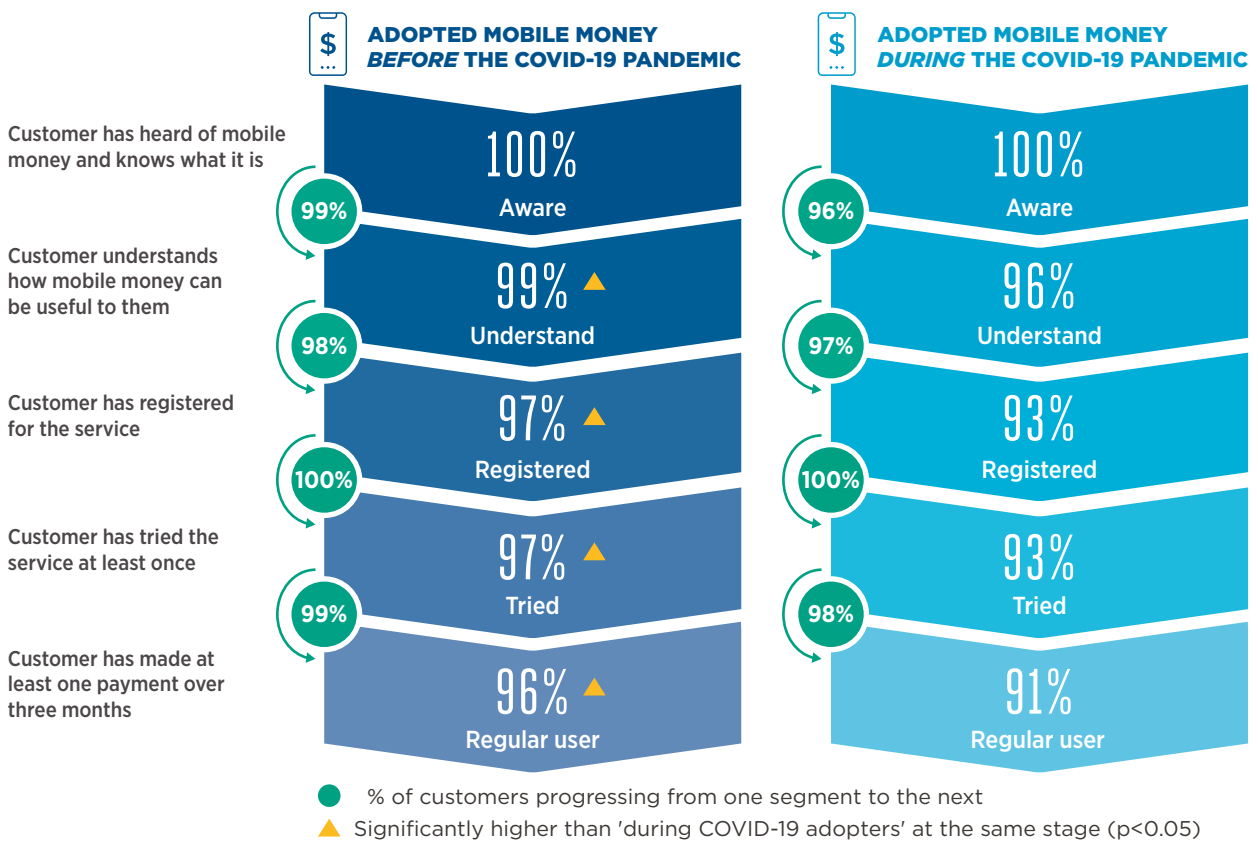
“I have heard people and seen people borrow credit [through mobile money], so when I got home, I asked my daughter and she helped me with it.”

**FEMALE ENTREPRENEUR**  
**OFANKOR**

Figure 4

Source: GSMA 2022 mobile money survey in Ghana, n=776 for women and 742 for men

**The mobile money user journey in Ghana comparing respondents who signed up before versus during the COVID-19 pandemic - for mobile phone owners**



Base: All who have access to a mobile money service and have used a mobile money service, n=776 for women and 742 for men. Question: And when did you first use your main/business mobile money account? Note: this shows the current user journey for both cohorts.

However, more recent mobile money adopters are less likely than longer term users to understand mobile money, to have registered for their own account, to have tried it by themselves or to be regular users. This is evidenced at each stage of the mobile money user journey (Figure 4), and newer users may be relying on someone else to send or receive money on their behalf.

There is opportunity for mobile money providers to deliver a greater range of supporting initiatives to help those who signed up to mobile money during the pandemic to quickly get up to speed with the core features of mobile money (such as P2P transactions, cash-in and cash-out), reduce their reliance on others and to sign up for their own account. This may help to promote new beneficial mobile money habits and drive more frequent and sophisticated usage.

## FINDING 2

### Mobile money is transitioning from an everyday cash replacement to a true banking alternative, but women entrepreneurs tend to use a narrower range of services than men

Mobile money has begun to play a more integral role in people’s everyday financial management since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Most mobile money users tend to use only core services such as receiving or sending money within Ghana and withdrawing or depositing cash with an agent. However, since the pandemic began, those who already had an account are more commonly using non-core services. This applies to both men and women. Forty-one per cent of mobile money users have received payments from customers or a client, 35 per cent have received or sent money outside of Ghana and 31 per cent have used mobile money to access a loan or credit services.

**Among entrepreneurs, this broader range of non-core services is used more by males than females. Increased usage by female entrepreneurs is more likely to be restricted to core services, such as sending or receiving payments.**

“I receive payments, and I withdraw from an agent. That is all I use it for.”

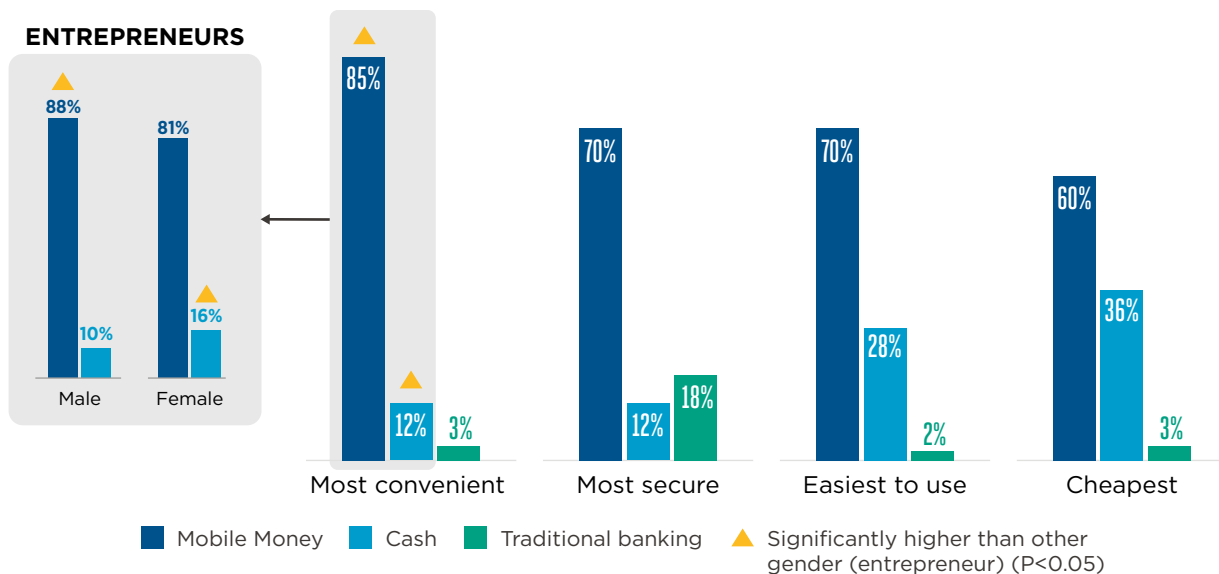
**FEMALE ENTREPRENEUR**  
**OFANKOR**

The potential longevity of mobile money in Ghana is further demonstrated by how customers perceive it in relation to other financial tools (Figure 5). Although our findings relate only to mobile money users, the high level of usage among the general population makes these perceptions relevant. Mobile money users perceive the service as significantly more convenient, more secure, easier to use and cheaper than either cash or traditional banking services.

Figure 5

Source: GSMA 2022 mobile money survey in Ghana, n=1518 for main sample and 781 for entrepreneur sample

#### How mobile money compares to other financial tools among mobile money users



Base: all mobile money users, n=1518 for the main sample and 781 for the entrepreneur sample. Question: And thinking about how mobile money compares to using either cash or traditional banking, which do you think is... Note: mobile money is significantly higher than other financial tools across all measures (P<0.05).

## FINDING 2

CONTINUED

However, it should be noted that female entrepreneurs who use mobile money are significantly less likely than their male counterparts to perceive it as convenient. Given that women are more likely to rely on others to perform mobile money transactions and have less confidence using mobile money unassisted, it is perhaps understandable that it is perceived as less convenient. Furthermore, female mobile money users tend to have lower awareness of the range of mobile money services on offer, which may compound this view.

In general, mobile money users in Ghana are starting to use more mobile money services beyond basic P2P transfers and cash-out, but this is less the case for women, including women entrepreneurs. Despite these differences, overall usage patterns suggest an evolution in how mobile money is being perceived and used in Ghana. Given its ease and convenience, it is likely that usage will continue to increase. Raising awareness of the full range of services and relevant and useful features, especially for women entrepreneurs, will help solidify women's perception of mobile money as a true banking alternative.



CASE STUDY

## Entrepreneurs in Ghana

### Entrepreneurs speak extensively about the ways in which mobile money has helped their business and made their business operations more convenient.

To understand why mobile money can contribute to notable operating changes for small business owners in Ghana, it is important to understand how they transacted before mobile money came along.

Many entrepreneurs, both male and female, spoke of using mobile money to buy stock or materials from suppliers outside of their local area. Before mobile money, this would have involved either a long and costly journey by bus or with a driver or, in some cases, an informal courier arrangement whereby they would give cash to a driver and ask them to deliver it to the business contact. As well as the expense of paying the driver, this was an obvious risk as the entrepreneur had no choice but to trust the driver to deliver the cash.

**“I think it will be very risky for me to send my driver with physical cash to make purchase for me. He can be attacked or the money can get lost. So nowadays, I always send money directly to my suppliers anytime I want to pay for goods and services.”**

♂ MALE ENTREPRENEUR  
📍 KOFI KWEI



Similarly, using a traditional bank can be a troublesome and time-consuming process, involving travel, delays and queues. Many are reluctant to visit a bank if they do not have to, and some do not have any kind of formal banking access at all.

**“It got to a time when you go to the bank you need to join the queue so because of that I had to start saving on my phone.”**

♀ FEMALE ENTREPRENEUR  
📍 KOFI KWEI

Mobile money can therefore be an alternative for those without bank accounts, but also a preferable financial tool for those who do have access to a formal banking account.<sup>22</sup> For example, being able to transfer money between a mobile money account and a bank account is convenient for users.

**“At first, when you wanted to withdraw let's say Ghc100, you had to queue at the bank or use the ATM. Sometimes you will go and the ATM would be out of service, this brought a lot of inconvenience... When you go to the bank to withdraw an international transaction, they will frustrate you by asking so many questions, but with mobile money, all these stresses are no more.”**

**“Also, my customers are able to send me money through mobile money with ease. I am also able to order spare parts from Abossey Okai and pay with mobile money and then my goods will be delivered to me. So, I will say mobile money has saved me the time and stress in travelling long distances to send or receive money.”**

♂ MALE ENTREPRENEUR  
📍 OFANKOR

22 GSMA. (2013). *Unlocking the Potential: Women and Mobile Financial Services in Emerging Markets.*

### FINDING 3

## Most male and female mobile money users anticipate that they will use mobile money as often, if not more, in a post-COVID world

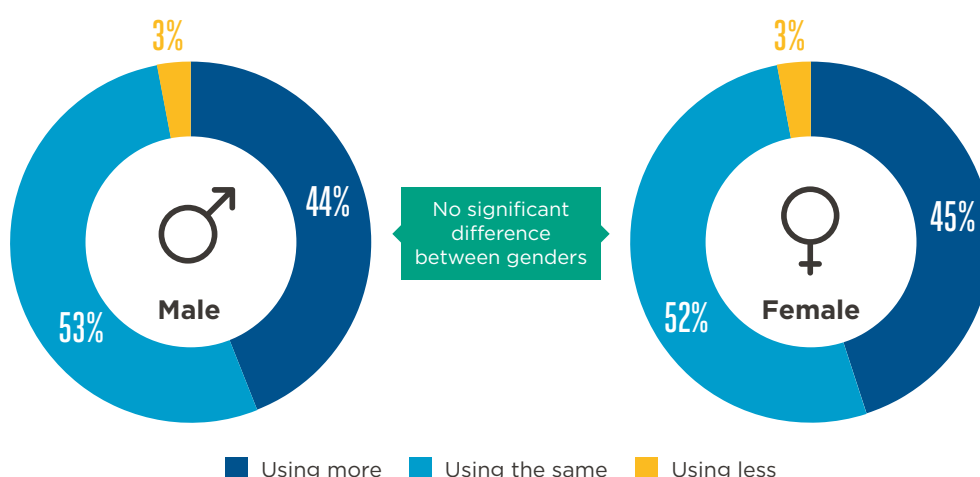
COVID-19 has helped to accelerate mobile money adoption and, for those already using it, deepened their usage. For users, the benefits and advantages of mobile money are clear and extend beyond the

context of the pandemic. Both male and female users anticipate they will continue using the service even when the pandemic restrictions are lifted, suggesting that mobile money usage is becoming entrenched.

Figure 6

Source: GSMA 2022 mobile money survey in Ghana, n=776 for women and 742 for men

### Anticipated mobile money usage among mobile money users once the COVID-19 pandemic is over, by gender



Base: all mobile money users. n=776 for women and 742 for men. Question: And how, if at all, do you anticipate your main usage of mobile money changing in the future, once the Covid-19 pandemic is fully over?

In our sample, 44 per cent of male and 45 per cent of female mobile money users reported that they intend to use mobile money services more often once pandemic restrictions are lifted, while 53 per cent and 52 per cent respectively, anticipate using it about the same amount (Figure 6). Some of the reasons given for using mobile money more during the pandemic were related to COVID-19 restrictions, but others were not. While hygiene is a reason cited by 37 per cent of those who used mobile money more during the pandemic, 28 per cent acknowledged that their usage was increasing anyway as mobile money became more ubiquitous (Figure 7). Therefore, we can expect these trends to continue, even without the pressures of the pandemic restrictions driving behaviour.

Some gender differences were noted in the reasons entrepreneurs gave for using mobile money more during COVID-19 (Figure 7). For example, the proportion of female entrepreneurs using mobile money who reported that it had made it easier to manage their finances during this time was significantly higher than male entrepreneurs using mobile money. Female entrepreneurs who used mobile money prior to the pandemic were also more likely than their male counterparts to have increased or continued their usage as a direct result of the pandemic. Although their initial reason for increasing their usage was driven by necessity, the value of mobile money has been proven over the course of the pandemic and contributed to their perception that they will continue to use it, and use it more, once the pandemic is over.



**FINDING 3**

CONTINUED

Furthermore, most entrepreneur mobile money users in the qualitative research mentioned that mobile money has made it easier to save, both in terms of the convenience compared to traditional savings channels and compared to saving in cash, which many felt was more difficult.

“What makes me like [mobile money] is the fact that I’m able to make deposits into my account, I can save and whenever I need it, I go to withdraw it”

**FEMALE ENTREPRENEUR**  
**OFANKOR**

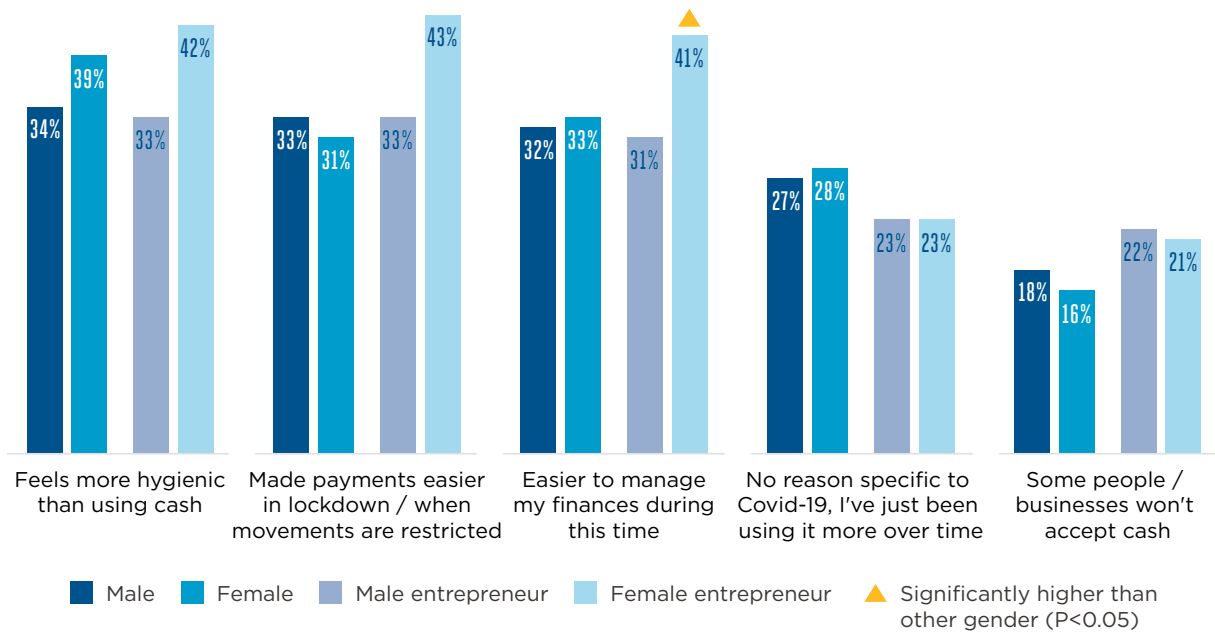
“I save my money on [my mobile money account]. When I have the money on me, I would end up spending it, so I just deposit it like the way I am saving with the bank so the only time I touch it is when I have an emergency.”

**FEMALE ENTREPRENEUR**  
**KOFI KWEI**

Figure 7

Source: GSMA 2022 mobile money survey in Ghana, n=345 for women, 300 for men, 217 for female entrepreneurs and 179 for male entrepreneurs

**Top five reasons why mobile money users increased their usage since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, by gender**



Base: all using mobile money more than before the Covid-19 pandemic, n=345 for women, 300 for men, 217 for female entrepreneurs and 179 for male entrepreneurs. Question: Which of these reasons explain why you have begun using your main mobile money service more often since Covid-19?

While for some, COVID-19 may have been the initial driver for increased mobile money use, most users intend to continue using the service, with a substantial proportion aiming to use it even more. However, usage could be further entrenched,

particularly for female entrepreneurs, through additional support from mobile money providers to ensure that they can use mobile money services autonomously and that the full range of services are easy and safe to use.









## FINDING 4

### There are opportunities to increase awareness and use of mobile money services beyond payments, particularly among women entrepreneurs

Despite high levels of mobile money adoption overall in Ghana, there are opportunities to drive further usage by raising awareness of the full range of services on offer. This is true for both men and women since 91 per cent of mobile money users use the service to receive money from others within Ghana, but far fewer use it for additional services, such as savings (26 per cent), bill payments (11 per cent) and insurance (9 per cent).

While overall, female entrepreneurs who own a mobile phone are just as likely as their male counterparts to have a mobile money account and use it regularly,<sup>23</sup> they are less aware of the full range of services on offer, and this gap needs to be bridged.<sup>24</sup>

There are a range of mobile money services that could add significant value for entrepreneurs, but are not commonly known. For example, female entrepreneurs who use mobile money are significantly less likely than their male counterparts to be aware of mobile money features beyond the core services of sending/receiving money within Ghana and depositing/withdrawing money (cash-in/out) with an agent. Awareness raising could focus on lesser known services, including:

-  Airtime top-ups;
-  Paying for goods in shops;
-  Paying bills;
-  Transferring cash to and from personal bank accounts;
-  Paying for goods online;
-  Paying salaries;
-  Paying suppliers; and
-  Paying school fees.

“I do not pay my school fees by mobile money... I did not know this was possible. Do they accept payment this way?”

 FEMALE ENTREPRENEUR  
 KOFI KWEI

Lower awareness naturally translates into lower usage of these services. Thus, by addressing the awareness gap, particularly with female entrepreneurs, there is potential to unlock opportunities to increase mobile money use. However, as shown in Figure 8, female entrepreneurs are currently less likely than male entrepreneurs to be aware of these value adding services.

“With buying airtime ... you don't have to walk out looking for a vendor; from the comfort of wherever you are you can just buy it... I use [mobile money] for my business, because of my social media presence. I use it to process my goods... I take pictures and post them online; mobile money makes the work easier and faster.”

 MALE ENTREPRENEUR  
 OFANKOR

By increasing awareness of the range of mobile money services available, providers could also increase usage. In particular, they could focus on services that female entrepreneurs could find most relevant and valuable, such as airtime top-ups, bill payments, supplier or salary payments. Doing so will help them reap the same benefits as many male entrepreneurs are experiencing – making life more convenient, making it easier to manage their money both in business and in their personal life, and saving the time and money associated with more inefficient methods, such as in-person cash payments and traditional banking.

<sup>23</sup> Regular mobile money use in this instance is defined as those who made at least one transaction in the past three months.

<sup>24</sup> GSMA. (2017). *Connected Women. Mapping the mobile money gender gap: Insights from Côte d'Ivoire and Mali.*

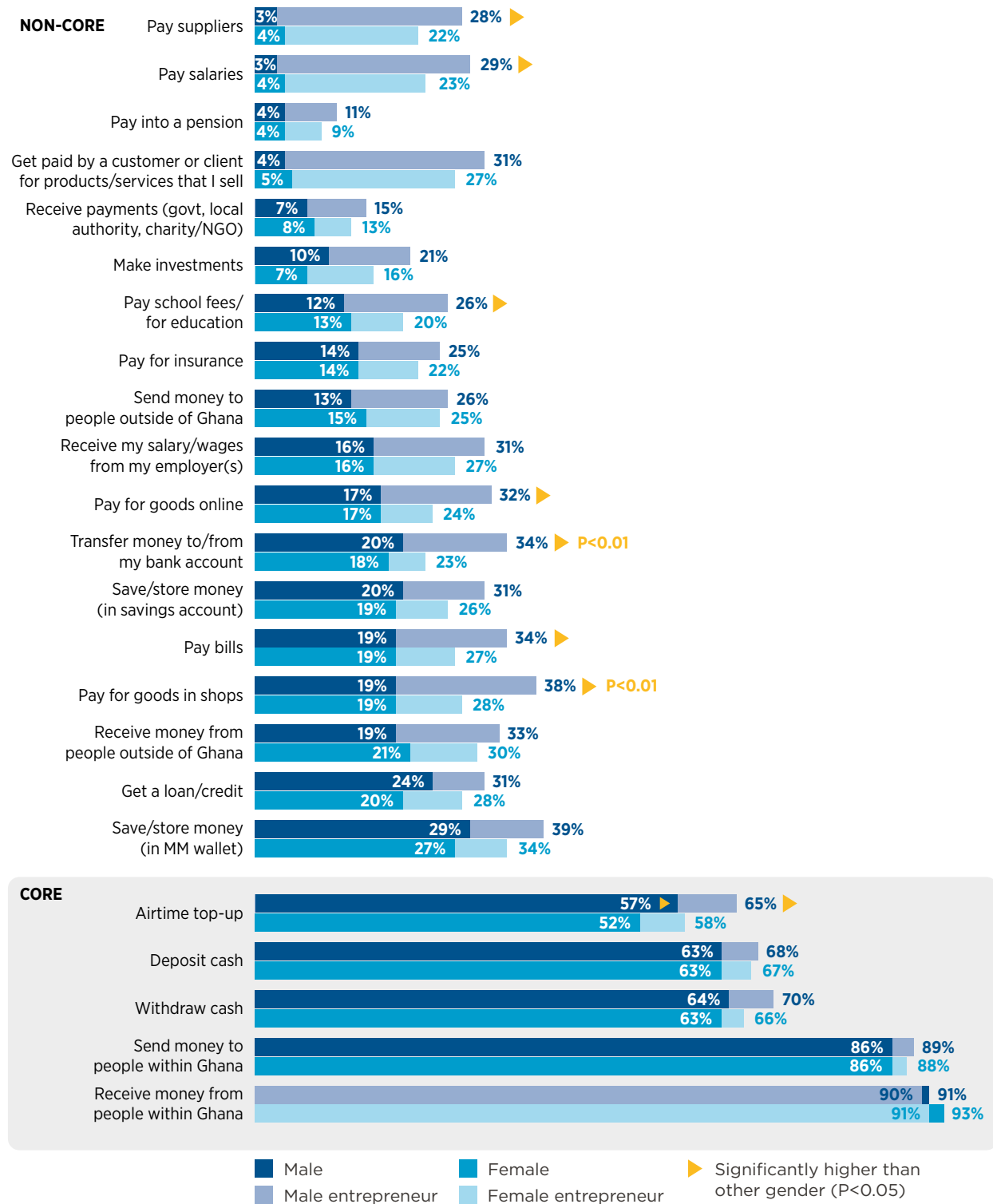
**FINDING 4**

CONTINUED

Figure 8

Source: GSMA 2022 mobile money survey in Ghana, n=778 for women, 746 for men, 446 for female entrepreneurs and 336 for male entrepreneurs

**Mobile money users’ current knowledge of a range of mobile money use cases, by gender**



Base: all who have access to a mobile money service, n=778 for women, 746 for men, 446 for female entrepreneurs and 336 for male entrepreneurs. Question: To your knowledge, what is it possible to do with your main/business mobile money account? Note: males and females are derived from the main nationally representative sample while male and female entrepreneurs are derived from the booster sample (a separate sample of entrepreneurs plus entrepreneurs from the main nationally representative sample).

## FINDING 5

### Women, including entrepreneurs, need more support from others to learn about and use mobile money

**When first learning about mobile money, female users are significantly more likely than male users to seek assistance from family members**, with 27 per cent of female users reporting this compared to 20 per cent of male users. Among entrepreneurs who use mobile money, this difference in reliance was even more pronounced, with 26 per cent of female respondents reporting that they learned about mobile money from a family member, compared to 15 per cent of their male counterparts.

**Interestingly, female mobile money users, including entrepreneurs, are more likely to rely on others to transact for them, compared to their male counterparts.** This poses a significant barrier to more frequent use and inhibits their ability to reap the maximum benefits of mobile money. It is likely that this reliance on others diminishes women's perceptions of convenience (see Finding 2) and contributes to their lower rate of daily usage compared to male users.

In contrast, male mobile money users are more likely to learn about mobile money through external sources (Figure 9), such as mobile money agents (for males generally) and TV adverts, radio or billboards (for male entrepreneurs specifically).

"For [mobile] money, I am unable to send it myself, so I give it to someone [else] to send... because I don't know how to do it..[and my husband and apprentices] also don't know how to do it.."

 FEMALE ENTREPRENEUR  
 OFANKOR

"I was taught... I didn't know how to do it and was scared when I do it, the money would end up in someone else's account... So we were taught at church."

 FEMALE ENTREPRENEUR  
 OFANKOR

"I asked him to teach me because I have been hearing that people buy airtime on their mobile phone and because I didn't know how to do it, I wanted him to show me how it is done and he did."

 FEMALE ENTREPRENEUR  
 OFANKOR

One potential contributing factor to explain women's reliance on others to learn about and use mobile money services is lower levels of education among women. In our sample, male mobile owners were more likely to continue their education beyond Junior High School than females. Forty four per cent of female mobile phone owners ended their education at Junior High School, compared to 34 per cent for males. Lower levels of education can contribute to lower levels of confidence in trying out new tasks or teaching oneself how to use a service, as can social norms which can discourage women from trying out something new.

Men's typically higher levels of formal education, and social norms that encourage experimentation for men, also means they are often more likely to develop the confidence to navigate mobile money service menus and teach themselves how to use new features using USSD/shortcode or app menus. The resultant independent learning was more common for males generally, compared to females (Figure 9) and was supported by the qualitative research.

"No one taught me I just went through the options and I found how to do it. I just input the first digit and the prompt came so I followed up so all the options came."

 MALE ENTREPRENEUR  
 OFANKOR

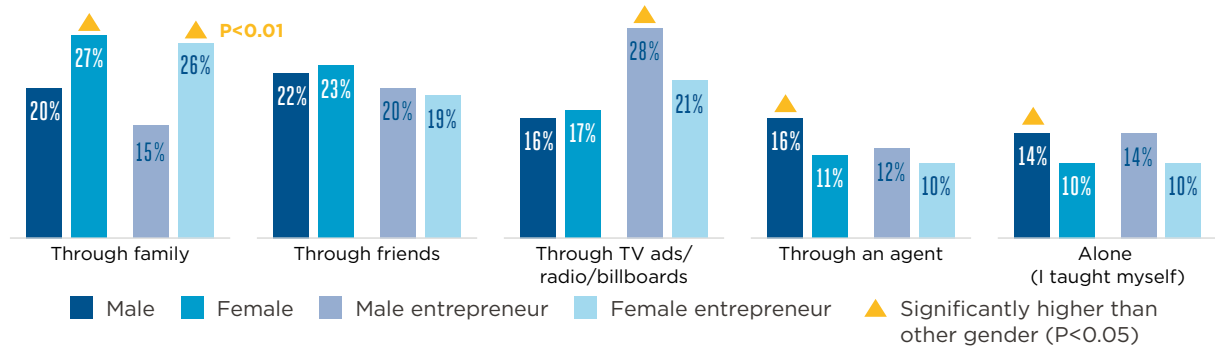
**FINDING 5**

CONTINUED

Figure 9

Source: GSMA 2022 mobile money survey in Ghana, n=776 for women, 742 for men, 446 for female entrepreneurs and 335 for male entrepreneurs

**Most common ways that mobile money users first learned to use their mobile money account, by gender**



Base: all mobile money users, n=776 for women, 742 for men, 446 for female entrepreneurs and 335 for male entrepreneurs. Question: How did you first learn how to use your main/business mobile money account?

The vast majority of mobile money users perform transactions themselves. However, the same reliance on family and agents by female users is somewhat evident in on-going usage, while male users are more likely to handle transactions themselves (Figure 10). Female entrepreneurs who use mobile

money are also significantly more likely to use agents to transact for them than their male counterparts.

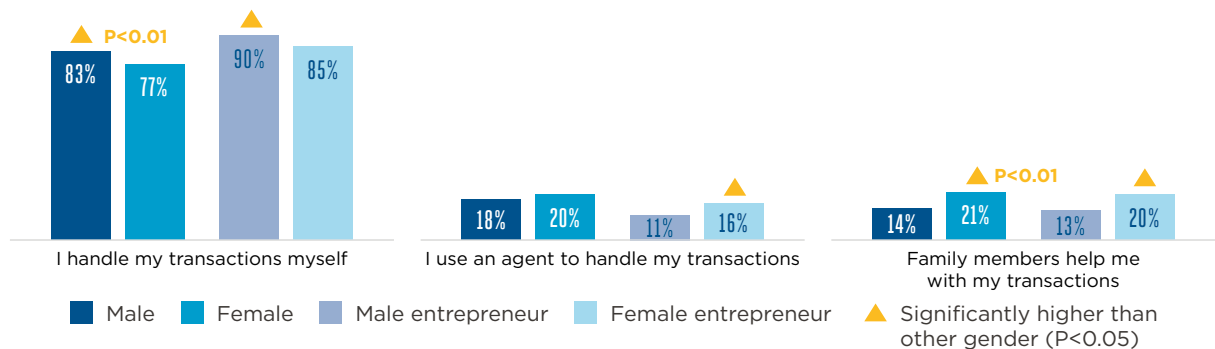
“I just go to the agent and deposit money, and he puts it on my mobile money for me.”

**FEMALE ENTREPRENEUR**  
**KOFI KWEI**

Figure 10

Source: GSMA 2022 mobile money survey in Ghana, n=776 for women, 742 for men, 446 for female entrepreneurs and 335 for male entrepreneurs

**Mobile money users who perform transactions with or without help, by gender**



Base: all mobile money users, n=776 for women, 742 for men, 446 for female entrepreneurs and 335 for male entrepreneurs. Question: Does anyone help handle your mobile money transactions?

While learning about mobile money via informal sources (like family members) may be more convenient or appealing for women, this is likely to limit their knowledge levels. Increasing the number and geographic spread of female agents may provide better support for female entrepreneurs

to learn how to use mobile money services autonomously. Agents, both male and female, could be incentivised to support female customers specifically, by raising awareness of additional services, explaining the benefits of these services and showing them how to use them.<sup>25,26</sup>

25 GSMA. (2013). Unlocking the Potential: Women and Mobile Financial Services in Emerging Markets.  
 26 See: [gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/reaching-women-with-mobile/](https://gsma.com/mobilefordevelopment/reaching-women-with-mobile/)

## FINDING 6

### Sustaining mobile money usage among new male and female users who signed up during COVID-19 will require overcoming some additional barriers

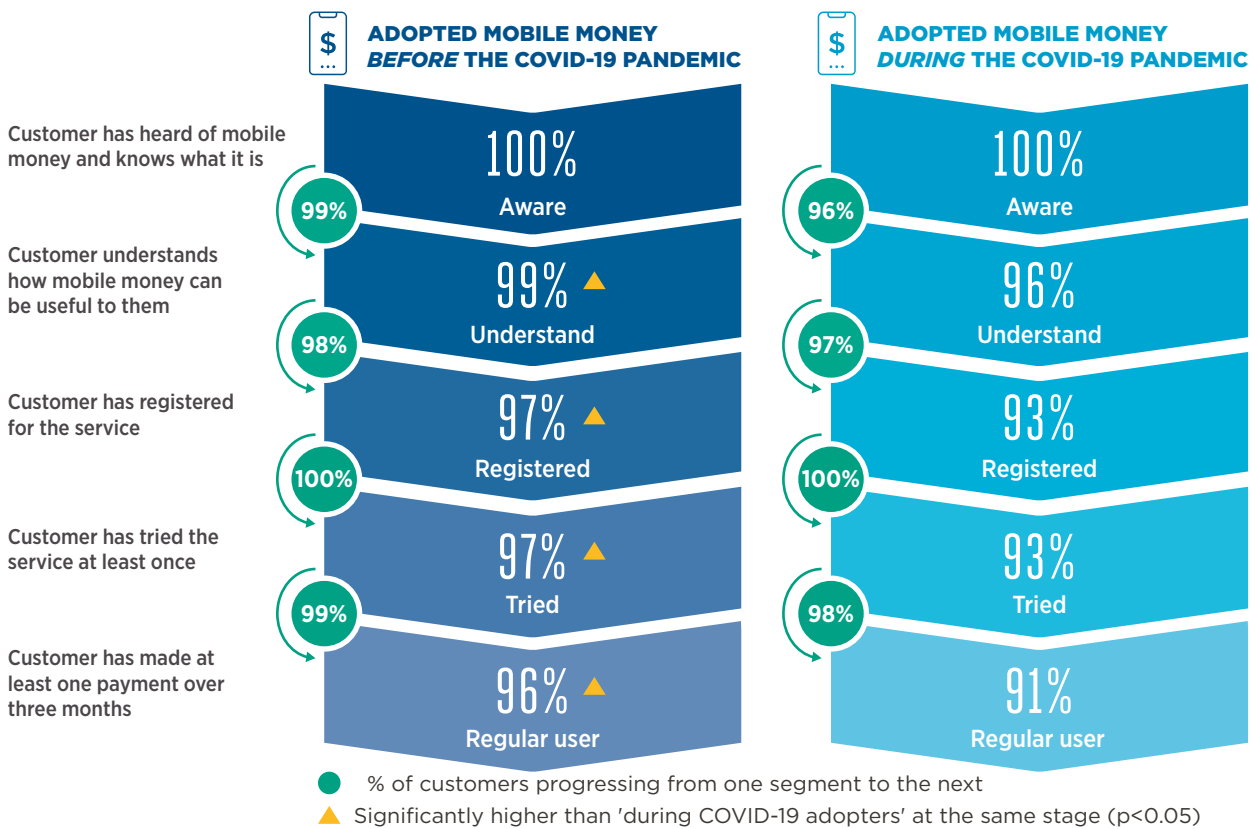
Almost a quarter of mobile phone owners in our sample started using mobile money since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, as the user journey shows (Figure 11), this group of newer users is significantly less likely to understand mobile money, register and know of and use the full range of

services offered compared to longer term users. This demonstrates the need to provide additional help to this group, so that they can become regular users and benefit from the full range of mobile money services available.

Figure 11

Source: GSMA 2022 mobile money survey in Ghana, n=776 for women and 742 for men

#### The mobile money user journey in Ghana comparing respondents who signed up before versus during the COVID-19 pandemic – for mobile phone owners



Base: All who have access to a mobile money service and have used a mobile money service, n=776 for women and 742 for men. Question: And when did you first use your main/business mobile money account? Note: This shows the current user journey for both cohorts.

**FINDING 6**

CONTINUED

Additionally, those who started using mobile money during the COVID-19 pandemic are more dependent on agents and family to learn how to use their account and are less likely to handle transactions themselves.

This reliance on agents is a particular limitation, as 40 per cent of new users during the pandemic and 37 per cent of new entrepreneur users during the pandemic cited issues with agents as a barrier to increased usage (Figure 12). The reasons included a lack of float, not being the same gender as the agent or the inconvenience or difficulty of travelling to an agent.

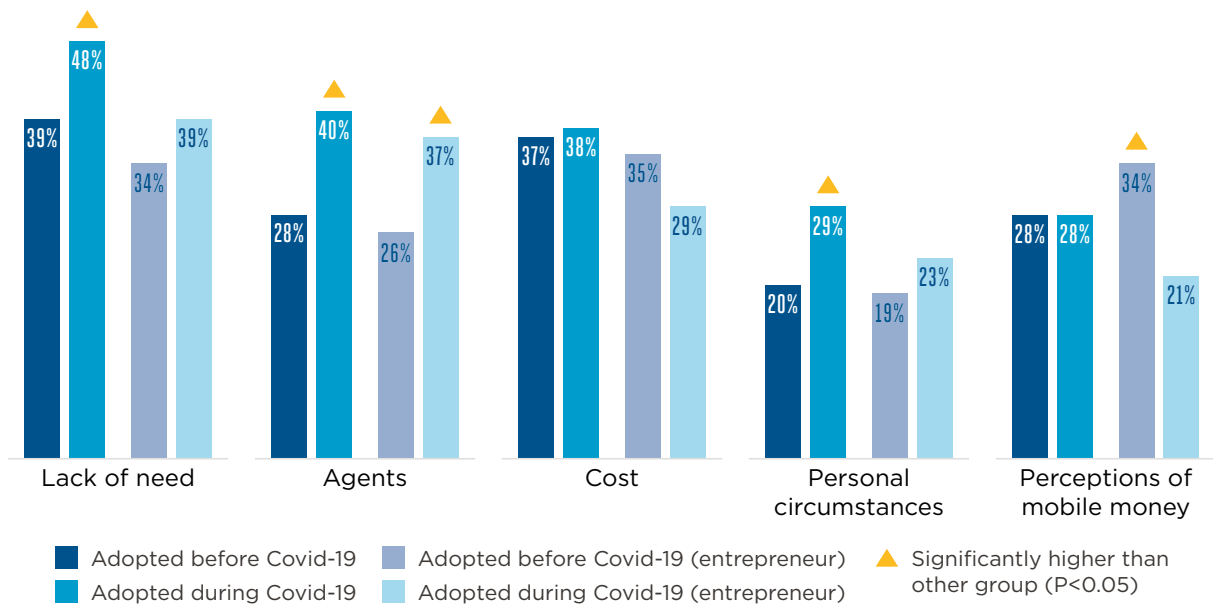
While cost is one of the most notable barriers to using mobile money more, it is felt among all mobile money users. Cost is a less pronounced barrier among

entrepreneurs adopting mobile money during the pandemic (Figure 13) although, female entrepreneurs (31 per cent) experience this barrier more than males (24 per cent). However, other attitudinal barriers, such as a lack of need will also need addressing to sustain usage among new mobile money users. Some of those who signed up during the pandemic still prefer to use other channels to transfer money (13 per cent) and tend to be primarily engaging with mobile money because it is quick to use (83 per cent versus 78 per cent for longer term users). Emphasising other benefits outside of speed will be key to making mobile money a more front of mind service. As mobile money behaviours of these users have yet to mature, there is a risk that they may revert to other channels unless mobile money proves more relevant for them.

Figure 12

Source: GSMA 2022 mobile money survey in Ghana, n=361 for new users and n=1157 for existing users

**Top five barriers to using mobile money more often among mobile money users<sup>27</sup>**



Base: all mobile money users, n=361 for mobile money users who have been using mobile money since the Covid-19 pandemic started and n=1157 for mobile money users who have been using mobile money for at least two years (i.e. since before the Covid-19 pandemic). Question: Why don't you use your main/business mobile money account more often than you currently do? Note: barriers shown are the five most commonly reported by respondents

<sup>27</sup> Figures 12 and 13 show composite barriers, where related barriers have been combined into groups as shown. See Glossary.

**FINDING 6** CONTINUED

Figure 13

Source: GSMA 2022 mobile money survey in Ghana, n=183 for males, 178 for females, 49 for male entrepreneurs and 91 for female entrepreneurs

**Top five barriers to using mobile money more often among new users who signed-up during the Covid-19 pandemic, by gender**

Male		Female		Male entrepreneurs		Female entrepreneurs	
49%	Lack of need	1	Lack of need 47%	43%	Lack of need	1	Lack of need 37%
42%	Agents	2	Agents 38%	37%	Agents	2	Agents 37%
40%	Cost	3	Cost 37%	24%	Cost	3	Cost 31%
32%	Perceptions of mobile money	4	Personal circumstances 29%	24%	Personal circumstances	4	Perceptions of mobile money 22%
30%	Personal circumstances	5	Perceptions of mobile money 25%	20%	Perceptions of mobile money	5	Personal circumstances 22%

Base: Mobile money users who have started using the service since COVID-19, n=183 for males, 178 for females, 49 for male entrepreneurs and 91 for female entrepreneurs. Question: Why don't you use your main/business mobile money account more often than you currently do? Note: barriers shown are the five most commonly reported by respondents

A substantial proportion of new users (38 per cent) perceive the cost of transacting via mobile money to be a barrier to usage. More needs to be done to communicate the value of mobile money services for this group, particularly how it can save them time and money overall, as well as being safer and more reliable than other financial tools. The barriers to increased usage for new users relating to agents

warrants further assessment. Increasing the number of female agents is one approach, as well as ensuring agents are available in all areas and have sufficient liquidity. This, combined with greater knowledge of the range of relevant services available, will help this group of more recent users transition to regular mobile money users, like those who have been using mobile money since before the pandemic.





# Recommendations

**As life returns to normal, ensure that men and women who signed up for mobile money during the COVID-19 pandemic have the knowledge and skills they need to continue using it.**

This group currently lags behind longer term users in terms of knowledge and use of mobile money. As Ghana starts to recover from the pandemic, it is crucial that new users are given clear and accurate information on the benefits of using mobile money longer term. This will help ensure that usage expands and becomes entrenched in day-to-day life, not just during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Drive usage by increasing women's awareness of the range of mobile money services available.**

While there is almost no gender gap in account ownership in Ghana, women use a narrower range of mobile money services than men. It is clear that the experiences of men and women differ. For entrepreneurs, this is especially evident in the awareness of non-core mobile money services. Lower awareness is mirrored by lower usage – increasing knowledge through

marketing and other approaches aimed at women and women entrepreneurs is likely to lead to greater uptake of a wider selection of mobile money services.

**Improve women's understanding of mobile money to reduce their reliance on others.**

Women, including women entrepreneurs, are significantly more likely than men to rely on others when learning to use mobile money. Without concerted efforts to reduce women's reliance on others, this is likely to limit the way they engage with the service, including the range of services they use and the frequency of usage. More needs to be done to provide training resources to women signing up to mobile money to ensure the information they receive is comprehensive and correct.<sup>28</sup> For example, mobile money providers could incentivise agents to provide hands-on support to women to demonstrate how the service works and improve their confidence in using it. Supporting women to use the full range of mobile money services independently is likely to deliver more substantial benefits to women, and women entrepreneurs in particular, as well as higher revenues for the mobile industry.

28 GSMA. (2014). *Reaching half of the market: Women and mobile money*.

## Glossary

### BARRIERS

Barriers shown in this report are composites of the following responses:

#### Lack of Need

- I don't need to make more transactions than I currently do
- I receive / give money from / to people who don't use mobile money
- I can make mobile money transactions with an agent without having an account

#### Cost

- Service is too expensive / the cost of making a transaction is too high for me

#### Mobile money agents

- There aren't enough mobile money agents close to where I am
- I don't trust the mobile money agents near me
- There are no mobile money agents of the same gender as me near me
- I can't easily travel to my nearest mobile money agent
- Mobile money agents in my area don't have cash

#### Perceptions of mobile money

- I don't trust the service
- It's not secure / security is not guaranteed
- Customer service is bad
- You can't transfer money to other people who use a different mobile money provider
- Service does not work well / there are technical issues
- Providers don't offer the services I am interested in

#### Personal circumstances

- I don't have enough money for mobile money to be useful to me / I have irregular income
- I don't understand how it works / I don't know how to use it / service is too complicated
- My family does not approve of me having a mobile money account
- I have difficulties with reading and writing
- My ability to use a phone is limited, and I am afraid to make errors while using it to do mobile money transactions
- I do not have any / reliable access to electricity at home
- A friend / relative / colleague makes my transactions for me

### GENDER GAP

Based on results from the GSMA 2022 mobile money survey in Ghana, the gender gaps (e.g. for ownership of a mobile money account, use or awareness of mobile money) in this report, are calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Gender gap in ownership/use/awareness (\%)} = \frac{\text{Male owners/users/aware (\% of male population)} - \text{Female owners/users/aware (\% of male population)}}{\text{Male owners/users/aware (\% of male population)}}$$

### MOBILE MONEY

A service is considered a mobile money service if it meets the following criteria:

- A mobile money service includes transferring money and making and receiving payments using a mobile phone.
- The service must be available to the unbanked, for example, people who do not have access to a formal account at a financial institution.
- The service must offer a network of physical transactional points which can include agents, outside of bank branches and ATMs, that make the service widely accessible to everyone. The agent network must be larger than the service's formal outlets.
- Mobile banking or payment services (such as Apple Pay and Google Pay) that offer the mobile phone as just another channel to access a traditional banking product are not included.
- Payment services linked to a traditional banking product or credit card, such as Apple Pay, Google Pay and Samsung Pay, are not included.

### MOBILE MONEY ACCOUNT (REGISTERED/ACTIVE)

An e-money account that is primarily accessed using a mobile phone and that is held with the e-money issuer. In some jurisdictions, e-money accounts may resemble conventional bank accounts, but are treated differently under the regulatory framework because they are used for different purposes (for example, as a surrogate for cash or a stored value used to facilitate transactional services). An active mobile money account is a mobile money account that has been used to conduct at least one transaction during a certain period (usually 90 days or 30 days).

[gsma.com/mobilemoney](https://gsma.com/mobilemoney)



For more information on GSMA Mobile Money, visit [gsma.com/mobilemoney](https://gsma.com/mobilemoney)



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