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**WOMEN'S AND MEN'S
SECOND-HAND CLOTHES
BUSINESSES IN TWO
SECONDARY TOWNS IN
KENYA**

By

**PHILIP K. RONO
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
AND ANTHROPOLOGY
EGERTON UNIVERSITY
PO BOX 536
NJORO, KENYA**

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1. Introduction

Second-hand clothing retail trade or what is commonly known as "mitumba" trade in Kenya has rapidly grown to claim a substantial share of the textile industry market in Kenya. This type of business has emerged due to the countrywide high inflationary rates in consumer products and because new fabrics are retailed expensively, thus making the cheap "mitumba" clothing products highly marketable and affordable. More and more men and women are joining mitumba trade but little is yet known about the level of gender participation, its impact on business management and business performance. Women are said to be increasing in number in this trade and their numbers may even be higher than that of men but there are no factual figures available from research.

We focus on the factors of variation in entrepreneurial input and business performance among men and women second-hand clothes traders in Nakuru and Eldoret towns. This chapter examines the relationship between gender and entrepreneurial input in second-hand clothes retail trade with the view of answering the following questions: namely, what kind of tasks do men and women perform in the Second-hand clothes business? and secondly, does gender and business management level

significantly influence the performance of mitumba businesses?

2. Theoretical Framework

Pearson's Gender Relations

Framework

The relevant theoretical framework useful here is a mix of Ruth Pearson's (1992: 320-330) framework of thinking on Gender Relations, Jovanovic's theory of firm dynamics and network approach to firm growth by Pedersen (1995).

Gender Relations Theory

According to Pearson, the society views all activities that are carried out to be based on social roles and interactions of men and women. This is an assumption of gender roles as dictated by the society.

The notions of gender roles and activities have a strong ideological content and policy often reflects normative or prescriptive versions of female and male roles rather than activities actually practiced by women and men. Based on such ideologies and development policy, the society seems to have an ultimate authority on the precise nature of what women and men actually do, and their real contribution to production and reproduction which turns out

to be biased against women (Pearson, 1992). Because of such bias, the performance of men and women in nearly all spheres of life such as business, environmental conservation, development projects and the like are bound to vary.

Theory of Firm Dynamics

This theory is an attempt to trace and explain the elements of firm or business enterprise dynamics.

Enterprises are seen to be at risk of collapse because business activities are inherently risky and because individual (man or a woman) entrepreneurs are unsure of their management abilities. According to Jovanovic, these abilities are better assessed by engaging in the business world and observing how well one performs in it. Through daily operations, an entrepreneur learns more and more about his/her actual abilities. As a result, business attitudes and practices also change over time according to the lessons from the empirical world of business.

At the initial stages, an industry is seen to be perfectly competitive with firms of equal size, assuming they all have equal managerial abilities. This is true of second-hand clothes trade where nearly all clothes on sale bear similar characteristics. In the first year, entrepreneurs observe their profits or losses and from this performance, they update their earlier estimation of their management

abilities. In this way, entrepreneurs/traders, both men and women, use profits or losses as a measure of their management ability and also chance of random elements which determine the next cause they should take.

Entrepreneurs adjust only partially to this new reality in order to ensure that he/she continue operating. Businesses that revise their management abilities estimates upward will tend to expand, while those that downgrade their estimates contract or even close down if the estimated managerial ability lead to net expected profits being negative. With time, surviving entrepreneurs gain through experience a more precise estimate of their managerial abilities. In the long-run, their estimated and true managerial abilities will converge and hence determine the fate of the business. Businesses that survive this market competition tend to be well managed, efficient and can grow.

Network Approach to Enterprise Growth and Its Environment

Proponents of the network approach (McCormick and Pedersen, 1996:4-6; Williamson, 1981; Johanson and Matison, 1986; Sanyal, 1991; Hyden, 1983, 1985) of small and medium-sized enterprises see them as operating within a specific environment in which there is an interaction between such enterprises. Pedersen and others mentioned above, see these interactions as between enterprises and

their environment as forming networks based to some extent on personal relations, trust and reciprocity. They also argue that some form of pure market or pure power relations may be involved to some degree.

Depending on business emphasis, it is argued that networks of small enterprises may take different forms. For used clothes business for instance, and especially in Kenya, it takes a combination of the following forms:

- i) hierarchical networks, generated by large enterprises (i.e wholesalers/importers) of used clothes, who also determine their next customer. This chain of networking is quite apparent in almost all lower echelons of the business except at the departure point where final consumer is reached.
- ii) equitable social support networks (more or less within the family circles or kinship or neighbourhood), which often in the case of women, not so much with men as seen in this study, lead to redistribution into other income outlets rather than reinvestment in the same enterprise.
- iii) unions of labour promoting self-employment for unemployed. This is the case with used clothes business where the government was forced to legalize second-hand clothes business despite its earlier ban due to pressure by the owners of these businesses and the common man who saw the sale of used clothes as a relief from the inflated prices of domestic cloth products.

3. Literature on Second-hand Clothes Market Structure

The market structure of second clothes trade is important because studies have shown that wholesale enterprises are more likely to add workers than retailers (Parker and Torres, 1994:27). Tracing the trends of enterprises market structure enables us to understand not only the patterns of micro and small enterprises growth, but also how firms are organized and relate to each other in this sub-sector.

Imports of used clothing have on some occasions for one reason or another been banned in Kenya. The argument for banning this trade has always been that it kills the local textile industry and denies the government revenue. But due to economic deterioration and pressure from the common poor segments of the population, the Kenyan government lifted the ban on the sale of these products. Other governments like those of Haiti, Nigeria and India have also banned importation of such products at one time or another (Haggblade, 1990:506). As it is now, it appears that the second hand clothes market not only in Kenya, but also in other Sub-Saharan countries is likely to stay on as demand for these clothes is said to be steadily rising. By 1980 for instance, used clothing constituted one-third of all garment imports by Sub-Saharan African countries. Most of these clothes arrive in bales, sorted by

fabric, garment and sometimes by size (Ibid, 1990:506-507).

The sorting allows the exporters to target markets during appropriate times of the year by season and thus assessing the forces of demand and supply. After sorting, these clothes are bound in 45-kilogram bales ready to be shipped abroad by tonnes (Ibid, 1990:508-511). The second-hand clothes reach Kenya through two channels: the imported bales from Europe and USA by private wholesalers and the informal cross-border trade with Tanzania and to a lesser extent, Uganda (Billetoft, 1995:120).

Thus commercial used-clothes market structure is made up of major wholesalers/importers, medium wholesalers, medium/ordinary retailers and small retailers. The last group of retailers mostly deal with a very small amount of used-clothes and especially with men walking or stationing themselves along town streets in an attempt attract the attention of customers. This happens to be the case also in other countries like Rwanda (Billetoft, 1995:120; Haggblade, 1990:514).

The sellers of these mitumba clothing have been noted to be people from low-income households especially in rural areas. Studies in Zambia and Zimbabwe have confirmed this to be the case. These are people who would have otherwise resorted to other low profit yielding

activities like vegetable selling (Billetoft, 1995:121). In Kenya this does not seem to be the case. Most mitumba sellers may not necessarily be classified as low-income earners because they appear to earn clearly good incomes. Findings from Rwanda show that self-employment earnings in used clothing retailing exceeded those of tailoring by 10 to 50 per cent (Haggblade, 1990:515).

Who buys mitumba or second hand clothes in Kenya? Billetoft (1995) notes that the high-income urban households and some rural middle-income households never turn to mitumba. It is the middle-income urban households and the low-income urban and rural segments of the population who heavily rely on second hand clothes than on either ready-made garments (at times imported) or small local customs tailors. This appears to be the trend in most countries. Used clothing share in total clothing expenditure drops from 45 percent in the bottom quintile to 20 percent in the top among the Rwandan population. In Zambia for example, it is said that 90 percent of the low-income group rely on second hand clothes (Haggblade, 1990:516; Denconsult, 1993).

Although used-clothes wholesale may appear to be adding more workers as revealed by this study, it is not certain whether this market structure is desirable as it might be causing less than optimal resource allocation and hence inhibit employment creation due to poorly functioning factor markets (Bigsten and Wicks, 1996:379-380).

4. Methods and Procedures

The data used and upon which the findings reported in this chapter is based, was obtained from a survey of second-hand retail traders in Nakuru and Eldoret towns of Kenya. These are new upcoming towns that are experiencing fast growth and therefore such enterprises are on the rise. Only traders who had been in business for at least six months were targeted for study. This period is long enough to allow businessmen and businesswomen to gain some experience of the market and adjust to the business environment.

To examine market structure, both men and women importers and wholesalers in Nairobi and Mombasa were studied. The basic unit of analysis was individual mitumba traders. Both men and women were interviewed for the purpose of comparing their entrepreneurial input and business performance trends of their businesses.

Second-hand retail trading is often found in different parts of towns like Nakuru and Eldoret. Each area where this business is carried out in both towns in a significant way were classified as clusters. There were 756 females and 429 males in Mitumba business in the two towns at the time of interview as shown in **Table 1**.

**Table 1: Frequency and Percentage
Distribution of Project
Participants by Sex**

Sex of Respondent Percent	Eldoret		Nakuru		TOTAL	
	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent		
Male	176	39.6	253	34.1	429	37.3
Female	268	60.4	488	65.9	756	63.2
TOTAL 100.0	444	100.0	741	100.0	1185	

In Eldoret, majority (268) representing 60.4 percent of the total sample frame were women, while men constituted a minority (176) representing 39.6 percent of the sample frame. In Nakuru, the total sample frame was 741 entrepreneurs, 488 of whom were females constituting 65.9% and 253 were males representing 34.1%. A total of 100 were sampled out from among second-hand traders in Nakuru and another 100 in Eldoret. In order to meet the objectives of the study, an equal number of men and women used-clothes traders were interviewed. Thus, fifty women and fifty men were interviewed in each town. For the purposes of enhancing and broadening the understanding of this business and the market structure, an additional 20 wholesalers in Nairobi and 13 in Mombasa were interviewed, making a total of 33 respondents. Apart from tracing commercial used-clothes wholesaling, an attempt was also made to trace sub-sectoral linkages.

Stratified random sampling technique was used to obtain sub-samples (that constituted a sample size of 200 mitumba traders) depending on the population size of each cluster/strata. Two lists of names of all women and men the traders who had been in business for the last six months was made in each strata from which the names of interviewees were drawn by simple random sampling without

replacement technique. An open-ended (unstructured) questionnaire was mainly used to collect the relevant data for this study.

5. Wholesale Trade in Second-hand clothes

Commercial trade in used clothes is rapidly growing in Kenya. From Mombasa where nearly all the clothes in Kenya enter the country at the moment, there is a chain of traders. Evidence from data collected by this study and show in **Table 2**, reveal that there are major wholesalers and ordinary wholesalers who buy or import between 13 and 15,000 bales per month, making a profit of between Kshs 24,000 and Kshs 22 million per month. On average, a wholesaler in Mombasa and Nairobi earns a profit of about Kshs 4,045,437.50 per month. Most of them have huge godowns in Mombasa and Gikomba where they store and sell imported bales to other medium wholesalers and retailers who finally sell to small scale retailers who are nowadays becoming very common along urban streets in towns like Nakuru and Eldoret. The most resourceful Mitumba traders having enough capital tend to buy whole bales and local dealers in turn buy from them. Retailers from smaller towns go to towns like Eldoret, Kisumu,

Nakuru, and Nairobi where they purchase the imported clothes in bales from major or medium wholesalers and transport them to centres of operation from where other smaller retailers buy from them. These retailers again transport them to other corners of the country even to the most remote places. This is often done through movement in rural areas on weekly basis during market days where these clothes are displayed in outdoor markets run by local authorities.

6. Second-hand Clothes Trade and Sectoral Linkages

Used-clothes retail businesses can be categorized as micro enterprise based on the foregoing discussion. This is so because most of them have no employees with a few having one or two employees and the nature of linkages they seem to have are limited though not to the garment industry only.

Table 2: Mean and Range of Key Characteristics of Business Enterprises of Wholesalers

Variable	Mean	Range	Minimum	Maximum	N	Label
V1	7.21	19.50	0.5	20.0	33	
V2	5.27	15.00	0.0	15	33	
V2_3	1.27	6.00	0.0	6.0	33	
V203	29.77	200.00	0.0	200.0	33	
V6	3.85	8.00	0.0	8.0	33	
V13	9.15	15.00	3.0	18.0	33	
V15	1.12	1.00	1.0	2.0	33	
V17	1.45	1.00	1.0	2.0	33	
V18	2.03	9.00	0.00	9.0	33	
V21	2,302	14,987	13	15,000	33	
V23	1,642	8,988	12	9,000	33	
V25	4,045,438	21,976,000	24,000	22,000,000	32	
V28	360,969	1,793,000	7,000	1,800,000	32	
V30	3,770,844	19,980,000	20,000	20,000,000	32	
V40	37.2	22.3	26.7	49.0	33	
V41	11.6	13.00	7.0	20.0	33	

Key:

V1 = Age of Business in Years	V21= Bales Bought p.m.
V2 = Number of Current Employees	V23= Bales Sold p.m.
V2_3 = Business Performance	V25= Profits per Month
V203 = Business Growth (%)	V28= Capital Input
V6 = Number of Own children	V30= Capital Input 6 Months Ago
V13 = Total Dependents by Busn.	V40= Age of Entrepreneurs
V18 = Number of Employees Added	V41= Education

Linkages of retail second-hand clothes range from handling, transport, cleaning, repairing and distribution. Retailers who cannot afford to hire repair or cleaning services do it themselves in the evening after their daily business activities. Wholesalers' linkages to other sectors include water and road transport from abroad and to upcountry. After arriving in Mombasa, most linkages that develop are associated with handling and distribution. Retailers reported hiring other people to either clean, iron or repair clothes for them before they display them in their shades. Some hire 'boys' to carry bales either by use of a cart or shoulder from lorries that have brought in tonnes of bales near to their stalls in Gikomba Market in Nairobi, Nakuru and Eldoret. Wholesalers likewise hire lorries to ferry tonnes of bales from Mombasa to Nairobi or Western Kenya to towns like Eldoret, Kimilili and Kisumu. It cannot be doubted that used-clothes business enterprise or commercial trade in used clothes has both direct and indirect linkages with other sectors of the Kenyan economy such as manufacturing through repair and servicing of lorries, buses and mini-buses that are used to transport these clothes.

7. Men and Women in Second-hand Clothes Trade

The Age Factor

Examination of study results shows an overwhelming majority (92%) of second-hand clothes traders to be in their prime working years when all age groups of both sexes are taken into consideration. The average age of used-clothes traders was 31.1 years for men and 31.7 for women with the youngest respondent being 19 years of age and the oldest respondent being 47 years old. This range of entrepreneurs' age would imply a negligible variation on business performance and overall entrepreneurial input of both men and women assuming all other personal characteristics and factors remain the same. This finding leads to the conclusion that there are no age differences among small second-hand clothes entrepreneurs. The minimum age gap of entrepreneurs however may contribute to the nature of gender input, involvement and participation in the micro and small enterprise development process as noted earlier on.

Table 3 shows frequency and percent distribution of respondents according to their age groups. Women business owners were slightly older on average than men, with an average age of 31.73 years against 31.12 years for men. Age of female respondents ranged between 22.4 and

47 years and men's ages ranged from 19.1 and 46 years.
These findings show that used-clothes business caters for
people who are in need of employment.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents According to Their Age Groups

Age Group	MEN		WOMEN		Percent
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	
15-19yrs	1	1.0	0	0.0	0.0
20-24yrs	11	11.0	3	9.0	9.0
25-29yrs	35	35.0	35	35.0	35.0
30-34yrs	28	28.0	22	22.0	22.0
35-39yrs	17	17.0	26	26.0	26.0
40-44yrs	6	6.0	7	7.0	7.0
45-49yrs	2	2.0	1	1.0	1.0
TOTAL	100	100.0	100	100.0	100.0

Assuming that all the respondents gave accurate information with regard to the age of their businesses, then the average age at which these second-hand clothes entrepreneurs enter into these businesses was 27 years for both men and women which brings us to the conclusion that there is no gender difference in business entry age. This shows some remarkable similarity in ages of both men and women . This clearly indicates that people who enter and get involved in second-hand clothes trade are youth in their late twenties. These results differ slightly from those of second-hand clothes wholesalers who appear to start their businesses at around the age of 30 years when the average business enterprise age of 7.21 is subtracted from their own average ages of 37.22 years (*see Table 2*).

Number of children and Dependents

Evidence from descriptive analysis on the number of children per family of the respondent show that family sizes of business men and women involved in used clothes range between 0 and 8 children. However, the mean number was 2.5 for men and 2.92 for women which translates to an average of about 3 children per family. This figure is relatively lower than what has been recorded by other studies and may be indicative of the reported declining fertility in the country (Rono, 1994, 1998a, 1998b; KDHS, 1993).

At the time of interview, there were 9 men and 5 women, that is 9% and 5%, respectively, who reported that they had no children. This is expected because the study included young respondents who were not yet married. Those who had 1 or 2 children constituted 40% and 41%, 3 to 5 children constituted 28% and 32%, 6 to 8 children constituted 7% and 11%, for men and women traders respectively as shown on **table 4**. This shift to small families is trend that has been recorded in both Nakuru and Uasin Gishu Districts respectively (Kenya, 1989, 1993a 1993b, 1993c, 1996).

**Table 4: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents
According to Their Family Size;**

	<u>MEN</u>		<u>WOMEN</u>	
	<u>Children</u> Dependents	<u>Dependents</u> Freq. Per	<u>Children</u> Dependents	<u>Dependents</u> Freq. Per
None	9	9.0	10	10.0
1-2	40	40.0	44	44.0
3-5	28	28.0	29	29.0
6-8	7	7.0	2	2.0
No. Stated	16	16.0	15	15.0
TOTAL	100	100.0	100	100.0
			100	100.0
			100	100.0
			100	100.0

The size of a family that one has will, in a way, affect his/her level of business performance and participation in particular, in their day to day business activities. This is because more time and resources will be needed for instance, to care for the children as well as look for ways and means of meeting their daily basic needs. Therefore, the larger the family size, the more the time that is spent attending to them rather on the business especially so with women. A part from less time being allocated to business activities, resources committed to the business will be limited as compared to traders with small families.

A part from own children, respondents were asked to state the number of other dependents whom they catered for. From table 4, we find that 10% and 8% men and women respondents respectively catered for no dependents apart from, perhaps, their own children. Another 73% and 72% of men and women respondents catered for between 1 and 5 dependents and the rest 2.0% and 3% of men and women respondents catered for 6 or more dependents respectively.

Like family size, the number of dependents that one catered for in combination with other factors, not only affect their entrepreneurial input in own business, but also affect their level and degree of business management and participation in the business circles which would have otherwise given them business exposure and experience. The role of second-hand clothes business in improving

people's welfare cannot be overemphasized as research evidence has shown that men cater for 3.68 and women cater for 3.25 on average per household, an indication that small businesses alleviate poverty.

Education Level

Evidence from collected information show that majority (67%) of men and over half (55%) of the women in the sampled used-clothes traders have obtained secondary education while 22% and 41% of men and women traders had only primary education. Another 11 percent and 4 percent of the respondents have post-secondary education as shown in table 5. Overall, second-hand clothes traders in Eldoret and Nakuru have an average education level of 10.73 and 9.40 years of schooling for men and women entrepreneurs respectively. Level of education attained has been noted to be a crucial factor in an individual's life, and mean schooling years is an indicator of the level of business performance and individual achievement as well as involvement and participation in the business world. Since the average education level is secondary, we do expect respondents in the second-hand clothes business to demonstrate very good business performances depending on the sizes of their businesses.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents According to Attained Years of Formal Education

Number of Years in School	MEN		WOMEN	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
0 (None)	0	0.0	0	0.0
1 - 8 (Primary)	22	22.0	41	41.0
9 - 12 (Secondary)	67	67.0	55	55.0
> 13 (Post-Sec.)	11	11.0	4	4.0
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100	100.0

Previous Major Occupation of Entrepreneurs

Asked to state their previous major occupations before they entered into used clothes trade, more than half of the respondents (59% of men and 72% of women), stated that they had no employment previously. This is to say that 65.5% of all used clothes traders are new entrants to the labour market or previously self-employed. The rest (12% men and 6% women) said they were engaged previously in farming, teaching and trade. Others were working previously in the private sector as salesmen or women, cashiers, clerks, and plumbers. Some respondents in Public service had worked as civil servants as clinical officers, and nurses while the rest were employed in other low paying occupations. It can be concluded that second-hand clothes business in Kenya has created a large number of job opportunities for people who would have otherwise remained unemployed.

Annual Profits

Second-hand clothes business men and women were asked to state their average monthly profits in order to determine their annual earnings from this business. Basic analysis revealed that men get a profit of between Kshs 21,600 and Kshs 540,000 per year, while women get

between Kshs 6,000 and Kshs 384,000 per year. **Table 6** shows that 17% of men and 21% of women traders get profits of up to Kshs 50,000 or less per year, forty six percent of men and forty five percent of women get profits between Kshs 50,001 and Kshs 100,000. Another twenty six percent of men and thirty three percent of women get profits between Kshs 100,001 and Kshs 200,000 per year and the rest 11% of men and only 1% of women get annual profits of over Kshs 200,000.

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents According to Their Annual Profits

Annual Profits	MEN		WOMEN	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Kshs 50,000 or Less	17	17.0	21	21.0
Kshs 50,001-100,000	46	46.0	45	45.0
Kshs 100,001-200,000	26	26.0	33	33.0
Kshs 200,001 or More	11	11.0	1	1.0
TOTAL	100	100.0	100	100.0

This is an evidence of high profits for men in a group of their own. Indeed, this small group could be considered as a middle men or wholesalers in a way. On average however, men earn more profits (Kshs 108,612 p.a.) than their women counterparts (Kshs 90,564 p.a.). These variations in profit levels have an impact on the way women's and men's business grow.

8. The Performance of Women and Men in Second-hand Clothes Trade

Gender and business enterprise performance have been found to have a relationship with various social and economic factors accounting for this relationship. From the survey conducted, data show men's businesses to be experiencing more growth than those of women counterparts. Secondly, women entrepreneurs appear to have less education and business management skills compared to their male counterparts and as such act as limitations to their performances. Women may also be preferring to maintain small number of employees than men due to the former reason. Further more, women may prefer to ask a relative to assist in running her business rather than to hire some one as opposed to men who prefer hiring a worker than engage the services of relatives. Alluding to

some degree of difference between the small retailers and wholesalers.

Wholesalers added up to six workers in the last one year, with an average of 1.27 workers per business. This clearly indicates that wholesalers relatively tend to add more workers although this do not imply they create more employment opportunities than retailers in this business. This could perhaps be because of their bigger capital base and size of business which demand more workers than the retailers' businesses.

Overall, men's businesses experienced a growth rate of 6.5% more than double that of their female counterparts with 2.83% growth in the last one year preceding the survey (*see Table 7*). Businesses of wholesalers were experiencing a growth rate of about thirty (29.77%) percent which is about five times that of men and more than ten times that of women in retail trade. Evidence from analyzed data in this study leads to the conclusion that small firms do not register significant growth in employment. This conclusion is corroborated by the results in **Table 7** which show most businesses as having an average of less than one employee for both men and women (0.7 for men and 0.6 for women) with business growth of 6.5% and 2.83% for men and women respectively. When they grow, they rather externalize functions and multiply. They therefore grow by becoming many. In this particular research, 31% of men and 34% of women business owners

reported that they had other sources of income where they invest profits generated from mitumba trade. It can therefore be argued that growth of used-clothes retail firms/enterprises is diffused to other enterprises.

In terms of profit generation and as shown in table 7, these businesses generated profits of between Kshs 7,547 per month and Kshs 90,564 per year for women and profits of Kshs 9,051 per month and Kshs 108,612 per annum for men retail traders. Men bought 4.76 bales per month and sold 3.77 bales which represent 79.2% of the total monthly purchases made while women bought 5.09 bales a month and sold 3.94 bales which represent 77.4% of the monthly purchases made. Clothes purchased are normally taken for dry-cleaning by the buyers before putting on and so in this way the second-hand business do generate indirectly some form of employment elsewhere. Clothes that are not sold are often carried forward and added to the stock of the next purchases. In cases where the seller think that the remnants are of low quality, they dispose them at low prices in order to clear such stocks.

Although women buy more bales for sale than men, their sales are slightly lower than those of men. This could be one of the reasons why their average monthly and annual profits are less than that of men.

Table 7: Mean and Range of Key Characteristics of Business Enterprists of Male and Female Entrepreneurs

N Label Variable	<u>MALE</u>		<u>FEMALE</u>		Male/Fem.
	Mean	Range	Mean	Range	
Age of Business	4.0	27.3	4.6	12.8	100
Current Employees	.7	4.0	.6	3.0	100
Business Performance	.2	4.0	.06	3.0	100
Business Growth (%)	6.5	300.0	2.8	200.0	100
Number of Own Child.	2.5	8.0	2.9	8.0	84/89
No. of Dependents	2.3	10.0	2.2	10.0	85/83
No. Pple Cared for	3.7	14.0	3.3	11.0	100/99
No. of Added Employ.	1.3	3.0	1.1	1.0	16/30
Bales Bought p.m.	4.8	19.0	5.1	15.0	56/85
Bales Sold p.m.	3.3	15.6	3.9	32.0	100
Monthly Profits	9,051	43,200	7547	31,500	100
Profits p.a.	108612	518400	90564	378000	100
Profit per Bale	37.6	19600	3051	8580	100
Capital Input	5,573	29,500	5287	19,650	100
Capital (half yr)	27,652	64,000	27402	68,600	100

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Income in Previous Occupation	3,648	8,350	3096	7,300	41/28
Income from Other Sources	54,568	156,400	53,118	144,000	31/34
Age of Entrepreneur	31.1	26.9	31.7	24.6	100
Education Level	10.7	13.0	9.4	14.0	100
Bus. Magn Level	2.66	1.8	2.4	2.0	100

A second reason that is quite apparent from the collected data is that women tend to earn less profit per bale (Kshs 3,051.14 compared to men's Kshs 3,756.00) perhaps because of their bargaining skills, type of clothing sold and marketing strategies. Another explanation for the differences in profits that men and women make from their business is attributed to the differences in pricing of their goods. Men apparently sell clothes at a slightly higher profit margins (about 23% above that of their women counterparts) than women.

Wholesalers seem to earn extremely high incomes ranging from Kshs 24,000 for medium wholesalers to Kshs 22 million for major wholesalers or importers per month. On average, each wholesaler earn about 4.05 million profit per month. This is a profit derived from sale of bales between 12 and 9,000 per month (*see Table 2*). The business owners themselves do not conduct day to day transactions. Most wholesale businesses are run by hired managers while business owners are out making business connections and some even spend much of their time outside the country on business missions in Canada, Britain, Belgium and the Netherlands. Two managers who reported to sell bales worth Kshs 800,000 per day on peak seasons said that their employers were based in Canada where they purchase thousands of bales and ship them to Kenya.

9. Types of Improvements Made by Men and Women on Second-Hand Clothes

Data revealed that women and men traders involved in used-clothes business do either specialize in particular types of clothing or sell a variety of them without concern for the mixture. The objective here is to determine whether men and women make different types of improvements on the second-hand clothes they offer for sale and the nature of networking that derives from this activity. Analysis of **Table 8** reveal that there is no difference on improvements made by men and women on the used-clothes since 52% of men reported that they specialized in certain clothing especially those of men, and 51% of women indicated that they specialized in used-clothes, mainly those of women. A more obvious observation however, is that women tend to move alot than men in the process of transportation since they deal with a large volume of clothes than men. An emerging evidence is that those who specialise tend to have high capital base than their counterparts who do not, and they could be classified as semi-wholesalers. Traders who specialise do not seem to earn more income than those who do not specialise for either sex. Men who specialised earned an average profit of Kshs 107,215 compared to those who do not specialise who earned Kshs 110,125 per year. On the other hand, women

who specialise earn a profit of Kshs 83,953 compared to Kshs 97,445 per year for those who do not specialise. The differences in annual earnings here could be due to the fact that entrepreneurs who specialise tend to sell less than those who do not specialise. Compared to men, women in this category still however buy more bales than men but sell less than them. An explanation for this variation could be attributed to the fact women's clothes come in several varieties than men's and therefore business women tend to buy more bales in order to provide their customer's with more choices and increase their sales. Those who do not specialise have more varieties of clothe products and therefore tend to attract more customers at the end of the day although entrepreneurs who specialise have higher profit margins than them.

**Table 9: Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Women and Men
Second-Clothes Traders by type of Trade**

	WOMEN		MEN	
Type of Trading Carried ou:	Freq.	Percent	Freq.	Percent
Trade in specialized				
Used-clothes	52	52.0	51	51.0
Trade in variety of used clothes	48	48.0	49	49.0
TOTAL	100	100.0	100	100.0

Some form networking was report to be existing between small second-hand clothes traders and the drycleaning industry. In cases where the small retailers do not undertake drycleaning or clothe mending personally, they take them to the informal drycleaners and taylor's who repair these clothes and clean them on their behalf. Usually those who engage in these activities are poor small retailers or new entrants in the business who have very little capital base. This is another aspect of gender differences associated with specialisation and which may also be considered to be constituting differences in types of improvements made on used-clothes. The second aspect is that of marketing. It was observed that although both men and women who specialised in the sale of second-hand clothes attempt to improve the quality of the products they offer to their customers by cleaning and ironing, majority of the men appeared to be more inclined to it than women. Again the reason for this difference has to do with the amount of time available to both sexes in a single day. Unlike women, men have alot of time and most of them are full-time engaged in the trade than women who participate part-time. Men also tend to make efforts to reach customers through various marketing strategies ranging from shouting out the prices of the common clothes they offer for sale to street display. It can therefore be concluded that they all nearly perform similar tasks and therefore variations in entrepreneurial

input and performance is to be attributed to tasks performed in this business.

10. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

As indicated earlier on, the focus of this research study was to establish the factors of variation in business performance of women and men in second-hand clothes, examine whether there is any differences in performances, examine market structure and finally trace any sectoral linkages between used-clothes trade and other sectors of the Kenyan economy.

This study has shown that gender is a major factor of variation in used-clothes business enterprise performance among men and women. In fact the association between the two variables is very strong and significant at 0.05 level of significance. These variations manifest themselves in a number of ways.

Although factors such as management skills, education level, and capital input plus the age of the business do influence business performance of traders, these variables however do not significantly affect business performance. Thus it has to be concluded that the major

factor that contributes to variations in business enterprise performance between men and women is basically their gender which is possibly reflective of cumulative effects of the above factors or different factors that have not been dealt with in this study. It was further observed that most of the business owners are at their prime age of employment (starting age is 27 years) with an average age of 31 years for both sexes most of whom depend entirely on their business as a source of income. Their low average capital input of about Kshs 5,286 and 5,573 for women and men entrepreneurs, generally suggests that the kind of people who venture into used-clothes retail commercial trade are poor or rather unemployed including some who were low income earners in their previous occupations. About two-third (65.5%) of those who are in used clothes business were previously unemployed while the others were engaged as civil servants or in other occupations such as cookery, hotel waiting, nursing, messenger, clerical and farming among others.

It has been found out that there is no difference in tasks performed by men and women in used-clothes trade since 52% of men reported that they specialized in certain clothing especially those of men and while 51% of women indicated that they also had specialized in this business. Men however, seem to enjoy some advantage of marketing strategies and more time at business site over women and this tends to manifest itself in terms of the volume of

clothes supplied to customers and profits made per month. In addition, the variations in income generations may be a result of a constellation of other factors such as socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of entrepreneurs.

Data also revealed that used-clothes market structure is made up of major wholesalers/Importers who in fact are millionaires, medium wholesalers, medium retailers and small retailers who are nowadays very common along the streets of towns like Nakuru and Eldoret selling cleaned, ironed and repaired used-clothes.

Used-clothes business has sectoral linkages which range from handling, transport, cleaning (or dry cleaning), repairing (mending) and distribution. These forms of business interactions have inherently indirect linkages to other sectors such as manufacturing. So although it is argued that second-hand clothes businesses do not experience significant growth in terms of employment, there is in fact a higher growth when indirect employment generated as a result of sectoral linkages with other businesses.

Policy Recommendations

Findings of this research study have shown that although women form the majority (60.4%, that is, a ratio of 2:3) in the second-hand clothes business, they do not perform well compared to men. They trail behind men in business performance, management skills, income generated on monthly basis, capital input and the number of employees offered training. This kind of performance is attributed to the societal restrictions and impositions that tend to confine women to household activities, denying them time at business site and therefore undermining their business success prospects. There is need of considering giving women who have started or who want to start micro enterprises chances in entrepreneurship training alongside men in order to enable them gain management skills, self-confidence and foresightedness in business. Policy makers should take note of the fact that the overall economy of the country would benefit from full involvement of women in various economic activities including second-hand clothes trade. They need to be given more time outside the household and support in running their businesses in this sub-sector.

Despite the fact that women do have a slightly higher average years in this business than their male counterparts, men still beat in business management contrary to common knowledge that experience is the best

teacher. This implies that women need assistance on how to go about in running businesses, not only those of used-clothes, but related business lines.

On average, women in second-hand clothes business have low education level with an average of about 9 years as compared to about 11 years for men. It is recommended that more and continued effort be made to ensure that girls have equal chances of accessing education like boys in the family since this is one of the main factors that contribute to variations in business performance between men and women in used-clothes retail trade. Most wholesalers appear to have a higher education level than retailers of over 11 years (mean of 11.61 years), implying that education is not a major constraint to this class.

Although retail traders did not complain much about the condition of their stalls, it was quite clear on the ground that their operating conditions are not good. The Municipal authorities in Nakuru and Eldoret should consider providing a convenient location and environment where commercial used-clothes retail traders can put up permanent structures. These businesses do not only benefit the individual owners as a source of income, but also the local authorities directly through taxes and rent.

Credit institutions should also consider entrepreneurs who want to start used-clothes business to be among their clients as research has shown that these businesses have a high potential and chances of success in

income generation once started under good management. Capital input for instance was not to be in the tune of Kshs 6,000 to Kshs 10,000 which many school-leavers and the poor cannot easily afford to raise at the beginning without support from such credit institutions.

Recommendations for Further

Research

This study did not explore in detail other factors that make gender a major factor of variation in business performance. It was only noted that in terms of income generation, there is a difference of 20% between monthly and annual incomes of men and women traders in used clothes. There is need for further research that will focus on this variations in order to give a full explanation. There is still need for further research of a similar nature with a larger sample to look deeply into these factors.

Secondly, the impact of commercial used-clothes trade on Kenya's industrialization is not known. There is need of a research to evaluate the impact of this business on the development and expansion of Kenya's textile industry and employment creation. For instance, what proportion of income generated by micro and medium scale enterprises do second-hand clothes business income constitute? Is this business enterprise worthwhile to be allowed to continue in

Kenya considering the current prevailing economic situation?