



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WOMEN ENTERPRISE FUND AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN ISIOLO COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract: This study attempted to investigate the relationship between Women Enterprise Fund (WEF) and the organizational performance of women owned small and medium enterprises in Isiolo County, Kenya. The study's main objective was to find out the relationship between women enterprise fund and the Organizational Performance of women owned small and medium enterprises in Isiolo County. The study also sought to assess to what extent training offered, networking opportunities, market opportunities and accessibility to credit offered by Women Enterprise Fund influence performance of women owned enterprises in Isiolo County. This study utilized a descriptive survey research design and targets all the 215 active women groups in Isiolo County which have benefited from WEF. Sampling method that was used to select 140 women groups was simple random sampling. A questionnaire with closed-ended items was used. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics that involved frequent distribution, percentages and average values. The findings were presented in frequency distribution tables, mean and standard deviation values followed by explanation of the study results per table. The study established that women Enterprise funds training equipped respondents with business management skills, informed respondents the importance of record keeping offered respondents a chance to share experiences with other business persons, women enterprise fund has enabled respondents' members to interact with well-established business women and learn best business practices from other business women and women enterprise fund has enabled our members to timely access information on pricing of their products. The study concludes that Women enterprise Fund training created awareness of the existence of the fund, members to interact with well-established business women and members' access capital for their business. The study recommends that SMEs in Kenya should put in place training programs so as to create awareness of the existence of the fund and put in place networking opportunities to enable staff to interact with well-established financial institutions.

Introduction

When women are empowered and governments chose to invest in their future, then the growth in the global economy grows, economic security and vitality is also achieved. As reported in the World Economic Forum Gender Gap report (2014), the U.S. economic growth in the last 40 years at 11 percent or \$3.5 trillion contributed to more women participation in the economy. The report further eludes that if there were less barriers reducing women participation in a country's labor force, countries like Japan gross domestic product would grow by a high 16%. Investing in women as observed by world economic forum, increases social and economic growth since women plough back their investments to their homes and communities. . This scenario have been observed both in developing and developed countries with savings have been shown to rise and spending shifting to health, education, food when women become in charge of their household income (World Economic Forum, 2014). Social exclusion and marginalization alienates women from mainstream society but

social and economic costs of failure to include them in development are enormous (MGCSO, 2011). Encouraging women participation in the sector of financial services provision is therefore one of the ways to boost the critical role they play in socio-economic development (MGCSO, 2011). Those who go into entrepreneurship are inadequately prepared due to limited capital and low financial matter (UN Women, 2010). The Ministry of Planning and Vision 2030, through the Poverty Eradication Council has put aside funds for women and youth groups through constituency and district development offices (Nation Correspondent, 2011).

In 2007, the Kenyan Government launched the women Enterprise Fund (WEF) whose main objective was to empower women economically. The loans given by the WEF are given to the beneficiaries directly through the constituencies Women Enterprise Scheme (CWES) and also by means of financial intermediaries. Recent figures indicate that Ksh 1.2 billion has been loaned through 74 financial institutions and CWES to over 221,691 women. Similarly, 3,874 women have benefitted from training in business management facilitated by the fund. At the moment, Kshs 3 million is allocated to each constituency while the financial partners run another scheme called "Jiimarishu" which allows borrowing between Kshs 500,000 and Kshs 2 million, payable within 36 months (Ongiri, 2011). The World Bank report (2001) points out that when countries ignore gender equality, they are bound to pay a high cost as the country's ability and its citizen's well-being cannot grow sustainably and this leads to high levels of poverty. In today's developing countries, women entrepreneurs have grown in leaps and bounds attracting the attention of the development and academic sectors. To develop the entrepreneurship skills of women NGOs, business associations, donors, national and local governments, charities, private firms, knowledge institutions and international public organizations have come up with policies and programs that have greatly helped women entrepreneurs. Through initiated programs that strengthen the network of women, finance and train builds on the entrepreneurial skills of women and designed policies increased business growth and stronger startups have been established.

However, despite the fact that more initiatives have come up and more resources have been provided in developing countries for promotion and development of women entrepreneurs today's women still earn little money in their enterprises whose growth is slow, they are also more bound to fail in their startups and more often than not tend to be necessity entrepreneurs. A study by Lois notes that the governments of Bangladesh and India have a system of homegrown micro finance institutions which is ideal for poor people especially women. The government of Bangladesh has an apex financial institution which gives low cost capital as a measure to combat the challenges faced by women as they try to establish themselves in SMEs (Lois, 2004).

Similar efforts have been made in Ethiopia, according to Stevenson et al (2005), the government introduced microfinance regulation focused on reduction of poverty and promotion of service delivery the rural poor especially the women. Even though such efforts have been established in many developing countries Kenya included, less impact has been achieved in establishing women as potential entrepreneurs. The small business enterprises in the Kenyan economy had the potential of bringing people from the informal economy to the mainstream economy. The Kenyan Government through Kenya Vision 2030 envisages industries of tomorrow by improving SMEs productivity and innovation (MPNDV2030). The Kenyan women make up 52% of the whole population and play very important roles in economic development as small scale entrepreneurs, but face some key challenges like limited access to finance, inadequate entrepreneurial skills, lack of reliable networks and market for their SMEs (Wanjohi & Mugure, 2008).

To address these challenges the Government of Kenya (GOK) has established a special kit by name Women Enterprise Fund to empower women in their efforts to become viable small scale

entrepreneurs. Isiolo County is an ASAL with low and unreliable rainfall. Most women turn to small and medium enterprise (SMEs) to support their families. Like all other entrepreneurs and especially women entrepreneurs they face a lot of challenges which forces their businesses to stagnate or fail altogether. Studies show that most women in the county have benefitted from Women Enterprise Fund although there are disparities from region to region. It is against this background that this study sought to investigate the relationship between Women Enterprise Fund and the Organizational Performance of women owned small and medium enterprises in Isiolo County in Kenya.

The WEF was budgeted for in the Kenyan budget of 2007/08. The goals of this fund are to reduce poverty, promote national development and empower women. It was also set up to enable and attract investments in the medium and micro businesses, improve financial infrastructures such as business incubators and markets that would be a benefit to women businesses. To ensure that women business produces products and services were marketed on the domestic and international markets to support the building of the funds beneficiaries and the institutional frameworks of WEF. The main target of the fund due to the important role they play in their families. At the start of the fund it had a billion Kshs, \$25 million kitties.

Women are able to borrow from the fund through financial institutions and contracted banks after presenting their business plans to the fund. Very low security is needed to secure funds from the financial institutions. The establishment of the fund was motivated after the government observed the success of micro finance based institutions in Kenya such as FAULU, K-rep, and women Finance Trust in their support of women entrepreneurs which has seen 90% repayment rates and improvement of women's lives. In Kenya today there is a big challenge of empowering the women who are economically challenged who are the majority of the women population. This has led the women businesses to remain as simple domestic agrarian businesses rather than becoming global competitive businesses in which these businesses strives to be. The women entrepreneurs are also faced with the challenge of filling the funds application forms.

Many women who get access to the funds prefer working individually and this after getting the funds as a group divide the money amongst themselves. The groups usually have 215 to 50 members and when the funds which are a maximum of Kshs 50,000 are divided per person they end up being very small amounts for each member. The SJHS 1million given to the constituency is also little compared to the number of qualified women groups per constituency. The fund only gives a maximum of 210 women groups per constituency every year (Business Daily, September, 17th, 2015). The banks contracted by the fund charge 14.85 per cent interest rates on the loans given by the fund. According to different research studies such interventions positively impact, economic improvement and poverty reduction, a study done by Kiraka (2009) on Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Growth and Innovation in Kenya: A Case Study on the Women Enterprise Fund findings show that although there was indicators of increased business worth, gross profit, number of employees and turnover, there were incidences of decline in growth and stagnation. These incidences were significant at 15 to 30% across the explained measures.

According to yet another study conducted by Kimaru (2014) on the effect activities of micro finance institutions had on medium and small businesses performance in Mogotio District, the findings were that MFIs had challenges in regard to service delivery in circumstances such as bank using personal profiles and women loan repayment track records in reviewing their loan applications. In another study done by Ismail and Mugambi (2013) on Determinants of Growth for Women Owned and Operated Micro Enterprises: The Case of Garissa, Kenya, indicated that that government and private organizations did give training And financial help to women groups however individual women entrepreneurs did not get any help and often struggled alone. Thus, the researcher assessed the

relationship between Women Enterprise Fund and the Organizational Performance of women owned small and medium enterprises in Isiolo County to since there is a glaring gap between the women enterprise development fund and organizational performance of women owned SMES in Isiolo County.

The purpose of this study was to find out the relationship between women enterprises fund and the Organizational Performance of women owned enterprises in Isiolo County. The study sought to achieve the following specific objectives:

- i. To assess the effect of training offered by Women Enterprise Fund on the performance of women owned enterprises in Isiolo County.
- ii. To establish whether networking opportunities provided by Women Enterprise Fund affect the performance of women owned enterprises in Isiolo County
- iii. To analyze whether sourcing of market by women enterprise Fund affects the performance of women owned enterprises in Isiolo County
- iv. To establish the effect of accessibility to credit offered by Women Enterprise Fund on the performance of women owned enterprises in Isiolo County.

Theoretical Literature Review

Entrepreneurship Theory

This theory is made up of opportunity discovery, opportunity evaluation and their decision behind opportunity exploitation. Institutions, external environments or entrepreneurs create opportunities after they identify factors that can help them better their welfare and improve their businesses. Entrepreneurs are different and the ability to identify and use the opportunities that present themselves depend on the entrepreneurs ability to access useful information and to take risks to act on such information. Individual attributes also affects discovery of entrepreneurial opportunity (Martin, McNally & Kay, 2013). Factors such as economic, socio-cultural, social, political, financial and legal that affect business environments affect opportunities discoveries. For instance the discovery of a business opportunity can be affected by the desire by the entrepreneur to improve their social statues, the entrepreneur's income level, availability of capital, political stability and the laws that govern property rights and private businesses (Boons & Lüdeke-Freund, 2013). The decision by the entrepreneur to seize the opportunity depends on the entrepreneur's ability to access credit, entrepreneur's education level, social networks and skills (Shane, 2003). The decision to seize the opportunity leads to the entrepreneur approaching a micro finance which translates to the start of an enterprise (Kuzilwa, 2005) however notes that the general environment has a greater role to play in the exploration of opportunity by entrepreneurs compared to the role played by a person's attributes.

Social Net-work Theory

A social net-work theory according to Richard Emerson is a social structure made of individuals or organization ties. This theory views relationships in forms of nodes and ties. Relationships of different kinds exist between actors i.e. Businesses networks, peers, companies and women group members. Among the women group members, there exists a relationship between the members and the other group members. Social net-work plays a role in group organization and structure. i.e. Assessing loans as a group and also in re-payment, individual members who are part of a registered group apply for a loan which they utilize in their business but repay through the group (Daly, 2010). Networks with big, open ties and connections have been found to be more useful to an individual. The theory states that a project that socializes norms determines behavior by looking at the extent to which the structure and

composition of ties affects norms, through table banking women groups offer loans to members and repay loans to WEF accounts (Krause, Croft & James, 2007).

The Rational Choice Theory

George Homans states that this theory models social and economic behavior, and a paradigm in micro-economics. The theories of rational choice are based on the fact that people are motivated by wants or goals that can foretell what they prefer. According to such theories one must anticipate other courses of action and decide which the best course to take is. Individuals that are rational adopt a course of action that is likely to bring the greatest satisfaction to them (Heath 1976, Carling, 1992 & Coleman, 1973). The promise of reward according to Homans motivates people to strive in order to receive reward that is the inducement in the conditioning of human behavior business enterprises, women groups, political parties etc. As outlined, the theory is pertinent to this study given that a person is motivated to reach goals that they have decided on. One acts rationally and examines all courses of action deciding to go with the one that maximizes benefits.

Empirical Review

This review reports on actual research findings, observations and conclusions by previous researchers on the area of Women Enterprise Fund and Organizational Performance of Women Owned Enterprises categorized under the four variables. According to Kenya vision 2030 (2011), Women Enterprise Fund is a revolving fund which established in 2006 and launched in 2007 by the Kenyan government with a goal to provide an alternative source of finance to women who could not get access to such services from informal And formal financial Institutions. The fund gives credit services at an affordable rate and assists women start and expand their businesses enabling them create wealth and jobs. This fund is a flagship project under Kenya's vision 2030 social pillar and also as a means of achievement of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) on empowerment of women and gender equity. As such, the fund targets Kenyan women who are aged 18 years and above, who may be part of a registered Self Help Groups or parts of companies whose owners are women or individual women. In some instances, men who are members of companies or women groups are supported by the fund so long as 70% of the group or company members are women and they also hold all the leadership posts (Kenya vision 2030, 2007).

The training of entrepreneurs has been identified as an important factor that has led to the development and growth of the small business sector in the world. It is a tool that changes a people's attitude towards business and equips them with the skills necessary to become a successful entrepreneur. Studies have shown that a major problem among Kenyan women entrepreneurs is lack of training and entrepreneur skills development as most women in Kenya acquire Entrepreneur skills from their relatives, previous experience and from friends (Republic of Kenya, 2005). For a business to successfully operate it has to have the ability to compete; the ability to compete depends on the products quality. This requires an entrepreneurial firm to work towards the improvement of the product quality continuously. This calls for an entrepreneurial talent which can make use of a firm available resources-human, informational, Physical and material resources, in an effective and efficient way so as to meet the goals and objectives of the firm. Many organizations' main goal is to make profit; this is partially achieved when such firms provide quality services and products (Lin & Chen, 2007). Training programs are used to provide entrepreneurial skills that enable entrepreneurs start or expand their existing businesses. Such training affects the overall performance of both medium and small businesses. The CEO of the Women Enterprise Fund Kenya Mr. Samuel Wainaina in 2012, asserted that the fund is intended to recruit 210 volunteers, one for every constituency who could train

entrepreneurship skills on the women so as to increase their loan uptake and maximize their investments returns.

A well trained entrepreneur portrays most of entrepreneurial traits, which include: Adequate knowledge about customer needs which keep on changing and a business must closely monitor these changes to remain abreast. Business record keeping is also a good business practice, Biggs (1995) defines book keeping as “the art of recording all money transactions so that financial position of an undertaking and its relationship to proprietors and outside persons can be readily ascertained”. All business requires keeping of written records. These records are used by managers to guide them on in making decisions, formulating the business rules, maintaining relationships with other firms or persons and a guide to routine actions (Lee, 2001).

Networks have been showed to help in survival of businesses run by women entrepreneurs (Boyd, 2005). It is an important factor that helps women entrepreneurs’ access information, loans and advice that they require in starting and running an enterprise (Carter, Wilson & Lam, 2006). Entrepreneurs use the social contacts and relations they have to gain access to customers, information, suppliers and finance. Research has shown that support from a person’s network can help new ventures improve, grow and perform better. De Tienne and Chandler (2007) observe women that are in business often lack peer support networks in in comparison with men. This is despite the fact that there have been various formed entrepreneurs associations targeting women and seeking top exchange skills and experiences, conduct trainings, motivation seminars and workshops, develop women leaders and entrepreneurs and offer support to women in business. The reason is because most women do not join such associations as they are overwhelmed by their businesses and family responsibilities.

This is a limitation to women entrepreneurs as they are unable to seek financing, informal advice and join networks that are required for growth and survival of their enterprises. This can create a problem in establishment of women networks that are essential for their growth of their enterprises (De Tienne & Chandler, 2007). According to Lin (2007), compared to men, women have a lower social position this can affect the networks they can access. Lin points out that Evidence shows that women are not as much involved in networks as the men and the networks they are involved in are different. Mostly these networks are better off suited for family matters and not market place business. He further asserts that women entrepreneur based networks are an important source of entrepreneurship knowledge and they are more depicted as valuable tools in promotion and development of women entrepreneurs. Therefore since women networks are a lot different from men’s networks and in the social capital that they have access to through these networks, they are not able to efficiently access important resources, information and support that they might need to manage and start their own businesses compared to men. Social networks are an important resource as they provide entrepreneurs with various useful resources in terms of financial and instrumental assistance including encouragement, financing, experience, generation of ideas and knowledge. Women Enterprise Fund provides networking for women SMEs to enhance their performance.

Many studies have been done on the relationship between market access and performance of enterprises. Previous researches conducted have conceptually and empirically supported the notion that market access has positive correlations with the performance of enterprise (Kiraka, 2009). Research has also shown that most SMEs face a lot of challenges in accessing market for their product. Market access hindrances in the Kenyan SMEs sector can be seen in form limited access to information, few market spaces where entrepreneurs can sell their products, decreasing income, restricted market participation, limited participation to international markets and little linkages with other businesses. This has led SMEs to be part of a local crowded market. Due to globalization, markets have been opened and trade barriers removed leading to increased competition from large firms and multinational

businesses. There are a few factors that have been identified as the factors behind market access to SMEs in Kenya, they include; poor quality of products and services which hinder entry in some markets, imperfect markets, weak e-commerce, poor access to market premises, spaces and physical markets, weak advertisement and promotion capacities, poor links to export markets, lack of market information, narrow product diversity and limited market research and analysis. Other factors include high transaction costs due to inefficiency, stiff competition, poor systems, long distance to markets and concentration of activities to a few sectors which makes these markets more vulnerable to competition and risks (GOK, 2005; KIPPRA, 2010).

Another challenge facing the Kenyan SME market is the lack of physical markets which has led to illegal hawking of products. Transaction costs have also been identified as a major issuer that affects SMEs market access. As explained by the theory of transaction cost when transaction costs reduce, it enhances market access. High costs in Kenya are due to information asymmetry, poor infrastructure and market inefficiencies. SMEs are unable to access local and international markets due to stiff competition that has been enhanced by liberalization and globalization. SMEs are unable to effectively compete because of limited product diversity, poor quality of products, high pricing and skewed customer preference (KIPPRA, 2010). The demand for a good is the one that establishes its market, if a product has as high demand the market for the product becomes vibrant. If the demand reduces, the market can shrink. Depending whether products are substitutes or complimentary, a demand for one product can positively or negatively affect their demand for another product. If products are complimentary, when one product demand rises, there is an increased demand for the other product. The opposite is true for substitute products. (Kotler, 2003), explains that marketing today is not used to find the right customer for one's product but the right product for one's customers.

There is evidence to support the fact that women in business are faced by lack of financing due to unemployment, lack of asset security, poverty, societal discrimination especially in developing nations and low business or household income (Peter, 2001). A major factor that affects performance of enterprises in Kenya is credit inaccessibility. Women entrepreneurs do not have enough physical capital such as savings and credit for their enterprises which see them seek for financial assistance (Kuzilwa, 2005).

In their study, Macharia and Wanjiru (2010) study of women and NGO small scale entrepreneurs in the garment manufacturing sector in Nairobi and Nyeri showed that factors that were a hindrance to women accessing credit include lack of security to access loans, non-awareness of the existing credit schemes, lack of capital, long and difficult procedures to access loans. Republic of Kenya (2005) also points out that lack of credit is a major challenge that slows down the growth of the SME sector and women entrepreneurs. Further other problems that inhibit the ability of SMEs to access capital as; nontangible security and unlawful legal and regulatory frameworks that do not accept other ways that can allow SMES to access credit and limited access to financing due to insufficient and poor capacities that cannot deliver financing to SMEs. According to research enough available credit for enterprises helps such businesses grow. Such credits when given to women entrepreneurs have been found to improve output, income, welfare and jobs for entrepreneurs (Peter, 2001; and Kuzilwa, 2005).

Despite the significances of women owned enterprises, past statistics show that three out of five enterprises fail in the first months of their operations, as they are held back by tough local conditions, such as inability to raise huge security collaterals that banks seek for as security for them to be given credit. Businesses that are owned by women often need low start up and working financing under normal circumstances their growth rate are low and they have a limited potential, also due to the business activities that they undertake (Economic Survey, 2015). Republic of Kenya (2005) recommended that the government should seek out policies that empower women, policies that

increase women access to credit through SACCOs, policies that promote women networks through MFIs and banks, policies that help grassroots women development and enhance entrepreneurship. The purpose of Women Development Fund by the Kenyan Government was empower women enabling them to develop themselves and enhancing the country's economic development, distribute wealth to other social groups and enable them to borrow loans at interest rates that are reasonable to enable them grow their business with loans that do not seek for collaterals and guarantors. Thus, the government envisioned that the fund would help the growth of the women owned enterprises (WEF, 2009).

Conceptual Framework

As explained by Mugenda (2008), a conceptual framework is a model that is hypothesized showing the relationship between the variables diagrammatically or graphically. Conceptual framework easily shows the proposed relationship and this relationship is tested so as to establish the proposed relationship importance. The conceptual framework depicts the relationship of training opportunities, networking facilities, market opportunities and accessibility of funds as influencing performance of women owned enterprises.

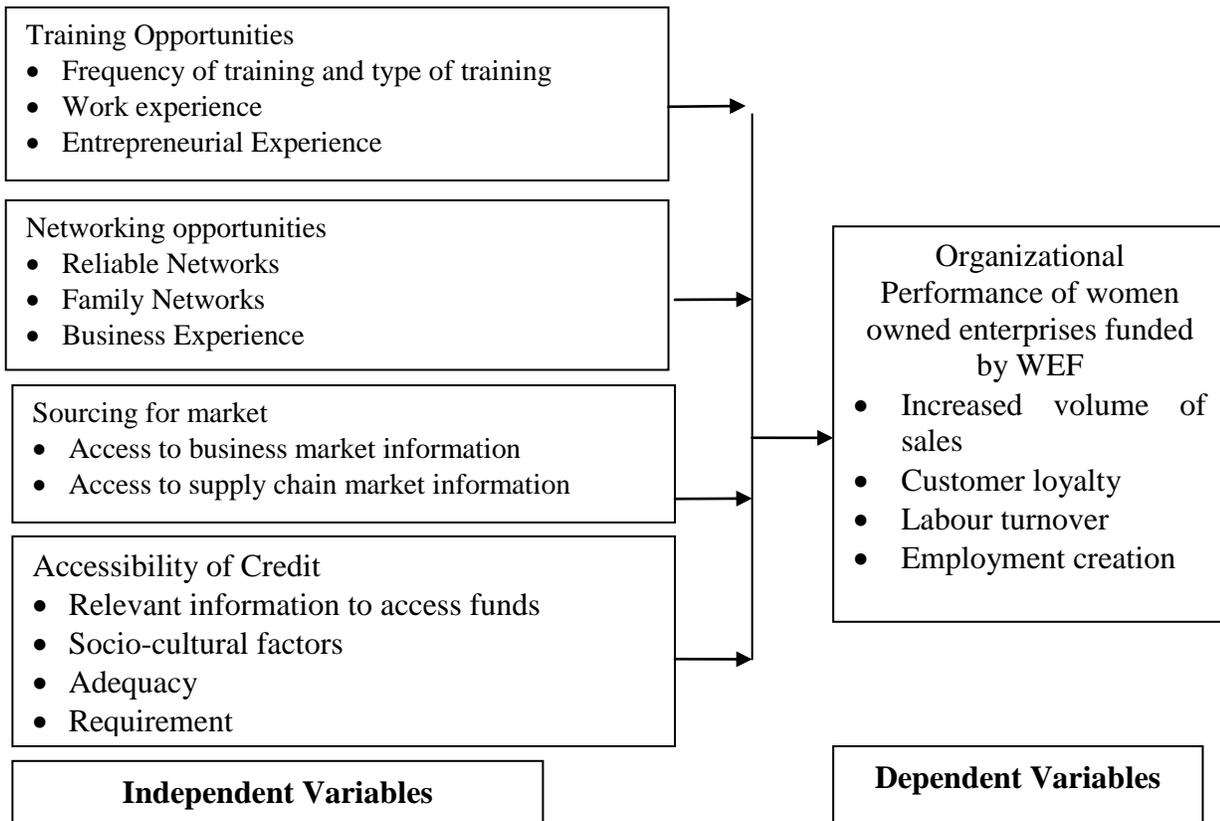


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

The research design used in this study was descriptive survey design. A survey collects data from existing population with no control over factors that might affect the characteristics of the population (Gupta, 2008). In Isiolo County there are 215 active registered women groups. The total number of women in all the active registered groups are 3, 265 in the whole county. Therefore this study targeted

all the 215 registered women groups in Isiolo County who have benefited from the Women Enterprise Fund.

The sample size of the study was determined as per the formula below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n=Sample Size N= Population e= Level of significance (0.05)

Therefore, the sample size

$$n = \frac{215}{1 + 215(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 140$$

Therefore, the study's sample size was 140 registered women groups from Isiolo County. Data was collected using a well-constructed questionnaire. One of the main advantages of using questionnaires is that respondents were able to fill them in at their own convenient time, thereby encouraging a higher response rate. The questionnaire has Closed- ended questions which are easier to analyze, administer and helps to ascertain the consistency of the data collected from the selected women. A pilot test was conducted to enhance the validity and reliability of the research instrument.

Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the collected data. Standard deviation, frequency distribution, and mean scores were used. Using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) the study findings were presented in bar charts, frequency tables, and pie charts. The data was summarized in line with the objectives of the study. To assess the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, the study made use of correlation analysis and regression analysis.

Data Presentation and Discussion of Findings

The study targeted a sample of 140 women out of which 99 questionnaires were filled and returned giving a response of 71%. This response was good enough and representative of the population and conforms to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) stipulation that a response rate of 70% and above is excellent.

Effects of Training by Women Enterprise Fund on Performance of Women Owned SMEs

Several elements of trainings that affect the performance of enterprises were carefully identified by the researcher. Respondents were then requested to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each statement in as far as training by Women Enterprise Fund has affected the performance of their business. A scale of 1-5 where: 1= no extent, 2 = little extent, 3= neutral, 4= great extent, 5 = Very great extent was used.

Table 1: Effects of Training by Women Enterprise Fund on Performance

Statements	Mean	Std. Dev
WEF training equipped me with business management skills	3.6465	1.12770
WEF training informed me the importance of record keeping	3.7071	1.06189
WEF training offered me a chance to share experiences with other business persons	3.8182	.90761
WEF training are well scheduled	3.7172	.86944
WEF training are well spaced for their business	3.3232	.97759
WEF training created awareness of the existence of the fund	3.9394	.78009
WEF training outlined key requirements for loan application	3.8081	.87688
WEF training outlined the repercussions of failure to repay loans advanced	3.4949	.87334

On whether Women Enterprise funds training equipped respondents with business management skills; the mean was 3.6465 with a standard deviation of 1.12770. This implies that respondents agreed to a great extent. The finding concurs with the Republic of Kenya (2005) which stipulated that most women entrepreneurs acquire their skills and experience through their family members, friends and previous experiences. As to whether Women Enterprise fund training informed respondents the importance of record keeping; the mean was 3.7071 with a standard deviation of 1.06189. The finding is consistent with Biggs (1995) who defined book keeping as “the art of recording all money transactions so that financial position of an undertaking and its relationship to proprietors and outside persons can be readily ascertained.

On whether women enterprise training offered respondents a chance to share experiences with other business persons; the mean was 3.8182 with standard deviation of 0.90761 and this implies that respondents agreed to a great extent on the statement. Regarding whether women enterprise Fund training are well scheduled; the mean was 3.7172 with standard deviation of 0.86944 and this implies that respondents agreed on the statement to a great extent. As to whether women enterprise Fund training are well spaced for their business; the mean was 3.3232 with standard deviation of 0.97759 and this implies that the statement had a neutral extent of effect on performance of women owned SMEs.

As to whether women enterprise Fund training created awareness of the existence of the fund; the mean was 3.9394 with a standard deviation of 0.78009 which implies that the statement had a great extent of effect on performance of women owned SMEs. As to whether women enterprise Fund training outlined key requirements for loan application; the mean was 3.8081 with a standard deviation of 0.87688 and this implies that respondents agreed on the statement to a great extent. As to whether the Women enterprise Fund training outlined the repercussions of failure to repay loans advanced; the mean was 3.4949 with a standard deviation of 0.87334.

Effect of Networking Opportunities on the Performance of Women Owned SMEs

A number of elements of networking opportunities presented by women enterprise fund were carefully identified by the researcher. The respondents were then requested to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each statement in as far as networking opportunities are concerned in terms of its effect on the performance of their businesses. A scale of 1-5 where: 1= no extent, 2 = little extent, 3= neutral, 4= great extent, 5 = Very great extent was used.

Table 2: Effect of Networking Opportunities on the Performance

Statements	Mean	Std. Dev
WEF has enabled our members to interact with well-established business women	3.9293	.88355
WEF has enabled our members to learn best business practices from other business women	3.6869	.91078
WEF has created a forum through which our members can meet and share experiences	3.2727	1.14123
WEF has expanded the number of persons our members can turn to for business advise	3.4949	.92993
WEF enabled our members information exchange on market forces	3.5556	.99203
WEF has enabled our members collaborate with suppliers to meet customer demands	2.9697	1.31285

As to whether women enterprise fund has enabled respondents' members to interact with well-established business women; the mean was 3.9293 with standard deviation of 0.88355. This implies that the statement has affects performance of women owned SMEs to a great extent. On whether women enterprise fund has enabled respondents' members to learn best business practices from other business women; the mean was 3.6869 with standard deviation of 0.91078 and this clearly implies that respondents agreed on the statement to a great extent. Regarding whether women enterprise fund has created a forum through which respondents' members can meet and share experiences; the mean was 3.2727 with a standard deviation of 1.14123 and this implies that respondents agreed on the statement to a neutral extent. The finding concurs with De Tienne et al (2007) who established that industry associations have been formed which generally serve as a platform for women entrepreneurs to establish networks and exchange information and experiences.

On whether women enterprise fund has expanded the number of persons our members can turn to for business advise; the mean was 3.4949 with standard deviation of 0.92993 and this implies that respondents agreed to a statement on a neutral extent. As to whether women enterprise fund enabled our members information exchange on market forces; the mean was 3.5556 and standard deviation of 0.99203 and this implies that respondents agreed on the statement to a great extent. Pertaining whether women enterprise fund has enabled our members collaborates with suppliers to meet customer demands; the mean was 2.9697 with standard deviation of 1.31285 and this implies that respondents agreed on the statement to a neutral extent.

Effect of Marketing Opportunities on the Performance of Women Owned SMEs

Several elements of marketing opportunities presented by Women Enterprise Fund were carefully identified by the researcher. Respondents were then requested to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each statement in as far as networking opportunities are concerned in terms of its effect on the performance of your business. A scale of 1-5 where: 1= no extent, 2 = little extent, 3= neutral, 4= great extent, 5 = Very great extent was used.

Table 3: Effect of Marketing Opportunities on the Performance

Statements	Mean	Std. Dev
WEF has enabled our members to timely access information on pricing of their products	2.7071	1.09965
WEF has enabled our members to competitively price their products	3.5859	.98985
WEF has enabled our members to get timely information on demand for their products	3.0606	1.06731
WEF has enabled our members to determine the appropriate products that their customers want	3.2727	1.10489
WEF has enabled our members predict the demands of their customers	2.7677	1.02846
WEF has enabled our members avail more products in their business	3.6263	.92124

With regard to whether women enterprise fund has enabled our members to timely access information on pricing of their products; the mean was 2.7071 with a standard deviation of 1.09965 and this implies that respondents agreed on the statement to a neutral extent. On whether women enterprise fund has enabled our members to competitively price their products; the mean was 3.5859 with standard deviation of 0.98985 and this implies that respondents agreed on the statement to a great extent. As to whether women enterprise fund has enabled our members to get timely information on demand for their products; the mean was 3.0606 with standard deviation of 1.06731. The findings concurs with GOK (2005) which indicated that many SMEs lack the necessary information on market opportunities limiting them to narrow local markets; on customers and market demand due to lack of market research leading to saturated markets with goods whose demand is low.

On whether women enterprise fund has enabled our members to determine the appropriate products that their customers want; the mean was 3.2727 with standard deviation of 1.10489 and this implies that the statement affected performance of women owned SMEs to a neutral extent. As to whether women enterprise fund has enabled our members predict the demands of their customers; the mean was 3.7677 with standard deviation 1.02846 and this implies that the statement had a great extent of effect on performance of women owned SMEs. As to whether women enterprise fund has enabled our members avail more products in their business; the mean was 3.6263 with standard deviation of 0.92124 and this implies that the statement affects performance of women owned SMEs to a great extent.

Effect of Accessibility of Women Enterprise Fund on the Performance of Women Owned SMEs

Several elements of accessibility to Women Enterprise loans on performance of businesses were identified by the researcher. The respondents were then requested to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each statement in as far as loans accessibility is concerned in terms of its effect on the performance of your business. A scale of 1-5 where: 1= no extent, 2 = little extent, 3= neutral, 4= great extent, 5 = Very great extent was used.

Table 4: Effect of accessibility of Women Enterprise Fund on the Performance

Statements	Mean	Std. Dev
WEF has enabled our members access capital for their business	3.5859	1.11584
WEF has enabled made available information on how to apply for loans in WEF	3.4040	1.01940
WEF has educated our members on what I need to do to access loans	3.1919	1.00688
WEF has introduced group guaranteeing which has enabled our members access a loan	3.2929	1.19738
The loan amount accessed through WEF are adequate for our members to run their business	3.6465	1.01331
Affordability of WEF loan repayment has encouraged our members to take a loan	3.4343	1.07059

As to whether women enterprise fund has enabled our members access capital for their business; the mean was 3.5859 with standard deviation of 1.11584 and this implies that respondents agreed on the statement to a great extent. On whether women enterprise fund has enabled made available information on how to apply for loans in WEF; the mean was 3.4040 with standard deviation of 1.01940 and this implies that the statement affected performance of women owned SMEs to a neutral extent. Regarding whether Women enterprise fund has educated our members on what they need to do to access loans; the mean was 3.1919 with standard deviation of 1.00688 and this indicates that the statement had neutral extent of effect on performance of women owned SMEs.

Regarding whether women enterprise fund has introduced group guaranteeing which has enabled our members access a loan; the mean was 3.2929 with standard deviation of 1.19738 and this implies that the statement had a neutral extent of effect on performance of women owned SMEs. As to whether the loan amount accessed through Women Enterprise Finance are adequate for our members to run their business; the mean was 3.6465 with standard deviation of 1.01331 and this implies that the statement had a great extent of effect on performance of women owned SMEs. Pertaining whether affordability of Women Enterprise Fund loan repayment has encouraged our members to take a loan; the mean was 3.4343 with standard deviation of 1.07059 and this implies that respondents agreed on the statement to neutral extent.

Organizational Performance

Several statements on performance of businesses were identified by the researcher. The respondents were then requested to indicate the extent to which they agreed with each statement with regards to the performance of their business. A scale of 1-5 where: 1= no extent, 2 = little extent, 3= neutral, 4= great extent, 5 = Very great extent was used.

Table 5: Organizational Performance

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Has led to increases sales volume for my business	3.3939	1.11409
Has improve the retention level of my staff	3.7071	.95032
Has enabled me expand my business	3.1515	1.05331
has enabled me employ more staff	3.4646	1.17207

From the finding, it has led to increases sales volume for my business had a mean 3.3939 with a standard deviation of 1.11409, it has improve the retention level of my staff had a mean 3.7071 with a standard deviation of .95032, it has enabled me expand my business had a mean 3.1515 with a standard

deviation of 1.05331 and it has enabled me employ more staff had a mean 3.4646 with a standard deviation of 1.17207.

Correlation Analysis

The researcher carried correlation analysis to establish relationship between women enterprise fund and the organizational performance of women owned small and medium enterprises in Isiolo County.

Table 6: Correlation Analysis

		Organizational Performance	Training by WEF	Networking Opportunities	Marketing Opportunities	Accessibility of WEF
Organizational Performance	Pearson Correlation 1 Sig. (2-tailed)					
Training by WEF	Pearson Correlation .698** Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	1			
Networking Opportunities	Pearson Correlation .832** Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.852**	1		
Marketing Opportunities	Pearson Correlation .801** Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.856**	.983**	1	
Accessibility of WEF	Pearson Correlation .792** Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.856**	.997**	.990**	1

From the findings of correlation analysis, the training by WEF and organizational performance indicated a Pearson correlation of 0.698 which is positive with p value of 0.000. Since the p value is less than 0.05, this means that statistically significant association exists between the Training by WEF and Organizational Performance.

For Networking Opportunities, the Pearson Correlation was .832 with p value of 0.000. This means that statistically significant positive association exists between Networking Opportunities. In relation to the marketing opportunities, the Pearson Correlation value was .801 with p value of 0.000 which means that statistically significant positive association exists between Networking Opportunities and organizational performance. For Accessibility of WEF; the Pearson Coefficient was .792 with p value of 0.000 which simply indicates availability of statistically significant association between Accessibility of WEF and organizational performance. The

Regression Analysis

The study conducted a multiple regression analysis to establish relationship between women enterprise fund and the organizational performance of women owned small and medium enterprises in Isiolo County. The results are shown in the subsequent sections.

Table 7: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.946 ^a	.895	.890	1.35469

From the finding, R^2 was 0.895 implying that only 89.5% of the dependent variable (performance) was explained by the independent variables (training, Networking, marketing opportunities and accessibility) while only 10.5% of the variations were due to other factors not in the study.

Table 8: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1467.574	4	366.894	199.923	.000 ^b
Residual	172.506	94	1.835		
Total	1640.081	98			

From the findings, the significance value was 0.000 which is less than 0.05 thus the model is statistically significant in predicting the relationship between women enterprise fund and organizational performance of small and medium enterprises. The F critical at 5% level of significance was 2.46. Since F calculated (value = 199.923) is greater than the F critical (2.46) this shows that the overall model was significant.

Table 9: Coefficients of Determination

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	8.006	2.595		3.085	0.003
Training	0.554	0.029	0.871	19.103	0.000
Networking Opportunities	-0.294	0.077	-0.141	-3.818	0.000
Marketing Opportunities	-0.057	0.059	-0.034	-0.966	0.337
Accessibility	-0.178	0.055	-0.158	-3.236	0.002

The established regression equation becomes;

$$Y = 8.006 + 0.554X_1 - 0.294X_2 - 0.057X_3 - 0.178X_4 + 1.35469$$

Where: Y= organizational performance, X₁= Training, X₂= Networking Opportunities, X₃= Marketing Opportunities, X₄= Accessibility and ε = Error Term.

From the findings in the regression analysis, if the factors (training, networking opportunities, marketing opportunities and accessibility) were held constant, organization performance would be at 8.006. The results show that training has a significant influence on organizational performance as indicated by a beta coefficient of 0.554 (p-value=0.000). The results also show that networking opportunities have a significant influence on organizational performance as indicated by a beta coefficient of -0.294 (p-value=0.000). A unit increase in networking opportunities would lead to a unit decrease in organization performance by 0.294. However, marketing opportunities have no significant influence on organizational performance as shown by a beta coefficient of -0.057. The association was not significant as the p-value (0.337) was more than the significance level (0.05). The results further show that accessibility had a significant influence on organizational performance as indicated by a beta coefficient of -0.178 (p-value=0.002). A unit increase in accessibility would lead to a unit decrease in organization performance by 0.178.

Conclusions

The study concludes that Women enterprise Fund training created awareness of the existence of the fund. Furthermore, Women enterprise training offers respondents a chance to share experiences with other business persons. The women enterprise Fund training also outlines key requirements for loan application. Women enterprise Fund training is also well scheduled. The study further concludes that

women enterprise fund has enabled respondents' members to interact with well-established business women. Furthermore, women enterprise fund has enabled respondents' members to learn best business practices from other business women. The women enterprise fund also enabled our members' information exchange on market forces.

The study concludes that women enterprise fund has enabled our members predict the demands of their customers. Additionally, the women enterprise fund has enabled our members avail more products in their business. The women enterprise fund has also enabled our members to competitively price their products. The study concludes that the loan amount accessed through Women Enterprise Finance is adequate for our members to run their business. The women enterprise fund has enabled members' access capital for their business. Moreover, affordability of Women Enterprise Fund loan repayment has encouraged our members to take a loan.

Recommendations for the Study

The study recommends that SMEs in Kenya should put in place training programs so as to create awareness of the existence of the fund. Availability of training programs would offer clients chances to share experiences with other business persons.

The study also recommends that the management of SMEs in Kenya put in place networking opportunities so enable staff to interact with well-established financial institutions and this enhances organizational performance. All SMEs should enable their members to exchange information on market forces of demand and supply and this leads to improved performance.

The study further recommends that SMEs in Kenya should put in place proper strategies which allow prediction of the demands of the clients in the market so as to improve on performance. There is also need for SMEs to ensure that their products are competitively priced relative to other industry players so as to enhance competitive advantage that brings about performance.

The study also recommends SMEs should expand their accessibility to credit facilities from financial institutions so as to effectively fiancé the operations. SMEs in Kenya should take advantage of the flexible loan repayment terms offered by lending institutions like the Women enterprise fund to access capital for funding business operations. SMEs in Kenya should also take advantage of the affordability of Women Enterprise Fund loan to massively take up loan for expanding operations in Kenya.

Areas for Further Research

The current study was carried out to establish the relationship between women enterprise fund and organizational performance of small and medium enterprises in Kenya. The study used four independent variables training, networking opportunities, marketing opportunities and accessibility. Future studies should cover other variables for example technological progress. Moreover, the current study used primary data that was gathered using questionnaires. Future studies should mix both primary and secondary data. Future studies should also be carried out to cover commercial banks as lending institutions as opposed to Women Enterprise Fund.

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