



# Gender and Developing Entrepreneurial Skills among Entrepreneurs in Juba City, South Sudan

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**Abstract:** Women's business has received more attention in recent years, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. The literature suggests that women can significantly contribute to entrepreneurship. This study examined gender and developing entrepreneurial skills in Juba City, South Sudan. The study was guided by Entrepreneurship Theory. A descriptive survey design was used. The target population was 100 men and women entrepreneurs in Juba City. A non-probability sampling technique was used to choose 100 entrepreneurs for the study. Questionnaires were used to collect data. This study ensured construct validity through relevant representative questions for the study objective. Further, research instruments were developed in close consultation with the research experts for their expertise approval. Cronbach Alpha was used to ascertain the reliability of the study. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics like measures of central tendency using SPSS (version 25). The analyzed data was presented in tabulation form. In the findings, gender has a significant influence on entrepreneurship for socio-economic development in Juba. Another finding was that women's engagement in business has been growing through awareness creation that targets gender and economic development. Finally support given to women in their entrepreneurial management by the South Sudanese state helps in the thriving of business. In recommendation, the national Government, local leaders, and all entrepreneurs should work together by formulating business-friendly policies which are inclusive to both genders without any form of discrimination to promote the endeavors of the entrepreneurs in the social and economic growth of both individuals and the country.

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurial Skills, Gender, Entrepreneurship, South Sudan

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## 1. Introduction

The efforts of governments in many nations globally place greater attention on the empowerment of their individual members by redirecting the attention of its men and women to exploit entrepreneurial opportunities. Due to the associated generation of revenue at the micro- and macroeconomic levels, entrepreneurship is acknowledged as a key strategy to combat poverty (Welsh, Kaciak, Fadairo, Doshi & Lanchimba, 2023 citing Content et al., 2020, Gras & Nason, 2015, Wurth et al., 2022). These initiatives are most welcoming, particularly in the case of developing countries where women's place has been

considered to be at home for domestic chores or parents (World Bank, 2015). Although women have responded positively to the government's efforts towards them and started joining the workforce, either as paid employees or self-employed, women are still an under-represented group within entrepreneurship and within higher positions in organizations (Philip, 2018).

It is evident that entrepreneurship activities contribute to a sustainable economy and gender gap reduction. The 2020/2021 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor report confirms that entrepreneurial activities and entrepreneurship education can "promote aspiration in life

and career as well as the outlook for future business sustainability for women” worldwide. Unfortunately, new businesses and ventures are more likely to be created by men than women (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2020).

In the recent past, the world recorded an upsurge in the number of women involved in entrepreneurial activities, yet there is still a huge gap between the two genders in what they are currently achieving in business (Swain, (2019). It is acknowledged that a higher percentage of men are engaged in entrepreneurial activities in developed and developing economies for various reasons. Further, the World Bank Group (2014) argued that women may find it harder to get motivated for their business intentions in established institutions and are forced to be self-motivated through working in their own enterprises. The self-employment option is echoed by several other researchers who suggest that self-employment may be the only available alternative to unemployment and this is mainly because of dissatisfaction from previous jobs, difficulties to re-enter the labour market, the ‘glass ceiling’, and family-related matters.

Despite the nature of economic development, the discrimination that surrounds the gender peculiarities of individual rights is on the increase (Sharaunga, Mudhara & Bogale, 2018). The gender issue is a subject that can generate heated arguments and is most noticeable when discussants try to impress their opinion on others in areas of economic and social significance. One such economically significant theme that cannot be trivialized is when the male entrepreneur sees his female counterpart getting involved in an area meant for men alone. Some studies mention that women are behind men when it comes to socioeconomic development while other studies point out that women are living below the poverty line with the possibility of getting the worst effect of economic recessions (2012:51). According to Shane (2015), gender inequality has been known to attract much attention because several reports evoke contradictory inferences about the effect of gender peculiarities on how men and women fare during economic adjustments.

This issue can be related to limited access to resources to establish new ventures among women. Indeed, it is important for all governments to reduce gender gaps between men and women when it comes to the promotion of business and entrepreneurship opportunities. It is reported by the UN Women (2020a) that the promotion of an entrepreneurial mindset through education and training can contribute to gender equity in the participation in entrepreneurship activities among women.

A gender belief system can have an impact on how men and women operate a business or the industry choice of

female entrepreneurs. Socio-cultural and educational factors toward women, that is, access to entrepreneurship education and training, may dictate that some industries or professions are more appropriate for female entrepreneurs than others. This point is related to the fact that gender segregation can influence women’s opportunities for training, education, and career choices. The result of such attitudes is that specific sectors can be oversaturated with female-operated ventures, whereas access to other markets is limited to women entrepreneurs, and thus female entrepreneurial activity in those spheres remains modes (UN Women, 2020b). Thus, certain industries are seen as “appropriate” for female entrepreneurs because of socially constructed roles. On the other hand, technology-intensive markets (i.e., manufacturing, construction) remain primarily reserved for male entrepreneurs. Therefore, gender issues remain problematic in the preparation for skill development among female entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurship is defined as a process of value creation and appropriation led by entrepreneurs in an uncertain environment (Mishra & Zachary, 2014). The entrepreneurial process of value creation is driven by the entrepreneur and her entrepreneurial intention (an aspiration for entrepreneurial reward). The entrepreneurial process is not an autonomous process; the entrepreneur is integral to the entrepreneurial process. Thus, the entrepreneurial intention and resources are intrinsic to the entrepreneurial process. The entrepreneurial process involves the entrepreneur identifying an external opportunity; matching the entrepreneurial resources at hand with the opportunity to effectuate an entrepreneurial competence; acquiring external resources, if necessary; creating sustained value; and appropriating the entrepreneurial reward.

In Spain, even though the number of female entrepreneurs has increased significantly in recent years and in similarly developed countries, empirical evidence still indicates that the number of businesses owned by women is significantly lower than the number of businesses owned by men and that twice as many men become entrepreneurs as do women (Gupta et al., 2017). The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) project has examined entrepreneurial activity in more than 70 countries, and the results show that the ratio of women to men in terms of entrepreneurship is low, reflecting low participation by women. In an attempt to identify the underlying reasons for gender differences in entrepreneurship, some authors, Watkins, have focused on the groups of factors that have been traditionally considered as determinants for making individual decision to starting a new business: contextual factors, socio-demographic factors (gender, age, educational level, employment status) and individuals’ perceptual factors (self-efficacy, ability to recognize opportunities, fear of failure, regretful thinking, perseverance).

In Southeast Asia, female entrepreneurs face challenges in starting and growing their businesses, because of gender and cultural-based barriers (OECD, 2019). A report on female entrepreneurship in Southeast Asia by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA, 2015) refers to certain structural problems that prevail to reduce gender gaps in entrepreneurial activities. They may include expectation and gender-based roles for women, matrimonial and inheritance laws and/or cultural practices, poor access to resources, limited mobility among women, lack of political voice and representation in society, and an unequal share of family and household responsibilities. When compared with their male counterparts, women entrepreneurs are in a less competitive position to accessing national and international markets, resources and support, and education and training. Most governments therefore promote entrepreneurship education and training as strategies to mitigate and reduce equality.

In South Africa, the governments have to a certain degree, recognized the importance of developing a strong entrepreneurial sector, which could promote and achieve economic growth, wealth creation, and creation of jobs. To this end, governments have over the years focused on the development of female entrepreneurs. These female entrepreneurs are considered late comers in the “game” of entrepreneurship and therefore thought to be lacking the adequate skills and competencies required to start and grow a business. Women-owned businesses are known for their low start-up and working capital note that under normal circumstances women’s enterprises have low growth rates and limited potential partially due to the type of business activities they run. Women entrepreneurs face many problems. Balestra (2018) emphasize that small businesses are held back by tough local conditions some of them are unable to raise huge collaterals demanded by banks as a condition to access loans.

In Kenya, women entrepreneurs are considered as an integral part of economic growth. Women who are active in entrepreneurship enable them to effectively combine their productive and reproductive roles because of the flexibility in hours of work which permit them to care for their children and also contribute substantially to economic growth (Orser, Riding & Li, 2019). This has made women to be regarded as the central focus of economic development and public policy concerns. With women entrepreneurship, there is a general lack of an entrepreneurial culture in Kenya and, more particularly, for potential and operating women owners/managers of businesses.

O’Connor (2020) points out that due to patriarchal social authority structures, women received substantial family support in the start-up stages of their businesses, but later on such support is limited, restricted, or withdrawn for fear

of husbands losing dominance over their wives. Other studies carried out in Kenya have attributed the lack of entrepreneurial culture among Kenyan women to a lack of confidence and self-belief; a lack of a variety of strong and relevant networks; passive learning methods; and, starting up enterprises without adequate prior preparation. There is a need for entrepreneurial training to socially condition the youth, and particularly girls, to develop a desire for achievement. This can be achieved by way of profiling and/or imitating successful women entrepreneurs. Other constraints and barriers include a poor social background, inadequate and inappropriate training and preparation for entry into entrepreneurship, and socio-economic discrimination (Evans, 2016).

In South Sudan, like in most African countries, the patriarchal culture has negatively affected women, and many cultural practices are biased against and imposed mostly on women. South Sudanese women have been involved in entrepreneurship activities to support their families for generations (Brush, Edelman, Manolova & Welter, 2018). Making up more than half of South Sudan’s population; women are often the sole breadwinners for their families. Yet due to the patriarchal society, their formalized business progress is often limited. Furthermore, women are sometimes subject to abuse and harassment while in their place of business. UNDP is working to address these issues through its Access to Justice, Security, and Human Rights Strengthening programme with support from the Accelerator Lab. 50 businesswomen from the South Sudan Women Entrepreneurs Association (SSWEA) were selected to improve their understanding of existing business laws in South Sudan and Juba municipality and provided with business legal skills to improve the daily operations of their enterprises.

In 2010, a group of women who attended entrepreneurship skills and microfinance training formed a private association called “Southern Sudan Women Entrepreneurs Association”. After the independence of South Sudan became the “South Sudan Women Entrepreneurs Association” (Brush & Greene, 2016). The association is concerned with the empowerment of women through entrepreneurship, capacity building, networking, and business development. Since the formation of this association, many women became members and some got training and grants. At the same time, progress has been made by female entrepreneurs, there are women-owned companies and many other women started small-scale businesses to support their families.

Clause 16 of South Sudan’s Transitional Constitution 2011 clearly states that women have the right to own property, however, cultural practices are contrary to this part of the constitution, affecting women’s ability to start or be involved in businesses. For one to become a successful

entrepreneur, one needs to be self-sufficient and financially stable, but because of traditions that believe women are meant to stay at home to look after children and do only domestic chores, many women are dependent on their spouses. Husbands dictating to their wives what they can and cannot do are a real challenge, especially for ambitious women who want to be self-reliant. Because almost all disputes in South Sudan are dealt with in customary courts, there is a need for a review of the formal and customary legal system to protect the rights of women as espoused in international law (Babbitt, Brown & Mazaheri, 2015).

South Sudan women entrepreneurs aspire to own banks, companies, and industries; to have increased access to credit facilities through Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOs), to see more women participating in the East African Common Market and other international economic blocks, to be treated in a respectful and dignified manner, and to compete favorably with other women entrepreneurs from the region and the continent. There is already some support for women entrepreneurs within the country, both at the national and grassroots levels. Humanitarian and development organizations in South Sudan have programs for women's economic empowerment and entrepreneurship, for instance, in Yambio, Masaia market was rehabilitated by UNDP and UN Women so that women entrepreneurs selling fruits and vegetables would have proper and hygienic facilities for their businesses (UNV, 2019). In this intervention, more than 88 women beneficiaries were provided with additional entrepreneurial and business skills so they can provide better customer service, save for, invest in, and even expand their businesses.

The Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan which was signed in 2018 calls for the establishment of a Women's Enterprise Fund to support women-owned businesses and build capacity of women entrepreneurs. This will be a great opportunity for women entrepreneurs if it is implemented. Support like the Women's Enterprise Fund should not be limited to entrepreneurs working only in South Sudan, but to support women so they can capitalize on opportunities in the region and beyond. For instance, the Dubai Expo 2020 put emphasis on Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) and welcomed participants from 192 countries to showcase their innovations and cultures. South Sudan participated in the Expo 2020 and showcased the country's rich cultural heritage, opportunities and welcomed investors into the country. Displays included crafts made by South Sudanese women (South Sudan Pavilion Expo, 2020). Women's participation in the Dubai Expo was a way to encourage women to establish their own SMEs and have big ambitions. However, more needs to be done by the government and its development partners in order for

women's aspirations of competing in regional and international markets to be realized.

## **1.1. Objectives of the Study**

To examine the effects of gender consideration in the advancement of entrepreneurial skills in Juba.

## **1.2. Research Question**

What are the effects of gender consideration in the advancement of entrepreneurial skills in Juba?

## **1.3. Statement of the Problem**

Despite the nature of economic development, the discrimination that surrounds the gender peculiarities of individual rights is on the increase. Although women have responded positively to the government's efforts towards them and started joining the workforce either as paid employees or self-employed, women are still an under-represented group within entrepreneurship and within higher positions in organizations (Alsubaie & Jones, 2017). In the recent past, the world recorded an upsurge in the number of women involved in entrepreneurial activities yet there is still a huge gap between the two genders in what they are currently achieving in business.

The Government of Kenya conceived the idea of institutional financing, a women's enterprise fund (WEF), to provide women with access to finance for self-employment activities and entrepreneurial skills development as a way of addressing unemployment and poverty which essentially are women's problems. Despite this, it was observed that business skill, especially among women, is still a challenge and many fail to take off even in the face of financial and technical assistance. In addition, these women owned micro- enterprises are characterized by failures or early closures due to financial distress and not much progress seems to have been achieved (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2016).

A study by the Alsubaie and Jones (2017) found that currently the growth of Women led enterprises is restricted by inadequate access to training, as well as follow up to training inputs, and limited opportunity to avail them of external, formal managerial capacity-building support. Further, despite the considerable South Sudan government support and support of bodies interested in promoting gender equality in all areas, entrepreneurship included, many female-owned businesses still fail.

Consequently, even though government support to these women entrepreneurs, by way of government funding, training, grants and consultative support services, the

failure rates of these women operated businesses remain high. The causes for the women entrepreneurial failure are not yet well established. The illiteracy rate has been cited as one of the reasons why there have been minimal successes in improving the women owned businesses in South Sudan. It is on these gaps that the current study sought to address by examining the influence of gender on developing entrepreneurial skills in Juba, South Sudan.

## 2. Literature Review

The study was guided by Entrepreneurship Theory which was coined by Shane (2013). The Theory states that an ability to identify and tap the opportunity provided by the external business environment to start or improve his/her business differs between individuals and depends on the individual's ability to access information and willingness to act upon the information in terms of risk. The ability to access information and willingness to act upon the information in terms of risk could be inferred to represent an attitude to risk. Studies have found that attitude and behavioural intention are positively related and that attitude toward behaviour leads to intention which eventually leads to actual behavior. The theory consists of opportunity discovery, evaluation of the opportunity, and the decision to exploit the opportunity. The entrepreneurial opportunity addressed by this theory is considered for both genders, where equal chances for women and men in business should be highly adhered to in Juba for social and economic development.

Other elements of the theory include self-employment, business operation, and performance. The theory highlighted four operational measures of performance which are survival, growth, profitability/income, and experiencing initial public offering. Survival refers to the continuation of entrepreneurial activity while growth refers to an increase in the venture's sales and employment. Profitability refers to a new surplus of revenue over cost while experiencing an initial public offer refers to the sale of stock to the public. Opportunities are created by the institutional or external environment for those entrepreneurs who could identify them to start or improve their businesses and subsequently, their welfare (Shane, 2017).

Entrepreneurs' ability to identify and tap such opportunities differs between entrepreneurs. It also depends on their ability to access information and willingness to act upon the information in terms of risk; that is their attitude. Individual attributes affect the discovery of entrepreneurial opportunities (Ajzen, 2009). It is made up of psychological and demographic factors such as motives, attitude to risk, education and training, career experience, age, and social status. This theory relates to this

study by offering insight into coaching and apprenticeship. The theory consists of opportunity discovery, evaluation of the opportunity, and the decision to exploit the opportunity which values that are obtained from proper coaching and apprenticeship. Understanding of gender inequality in the entrepreneurial practices that had been noted by many scholars globally, South Sudan included has been depicted by this Theory. Women are still behind in entrepreneurship compared to their lame counterparts despite numerous efforts geared to support them. However, there is a struggle by the government to create a universal platform for entrepreneurial development in South Sudan.

**Criticism of the Theory:** The Theory of Entrepreneurship does not provide a review of the extant literature on entrepreneurship. The authors instead make use of sample studies to demonstrate the basic ideas underlying the value creation associated with the entrepreneurial process. Since the entrepreneurship field is multidisciplinary, the theory of entrepreneurship integrates ideas from several disciplines, including economics, psychology, sociology, finance, decision sciences, and strategy, among others, to explain the dynamics of a complicated and disorderly entrepreneurial process with a parsimonious model.

In justification of the Theory of Entrepreneurship, the study relied on the approach because it helps in understanding the research problem. The theory has the strength to expound on entrepreneurship as a backbone of the economic growth of a country. The study was conducted in Juba, South Sudan where gender in business has been valued to secure a space in developing the socioeconomic status of the individual residents of the country that further creates employment opportunities and poverty elevation. Entrepreneurship among women was found to still be experiencing some failures despite a lot of efforts gathered compared to men. In relation to this, the theory intends to shape the notion there is unbalanced gender in the entrepreneurial sector.

## 3. Methodology

This section focuses on the research design and methods that were used in the study. It addresses the target population, sample size and sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection procedures, and data analysis. According to Creswell (2014), research design refers to the overall strategy one chooses to integrate different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby ensuring the researcher effectively addresses the research problem. The researcher used a descriptive survey research design. A descriptive survey allows the use of questionnaires, which allow for general conclusions to be drawn from particular facts (Creswell & Clark, 2017). The

design enabled a close analysis of the association between the two variables (gender and entrepreneurship). The study was conducted in Juba, Sudan. The research targeted both men and women in entrepreneurship. A group of 100 registered small and medium entrepreneurs was specifically targeted for the study due to the fact that they directly operate in entrepreneurship where they understand entrepreneurial skills and how gender in business may influence entrepreneurship development.

Sampling is the process of selecting the individuals from which to collect the data. Therefore, a sample is a smaller part of units in a population that is used to study the characteristics of the elements in the population. A sample ought to be large enough to represent the significant features of the target population (Mvumbi & Ngumbi, 2015). A non-probability sampling technique was used to sample 100 specifically targeted registered small and medium entrepreneurs for the study.

According to Orodho (2018), the questionnaire is a suitable method, the easiest and the cheapest way of data collection. It has the ability to collect a large amount of information in a reasonably quick span of time. According to Kothari (2014) in his observation, the questionnaire is free from the bias of the respondents who are not approachable and reachable. Therefore, the questionnaire for the entrepreneurs was used to collect data from Juba which was the most relevant in obtaining information concerning the study topic. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected using self-administered questionnaires. The study employed the use of structured and unstructured questions. The structured questions facilitated easy interpretation and analysis of the collected data. These questions reduced the variation of the responses from the respondents. The unstructured questions on the other hand gathered information from the respondents on their experiences regarding gender and entrepreneurial skills development.

This study ensured constructs validity by deriving relevant representative questions to cover the study objective. The researcher also prepared the research instruments in close consultation with the supervisors, whose expert judgment helped improve the validity of the research instrument. The test for reliability established the extent to which results are consistent over time. The reliability of the instruments was ascertained by re-administering the questionnaires and the interview guide to the same sampled respondents in two weeks intervals to determine their productivity. The scores obtained from each test were correlated to get the coefficient of reliability. In order to obtain the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient, Gupta (2017) opines that a standard minimum value of 0.6-0.9 is recommended.

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2019), data analysis is the process of bringing order and meaning to the raw data collected. Data analysis involves organizing data in order to derive helpful information. Both quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed in this study. The quantitative data was collated and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as measures of central tendency and dispersion using SPSS (version 25). The analyzed data was presented in tabulation form.

## 4. Results and Discussion

This section presented the analysis and findings from the data that was gathered using questionnaires on gender and the development of entrepreneurial skills in Juba, South Sudan. It also presented the interpretation of the findings of the reliability test. At the respondents' rate, 100 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents out of which all were filled and collected back. This indicated a 100 % return of the questionnaires, which was excellent for the study.

**Table 1: Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.986	.987	10

The findings in Table 1 show correlation values greater than the acceptable threshold of  $r = 0.05$ , with 0.986 and 0.987 being higher. The Cronbach Alpha values were greater than 0.6 affirming an acceptable level of internal

consistency. The values were above the stated threshold value, with the lowest being 0.986 and the highest value being 0.987 and confirmed the reliability of the questionnaires as valid information-gathering instruments.

This was supported by Crutzen and Peters (2017), who stated that while an alpha of 0.65 to 0.80 is acceptable, values of 0.90 and higher, are exceptional, 0.80 and lower are good, 0.70 and lower are acceptable, 0.60 and lower are

subpar. The reliability test statistics produced in the research had a Cronbach alpha of equal to or more than 0.90 is excellent and were acceptable reliability values that implied high internal consistency.

**Table 2: Gender and Entrepreneurial skills development**

Statement	1		2		3		4		5	
	F	%	F	%	f	%	F	%	f	%
In Juba, both women and men are taking part in entrepreneurship operations for the socioeconomic change of the country.	5	5%	5	5%	2	2%	64	64%	24	24%
Women participation in entrepreneurship in Juba has risen due to the increased awareness in gender and economic development.	5	5%	12	12%	13	13%	55	55%	15	15%
Government support to women in entrepreneurial empowerment has boosted their business performance in Juba.	6	6%	23	23%	10	10%	52	52%	9	9%
Gender inequality in the job sector affect the development of entrepreneurial capacity building in South Sudan.	6	6%	26	26%	15	15%	38	38%	15	15%
Encouraging women to take part in the competitive entrepreneurial market has improved the socioeconomic development of Juba community.	6	6%	8	8%	8	8%	58	58%	20	20%
Men discrimination against women in business implementation is still in increase despite the various intervening bodies, leading to their failures in South Sudan.	12	12%	30	30%	11	11%	40	40%	7	7%
More entrepreneurial trainings have been initiated in Juba to women than men as a means of stabilizing business development to all the communities.	7	7%	21	21%	9	9%	52	52%	11	11%
In South Sudan, entrepreneurship still performs poorly due to low entrepreneurial knowhow among the individual groups.	5	5%	10	10%	11	11%	59	59%	15	15%
Every group of entrepreneurs including youths and persons with disabilities has equal opportunity to run a business in Juba for personal growth.	8	8%	10	10%	10	10%	58	58%	14	14%
War influence and poverty level among women and youths in South Sudan has affected their interest in entrepreneurship due to illiteracy increase.	10	10%	12	12%	8	8%	42	42%	28	28%

The analysis in table 1 shows the findings on the gender issues in the development of entrepreneurial skills. The majority of the respondents (64%) indicated they agreed

with the statement that women and men in Juba take part in entrepreneurship operations for the socioeconomic change of the country. Further, 24%) of the participants



were in strong agreement with the same statement. Those who strongly disagreed and disagreed had an even distribution of (5%) each while (2%) were undecided. The finding, therefore, revealed that gender has a significant influence on entrepreneurship for socio-economic development in South Sudan. This must have been legalized through the creation of equal business platforms and awareness to the public on the value of taking part in entrepreneurial development.

This finding concurs with Orser, Riding, and Li (2019) who found that women who are active in entrepreneurship enable them to effectively combine their productive and reproductive roles because of the flexibility in hours of work which permit them to care for their children and also contribute substantially to economic growth.

A finding from the analysis on the statement whether women's participation in entrepreneurship increased in Juba due to the increased awareness of gender and economic development shows that (55%) confirmed they agreed, (15%) strongly disagreed while (13%) did not take any side, (12%) agreed with the same statement and (5%). It is clear that in Juba, women engaged in business have been growing through awareness creation that targets gender and economic development. The strength of women in the economic development of the country has been prioritized particularly in Juba where they are encouraged to register more businesses.

In comparison, findings show similarity with that of the South Sudan Pavilion Expo (2020), which revealed that women's participation in the Dubai Expo was a way to encourage women to establish their own SMEs and have big ambitions.

On the idea of whether government support for women in entrepreneurial empowerment has boosted their business performance in Juba, findings revealed that the majority of the respondents (52%) agreed with the statement. This was followed by (23%) who were in disagreement with the idea, (10%) who were neutral, (9%) who strongly agreed (6%) who strongly disagreed with the statement. The researcher concluded that support given to women in relation to their entrepreneurial management by the state of South Sudan shows much achievement in the thriving of the business. The result concurred with a report by the World Bank (2015) which affirmed that the efforts of governments in many nations globally now place greater attention on the empowerment of its individual members by redirecting the attention of its men and women to exploit entrepreneurial opportunities. These initiatives are most welcoming, particularly in the case of developing countries where women's place has been considered to be at home for domestic chores or parents.

In further analysis, the majority of the respondents (38%) agreed that gender inequality in the job sector affects the development of entrepreneurial capacity building, (26%) disagreed with the statement while those who showed strong agreement and neutral scored (15%) in each case as (6%) of the respondents strongly objected the statement. Therefore, it can be affirmed that differences in the workplace shown by men and women in Juba are detrimental to the development of business skills. Gender equality should be understood as a change driver in any sector of economic practices like entrepreneurship.

Findings revealed that the majority of the respondents (58%) encouraging women to take part in the competitive entrepreneurial market have improved the socioeconomic development of the Juba community. This was also supported by (20%) of those who reported a strong agreement. In other findings, both agreed and neutral respondents had an even distribution of (8%) each while (6%) of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. The researcher found that various communities in Juba have indicators of change caused by the increased population of women in the market of entrepreneurs. This must have been the right job sector that accommodates majority as a means of poverty alleviation in South Sudan.

On the statement that men discrimination against women in business implementation is still in increase despite the various intervening bodies that fails business in South Sudan, majority of the respondents (40%) agreed to the statement. This was followed closely with (30%) who reported strong disagreement. In addition, (12%) strongly disagreed, while (11%) of the respondents were undecided and (7%) said strongly agreed. From the findings, it can be concluded that women in business still face serious discriminations from male counterparts which in deed put businesses to risks. Therefore, for entrepreneurship to do well, gender parity must be put into consideration for the good of the country as well as individuals.

In this analysis, it was found that majority of the respondents (52%) agreed that more entrepreneurial trainings have been initiated to women than men as a means of stabilizing business development to all the communities in Juba. This statement was disputed by (21%) who reported disagree. Moreover, (11%) strongly agreed, while (9%) of the respondents were undecided and (7%) said strongly disagreed. In view of the findings, it is clear that most communities in South Sudan receive entrepreneurial empowerments. This practice is accorded to both genders for the development of the required business expertise.

On the statement "South Sudan entrepreneurship still performs poorly due to low entrepreneurial knowhow among the individual groups," I majority of the



respondents (59%) agreed with the statement, (15%) reported strongly disagree, (11%) were undecided, while (10%) of the respondents disagreed and (5%) were strongly disagreed. The result thus affirmed that indeed most of the entrepreneurs suffer the challenge of entrepreneurial skills. This must be a serious stumbling block to the performance of businesses in Juba that should be addressed.

Moreover, findings indicated that the majority of the participants (58%) agreed with the statement that every group of entrepreneurs including youths and persons with disabilities has equal opportunity to run a business in Juba for personal growth. It was also showed that (14%) strongly supported the argument, (10%) was equally scored by those who were undecided and those who agreed respectively while (8%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. The reality of the study is that vulnerable groups including youths and people who are differently able are considered in the entrepreneurial development in Juba. This reflects the respect given to human rights in the country irrespective of one's capability. This concurs with the report that Sudanese women have been involved in entrepreneurship activities to support their families for generations (Brush, Edelman, Manolova & Welter, 2018).

Findings also show that majority of the respondents (42%) agreed that war influence and poverty level among women and youths has affected their interest in entrepreneurship due to illiteracy increase, (28%) strongly agreed with the argument, (12%), disagreed, (10%) of the respondents strongly disagreed, (8%) were neutral. The South Sudanese women and youths who should vest their interest in businesses have withdrawn their enthusiasm in operating business due to long suffer of war and poverty which has increased illiteracy level in the country.

This finding was supported by the study by O'Connor (2020) which points out that due to patriarchal social authority structures, women received substantial family support in the start-up stages of their businesses, but later such support is limited, restricted or withdrawn for fear of husbands losing dominance over their wives.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 5.1 Conclusion

Entrepreneurship is the backbone to every country's economic development; it creates jobs for the youth, men, and women and increases the GDP of a country. When women are involved in entrepreneurship, it means they can become financially independent and able to support their families, and their voices will be respected at the family level and in the public spheres. South Sudanese women can

be breadwinners in their families—we know they are supportive, but they also need more support.

If women entrepreneurs are fully supported, the burden on men, who are considered the head of a family and believed to be the sole provider, will be reduced. In South Sudan, empowered women who understand their rights, are working, earning, and taking the lead in providing for their families. This shows that if we invest in women's economic empowerment and encourage more women to venture into entrepreneurship, we will have more financially stable families and a bright future for the next generations.

### 5.2 Recommendations

The study recommends the following:

1. The national Government, local leaders, and all entrepreneurs should work as a team by formulating business-friendly policies which are inclusive to both genders without any form of discrimination in the sector of business. The inclusivity will promote the endeavors of the entrepreneurs in the social and economic growth of both individuals and the country.
2. Women should be motivated to venture into entrepreneurship and they need to embrace their efforts than see themselves as the weaker gender. Through this empowerment, the national economy will be promoted.
3. Men need to be aware of the consequences of gender discrimination in any field of work. Therefore, they should respect women and instead work together in solidifying the entrepreneurial sector.

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