

## Entrepreneurial training and participation of women in entrepreneurial activities: Evidence from the micro and small enterprises in Kimilili sub-county in Kenya

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### Abstract

Women entrepreneurs and their businesses constitute a rapidly growing segment of the business population in Kenya creating a variety of new ventures and contributing to the development of a range of services and products. Nevertheless, the share of women participation in entrepreneurial activities in Kenya is still significantly low when compared to their male counterparts. Interestingly, little research has been undertaken to determine factors that affect participation of women in entrepreneurial activities. Based on a study conducted by the author in Kimilili Sub-County in Bungoma County of Kenya, this paper assesses how access to entrepreneurial training affects participation of women in entrepreneurial activities in micro small enterprises. The human capital theory has been used in the paper to underscore the relationship of training with business activity among women. The study targeted 200 women who owned and operated MSEs in Kimilili Sub-County and were also registered with the Ministry of Trade of Bungoma County. Both stratified and random sampling techniques were used in determining the sample size of 60 women in MSEs. A questionnaire was used for data collection and data analysis was conducted via descriptive statistics. Inferential statistics was used to measure relationships between the variables of the study. A multiple regression model was applied to examine the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was also used to analyze the data. The study established that inadequate entrepreneurial training hindered participation of women in entrepreneurial activities in MSEs. The study recommends that women should engage in formal entrepreneurial education and training to help them get the prerequisite skills to effectively participate in entrepreneurial activities and that the County Government of Bungoma, through the Department of trade, should initiate the training programmes.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurial Training, Women, Activities, Micro Small, Enterprises, Kimilili, Kenya

### 1. Introduction

The participation of women in entrepreneurial activities has attracted a lot of policy initiatives globally, Kenya included. The Kenya government and several other stakeholders have come up with many interventions but little has been achieved. The Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1992, on *Small Enterprises and Jua Kali Development in Kenya*, highlights the challenges and constraints faced by women in the sector, which include gender disparity, lack of education, multiple roles, cultural and traditional practices, discrimination and lack of information. This Paper stipulates that data on women entrepreneurs should be collected and successful ones be identified and be promoted as role models (GoK, 1992) [9]. However, such measures do not yield expected outcome due to weaknesses in the policy design and implementation. There are, however, no data on women entrepreneurs as a result of poor design of this initiative. Limited efforts have been geared towards accumulating data on the growth of women-owned enterprises, a situation that compromises the development of evidence-based policy initiative (Gakobo, 2014) [8].

The Government of Kenya (2005) [10] in Sessional Paper No. 2 of 2005, on *Development of MSEs For Wealth and Employment Creation for Poverty Eradication*, identifies gender inequality and limited access to formal education and training as the most critical factors that limit performance and growth of women-owned enterprises. Other factors identified include gender inequality in distribution of income, limited

access to and control of productive resources such as land and credit, and multiple roles of women. Gender equality is given greater priority in this sessional paper. It outlines in detail the strategies that are aimed at addressing gender issues in MSEs. These include ensuring that MSE policy is gender responsive, establishing a gender mainstreaming framework, empowering women and ensuring that MSE support programmes and projects are designed to offer equal opportunities to all. The need for collecting and sharing gender-disaggregated data to facilitate gender responsive planning and policy formulation is also recognized (GoK, 2005) [10]. However, institutional set-up for this process is not adequately spelt out. The need for analytical work for monitoring these strategies is also neglected (Gakobo, 2014) [8].

In an effort to realize Vision 2030, the Kenya government established Women Enterprise Fund (WEF) through legal notice No. 147 (Government Financial Management Women Enterprise Fund) Regulations in 2007 (GoK, 2007) [11]. The fund was established as flagship project of Kenya Vision 2030. It is a demonstration of the Kenya government commitment to the realization of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on gender equality and women empowerment. The fund is also aimed at addressing the existing hurdles women face in venturing and growing sustainable business enterprises. However, the report of the Rapid Assessment of January 2009 carried out in the selected regions of the country reveals that majority of the women are not able to

access the WEF (GoK, 2009) <sup>[12]</sup>.

Despite the growing number of initiatives and resources being made available to promote and develop women's entrepreneurship in Kenya, majority of women (89%) are still predominantly micro and small, with very few of them, if any, being entrepreneurial (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [KNBS], 2010) <sup>[20]</sup>. It has been noted that women enterprises in Kenya are smaller, less likely to grow, less profitable and begin with less capital investment than those owned by men and rarely employ more than 10 people. Despite the absolute increase in the number of women in self-employment in recent years, there still exist significant differences in the level of new firm creation across gender and the number of women involved in entrepreneurial activities is significantly and systematically lower than that of men (Karani, 2012) <sup>[18]</sup>. Female-owned MSEs also close down more often than enterprises of men (Kibas & K'Aol, 2004) <sup>[21]</sup>.

Kenya has thus far failed to successfully tackle constraints facing women entrepreneurs (Athanne, 2011) <sup>[2]</sup> and women continue to be perceived as dependent on men (McDade & Spring, 2005) <sup>[22]</sup>. Gender inequalities constrain women from fully partaking in the labour market and unequal opportunities stand in the way of profiting from the promising benefits women entrepreneurs offer to Kenya (Baughn *et al.*, 2006; World Bank, 2008) <sup>[3, 37]</sup>. Existing literature on this issue have identified characteristics, such as perseverance, creativity, initiative, propensity to take risks, self-confidence and internal locus of control, among others, as correlates of being or desiring to be an entrepreneur (Njaramba & Ngugi, 2014) <sup>[29]</sup>. From casual observation, majority of women in MSEs in Kimilili Sub-County do not exhibit these characteristics, implying they are not entrepreneurial. There arises a need, therefore, to assess factors that affect participation of women in entrepreneurial activities in MSEs.

### Human Capital Entrepreneurship Theory

The term human capital was originally used by Nobel Economist, Becker (1993) <sup>[4]</sup>, to refer to the store valued of knowledge or skills of members of the workforce in an enterprise. The consensus among scholars is that human capital is critical to the initiation and participation in entrepreneurial ventures (Smart, 1998) <sup>[34]</sup>. Heckman (2000) <sup>[14]</sup> describes human capital in terms of the time, experience, knowledge and abilities of an individual which can be used in the production process in an ongoing concern. The Human Capital Theory proposes that the level of education, area of training, previous entrepreneurial experience and business skills affect the creation and growth of the enterprise (Becker, 1993) <sup>[4]</sup>. In this paper, human capital is considered as the skills and training an entrepreneur acquires, e.g., apprenticeship, work experience and training in various skills (Birley *et al.*, 1989) <sup>[5]</sup>. This paper examines how entrepreneurial training affects participation of women in entrepreneurial activities in MSEs.

### Entrepreneurial Training and Participation of Women in Entrepreneurial Activities

According to Walter and Dohse (2009) <sup>[36]</sup>, entrepreneurship training is the building of knowledge and skills in preparation for starting and running a business. Therefore, the purpose of

entrepreneurship training is very specific. Entrepreneurship is a practice. Drucker (1985) <sup>[7]</sup>, says that "most of what you hear about entrepreneurship is all wrong. It's not magic; it's not mysterious; and it has nothing to do with genes. It's a discipline and, like any discipline, it can be learned." Drucker's concept of entrepreneurship thus shows that training can play a key role in its development. The level of training required to develop each of these skills will be highly dependent upon the levels of human capital that individuals might already possess before embarking upon their entrepreneurial journey. Indeed, it has been argued that developing these skill-sets will engender enterprising persons who should be equipped to fulfil their potential and create their own futures, whether or not as entrepreneurs (NESTA, 2008) <sup>[27]</sup>. Most scholars agree that experiential learning, or "learning by doing," is more effective for developing entrepreneurial skills and attitudes than traditional methods like lectures (Walter & Dohse, 2009) <sup>[36]</sup>.

Women in MSEs, especially in developing countries, lack entrepreneurial training (IFC, 2007) <sup>[16]</sup>, and entrepreneurial process is a vital source of developing human capital as well as plays a crucial role in providing learning opportunities for individuals to improve their skills, attitudes and abilities (Brana, 2008) <sup>[6]</sup>. Again, the effect of entrepreneurial training on women in MSEs' performance, especially in developing countries, has not been adequately addressed. Taking cognizance of the peculiar situations of most women in developing countries in terms of poverty, low educational levels and other societal discriminations (Roomi & Parrot, 2008) <sup>[31]</sup>, entrepreneurial training is a very important factor for women in MSEs as it would provide the skills and experience needed for business (Akanji, 2006) <sup>[1]</sup>.

It is argued that majority of women in MSEs do not have specialized skills, and so cannot participate fully in entrepreneurial activities (Karnani, 2007) <sup>[17]</sup>. Paid employment provides prior business experience that is vital for enterprise success, yet women mostly in developing countries lack this (Brana, 2008) <sup>[6]</sup>. This further strengthens the need for entrepreneurial training as an ingredient for the women participation in entrepreneurial activities. Again, there are suggestions for the need to access entrepreneurial training in developing countries because of low educational levels of women in MSEs (Harrison & Mason, 2007; Ibru, 2009) <sup>[13, 15]</sup>. Education is related to training, and women entrepreneurs in high-income countries are better educated than those in low income countries (Ibru, 2009) <sup>[15]</sup>.

Scholars confirm that skill training and tertiary education have positive effect on enterprise performance (Akanji, 2006) <sup>[1]</sup>. Many women lack this, especially in developing countries (Ibru, 2009) <sup>[15]</sup>, whereas the exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunity depends on the entrepreneur's level of education, skills or knowledge acquired through work experience and training (Shane, 2003). Therefore, there is need for entrepreneurial training, especially in developing economies is highlighted. Namusonge (2006) <sup>[26]</sup>, argues that entrepreneurial education and training play a key role in stimulating entrepreneurship and self-employment. Kenyan women also face inadequate and inappropriate training and preparation for entry into MSEs (Mutuku, 2006) <sup>[24]</sup>. Despite the presence of business development services in Kenya not many women in MSEs use it because of cost, access, necessity, or availability (Steven *et al.*, 2005) <sup>[33]</sup>.

**Statement of the Problem**

In recent years, the general attention to women and entrepreneurship in developing countries has increased to a great extent and the focus on this ‘untapped source’ of growth seems indispensable for development practitioners and policy makers (Minniti & Naudé, 2010) [23]. Despite the growing number of initiatives and resources being made available to promote and develop women’s participation in entrepreneurial activities in Kenya by the government, donors and non-governmental organizations, both local and international, women in the sector (89%) are still found predominantly in MSEs with low-performance rates, earning lower revenues than their male counterparts (KNBS, 2010; Karani, 2012) [20, 18].

The share of women participation in entrepreneurial activities in Kenya is still significantly low compared to their men counterparts. Very few of them, if any, are growth oriented; many women in MSEs are generally low margin, ‘me too’ businesses, have very little differentiation and are necessity driven (The Guardian, 2014) [35]. This implies that most women in MSEs in Kenya may not be exploiting their entrepreneurial potential. The question arises as to what really affects women participation in entrepreneurial activities in Kenya and particularly Kimilili Sub-County.

Majority of women-owned MSEs are faced by constant threat of failure and many do not graduate into medium to large enterprises (World Bank, 2014) [38]. Studies indicate that women in the MSE sector in Kenya are characterized by high mortality rate (GoK, 2005) [10]; three out of five fail within the first few months of operation (RoK, 2013) [19]; over 60% fail each year (KNBS, 2007), and most do not survive to their third anniversary (Ngugi, 2013) [28]. Many countries, it is noted, are not making full use of women’s unrealized entrepreneurial abilities (Mwangi, 2014) [25].

The Kenya government through sessional papers (No. 2 of 1992 and No. 2 of 2005) highlights the challenges and constraints faced by women in the sector as: gender disparity, cultural and traditional practices, multiple roles,

discrimination, limited access to education and training, limited access to and control of productive resources such as land and credit, and lack of information. Both papers have agendas for action to addressing these issues. It is a matter of great concern that in a span of thirteen years, the same challenges and constraints have been duplicated in the government’s sessional papers. These issues have either never been addressed or have been inadequately addressed despite the agendas for action being drawn (Ongachi, 2013) [30]. Validation of these factors among women in MSEs is necessary. In addition, there is need to determine the relative importance of these factors. It is within this context that the study on factors affecting participation of women in entrepreneurial activities was necessary. Informed by the study, this paper assesses the extent to which access to entrepreneurial training affects participation of women in entrepreneurial activities in micro small enterprises in Kimilili Sub-County.

**2. Materials and Methods**

The study targeted women who owned and operated micro small enterprises within Kimilili Sub-County. The study used a descriptive survey research design, which was preferred as it is used to explain the existing status of the two variables. The businesses in operation were mainly in retail, textile and apparel, cereal vending, groceries and service provision. The sampling frame for the study consisted of 200 registered women in MSEs in Kimilili Sub County. Given the population of 200 women in MSEs, a sample size of 60, representing 30%, was taken using stratified sampling followed by simple random sampling within the strata which gave each item in the population an equal probability chance of being selected. The study used stratified random sampling technique to select the sample. The study grouped the population into strata. From each stratum the study used simple random sampling to select 60 respondents. The selection was as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Sample Size

Nature of Business	Population	Sample size (30%)
Green groceries	15	5
Textile and apparel	52	15
Retail business	70	21
Cereals vendors	12	4
Service providers	51	15
Total	200	60

The study used a questionnaire to collect data. The data collected was presented by use of tables and charts. The study generated both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data was measured based on the content matter of the responses. Responses with common themes or patterns were grouped together into coherent categories, coded and analyzed using Statistical Packages for Social Scientists (SPSS). Quantitative data collected from respondents was organized according to various variables and appropriately analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics included mean, standard deviation and percentages. Inferential statistics was used where Pearson correlation coefficient was ascertained in determining the

degree of association between independent variables and the dependent variable. Regression analysis was computed so as to establish the relationship between independent variables and the dependent variable.

**3. Results**

The study sought to assess the extent to which access to entrepreneurial training affects participation of women in entrepreneurial activities in micro small enterprises in Kimilili Sub-County. This was found to be important in order to assess its effect on participation of women in entrepreneurial activities in MSEs in Kimilili Sub-County.

**Attendance to Entrepreneurial Training**

The respondents were asked to state whether they had ever attended any entrepreneurial training in the course of operating their businesses. The results are shown in the Figure 1.

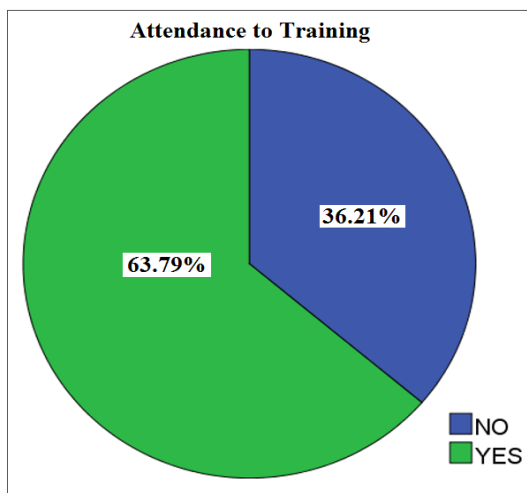


Fig 1: Attendance to entrepreneurial training

As shown in the figure above, 37(63.79%) of the women respondents stated that they had never attended any entrepreneurial training and 21(36.21%) of women respondents stated that they had attended entrepreneurial training. This implied that majority of the women in MSEs in Kimilili Sub-County had never attended any entrepreneurial training. However, further findings revealed that women in MSEs in Kimilili Sub-County who underwent training generally received informal kind of entrepreneurial training through workshops and seminars which was organized by Women Enterprise Fund Providers and it was only once. This indicates that the training received was not adequate enough in imparting entrepreneurial skills in the women entrepreneurs.

**Type of Training**

To evaluate the type of training received by women in MSEs, 4 items with five-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly agrees (1) to strongly disagree (5) was administered to women respondents. The findings were as presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Type of Entrepreneurial Training

	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)
Training in business management (A)	12	5	1	2	1	1.8095	1.20909
Training in sales and management (B)	6	11	1	2	1	2.0952	1.09109
Training in book keeping (C )	2	6	1	9	3	3.2381	1.30018
Received training in customer relations (D)	7	8	1	3	2	2.2857	1.34695

Key: SA = Strongly Agree A = Agree U = Undecided D = Disagree SD = Strongly Disagree

From the findings presented in the table above, majority of respondents agreed that they had trained in business management (M = 1.81, SD = 1.20909), trained in sales and marketing (M = 2.10, SD = 1.09101) and trained customer relations (M = 2.29, SD = 1.34695). Most of the women respondents disagreed that they had trained in book keeping (M = 3.2381, SD = 1.30018). The results could be interpreted to imply that training provided covered significant areas in management, sales and marketing and customer relations. Further analysis revealed that majority of the women respondents had not undertaken training because they were not aware of the existence of such training opportunities, they were not invited and some saw no need for training. From the study findings, it can be argued that entrepreneurial training of most women in MSEs in Kimilili Sub-County was very low. The findings indicated that women have very little training making them less entrepreneurial. These findings support those of Namusonge (2006) [26] who observes that entrepreneurial training stimulates entrepreneurship and self-employment.

**Demographic Characteristics versus Access to Entrepreneurial Training**

The study sought to establish the relationship between selected demographic characteristics of respondents and their attendance to entrepreneurial training. The two main characteristics that were used in this comparison are: number

of children and business experience of respondents. Each of these characteristics was cross-tabulated to both the attendance to training and the type of training attended.

**Number of Children and Attendance to Training**

The results on the number of children of women entrepreneurs and their attendance to entrepreneurial training were as cross tabulated in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Number of Children vs. Attendance to Training

		Number of Children		Total
		< 3 Children	≥ 3 Children	
Attendance to training	Yes	5	16	21
	No	18	19	37
Total		23	35	58

Key: < = Less than, ≥ = Greater or Equal to

The results in Table 3 above show that majority, 16(76.2%), of the women respondents who had attended entrepreneurial training had 3 or more children compared to those who had less 3 children, 5(23.8%). The findings further revealed that women respondents who had less than 3 children and had not attended entrepreneurial training were 18(48.6%). Those who had 3 children or more and had not attended entrepreneurial training were 19(51.4%). These findings indicate that women respondents who had many children attended training more than those with fewer children. However, one would have

expected women respondents with fewer children to have attended entrepreneurial training more than those with more children since the former were expected to have fewer responsibilities and hence more time to attend training.

**Number of Children and Type of Training**

The research results on the cross-tabulation of the number of Children of women respondents and type of entrepreneurial training were as indicated in Table 4 below.

**Table 4:** Number of Children vs. Type of Training

	SA		A		U		D		SD		MEAN			STD DEV.		
	<3	≥3	<3	≥3	<3	≥3	<3	≥3	<3	≥3	<3	≥3	Σ	<3	≥3	Σ
A	5	7	0	5	0	1	0	2	0	1	1.70	1.92	1.81	1.10	1.32	1.21
B	5	1	0	11	0	1	0	2	0	1	1.96	2.23	2.10	1.20	0.98	1.09
C	2	0	3	3	0	1	0	9	0	3	2.91	3.56	3.24	0.80	1.80	1.30
D	5	2	0	8	0	1	0	3	0	2	2.53	2.04	2.29	0.90	1.79	1.35

Key: SA = Strongly Agree A = Agree U = Undecided D = Disagree SD = Strongly Disagree, < = Less than, ≥ = Greater or Equal to

From the findings in Table 4 above, women respondents with less than 3 children strongly agreed more than those with 3 children and above that they had trained in business management (M = 1.7, S = 1.1 and M = 1.92, S = 1.32, respectively). Similarly, women respondents with less than 3 children agreed more than those with 3 children and above that they had trained in sales and marketing (M = 1.96, S = 1.2 and M = 2.23, S = 0.98, respectively). In the same way, women respondents with less than 3 children agreed more than those with 3 children and above that they had trained in customer relations (M = 2.53, S = 0.90 and M = 2.04, S = 1.79, respectively). Lastly, women respondents with less than

3 children disagreed more than those with 3 children and above that they had trained in book keeping (M = 2.91, S = 0.80 and M = 3.56, S = 1.80, respectively). These results suggest that although women in MSEs in Kimilili Sub-County with less than 3 children who had attended entrepreneurial training were fewer, they received intensive training than those with three or more children.

**Business Experience and Attendance to Training**

The research results for cross-tabulation of business experience of women respondents and their attendance to entrepreneurial training were as shown in Table 5 below.

**Table 5:** Business experience vs. Attendance to Training

		Attendance of Training		Total
		YES	NO	
Business Experience	Below 3 years	16	16	32
	3 years and above	5	21	26
Total		21	37	58

The findings in Table 5 above show that women respondents who had been in business for less than 3 years and had attended entrepreneurial training were 16(76.2%) while women respondents who had been in business for 3 years and above and had attended training were 5(23.8%). Furthermore, those women respondents who had been in business for less than 3 years and had never attended training were 16(43.2%). Those who had had been in business for 3 years and above and had never attended entrepreneurial training were

21(56.7%). These findings suggest that majority of women in MSEs in Kimilili Sub-County with business experience of less than 3 years had attended entrepreneurial training.

**Business Experience and Type of Training**

The cross-tabulation results for business experience of women respondents and the type of entrepreneurial training were as shown in Table 6 below.

**Table 6:** Business Experience vs. Type of Training

	SA		A		U		D		SD		MEAN			STD DEV.		
	<3	≥3	<3	≥3	<3	≥3	<3	≥3	<3	≥3	<3	≥3	Σ	<3	≥3	Σ
A	12	0	4	1	0	1	0	2	0	1	1.25	2.37	1.81	1.00	1.42	1.21
B	6	0	10	1	0	1	0	2	0	1	1.63	2.58	2.1	0.80	1.38	1.09
C	2	0	6	0	1	0	7	2	0	3	2.81	3.67	3.24	1.40	1.20	1.3
D	7	0	8	0	1	0	0	3	0	2	1.63	2.96	2.29	1.10	1.60	1.35

Key: SA = Strongly Agree A = Agree U = Undecided D = Disagree SD = Strongly Disagree.

From the findings in Table 6 above, women respondents who had less than 3 years business experience strongly agreed more than those with 3 years and above that they had trained in business management (M = 1.25, S = 1 and M = 2.37, S = 1.42, respectively). Similarly, women respondents who had less than 3 years business experience strongly agreed more than those with 3 years and above that they had trained in sales and marketing (M = 1.63, S = 0.8 and M = 2.58, S = 1.38, respectively). Moreover, women respondents who had

less than 3 years business experience strongly agreed more than those with 3 years and above that they had trained in customer relations (M = 1.63, S = 1.10 and M = 2.96, S = 1.60, respectively). Lastly, women respondents who had 3 years and above business experience disagreed more than those with less than 3 year that they had trained in book keeping (M = 3.63, S = 1.2 and M = 2.81, S = 1.40, respectively). These results seem to imply that majority of women in MSEs in Kimilili Sub-County who had been in

business for less than 3 years had received intensive training in entrepreneurship compared to those who had been in business for longer periods.

#### 4. Discussion

The study sought to assess the extent to which access to entrepreneurial training affects participation of women in entrepreneurial activities in micro small enterprises in Kimilili Sub-County. The research findings disclosed that majority of the women in MSEs in the Sub-County had never attended any entrepreneurial training and those who trained generally received informal kind of entrepreneurial training through workshops and seminars which were organized by Women Enterprise Fund Providers, and it was only once. The results further revealed that training provided covered significant areas in management, sales and marketing and customer relations. The training, however, did not cover much on book keeping. Further analysis of the research findings revealed that majority of women respondents had not undertaken training because they were either not aware of the existence of such training opportunities or they were not invited for training and some saw no need for partaking the training. This meant that the training received was not adequate in imparting entrepreneurial skills in women in micro small enterprises.

The study findings further showed that women respondents who had many children attended training more than those with fewer children. It was expected that women respondents with fewer children would have the time to attend entrepreneurial training more than those with many children since they have fewer responsibilities. Although women respondents with less than 3 children who had attended entrepreneurial training were fewer, they received intensive training compared to those with three or more children. The findings further showed that majority of women in MSEs in Kimilili Sub-County with business experience of less than 3 years had received intensive entrepreneurial training compared to those who had been in business for long. Using bivariate data from the findings which were, a Pearson correlation of 0.721 was calculated which indicated that access to entrepreneurial training affected participation of women in entrepreneurial activities.

#### 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the research findings of this study, it is clear that most women entrepreneurs in Kimilili Sub-County have not received sufficient training in business related programmes. Some of the constraints to their access to training include lack of exposure to training and poor business experience. Inadequate entrepreneurial training hinders the participation of women in entrepreneurial activities. Women with fewer children and those who have been in business for long are affected more than those with more children and little business experience.

Based on the above conclusions, it is recommended that women should engage in formal entrepreneurial education and training to help them get the prerequisite skills to effectively participate in entrepreneurial activities. The County Government of Bungoma, through the Department of trade, should initiate the training programmes and facilitate their implementation.

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