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Entrepreneurial Skills and Performance of Women's Small Enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Performance enterprise is important determinant for survival and meeting stakeholders' interests. However, a performance enterprise has been a concern as many small enterprises report dismal performances. Entrepreneurial dimensions are reported to leverage competitiveness, survival and growth of enterprises. Thus, study attempted to examine influence of entrepreneurial skills on performance of women owned small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya. The study was guided by three specific objectives: evaluate the influence networking skills on performance of women's small enterprises, to determine influence of communication skills on performance of women's small enterprises and to investigate the influence of innovation skills on performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya. The study was anchored on the Opportunity Based Entrepreneurship Theory, stakeholders' theory and resource based firm theory. The study employed descriptive research design consisting of both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The target population was 1235 respondents, comprising of the management/owners of the women enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya. The sample size was 302 respondents obtained using the simple random techniques. The study utilized questionnaires to collect data. A pilot test was conducted to ensure data validity and reliability of the research instrument. The study employed both descriptive and inferential statistics with aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29 software. Descriptive statistics such as mean, frequencies and standard deviations assisted in summarizing sample characteristics, while inferential statistics regression, correlations and ANOVA to establish relationships. The findings of the study created insights among the operators influence of entrepreneurial skills on performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya. Secondly, contribute to policy makers' influence of contributing entrepreneurial skills on performance of women's small enterprises. Lastly, to results contributed to academic discourse on entrepreneurial skills on performance of firms. Networking skills explained 43.2% of performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya, communication skills 61.0%, and innovation skills 38.2% of performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya. The study recommended for further research work to be conducted to review the influence of other variables on performance of women's small enterprises in other counties in Kenya.

Keywords: *Strategy implementation, Strategy Evaluation, Accessibility of NGOs to Donor Funding*

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

According to World Bank (2023) report Women entrepreneurs in SEs are the engine of growth; essential for a Competitive and efficient Market; Critical for Poverty reduction; and Play a Particularly Important Role in developing Countries. Women entrepreneurs in SEs are contributing to employment growth at a higher rate than larger firms. The private sector and in particular women entrepreneurs in SEs form the backbone of a market economy and for the transition economies in the long-term might provide most of the employment. Support for women entrepreneurs in SEs will help the restructuring of large enterprises by streamlining manufacturing complexes as units with no direct relation to the primary activity are sold off separately. And through this process the efficiency of the remaining enterprise might be increased as well; they curb the monopoly of the large enterprises and offer them complementary services and absorb the fluctuation of a modern economy; through inter-enterprise cooperation, they raise the level of skills with their flexible and innovative nature. Thus women entrepreneurs in SEs can generate important benefits in terms of creating a skilled industrial base and industries, and developing a well-prepared service sector capable of contributing to GDP.

Women entrepreneurship is defined as a process where women or a group of women take the initiative to establish and operate a business (Xavier, Ahmad, Nor & Yusuf, 2013; Sharma, 2023). Women owned businesses can be in any sector and can be in the form of beauty salons, taverns, spaza shops, and it includes those women operating as hawker and agriculture. The main reason prioritizing women in business in developing countries are confirmed by Kim (2021) as, women have only to gain from being involved in business due to their perceived gender position of being poorer and discriminated against. There has been rapid increases in female entrepreneurship activity in developing countries in general.

Women's engagement in entrepreneurship can help reduce inequality and expand the economy. It is estimated that women-owned SMEs form 31- 38% of formal enterprises in emerging markets (IFC & McKinsey, 2021). Moreover, it was projected that the failure to attain the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target 3 that promotes gender equality and empowerment of women would lower the per capita growth rates by between 0.1 to 0.3 percentage points.(Abu-Ghaida & Klasen, 2020; Baliamoune-Lutz & McGillivray, 2021).The crucial roles played by women in economic growth are underscored in Kenya's vision 2030 where SMEs are identified and prioritized as key drivers for growth and development. Currently, the country has about 7.5 million registered SME's that contribute about 44% of the GDP (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), 2023). Monitoring and evaluation methods ensure that project outcomes may be quantified at the impact, outcome, output, process, and input levels, According to ILO study carried out by Steven son and St-ONge (2020), there are three profiles of women entrepreneurs operating MSEs in Kenya, namely those in Jua Kali micro-enterprises, "very small" microenterprises and "small-scale" enterprises. These are differentiated by their demographic profiles, extent of previous business experience, needs, access to resources and growth orientation. Most of the rural women provide for their families through subsistence farming and other agricultural activities supplemented by petty trade or micro enterprises. But they continue to face challenges. It is upon this background that this study seeks to assess entrepreneurial skills and performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya. The small and micro enterprises (SMEs) play an important role in the Kenyan Economy.

According to the Economic Survey (2023), the sector contributed over 50 percent of new jobs created in the year 2020. Despite their significance, past statistics indicate that three out of five businesses fail within the first few months of operation (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019).

Globally, studies have confirmed that women participate in a wide range of entrepreneurial activities across the world although only few of them have been successful. This has been attributed to the fact that many women lack access to funds that they can use to start business enterprises. It has been found that in countries such as Brazil and India the availability of funds specifically allocated to women has helped tremendously to increase the number of women owned entrepreneurial ventures in the world. The emergence of the private sector as the major participant/player in the industrial development of many countries such as Malaysia, has also improved women's access to employment opportunities as against when they experienced denial in employment opportunities as wage workers because of their family responsibilities, lack of skills, social and cultural barriers (Nduati, 2020).

An entrepreneur is one who organizes, manages and assumes the risks and reaps the benefits of starting a new entrepreneurial venture, is a role model in a society, who creates something new, something different, always "searching for change, responding to it, and exploiting it" (Baron, 2017). The reputation of entrepreneurs from developed countries in the European Union (EU), rest of Europe and USA is remarkable. In America for instance, entrepreneurs are respected for their role in creating new jobs, providing new competition to existing businesses, improving product quality, reducing prices, introducing new goods and services through innovation and technology advancement. For example, Bill Gates, through Microsoft has contributed immensely towards information technology. Suffice it to say entrepreneurship has formed the basis for advancement in technology through creation of new job-markets (Aoulou & Fayole, 2022).

The International Labor Organization (ILO) acknowledges some of the challenges that women face in managing their small enterprises in Africa. ILO specifically mentions the fact that lack of funds is a major constraint in their businesses especially among the poor African countries such as Malawi and Madagascar (Porter & Nagarajan, 2005). In Africa, many micro enterprises are largely run by women, primarily as a matter of survival and not business opportunity. Nevertheless, they play a significant role in local economies.

Entrepreneurs in South Africa require three main types of support, namely human, financial and social capital (Kim, 2022). With regard to human capital, entrepreneurs would greatly benefit from entrepreneurial skills and training according to their developmental stages and the sector of activity. The lack of entrepreneurial skills may be because of inadequate training and a poor educational system as the South African public education system is classified as the worst in the world, far worse even than peer developing countries (Turton & Herrington 2023).

Women Entrepreneurs in SEs are important to almost all economies in the world, but especially to those in developing countries and, within that broad category, especially to those with major employment and income distribution challenges. On what we may call the "static" front, women entrepreneurs in SEs contribute to output and to the creation of "decent" jobs; on the dynamic front they are a nursery for the larger firms of the future, are the next (and important) step up for expanding micro enterprises, they contribute directly and often significantly to aggregate savings and investment, and they are involved in the development of appropriate technology. In an increasingly international marketplace, many companies are finding that prosperity is best achieved from specialization, as opposed to diversification. While the

majority of the world's largest companies continue to provide multiple services to numerous markets, they now purchase many components and goods from smaller companies that serve one particular niche. As the global marketplace continues to develop, women entrepreneurs in SEs provide an effective tool for economic growth through participation in global supply chains (World Bank, 2019).

Statement of the Problem

Women entrepreneurs and their businesses is a rapidly growing segment of the business population in Kenya creating a variety of new ventures and contributing to the development of a range of services and products. Nevertheless, the female enterprises seem to face stiff cultural challenges as regards their business engagement and consequently their performance (Minniti, 2023).

Furthermore, lack of entrepreneurial competences is said to be the main contributor to low entrepreneurial activity and high failure rate for women entrepreneurs in South Africa (Herrington *et al.,* 2024). In many societies women do not enjoy the same opportunities as men. In many transitional economies progress has been achieved in opening doors to education and health protection for women but political and economic opportunities for female entrepreneurs have remained limited. Concerted efforts are needed to enable female entrepreneurs to make better economic choices and to transform their businesses into competitive enterprises, generating income and employment through improved production.

Women's productive activities, particularly in industry, empower them economically and enable them to contribute more to overall development. Whether they are involved in small or medium scale production activities, or in the informal or formal sectors, women's entrepreneurial activities are not only a means for economic survival but also have positive social repercussions for the women themselves and their social environment. (United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), 2021). The Kenyan government recognizes that sustainability of women entrepreneurs has not been on an equal footing when it comes to their access to opportunities and assets, but it is yet to effectively address the barriers facing women in business (Athanne, 2021). It's against this background that the proposal seeks to fill in the gap by studying entrepreneurial skills and performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya.

General Objective of the study

The general objective of this study was to examine entrepreneurial skills and performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya:

Specific Objectives

1. To determine the effect of communication skills on performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya
2. To evaluate the effect of innovation skills on performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya

Research Questions

1. How do communication skills affect performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya?
2. How do innovation skills affect performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya?

Stakeholders Theory

Friedman (2006) developed the theory and promoted the concept of a company's success. Hubbard (2009) observed that the theory evaluates the efficiency of a company's policy based on the expectations of the stakeholders. Any company's performance draws interest from several key parties. The main stakeholders interested in the performance of the companies are investors/owners, vendors, clients, and staff

in the case of small and medium enterprises. Stakeholders are therefore worried about the company's behavior and operations to ensure enhanced profitability.

Some of the performance factors that stakeholders are interested in, based on the concept, include sales, liquidity, and returns on investment (Borror, 2019). Investors' interest is in returns on investment, maximizing their wealth. The state is also worried about the profitability of SMEs as it receives income tax from the returns of these firms/companies. In particular, customers are worried about the business capacity to satisfy its growing requirements. In addition, the staff is worried about sales as their productivity is evaluated based on their sales. The theory of stakeholders was important to this research as it highlights the idea of firm performance. Any company's main goal is to maximize earnings and SMEs are not an exception. Based on the theorist argument, the company's achievement is expected by different organizations. In the case of SMEs, there are strong expectations of important stakeholders such as owners, government, vendors, staff, and clients. Therefore, the company management has a function to guarantee that the needs of the stakeholders are met.

Resource Based Firm Theory

According to resource based theory, these may include employee level of education and the entrepreneurs' knowledge and skills, well equipped asset and resources, availability of new and updated technological skills, business with a good reputation and having enough manpower (Barney 2021). He further defined resources into tangible asset which can be accounted for and intangible asset which include organization process, routine, managerial capabilities and the information control measure that can be used by the firm to formulate strategies. According to resource based theory, businesses that have enough resources can do better than the business that don't (Simpeh 2021). Strategic resources are the cornerstone of the business to gain competitive advantage and there by performing better than their competitors in the same sector (Mensah 2023). Where businesses are well equipped and keep on updating with the new technology and changes in the infrastructure facilities, environmental changes and business regulations these will enhance the performance of micro and small enterprises (Barney 2021).

The resource based theory argues that availability of resources determines the performance of a business and in a perfect competition model the firm exists to combine resources to produce an end product (Alvarez & Busenitz 2022) According to the theory, performance between different firms depend on significant measures of unique input and capabilities. The theory prescribes firm resources as the main drives of firm performance and the resources need to be distributed across the firm. Each business possesses different resources and capabilities and the way the business acquires, maintains, applies and develops these resources lead to its superior performance. Performance of business can be associated with a collection of different resources where some are tangible resources and others are intangible (Caldeira, & Ward 2021).

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a graphical or diagrammatic representation of the relationship between variables in a study (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). It helped the researcher to see the proposed relationship between the variables easily and quickly. A conceptual framework's objective categorized and defined ideas relevant to the interactions between them in the research and map. In this research, the independent variables were entrepreneurial skills; while performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County formed the dependent variable.

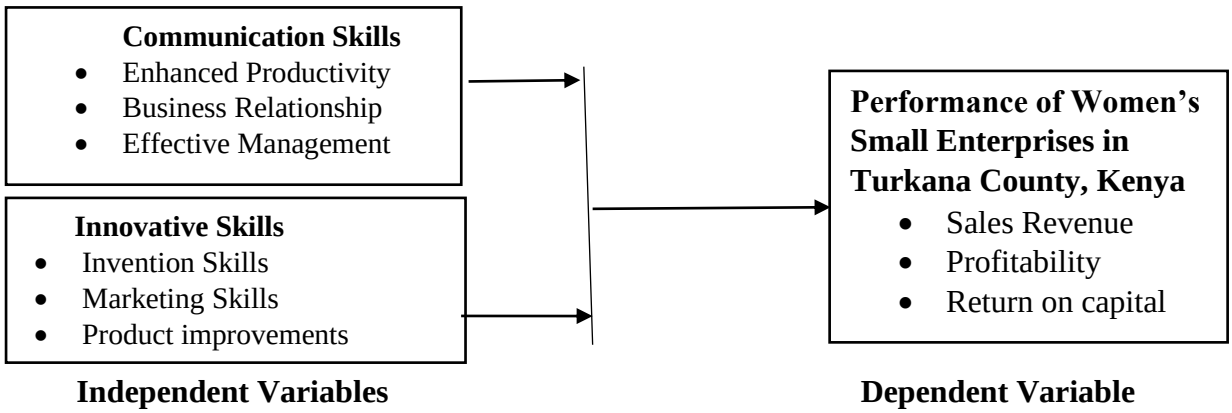

Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework
Source: Research Data 2024

Communication Skills and Performance of Women Small Enterprises

Effective communication is critical for the success of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Women entrepreneurs, like their male counterparts, have access to modern communication technologies but must also master strategic communication to enhance their competitiveness (Williams & Thompson, 2023). Strong communication skills facilitate better decision-making, conflict resolution, and team motivation, which are essential for business success (Davis & Clark, 2022). Improved communication leads to enhanced productivity, stronger business relationships, and effective management within SMEs (Brown & Green, 2024).

According to Davis & Clark (2022), management has the power to directly stimulate companies to succeed. Managers establish employee values, culture, willingness to change, and motivation. They shape the plan of the organization, including its implementation and effectiveness. Leaders play different roles at each stage of the organization. All successful managers have in common that they motivate those around them to use the organization's resources as efficiently as possible.

Innovation Skills and Performance of Women Small Enterprises

Innovation in entrepreneurship encompasses various types, including product, process, marketing, technological, and organizational innovations (Garcia *et al.*, 2021). Recent studies highlight the significance of technological and strategic innovations in driving business success (Jones & Allen, 2023). Entrepreneurs use technology and innovative strategies to enhance their operations, marketing techniques, and organizational structures, thus fostering business growth and adaptation (Lee & Patel, 2022). Understanding these innovation types and their applications is crucial for enhancing the performance and competitiveness of women small enterprises (Kumar & Singh, 2024).

Kumar & Singh (2024) evaluated the effect of innovation capability on export firms' performance and used descriptive research. The research concentrated on particular elements of innovation: operational, allocating resources, capacity for organization, culture, and learning. The results stated that export firms' performance in innovation capabilities has a favorable and substantial impact. Their research, however, concentrated on export companies, while the current research concentrates on SMEs. Karabulut (2019) studied the impact of the strategy for innovation on company results. This research was carried out on Turkish manufacturing companies and gathered information using questionnaires. The results disclosed that more than other dimensions of company performance, the innovation approach explained economic

performance. It was concluded that Turkish production companies' innovation approach caused them to enhance their economic performance. The innovation approach also led to these companies to enhance their performance, efficiency, learning, and growth efficiency of their customers, inner business processes. Majimbo and Namusonge (2020) examined the strategic innovation and performance of an oil marketing firm in Nairobi, Kenya. As a result, the goal of this research was to investigate the effect of strategic innovation on the performance of oil marketing enterprises in Nairobi City. The first particular goal was to assess the influence of product innovation on the performance of oil trading firms. The second specific goal was to assess the influence of market innovation on the performance of oil trading firms. The third specific goal was to investigate the impact of process innovation on the operations of oil marketing organizations.

Saunila (2020) conducted a thorough review of the literature on the potential of SMEs to innovate. The findings of a comprehensive review of small businesses' inventive capacity were presented in this study. As an essential contribution, this study presented a holistic approach to the rising research on innovation in small businesses.

Performance of Women Small Enterprises in Turkana County

Several indicators can be used to measure the performance of an enterprise. These include; number of employees, sales revenue, level of capitalization, gross sales turnover and size of the business among others (Kessy, 2023). A successful business can also be viewed as an enterprise that has been in existence for more than 2 years, has more than 5 employees, has made profits and has expanded in terms of infrastructure and market share (Yazdanfar & Öhman, 2024). Small enterprises performance can further be measured in terms of finance and operations. Financial performance indicators may include: turnover, net profit, and return on investments, sales, employment levels and market share. The operational performance measures include: quality, innovation, resource and capacity utilization, customer satisfaction, continued existence, expanding infrastructure and meeting of personal goals (Saunila, 2023). New product development is also a way of attaining success and measuring (Johnson, 2023).

MATERIALS & METHODS

Research Design

The study adopted descriptive research design. The research design which combines both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. According to Schindler and Orang (2022), descriptive design is one that is concerned with description of phenomena and characteristics associated with a subject population. Descriptive research design was ideal for the study since it described the nature of the respondents and got the description of existing phenomena by asking individuals about their leadership, communication perceptions, attitudes, behaviors or values in small women enterprises.

Target Population

Target population is defined as a universal set of all members of real or hypothetical set of people, events or subjects to which an investigator wishes to generate the results (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The target population of this study was made up of small women entrepreneurs licensed in Turkana County (Turkana County Trade Department Records, 2024). According to Turkana County Trade Department (2024), statistics indicated that there were 1,235 women small enterprises in Turkana County from which the owners were the target population for the study.

Sample size, Sample and Sampling Techniques

Sample size is a proportion of target population taken for study. According to Kothari (2019), the researcher should select

adequate and representative sample for correct generalizations. The study employed Yamane formula (1967) to determine the sample size. Sampling techniques are methods of selecting elements to include in the study. The sampling technique that was used in the study was simple random sampling. With simple random sampling, each unit of the population has an equal probability of inclusion in the sample (Bryman & Bell, 2021). In addition to the purpose of the study and population size, three criteria were specified to determine the appropriate sample size for a simple random sample design: the level of precision, the level of confidence or risk, and the degree of variability in the attribute being measured. Israel, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2022) argue that a sampling error (e) of 10% to 20% of accessible population is acceptable in descriptive research.

The sample size (n) of the study was adjusted using the Yamane formula (1967) and arrived at 302 Respondents. The sample size was 24.5 % of target population. Mugende and Mugende (2003) suggested that a sample size of 10% of target population is adequate for social, business and education researches. Thus, the study sample size was deemed adequate for the study.

Research Instruments

Israel *et al.,* (2022) describe data collection techniques as processes employed by a scientist to collect information from study participants to answer research questions. To collect primary data, the study used the semi-structured questionnaires to collect both quantitative and qualitative information (Cox & Hassard, 2019). Closed-ended questions were used to acquire quantitative data while open-ended questions were used to acquire qualitative data.

A five-scale Likert was used, varying from highly disagreeable (HD), disagreeable (D), neutral (N), agreeable (A), and highly agreeable (HA).

Data Analysis and Presentation

According to Kothari (2019), data analysis procedure includes the process of packaging the collected data putting in order and structuring its main components in a way that the findings can be easily and effectively communicated. Data was edited, categorized, coded, and stored for assessment in the computer. SPSS version 29 was used to process and analyze the gathered data. Both quantitative and qualitative data was collected. Quantitative data was evaluated using descriptive statistics, i.e., mean, standard deviation, frequencies, and percentages, as well as Pearson correlation and regression analysis. The individual regression coefficients were verified to see if the dependent variable (performance of small women enterprises) was influenced by independent variables (entrepreneurial skills; communication skills and innovation skills).

The multiple regression model that aided the analysis of the variable relationships took the follows format:

$Y= \beta o + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon$

Where;

Y Performance of women small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya (dependent variable)

B_0 Constant (Coefficient of Intercept)

$\beta_1 \ldots \beta_2$ Regression Coefficient of the Independent Variables

X_2 Communication Skills

X_3 Innovation Skills

ε Error term

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Response Rate

The researcher distributed 302 questionnaires to the respondents, 230 of them were satisfactorily filled and returned, and 47 questionnaires were incomplete and were considered inadequate for inclusion while 25 questionnaires were not returned. This summed up a response rate of 76% which was considered significant for data analysis.

Table 1: Response Rate

	Frequency	Percent
Filled and Returned	230	76
Partially Filled	47	16
Not Returned	25	8
TOTAL	**302**	**100**

Pilot Results

Reliability of the Research Instrument

To obtain the reliability coefficients, the questionnaire feedback was entered in to the SPSS program and the Cronbach's test approach used to test for reliability of the questionnaire items. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was obtained for all variables; talent management strategies and employee performance. According to Mosong, Komen & Cheboi (2023), the Cronbach's coefficients were equal to or greater than 0.7 and were therefore considered to be acceptable/reliable for the study. Thus, Cronbach's alpha scanning is the approach that was used to assess for internal consistency of each study variable (Serakan, 2019).

The reliability analysis results were as tabulated below;

Table 2: Reliability Analysis

Variables	Number of items	Cronbach alpha	Comment
Communication Skills	4	.710	Reliable
Innovation Skills	4	.702	Reliable
Performance	4	.754	Reliable

From the findings, each variable had a positive correlation. It was established that stronger correlation, between the independent variables, was from the communication skills variable at r = .710, followed by innovation skills variable at r = .702, the dependent variable; Performance of the women's small enterprises in Turkana County was at r=.754. All the coefficients were above the .70 mark and hence the research questionnaire was accepted and adopted for use as the research tool (Cronbach, 1951). The results were in tandem with Maina (2023) who observed that all the independent variables were statistically and significantly associated with the dependent variable at .05 significance level.

Validity of the Research Instrument

Validity considers the extent an instrument asks the right questions relation to the required accuracy and the degree to which obtained data analysis results represents the phenomenon under study (Bratton & Gold, 2023). The supervisor was instrumental in ensuring that the research instrument met the validity threshold. The research instruments for the study were rated according to their effectiveness in sampling significant aspects of the study purpose and fulfillment of the study objectives.

The study measured the content validity with the aim of establishing the extent to which the instrument covered the items sufficient to measure the construct of interest. The item content Validity Index (I–CVI) was determined for measuring content validity.

Table 3: Content Validity

Variables	Number of Items	CVI	Comment
Communication Skills	4	.586	Reliable
Innovation Skills	4	.527	Reliable
Performance of Women's Small Enterprises	4	.580	Reliable

According to Shabir *et al.,* (2018), content validity index values are lie between 0 and 1 while the CVI values of .5 and above are considered reliable for measuring the research instrument validity. From the analysis, the content validity indices were

all above .5 and therefore considered reliable.

Descriptive Statistics

Performance of Women's Small Enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya.

The study dependent variable was performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya. The analysis findings extract on the basis of the descriptive statistics was as presented below;

Table 4: Performance of Women's Small Enterprises

Items	N	Mean	S.D.
Profit margins increase due to owners' entrepreneurial skills	230	4.62587	.74789
Entrepreneurship skills have increased the number of new products introduced	230	4.19871	.75201
Entrepreneurial skills have led to an increase in business market share	230	4.02546	.82651
Owners' networking skills have expanded the business which now satisfies customers more	230	4.31247	.75842
AVERAGE		**4.29063**	**.77121**

There was evidence of the respondents' strong agreement with the statement on whether profit margins increased due to owners' entrepreneurial skills with a mean of 4.62587 and a standard deviation of .74789. The responses on the statement on whether entrepreneurship skills have increased the number of new products introduced generated a mean of 4.19871 and a standard deviation of .75201 being an indication that the respondents strongly agreed with the statement. The respondents' feedback on the third statement as to whether entrepreneurial skills have led to an increase in business market share indicated that the respondents were in agreement at a mean of 4.02546, and standard deviations of .82651. And finally, as to whether owners' networking skills had expanded the business which satisfied customers more, the respondents strongly agreed with the statement at 4.31247 mean and .75842 standard deviation. From the respondents' reactions on the dependent variable, the respondents strongly agreed with the statements at an average mean of 4.29063 at a standard deviation of .77121.

Communication Skills and Performance

On the influence of communication skills on performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya, the findings were as presented below;

Table 5: Communication Skills and Performance

Statement	N	Mean	S.D.
Does effective communication with customers enhance customer satisfaction	230	4.18791	.76342
How well do you feel communication within your team is managed	230	4.20045	.66748
Do you think effective communication contributes to your enterprise's success	230	4.21309	.75401
Communication skills are effective in achieving your business goals	230	4.24692	.75333
AVERAGE		**4.21209**	**.73456**

The results indicated that the respondents strongly agreed with the statement on whether effective communication with customers enhance customer satisfaction with a mean of 4.18791 and a standard deviation of .76342. The statement on whether the respondents felt communication within their teams is managed returned a strong agreement as feedback with a mean of 4.20045 and a standard deviation of .66748. The respondents were further in strong agreement on whether effective communication contributed to their enterprise's success at means 4.21309 and standard deviations of .75401. Finally, the respondents strongly agreed that their communication skills were effective in achieving the business goals at 4.24692 mean and standard deviation of .75333. The respondents, on aggregate, strongly agreed

that communication skills significantly influenced performance of their businesses in Turkana County, Kenya at a mean of 4.21209 and a standard deviation of .73456.

Innovation Skills and Performance

The last independent variable, innovation skills, had its data analyzed and presented as below:

Table 6: Innovation Skills and Performance

Statement	N	Mean	S. D
Does effective Creativity and Innovation enhance customer satisfaction?	230	3.53101	1.60101
Do you frequently employ Creativity and Innovation in your enterprise?	230	2.87356	1.73516
Do you think effective Creativity and Innovation contributes to your enterprise's success?	230	4.01572	1.06248
Does Creativity and Innovation boost your business goals?	230	3.99394	1.12196
AVERAGE		**3.60356**	**1.38015**

The respondents agreed that effective creativity and innovation enhanced customer satisfaction, with a mean of 3.53101 and a standard deviation of 1.60101. The statement whether respondents frequently employed creativity and innovation in their enterprises, received a disapproval with mean of 2.87356 and a standard deviation of 1.73516. The respondents were in agreement that effective creativity and innovation contributed to their enterprise's success at means 4.01572, and standard deviations of 1.06248. Finally, the respondents were in agreement that creativity and innovation boost their business goals at 3.99394 mean and 1.12196 standard deviation. The overall average was that the respondents agreed that innovation skills influenced performance of their businesses in Turkana County at an average mean of 3.60356 and a standard deviation of 1.38015.

Correlation Analysis

The findings on the correlation among variables was extracted in a Pearson correlation matrix as shown below:

Table 7: Correlation Matrix

		Communication Skills	Innovation Skills	Performance
Communication Skills	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	230		
Innovation Skills	Pearson Correlation	.213	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.138		
	N	230	230	
Performance	Pearson Correlation	.758*	.695	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013	.011	
	N	230	230	230

Correlation is significant at .01 level (2-tailed)

From the data analysis results, the study reported a statistically significant correlation between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The correlation matrix table indicated that there was a relevant relationship between performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya and the independent variables (communication skills and innovation skills). In a descending order, the findings indicated that communication skills had a higher perfect and statistically significant correlation of .758; $p<.01$; and innovation skills at .695, $p<.01$ respectively. The findings agreed with Musyimi and Mwasiaji (2023) that entrepreneurial skills positively and strongly influence performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya. The independent

variables were hence used to predict the dependent variable accordingly.

Goodness of Fit

The study used the F-statistic (ANOVA) to measure the goodness of fit of the model. The ANOVA results were extracted from the analyzed data and presented as shown below;

Table 4.15: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	f	Sig.
1	Regression	23.425	3	7.808	10.301	.002[b]
	Residual	171.364	226	.758		
	Total	194.789	229			
a. Dependent variable: Performance						
. Predictors: (Constant); Communication Skills and Innovation Skills.						

From the ANOVA table above, the regression model was statistically significant and hence used to predict the dependent variable. To find out the influence of independent variables on performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya, the results aided in fitting a regression model to the data and it was found to be statistically significant with the F-calculated value being greater than the F-critical value (F (3, 226) = 2.65, p-value = .002).

Model Summary

The coefficient of determination R-Square) was used as a measure of explanatory power of the independent variables in explaining the dependent variable.

Table 8: Model Summary

Model	R	R-Square	Adj. R-Square	Std. Error of Estimate
1	.835[a]	.697	.695	.31775
a. Predictors: (Constant), Communication skills and innovation skills.				

The model summary results revealed that the coefficient of determination (R^2) was .697 of performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya, which implied that the independent variables (Communication skills and innovation skills) explained 69.7% of the dependent variable (performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya). The R-Square value showed that there was a positive correlation between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The R-square of .697 showed that independent variables in exclusion of the constant, explained the change in performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya, by 69.7%, the remaining percentage to 100% (i.e. 30.3%) was be explained by other factors not in this study.

Simple Regression for Communication Skills and Performance

The study used the simple linear regression model to measure the relationship between communication skills and performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya and the results presented as indicated in the table below;

Table 9: Regression Coefficients for Communication Skills

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		β	Std. Error	βeta		
1	(Constant)	13.541	.015		3.257	.000[b]
	Communication Skills	.610	.032	.607	4.971	.002

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

The table above presented the relationship between the variable communication skills and performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya, with the highest positive beta coefficient value of .610 with a p-value =0.002<0.05 and a constant of 13.541 with a p-value=.000<.0.05. The study concluded that both the constant and communication skills contributed significantly to the model. The model was therefore accepted for use in providing needed information to predict performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya, from communication skills data. The regression equation was then presented as follows;

$Y = 13.541 + .610X_1$

Where:

Y Performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya

X_1 Communication Skills

Simple Regression for Innovation Skills and Performance

The study used the simple linear regression model to measure the relationship between innovation skills and performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya and the results presented as indicated in the table below;

Table 10: Regression Coefficients for Innovation Skills

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		β	Std. Error	βeta		
1	(Constant)	13.541	.054		3.257	.000[b]
	Innovation Skills	.382	.061	.277	2.876	.007

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

The relationship between the innovation skills variable and performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County revealed a positive beta coefficient of .382 with a p-value of .007<.05 and a constant of 13.541 and p-value = .000<.05. It was concluded that innovation skills together with the constant significantly contributed to the model with the lowest coefficients. The model was however considered statistically viable to be employ for the provision of required information for the prediction of the dependent variable (performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya) from available data on the innovation skills variable. The regression equation was then presented as follows;

$Y = 13.541 + .382X_2$

Where:

Y Performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya

X_2 Innovation Skills

Multiple Regression Analysis

The study then adopted a multiple regression model to measure the relationship among the variables (Takwi *et al.,* 2020). The multiple regression model below was a combined model from the simple regression models per variable above.

Table 11: Regression Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		β	Std. Error	βeta		
1	(Constant)	13.541	.015		3.257	.000[a]
	Communication Skills	.610	.032	.607	4.971	.002
	Innovation Skills	.382	.061	.277	2.876	.007

a. P<.05, 95% Confidence level, N=230

The independent variables in the study fully explained the dependent variable (Performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya). The following regression equation was established from the analysis:

$$Y= 13.541 +.610X_1 + .382X_2$$

The regression analysis table above indicated that communication skills with a p-value of .032 was a more influential variable of the study to the dependent variable. The table further revealed that, holding other variables constant, Performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, had a constant or intercept value of 13.541. The regression results also indicated that a single unit increase in communication skills would lead to an increase in Performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya by a .610 factor increase while innovation skills by a .382 factor increase in Performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya. According to Shabir *et al*., (2018), the model was concluded to be important for purposes of the study in providing relevant information for the forecasting of the Performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya, from the study predictor variables.

Discussion of the findings

Communication Skills and Performance

The study results revealed that communication skills had a coefficient value of .610 at a p-value of .002 at .05 significance level. The results revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between communication skills variable and Performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya. This relationship was the highest of all the three independent variables.

Innovation Skills and Performance

The third study variable was the innovation skills and performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya. The analysis results established the weakest relationship with a coefficient of .382 coefficient value and a p-value of .007 at 5% significance level. These results revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between innovation skills variable and Performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya.

CONCLUSIONS

Communication Skills and Performance

From the study findings, the researcher concluded that the results revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between the communication skills variable and performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya. This relationship was the highest of all the three independent variables.

Innovation Skills and Performance

The analysis results established that this variable (Innovation Skills) had the least influence on the dependent variable (performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya). These results revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between innovation skills variable and performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made with regard to the gaps identified from the data analysis results/findings:

Communication Skills and Performance

The findings on this variable returned the highest positive verdict, on the influence on performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya. From this weight of the influence of this variable to the dependent variable, the researcher recommended that the respondents ensure that their communication skills are well sharpened for the benefit of the businesses.

Innovation Skills and Performance

The findings of this variable from the data analyzed revealed the least influence on performance of women's small enterprises in Turkana County, Kenya. However, that there was need to ensure that the entrepreneurs employed effective creativity

and improve their innovation skills to enhance customer satisfaction, to frequently employ creativity and innovation in their enterprises and finally, ensure that this creativity and innovation boost and drive them to achieve their business goals.

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