

Contribution of Business Training Services on the Entrepreneurial Capacity of Businesswomen in Mbeere South Sub County, Embu County, Kenya.

Lillian Lwaya¹⁾, Kennedy K. Mutundu²⁾, Serah Kimaru-Muchai³⁾

¹⁾ Doctoral Programme in Development Studies, Mount Kenya University, Kenya

^{2,3)} Social and Development Studies, Mount Kenya University, Kenya

*Corresponding Author

Email: liana.lwaya87@gmail.com

Abstract

This study sought to understand the impact of business training on women proprietors and managers of businesses in Mbeere South Sub County in Embu County, Kenya. A mixture of quantitative and qualitative techniques was adopted to measure the impact of the non-financial business development service on women entrepreneurs. In this study, the descriptive research design was employed and was based on the expectancy, performance and human development theories. The target population consisted of 813 women who were running and managing micro businesses in three major primary markets, namely Kiritiri, Gategi and Mutuobare. Purposive sampling was used to select the markets and thereafter, systematic random sampling and purposive sampling techniques were employed in the selection of 268 respondents. Structured questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data, whereas focus group discussions and key informant interviews provided qualitative and in-depth information in the study. Quantitative data were analyzed through the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 27 using descriptive and inferential statistics while qualitative data were organized according to themes and presented in narrative form. The findings revealed that business training and entrepreneurial capacity had a correlation of $R^2=0.85$ and $p < .005$, thus there was a strong correlation between the two, meaning that this form of training was essential for the creation and efficient administrative control of both new and existing enterprises. This study concluded that training services needed to be appropriate and demand driven, and this needed to be provided in the short and medium terms. Additionally, there was need to tackle the affordability, awareness and post training follow up barriers that hindered the effectiveness of this business support service delivery.

Keywords: Business Training, Entrepreneurial Capacity, Women Entrepreneurs, Non-financial Business Development Services (NF-BDS), Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs)

INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) point out the importance of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the growth of economies and in driving social progress. The recognition of June 27 as the global MSME Day further evidences the critical contribution of small and medium-sized businesses to economies all over the world. Women entrepreneurship in particular, is becoming more common in the small and medium business sector, leading to more diverse business ideas and helping solve socio-economic challenges worldwide ((World Bank, 2021)).

Globally, women-led MSMEs play a key role in the attainment of the SDGs, especially in combating vulnerability, working towards gender equality, building a balanced economy, and inspiring job creation and innovative ideas. However, women micro entrepreneurs often have a harder time since they are less likely to make as much money or grow as fast as male business owners ((Raman et al., 2022) The COVID-19 pandemic worsened these problems, especially for women who work in rural areas, and for those running hospitality and physical businesses without an online presence (Liu et al., 2021).

Research shows that 31% to 38% of the businesses in developing regions are owned by women (World Bank, 2020). Notably, in Sub-Saharan Africa, more women than men are starting new businesses (Asiedu et al., 2023). However, women-owned businesses make about 34% less

profit than men, showing an urgent need to remove the barriers holding women back from growing sustainable and profitable businesses.

In Kenya, small and medium-sized businesses employ more than 15 million people and help make up about a third of the country's economic output/GDP. However, women own less than 30% of these businesses and have to deal with stronger competition and slow enterprises' growth (MSME Report, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic put extra pressure on small and medium-sized businesses, primarily putting extra pressure on already struggling women owned businesses (Liu et al., 2021). The high mortality rates of small businesses, especially those run by women, are often caused by lack of skills or knowledge or market access constraints (Lwesya et al., 2021).

Despite the Kenyan Government efforts and sectoral policy support to the MSME sector since 1965, the small businesses in Kenya have not registered a reciprocal, sustained and profitable growth trajectory. The MSEs Act No. 55 of 2012 aims to mainstream gender in MSE programmes, but women entrepreneurs still struggle with challenges like access to business training services (Embu County Government, 2022). These interventions serve to equip businesswomen with the skills and capabilities to set up and handle their enterprises, manage records, decrease expenses and design business plans on a day to day basis. Focusing on financial barriers only misses the vital role of non-financial business development services (NF-BDS), which are crucial for helping small businesses overcome larger systemic barriers (World Bank, 2021).

According to the Human Development Theory UNDP (1990), the imparting of knowledge and skills to women entrepreneurs through training programs is a salient component in the discourse of human capital development. This study regards the proposition that women entrepreneurs who would have been trained in business management would certainly show a greater degree of efficiency, as well as productivity, than those who would not have been trained in business management. Non-monetary business enhancement services such as business training, this study advocates, should be provided to women-owned and managed small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Kenya to enhance their sustainability and growth. Through this essential and strategic investment, stakeholders would be better positioned to assist women in launching and expanding their enterprises, enabling them to bolster the economy at the district level as well as the entire country.

Poor climatic conditions that are a characteristic of arid and semi-arid regions (ASALs) exacerbate the poverty condition in the Mbeere South Sub-county. The proportion of resource poor people in the area is 64.74-percent above the 28.3 percentage in the county. This means that finding new ways for the region's rural women to earn money off-farm, primarily through starting MSEs, is significant to helping those are most in need of mechanisms to pull out of vulnerability. However, many micro and small businesses have difficulty growing and thriving because they do not have enough access to essential entrepreneurial non-financial services like business training, a functional level NF-BDS which is critical in the establishment and effective management of businesses. The ILO Get Ahead training Programme (2013-2016) found that many women entrepreneurs in Embu County did not have access to the necessary business support, despite the enactment of policies like the MSE Bill No. 55 of 2012 that aims to give support to small businesses in Kenya. The Gender Innovation Lab (2019) and GEM (2023) found that women entrepreneurs often feel less confident and struggle more with business tasks/operations and managing staff, which can hinder the overall sustainability and success of their enterprises. Embu County Integrated Development Plan-CIDP (2023-2027) has indicated areas of gaps in training and mentorship programmes that women are undertaking to acquire the necessary skills.

Literature concurs that business training is a supportive non-financing enterprise facility essential that women entrepreneurs require in order to succeed in business. Leauseged et al.

(2020) observed that women entrepreneurs receiving training have higher chances of remaining committed towards their businesses and better performance than women entrepreneurs who do not. Furthermore, giving women better access to entrepreneurial training can heighten their confidence and help them gain better managerial skills, which can go a long way in helping them overcome some of the challenges they experience compared to men International Financial Corporation (IFC) (2020). However, this important support service is not given enough attention, especially in remote rural areas where women entrepreneurs often face difficulties getting the skills and knowledge they need to help their businesses grow. In Mbeere South Sub County, which is a semi-arid ecological zone, equipping the local women with training skills to start and grow their own businesses, get value from them and hence improving their lives. This area, as earlier noted has a high poverty rate compared to the average county rate as well as a non-financial business development services provision gap, making it ideal for analyzing the place of business training in sustainable women entrepreneurship. The findings will be particularly useful for the local businesswomen, and will be crucial contributors to the larger county, national and global goals aimed at creating more jobs, reducing poverty and achieving universal gender equality.

Training, as a functional level BDS, is needed to impart management and business operation skills and it's very central to business success. According to ILO (2017), entrepreneurship training is a process of imparting the skills and expertise needed to entrepreneurs so as to start and operate a business, successfully. In essence, these interventions serve to equip businesswomen with the skills and capacities to set up and manage their enterprises, on a daily basis. According to the Human Development Theory UNDP (1990), the imparting of knowledge and skills to women entrepreneurs through training programs is a salient component in the discourse of human capital development. Through training, it is envisaged that the women entrepreneurs who would have received business management skills will certainly exhibit efficiency and more productivity compared to non-recipients. For instance, Moraa & Mainah (2023) a study by on the factors affecting the performance of women enterprises in Isiolo County, showed that over 80% of the respondents agreed that Entrepreneurial training had improved the performance of their businesses. However, many rural women entrepreneurs' have been adversely hit by lack/insufficient entrepreneurship training services which are mostly limited in scope and content and therefore are often unable to provide business plans and growth projections to attract banks and investors(GIZ, 2023). This was demonstrated too by Gachimbi, (2018) who observed that lack of managerial training was among the challenges that led to business closures of female owned enterprises in Juja. Financial obstacles, as explained by Achuti (2025) were noted to be a chief hindrance to the accessibility of NF-BDS in rural areas. Many women entrepreneurs in the rural areas are unable to access and use training programs and marketplace services due to affordability issues. This is more so in areas where these services are not subsidized or one has to pay transportation costs for in-person trainings.

Female entrepreneurs juggle a lot, at the home and business fronts. As such, training programs need to be structured to accommodate mentorship components so as to broaden the thoughts, improve the confidence and skill competencies of these women entrepreneurs. As per Whitlock et al. (2023) training programs infused with mentorship skills enabled female entrepreneur beneficiaries to experience a higher success rate in business expansion than non-beneficiaries. These kind of enriched programs produce mentally mature businesswomen capable of tackling existing and emerging business issues with much ease. Without ongoing mentorship services and market entry support given to women, women are not given better opportunities to develop sustainable businesses (Esther Omosa et al., 2025). Existing South African studies that demonstrate how entrepreneurial mindset skills training increased adolescent girls and young women's understanding with respect to entrepreneurship confirm the need for such training initiatives(Smart & UNICEF, 2020). The same can be said of the incorporation of digital skills

training in the entrepreneurship teaching curriculum. These skills are key for the success of online delivery of entrepreneurship modules. This in turn acts as a remedy for the expenses incurred during a classroom set up kind of training (Sitaridis & Kitsios, 2024).

Although women entrepreneurs largely need training services to bolster their capacity development; affordability barriers, as well as narrow training curricula challenges and logistics among others, still hinder their ability to continue learning (Felicia Siegris & Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (We-Fi), 2022). For these reasons, there is a need to develop specific interventions to tackle these obstacles, from government funding and low-cost educational programs to digital skills education initiatives. There is also the need to focus on the quality of service provided; this includes evaluation on the awareness levels of these programmes among the businesswomen, as well as the suitability and appropriateness of the services provided vis a vis the needs of the trainees. This has not been explicitly tackled by the reviewed literature. According to ISA et al. (2021) assessing the usefulness of a BDS Programme is very central to the resultant impacts thereof, for example training programmes should be gendered, considering the diverse challenges that each gender encounters in their respective contexts. Similarly, the Performance theory, which this variable is also anchored on, posits that along the performance achievements journey, a time for reflection is needed where one observes present performance, notes accomplishments and analyzes areas of improvements (Marshall et al., 2024). The Performance theory holds that the outcomes of initiatives must be measurable. In this regard, the reviewed studies do not show the nexus between NF-BDS provision and the measurable quantifiable impacts on enterprise growth e.g. growth in sales and profits, enterprise expansion but dwelt on the short term impacts like proper record keeping, customer service etc. This study will strive to fill this gap.

RESEARCH METHODS

The study used a mixed-methods design, which is combination of the quantitative and qualitative research methodological strategies. Mixed-methods studies are especially handy when handling complex phenomena because they combine numerical data with the abstract experience that qualitative knowledge (Dawadi et al., 2021). This strategy enables a better comprehension of the research question of which both quantitative and qualitative data give a statistical trend and get a deeper contextual insight to accomplish a triangulation that advances validity and reliability in understanding (Hamilton & Ravenscroft, 2020).

Regarding the research design, descriptive research design was implemented, since it is appropriate in researching the relations and trends of variables within the same setting without altering the research environment (Ghanad, 2023). The descriptive research design was effective in cases where the objective is to record and comprehend the phenomena and was considered the right choice to investigate the interaction between BDS and the entrepreneurial potential of the female entrepreneur. The sample was in Mbeere South Sub-County, a part within Improve County where many micro-entrepreneurs were without adequate access to business resources of the business. The approach taken to select the location is because of its distinct socio-economic features that place it as a perfect place to examine the role of non-financial BDS. Willie (2024) argues that the population of the study is to be representative of the target area under investigation. The three markets picked Kiritiri, Gategi and Mutuobare were selected according to their size and their geographical representation, so that they could have diversity that could be considered representative of women business owners.

Table 1: Sampled Market Statistics

Market	Total microenterprises (both male & women owned)	Women microenterprises	Market Location
Kiritiri	595	417	Mavuria Ward
Gategi	330	231	Mwea Ward
Mutuobare	236	165	Kiambeere Ward
Totals	1161	813	

Systematic random sampling method was used to choose a sample of 244 respondents or 30 percent of all the women micro-entrepreneurs in the selected markets. Implying that every entrepreneur stands equal opportunities to play, resulting in the improved representativeness of the sample (Mostafa & Ahmad, 2018). For the 11 key informants were selected using purposive sampling technique to provide expert information on the local business environment as well as provision of non-financial BDS. Purposive sampling can be used to select the types of people that have particular knowledge pertinent to the questions of the study (Patton, 2002).

Table 2: Sample Distribution

Market	Women micro entrepreneurs	Proportionate Sample size	Percentage Estimates	Proportion	
				Those Without BDS Exposure	BDS Beneficiaries @ 30%
Kiritiri	417	125	30%	87	38
Gategi	231	69	30%	48	21
Mutuobare	165	51	30%	36	15
Total	813	245		171	74

The study employed a combination of semi-structured questionnaires, key informant interview schedules, and a focus group discussion guide to collect data. Florida & Bhattacharjee (2012) note that the application of a combination of data collection instruments enable researchers to gain a complete picture regarding the subject of the research. The questionnaires were to reflect not only the quantitative information about the access and consumption of non-financial BDS by the businesswomen, but also the qualitative experience of the businesswomen. The major interviews and focus groups discussions which involved the key informants played a critical role in tracking the in-depth contextual variables that shaped BDS uptake and effect.

Regarding validity and reliability of the research tools, the instruments were tested at Masinga Sub County's Kivaa Market, Machakos County with similar attributes to those that are in the research area. The pilot test plays an important role in preparing data collection instruments and establishment of whether they measure what they are designed to measure (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Also, the questionnaires reliability was checked with the help of Cronbach alpha, the results are 0.858 which exceeds the standard of 0.7 (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). This was a very high level of internal consistency proved that the research instruments were sufficient to use in the main study.

Techniques in the analysis of data involved both descriptive and inferential statistics such as means and standard deviation, regression analysis and T –tests with the help of SPSS version 27. Through these methods, it was possible to identify the pattern and correlated cases between BDS and entrepreneurial capacity (Field, 2009). The qualitative data was transcribed and categorized into themes from which inferences were drawn and triangulated with quantitative data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Contribution of Business Training Services to Micro Entrepreneurs’ Capacity

a) Business Training Access

Majority of the BDS beneficiaries had attended training on business (83%) while the remaining minority (17%) had not taken part in this particular BDS. This high percentage of training services beneficiaries suggested that most entrepreneurs recognized the need to enhance their business knowledge and skills for business sustainability and growth. This is in line with Zogning (2023) finding that having access to structure training improves the operational efficiency and business performance of women entrepreneurs. It is hypothesized that the remaining minority of non-attendees could ultimately be challenged by lack of skills on business management and hence negatively affecting their business growth and overall competitiveness. This is in relation to the fact that entrepreneurship training is a functional level BDS, offering essential and basic business management skills, which are critical in the establishment and seamless running of startups.

b) Business Skills Gained

The findings revealed that the majority of respondents (54%) acquired financial, investment and book keeping skills (Table 1). This suggests that financial literacy and record-keeping are critical areas of focus in business training programs and are likely viewed as essential for business sustainability in the study area.

Table 3: Training Skills Acquired

Skill	Frequency	% Frequency	% Cumulative Frequency
Managerial	8	15	15
Customer service	13	24	39
Financial/ investment/ book	29	54	93
Risk Management	4	7	100
Total	54	100	

Source: Research Data (2025)

Proper bookkeeping enables entrepreneurs to track income and expenses, manage cash flows, and make informed financial decisions, which are fundamental for business growth. However, despite its high acquisition rate, the fact that nearly half of the respondents lack fundamental skills in bookkeeping indicates a gap in financial management that potentially precludes business growth and sustainability. Additionally, 24% of the respondents acquired customer service skills which equips entrepreneurs with competencies in handling customer complaints, improving service delivery, and enhancing customer retention, which are key to maintaining a loyal client base. Tanusha (2022) asserted that strong customer relations boost business growth and competitiveness, but relatively low uptake in this area might be that most women tend to take lower value and emphasis on customer experiences compared to financial control, despite both being crucial for business success. Furthermore, 15% of the respondents gained managerial skills, implying that a relatively small proportion of entrepreneurs were trained in leadership, business strategy, and organizational management. Managerial skills are vital for business decision-making, employee supervision, strategic planning, and operational efficiency. This type of skill was envisaged as critical in the study area considering that, as earlier noted, 91% of the businesswomen were managing the enterprises on their own. Therefore, there was an urgent need for training in leadership and strategic planning so as to scale up operations and effectively use the resources at the entrepreneurs’ disposal. Subsequently, it could be deduced that the low percentage of managerial skills beneficiaries suggested that entrepreneurs may be facing challenges in effectively managing their businesses beyond daily operations and may require additional training in business leadership, delegation, and long-term planning. This is very important considering the findings by Bhatia-Kalluri (2021) that showed that

businesswomen who received managerial skills training in a randomized controlled trial in Ethiopia improved their business practices, sales and profits.

Moreover, only 7% received risk management training, indicating widespread challenges amongst the businesswomen in identifying and mitigating business risks like economic downturns, supply chain disruptions, or changing market dynamics (Imdad, 2022). Risk management is essential in mitigating financial losses, handling economic fluctuations, and developing strategies to navigate entrepreneurial uncertainties. The findings also corroborate Vroom's Expectancy Theory, which states that tasks that are likely to produce desired results will lead to an individual's motivation to perform tasks. Women seem to participate at a high level in financial training as they see it as something that is directly beneficial for them, and low participation in areas such as risk management and leadership could be viewed as stemming from not knowing or not feeling confident that these skills add value in the short term. Additionally, Novanda et al. (2021) pointed out that gendered norms and household obligations can restrict women's participation in some forms of training, which contributes to creating these patterns.

c) Business Training Provider

Majority of those who accessed this service did so through NGOs/ MFIs/Private companies (61%), followed by Government agencies in particular the County government, Kenya Revenue Authority and the Micro and Small Enterprises Authority (MSEA) as indicated in Figure 2.

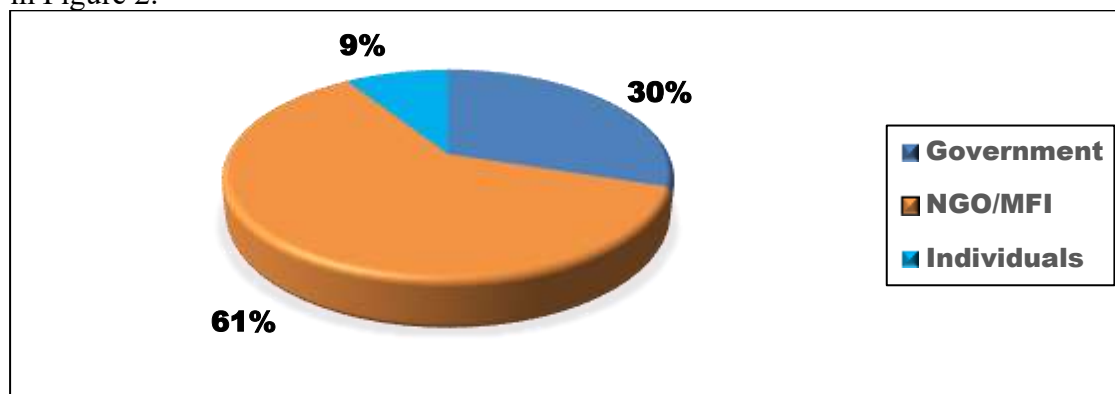


Figure 1: Type of BDS Provider

Source: Research Data (2025)

It was noted that MFIs/ Saccos were very vibrant in provision of training services and especially in matters recordkeeping, Savings and Investments. This could be denoted to mean that over and above the main motive of sustainability for the women enterprises, there was the ultimate need for the MFIs to consolidate and cascade their client base. Ruwan (2015) observed that Microfinance programs, including microcredit and business development services (BDS), are acknowledged for assisting enterprises in overcoming hurdles, as the availability of financial resources and support in skill development can enable start-ups and promote growth. This scenario was echoed by the local key informants and FGDs;

The findings mirror assertions of the Human Development Theory (UNDP, 1990), where the main role that MFIs/Saccos perform in delivering business training services matches the core concept of Human Development Theory. The theory emphasizes human capital investments, including training and financial literacy, as catalysts for improved entrepreneurial abilities. MFIs/Saccos, through their provision of training services, help women achieve financial inclusion and complete human development progress.

d) Reasons for not attending business Training

Disinterest was the dominant reason cited by those entrepreneurs who did not attend or ignored training or believed that their knowledge was adequate or that they found the trainings to be too basic for their entrepreneurial levels (Figure 3).

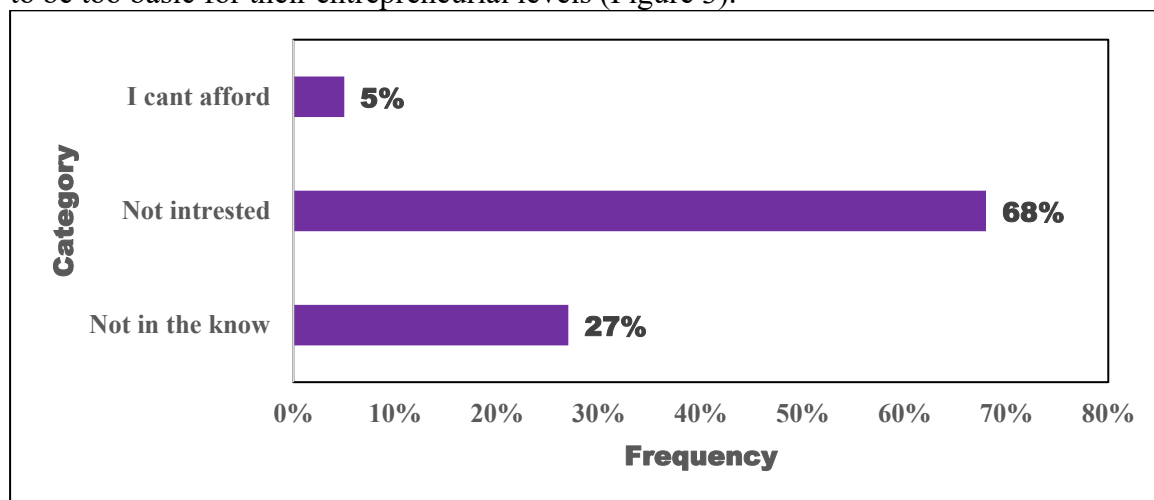


Figure 2: Reasons for non-attendance of Business Training

This finding is consistent with Bhatia-Kalluri (2021) who reported that the main reason for low training uptake in developing economies is the sense of having enough knowledge to perform tasks and being unaware of the value of training. This in line with Vroom's Expectancy Theory (1964) in that people will perform any activity that they think will produce desirable outcomes; in this case, the sampled businesswomen did not expect business training to lead to a worthwhile outcome. This was despite the assertions of the Performance theory that there are core ingredients (uptake of the service) that must be input for results to be achieved (Enterprise performance). Similarly, (UNDP, 2022)opined that most providers supporting women entrepreneurs, assume that all women are looking for the basics, when the truth is that a sizeable number of them have achieved a degree of development and are only challenged by lack of advanced support that holds them from developing further. In this regard, some NF-BDS providers do not categorize entrepreneurs in terms of their education levels, business growth level as well as enterprise needs, hence failing to achieve intended objectives. This claim is similar to that proposed by Moraa & Mainah (2023) that training that is targeted to women's specific business needs contribute to improving the decision-making and sustainability of micro-enterprises. International Financial Corporation (IFC) (2020)on the same breath remarked that providers need to make these training programs attractive to more women entrepreneurs by blending them with other riders like childcare and transportation. These points would help relieve some of the challenges for affordability, as described by Francis et al. (2021) and which this study found to affect 5% of respondents. While this percentage was small, it pointed to the absence of free training programs within the respondents' operational areas or the adoption of digital learning platforms, which would help greatly. This is especially important for people running small, low-margin businesses, who have to purchase training programs, or who have to pay for voluntary training programs along with travel expenses.

There was no doubt of the necessity for awareness campaigns to illustrate the merits of undertaking business training and how it can improve business performance, profitability, and long-term sustainability. Findings suggested that there was a gap which revealed that 27% of respondents did not access business training due to a lack of awareness. This indicated that a lack of robust information dissemination on business training programs was a problem. These perception-related barriers to access tend to result in challenges of record-keeping, enterprise management, and service provision to customers.

This was the basis for the campaign that there was no question of a need for awareness campaigns that target the specific needs of entrepreneurs and for finding access to community-based training. From a theoretical perspective, this finding is reinforced by Expectancy Theory, which suggests that entrepreneurs engage in training whenever they expect that the effort (attending the training) will result in better performance (increased business activity) which, in turn, will lead to positive outcomes (profits; empowerment). Furthermore, the Human Development and Performance Theories regard the knowledge and skills gained as crucial in the process of empowerment and in the case of people (especially women) from disadvantaged circumstances, they are able to make informed choices to improve their circumstances.

e) Level of Satisfaction with Business Training

The sampled respondents rated their satisfaction levels with Business training, and the following were the findings as shown in Figure 4;

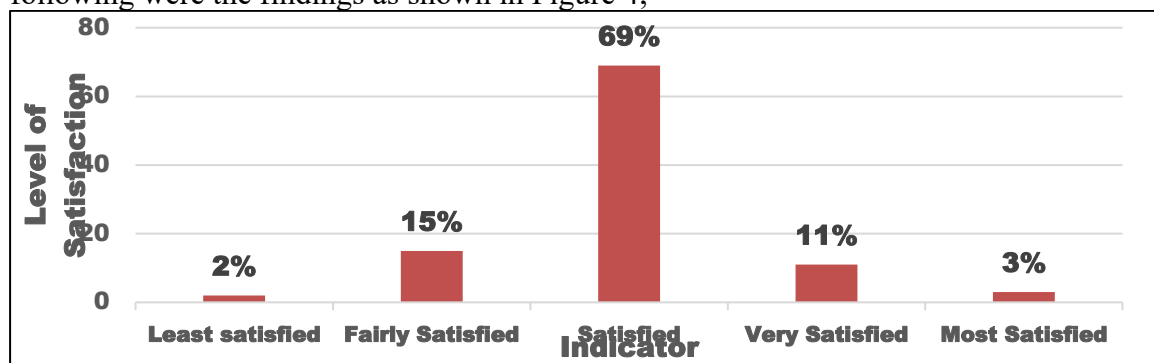


Figure 3: Business Training Satisfaction

According to GIZ (2023), support to individual women entrepreneurs, such as training or increasing business management skills, has an important role in augmenting their capability to make the most of economic opportunities. This is more so if the training is aligned with the aspirations of the recipients. In this regard, the study findings showed that 83% of the respondents were generally satisfied with the provision of business training possibly transforming their business approaches or contributing significantly to their entrepreneurial growth. 2% felt that the training services did not meet their expectations or needs as fronted by Adikaram and Razik (2023) and augmented by Raman et al. (2022) that business training will be most effective if customized to fit the context of the participants and their own specific needs (and barriers) in this respect. These people interpreted the content as being unhelpful, inappropriate, or being too elementary to their organizational requirements. This signifies the possibility of the weaknesses in the effectiveness of the appraisal of the contents or the relevance of the training to the duties of the trainees. The study findings align with the confirmative literature on inadequacy of business training on enhancement of the potential of women entrepreneurs. This being the case, the areas of dissatisfaction highlight the need of more precise training programs to make sure that all entrepreneurs utilize the services that are extended.

'I am confident in my approach to dealing with my clients. The skills gained from customer relations training have helped to increase my clientele base and profits, thankfully. However, am still hoping for better markets so as to widen my customer catchment further and also diversify my products to meet the dynamics of customer needs and wants' (FGD Participant, Gategi Market)

Regression Analysis results

The regression analysis showed that 85% of variance in entrepreneurial capacity was explained by business training (Table 2).

Table 4: Model Summary for Business Training

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.923	0.85	0.849	0.21438

The model implied that 85% variability in entrepreneurial capacity was explained by business training while the remaining variability was explained by the other factors not covered under this study.

Additionally, The F value of 298.88 and p value of 0.000 implied that the regression model was statistically significant as showed in Table 3.

Table 5: ANOVA for business training

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	63.59	1	63.59	298.88	0.000
Residual	11.16	212	0.052		
Total	74.75	213			

Regression Coefficient Analysis

The model's effectiveness is further supported by the coefficients for Business Training. This baseline level of entrepreneurial capacity when Business Training is zero is interpreted as with intercept (0.539). The coefficient of Business Training (0.979) showed that for every unit increase in Business Training, the entrepreneurial capacity increased by 0.979 units keeping other factors constant

Table 6: Coefficients for Business Training

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.	Exp(B)
Intercept	0.539	0.124	-	4.352	0.000	-
Business Training	0.979	0.046	0.938	21.441	0.000	-

Business Training had a very strong positive effect on the entrepreneurial capacity, accounting for nearly 94% variance in the dependent variable. The p-value and t-value; 0.000 and 21.441 respectively showed that this effect was statistically significant, meaning it was unlikely because of random chance.

The hypothesis on Business training stated that; Ho: Business Training Services have no impact on the entrepreneurial capacity of businesswomen in Mbeere South Sub County, Embu County, Kenya

From the findings, the null hypothesis was rejected. These findings agreed with those by Mengstie (2016) and Stella et al (2013) that business training is associated with greater efficiency and effectiveness which increases organizational performance. Moreover, the study conducted by Mohamed (2015) and Tamirat (2020) on the Performance and Sustainability of Business Development Services showed that the performance of MSEs that had accessed entrepreneurial training increased dramatically owing to the intervention. Likewise, BDS beneficiary respondents that were satisfied with book keeping and other services had higher sales volume than non-beneficiaries.

CONCLUSION

The provision of business training services has long been regarded as essential in the enhancement of entrepreneurial capacity, and more particularly for the development of rural women entrepreneurs who are faced with numerous resource constraints and limited access to business development opportunities. The findings of this study emphasize that conducting business training is very significant in empowering these women with skills, effectively resulting

in enhancing their businesses' performance. The business skills gained included, financial management, investments, bookkeeping and customer relations, among others. The training knowledge helped them to increase sales and profits, manage finances effectively, understand investment trends, improve customer service and compete favorably in the marketplace. From this viewpoint, business-training services were essential in improving the general marketability and sustainability of women-owned businesses for the service beneficiaries.

On the flip side, while these services were generally seen as important by both the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, the study also found various obstacles to be addressed if training programs were to increase the impact of women's entrepreneurial capacity significantly. The major concern was that there was a sizeable portion of the businesswomen who had not accessed this particular BDS citing disinterest, meaning that the training content did not match what some businesswomen needed. Ideally, business training programs are meant to be comprehensive, covering most issues business-related. Despite this, some entrepreneurs believed the training did not match their enterprise-type nor level of growth. To this particular segment, the training seemed disconnected from the operational, on-the-ground, real-life aspects of business. Hence, the training did not offer them value in its relevance nor its practical usability. This was understandable considering various businesses at varying stages of growth tend to deal with exclusive challenges that cannot be completely taken care of by generalized training modules. This fact lowered the overall satisfaction with the service amongst some entrepreneurs. Nevertheless, those who had missed this BDS intervention pointed out challenges in book keeping, customer service and in the day to day management of their enterprises, negatively affecting their entrepreneurial prowess.

This study showed that among those who utilized this service, not all were able to transform the knowledge gained from the training into tangible advancements within their businesses. Furthermore, the beneficiaries of the business training were somewhat ambivalent about and rated the post training assessment poorly, with some expressing adequate levels of satisfaction while others were quite dissatisfied with this aspect of the BDS. Usually, training programs require mentorship support for trainees to be able to implement what they learned and in the application of their newfound skills which does not always happen, hence creating a gap in post BDS delivery among beneficiaries. This impacts the overall relevance of the service. But these challenges notwithstanding, overall, business-training service had a significant influence on enhancing women's participation in entrepreneurship and in raising their confidence in running their businesses and making sound and informed decisions. The upturn in confidence and skill development that businesswomen gained significantly boosted and improved the competitiveness and profitability of their enterprises.

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