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Role of Informal Financial Banking Services Training on Economic Empowerment of Rural Women Self-Help Groups Affiliated to Joyful Women Organization (Joywo) in Kericho County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT: *Women all over the world contribute a lot to the national agricultural output and family food security, and several studies from Sub Saharan Africa shows that rural women are credit constrained than men of equivalent socio-economic conditions. Rural women are exposed to economic disability yet they form the majority of the rural population. Empowerment and improvement of women's socio-economic status is important for achievement of the necessary rural Development. In Kenya informal financial services concept has taken root with recent adoption of Joyful Women Organisation to provide financial resources to rural women to engage in livelihood projects. The purpose of this study was to determine the role of informal financial services to the economic empowerment of rural women entrepreneurs in Kenya. The specific objective addressed in this paper was to establish the role of informal financial banking services training on economic empowerment of rural women groups in Kericho County. The study used a survey design and targets rural women who are members of groups that subscribe to JOYWO. The study used 23 women self-help groups with a membership of 468 to reach the target population.153 members were randomly selected using stratified sampling technique. The study was carried out in Kericho County. The main instruments of data collection were the questionnaire, triangulation conducted through focus group questionnaire, and use of interview schedule for key informants. A pre-test of the questionnaire was carried out in a similar setting in Nakuru County to test the reliability of the instrument. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics, frequency distributions, chi-square and multiple linear regressions with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The results of the study indicated that training was a significant predictor of economic empowerment ($\beta = 0.03905$, $p<0.05$). Focus group discussions respondent who participated in this study were in agreement that most women groups lacked the entrepreneurship skills and had no idea how to successfully run a business, a claim they said had affected their effectiveness. The study recommends that the government should facilitate training for the groups particularly on financial management and loaning procedures. The Government and micro-finance institutions need to help women groups evaluate viability of income generating projects and follow up on how loans are used. The study will be helpful to groups and their members in streamlining their lending, saving and borrowing programmes. The formal banks will also benefit by adapting the principles of Informal banking and the use of group lending. Both national and county governments will make policies based on the findings.*

KEYWORDS*: Informal financial Banking Services, Rural Women Entrepreneurs, Economic Empowerment, performance, poverty.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has enabled poor people in the rural of Southern and Eastern Africa to overcome poverty by increasing their access to financial services to improve their small-scale agricultural production. Entrepreneurs and small enterprises have improved due to the availability of credit services from Microfinance Institutions and Microcredit Programs (IFAD, 2016).

The establishments of Sustainable Financial Services as a means to support or to empower marginalized people, to help them out of poverty, differ from country to country. There are those microcredit programs which are member-owned financial institutions which are evidenced in Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), in India and those which are donor or government supported like Women Enterprise and Development Fund (WEDF). Microcredit and microfinance have thus, in recent years, been claimed to be the most suitable vehicles for providing access to sustainable financial services and alleviating poverty among women who are economically challenged (Adoyo, 2013).

Kenya's financial system informal and formal is by far the largest and the most developed in East Africa despite the challenges that hinder it from reaching full potential with its stability improving significantly over the past years (Beck and Fuchs, 2007). Financial system comprises of formal and informal sectors: Formal banking services are provided by large financial institutions commercial banks licensed by Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) which supervise and regulate their activities. Formal banking institutions target large-scale enterprises and rich individuals and ignore the small income earners and small-scale enterprises. The informal sector, on the other hand, is not legally registered at the national level but belong to a registered association. Informal institutions engaged in the provision of financial services like mobilizing savings and credit facilities to farmers and low-income households in rural areas and also small-scale enterprises in urban areas (Pagura, 2008).

Furthermore according to Rutherford (2009), in Kenya and most of developing countries, financial access is limited to only 20-50 per cent of the entire population, that is, the few rich individuals excluding the other large percentage of the marginalized people. This is because the poor lack education and knowledge to understand the financial options that are available to them, banks are normally located in urban centres making them inaccessible to the marginalized group. Lack of collateral to borrow large loans from banks also is a major challenge that the poor face in an attempt to borrow loans. This limited access to financial services by the poor over the past years have led to the improvement of informal banking sector so as to enhance economic growth and improve standards of living especially to the poor rural women. Due to lack of financial access for the poor, over the past few decades, microfinance institutions and mobile banking have developed to provide financial services to small businesses like retail shops and kiosks. Microfinance provides services to such clients as relationship-based banking for sole- entrepreneurs, small enterprises and group-based models where several entrepreneurs come together as groups to apply for loans.

The Concept of microfinance came into existence due to the weakness of formal financial institutions and systems. The poor rural women have continued to be denied access to funds in formal financial institutions. This group of rural women was not catered for by the formal financial institutions and led to the development of other services like micro-saving, micro-leasing, insurance, and money transfers, deposits mobilization with some percentage being loaned, (Stewart et al., 2010). It is argued that microfinance is not only a source of finance for investment but also in financing well-being and reducing vulnerability to life crisis and health improvement (Amendariz&Morduch, 2010). The main objective is to improve the power of the poor and to improve the acquisition and control of assets and also have decisions –making. It also aims at reducing inequalities and gender discriminations (Swain &Walletin 2009).

Previous studies which have been documented revealed that there are many constraints faced by clients and especially those who are new in business in most of the developing countries, which include infrastructure, power, and lack of market (Beck et.al, 2007). The issue of financial constraints is more serious for SMEs, informal firms who are new or may want to start a business but lack collateral securities. Therefore these firms may have two alternatives; formal finance and informal finance. Informal finance may require less detailed information for on to get to get funds from lenders due to less rigorous procedures and requirement but is normally having inadequate supply and forced to offer at a higher interest rate. Formal finance can be a substitute, on the other hand, to help firms overcome financial constraints because of its adequacy in supply and financial advice on the management. The small and medium scale enterprises are driving force for the Ghanaian economy (Triki et al., 2011). The recent research has established that informal firms serve as the engine behind any economic development. Indeed Nyamekye (2009) evidence shows that the informal sector has grown from being twice that of the formal sector in the earlier years in West African countries.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section discusses literature review from studies done in the past that shows how informal financial banking services training in developing countries have financially empowered women.

2.1 Training Evaluation -Kirkpatrick model

The Kirk Patrick's Four-Level Training evaluation model is used to measure other effectiveness of training by analyzing and evaluating the results of training and educational programs. It takes into account any style of training, both informal and formal, to determine aptitude based on the four levels criteria- **Reaction, Learning, Behavior** and **Results**.The fourth level shows the contribution of training program in enterprise achievements. Training objective met or not, individuals expectation fulfilled or not due to training (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2008).In incorporating the model it will demonstrate the impact of empowerment in developing skills and knowledge of both individuals and groups.

The model has its own limitations where it finds out the result of existing factors and does not work on new factors so it is incomplete. It is on sequential or causal linkage model, meaning that every next steps/ level enhance the results of training effectiveness or it can say that one steps cause by other. Formal schooling leaves a gap between knowledge provided and required skills in business organization in order to fill this gap, training is required. Knowledge is really a reliable source of uncertainty and complexity of the global environment. Knowledge provides a competitive advantage and complex challenges in business challenges and has to be answered easily with special and selective knowledge received during training. Training is for improving, enhancing and updating the skill, knowledge, and abilities to perform better (Niazi, 2011).

The relevance to the study of this model is that it provides continuous training to women which results in creativity and innovation. The competitive advantage is the result of innovation done by and these innovations as a result of knowledge and upgrading knowledge yield to continuous innovation, it improve performance, it helps to cope with internal and external challenges, knowledge and skills also upgraded, yield to efficient work, environment, problem-solving skills. Training evaluation is useful for determining the benefits and effectiveness of training (Plameta, Myers Gyarmati&Voyer, 2011).

2.2 Training on informal financial services

In a study by Kiruja (2013), women who operate in the micro-enterprise sector tend to have lower education, less formal, have little work experience and are initially driven into self-employment by economic necessity. Education is one of the most powerful tools that can be used to bring development to a nation. It is a key when women receive education that increases their awareness being informed, entrepreneurship skills, management and enables them to exploit their environment (Tavershima, 2012). Klapper (2013) argues that educating a man is just educating one person but by educating a woman you are educating an entire nation. This argument arises from the different roles to women accorded in modern society like house wives, social mobilizers, leaders and citizens and entrepreneurship. Financial education is a key factor for pro-saving intervention. This approach is motivated by believe that most people lack basic financial knowledge. The finding in India for instance, where 26% of respondents provided no correct answers to four questions on basic financial principles, and where only 3% answered all four questions correctly (Cole, Sampson, and Zia, 2011). The same method was applied using the same instrument in other less-developed countries and yielded similarly low levels of basic financial literacy (Xu and Zia, 2012).

Tavershima (2012) observes that in most countries women are multi-tasking beyond domestic services such as nurses, teaching and other occupations until recently only considered for men. Education has the social benefits of liberating women from cultural activities that deny their progression of women (Tavershima , 2012). Educated women are more likely to fight practices such as human rights violation, wife beating, and primitive cultural practices. Studies by Grown, Gupta, and Kes (2013) showed that women with a higher level of education beyond primary level will engage in formal paid employment. Grown, Gupta, and Kes(2013) also found that women experience higher returns than men from secondary education, but men receive higher returns than women from primary education. Secondary education for women is an important factor that affects fertility and mortality (Grown, Gupta, and Kes, 2013).

Glenrose (2013) defines training as a systematic development of knowledge, skills and attitudes required by an individual to perform adequately a given task or job. The attitudes of the rural women will change towards doing businesses.Tavershima (2012) observes that in most countries women are taking responsibilities beyond domestic services such as nurses, teaching and other occupations until recently only considered for men. In addition, Grown, Gupta, and Kes (2013) notes that educated women who are educated and are gainfully employed provide income to their families. According to Tavershima (2012) education has the social benefits of liberating women from cultural activities that inhibit progression of women. Educated women are more likely to challenge practices such as human rights violation, wife beating, and other unhealthy cultural practices. Additionally, women education is an important factor for participation in the labour market.

A study in India finds that a better-educated woman has greater negotiating power, as measured by physical mobility and say in household resource-allocation, through the channel of increased information. In a report on women, work, and economy, Elborgh-Woytek et al. (2013) reported that in countries with few women with secondary education families had over five children and two had died at infancy. In countries with higher levels of secondary educated girls families had about three children with almost no deaths. Although primary education is the major focus, for girls post primary education has stronger effects in health, position in family and society, political participation and economic opportunities. Therefore, it is important commitments and investments are also made in secondary education (Grown, Gupta, &Kes, 2013). Tavershima (2012) argues that educated women are able to improve their health and sanitary and those of the family which is important for the progress of the family and the nation. Holloway, Niazi, and Rouse (2017) reinforce this argument by noting that mothers are aware of their responsibilities towards their children especially medical care. Previously due to ignorance mothers would not take children to hospital but would treat them with traditional medicine which was sometimes unreliable. The education of women greatly contributes to education of the society because of the role they play as mothers. El Nokali, Bachman, and Votruba-Drzal, (2010) argues that much of what children learn and practice in life is greatly contributed by the mother who is a teacher early in life. Educated mothers are able to guide children in their schoolwork, support them by buying books, discipline them when they don't do well and ensure they complete their home-work. A programme implemented in India called MahilaSamakya aimed at improving female empowerment in groups indicated that through women's adult learning, has enabled women to be aware of the many forms of disadvantages they suffer, thus point out their rights and chart ways to shape their own lives (Nualart, 2012). Education has also enabled women to run their groups effectively. The leaders are able to effectively run their groups if they have the knowledge on how to. It is important to note that keeping of financial records, minutes as well as other relevant records is important for effective performance of any organization. It is through these records that group members and its leadership will know whether the group is on course or not. Education therefore plays a key role and is linked to how effective women can make decision, access economic resources; perform in enterprise development as well as getting accurate information on how government and other institutions can be of beneficial to their groups.

A study in India finds that a better-educated woman has greater negotiating power, as measured by physical mobility and say in household resource allocation, through the channel of increased information (Nualart, 2012). UNIDO Document (2003) shows that Ugandan women entrepreneurs in rural areas suffer from lack of training and advisory services that would allow them to upgrade their managerial and technical skills, which will enable them, solve immediate problems. This automatically limits their performance in their groups, because of multi-tasking and lack of technical knowhow. The end result of such according to ILO (2008) could disastrously lead to break-up performance and even closure of individual or group projects owned by women. Availing loans to women through groups is just part of work, because they also need access to markets.

World Bank and FAO (2009) observed that women entrepreneurs in developing world have problem in accessing markets due to lack of capacity, skills and awareness. It is noted that there is a lot of social pressure on borrowers to repay their loans, yet they cannot meet the minimum amount due to lack of market. Capacity building is an essential ingredient in fostering successful linkages between different institutional actors. It is a requirement in strengthening the capacity of informal-finance intermediaries to build and maintain these linkages or groups. Training is a must in the following areas: how to evaluate and select good members in a group, how to design and negotiate group contracts and tenders, how to select and train new group member or group, and how to evaluate properly the costs and benefits of business as an individual or for the group. Kibas (2006), lack of management training, financial training general management is a hindrance to women from fully engaging in under-development. A consequence of poor managerial ability is that the business' owners are ill prepared to face changes in the business environment and to plan, accept, and implement changes in technology (Yongo, 2011). Okpara and Wynn (2007), in their study supported this view. In their study on factors affecting growth of MSEs, they found that lack of management experience is a major cause of small business failure. In the study they concluded that owners tend to manage businesses themselves as a way of reducing operational costs.

Most of the sectors of the economic and some regions may still be lacking financial education. More generally, Campero and Kaiser (2013) have shown that households with greater levels of schooling are more likely to be aware of credit sources (formal and informal) and that regions with greater average schooling levels are marked by greater use of formal credit.

The large informal sector may impede access to financial services. Participants in the informal sector find it harder to document their financial situation, given the absence of tax returns. They may also prefer to deal in cash to avoid leaving traces in the financial system, Campero and Kaiser (2013)

It is believed at the Grameen Bank that the main problem of the poor is a lack of access to credit. Established large banks give credit to those with collateral whereas Grameen Bank gives loans without any kind of collateral. This is done by replacing collateral by peer pressure and social sanctions. The extremely poor can get small loans at Grameen Bank by being in groups of five women. Each member of the group receives an individual loan but is mutually responsible for all five credits. Each is guaranteed by the other in case of default. The bulk of Grameen Bank's borrowers are women who are the poorest socially, politically and economically. The practice is flourishing in countries like Malaysia where poverty has been reduced through such approaches to about3 % (ROK, 2009).

Money in the hands of mothers as opposed to husbands brings more benefits to the family, Doepke and Tertilt (2011). At the 18th meeting of the African partnership forum RCM-Africa (2007), it was noted that 20 women in both rural and urban areas need access to financial services like banking, microcredit and insurance, management training, business development and support services. Easy access to these services is the foundation of establishing small and medium (SMEs) enterprises that will enable women develop their economic potentiality. Thus, their bargaining power is boosted (Eyben, Kabeer& Cornwall (2008). Economic empowerment give women ability to access resources' and jobs opportunities and financial services, productive investments, skills and market information (OECD, 2012). Regulated financial products are very inflexible and an innovative approach that aims at availing these services to women is informal finance through group lending.

Yunus (2006), the Nobel laureate argues that to achieve the goals of economic development which include; improved standard of living, removal of poverty, access to dignified self and employment and reduction of inequality it is natural to start with women. Empowerment of women leads to reduction of violent conflicts. Burra (2005) notes access to credit does not automatically include control. This has challenged women to seek proper means on which they can assert control on this crucial resource. Collective action has therefore been recognized as an important force in risk management among rural communities who are in the developing world.

Groups contribute to building social capital which yield positive effect on people's welfare where it generating income (Hans, 2012). Place et al (2004) strongly argued that women in Kenya feel more confident and secured by working in groups and he identifies activities that Kenyan women groups are involved in as income generation, asset building, commodity marketing and social functions. Dey and Sarker (2010) noted that more consideration should be on the impact, and the potentialiality of women groups in alleviating poverty and empowering women as work of Grameen bank in 1979.

Women group formation and linking to banks can also raise incomes and broaden financial markets by providing credit to SMEs and entrepreneurs thus reducing poverty (Glenrose, 2013). In India finance lending begun in early 1980s with small efforts at forming informal self-help groups to provide accessibility to credit services and India's first Microfinance Institution 'ShriMahila SEWA Sahkari Bank' was set up as an urban co-operative bank, by the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA), (Das,2012). However, OECD (2012) notes that microfinance is important in women Empowerment though it can lead to undesirable outcomes such as debt and exclusion if not properly managed and structured. To mitigate this UNDP (2010) stresses on the importance of women mobilizing into groups and provision of support services like training easy access to funds. Holvoet (2005) in a study on rural women in Kenya discovered that when money is directly channelled to women there is no much improvement in decision influence within the household. However where women groups were used there was an observable change in the patterns of decision making.

Based on research conducted in India on self-help groups, Swain and Wallentin (2009) observed that, direct empowerment of women through microfinance occurs when women join a group where they are exposed to training. These women groups give them an opening of getting capital through small savings enables them to access credit through formal financial systems. The collective back-up of liability enables members to overcome the challenge of collateral which is a big problem in getting credit from financial institutions. Creation of a safe avenue for savings have been studied by many scholars (on which interest is earned) is an attractive feature of SHGs, which has led to significant promotion of savings (Mary & Krupa, 2012) . Another issue that makes the size and the number in a group makes it a better vehicle for women economic empowerment. This brings togetherness and better participation among members. Although women groups are widely being used as an important vehicle in economic empowerment evidence on their success is mixed.

Husain, Mukerjee and Dutta (2010) hypothesized that women groups attract women active in public domain, which they call 'self-selection' while excluding those in need of assistance. This relationship is a major challenge to success of women groups. The multi-tasking on women that they complete household chores, then use their leisure time for women group activities leads to fatigue due to overworking .Loans to groups had significantly boosted the capacity of households in generating income (Holloway, Niazi, & Rouse, 2017).

There have been a significant increased household assets and knowledge and skills on how to use financial capital. In a study in Uganda, Kakuru (2008) concluded that groups were mainly composed of low income women which help overcome the challenge of market access better than any other way of outreach. The study found that the flexibility of women groups enabled them be utilized in other areas such as providing emergency loans and welfare funds. A study in Zimbabwe by Allen and Hobane (2006) found that use of women groups to advance loans had contributed to an increase in business and consumer assets amongst group member households.

In Malawi, Anyango (2005) increase household income and diversification of economic activities is as a result of women groups. In Kenya, the concept of groups was enhanced by the Harambee philosophy, which literary meant let us pull together in article of African philosophers. Harambee was the collective and cooperative participation of a community in an attempt to fill perceived needs through utilization of its own resources. The Harambee philosophy gained prominence in Kenya after independence in 1963 through Kenya's first president, MzeeJomo Kenyatta who urged Kenyans to help one another through the spirit of harambee. He believed that if Kenyans worked together in pulling towards a common goal, a new and a better Kenya would be built. This concept has been advanced through different avenues including women groups. Women empowerment in Kenya consequently, can be traced back to the tradition and ways of African people.

Holloway et al. (2017) women group activities enables them to participate in household decision making by creating resources they control although the entire household benefits. World Bank and FAO (2009) observed that women entrepreneurs in developing world face huge challenges in accessing markets due to lack of capacity and skills as compared to men. There is a lot of social pressure on borrowers to repay their loans whileothers have tried to understand the birth of kinds of self-help organizations. He notes that unlike men, women lack the necessary physical and financial capital, but have substantial human capital.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study used survey design consisting of a questionnaire with standardized answers and specific questions that made it easier to compile data and it is therefore possible to give precise and testable expression of qualitative ideas. It employed descriptive and inferential statistics in analysing the role of informal financial services in economic empowerment of rural women. Descriptive research helps in obtaining information concerning the present status of the phenomena and to describe what is in existence with respect to variable in a situation. It maximises reliability (Kothari, 2004). Successful descriptive research design should have six w's: who should be considered, where should the respondents be conducted to obtain the required information, when should the information be obtained, what information should be obtained, why information is being obtained and way in which the researcher is going to obtain the information from the respondents. (Cooper,&Schindlier, 2014). The target population was 1040 members of women spread in 65 groups that subscribe to JOYWO in Kericho County.

The key informants were sampled purposefully based on their positions of authority. The sample size was arrived at using Nassiuma (2000), formula:

$$\mathrm{n} = \frac{\mathrm{NC}^2}{\mathrm{C}^2 + (\mathrm{N}-1)\mathrm{e}^2}$$

(Where; n=sample size; N=population size; C=Coefficient of variation which is ≤ 30%; e=margin of error which is fixed between 2-5%). The study sample will calculate at 25% coefficient of variation and 5% margin of error (Nassiuma, 2000).

Twenty five percent coefficient of variation was used to ensure that the sample was wide enough to justify the results being generalized for Kericho County. Higher coefficients of variation will be not used to avoid very large samples due to limitation of research funds. Five percent margin of error was used because the study used an ex-post facto survey, whereby the independent variables will not be manipulated hence necessitating relatively higher margin of error.

$$\mathrm{n} = \frac{468 * 0.3^2}{0.3^2 + (468-1)0.02^2} = 152.17 \approx 153$$

The study used stratified random sampling to further divide the population into homogenous subgroup. Nachmias and Nachmias (2009) advices that for the purpose of getting accurate sample size, when population has more than 100 respondents, 10% or more of each stratum should be selected. In this case of the 23 groups that were randomly selected for study the stratified sample size was 153 respondents. Once you have fixed the sample size then allocate it proportional according to Neyman's formula $n_h = \left(\frac{n}{N}\right) N_h$

The main tool employed for data collection in this study was the questionnaire. The research assistants helped administer and distribute the questionnaires to the various JOYWO women groups. The questionnaires were administered by research assistant during the group meetings. However, in case of language complications, the assistants assisted the respondents in filling the questionnaires. In situations of difficulties in answering the questions using questionnaires during group meetings the respond were allowed more time to be collected in the next meeting. Researcher analysed data collected using descriptive, chi-square and inferential statistics-test correlation and multiple regression analysis. The information was presented using tables. The relationship between various independent variables and dependent variable was determined using a multiple regression model in form of:

$$\mathrm{Y} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \mathrm{X}_1 + \beta_2 \mathrm{X}_2 + \beta_3 \mathrm{X}_3 + \mathrm{e}$$

Where;

Y = Dependent Variable (women empowerment)

β_0 = Constant Term

β_1, β_2, β_3, = Beta coefficients

X_1 = Informal Savings Loans and Credit

X_2 = Informal financial Services training

X_3 = Information access on Informal financial services

e = Error Term

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents a detailed descriptive and inferential statistics based on the research data.

1.4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Education and training on informal financial services

		Frequency	Percent (%)
	Yes	143	98.6
	No	2	1.4
Total		**145**	**100.0**

As shown by table 1, most respondents indicated that they their groups had official training on informal financial services. 143 (98.6%) attested to this. Only two (1.4%) stated that they had no education and training on financial services. This coincides with Koech (2014) study on contribution of women in economic empowerment of rural women groups. When asked whether they had received training as group members, 27 respondents indicated they had received training while three indicated they had not received any training. These respondents represented 90% and 10% respectively. Koech (2014) further states that the 27 respondents said that the training received was basic and that they needed more specialized business start-up courses and technical assistance. According to the respondents, this will enable them improve their entrepreneurship skills. Key informants who participated in this study were in agreement that most women groups lacked the entrepreneurship skills and had no idea how to successfully run a business, a claim they said had affected the effectiveness. Four women group leaders who were also community women leaders said that the main contributing factors on low entrepreneurship skills were education, socio-cultural norms and low level of training by micro finance institutions as well as the government. Key informants from micro finance institutions and government noted that women groups receive basic business management training from their institutions. They said that most women groups go through seminars on how to manage their finances through their financial institutions before they are given any funding.

Table 2: Facilitation of training of members by the group

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes	144	99.3
No	1	.7
Total	**145**	**100.0**

As shown by table 2 above, almost all respondents indicated that they their groups had facilitated training to their members on informal financial services. This was 99.3% (144 respondents) of the total representation. This is a clear indication that most groups train their members.

Table 3: Number of trainings attended by members

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Less than 6 times	1	.7
6-12 times	1	.7
13-18 times	83	57.2
19-24 times	20	13.8
24-30 times	40	27.6
Total	**145**	**100.0**

Most respondents, 83 (57.2% had attended 13-18 trainings facilitated by their groups. 40 (27.6%) had attended 24-30 trainings. Twenty (13.8%) had attended between 19 and 24 trainings. From this data, we can conclude that most respondents had received adequate trainings facilitated by their groups.

Table 4: Improved business activities after training

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes	144	99.3
No	1	.7
Total	**145**	**100.0**

As shown by table 4, almost all respondents indicated that training has helped improved their business activities. This was 99.3% (144 respondents) of the total representation. This is a clear indication that trainings play a key role in improving business activities of various groups and their members. Training had enabled them improve their business performance, gained skills on financial management, and understood loan procedures better.A study done by Adesua andLeighton(2008) is in contrast where they concluded that lack of management experience and skills is negatively correlated to small business performance. The findings in their showed a major gap in capacity building and financial training in table banking and demanded for increased attention.

Table 5: Number of times attending a financial or credit management seminar

	Frequency	Percent (%)
1-3 times	1	.7
4-6 times	21	14.5
7-9 times	115	79.3
10 times and above	8	5.5
Total	**145**	**100.0**

As shown by table 5, most respondents had attended between 7 and 9 credit management seminars. This was represented by 115 (79.3%) of the respondents. 21 (14.5%) had attended 4-6 trainings. Only 8 (5.5%) had attended more over ten trainings on credit management.

Table 6: Increase in financial bargaining power

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Disagree	5	3.4
Neutral	48	33.1
Agree	66	45.5
Strongly Agree	26	17.9
Total	**145**	**100.0**

Most respondents agreed that informal financial services increased financial bargaining power. This represented 66 (45.5%) of the total response. 48 (33.1%) were neutral on the subject matter. However,26 (17.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed on the subject. Only 5 (3.4%) disagreed. This shows that, informal financial services have led to increase in financial bargaining power, though a considerable number of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed.

Table 7: Promotes peer support in entrepreneur activities

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Disagree	4	2.8
Neutral	64	44.1
Agree	65	44.8
Strongly agree	12	8.3
Total	**145**	**100.0**

Most respondents agreed that informal financial service promotes peer support in entrepreneur activities. This represented 65 (44.8%) of the total response. Almost the same number of respondents, 64 (44.1%) were neutral on the subject matter. However,12(8.3%), of the respondents strongly agreed on the subject. This shows that, informal financial services have promoted peer support in entrepreneur activities, though a considerable number of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed.

Such groups or peer support according to study done by (Napier, 2009) the group saving benefits the individual members in two ways as economic benefit as well as intangible social benefits. The members can socialise whenever they have meeting and exchange ideas, copy good manners and ways of grooming. This is supported by the study done Nigeria by Banwo(2015) where he argued that group cohesion is key in group performance if where the group is establishing itself or young. Harun&Manmood (2012), (Harun& Chin(2015) argues that group cohesiveness is key in improving and encouraging innovation and creativity.

Table 8: Easy Access to credit

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Disagree	8	5.5
Neutral	54	37.2
Agree	76	52.4
Strongly agree	7	4.8
Total	**145**	**100.0**

Most respondents agreed that they had easy access to credit in their groups. This represented 65 (44.8%) of the total response. 54 (37.2%) were neutral on the subject matter. 7 (4.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed on the subject. However, 8(5.5%) disagreed. This shows that, easy access to credit has benefitted their groups, though a considerable number of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed.Informal financial services , convenient, simple and within the reach of rural women, interest on loans is low compared to formal finance, the person lending and the borrowers know each other well, there is also good savings mobilization.

Table 9: Savings Habit

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Disagree	8	5.5
Neutral	65	44.8
Agree	54	37.2
Strongly agree	18	12.4
Total	**145**	**100.0**

Most respondents were neither agreed nor disagreed that informal financial services promote savings habit. This represented 65 (44.8%) of the total response. 54 (37.2%) agreed on the subject matter. 18 (12.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed on the subject. However, 8(5.5%) disagreed. This shows that, informal financial services have no clear way of promoting savings habit, though a considerable number of respondents agreed that informal financial services promotes savings habit.

Table 10: Role of training on business skills

	SD	D	N	A	SA	ChiSq	Pr>ChiSq
Leadership	1.38	2.07	23.45	50.34	22.76	116.6	<.0001
Book keeping		2.07	50.34	45.52	2.07	122.7	<.0001
Human resource management		5.52	29.66	55.86	8.97	93.4	<.0001
Record keeping		8.28	48.28	39.31	4.14	84.8	<.0001
Conflict management		4.14	40.69	48.97	6.21	93.3	<.0001
Projects management		5.52	49.66	40	4.83	93.9	<.0001
Investment management		4.14	34.48	46.9	14.48	67.9	<.0001
business management		1.38	42.76	44.14	11.72	82.1	<.0001
individual economic projects		5.52	35.17	53.1	6.21	94.3	<.0001
Financial management		4.14	49.66	39.31	6.9	94.3	<.0001
Credit management	2.76	2.76	40	44.14	10.34	121.1	<.0001

Table 10shows that 1.4% of the respondents strongly disagreed that there was improved leadership after training, 2.1% disagreed, 23.4% were neutral, 50.3% agreed while 22.8% strongly agreed. The highest value of 50.3% indicated that majority of the respondents agreed that training had led to enhancement of leadership in their groups.

On book keeping, 2.1% disagreed that there was improved book keeping after training, 50.3% were neutral, 45.5% agreed while 2.1% strongly agreed. The highest value of 50.3% indicated that majority of the respondents were not sure whether training had led to improved book keeping in their business activities.

On human resource management, 5.5% disagreed that there was improved human resource management after training, 29.7% were neutral, 55.9% agreed while 8.9% strongly agreed. The highest value of 55.9% indicated that the majority of the members agreed that training had led to improved human resource management in their business activities.

On record keeping, 8.3% disagreed that there was improved record keeping after training, 48.3% were neutral, 39.3% agreed while 4.1% strongly agreed. The highest value of 48.3% indicated that majority of the respondents were not sure whether training had led to improved record keeping.

On conflict management, 4.1% disagreed that there was improved conflict management after training, 40.7% were neutral, 48.9% agreed while 6.2% strongly agreed. The highest value of 48.9% indicated that the majority of the members agreed that training had led to better ways of conflict management in their business activities.

On project management, 5.5% disagreed that there was improved project management after training, 49.7% were neutral, 40% agreed while 4.8% strongly agreed. The highest value of 49.7% indicated that majority of the respondents were not sure whether training had improved project management skills in their business endeavours.

On investment management, 4.1% disagreed that there was improved investment management after training, 34.5% were neutral, 46.9% agreed while 14.5% strongly agreed. The highest value of 46.9% indicated that majority of the respondents agreed that training had led to enhanced investment management in their business activities.

On business management, 1.4% disagreed that there was improved business management after training, 42.8% were neutral, 44.1% agreed while 11.7% strongly agreed. The highest value of 46.9% indicated that majority of the respondents agreed that training had enhanced business management skills of members.

On individual economic projects, 5.5% disagreed that training had improved individual economic projects, 35.2% were neutral, 53.1% agreed while 6.2% strongly agreed. The highest value of 53.1% indicated that majority of the respondents agreed that training had helped in the improvement of individual economic projects.

On financial management, 4.1% disagreed that training had improved financial management, 49.7% were neutral, 39.3% agreed while 6.9% strongly agreed. The highest value of 49.7% shows that majority of the respondents were not sure whether training had improved their financial management skills.

On credit management, 2.8% of the respondents strongly disagreed that there was improved credit management after training, 2.8% disagreed, 40% were neutral, 44.1% agreed while 10.3% strongly agreed. The highest value of 50.3% indicated that majority of the respondents agreed that training had led to improved credit management in their business activities.

These findings are consistent with a study by Sabharwal (2010) which observed that training programs are recognized as having the capacity to empower the most vulnerable and marginalized, by creating a community-based structure that builds mutual support and trust. Such an approach allows for greater economic and social integration for the marginalized section of society, thereby directly addressing issues of vulnerability. Mayoux (2009) adds that training improves women's ability to earn an income. Training also has the potential to question and significantly change men's attitudes and behaviors as an essential component of achieving women's empowerment.

These findings also agree with Kibas (2006), who identified lack of management training, financial training general management as a hindrance to women from fully engaging in under-development. A consequence of poor managerial ability is that the business' owners are ill prepared to face changes in the business environment and to plan, accept, and implement changes in technology.

Table 11: Economic Empowerment

	SD	D	N	A	SA	ChiSq	Pr>ChiSq
Increase financial bargaining power		3.45	33.1	45.52	17.93	58.1	<.0001
Promotes peer support in entrepreneur activities		2.76	44.14	44.83	8.28	88.96	<.0001
Easy access to credit		5.52	37.24	52.41	4.83	97.9	<.0001
Promotes savings habit		5.52	44.83	37.24	12.41	62.7	<.0001
Econ. growth of members		5.52	33.79	51.03	9.66	75.9	<.0001
Reduced poverty levels	0.69	1.38	44.83	37.24	15.86	119.7	<.0001

The highest benefit to training was the increase in financial bargaining power which was agreed by an average of 63.45% (92) of the respondents. Growth in group membership was agreed by 85 (58.69%) and easier access to credit was agreed and strongly agreed by 83 (57.25%) of the total respondents. Promotes peer support in entrepreneur activities, reduced poverty levels promotes savings habit were agreed and strongly disagreed by 77 (53.11%), 77 (53.10%) and 72 (49.65%) of the respondents respectively. These findings tell us that training on informal financial services have benefited members by increasing their financial bargaining power, the rise in the number of group economic empowerment, access to credit, and increased support of business. Although these benefits were identified, it is important to note that a considerable number of respondents were either neutral or did not agree to receive any benefits.

Table 12: Role of training in economic empowerment of women

	SD	D	N	A	SA	ChiSq	Pr>ChiSq
your empowerment as a woman		3.45	17.24	54.48	24.83	80.4	<.0001
increase in the volume of output and sales		2.07	42.07	50.34	5.52	106.7	<.0001
expansion of the business and increase in dividends		6.21	40	46.9	6.9	80.4	<.0001

Increase in incomes from the business		5.52	41.38	45.52	7.59	79.6	<.0001
increase in quality of products and profitability	0.69	2.07	46.21	46.21	4.83	166.6	<.0001
Improved credibility for loans by the group	1.38	4.14	44.83	40	9.66	124.8	<.0001
Informed investment`		4.14	36.55	53.1	6.21	99.3	<.0001
Improved records keeping		3.45	40.69	44.14	11.72	72.7	<.0001
Increased mobilization of rural areas households savings from low income		2.07	37.93	51.03	8.97	94.4	<.0001
Improved access to credit due to lack of bureaucracy		3.45	48.28	39.31	8.97	85.2	<.0001

In relation to the first statement on the role of training on the respondent's empowerment as a woman, a high response of 79.32% (115) on average agreed with the statement. These findings are consistent with the United Nations Report of 2012, which stated that women's equal access to economic resources, including land, credit, science and technology, vocational training, information, communication, and markets, was paramount in the advancement and empowerment of women and girls (United Nations, 2012).

In regards to the role of training on the increased mobilization of rural areas household's savings from low income, an average of 60% (87) agreed with this statement. The remaining factors: Informed investment, increase in the volume of output and sales, improved records keeping, expansion of the business and increase in dividends, increase in incomes from the business increase in quality of products and profitability, improved credibility for loans by the group and improved access to credit due to lack of bureaucracy on average were agreed upon 59.31% (86), 55.86% (81), 55.86% (81), 53.8% (78), 53.11% (77), 51.04% (74), 49.66% (72) and 48.28% (70) respectively.

1.4.2 Hypothesis testing

This section summarizes the test of association using Chi-squre (χ^2) to ascertain whether there was a significant relationship between training and economic empowerment. The results obtained are presented in table 13.

Table 13: Chi-Square Tests on training and Economic Empowerment

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	62.158[a]	27	**0.0021**
Likelihood Ratio	31.732	27	.670
Linear-by-Linear Association	.242	1	.751
N of Valid Cases	141		

Table 13 indicated that there was a significant association between training on informal financial services and women economic empowerment ($\chi2$=62.158, df= 27, P=0.0021). The researcher, therefore, failed to accept the null hypothesis, hence concluded that there was a significant relationship between training on informal financial services and their level of economic empowerment.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study findings revealed that most women group members had received training on economic empowerment. These training sessions were offered by financial institutions as well as the government. Accessibility to credit and business services was described by the respondents as good. This was because a substantial number of women were able to access credit to facilitate projects. However, findings from the study revealed that accessibility of funds from the government was low as opposed to other financial institutions. Chi-square test of independence indicated a significant association between informal financial banking services trainingand women economic empowerment.

Based on the findings, the following recommendation was made: The government should facilitate training for the groups particularly on financial management and loaning procedures. There is a need to enhance adult literacy programmes so that women can learn to read and write. This will nurture the leadership skills of all the women group members and contribute to women empowerment at all levels. Training women on new proficiencies they have been conventionally deprived of, has a great possibility of opening up new role opportunities for them, thus enhancing their empowerment at all levels.

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