

**PERCEIVED FACTORS AFFECTING THE GROWTH OF WOMEN OWNED
SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SMES) IN EVENTS MANAGEMENT
SECTOR IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA**

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DECLARATION

STUDENT’S DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my original work and has not been presented for Examination or Academic purposes in any other University or College. All the sources used herein are duly acknowledged.

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SUPERVISORS DECLARATION

I confirm that this project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university Supervisor.

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Above all, I owe my gratitude the almighty God for enabling me to complete this Masters of Science Degree.

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DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this research project to my family; Emma Muthoni, Manuel Ngaramba, my sister Elizabeth Njambi and Rose Kadeny for all their understanding, moral support and encouragement. Above all I thank God for turning all that may have seemed as impossible situations in my life into limitless possibilities.

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ABSTRACT

Small and Medium Enterprises form the foundations of growth for numerous economies particularly African nations. They represent a large number of businesses generating employment and wealth. Women entrepreneurs are increasingly recognized as playing a vital role in the unprecedented SMEs growth rate and indirectly to the economy of a country. The Kenyan SME sector is equipped with the potential and the historic task of shifting millions of people from the survivalist level including the informal economy to the mainstream economy. The study is anchored on the Schumpeter and Kirzner's theories of economic development and the Networking Theory. The objective of the study was to identify the perceived factors affecting the growth of women owned small and medium enterprises within the events management sector in Nairobi. While the sector has immense potential to generate remarkable levels of income, contribute substantially to the national economy and exhibit progressive sector growth, the situation on the ground has not met these expectations. Despite the great potential and positive impact events have on a country's economy, the sector experiences challenges like all other sectors Dwyer et al., (2007). Low business growth and numerous other challenges are evident in the sector. The study used primary data that was collected directly from the targeted population using questionnaires. Further, descriptive research design was utilized to assess the quantitative data and the results displayed in tables. Descriptive research design was best suited for this study for its ability to provide information on the characteristics of a given population or phenomenon. The study established that majority of women owned businesses are faced with numerous challenges which include networking, access to finances, access to markets, competition, shortage of skilled and adequate human capital among others which hinder the expected growth of their businesses. The study recommends; use of computer and web-based business networking to build more business contacts; alternative sources of income such as merry-go-rounds and "chamas"; enrollment into more business programs to educate themselves in different management and entrepreneurial competences for effective decision making and improved leadership skills; implementation into employee education programs to boost skills.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BLC:	Business Life Cycle
EMAK:	Events Management Association of Kenya
GoK:	Government of Kenya
ILO:	International Labour Organization
MOYA:	Ministry of Youth Affairs
MSME:	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NGOS:	Non-Governmental Organizations
ROI:	Return of Investments
SMES:	Small and Medium Enterprises
WC:	Working Capital
WCM:	Working Capital Management

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Entrepreneurship entails the use of private initiative to transform a concept of business into a new venture or to grow or diversify an existing one. In the current world, entrepreneurship is now emerging as a means for generating employment, a means of enabling women to uplift their economic lives and a way of uplifting their social and economic levels Tubey, (2012). Small and Medium Enterprises are considered a key driver of social and economic development in the developing nations. They are the foundations of growth to these economies and represent a large number of businesses generating employment and wealth. Women entrepreneurs are increasingly being seen as playing a vital role in the unprecedented SMEs growth rate and indirectly to the economy of a country. Watkins and Watkins (1984) pointed out that the contribution women brought to the business arena was barely noticed until the mid-1980s, when studies related to gender-specific barriers were conducted Hisrich and Brush (1986), motivations for new ventures Goffee and Scase (1985) and comparisons with male business owners Hisrich and O’Cinneide (1985) began to emerge in the literature. Polin, (2015) pointed out that the number of women entrepreneurs around the globe in 2014 was 48% of the total employment in SMEs.

Schumpeter's (1934, 1943) Theory of Entrepreneurship contends that an entrepreneur is the innovator who brings something new into an economy. Schumpeter’s definition and depiction of entrepreneurship places emphasis on innovative, growth-focused enterprises and also addresses economic entrepreneurship factors. Kirzner’s (1979) theory of

entrepreneurship shows how and why market processes arise. His idea places emphasis on individuals to be alert to profitable opportunities in order to generate pure profits as the entrepreneurial process is the drive that creates the market process and decides its direction. The Networking Theory views business as being inbuilt in a complex network of social relationships. Within these networks, entrepreneurship is aided or hindered by linkages among aspiring business people, resources, and opportunities Aldrich and Zimmer (1986).

The Kenyan SME sector is equipped with the potential and the notable task of shifting millions of people from the survivalist level including the informal economy to the mainstream economy. The government releases the critical task small businesses play in the Kenya economy, and through Kenya Vision 2030 envisages ways it can strengthen SMEs to help them transform into future's key industries by enhancing their productivity and innovation, Ministry of Planning, National Development & Vision 2030 of (2007). Consequently nurturing and improving the growth of women entrepreneurship in Kenya is essential in the accomplishment of extensive development objectives that include economic development and advancement.

The study was carried out in the Events Management Sector within Nairobi in Kenya, which hosts a high concentration of women owned events businesses and has potential to generate remarkable levels of income. It is a recent and fast growing business phenomenon as observed by Uysal and Xiangping, (2008) and currently stands out as a respected and popular decisive communication and marketing tools by large and small firms.

1.1.1 Concept of Perception

Barber and Ledge (1976) as cited by Brown (1998) define perception as the process of receiving, sourcing, transforming and arranging information supplied by our senses, while Berelson and Steiner (1964) alludes to it as a hard process by which individuals choose, organize and interpret sensory stimulation into a significant and clear picture of the world. Smith et al, (2007) depicts perception as the way in which people organize and interpret sensory impressions in a bid to understand their environment and stresses that it is important to appreciate that what others see is usually different from objective reality and that individuals tend to react to what they imagine as real rather than the actual reality. Psychologists point out that perception is a complex process that entails individuals choosing specific stimuli to respond to, arranging and interpreting the stimuli into patterns they already recognize Beardwell et al (2004). Daft (2000) defines perception as the way used by individuals to understand their environment by choosing, arranging and depicting information from the environment. He contends that people's perception of any aspect of their lives will be a function of the intensity or repetitiveness of that aspect. The number of times that aspect gets highlighted and the intensity with which it happens indicates just how important that activity is taken. Wallace 1999; Guest (1999) contends that the commitment of people to certain causes or issues depends on their perception. According to Arnold et al, (1991) research findings demonstrated that people's avowed feelings and convictions about someone or something appeared only loosely related to how they acted towards it and therefore this study of perceived factors affecting the growth of women owned businesses in events management sector within Nairobi is critical towards identification, formulation and implementation of issues and policies aimed at nurturing, ensuring sustained growth of women owned businesses.

1.1.2 Enterprise Growth

Enterprise growth is the process of enhancing some measure of a businesses' success. It can be accomplished either by boosting the top line or income of the enterprise with higher product sales or service revenue, or by expanding the bottom line or profitability of the operation by minimizing costs. Organic growth a prerequisite of the strategic growth, concentrates on the physical development of plant, buildings and land where additional assets are purchased, utilized and stock increases. Strategic growth is more specialized and target driven, with expansion of cash flow being focused into long term strategy such as overseas investment, defined market advertising and items differentiation in areas the organization's top administration believes will put the firm in lasting relationships with financial institutions, markets and even territorial regions. Business growth occurs in three main stages; the Birth Stage which entails establishment of the firm, attracting customers and finding the money. The task at this stage is fighting for its existence and survival of the business. The Breakthrough stage, involves the firm working on finances, becoming profitable and growing. The task at this stage is coping with the growth and takeoff. Lastly, the Maturity Stage involves refining the firm's strategy, continuing to grow and managing the business for success. The task is to invest wisely and stay flexible.

Growth is usually linked to the enterprise's overall success and survival Johansson, (1993); Phillips and Kirchhoff, (1989) and has been utilized as a simple scale of success in business Storey, (1994). Brush and Vanderwerf (1992) propose growth as the most suitable pointer of the performance for survival of small firms. The growth of SMEs can be determined by supply of capital, manpower, proper management and opportunities for

profitable gain. According to Dockel & Ligthelm (2005), an enterprise's growth is dependent on the top management's knowledge. In Kenya, it is recognized that access to various factors is vital for growth and development of firms particularly Small and Medium Enterprises (RoK, 2005).

1.1.3 Small and Medium Enterprises

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) have always been described as a seedbed to the development of a nation since they play a vital task in the growth of an economy. They are globally appreciated for their role in the social, economic and political development. SMEs are foundations of growth in most economies, while the real value of the SME sector is especially seen in its ability to supply fairly priced items, services, revenue and generate jobs to numerous individuals Mullei and Bokea, (1999). In developing countries, SMEs employ the majority of the population and are seen to be more labour intensive unlike in large organizations. This is because they use less technology and less automated processes. Reddy, (1991) points out that SMEs have the ability to attain fast economic growth at the same time generating remarkable levels of opportunities for job creation.

In Kenyan perspective the definition of an SME is determined by the number of its employees. The government of Kenya views the sector as a highly valued engine for fast and increased economic development and employment. SME policy as depicted in the Sessional Paper Number 2 of (GoK 2005) states that SMEs are suppliers of goods and services and most importantly enhance competition, innovation and promote the culture of a business which is vital for the growth and industrialization of the private sector. In Kenya context, SME industry attracts the skilled persons unable to secure formal jobs in

their areas of study, retrenched persons from their formal jobs or unskilled persons. This is regarded as the second best option for those unable to secure jobs in the modern sector. Mwangi and Ouma (2012) noted that employment growth in Kenya's SME sector has far outpaced growth in the large modern sector. This has so far been proven factual by the massive growth of SMEs in Kenya over the years. Pinho (2011) noted that SMEs are more urban than rural-based.

1.1.4 Factors Affecting Growth of Small and Medium Enterprises

Women entrepreneurs are increasingly being appreciated as playing a vital role in the unprecedented SMEs growth rate and indirectly a country's economy. Watkins and Watkins (1984) pointed out that the contribution women injected into the business arena was barely noticed until the mid-1980s, when studies related to gender-specific barriers were conducted Hisrich and Brush (1986), bring to entrepreneurship was not fully recognized until the mid-1980s, when a number of gender-specific barriers related studies Hisrich and Brush (1986), motivations for new ventures Goffee and Scase (1985) and comparisons with male business owners Hisrich and O'Conneide (1985) began to appear in the literature.

The SMEs sector is unpredictable and encounters high levels of enterprise closure and shrinkage Baard & Van Den Berg, (2004); Eriksson & Kuhn, (2006) leading to the government making numerous attempts to help in its development. The increased levels of business death or closure is an indicator that SMEs are restricted in their ability to forge sustainable and durable employment and may also be the biggest cause for the highest level of wealth and job loss Ahwireng, (2003). Although SMEs encounter numerous challenges and difficulties, they possess great potential for increased

employment generation Miller, (2003). Unlike large and established firms, the newness and small size of SMEs puts them at a higher risk of failure since they lack experience, qualified expertise and technology. SMEs have limited opportunity to learn from their past since small mistakes are likely to lead to the death of the firm. Previously done research work explains that many SMEs fail due to insufficient financing Amyx, (2005). Longenecker, et al., (2006) identified poor planning, inadequate financing and weak management as the principal cause of SME lack of business success, while Oketch, (2000); Tomecko & Dondo, (1992); and Kiiru, (1991) emphasized on poor financing as a serious hindrance to SMEs and deterring their development. Alila et al., (2002) identified financial accessibility, record keeping, working capital and budgeting as the challenges.

Though the traits of male and women business owners are alike, researchers point out that women business owners ought to cross beyond negative social perceptions regarding women Hadary, (2010); Hisrich and O'Brien, (1981) which men need not address. Most times, even though women owned businesses may post solid sales and profitability records, they are usually seen as lacking the capability to advance their enterprises Hadary, (2010), more often than not, they are classified by many financiers as risky borrowers, and seen as not creditworthy especially when lined against male businesses owners Brush, (1997). These negative views acts as deterrents for women business owners to acquire tangible resources needed to improve their enterprises Alsos et al., (2006); Buttner and Rosen, (1988); Godwin et al., (2006).

1.1.5 Events Management

Getz (2005) noted that a rule pertinent to all events is that they are short term and each event is unusual originating from a mixture of management, arrangement, scenery and individuals involved. Shone and Parry (2004) noted that unique events are remarkable developments emanating from uncommon occasions which have recreational, social, individual or organizational goals set apart from the typical actions of day to day life with the sole intention to, celebrate, engage or challenge the experience of a gathering of individuals. Douglas et al., (2001) referred to events as occasion for individuals to gather to engage, demonstrate, praise, pay respect, commemorate, socialize while Allen et al., (2008) referred to events as specific cultural observations or celebrations that are purposely set out and created to remember important occurrences. Events can be classified on the basis of magnitude or kind of event with the greatest in size being labelled as mega events which are generally targeted towards international markets. Based on their magnitude and level, they are able to draw substantial increase in visitors, media coverage and bring in considerable income and economic advantages. A substantial number of superior international championships for sports fall into this class Bowdin et al., (2006). Minor events range from parties to celebrations, meetings to weddings. Many sectors, non-governmental organizations and interest groups host events in a bid to promote themselves, form business linkages, fundraise or celebrate Raj and Musgrave, (2009).

Apart from provision of employment alternatives, events enhance the number of population participation in economic development, bring in secondary revenue, improve community stability, and are usually deemed to have minimal negative impact to the

environment Hall, (1996); Oppermann,(1996); Editner (1995). An important aspect is that, events businesses do not always demand high amounts of start-up capital and hence do not require massive external investment thereby limiting the money risk involved thus encouraging entrepreneurship and self-employment. The ventures have the benefit of enabling the use of under exploited production factors. As noted by Weiermair (1998), they enable business owners to come up with special customer relationships.

1.1.6 Events Management Sector in Nairobi County

In Kenya the sector currently stands out as a popular and respected decisive informative and marketing weapon by both large and small businesses. As people and firms observe, engage, rejoice significant life events, recall milestones, promote themselves, fundraise, celebrate or form business relationships so is their need for organized and successful events. The growth of the events management has seen the hosting of services ranging from corporate events such as products launches, workshops, farewell and end of year parties, award ceremonies, university graduations, annual general meetings, sporting events, political forums, press conferences and others non-corporate events such as funerals, fund raisings, weddings, birthdays, baby and bridal showers.

Events management particularly in Kenya mainly entails setting out the management logistics, analysing brand complexity, recognizing the targeted population by the company and setting forth the event idea. Important details that can foil an event such as positioning of tents, chairs and tables, appropriate décor befitting the occasion, videography and photography may often be overlooked or considered minor prior to the event but with the services of an events manager, the specific boundaries of a particular event's service requirement such as; technical, operations and creative aspect of the

occasion to ensure the needs and budget of the client are met without a hitch. Nairobi County being the centre of major business activities in Kenya offers numerous event management opportunities. Though a relatively new business phenomenon in Kenya, it hosts events businesses with women owned being the majority. The events concept by its nature, the cultural as well as family background as pertains to the role of women as perceived by the African society appeals and attracts women investment. Services offered include; planning services, provision and hire of events facilitation products such as tents, chairs, tables, lighting, décor and grounds hire; outside catering and baking services.

1.2 Research Problem

Small and Medium Enterprises are largely viewed as the propelling force of national growth, job opportunity creation and alleviation of poverty in growing countries and their input to growth mainly recognized. However, the input of women business owners to the economic improvement has not failed to be well recognized. Despite such information on setup of small ventures in addition to economic input by women in advanced states, little information on women business owners in growing states, more so in Kenya. Women business owners in struggling nations' paths to business, their journeys to self-employment, their inputs to new enterprise generation, their ability to generate opportunities for employment, and the resulting reduction in the levels of unemployment and reduction of poverty have notably be overlooked in research literature (Allen and Truman 1993; ILO 2000; Lerner, Brush and Hisrich 1997; Saffu and Takyiwaa Manu 2004; Still and Timms 1999; Tinker 1998). Women entrepreneurs face many constraints that limit their long-term survival and development.

Korir (2012) in her study of elements of event management ventures in Kenya noted that event management ventures are more attractive to female and educated entrepreneurs. Though most of the women owned ventures in events management do not always require high start-up capital and as such attract enterprise startups and self-employment, in most cases the sector has remained largely unstructured and informal. Further, while the sector has potential to generate remarkable levels of income, contribute substantially to the national economy and exhibit progressive sector growth, the situation on the ground has not met these expectations. As noted by Dwyer et al., (2007), despite the great potential and positive impact events have on a country's economy, the sector is experiences challenges like all other sectors. The women owned businesses in the sector are experiencing very slow growth in their businesses in addition to encountering numerous challenges.

Ongachi & Bwisa (2013) study concluded that most women MSEs were faced with slow growth while pointing out negative factors deterring their growth as absence of finance, absence of skills, absence of training in addition undertaking of multiple tasks. They further cited the positive factors promoting their growth as; enabling environment and great demand for required items and services. Kimani (2014) highlighted factors influencing performance of events management firms in Nairobi Kenya cited supply chain networks, management skills in supply chain and access to credit facility influence the performance of the event management and further called for the organizations to build business networks that will see them access credit facilities not only in commercial banks but also in micro finance institutions. Several studies Onugu (2005), Wawire and Nafukho (2010), Frempong (2009) uncovered several factors deterring SMEs growth

which include; lack of focus, exercising too much focus on a specific market for ready goods, disorganized business records, failure to set out a plan for future succession, insufficient market feasibility study, lack of business strategy, cut throat competition and concentration of decision making on one key person, usually the owner. Kenya's session paper two of 1992 detailed obstacles and hindrances encountered by female entrepreneurs as; difference in gender, social and historical norms, inadequate education, numerous tasks, prejudice, in access to information and gender disparity are also highlighted as a challenge session paper number 2 of 2005 (GoK 2005).

Though investigation has been conducted on small businesses, little has specifically been investigated on women owned businesses in events management sector within Nairobi, Kenya. Further, where several exercises have been undertaken on growth of women businesses, to the knowledge of the researcher none have generated information detailing to what extent the growth of women SMEs owners in event management sector has been affected. There also being very little information on previous researches conducted on growth of SMEs owned by women in this sector continues to deny existing but struggling women SME owners the opportunity to learn from documented past mistakes to prevent the death of their firms as may be caused by numerous challenges they are constantly exposed to in the course of running their businesses. Moreover, the challenges facing the women entrepreneurs in the sector are tremendous and it is therefore extremely important to take appropriate measures to address these challenges, for being able to identify the factors that bring about these challenges is merely a precondition, for a challenge well stated is only half solved. In this respect, the research seeks to find out the perceived

factors affecting growth of women owned SMEs within the Events Management Sector in Nairobi.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The objective of the study was to find out perceived factors affecting the growth of women owned businesses in the Events Management Sector within Nairobi County in Kenya.

1.4 Value of the Study

The research findings which highlight the factors affecting women owned SMEs' growth within the events management sector together with possible recommendations, would be of importance to both aspiring and existing but struggling women SME owners, by offering them the opportunity to learn from documented past mistakes to prevent the death of their firms as may be caused by numerous challenges they are constantly exposed to in the course of running their businesses.

With the limited research on women owned businesses available, the findings of the study would be published, shared and stored in Libraries to help build up on the existing knowledge on women owned businesses in Kenya to be used by other researchers and academicians as a source of reference material.

The results would be invaluable to the government for determination and establishment of regulatory legal framework for women owned businesses in Kenya through the Ministries of Youth Affairs (MOYA), Gender and social services in generating policies aimed at facilitating sustained growth of female owned businesses.

Other stakeholders namely the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and also Development Partners engaged in alleviation of poverty or women empowerment issues would also find the report useful. The financial institutions would be in a position to generate products tailored to suit women business owner's financial resources needs.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The chapter defines the foundations of the study by detailing the theoretical framework guiding the study before establishing the empirical foundation for the perceived factors affecting growth of women owned SMEs.

2.2 Theoretical Foundations

The study is motivated by economic perceptions attached to entrepreneurship by Joseph Schumpeter and Israel Kirzner, which are seen to be clearly relevant in expounding economic growth and all round business success Ripsas (1998); Wennekers and Thurik (1999); and the Networking theory which perceives entrepreneurship as intergrated in complicated linkages of social networks.

2.2.1 Schumpeter's Theory of Economic Development

Schumpeter (1934, 1943) points out entrepreneurs are innovators with foresight and creativity to introduce new things to the economy. His depiction and outline of entrepreneurship looks at the economic issues of business and innovative, growth-focused businesses. To Schumpeter, the importance of entrepreneurship is in its capability to break from the norm, to eliminate current structures, to propel the system from the balanced circular flow. This theory views the application of new combinations of entrepreneurship in terms of innovation; such as injecting a new good to the market, new way of production, creating new markets, acquisition of new source of raw material supply and reorganization of the market place, such as new monopolistic position or breaking up of existing monopoly as basically a creative activity Casson, (2002). The

concept of economic development explains to entrepreneurs especially Small and Medium Enterprises ways they can enhance survival and growth of their businesses in the market place. According to Schumpeter, entrepreneurs are usually seen in small enterprises Wennekers and Thurik (1999); they are owners and directors of autonomous firms that practice innovation, and creatively eliminate market structures that are currently in place.

Joseph Schumpeters view on growth exceeds economist view by clearly differentiating between tangible and intellectual resources, and between saving, which contributes to the physical accumulation of capital, and innovation, which enables intellectual capital accumulation. It is of the view that technological advancement emanates from new ideas undertaken by enterprises inspired by the promise of profit, and it further entails creative destruction. Each new way is directed at unveiling new processes or goods that benefit its innovator a competitive edge over rivals in the business arena; this occurs when it renders previous innovations obsolete; it is also bound to be made obsolete by new ways in future Schumpeter, (1934). Schumpeter (1954) argued that all new combinations successfully implemented by business enterprises, whether big or small, newly introduced or old, brings about fresh need for products thereby creating new wealth and achievement for the business person.

According to Schumpeter innovation is all about increasing the use of currently available resources by anyone. He believes that entrepreneurship goes beyond the running a business but more so, giving direction as the firm's leader which contradicts imitators who only follow the creative lead of the entrepreneurs. It is the task of the entrepreneur to continuously uplift the economic system. Schumpeter perceived the entrepreneur to be

the overall person in a given cultural setting and entrepreneurship as a short term position for anyone, except when stop being innovative. Further, Schumpeter (1961: 7) argued that the growth of economies is not similar those of trees, 'steadily and continuously', but happens based on an individual's innovative approach to opportunities encountered.

2.2.2 Kirzner's Theory of Economic Development

Kirzner's (1979) theory outlines the process in which markets come in existence and explains the reasons behind their formation. In his idea, he emphasizes that people should be alert to gainful opportunities that provide them with benefits as the process of venture creation, execution and implementation is the drive that brings about market processes and more so determines their paths. Kirzner's (1997) alert entrepreneur not only identifies and explores emerging venture opportunities, but also puts aside what is irrelevant and propels the economy towards equilibrium, a state of balance where no additional information can be identified. He further explains that progression in entrepreneurship is not dependant on one great man, but rather on many great men, many players in the business arena. According to Hayek (1945) and Kirzner (1979), Resources in the market place are utilized imperfectly an aspect that comes in being as a result of uneven distribution of knowledge among individuals. The few individuls fortunate enough to gain special knowledge of discrepancies in the market place such as mismatch in knowledge, information and opportunities yet to be recognized and explored by others in the market process benefit by converting them in gainful profits.

According to Kirzner, the economy benefits substantially from the identification of new ideas Kirzner's perspective Kirzner (1979); Venkataraman (1997). The task of entrepreneurship involves identifying areas of mismatch that occur in the market process

and swiftly seizing these opportunities and exploiting them for gainful profit. The key is for the business person who is the equilibrating force within the market process to be alert to identify potentially profitable and unexpected emerging opportunities and gaps or changes occurring independently in the market surroundings. A key issue in Kirzner's view of entrepreneurship is evident in the way the entrepreneur sees and identifies a gap in price between what is presently put in and what will be derived from it in the future while maximizing on gainful opportunities by engaging into the necessary functions aimed at generating profits.

Kirzner's (1979) perceives entrepreneurs as future focused and business minded individuals who are determined, full of confidence, creative and bold. According to Kirzner, such traits are essential to the entrepreneur's process of uncovering gainful opportunities (Kirzner 1999). Therefore, Kirzner saw business people as suppliers of products or services, though they are only considered as entrepreneurs when they come up with new ways or gaps and more so when they gain profits from them (Kirzner 1973). To Kirzner, an entrepreneur brings together resources aimed at servicing a presently unmet needs or improving shortcomings or omissions in the market Wennekens and Thurik (1999).

2.2.3 Networking Theory of Entrepreneurship

The Networking Theory perceives entrepreneurship as being inbuilt into a complicated system of social networks which are either enabled or hindered by linkages that exist among aspiring entrepreneurs, resources, and opportunities (Aldrich and Zimmer 1986). It further explains that the presence or absence of networks, such as relatives, friends and access to or memberships in associations, plays a role in influencing growth and the

viability of a business venture. It holds that the presence of networks both formal or informal, being close or extended family members, peers, and ability to gain or being members of network groups, influences success, growth and viability of a ventures owned by females. Women business owners find themselves in different personal and social networks from their male counterparts which results in divisions and barriers that limit the reach and diversity of their networks might have far-reaching consequences for business growth Aldrich (1989). In conclusions, women network associations in the events management sector will be addressed to establish the relationship between growth of enterprises and their network associations which are seen as related to business success.

2.3 Indicators of Growth of Small and Medium Enterprises

Growth is mostly seen to be the best measure of an enterprise's performance since it is dependable and easily accessible. According to Tubey (2012), different methods can be used to quantify growth and as such there is no general measurement. Quantifying improvement in sales and relative improvement in employment for a given time period are some of commonly utilized indicators Amyx, (2005). Awour (2012) pointed out that pointers such as assets, market share, profitability and production are also utilized, though not as frequent as sales and employment. Production and market share largely differ depending on the industry and as such it become difficult to compare. Total assets depend largely on the depth of capital requirement in an industry and vary from time to time while profits become significant where one is quantifying size over the long term. This makes sales and employment as the two best suited ways of quantifying the size of an enterprise and as well as growth Boshoff, Theron & Schutte, (2008). The government

considers employment numbers a key dimension making it is easy access these numbers as a measure. Inflation as well as the rates of exchange affect sales making it a challenge to derive an inter industry comparison. In respect to this, it is essential to utilize multiple pointers of growth to analyse an enterprise's growth. Kiraka *et al.* (2012) emphasized on the importance of appreciating a multidimensional nature of growth. Focusing on a specific dimension or on a narrow gap can be misleading in building both a descriptive and normative theory. It is important to utilize multiple ways of quantifying growth such as sales, market share, profits or use of other factors like overall satisfaction and the owner's non-financial in the process of evaluating growth. This is in line with Muteru (2013) who emphasizes on the use of both financial and non-financial ways to assess growth of SMEs growth. According to Mwobobia (2012), various pointers are utilized in the process of measuring growth an indication that there is no specific way of measurement.

According to Ngugi and Bwisa (2013), a goal-oriented approach points the owners-managers to concentrate their efforts on both; financial measures which entails income, sales growth, profits, return on sales, return on equity, return on investment (ROI) and profitability growth; and non-financial measures which includes customer's brand awareness, loyalty and satisfaction, employee's and owner's satisfaction, employment creation and overall SME performance as compared to that of the competitor.

2.4 Factors Affecting Growth of Women Owned Small and Medium Enterprises

Several studies world over have been done on the factors affecting growth of SMEs in general. However, the following factors have been found to be more inherent in growth of women enterprises in the events management sector; Access to Network, Access to Policy Makers, Clear Focus, Entrepreneur's Personal Competencies, Shortage of Skilled Human Capital, Competition, Accessing Business Financing and Access to Markets.

2.4.1 Access to Networks

A big number of women have limited business contacts, exhibit minimal knowledge on dealing with the governmental bureaucracy and have less bargaining power, all of which limit their growth. As a result of the low emphasis placed on sectors highly dominated by women entrepreneurs and on women in general in any given sector, women find it difficult to secure invitations to join trade missions or delegations (Mahbub, 2000). Most women business owners find it difficult to gain access to vital information resulting from the fact that they run their businesses on a small level, have no memberships to professional organizations or networks groups. The absence of these networks deprives women awareness and exposure to good role models. A big number of currently available networks happen to be highly concentrated with men preferring exclusivity hence at most times not very welcoming to the women and in an instance where a woman gains access to the network, she is often met with numerous challenges since most activities take place after regular working hours. Past research works on women entrepreneurs' networking identified that women prefer to seek out other women as

information sources rather than men. Literature has therefore revealed that organizations that offer networking exclusively to women have been successful (Coughlin 2002). The formalization of women's networks, such as National Women's Business Council in the US, has been highly successful as networks provide access to information and support for women business owners. Women entrepreneurs' exclusive networks is their flexibility and informal nature, which suit women's roles as family women and entrepreneurs. Findings from other studies indicate that intangible resources of women entrepreneurs such as their ability to access informal and formal networks boost the growth of their businesses Kickul, Gundry, and Sampson, (2007).

According to Smeltzer and Fann (1989), social support is essential to the survival of small firms as instrumental information. Women entrepreneurs utilize networks not only to acquire business information, but also to fulfill social support needs since a personal network support system composed of spouses, significant others, family members and acquaintances is very essential to women entrepreneurs Moore and Buttner (1997). In Moore and Buttner (1997) study of USA women entrepreneurs it was revealed that 53 percent consider their spouses the primary source of support. Nelson (1989) finds that women business owners are pragmatic in seeking tangible support from those most able to provide it, predominantly spouses, siblings and male friends. Carter (1989), noted that networking and the ability to draw on sources of business experience and support are important practices enabling the transition from entrepreneurial management to professionalism in the business studied. Andre (1992) concurs and further proposes that financially successful women should devote time to networking and women already in networks should center their focus on not only in innovation and business expansion but

also like the men, seize the chance to share and learn from other women sharing similar experiences and views McDade and Spring (2005).

In Kenya, women engage in informal networks like Chama groups as a way to seek support and information from their fellow women. The Events Management Association of Kenya (EMAK) seeks to bring together event managers across Kenya to create, practice and maintain professional standards for the good of clients and the growth of the sector. It offers four levels of memberships namely; Gold, Platinum, Silver and Individual. However, the association is not yet popular with most small events planners and is also out of reach to most small businesses due to the registration and annual subscription fees payable. Networks have therefore been proved as an important prerequisite to the successful organization of entrepreneurial activities in any society. The existences of such institutions are crucial at the various stages of entrepreneurial activities. No matter the form it takes and the people involved, it is clear that networking is used by women entrepreneurs as a means to establish their businesses and reputation, acquire resources and develop their businesses, gain advice and information, and reduce isolation. Hence, women entrepreneurs strategically allocate resources to developing and maintaining networks and view effective networks as a crucial aspect for ensuring the success of their ventures.

2.4.2 Access to Policymakers

Businesses owned by women are less represented in associations such as sector, trade or business. Furthermore, they exhibit limited access or representation to policymakers or bodies unlike male entrepreneurs and large firms who have easy access and influence and are seen more as peers. Further, the leadership and the membership of chambers of

commerce, business, traders and industry associations tend to be dominated by men, and few women join or reach leadership positions in the mainstream business organizations, limiting their input into policymaking through lobbying. Women's lack of access to information also limits their knowledgeable input into policymaking (UNECE, 2004). Numerous specialist firms owned by women tend to escape this kind of situation since their business activities are more often than not focused on charity and social work which is different from business networking and policy lobbying orientation of the mainstream but more male-dominated organizations (Phizacklea, 2003). According to Groebner (2008) a conducive environment is a welcomed opening that should be used by all business operators in Kenya. The changing governments, each promising better things and the depiction of newly formed policies, economic reconstruction, improvement in infrastructure and security, it is anticipated that small businesses will do well. Often times, changes in a particular environment leads to changes in another environment and more so affects the way the current laws are enforced for instance change in political environment may affect the legal environment. It is not an easy task for business owners to be familiar to all the significant laws though on the other hand it is essential they get to know as the legal environment sets some basic rules on operations of businesses and it may severely limit some choices when the law changes. According to McGrath (2002), the legal and economic framework in which businesses are run is vital to their performance. Documented research findings on growth of a business, it is highlighted that in many countries, the legal framework is a barrier to enterprise growth. Decrease in open hostility as compared to positive business development programs initiated from the national level has been most instrumental to small businesses particularly in Africa.

2.4.3 Clear Focus

A clear focus involves resting on the choice of a narrow competitive scope within an industry by focusing on a segment and tailoring the firm's strategy to serving the particular segment to the exclusion of others Porter (1985). Women owned businesses in the events sector are faced with numerous opportunities but the challenge is in choosing the right ones. However, in a bid to start business operations and sustain them, most women business owners accept any opportunity that comes their way, failing to realize that good opportunities are only those that enhance the strengths of their businesses and result to a compelling customer value proposition. By trying to do too much for too many, the business owners end up diluting their focus and often the quality of their services. According to Porter (1985), when a firm optimizes its strategy for the target segments, it is actually seeking to attain a competitive edge in the particular segment it is operating in even when it currently does not currently have an overall competitive advantage. Therefore, opportunities that do not fall into a business's category should be turned away otherwise things might turn hectic or sometimes chaotic leading to too much of the entrepreneur's time taken in putting out fires as multiple mistakes may need to be frequently corrected denying the them the opportunity to be strategic.

2.4.4 Entrepreneur's Personal Competencies

The entrepreneur's centrality in running the firm's operations cannot be understated for where the owner has strong skills, then the success of the business will be greater (Lerner and Haber 2000). Many women business owners in the sector struggle with personal competencies. According to Lerner et al. (1997) and Saffu and Takyiwaa Manu (2004)

personal skills like leadership, effective delegation, decision making, dealing with people, marketing skills, strong idea generation were found to be related to business growth and success.

Porter (1985) argues that the most essential trait of a sound leader based on the views of the followers is the goals they have and a good strategy from the follower's perspective is that the leader has goals and a strategy that ensures a profitable living for the followers. Most business owners struggle with evolving from owner to the leadership role with majority resisting delegating control of any business aspect to others and as such tending to concentrate all decision making on one key person, usually the owner. The realization that help is needed and as such the owners must learn to trust and work with others in order to achieve the set out goals is a very hard reality to accept as when the growth of a firm begins help from others is needed to properly service the customers. For the business to grow, the entrepreneur must grow and evolve from being a doer to a manager of employees and eventually to a manager of managers in this matter the leader Brush et al. (2006). It requires a continuation of the mind shift from me, the entrepreneur and my way to it is really all about them.

2.4.5 Shortage of Skilled Human Capital

Women owned businesses in the events management sector are faced with shortage of adequate and skilled human resource which leads to lack of task specialization as everyone undertakes the task at hand. For instance, where a firm engages in provision of event items, you may find that the cleaning of the tents, linen, floor and carpets, setup up and collection of the tents at site, managing the store and repair of damaged items are done by the same staff. According to Terry Hill (1997) most small businesses lack

resources to employ skilled personnel to handle various aspects of management like marketing, accounting, administration and customer service. Results the staff being overwhelmed as and mostly end up putting in too many hours, poor quality of service delivery, inconsistency and lack of accountability as different persons are skilled differently. Further, most entrepreneurs in the sector opt for minimal wage over hiring smart which results to costly mistakes that are time consuming and create quality and financial risks in their businesses Starcher (2008). High employee turnover is a common occurrence which emanates from staff being overwhelmed by workload and dissatisfied by the minimal wage.

2.4.6 Competition

Most women owned businesses in the sector are not necessarily capital intensive and as such encourage entrepreneurship and self-employment which leads to a high number of entrants into the sector Dwyer et al., (2007). This in turn has led to immense competition for the available opportunities and in bid to survive, businesses owners result to different measures to beat the competition Armstrong (1997). These include undercutting in items prices or service fees, collaboration by suppliers to reduce sub-hire rates for their group members as strategy for survival. Competition is necessary in business but sometimes it may be unfair. According to the Industrial development, (2003) firms engaged in similar type of business compete in the market through price reductions in order to get customer for their products and service. Subsequently, little emphasis for the quality of their product and service is given leading to lose of customers. Armstrong (1997) noted that well formulated regulations can encourage competition and ensure fair market. He further added that the government should come up with policies for the general public to guide

the business sectors, put in place rules and regulations which limit unfair practices or exploitation to the society. Though the government has put several measures to safeguard the interests of the marginalized groups which includes women business owners like thirty percent of all government tenders, reserved certain items for exclusive production by small business, SMEs find it almost impossible to compete with large scales strategy who use have access to better modern facilities, technology and hence are in a better position to price their products or services way below the SMEs rates Balu, (2000).

2.4.7 Accessing Business Finance

Important aspects to the success of a business include choice of a suitable capitalization structure, ability to get business financing and decisions on how to sequence the sources of capital Carter et al. (2003). Ability to acquire financing is of vital importance to women. The ability to get loans especially for startups ventures or existing businesses seeking expansion is a common constraint facing most women businesses. For instance, where women businesses may exhibit sound sales and profit records, they are still seen as lacking ability to grow their businesses Hadary, (2010), further, they are classified as risky borrowers and often seen by the loan officers as being un-creditworthy compared to men Brush, (1997). These negative perceptions make it difficult for women entrepreneurs to access finances necessary to grow their business Alsos et al., (2006); Buttner and Rosen, (1988); Godwin et al., (2006). In most instances, women have lesser opportunities as compared to the men to secure credit resulting from numerous reasons which range from having no collateral and creditors unwillingness to household items as loan security and negative views of women business owners by the credit officers. In instances where women can now afford to provide the collateral requested by the banking institutions, the

interest charged on the loans is so high that it scares most of the women entrepreneurs away from bank loans. In Kenya, women are barely considered by professional financial institutions and are advanced barely 10% of the commercial credits (MahbubulHaq human Development Center, 2000). In instances where women are able to secure loans, they often qualify small amounts irrespective of whether it is adequate for their required purpose or not. Entrepreneurs often need some form of financing establish their startups whether from a financial institution or from a savings account. Financial institutions are often skeptical of women business owners for fear that they may change their minds about working and become housewives again.

2.4.8 Access to Markets

To be able to gain access to new markets, expertise, knowledge and contacts are of key importance. Most often, women encounter challenges in training and experience on to take part in the market place which hinders their ability to strategically market their goods and services. Further, most are not exposed to the international market which results to their lack of information of what is acceptable internationally. The development of new contacts for businesses and networks in newly ventured countries or markets incurs huge costs hence making it a big challenge for most SMEs especially women owned. Fear of encountering female related challenges such as sexual harassment or other may be restricted in their ability to travel to make contacts (UNECE, 2004). It is further debated that women business owners possess low-level management skills making them to rely of office staff and intermediaries to execute tasks particularly the marketing and sales part of business. In such cases, there is more likelihood for business fallacies such as market intermediaries seizing the major part of the surplus or profit.

Marketing entails the mobility and confidence in relating with the external world, both of which women have been discouraged from developing by social conditioning. Even when they are otherwise in control of an enterprise, they often depend on males of the family in this area (Penrose, 2006).

2.5 Summary of Literature Review and Research Gap

Information from earlier research studies and reports derived from the government regarding the state of SMEs reveals that the sector is encounters many challenges and constraints affecting growth of SMEs. Though a lot of research has been undertaken on SMEs, little has been done particularly in regard to the perceived factors affecting growth of women owned SMEs in the events management sector within Nairobi, Kenya. With the fast adaptation of the event management concept in Kenya and especially Nairobi by both private and public, not many of the small businesses are significantly contributing to employment creation and economic growth. There remains a knowledge gap in understanding the slow growth and negative growth in some cases experienced by women owned businesses in the sector. Sadly, the literature provides no information on the level in which the growth of women owned SME's in event management sector has been affected. It is in providing this assessment that the research sought to make its greatest contribution to the body of knowledge on perceived factors affecting growth of women owned SMEs in event management sector within Nairobi County in Kenya.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The chapter sets out the methodology applied by the researcher to conduct the study, particularly in collection, measurement and analysis of the data. It specifically addresses the research design, target population, data collection instruments and the techniques for data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

The research opted for descriptive survey design to fulfill the study's objective being perceived factors affecting the growth of women owned businesses in the Events Management Sector in Nairobi as they exist. The research opted for the descriptive research design because it facilitates generalization of the findings to a larger population and it has been recognized as it is known to allow relations and analysis of variables specifically to investigate viable relationship and outline how these factors support matters under study.

3.3 Target Population

The population of the study comprised of the registered Women Owned Events Management Businesses in Nairobi County. The target population consisted of 700 registered women owned events management businesses within Nairobi Huduma Centre, (2016).

3.4 Sampling Design

Random sampling method was utilized to choose 10% of the target audience which is deemed as representative of the target population. In random sampling all the respondents have equal chances of being selected. The size of the sample for this study was 70 respondents.

3.4 Data Collection

Collection of data was done through self-administered questionnaires containing open ended as well as closed questions. The questionnaires contained three sections with section **A** covering the demographic profile, section **B** various factors affecting growth of women owned events businesses and Section **C** covering the measures of growth. The questionnaires were then distributed using drop and pick style and sometime sent through email. Follow-up was done for purposes of making sure there was timely collection of questionnaires and more so to offer assistance to respondents having problems filling in or understanding the questionnaires.

3.5 Data Analysis

The filled in and ready questionnaires were reviewed and checked for accuracy, logical flow and soundness. Data was cleaned up, before the final analysis to remove discrepancies and then, categorized based on similarity and thereafter tabulated. The feedback was coded and entries made into Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 20) for cleaning and organization. The data was then analyzed using descriptive statistics to reveal central tendencies, like mean scores, percentages as well as dispersion measures like standard deviations. The findings were then displayed in frequency tables

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of the research was to examine the perceived factors affecting growth of women owned businesses in the events management sector in Nairobi. This chapter gives the results gained from the study and analyzed in line with the guiding objective. It further outlines data analysis, presentation and interpretation of the results.

4.2 Response Rate

The researcher distributed 70 questionnaires from which 56 questionnaires were answered to the researchers' expectations and returned. Out of the remaining 14, 11 respondents did not return the questionnaires while 3 respondents were rejected as they did not answer the questions to the expectations of the researcher. Therefore, the data analysis is based on 56 respondents. This translates the response rate to 80% which is within the prescribed response rate according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003).

4.3. General Information

The study assessed the background information of the respondents in an effort to ensure that the sampling was effectively done by analyzing such variables as age distribution, highest level of education, length of time in business, legal nature of their business, number of employees and average employees' education level.

4.3.1 Age Distribution

The researcher's interest in the age of the respondents to assist in establishing the distribution and its influence on growth of women businesses within the sector.

Table 4.1: Age Distribution

Age Distribution	Frequency	Percentage
20 to 30 years	4	7
31 to 40 years	26	46
41 to 50 years	20	36
51 years and above	6	11
Total	56	100.0

Table 4.1 shows that 4(7%) of the participants were aged between of 20-30 years, 26(46%) who were the highest in number were between the 31-40 years, 20(36%) were between 41-50 years while 6(11%) were 51 years and above. The findings showed that more than 80% of the participants were aged 31 years and above, giving the implication that those who participated in the study were well experienced. Further, all the age groups were represented in the study.

4.3.2 Level of Education

The study aimed at establishing the respondents' level of education which refers to the highest academic qualification of the respondents.

Table 4.2: Level of Education

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
Primary Level	0	0
Secondary Level	12	21
Diploma Level	23	41
Degree Level	20	36
Postgraduate Degree	1	2
Total	56	100.0

Table 4.2 shows that the highest number of the respondents were diploma holders at 23(41%) followed closely by degree holders at 20(36%). 12(21%) of the respondents are secondary certificate holders and while 1(2%) are postgraduate degree holders. The education level was measured to help the researcher determine the highest academic qualifications of women business owners and from the above findings, it was evident that majority were well educated with diplomas and first degrees. The results further indicate that the respondents had adequate levels of education to understand the concept of the study.

4.3.3 Length of time in business

The study aimed at establishing the duration of time the respondents have been in business. This was to assist the researcher determine the amount of experience the respondent has in the events management sector.

Table 4.3: Length of Time in Business

Length of Time in Businesses	Frequency	Percentage
Below 1 year	5	9
2 to 6 years	26	46
7 to 10 years	18	32
Above 11 years	7	13
Total	56	100.0

Table 4.3 outlines that 26(46%) of those who participated had 2 to 6 years of business experience followed by 18(32%) of the respondents with between 7 to 10 years of experience. 5(9%) of the respondents had experience of below 1 year while 7(13%) of the respondents had more than 11 years of experience. This shows that majority of the women owned event management businesses have been in operation for 2 to 10 years, an indication that they understood the business environment very well.

4.3.4 Nature of Business

The study aimed at establishing the nature of the businesses. This was to assist the researcher determine the legal status of the respondent's enterprises.

Table 4.4: Nature of Business

Nature of Business	Frequency	Percentage
Sole Proprietorship	26	46
Partnership	6	11
Family Businesses	4	7
Limited Company	20	36
Total	56	100.0

Table 4.4 displays that 26(46%) of those who participated businesses' were registered as sole proprietorships followed by 20(36%) of the respondents whose businesses were registered as private limited company's. 6(11%) of the respondents were in partnership businesses while 4(7%) were in family business. This shows that most of the women owned events management businesses initially start operating as sole proprietors before transitioning to limited companies. This is an indicator that most of the respondents preferred sole proprietorships to partnerships.

4.3.5 Number of Employees

The study sought to determine workforce available in women owned businesses. This was to assist the researcher determine the human capital of the respondent's business.

Table 4.5: Number of Employees

Number of Employee's	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 5 employees	8	14
5 to 10 employees	26	46
10 to 15 employees	21	38
Above 15 employees	1	2
Total	56	100.0

Table 4.5 shows that 8(14%) of the respondent's businesses have employed less than 5 employees while 26(46%) employ between 5 to 10 employees. 21(38%) have between 10 to 15 employees with only 1(2%) of the respondents employees exceeding 15. The findings of the study reveal that most women owned events management businesses have between 5-15 employees. This indicates that most are still small in size.

4.3.6 Average Employees Education Level

The study aimed at establishing the average educational levels the respondent's employees in women owned businesses possessed. This was to assist the researcher determine the capacity of human capital of the respondent's business.

Table 4.6: Average Employees Education Level

Average Employees Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
Primary Level	12	21
Secondary Level	30	54
College Level	13	23
University Level	1	2
Total	56	100.0

Table 4.6 shows that 12(21%) of the respondent's employees education averaged at Primary Level while 30(54%) had an average of Secondary Education Level. 13(23%) of the respondents employees had an average of College Level Education while only 1(2%) had an average of University Level employees. The outcome of the study evidently show that most of the women owned events management businesses' human capital educational qualifications averaged at secondary level. This indicates that they are not quite able to employ professionals.

4.4 Factors affecting the Growth of Women owned SMEs in the Events

Management Sector

The study aimed at finding out the perceived factors affecting growth of women owned businesses in the events management sector in Nairobi County in Kenya. The respondents were required to respond to various aspects under study in a five point Likert

Scale. The range was ‘Strongly Disagree (1)’ to ‘Strongly Agree’ (5). The scores of strongly disagree have been taken to represent a variable which had mean score of 0 to 2.5 on the continuous Likert scale; ($0 \leq S.E. < 2.4$). The scores of ‘moderate’ have been taken to represent a variable with a mean score of 2.5 to 3.4 on the continuous Likert scale: ($2.5 \leq M.E. < 3.4$) and the score of both agree and strongly have been taken to represent a variable which had a mean score of 3.5 to 5.0 on a continuous Likert scale; ($3.5 \leq L.E. < 5.0$). A standard deviation of > 0.9 implies a there is significant difference on the impact of the variables among respondents.

4.4.1 Networking

Business networking induces a wide array of benefits to businesses as it develops opportunities. SMEs without efficient networks within their operations may find it hard to sell their products. In this respect, the respondents were requested to rate in their views how they perceived the different indicators of networking.

Table 4.7: Networking

Item	N	Mean	SD
I have formal and informal networks which I find important in supporting my business.	56	3.2342	1.09507
My main personal support networks are my spouse and relatives.	56	3.1081	1.30280
I have a good network of business people who support me with supply of materials	56	1.9820	1.07857
My network of business people are my main source of information	56	2.9279	1.32604
Valid N (listwise)	56		

The study investigated various aspects under networking in the events management sector. Many of the participants were in agreement to a moderate extent with the fact that they had formal and informal networks that they found important for supporting their businesses (3.2342); their main personal support networks were their spouses and relatives (3.1081) and their network of business people are their main source of information (2.9279). However, the respondents agreed to low extent (1.9820) that they had good network of business people who support them with supply materials. Also, the aspects had a significant standard deviations of >0.9 . From these results it is clear that many of the women owned businesses in the sector lack effective networks to sell their businesses while majority rely on their relatives to grow their businesses. Lastly, the businesses still face the challenge of sufficient networks for material supply, key aspects that challenges to their operations.

4.4.2 Access to Policy Makers

Most SMEs owned by women have higher chances of misrepresentation in the business policy making unlike businesses owned by men which easily influence the policy making procedures. Such aspects were seen to be brought about by lack of sufficient information among this group. The study sought to assess the respondents' opinions on different statements regarding policy making within their business operations environment being the events management sector within Nairobi.

Table 4.8: Access to Policy Makers

Item	N	Mean	SD
I have access to policy makers	56	2.0901	1.10265
I am comfortable and happy with the business environment I work in and have no complaints at all.	56	2.0270	1.08258
I am a beneficiary of government incentives and the taxes levied on my business are reasonable	56	1.6306	0.95718
N (listwise)	56		

From the study, the findings reveal that most of the respondents agreed to a low extent with all the aspects under access to policy makers. The respondents disagreed with the aspect that they had access to policy makers with a mean of 2.0901 and std. deviation (1.10265); that they were comfortable and happy with business environment they worked in and had no complaints at all (2.0270) and std. deviation (1.08258) and that they were beneficiaries of government incentives and the taxes levied on the business were reasonable (1.6306) and std. deviation (0.95718). Also, the aspects had a significant standard deviations of >0.9 . These findings clearly imply that there are different obstacles hindering female business owners from accessing policy makers making their business environment not highly conducive for their businesses. Also, it is clear that most women owned businesses in the sector do not access government incentives to boost their businesses, with taxes being a chief bottleneck.

4.4.3 Entrepreneur's Personal Competence

Entrepreneur's personal competence entails a set of personal strengths, knowledge, skills and abilities that give the thrust to business growth. There is a strong relationship between strong personal competences with business growth. Accordingly, business people with strong personal competences have strong leaderships skills, strategies to encounter competition, business resistance, marketing skills and strong idea generation; key aspects that are associated with business growth. This item aimed to assess how the respondents perceived their personal competences and how these competences influence their businesses. In respect to this, the participants were requested to show to what extent they concurred with the statements under entrepreneur's personal competences.

Table 4.9: Entrepreneur's Personal Competences

Item	N	Mean	SD
I find that good leadership has been instrumental to the growth of my business.	56	4.3523	1.05717
I feel that all decision making of the business should be left to the owner.	56	3.1441	1.25660
I am very comfortable in delegating roles to my employees	56	2.1441	1.34737
N (listwise)	56		

Those participating agreed to a high scale that leadership is a chief factor to the growth of their businesses with a rating of (4.3523, 1.05717). Moreover, the respondents agreed to a

moderate extent that decision making should be left to the owners with a rating of (3.1441, 1.2566). However, the respondents disagreed to the fact that they were comfortable at delegating their roles to the employees with a rating of (2.1441, 1.34737). Also, the above aspects had a significant standard deviations of >0.9 . It is clear that competent leadership is perceived to be a core driver for SMEs while most women business owners in the sector are not entirely comfortable delegating roles their employees. This is an indication that the business owners carry out most of the business roles including the role of decision making, which gives true attributes of sole proprietorships.

4.4.4 Competition

In their day-to-day business operations, competition remains an obstacle within the SMEs especially the ones in the same sector. Accordingly, significant competition emanates from the idea that the SMEs within the events management sector do not require intensive capital to start, which leads to immense competition. As a result, business owners have to implement different strategies such as pricing (low-margined and economic pricing) and cost-reduction to survive in the sector. Accordingly, this item assessed the respondents' opinions on perceived competition within their operations.

Table 5.0: Competition among SMEs in the Events Management Sector

Item	N	Mean	SD
I have been affected by unfair competition practices like undercutting of prices from competitors	56	4.6640	1.04384
I found it very easy to start my events business as little capital was needed and there are no barriers to entry	56	3.8559	1.28521
I have not been faced with business competition in the course running my businesses	56	1.6559	1.25660
N (listwise)	56		

Clearly, the study shows that competition among the women owned businesses in the events management sector is real and the respondents disagreed to a high extent (1.6559, 1.2566) that they have not been faced with any form of competition within their business operations. Additionally, the respondents agreed to a moderate degree (3.8559, 1.28521) that starting a business within the sector requires relatively small capital hence making entry into the sector easier. Also, the respondents agreed to a high degree (4.6640, 1.04384) that unfair competition such as undercutting prices have adversely affected their businesses. Also, the aspects had a significant standard deviations of >0.9 . It is therefore, evident that unhealthy competition is a threat to the operations of most women owned businesses within the events management sector in Nairobi. Barriers to entry are insignificant hence giving new businesses an incentive to enter into the sector.

4.4.5 Access to Business Financing

Financial access especially among SME startups has been identified to be a chief challenge in which most businesses continue to fail due to lack of sufficient funds to support their operations. Therefore, the capitalization of SMEs falls under this trap, making it hard for business owners especially women business owners to access credit facilities due to lack of legal collateral assets or property. This item required the respondents to rate their opinions regarding business financial accessibility.

Table 5.1: Accessing Business Finance

Item	N	Mean	SD
I do not apply for bank loans as the application process is very lengthy and rigorous	56	3.6631	1.18536
I have been denied bank loans due to lack of security/collateral.	56	3.8405	1.40637
I have had access to different types of financing in the course of running my business.	56	1.2613	1.29131
N (listwise)	56		

The findings of the study show that it is evident that bank loan application processes are long and rigorous with a high demand on collateral or security such as property to access credits from financial institutions. The respondents agreed to a moderate degree (3.6631, 1.18536) that they do not apply for bank loans because the process is rigorous and lengthy. Additionally, the respondents agreed to a moderate degree (3.8405, 1.40637) that

they have been denied bank loans because of lack of collateral. Lastly, the respondents disagreed to a relatively high degree (1.2613, 1.29131) that they had access to different types of financing sources. These aspects indicate that access to business financing for potential SMEs is challenged by access to business finances while a high number of potential women business owners are denied loans on grounds that they do not have collateral or security to guarantee the loans.

4.4.6 Access to Markets

Access to markets allows tapping of new opportunities giving a business room for growth. However, many women business owners in SMEs tend to struggle with insufficient expertise to tap into new markets, as well as maneuvering markets strategically. This item required respondents to rate their perceptions towards their access to markets for the businesses within the sector.

Table 5.2: Access to Markets

Item	N	Mean	SD
My business benefits more in profits where there are no market intermediaries	56	4.0252	1.00743
I have found marketing to be a big challenge to my business.	56	4.0103	1.09507
I have good access to the market for my services or products	56	1.1901	1.0131
N (listwise)	56		

From the study, it is clearly evident that most women owned business in the sector lack good access to markets for their businesses. Accordingly, the respondents disagreed to a high degree that they have good access to markets with (1.1901, 1.0131). Additionally, the respondents had a high perception and agreed to a high degree (4.0103, 1.09507) that marketing was a big challenge to their businesses. Again, more benefits by the women businesses are realized when the number of intermediaries is low with respondents agreeing to a high degree (4.0252, 1.00743) on this item. The findings reveal that the presence of intermediaries is seen to be associated with reduced profitability while a good access to markets leads to growth of the women owned businesses within the events management sector.

4.4.7 Clear Focus

Business focus determines the decision making and choice of narrowed competitive scope within an industry, as well as tailoring the business strategy to serve a particular segment. The choice of the right opportunities is a big challenge and most women owning the SMEs tend to seize good opportunities for business growth and delivery of customer value. With this in mind, this item focused on assessing the respondents' perceptions on business focus in the operations of their businesses.

Table 5.3: Clear Focus

Item	N	Mean	SD
I accept all business opportunities that come my way; I do not specialize in any line.	56	3.5225	0.88263
By focusing my efforts on one line of business, I have been able to improve the quality of my product and delivery of service	56	3.4414	0.84943
I only accept business opportunities that I am good at.	56	2.7207	1.06320
N (listwise)	56		

From the study findings, the respondents agreed to a moderate extent that they accepted all business opportunities with a mean rating of (3.5225, 0.88263). Also, the respondents agreed moderately that clear focus has enabled them improve their product quality with a mean rating of (3.4414, 0.8943) for this aspect. Lastly, the respondents agreed to a low extent (2.7207, 1.06320) that they only accept opportunities they are good at. While accepting only those opportunities they are good at may result in lost opportunities with potential to boost business growth, clear focus and concentration of efforts on opportunities they are good at improves product quality and service delivery.

4.4.8 Shortage of Skilled Human Capital

Lack of task specialization has been associated with shortage of adequate skilled human capital. Accordingly, most SME owners lack sufficient financial resources to hire skilled labour to handle the managerial tasks of their businesses. Consequently, such aspects lead to inconsistency and poor accountability in the businesses, as well as poor quality of

services. This item assessed the respondents' perceptions towards accessibility of skilled human capital within their businesses.

Table 5.4: Shortage of Skilled Human Capital

Item	N	Mean	SD
My business is still small and i am not able to employ adequate or skilled employees.	56	4.3802	1.22992
I have professionally trained employees attached to all major aspects of my business. (such as marketer, accountant, human resource, administration, procurement, technical roles)	56	1.6937	1.29890
I have been able to keep my current employees for quite a long time. The employee turnover at my business is very low	56	1.3153	1.06158
N (listwise)	56		

The respondents agreed on a high extend that their businesses are still small and they are not able to employ adequate skilled employees with a rating of (4.3802, 1.22992). Also, the findings revealed that many SMEs lack trained employees in their major business aspects and the respondents disagreed on this aspect with a rating of (1.6937, 1.29890). Lastly, the business owners have not been able to keep their current employees for long periods of time and therefore, the respondents highly disagreed on this aspect with a rating of (1.3153, 1.06158). Such a situation may be caused by lack of sufficient resources to meet minimal wage rates and hire competent workers.

4.4.9 Measures of Enterprises Growth

To assess the growth of the businesses, the researcher assessed different aspects related to business sales, employee growth, market share, output growth, changes in profitability and assets as experienced by the women owned businesses in the events management sector. With the different challenges reflected that undermine the business operations, enterprise growth indicators may be used to assess the impact of such challenges.

Table 5.5: Measures of Enterprise Growth

Item	N	Mean	SD
In the last three years, my business sales have increased by	56	11.13%	1.04595
In the last three years, I have increased my employees by	56	10.57%	1.06643
In the last three years, I have increased my market share by	56	36.70%	1.13899
In the last three years, I have increased the production (Output) of my business by	56	32.85%	1.08447
In the last three years, I have increased the profitability of my business by	56	28.78%	0.06158
In the last three years, I have increased the assets of my business by	56	34.88%	1.11904
N (listwise)	56		

From the research studies, most of the women owned businesses in the sector have increased their sales by an average of 11.13% over three years while employee growth has been realized as 10.57% on average during the same period. Additionally, the businesses have expanded their market share by an average of 36.70% with their

productivity increasing by an average of 32.85%. Nevertheless, an increment in profits of about 28.78% has been achieved over a period of the last three years with assets increasing by just 34.88% on average. These are the main indicators that predict the enterprise growth over the three year period, which are relatively small. For instance, poor asset growth indicates a barrier or limitation to business growth which is reflected through profitability and output of these women owned businesses.

4.5 Pearson Correlations

A person correlation was done to compare the relationships between the perceived factors and the growth of women owned SMEs within the events management sector in Nairobi.

The findings of the study are presented in Table 5.6 below;-

Table 5.6: Pearson's Correlations

		access to networks	access to policy makers	clear focus	Entrepreneur's personal competences	Shortage of skilled human capital	Competition	accessing business finance	access to markets	Growth of women owned enterprises
access to networks	Pearson Correlation	1								
	Sig. (1-tailed)									
	N	56								
access to policy makers	Pearson Correlation	.085	1							
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.341								
	N	56	56							
clear focus	Pearson Correlation	.228	.024	1						
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.132	.453							
	N	56	56	56						
Entrepreneur's personal competences	Pearson Correlation	.100	.368	.049	1					
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.314	.032	.405						
	N	56	56	56	56					
Shortage of skilled human capital	Pearson Correlation	.033	.054	.098	.180	1				
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.436	.397	.317	.189					
	N	56	56	56	56	56				
Competition	Pearson Correlation	.164	.226	.057	.336*	.333*	1			
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.212	.134	.448	.047	.048				
	N	56	56	56	56	56	56			
accessing business finance	Pearson Correlation	.388*	.343*	.120	.486**	.058	.289	1		
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.025	.043	.280	.006	.389	.076			
	N	56	56	56	56	56	56	56		
access to markets	Pearson Correlation	.568	.519*	.171	.062	.161	.066	.231	1	
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.093	.003	.202	.381	.216	.375	.128		
	N	56	56	56	56	56	56	56	56	
Growth of women owned enterprises	Pearson Correlation	.162	.091	.312	.522*	-0.618	-0.34	.104	.092	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.15	.033	.040	.003	.060	.054	.021	.033	
	N	56	56	56	56	56	56	56	56	56

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1 tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1 tailed).

Results from Table 5.6 indicate the individual correlations of perceived factors affecting growth of women owned SMES in events management sector in Nairobi County. The Pearson correlation coefficient test resulted to the tabled results below. Study findings revealed that access to networks (.162), accessing business finance (.401), access to markets (.092), and access to policy makers (.091), clear focus (.312), and entrepreneurs' personal competences (.522) had a positive correlation with the growth of women SMEs in Nairobi County. However, shortage of skilled human capital (-.618) and competition (-.314) had a negative correlation with the growth of the SMEs. Further the significance of the factors on growth of the SMEs was tested and the p-values were presented. Study findings reveal that access to networks (0.015), access to policy makers (.033), clear focus (.040), entrepreneur's personal competence (.003), assessing business finance (.021) and access to markets (.033) had significant relationships with growth of women SMEs while shortage of skilled human capital (.060) and competition (.054) had insignificant relationship on growth of women SMEs.

4.6 Discussion of Findings

The study aimed at finding out perceived factors that affecting growth of women SMEs in the events management sector in Nairobi. Several factors were addressed in the study, they include; access to networks, access to policy makers, clear focus, entrepreneur's personal competence, shortage of skilled human capital, competition, accessing business finance and access to markets. Various aspects were featured under each factor to estimate the effect on the dependent variable. Descriptive analysis was done to present the means and standard deviations of the sub-variables.

From the study, it was evident that most women SMEs owners had limited access to networks, an aspect supported by Mahbub (2000) who argued that few women receive invitation to be part of trade missions or delegations as a result of combined absence of sectors or subsectors with high concentration of women and of women as individuals in a given sector and also since many women businesses are run on a small scale and more so women do not usually subscribe to professional bodies as members or join networks. Consequently, most often find it extremely hard to access information.

Further it was identified that there was a significant relationship of access to networks on growth of women owned events management businesses in Nairobi County. These findings are still supported by Mahbub who noted that absence of networks denies women of knowledge and chance to access good role models thus limiting growth in their businesses and vice versa. Another factor that was featured in the study was access to policy makers whereby the study analyzed several aspects to establish whether the aspect had any effect on growth of women SMEs in the events management sector in Nairobi. The study established that majority of the respondents had no access to policy makers. These findings are in line with McGrath (2002) who noted that the legal and economic framework in which enterprises operate is vital to their growth. It was further argued that the legal environment of most nations act as barriers to venture growth. The findings also imply that the women face a challenge of limited growth that is associated with limited access to policy makers. The study results also revealed the presence of a significant effect of access to policymakers on growth of women owned events management businesses in Nairobi County.

Another factor that was featured in the study was the entrepreneur's personal competences. The study findings unveiled that most respondents were competent in their businesses an aspect that boosted the growth of the SMEs. These findings are in line with Porter (1985) and Brush et al., (2006) who argued that for businesses to grow, the entrepreneurs must grow and evolve from being doers to managers of employees and eventually to managers of managers in this matter, leaders. Competition was another aspect that was investigated under the study where the findings unveiled that most respondents had faced competition which had affected their growth. The study finding collaborates with Dwyer et al., (2007) and Armstrong (1997) who argued that women owned businesses in the sector are not necessarily capital intensive and as such encourage entrepreneurship and self-employment which leads to a high number of entrants into the sector leading to immense competition for the available opportunities and in bid to survive, business owners result to different measures to beat the competition.

Access to business financing was also investigated in the study where the study findings revealed that most respondents lacked access to various types of financing. They further added that they do not apply for bank loans as the processes are lengthy and are in most cases denied the loans for lack of collaterals. The study findings collaborate with Mahbub (2000) who noted that women are noticeably insignificant to formal financial institutions and they are awarded below 10 per cent of business loans. This aspect is a drawback to growth of the women ventures in the events management sector in Nairobi. The study also investigated on the access to markets where the findings showed that few women

have had good access to markets and they have found this to be a huge hindrance to the growth of their businesses. The study findings collaborate with Penrose (2006) who stated that a notably huge percentage of female entrepreneurs tend to have minimal management skills hence end up depending on their employees and market intermediaries to execute tasks particularly on marketing and sales aspect of business.

Clear focus was another factor that was investigated in this study whereby the study outcome showed that many women businesses in events management sector have a clear focus on their businesses and accepts all the opportunities they are good in, an aspect believed to influence the growth of their SMEs positively. This study finding aligns itself with Porter's study (1985) who noted that when a firm optimizes its strategy for the target segments, it is actually seeking to attain a competitive edge in that particular market-niche though it has not attained an overall competitive edge. Shortage of skilled human capital was another aspect that was investigated under the study and the revealed that most women businesses in the sector were small and the owners were not in a position to employ skilled workers. However, it was also found that a few of the women owners had professionally trained employees attached to their businesses and again they denied the fact that they were able to keep their current employees for a long time. This aspect was deemed to influence the growth of women owned SMEs in the sector in Nairobi. The study outcome is in line with Terry Hill (1997) who argued that most small businesses lack resources to employ skilled personnel to handle various aspects of management like marketing, accounting, administration and customer service.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a summary of the research, conclusions and recommendations for the women owned businesses in the event management sector in Nairobi to improve their profitability and business growth. The chapter also reflects on the future areas that researchers can embark on.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The study investigated the perceptions of women business owners in the event management sector in Nairobi, on the different challenges that hinder their business operations. Through descriptive analysis, the study assessed different independent variables affecting the growth of these businesses. For instance business networking was identified to be a salient challenge in which most businesses lack formal and informal networks to build their business operations. Additionally, a significant number of the women business owners perceived that they build their networks through their relatives and spouses indicating that they rely on these subsistence networks as their main source of information for growing their businesses. Therefore, business networks should be commercialized and should cover a wide area with minimal costs for success and continued growth of women businesses in the sector.

Policy making has been seen to influence access to credit facilities and issues to do with business taxation, as well as influencing business law enforcement. Additionally, the study found that women have been locked out of policy making decision processes; a key aspect that complicates their business environment. Women have been locked out of government incentives while taxation on business appears to oppress their operations. On the other hand, entrepreneur's personal competence has been perceived to be another salient challenge which undermines skills, abilities and knowledge for the thrust of business growth. The respondents had a high perception that leadership is a key instrumental tool that initiates business growth. However, most women business owners turned out to be the main decision makers with fewer delegating roles to their employees.

Unhealthy competition is a threat to the operations of most women owned businesses within the events management sector in Nairobi and the respondents had high perceptions on the idea that unfair competition has adversely affected their businesses. The sector has been seen to have low starting capital making barriers to entry insignificant and hence giving new businesses an incentive to enter into the sector. Such an idea denotes that little barriers to entry injects the women business owners into the events management sector whose demand experiences low growth because most of products delivered are seasonal and specifically suit a particular event such as weddings which do not occur continuously. On the other hand, the access to business financing has been perceived to be a threat and a key challenge to women SMEs in the sector. Ideally, the respondents had a high preference on the item that the bank loan application processes are rigorous and lengthy while significant women are denied loan facilities because they lack enough collateral to secure business loans.

Nevertheless, access to markets is another salient factor that affects growth of women SMEs in the sector. Through market access, business owners are in a position to tap into new opportunities for their businesses. However, it is clear that most women in this sector starting SMEs experience insufficient expertise to tap into new markets. From the study results, women business owners do not have a good access to market for their products, hence a large number find marketing as a big challenge to their businesses. Consequently, a large number of respondents perceived that they would prefer business channels without market intermediaries for more profits. It implies that business intermediaries offer obstacles to large market access and also increase cost of delivery of products hence reduced profits being realized by the business owners.

Clear focus in business determines decision making and choice of narrowed competitive scope within the markets. Therefore, business owners can tailor their strategy to serve and satisfy a given market segment. A relatively high percentage of female business owners in the sector accept all business opportunities while a relatively low number accept those opportunities they are good at. Such an aspect denotes that while a wider number may miss potential business opportunities as a result of only accepting those opportunities they are good at and hence limiting their growth, an moderate number agree that product quality and service delivery are equally important to the growth of their businesses hence need for clear focus.

Lastly, shortage of skilled human capital has been seen as a striking obstacle in limiting the growth of women SMEs in the sector. For instance, most women owned businesses in the events management sector in Nairobi lack sufficient financial resources to hire competent or skilled labour force. Therefore, the respondents perceived that they are not

in a position to hire sufficient and adequate skilled employees since their businesses are still small and not adequately resourced financially. Again, retaining their current employees appears to be a challenge as most of these women owned businesses lack sufficient funds to maintain the minimum wage rates or meet the frequent rising demand of wages and salaries of their workers.

5.3 Conclusions

The study outcome concluded there was low access to networks by the women business owners an aspect that was deemed to contribute to limited growth of women owned SMEs in the events management sector in Nairobi County. Few women owned businesses had access to policy makers an aspect that translates to low growth of women owned SMEs. Majority of the respondents agreed that strong personal competences were an aspect that influenced their businesses to grow positively. Majority of those who participated did not agree that they had not been faced with business competition in the course of running their businesses, an indicator that they were currently facing competition. This aspect is deemed to be influencing the growth of their businesses negatively. Most women business owners in the study agreed that they had limited access to business financing an aspect that contributed to limited growth of their businesses. Study findings also revealed that there was limited access to the markets an aspect that contributed to limited growth of women owned businesses in the events management sector in Nairobi County. Study findings indicated that respondents had clear focus in their businesses and accepted all the businesses opportunities they were good at, an aspect found to contribute to the positive growth of their business sector. Finally, the study established that most of the participants had shortage of skilled human capital since

their businesses were small and they were not able to employ skilled employees. Again they agreed that they rarely employed professionally trained employees and have not been able to retain their employees for long periods of time resulting to a high rate of employee turnover. This aspect contributed to low growth of the women SMEs in event management in Nairobi County.

Therefore the perceived factors being access to networks, access to policy makers, clear focus, entrepreneur's personal competence, shortage of skilled human capital, competition, access to business finance and access to markets as discussed in the study, were found to have effects on growth of women SMEs in the events management sector in Nairobi County.

5.4 Recommendations for Policy and Practice

Given the above outcome, this study advises that women business owners in the events management sector within Nairobi should consider integrating computer and web-based business networking to build more business contacts as opposed to using spouses and relatives. Such an aspect would boost their market accessibility. Also, the women business owners should consider other sources of income such as merry-go-rounds and "chamas" or increase their banking activities to increase their creditworthiness; a key aspect that will boost their ability to access business financing to support their operations.

Alternatively, the women SMEs should also consider enrolling into more business oriented programs to educate and equip themselves with different management and entrepreneurial competences for effective decision making, book keeping and improved leadership skills. Similarly, they should consider implementing employee education

programs to boost their skills and expertise of their employees. Lastly, they should consider implementing quality control measures to ensure that their products are unique and able to achieve perfect customer satisfaction which is a key aspect to survival in the midst of the stiff competition.

5.5 Future Areas of Research

This study has been limited to investigating the causal-effect of these variables or factors towards the growth of SMEs owned women hence, a researcher may select a specific business growth factor such as business profitability and investigate how it may be affected by shortage of skilled employees or by competition.

Also, the study was confined to the events management sector which most of the businesses appears to be seasonal hence resulting to systemic barriers to accessing loans and non-continued business operations. A future study may consider a different sector that has continued business operations such as domestic tourism or industrial manufacturing.

5.6 Limitations of the Study

Some of the limitations of the study included; most of the women business owners were apprehensive in disclosing their business information to outsiders and as such limiting the study. Another limitation was that in most of these firms, only the owner could fill in the questionnaires and as such a lot of time was lost and cost incurred the numerous trips made to get back the feedback.

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APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

INSTRUCTIONS.

This questionnaire seeks to collect information on **PERCEIVED FACTORS AFFECTING THE GROWTH OF WOMEN OWNED SMES IN EVENTS MANAGEMENT SECTOR IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA**. Please provide information in the spaces provided unless indicated as optional and tick the appropriate boxes. All the information received will be treated confidentially and will only be used for academic purposes.

Section A: General Information

1. State the name of your organization (Optional)

2. Indicate your age bracket.

20-30 yrs. 31-40 yrs.

41-50 yrs. 51 and above

3. State your highest level of education.

Primary level Secondary level Diploma

Degree Postgraduate

4. How long have you been in business?

Below 1 year 2-6 years

7-10 years above 11 years

5. What is the legal ownership status of the business?

Sole Proprietor Limited Company

Partnership Family Businesses

6. State the number of employees in the business.

Less than 5 employees 5-10 employees

10-15 employees [] above 15 employees []

7. State the average level of education for your employees

Primary level [] Secondary level [] College [] University []

Section B: Various factors affecting growth of women owned businesses in the Events Management Sector

8. The perceived factors that affect growth of women businesses are listed below. Please read and evaluate them in relation to your business then put a tick mark under the choices below. 5=strongly agree, 4=agree, 3=undecided, 2=disagree and 1=strongly disagree.

AGREEMENT SCALE

NO.	ITEM	5	4	3	2	1
	NETWORKING					
	I have formal and informal networks which I find important in supporting my business.					
	My main personal support networks are my spouse and relatives.					
	I have a good network of business people who support me with supply of materials					
	My network of business people are my main source of information					
	ACCESS TO POLICYMAKERS					
	I have access to policy makers					

I am comfortable and happy with the business environment I work in and have no complaints at all.					
I am a beneficiary of government incentives and the taxes levied on my business are reasonable					
PERSONAL COMPETENCES					
I find that good leadership has been instrumental to the growth of my business.					
I feel that all decision making of the business should be left to the owner.					
I am very comfortable in delegating roles to my employees					
COMPETITION					
I have been affected by unfair competition practices like undercutting of prices from competitors					
I found it very easy to start my events business as little capital was needed and there are no barriers to entry					
I have not been faced with business competition in the course running my					

businesses					
ACCESS TO BUSINESS FINANCING					
I do not apply for bank loans as the application process is very lengthy and rigorous					
I have been denied bank loans due to lack of security/collateral.					
I have had access to different types of financing in the course of running my business.					
ACCESS TO MARKETS					
My business benefits more in profits where there are no market intermediaries					
I have found marketing to be a big challenge to my business.					
I have good access to the market for my services or products					
CLEAR FOCUS					
I accept all business opportunities that come my way; I do not specialize in any line.					

By focusing my efforts on one line of business, I have been able to improve the quality of my product and delivery of service.					
I only accept business opportunities that I am good at.					
SHORTAGE OF SKILLED HUMAN CAPITAL					
My business is still small and i am not able to employ adequate or skilled employees.					
I have professionally trained employees attached to all major aspects of my business. (such as marketer, accountant, human resource, administration, procurement, technical roles)					
I have been able to keep my current employees for quite a long time. The employee turnover at my business is very low					

9. Apart from the above, which other challenges have you been facing in your business?

i.

ii.

Section C: Measures of Enterprise Growth

10. How would you interpret the rate of growth of your business In the last three (3) years on average, in the following? Rate your responses on a scale of 0-100 where 0=no growth and 100=very high growth rate.

NO.	ITEM						
	In the last three years, my business sales have increased by	0%	20%	50%	80%	100%	Over 100%
	In the last three years, I have increased my employees by	0-10	10-20	20-30	30-40	40-50	Over 50
	In the last three years, I have increased my market share by	2%	5%	10%	20%	30%	Over 30%
	In the last three years, I have increased the production (Output) of my business by	Below 10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	Above 50%
	In the last three years, I have increased the profitability of my business by	0%	20%	50%	80%	100%	Over 100%
	In the last three years, I have increased the assets of my business by	10%	20%	30%	40%	50%	Above 50%

THANK YOU FOR TAKING TIME OUT OF YOUR BUSY SCHEDULE TO ANSWER THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.