

RELATIONSHIP OF MICRO CREDIT SERVICES ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN JUBA CITY: A CROSS SECTIONAL STUDY.

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Abstract

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Background

The study aims to examine the relationship between micro-credit services on the socio-economic development of women entrepreneurs in Juba City.

Methodology

The researcher adopted a correlational research design to establish how each microfinance service relates to the economic development of women entrepreneurs in Juba City. A sample of 152 respondents was selected from a study population of 250 persons. However, the researcher managed to access 135 respondents, giving a response rate of 88%. Respondents were selected using Purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Data was collected by use of self-administered closed-ended questionnaires.

Results

20.74% of the respondents were male and 79.26% were female. Microcredit services had a beta value of 0.722. It can therefore be deduced from the result that at a 100% increase in micro-credit services, the economic development of women entrepreneurs in Juba City is likely to improve by 72.2%.

Conclusion

The researcher sought to establish whether microcredit services have any statistically significant relationship with the socioeconomic development of women entrepreneurs in Juba City. The study findings revealed that microcredit services have a statistically significant positive relationship with the economic development of women entrepreneurs in Juba City. This was based on the Pearson correlation analysis as well as a multiple regression analysis which revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between the two variables ($r = 0.722$, $p < 0.05$, $n = 135$).

Recommendation

The management of microfinance institutions in Juba City ought to offer long repayment periods to borrowers as this is likely to increase the working capital of the small businesses in the study area. Moreover, to enhance the accessibility and reliability of their credit services, microfinance institutions also need to direct more efforts into credit diversification and at the same time adopt a more equitable treatment of all its credit customers.

Keywords: Relationship, Micro Credit Services, Socio-Economic Development, Women Entrepreneurs, Juba City.

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Background of the study

Microcredit service is the provision of financial services such as credit (loans), savings, micro leasing, micro-insurance, and payment transfers to economically active poor and low-income households to enable them to engage in income-generating activities or expand/grow their small businesses (Irobi, 2008). These services include savings, credits, insurance, payments services, money transfers, and social intermediation and are performed by a variety of institutions, such as credit unions, savings and loan cooperatives, commercial banks, as well as NGOs and government banks (Kireti and Sakwa, 2014). The majority of them are engaged in small income-generating self-employment in agriculture and non-agricultural activities with low prospects for growth. Looking into the affairs of women entrepreneurship, the clarity of the issue is that, microfinance institutions are business-oriented and are targeting the working profits of

the business hence it was not found viable to improve the economic development of the women entrepreneurs, instead the women entrepreneurs found themselves in a cyclical nature of borrowing without necessarily growing and developing into large scale suppliers and buyers. The study aims to examine the relationship between micro-credit services on the socioeconomic development of women entrepreneurs in Juba City.

Methodology

Research design

According to Bryman, (2008), research design entails the detailed exploration of the specific case, which could be a community, person, or organization. Generally, research design is a framework for collecting and analyzing data. This study was conducted using a correlation research design. According to Oso & Onen (2008), correlation design is the determination of whether or not, and to what

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extent an association exists between two or more paired and quantifiable variables. A correlational research design was deemed appropriate because the researcher wanted to establish whether and to what extent, a relationship exists between microfinance services and women economic development among women entrepreneurs in Juba City

Study Population

According to Babbie and Mouton (2006), the population for a study is that group (usually of people) about whom we want to conclude. The target population for this study was comprised of women entrepreneurs in Juba City. These were 250 individual entrepreneurs based on different enterprises

Sample size

According to Oso & Onen (2008), a sample is part of the target (or accessible) population that has been procedurally selected to represent it. The sample size of

the study was 152 respondents from the target population. The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table of determining sample sizes from a predetermined study population.

Sampling techniques

This study adopted simple random and purposive sampling techniques. The purposive sampling method is the sampling technique where the sample size is derived by the use of judgment of the researcher (Amin, 2005). This method was used to select women entrepreneurs in Juba City. On the other hand, simple random sampling techniques were used to select women clients. The justification for using the random sampling technique is that it eliminates the possibility that the sample is biased by the preference of the individual selecting the sample (Bordens & Abbott, 2002). Table 1 further shows the study population, sample size, and techniques.

Table 1: showing the study population, sample size, and techniques

Designation	Population	Sample	Sampling technique
women entrepreneurs in Juba City	65	52	Purposive sampling
Clients	185	100	Simple random sampling
TOTAL	250	152	

Data collection instruments

The study mainly used primary data. Primary data was gathered by use of a closed-ended questionnaire. According to Kothari (2004), primary data is that which is collected afresh and for the first time, and thus happens to be original in character. The instrument that was used in collecting this data is explained below.

Questionnaires

Closed-ended self-administered questionnaires were used in collecting data from respondents in the study area. The questionnaires consisted of two sections. The first section sought for demographic characteristics of the respondents while the second section covered items of the variables under study. Responses were weighted on a five-point Likert scale of 5 to mean Strongly Disagree, 4 to mean Disagree, 3 to mean Neutral, 2 to mean Agree, and 1 to mean Strongly Agree. The questionnaire was preferred as a data collection instrument because of its ability to yield the most satisfactory range of reliable data (Blanche et al., 2006).

Validity of Instruments

Saunders et al (2009) stated that the validity of a questionnaire is concerned with the extent to which a questionnaire measures what it is designed to measure.

The researcher formulated the questionnaire and submitted it to his supervisor who evaluated the items therein. Thereafter, a content validity index (CVI) was computed by dividing the items selected as appropriate by the total number of items in the questionnaire. Results are presented below

$$CVI = \frac{\text{Items selected as appropriate}}{\text{Total number of items}}$$

$$CVI = \frac{30}{35}$$

$$= 0.85$$

A content validity index of 0.85 was obtained which implies that the instrument was valid as suggested by Amin (2005).

Reliability of Instruments

According to Trochim (2006), the reliability of the measuring instrument addresses the question of whether the results of the measuring processes are consistent on occasions when they should be consistent. To ensure reliability, the researcher carried out a pilot study among women entrepreneurs in Juba City. Data collected from this pilot study was then entered in the SPSS and a Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha was computed to test for reliability of the instrument. Table 2 shows the results.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.892	30

The findings of the pilot study show that the study instrument was reliable as its reliability value exceeded the prescribed threshold of 0.7 (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

Data analysis

Data analysis is a process of analyzing all the information and evaluating the relevant information that can be helpful in better decision-making (Silvia and Skilling, 2006). Data gathered from the field was edited, categorized, and entered into the computer using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) for generating summary frequency tables and graphics. Then Pearson correlation analysis was used to test the hypothesis. Multiple regression analysis which is defined as a regression method that is designed to study the relationship between one variable and several other variables (Campbell and Campbell, 2008) was also carried out to establish the most predictor variable among dimensions of microfinance services.

Measurement of Variables

In this study, the researcher adopted two major variables that are the independent variable (microfinance services) and the dependent variable (economic development of women entrepreneurs in Juba city). Microfinance services were conceptualized to involve micro-credit services, micro-savings services, and capacity-building services while economic development of women entrepreneurs in Juba City was conceptualized to involve Women empowerment, Accumulation of wealth, and Accessibility to social services. An attempt was therefore made to establish how each of the microfinance services relates to the economic development of women entrepreneurs in Juba City

Ethical considerations

It was important during the process of research for the researcher to understand that participation was voluntary; participants were free to refuse to answer any question and may withdraw at any time.

Another important consideration involved getting the informed consent of those going to be met during the research process, which involved interviews and observations bearing in mind that the area bears unfamiliar respondents.

Accuracy and honesty during the research process were very important for academic research to proceed. The researcher treated the project with utmost care, in that there was no temptation to cheat and generate research results since it jeopardized the conception of research.

Personal confidentiality and privacy were very important since the dissertation was public. If individuals had been used to provide information, it was important for their privacy to be respected. If private information had been accessed then confidentiality had to be maintained (Stephen, P. 2002).

Results

Response Rate

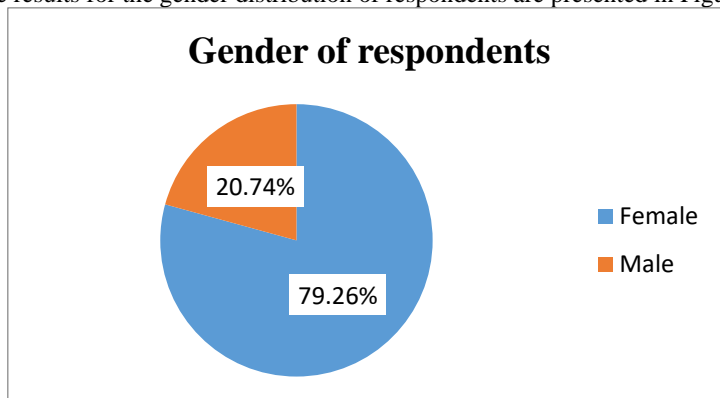
The researcher selected a sample of 152 respondents from a study population of 250 persons involved as women entrepreneurs in Juba City and women clients. A total of 152 questionnaires were distributed to all the selected respondents in the study area. Out of the 152 questionnaires that were given out, 135 questionnaires were fully completed and returned to the researcher in time. This represented an 88% response rate. This response rate was found to be appropriate for the study since Kothari (2004) asserts that any response rate of 50% is adequate, while a response rate greater than 70% is very good.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages relating to the demographic characteristics of respondents are presented in this section. These include respondents' gender, age, and level of education. Gender of the Respondents

Figure1: Gender of the Respondents

The results for the gender distribution of respondents are presented in Figure 1.



Source: Primary data

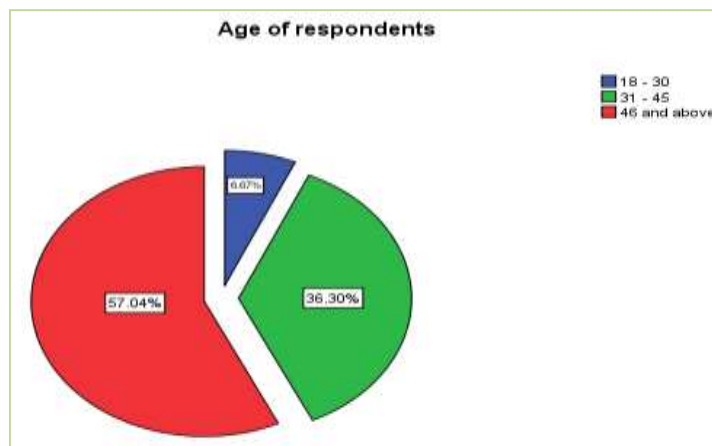
Respondents were asked to indicate their gender by placing a tick next to the relevant option provided (male or female). The results presented in Figure 2 above show that 20.74% of the respondents were male and 79.26% were female. The dominance of female respondents confirms what was stated by Luyirika (2010) that most of the microfinance services are particularly targeted towards women. The author also stated that the women, being the main actors in microfinance could be a result of the fact that they are very sympathetic to the welfare of their household members. Therefore they try as much as possible to get involved in activities that would enable

them to earn income that could assist them in buying daily necessities as well as social services such as health, education, and land (Luyirika, 2010).

Age of the respondents

Figure: Age of the respondents

Respondents were requested to indicate their age groups. In this study, the age of respondents was categorized into four groups namely: 18 - 30, 31 – 45, and 46 years and above .Results are presented in Figure 2;



Source: Primary data

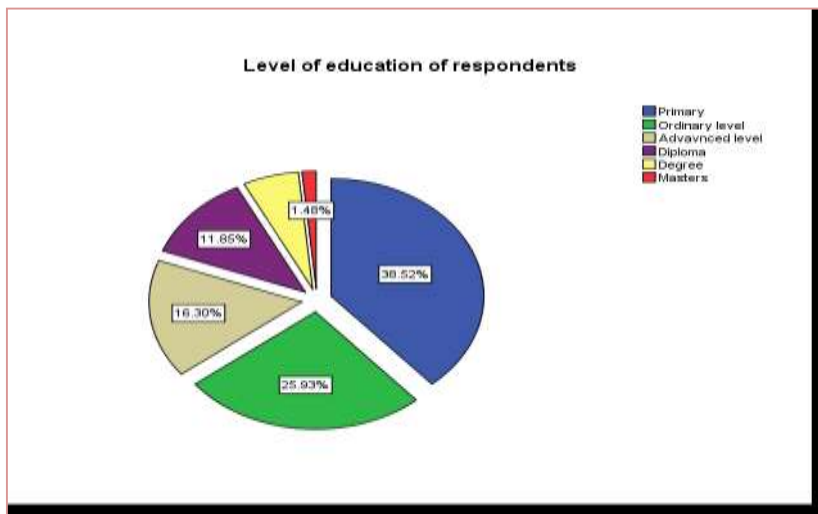
The findings in Figure 2 show that respondents in the age bracket of 46 years and above were the majority constituting over 57%. These were followed by those between 31 – and 45 years who were over 36% and the minority (6.67%) were between 18 and 30 years. This indicates that a majority of the respondents were quite advanced in age. This agrees with Luyirika (2010) who noted that most of the MFI services target people in advanced age brackets. According to him, this could be attributed to the fact that this age group has several responsibilities to undertake especially paying school fees

and feeding the family. Thus, when the available funds are not enough, they resort to MFIs to fulfill their obligations to the family.

Education Level of Respondents

Figure 3: Education Level of Respondents

This question was also posed to understand the educational background of respondents in the study. The findings are presented in Figure 3.



Source: Primary data

Figure 3 indicates that 38.52% of the respondents had primary level education, 25.9% had ordinary level education, 16.30% had advanced level education, 11.85% had diploma level education, while 1.48% and 1.48% had degree and masters level education. In general, the level of education of respondents was high. This is an indication that most of the respondents had relevant academic qualifications to effectively carry out their other duties. This suggests that MFI services mainly attract people of low education levels. This is based on what was stated by Luyirika (2010) that people of lower-level education are attracted to microfinance services because they own no property, and require small amounts of money to inject into their small businesses. This is also confirmed by Meade (2001) who explains that the credit is targeted to the landless or asset-less borrowers, and the moderately to extremely poor.

Description of results about the objective of the study

This section deals with results derived from respondents about the effect of microfinance services on the economic development of women entrepreneurs in Juba City.

To examine the relationship of micro-credit services on the socio-economic development of women entrepreneurs in Juba City

In this, the researcher sought to establish whether micro-credit services have any significant relationship with the economic development of women entrepreneurs in Juba City. Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed to statements relating to micro-credit services provided to women entrepreneurs in Juba City on a five-point Likert scale where 1 represented strongly agree, 2 represented agree, 3 represented neutrals, 4 represented disagree and 5 represented strongly disagree. In the first item about this objective, the researcher sought to establish whether loans are accessible to most of the women entrepreneurs in Juba City. Results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: loans are accessible by most of the women entrepreneurs in Juba City.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly agree	14	10.4	10.4	10.4
Agree	88	65.2	65.2	75.6
Disagree	31	23.0	23.0	98.5
Strongly disagree	2	1.5	1.5	100.0
Total	135	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary data

In Table 3, 14 (10.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 88 (65.2%) agreed, 31 (23.0%) disagreed, and only 2

(1.5%) strongly disagreed in response to the statement that “loans are accessible by most of the women entrepreneurs

in Juba City”. Since most of the respondents agreed to this item, it indicates that indeed loans are accessible to most of the women entrepreneurs in Juba City.

The researcher also sought the opinions of respondents on agricultural loans to women entrepreneurs in Juba City. Findings about this item are presented in Table 4;

Table 4: offers agricultural loans to women farmers women entrepreneurs in Juba City

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	11	8.1	8.1	8.1
	Agree	87	64.4	64.4	72.6
	Not sure	3	2.2	2.2	74.8
	Disagree	23	17.0	17.0	91.9
	Strongly disagree	11	8.1	8.1	100.0
	Total	135	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary data

In Table 4, 11 (8.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 87 (64.4%) agreed, 3 (2.2%) were not sure, 23 (17.0%) disagreed and 11 (8.1%) strongly disagreed in response to the statement that “offers agricultural loans were offered to women farmers in Juba city”. Since most of the respondents agreed to this item, it indicates that indeed

agricultural loans were offered to the women farmers in Juba city.

The researcher further sought the opinions of respondents on a long loan repayment period. Findings about this item are presented in Table 5.

Table 5: microfinance loans have a long repayment period

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	11	8.1	8.1	8.1
	Agree	15	11.1	11.1	19.3
	Not sure	2	1.5	1.5	20.7
	Disagree	91	67.4	67.4	88.1
	Strongly disagree	16	11.9	11.9	100.0
	Total	135	Table	100.0	

Source: Primary data

In Table 5Table(8.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 15 (11.1%) agreed, 2 (1.5%) were not sure, 91 (67.4%) disagreed and 16 (11.9%) strongly disagreed in response to the statement that “loans of a long repayment period were offered”. Since most of the respondents disagreed

with this item, it indicates that loans do not have a long repayment period.

The researcher further sought the opinions of respondents on loan flexibility findings about this item are presented in Table 6;

Table 6: loans flexibility

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	10	7.4	7.4	7.4
	Agree	9	6.7	6.7	14.1
	Not sure	7	5.2	5.2	19.3
	Disagree	73	54.1	54.1	73.3
	Strongly disagree	36	26.7	26.7	100.0
	Total	135	Table	100.0	

Source: Primary data

In table 6, 10 (7.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 9 (6.7%) agreed, 7 (5.2%) were not sure, 73 (54.1%) disagreed and 36 (26.7%) strongly disagreed in response to the statement that “loans given to women entrepreneurs in Juba City are more flexible compared to other areas”.

Since most of the respondents disagreed with this item, it indicates that loans were not flexible

The researcher further sought the opinions of respondents on whether Loan clients always obtain the exact amount of loans they apply for. Findings about this item are presented in Table 7;

Table 7: Loan clients always obtain the exact amount of loans they apply for

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly agree	4	3.0	3.0	3.0
Agree	17	12.6	12.6	15.6
Disagree	113	83.7	83.7	99.3
Strongly disagree	1	.7	.7	100.0
Total	135	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary data

In Table 7, 10 (7.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 9 (6.7%) agreed, 7 (5.2%) were not sure, 73 (54.1%) disagreed and 36 (26.7%) strongly disagreed in response to the statement

The researcher further sought the opinions of respondents on whether loan tracking officers fully explain to clients about credit services in a language that both parties understand. Findings about this item are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: loan tracking officers fully explain to clients about its credit services in a language that both parties understand

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly agree	8	5.9	5.9	5.9
Agree	93	68.9	68.9	74.8
Not sure	2	1.5	1.5	76.3
Disagree	28	20.7	20.7	97.0
Strongly disagree	4	3.0	3.0	100.0
Total	135	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary data

In Table 8, 8 (5.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 93 (68.9%) agreed, 2 (1.5%) were not sure, 28 (20.7%) disagreed and 4 (3.0%) strongly disagreed in response to the statement that “loan tracking officers fully explain to clients about its credit services in a language that both parties understand”. Since most of the respondents agreed to this item, it indicates that indeed loan tracking officers

fully explain to clients about its credit services in a language that both parties understand.

The researcher further sought the opinions of respondents on whether loan tracking officers tolerate loan clients for delays especially when they are struck by some uncertainties (illness, robbery, etc). Findings about this item are presented in Table 9.

Table 9: loan tracking officers tolerate loan clients for delays especially when they are struck by some uncertainties (illness, robbery)

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly agree	31	23.0	23.0	23.0
	Agree	65	48.1	48.1	71.1
	Disagree	29	21.5	21.5	92.6
	Strongly disagree	10	7.4	7.4	100.0
	Total	135	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary data

In table 9, 31 (23.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 65 (48.1%) agreed, 29 (21.5%) disagreed and 10 (7.4%) strongly disagreed in response to the statement that “credit managers tolerate loan clients for delays especially when they are struck by some uncertainties (illness, robbery, etc.)”. Since most of the respondents agreed to this item, it indicates that indeed credit managers tolerate loan clients for delays especially when they are struck by some uncertainties (illness, robbery).

To test the study hypothesis and also find out whether micro-credit services have any significant effect on the economic development of women entrepreneurs in Juba City. The researcher carried out a Pearson correlation analysis. In this case, the computed scores for micro-credit services were correlated with those of economic development women entrepreneurs in Juba City. Results are presented in Table 10.

Table 10: Results of a Pearson correlation analysis between micro-credit services and economic development of women entrepreneurs in Juba City

		SSB MICRO CREDIT SERVICES	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN JUBA CITY
SSB MICRO CREDIT SERVICES	Pearson Correlation	1	.722**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	135	135
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN JUBA CITY	Pearson Correlation	.722**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	135	135

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary data

Table 10 shows that the value of the coefficient (r) equals .722 and the sig value, $p = 0.00$. The value of r being positive, means that micro credit services have a statistically significant and strong positive effect on the economic development of women entrepreneurs in Juba City. The sig. value for the correlation was equal to .000 which was less than the level of significance (.05). Based on this, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis and upheld the alternative and therefore concluded that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between

microcredit services and economic development of women entrepreneurs in Juba City. This also means that increased microcredit services are likely to improve the economic development of women entrepreneurs in Juba City significantly.

The researcher also used coefficients (beta values) statistical techniques to analyze the data. This helped to determine the extent to which micro-credit services affect the economic development of women entrepreneurs in Juba City. The results are summarized in Table 11.

Table 11: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Coefficients		
1	(Constant)	1.624	.155		10.472	.000
	SSB MICRO CREDIT SERVICES	.612	.051	.722	12.050	.000

a. Dependent Variable: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN IN JUBA CITY

Source: Primary data

The study findings in Table 11 indicate that microcredit services had a beta value of 0.722. It can therefore be deduced from the result that at a 100% increase in microcredit services, the economic development of women entrepreneurs in Juba City is likely to improve by 72.2%.

Discussion

The study findings revealed that microcredit services have a statistically significant positive relationship with the economic development of women entrepreneurs in Juba City. This was based on the Pearson correlation analysis as well as a multiple regression analysis which revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between the two variables ($r = 0.722$, $p < 0.05$, $n = 135$).

These findings agree with the works of previous researchers like Adugna and Heidhues (2000) who noted that access to credit enables rural poor households to enhance their productive capacity with potential implications for increased household income and employment opportunities. Dong, Lu, and Featherstone (2010) also indicated that access to credit is a necessity for improving farm profits and improving the living standards of rural communities in developing countries. The writers found that by removing credit constraints, the income of farmers would improve considerably. Moreover, in his study, Khandker (2006) observed that access to microfinance services contributes to poverty reduction, especially for female participants, and to the overall poverty reduction at the village level.

The study findings were also in agreement with Kireti and Sakwa (2014) who observed that credit creates opportunities for self-employment rather than waiting for employment to be created. It liberates both the poor and women from the clutches of poverty. It brings the poor into the income stream. One can become the architect of one's destiny and the agent of change not only for one's family but also for society.

Hermes and Lensink (2011) also noted that access to finance has several potential benefits that reduce poverty. These include (i) long-lasting increases in income through higher investments in income-generating activities, and a more diversified livelihood; (ii) asset accumulation and consumption smoothing; (iii) reduction of vulnerability to illness, droughts, floods; (iv) empowerment of women through expansion of economic opportunities and enhancement of social status; and, (v) finally, through spillover effects that extend beyond the borrowers. The study findings also concur with Eneji et al. (2013) who

observed that rural dwellers need credit to a large extent to enable them to invest in different types of economic ventures.

limitations encountered in the study

In the process of carrying out this investigation, several limitations were met. These limitations obstructed the speed at which the study was carried out. These included; The major limitation of the research was the inadequacy of financial resources. Visiting the different libraries for data collection several times may turn out to be expensive in terms of transport

There was mounting pressure from the administration for students to complete the research on schedule which affected the quality of the research

The study required a lot of time to be dedicated to collecting substantial data from one respondent to another making observations, continuous review of literature, data analysis, and report writing

Some of the targeted respondents were not willing to set aside time to respond to the investigator's questions thus somehow ending up frustrating the researcher's efforts to collect substantial data. The researcher also faced the problem of some rude and hostile respondents.

Conclusion

the researcher sought to establish whether microcredit services have any statistically significant relationship with the socio-economic development of women entrepreneurs in Juba City. The study findings revealed that microcredit services have a statistically significant positive relationship with the economic development of women entrepreneurs in Juba City. This was based on the Pearson correlation analysis as well as a multiple regression analysis which revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between the two variables ($r = 0.722$, $p < 0.05$, $n = 135$).

Recommendation

The study findings revealed that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between microcredit services and the socio-economic development of women entrepreneurs in Juba City. To further strengthen this relationship, the researcher recommends that the management of microfinance institutions in Juba City ought to offer long repayment periods to borrowers as this is likely to increase the working capital of the small businesses in the study area. Moreover, to enhance the accessibility and reliability of their credit services, microfinance institutions also need to direct more efforts into credit diversification and at the same time adopt a more equitable treatment of all its credit customers.

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To my children and their mother please let us praise God for the wonders he has done

To all the respondents for participating in this study, without you completing this work would be difficult

List of Abbreviations

AMFIU:	Association of Micro Enterprise Finance Institutions of Uganda
ASCAs:	Accumulating Savings and Credit Associations
BANSEFI	: Banco del Ahorro Nacional y Servicios Financieros
FEM	: ‘Femmes Entrepreneuses en Méditerranée’)
MSE:	Micro-Saving Expert
MFIs:	Microfinance institutions
MFO:	Micro Finance Opportunities
NGOs:	Non-Governmental Organizations
NABARD:	National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development
SMEs:	small and medium size businesses
SSA:	Sub-Sahara Africa
UWFT:	Uganda's Women Finance Trust
WWB:	Women's World Banking

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Conflict of interest

The author had no conflict of interest.

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