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the Relationship between the Provision of Informal Hospitality
Services and the Socioeconomic Well-Being**

Lynette Akinyi Ogada Onyando

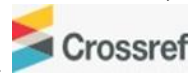


Moderating Effects of Business Proximity to Infrastructure on the Relationship between the Provision of Informal Hospitality Services and the Socioeconomic Well-Being



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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The provision of informal hospitality services is considered an income diversification strategy that benefits women's socioeconomic well-being, with business proximity to infrastructure thought to influence this relationship. Nevertheless, evidence from extant literature points to the inadequacy of this information. This study investigated the effect of business proximity to infrastructure on the relationship between informal hospitality services and the socioeconomic well-being of Kenyan women entrepreneurs.

Materials and Methods: The study employed a mixed methods approach and a sequential exploratory research design. The survey targeted 829 women entrepreneurs from four counties: Muranga, Kusumu, Kakamega, and Nakuru. In the qualitative phase, eight discussants for interviews and eight FGD participants (2 from each county) were purposively selected. During the quantitative phase, 272 randomly selected participants were given self-administered questionnaires. Framework analysis and regression analysis were used to analyse the qualitative and quantitative data, respectively.

Findings: Both qualitative and quantitative findings suggested that women entrepreneurs provided outside catering and event management

services. The qualitative findings also revealed that women attained increased income, improved health and accessed education. Business proximity to infrastructure was found to moderate the association between informal hospitality services and socioeconomic well-being, with an R^2 change of 0.053.

Unique contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The Opportunity-Based Entrepreneurship Theory informed this study and is applicable to hospitality services, which evolve in response to societal needs. This transition needs a more coordinated approach to hospitality service provision, which women may readily organise through their enterprises. They capitalised on the transformation and their ability to organise rapidly by investing in hospitality services to profit and boost their socioeconomic well-being. This study provided information for policy creation for SMEs and infrastructure development activities to enhance the hospitality industry's performance. The study also provided scholars with information on women-led informal hospitality services.

Keyword: *I31-Socio-Economic Well-Being, L26-Women Entrepreneurship, O18-Business proximity to Infrastructure*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

There are numerous women empowerments including education, involvement in leadership and engaging in business enterprises, among others. These channels enable women to access employment either in the formal or informal sectors. Unemployment is one of the problems facing Kenyans today, with most of its educated women citizens not formally employed. As a result, many women have formed groups and ventured into Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) business, which include the provision of informal hospitality services such as outside catering, housekeeping and events management to help them attain socio-economic well-being (Bokhari et al., 2012). Nisthar et al. (2017) further posit that proximity to major infrastructure may affect the well-being of women entrepreneurs who are involved in providing hospitality services. It is hypothesised that when such a moderator is incorporated in the relationship, the socio-economic well-being of women will improve. A study conducted by Ajide (2020) on infrastructure and entrepreneurship revealed that infrastructure plays a significant role in improving entrepreneurial development in Africa. Iwuji (2003) observes that it is the role of any government to provide an enabling environment that supports businesses and persons since SMEs constitute untapped revenue potential for many countries (KAM, 2016).

Business Proximity to Infrastructure and Socioeconomic Well-Being

Business proximity refers to the accessibility of raw materials, a robust road network, and how easily customers can reach a business (Minai & Lucky, 2011). It facilitates access to markets and capital, contributing to business success. Akwani (2007) highlighted that poor infrastructure negatively impacts the production and service delivery of SMEs in Nigeria. Similarly, Akinson (2018) emphasized that essential infrastructure, such as power and water, is critical for SME growth and should be readily available to support financial and market expansion, which in turn improves the socio-economic well-being of entrepreneurs.

Akhmad et al. (2018) noted that the Indonesian government has initiated programs to empower and protect SMEs, aiming to shield entrepreneurs from losses and enhance their socio-economic well-being. In Vietnam, Nguyen and Wongsurawat (2012) found that among 13 government support policies, six covering roads, electricity, telecommunications, Internet, tax reductions, and property rights positively influenced SME performance, whereas the other policies had moderate to weak effects.

Contrarily, Davis (2011) argued that the proximity of businesses to infrastructure may not significantly impact women entrepreneurs, suggesting that their needs remain constant regardless of location. However, Mugo et al. (2019) showed a significant, positive correlation between SME growth and infrastructure availability, including transport networks, piped water, electricity, security, and telecommunications. This is echoed by Obokoh and Goldman (2016), who observed that deficiencies in infrastructure hinder the growth, performance, and profitability of SMEs in Nigeria. Similarly, Lukes and Laguna (2010) noted that SMEs contribute to job creation, with the sector accounting for 90% of new jobs in Kenya in 2016 and 33.8% of the GDP (Government of Kenya, 2017).

While these studies focus on infrastructure as an independent variable, they do not explore its moderating role in the provision of informal hospitality services and the socio-economic well-being of women entrepreneurs in Kenya. The current study addressed this gap by examining the

extent to which business proximity to infrastructure moderates the relationship between informal hospitality services and the socio-economic well-being of women entrepreneurs in Kenya.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Women's socio-economic well-being is essential for empowerment, self-reliance and fulfilment of their obligations. However, due to a myriad of factors, such as inadequate formal employment, women have engaged in the provision of informal hospitality services as more women continue to engage in the informal sector through entrepreneurship (Bokhari et al., 2012). Despite this, women's socio-economic well-being is not as expected (Mathivannan and Selvakumar 2008). This has drawn the interest of both policymakers and practitioners alike in finding out the relationship between the provision of informal hospitality services and the socio-economic well-being of women entrepreneurs. Despite this, the extent to which hospitality services contribute to the socio-economic well-being of women entrepreneurs is well documented in the formal sector but not in the informal sector, a gap this study sought to fill. Moreover, existing empirical evidence is still inconclusive on the role that informal hospitality services play in the socio-economic well-being of women entrepreneurs. Studies have established that business location is a factor that affects various businesses (Minai & Lucky, 2011). If the infrastructure is well established in an area, the entrepreneurs will perform better because they will not need to incur costs that are related to poor infrastructure within their area of operation. It is again this background that this study seeks to examine the moderating effect on the relationship between the provision of informal hospitality services and the socio-economic well-being of women entrepreneurs in the four selected counties in Kenya.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

This study was anchored on the Opportunity-Based Entrepreneurship Theory (OBET), which helped in the conceptualization of the study. OBET was proposed by Drucker (1985). It advances the idea that entrepreneurs take advantage of opportunities created by environmental changes, as articulated by Drucker (1985). In essence, success associated with entrepreneurship is brought about by taking advantage of market opportunities generated by technological change, climate, shifts in consumer demand, culture, and infrastructure. These environmental changes act as "opportunities" for entrepreneurs to capitalize on. Such opportunities may include changes in technology, consumer expectations, legislation, and infrastructure, but they do not cause change.

An entrepreneur uses a particular approach to define and execute any potential, depending mainly on the availability of information and the willingness of the entrepreneur to take risks and act on that information (Karanja et al., 2014). The discovery of opportunities for an entrepreneur depends on factors such as the availability of infrastructure facilities, the expertise of the entrepreneur, risk management abilities, and the experience of the entrepreneur (Anderson et al., 2012). The partnership between entrepreneurship and strategic planning increases the identification of opportunities. Through these strategies, the entrepreneur will take advantage of the opportunity and add unique value to both the customer and the product (Gathenya, 2013).

The OBET informed this study and is particularly relevant to hospitality services whose forms of provision have evolved with societal changes. These changes include modernization, cultural shifts, and increased knowledge and awareness. The provision of hospitality services required a

more organized approach, and women entrepreneurs, who are more organized, were able to take advantage. They invested in hospitality services as a preferred field of entrepreneurship to improve their socio-economic well-being. In this context, infrastructure functions as an "environmental change" that creates the "opportunity" for women entrepreneurs to expand their businesses.

Business proximity to infrastructure is thus a key factor that enables women in informal hospitality services to leverage the opportunities presented by these environmental changes. Entrepreneurs often focus on the advantages that come with such changes, rather than the problems they might create. According to Alvarez and Barney (2014), the success of an entrepreneur depends mainly on the ability to create and manage opportunities regarding available resources, with specific reasons for every opportunity in a given field. Opportunities are infinite, and life is a set of opportunities. The business opportunities that arise will determine the rate of success and development of the enterprise (Dangote, 2013). Alvarez and Barney's (2014) research on the relationship between entrepreneurial innovation and the success of MSEs notes that rewarding business opportunities contribute to good performance in organizations.

Women entrepreneurs have benefited from government SME policies, which have enabled them to access credits and grants to grow their businesses. Additionally, the rapid growth of infrastructure has allowed women entrepreneurs in urban areas to provide hospitality services with greater ease. This improved access to infrastructure has helped enhance their income and led to an improvement in their socio-economic well-being. The OBET aligns with entrepreneurship in the informal hospitality sector by highlighting how infrastructure as an environmental change creates opportunities for women entrepreneurs to grow improve their well-being.

2.2 Research Gaps

Avorny (2013), in his study, concluded that women in Ghana make a significant contribution to socio-economic development and well-being in their society, and this can be realised through various socio-economic fields. The current study focused on the contribution of informal hospitality services to the socio-economic well-being of women entrepreneurs in Kenya, unlike the previous study, which focused on women's socio-economic well-being and was not specific to informal hospitality. Mathivannan and Selvakumar (2008) also note that several women who have been involved in this business have not had their socio-economic well-being improved, and that the overall growth of women remained stunted. The inconclusive nature of results about women achieving their socio-economic well-being necessitated the current study.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on informal hospitality services has brought to light new challenges and opportunities. Studies have shown that the pandemic severely disrupted the hospitality sector, particularly affecting informal hospitality services due to travel restrictions, changes in customer behavior, and the reduction in tourist numbers (Muraya & Wanjama, 2023). Women entrepreneurs in the informal hospitality sector in Kenya faced significant hardships during the pandemic, including the closure of many businesses, loss of income, and lack of access to necessary infrastructure to pivot their services (Muoki, 2021). However, the pandemic has also highlighted the resilience of women entrepreneurs, with some turning to digital platforms and adapting their services to meet local needs.

Many scholars have also noted that there is a relationship between business proximity to infrastructure and entrepreneurship, and socio-economic well-being, which can affect socio-economic well-being positively or negatively. Business proximity to infrastructure can be a

catalyst to entrepreneurship and, therefore, was considered as a moderator variable. While researchers have studied infrastructure as a primary factor in entrepreneurship, the effect of business proximity to infrastructure as a moderator variable on the relationship between informal hospitality services and the socio-economic well-being of entrepreneurs has not been established. Therefore, this study sought to determine the moderating effect of business proximity to infrastructure on the relationship between the provision of hospitality services and the socio-economic well-being of women entrepreneurs in the four selected Counties in Kenya.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

The elements of the current investigation and their relationships are shown in Fig.1. The informal hospitality services are conceptualised using three sub-variables outside catering, events management services and housekeeping services. These are hypothesised to affect the socioeconomic well-being of women entrepreneurs as moderated by business proximity to infrastructure. These three selected independent variables are likely to have a direct contribution to women's socio-economic wellbeing (dependent variable). The indicators of socio-economic wellbeing of women included aspects such as increased income, improved health and access to education. The whole relationship of these services on economic welfare of women entrepreneurs may be affected by business proximity to infrastructure (roads and accessibility, means of transport and access to raw materials). This study explored the extent of how this plays out in the provision of hospitality services to enable realization of socio-economic wellbeing of women.

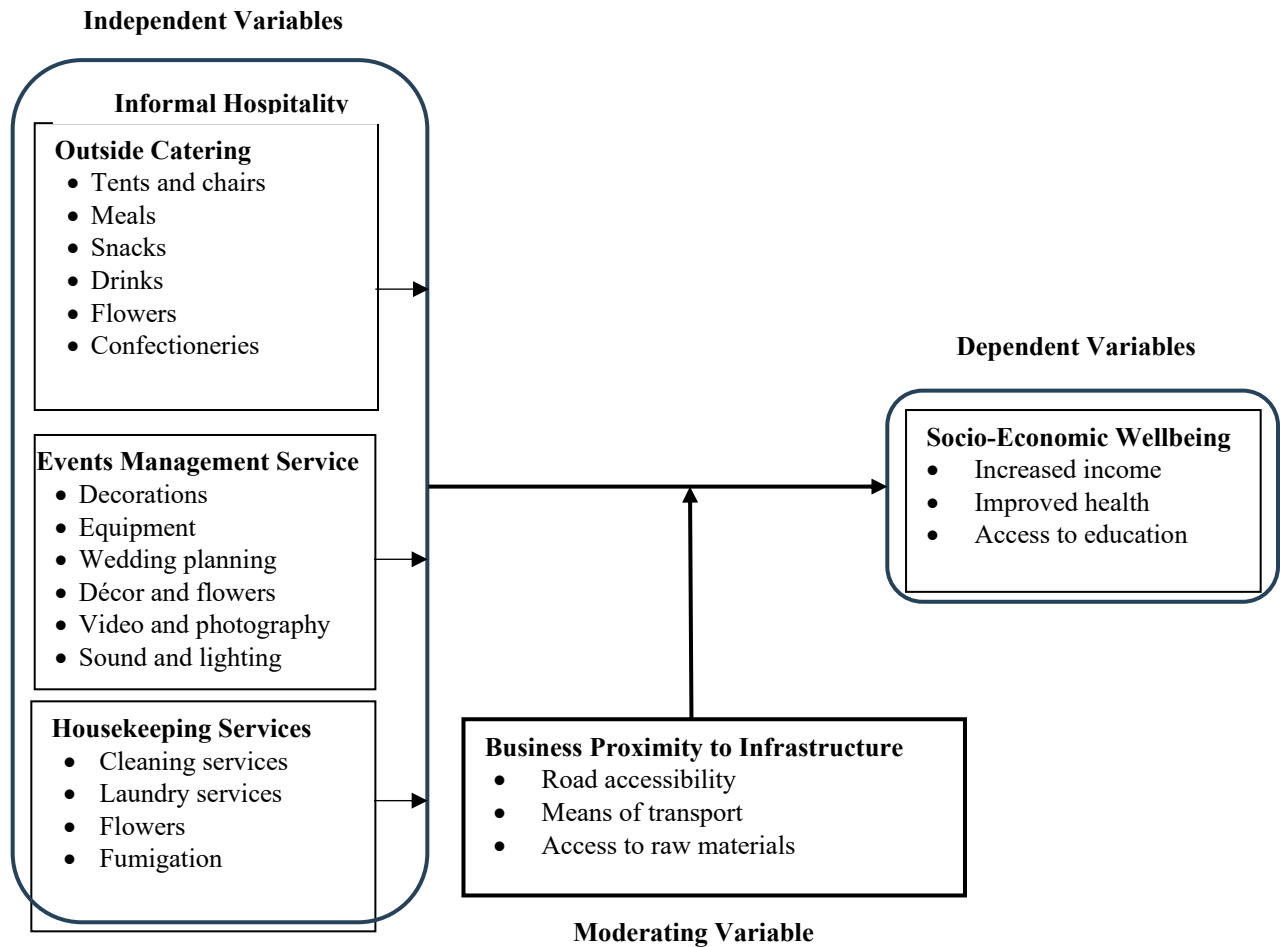


Figure 1: The Link between Informal Hospitality Services, Business Proximity to Infrastructure and Socioeconomic Well-being of Women Entrepreneurs. Source; Researcher (2026)

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Approach and Design

The nature of the research phenomena necessitated the adoption of mixed methods, which integrates both qualitative and quantitative (Morgan, 2007; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In view of this, the study adopted a sequential exploratory design where qualitative data were first collected, followed by quantitative data. The benefit of the sequential exploratory method is that there are no simultaneous limitations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Additionally, the design was used because it was able to measure and standardise instruments on how hospitality services contribute to the socio-economic well-being of women entrepreneurs in the informal hospitality industry. Inadequate information on the study area regarding women entrepreneurs in the informal hospitality industry also necessitated the adoption of the said design (Plano Clark et al., 2008).

3.2 Study Location

The study was conducted in four selected counties: Nakuru, Muranga, Kisumu and Kakamega, which are half of the 8 regions in Kenya. These counties were purposefully chosen as the data was available at county offices. From each of the Counties, two sub-counties within towns or urban centres and one sub-county situated in rural areas were chosen for the study. These counties are distributed in the former Central, Western, Rift Valley, and Nyanza Provinces and thus were convenient in coordinating field data collection.

3.3 Study Population

The population of registered women providing informal hospitality services in twelve selected sub-counties of Kisumu, Kakamega, Muranga and Nakuru was 829. Three sub-counties were selected from each of the four counties that participated in the study. The sub-counties were selected based on whether they were in a rural or an urban setting. This ensured that participants involved in the study were from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. The distribution of the population is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Study Population of the Study

County	Sub-County	No. Members
Kisumu	Kisumu East	120
Kisumu	Kisumu West	100
Kisumu	Nyakach	70
	Kisumu Total	290
Kakamega	Mumias East	35
Kakamega	Lurambi	44
Kakamega	Mumias West	24
	Kakamega Total	103
Muranga	Gatanga	88
Muranga	Kandara	77
Muranga	Kigumo	66
	Muranga Total	231
Nakuru	Nakuru Town East	86
Nakuru	Nakuru Town West	64
Nakuru	Rongai	55
	Nakuru Total	205
	Grand Total	829

Source: Selected counties Social Services Groups Registration Roll (2021)

3.4 Qualitative Research

This approach is used to explore and understand the meaning ascribed to individuals or groups in relation to a social or human problem. The research process involves emerging questions and procedures; data typically collected in the participant's setting; data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes; and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. The study used interviews and focus group discussions to obtain data. Face-to-face, telephone/video call interviews with respondents were used. Thus, the researcher becomes an important tool for data collection in managing the interviews and discussions (Atieno, 2009). The

researcher studied the population through observation, assessed the situation and made an appropriate conclusion to the objective of the study.

3.4.1 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The study selected 8 key informants (KIs) and 8 discussants for FGDs. The key informants were purposively selected from the targeted counties and sub-counties as shown in Table 2. This group was excluded from the FGDs and the quantitative phase. Similarly, the 8 participants for FGDs were purposively selected from the targeted counties and sub-counties as indicated in Table 3. The number of participants was guided by the recommendations of Dawson et al. (2014), who proposed a group of 6 to 12 persons. Those who took part in the FGDs were excluded from the KIs and quantitative phase.

Table 2: Sample size for Key Informant Interviews and FGDs

County Name	Sub- Counties		No. of Respondents	
	Urban	Rural	KIs	FGDs
Nakuru	Nakuru East	Rongai	2	2
Kisumu	Kisumu Central	Nyakach	2	2
Kakamega	Lurambi	Mumias West	2	2
Muranga	Kandara	Kigumo	2	2
Total			8	8

3.4.2 Qualitative Interview

The study used an in-depth interview guide to collect data from the respondents. This helped in providing a clearer understanding of the phenomena under investigation, which could not be easily observed or counted (Christensen et al., 2015). In-depth interviews were conducted separately with each of the KIs. Before the interview, each participant was contacted, and interview dates were agreed upon. The purpose of the study was explained after the introduction. The researcher also ensured that the participants filled out consent forms and that they consented to the audio recording of the interview. In addition, field notes were taken by research assistants to ensure that all the points and themes related to the study phenomena were well captured. At the end of the interview, the researcher filled in the interview guide with a summary of key points on every question asked.

3.4.3 Focus Group Discussions Design and Data Collection

Wong (2008) describes a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) as a renowned qualitative analysis method for collecting large volumes of narrative or explorative data. In this study, FGD added meaning and understanding to the initial data collected through KIs. FGD allowed for case comparisons of the data with qualitative interviews during research (Wadongo & Abdel-Kader, 2014). The researcher used questions in the interview guide and probing questions to cover the objectives of the study. This was to be analysed in the form of outside catering services, housekeeping services and events management and how these have affected them. As the respondents continued to provide information on the themes, the research assistant took notes on the content of the discussion. FGD was used for generating information on collective views on the types of informal hospitality services and the challenges women entrepreneurs face in the provision of the services. The researcher also used FGD to synthesise further meanings that lie behind the views necessary in generating a rich understanding of participants' experiences and beliefs on these

two themes. FGD was done in Nakuru County with the participants drawn from the four selected Counties. Those who were sampled for FGD were facilitated to travel to Nakuru for the discussion.

3.4.4 Reliability and Validity

The content validity was established through a vast literature review, discussions and deliberations with peers and supervisors at Maseno University. The experts in hospitality at the department and school levels were consulted to provide guidance on the content of the instruments and to ensure that all the research objectives were addressed. To test for reliability, information obtained from interviews was compared to see if they were corresponding with what was obtained from the focus group discussion (Cypress, 2017).

3.4.5 Qualitative Data Analysis

The researcher used Framework Analysis (FA) to analyse qualitative data. In the case of the framework analysis technique, the collected data from interviews and FGD through a print interview guide and audio were organised into themes based on the study objectives. The audio records were first transcribed into written form to come up with themes, which were used during analysis (McMullin, 2021). Finding parallels and variances between the themes allowed them to be categorised into more general thematic groupings. For this investigation, Pope et al., (2000) five-step system approach of data review was applied. This entailed the researcher's familiarisation with the raw data, theme identification, indexing and identification of thematic frameworks, organising data and themes, visually mapping and interpreting.

3.5 Quantitative Strand

Quantitative research is an approach for testing objective and theories by examining the relationship among variables. These variables, in turn, can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numerical data can be analysed using statistical procedures (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The quantitative design was correlational in nature as the study sought to determine the effect of informal hospitality services on the socio-economic well-being of women entrepreneurs as moderated by business proximity to infrastructure.

3.5.1 Sample Size and Sampling Technique for Quantitative Strand

The study adapted the sampling technique by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) to arrive at the sample size needed for the quantitative phase, as shown.

$$n = \frac{\chi^2 * N * P(1 - P)}{(ME^2 * (N - 1)) + (\chi^2 * P(1 - P))}$$

Where,

n = The required sample size, given by the following:

χ^2 = The table value of chi square for one degree of freedom relative to the Desired level of confidence which is 0.95. [The chi-square value will be 3.841].

N = The population within the study area [829]

P = The population proportion [assumed to be 0.50], as this magnitude yields the maximum possible sample size required.

ME = desired margin of error (expressed as a proportion). This is the degree of accuracy as reflected by the amount of error that can be tolerated in the fluctuation of a sample proportion about the population P.

The value of d was taken as 0.05, which is equal to plus or minus 1.96σp.

$$ME^2 = [0.05^2 = 0.0025]$$

Based on the projected population (829) and the above formula, the required sample size was computed as 265 women entrepreneurs. To obtain the number of participants from each of the counties, a multi-stage sampling technique comprising stratification, proportionate and simple random sampling was applied. The population was stratified by counties, and the number of participants from each stratum was determined using proportionate techniques as shown in Table 3. For example, the number of participants for Kisumu East was computed as:

Sample drawn from Kisumu East $n_{ke} = n \times a_k/ap$

Where n_k = Portion of the sample from Kakamega

n = study sample

a_k = Portion of accessible population from Kisumu East

ap = Accessible population of the study

Therefore, $a_k = 265 \times 120/829 = 38.3594692$ which was rounded to 39, given that the respondents were human beings. The 39 were then selected randomly from the specific stratum, in this case, Kisumu East, to take part in the quantitative study. The same procedure was applied to each of the targeted sub-counties, which resulted in a slightly inflated sample size of 272.

Table 3: Stratified Sample Frame Based on the Location of the Group

County	Sub-County	Population	Proportionate Sample Size
Kisumu	Kisumu East	120	39
Kisumu	Kisumu Central	100	32
Kisumu	Nyakach	70	23
Kisumu total		290	94
Kakamega	Mumias East	35	12
Kakamega	Lurambi	44	15
Kakamega	Mumias West	24	8
Kakamega total		103	35
Muranga	Gatanga	88	29
Muranga	Kandara	77	25
Muranga	Kigumo	66	22
Muranga total		231	76
Nakuru	Nakuru Town East	86	28
Nakuru	Nakuru Town West	64	21
Nakuru	Rongai	55	18
Nakuru total		205	67
Grand total		829	272

Source: Selected counties Social Services Groups Registration Roll (2021)

3.5.2 Data Collection Instrument in Quantitative Strand

Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect data in this phase of the study. The questionnaire consisted of open and closed-ended items. It had sections for gathering data on demographic characteristics, informal hospitality services, socio-economic well-being and business proximity to infrastructure. The respondents rated the items that were used to measure the variables on a one-to-five-point Likert scale based on the extent of agreement, frequency or differences in life.

3.5.3 Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted by administering the questionnaires to 28 participants who were randomly selected from the study population (829). This represented 10% of the new computed sample size (i.e. 272). According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), 10% of the study sample size is deemed adequate for piloting a research instrument. These participants were not included in the 272-person sample size for the main survey.

3.5.4 Validity and Reliability in Quantitative Study

In this study, the questionnaire was peer-reviewed by the supervisors at Maseno University to test the content validity. Experts were consulted to provide feedback on the quality of the tools to ensure that all study goals were met. The manner in which the instrument was constructed was reviewed to ensure that the questions were not misinterpreted and that correct information was collected. The researcher ensured that all questions were posed correctly to the respondents and that clarifications were made where possible to avoid misinterpretation. Data from the pilot study were subject to internal validity assessment using Cronbach's alpha coefficient of $>.7$.

3.5.5 Data Analysis

Both descriptive and inferential statistics in SPSS were applied in analysing the quantitative data. Descriptively, the study applied frequencies to describe respondents' demographic profile. Inferentially, the study used hierarchical regression analysis. The first step involved regression of the IV on the DV. The second step involved regression of the IV and M on the DV. The third step involved regression of the IV, M and interaction effect of IV and M on the DV. The moderating effect was then determined using the formula given below:

$$\text{Model 1: } Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \varepsilon$$

$$\text{Model 2: } Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \beta_2 M + \varepsilon$$

$$\text{Model 3: } Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + \beta_2 M + \beta_3 XM + \varepsilon$$

Y: is Socioeconomic well-being

β_0 : is the intercept

β_1, β_2 , are the coefficients

X: Informal hospitality service

M: Moderator variable

XM: Interaction effect which is a product of standardized values of, outside catering, events

ε : is the error term.

Composite score of informal hospitality services (outside catering, housekeeping, events management), and socio-economic well-being were entered in the first step. In the second step, the moderator was added, and the composite score of interaction variables (product of business proximity to infrastructure and informal hospitality services) was entered in the third step.

4.0 FINDINGS

4.1 Questionnaire Response Rate

A total of 272 questionnaires were distributed to the participants to fill out. Out of this, 265 were received, accounting for 97.4%, as shown in Table 4. The researcher strived to ensure that a total of 265 questionnaires (which was the study's minimum sample size) were received back. This was possible because the researcher administered the questionnaire when the women were holding their meetings.

Table 4: Response Rate

Response	Frequency	Percent
Returned	265	97.4%
Unreturned	7	2.6%
Total	272	100%

4.2 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Tables 5 and 6 show the demographic information of the participants in the qualitative and quantitative phases, respectively.

Table 5: Demographic Characteristics of Interviews and FGDs' Participants

Characteristic	Measure	Frequency	Per cent
Age Bracket	30-40 years	6	38
	41-50 years	7	44
	50 and above years	3	19
	Total	16	100
Marital Status	Married	11	69
	Single	2	13
	Widowed	3	19
	Total	16	100
No of Children	Less than 3 children	6	38
	3-5 children	8	50
	6-8 children	2	13
	Total	16	100
Highest Education Level	Primary	3	19
	Secondary	4	25
	College	8	50
	University	1	6
	Total	16	100
Profession	Hospitality	3	19
	Farmer	2	13
	Education	2	13
	Accountants	1	6
	No Profession	8	50
	Total	16	100
Years in Business	Less than 5 years	3	19
	5-10 years	9	56
	More than 10 years	4	25
	Total	16	100

Table 6: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents in Quantitative Phase

Characteristics	Frequency	Per cent
Years of Operation		
Maximum of 3 years	95	35.8
4-7 years	87	32.8
8-10 years	28	10.6
Over 10 years	55	20.8
Total	265	100
Level of Education		
No formal education		
Primary	20	8
Secondary	84	32
Diploma	119	45
Degree	22	8
Degree	20	8
Total	265	100
Age Group (Years)		
19-28	36	13.6
29-38	95	35.8
39-48	77	29.1
49-58	31	11.7
59 and above	26	9.8
Total	265	100
Household Members		
1- 2	16	6.0
3 - 4	77	29.1
5 - 6	100	37.7
7 - 8	58	21.9
9 and above	14	5.3
Total	265	100
Formal Training in Hospitality		
Yes	29	11
No	236	89
Total	265	100

4.3 Socio-economic Well-being of Women in Informal Hospitality Services

This section presents both qualitative and quantitative results on the socio-economic well-being of women entrepreneurs.

Qualitatively, the sub themes were whether the women achieved any benefit from informal hospitality services through aspects such as improved income; food as basic needs; housing for the family; improved healthcare; access to education; clothing for the family; belonging to a social network; socio-psychological support; social bonding; supporting the poor in the society; and ability to start other business. The results are presented in Table 7.

From the interviews and FGD, it was reported that the informal hospitality services provided by the participants enabled them to achieve many socio-economic benefits. The participants indicated that the income they generated from the services they offered enabled them to provide food for their families. They used the same revenue to improve their health and that of their families, and as such, they could access education. This is evidenced by some of their sentiments presented below. Further, the fact that they belonged to a group assured them of social belonging.

Table 7: Socio-economic Well-being of Women in Informal Hospitality Services

Section C:	M RP 1	M RP 2	K RP 1	E RP 1	E RP 2	N RP 1	K RP 2	N RP 2	KFGD1	KFGD2	KFGD3	MFGD4	NFGD5	KFGD6	NFGD7	NFGD8
Achieve some benefits?																
Improved income																
Food as basic need																
Housing family																
Improved health																
Access to education																
Provide clothing to family members																
Belonging to social network																
psychosocial support																
Social Bonding among the groups																
Provide support to the poor in the community																
Able to start other businesses																

The women interviewed observed specific socio-economic well-being.

“The income we get from the business has helped members in many ways. For example, I used to live in a bedsitter and now am living well in one-bedroom house. The increased income has also contributed towards health care by helping members pay for NHIF and meeting other medical bills by paying cash for medication or treatment. The business has also made contributions towards paying school fees for members’ education. Some of our members have used income from the business to support children’s education by paying school fees and buying school uniform. The income of the business has also enabled group members to feed the family, pay rent and dress well. Our group is engaged in social networking by interacting with friends for moral support. We also belong to a group named young mothers.” (MRP2).

Other women who participated in interviews and FG identified several socio-economic well-being they achieved from the proceeds obtain in the provision of informal hospitality services.

“We have been able to get a source of income for school fees, furnish our houses by buying seats, blankets, cups, gas cookers and have upgraded from grass thatched housed to brick houses. We have also been able to feed and clothe our families, learn a high degree of hygiene, buy fertilizers, to pay for NHIF, buy medication and pay hospital bills. The group has brought discipline among members, we have been exposed and our knowledge has increased. Sometimes one of our member’s trains us on how to cook and this makes us be better at our job. We also belong to other developed social groups in which we increase our networking.” (KKFGD2).

Women from rural setup also had unique experience as far as their socio-economic well-being was concerned.

As a result of this catering business, we have been able to open other businesses, feed our families, improve our standards of living, improve our self-esteem, improve our financial status, be self-reliant, support the poor within the community and create employment for community members. We have improved our health situation as we can now be able to pay our NHIF monthly, buy medication and even be able to go for medical check-ups. We have experienced improved access to education by being able to pay school fees for our children and also some of our members have been able to pay their own fees. Some of the other benefits we get from the business are increased knowledge and members are given free services by fellow members in good or bad times. To continue networking, we have subscribed to a social network where we interact with other groups.” (NRP2).

Another woman interviewed from Lurambi Sub-County in Kakamega observed that their group’s socio-economic status tremendously improved ever since they started the informal hospitality services.

“As a result of this catering business, we have improved our standard of living, been able to bond as members, and able to buy clothing and feed family. Health wise, we are now able to afford medication, pay NHIF monthly and go for wellness check-ups. Also, we have been able to pay school fees for our children and for ourselves. We also belong to other social network groups that have helped us make more connections.” (ERP1).

Apart from the improved socio-economic well-being, the provision of informal hospitality services also, to some extent, enabled the women to provide psychosocial support, social bonding and

support to the poor in the community. This finding indicated that informal hospitality services were a social catalyst which enabled the women to provide the necessary social support to their members, contributing to the social stability of the women in the sector, as was observed by one of the participants during the interview.

“We normally share profits together and help each other in times of need enhancing the psychosocial support for members.” (MRP1).

Another participant during FGD observed salient benefits as networks and bonding, wellness clinics to benefit the members of the groups.

“This business is everything to us. Our levels of networks have grown as we bond and support each other. Again, through referrals our networks have improved a great deal and this has made our business to expand.” (NFGD5).

Another participant in the interviews also observed that the women expressed their support to the poor within their community to earn a living.

“We usually support the poor within the community and create employment for community members” (NRP2).

Regression analysis results indicate that informal hospitality services represent 20.5% ($R^2 = .205$) of the differences in socio-economic well-being of women entrepreneurs in selected counties in Kenya. (see Table 8 below). The results in Table 9 further show that the predictor had a substantive favourable outcome on socio-economic well-being, with the regression model being significant ($F [1, 263] = 67.728, p < .001$).

The regression results in Table 10 indicate that informal hospitality services significantly affect the socio-economic well-being of women entrepreneurs ($\beta = .415, t = 8.230, p < .001$).

Table 8: Regression Model Summary for Informal Hospitality Services

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	SE of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R-Square Change	F	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.453 ^a	.205	.202	.80508	.205	67.728	1	263	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Provision of informal hospitality

Table 93: Regression-ANOVA for Informal Hospitality Services

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	43.899	1	43.899	67.728	.000 ^b
	Residual	170.466	263	.648		
	Total	214.365	264			
	Residual	129.807	261	.497		
	Total	214.365	264			

a. Dependent Variable: Socio-economic index

Table 10: Model Summary for Informal Hospitality Services and Socioeconomic Well-being of Women Entrepreneurs

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.399	.161		14.863	.000
	Provision of informal hospitality	.415	.050	.453	8.230	.000

Dependent Variable: Socioeconomic well-being

The implication of this finding is that a unit increase in informal hospitality services will increase the socio-economic well-being of women entrepreneurs by .42 units. The findings indicate that the more involved the women are in the informal hospitality services, such as provision of outside catering, events management and housekeeping services, the better their socio-economic well-being is. This corroborates the findings from the qualitative phase of the study, as already described. Based on the forgoing results and discussions, the study established that informal hospitality services contributed greatly to the socio-economic well-being of the women in the informal hospitality services in the four counties. The results are supported by the findings of (Rehman et al., 2015), who examined the impact of interest-free micro credit loans on the lives and businesses of the female borrowers, found that women's businesses were expanding after borrowing, resulting in a huge improvement in their socio-economic status. Findings on women engagement on social network is supported by (Gall et al., 1996) who found out that those personal networks are seen as a more supportive asset than business networks; that personal contacts with other entrepreneurs are regarded as valuable; and that the women entrepreneurs who are positive towards new networks already have a more heterogenic network than those who do not express this willingness. Similarly, the findings support the works of Mwobobia (2012), who established that women use social network strength mostly for strategy analysis, objectives analysis, and problem analysis.

4.4 Business Proximity to Infrastructure, Hospitality Services and Socioeconomic Well-being

The research objective was to establish the moderating role of business proximity to infrastructure on the link between informal hospitality services and the socio-economic well-being of women entrepreneurs in selected counties in Kenya.

The emerging issue or sub-themes analysed qualitatively under business proximity to infrastructure included: transportation goods/services is a problem, accessibility of roads, availability of electricity, availability of fuel, availability of water, availability of banking facilities, availability of raw materials and that location has affected business. The results are shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Effects of Business proximity to infrastructure on Informal Hospitality Services

Section D: Business Location	M R P 1	M RP 2	K R P 1	E R P 1	E R P 2	N R P 1	KR P2	N R P 2	KF GD 1	KK FG D2	KK FG D3	MF GD 4	NF GD 5	KF GD 6	NF GD 7	MF GD 8
Transportation																
Accessible roads																
Electricity																
Available fuel																
Available water																
Available banking																
Available raw materials																

All the participants in the qualitative phase reported that they face challenges because of the location of their businesses. The majority of the women interviewed in the four counties also observed that transportation of goods and services was a problem. Raw materials also posed a great problem to the women, apart from two women interviewed in the four counties who reported having access to available raw materials from the areas where they operated. This is because most women obtained the raw materials from local markets at a wholesale price, and the markets were also near where they operated from. The main challenges related to business proximity to infrastructure, as highlighted by the participants, were in accessible roads and electricity-related issues. Issues related to fuel and water were also reported by a number of participants. The business proximity to the infrastructure of informal hospitality services affected women entrepreneurs in the provision of the services differently, as was observed by the many participants providing these services, especially in the rural setup. Some of their sentiments are captured, implying that business proximity to infrastructure is a key issue affecting the provision of informal hospitality services, which in turn impacts the socio-economic well-being of women entrepreneurs.

“Transportation of goods and services is a challenge because transport is expensive. Also, in this location we experience challenges associated with bad roads which are sometimes inaccessible together with the lack of electricity. The main source of cooking energy is firewood which is not accessible most of the times. Accessing clean water is also

problematic in this location. Most of the times the client has to organize for water from Molo River and treat it before we use it, we still struggle to access banking facilities and agents and it is quite a distance and it costs Kshs. 200 with a motorbike to and from. Finally, not all raw materials are available locally and we have to go to either Rongai town or Kambiya Moto which is quite a distance to buy these materials. If we fail to get them in these two shopping centres, then we have to go to Nakuru town.” (NRP2).

Other women in the informal hospitality services had different opinions in relation to the location of the services, as observed by the interviewed women by a respondent in an urban setup.

“The location of our business has affected transportation positively because there is availability of efficient means of transport together with good roads which has enabled us to transport our goods and services as per the needs. Our location has good supply of electricity, available fuel for cooking and at the same time clients ensure there is constant supply of water during production and service. We have available simple banking facilities around our location which has enabled us to deposit our money whenever we wish conveniently. Raw materials are also readily available in our locality. These can be provided by the client or sometimes we buy from the wholesale market for both dry and perishable ingredients. Furthermore, our location in town has impacted us positively since most people are busy thus not able to do their own cooking. We therefore get called to provide cooking services in most functions or activities.” (NRP1).

The findings on the business proximity to infrastructure are further validated by the data collected during FGD, whose analysis indicated similar challenges and strengths of business proximity to infrastructure. A participant made the following observations as far as business location affects the provision of the services.

“Our location is a rural settlement area where we are united and we work together. Transport is expensive since we have to use a tractor to transport goods and services, it cost about Kshs. 2,000. The roads are bad especially when it rains and electricity is a challenge as very few homesteads are connected to the grid. We use firewood for cooking and it is usually not easily available and it is costly for us. We have a challenge of water accessibility. We have banking agent facilities around where we can do our banking transactions. We get our raw materials from Sondu at a slightly higher cost so we would rather go shop in Kisumu.” (KFGD1).

Transportation of goods and services including bad roads affected the informal hospitality services especial many women entrepreneurs according to the observation of one of the women.

“Transportation of goods and services is a challenge because the roads are poor. We therefore have to hire transport which can be costly when using man labour and motor bikes. Some roads are not good thus making them not accessible which inconveniences most of the times.” (MRP2).

The situation of transportation and road conditions within towns was found to be slightly different due to the fact that town areas have better road networks.

“Transportation used to be a challenge for us because we had to hire a vehicle to transport our items which was costly for us. But in recent days the roads are improving and becoming more accessible.” (ERP1).

Another participant in the FGD singled out how location affected them within town which include.

Transportation is mainly using pick-ups and motorbikes which are costly. Roads are much better as compared to before but means of transport is limited because of the high cost, leaving only motorbikes as the only means available. The cost of electricity cost is high since we do a lot of baking using electricity, we therefore end up paying high bills and this is eating into our profit. We usually use biogas which is cheap to cook within our locality. Water is readily available and not a challenge.” (MFGD4).

Fewer women seemed not to have many challenges related to business proximity to infrastructure in the provision of informal hospitality services, as was shared by a participant. This is because they are situated in urban centres where a transport network is available and efficient. The roads are accessible to different places where they provide their services.

“In our location, transportation is easily available as we usually hire a pickup to transport food and equipment to a client’s function. The roads are good and accessible making transportation of food and equipment easier and cheaper for us. Electricity is usually available in the functions that we cater at and this has made our work easy at the same time there is usually generator on standby in case power goes off. Fuel is available as we usually use gas to cook which is being costly. Water is usually available at the venue in town where we usually cook from, making the preparation and cooking process easy. When we go for out-of-town events, the clients usually provide the water which at times is not running water; this makes the work a bit cumbersome. We always have a readily available market because of the client referrals we get which keep us on our toes. Those we have worked for usually mention our name and the kind of services we do offer. This gives us an upper hand which makes the clients to give us the work. We are in town and the banking facilities are available, and we usually bank whatever money we get from contracts and our savings conveniently. Raw materials are readily available from the wholesale markets at an affordable price.” (NFGD5).

Quantitatively, the study sought to analyse the moderating role of business proximity to infrastructure in shaping informal hospitality services and socio-economic well-being of women entrepreneurs in selected counties in Kenya. The model two regression results (see Table 12) indicate that both informal hospitality services and business proximity to infrastructure accounted for 34.1% ($R^2 = .341$) of the variation in socio-economic well-being of women entrepreneurs in selected counties in Kenya.

Table 12: Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	SE of the Estimate	R-Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F	df1	df2	
1	.453 ^a	.205	.202	.80508	.205	67.728	1	263	.000
2	.584 ^b	.341	.336	.73424	.136	54.197	1	262	.000
3	.628 ^c	.394	.387	.70523	.053	23.003	1	261	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Provision of informal hospitality

b. Predictors: (Constant), Provision of informal hospitality, Business proximity

c. Predictors: (Constant), Provision of informal hospitality, Business proximity, InterffecXM

The results in Table 13 further show that both the predictors in model two had a substantive favourable outcome on socio-economic well-being, with the regression model being significant ($F [2, 262] = 67.813, p < .001$). The results (see Model 2 in Table 14) further point out that informal hospitality services significantly affect the socio-economic well-being of women entrepreneurs ($\beta = .342, t = 7.262, p < .001$), but the effect has decreased with the introduction of the moderator. This implies that the moderator, which also significantly affects socio-economic well-being ($\beta = .339, t = 7.362, p < .001$), absorbed some of the effects. This outcome is even more pronounced when the interaction term is included in the relationship, as shown in Model 3 in Tables 12, 13 and 14.

Table 13: Regression-ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	43.899	1	43.899	67.728	.000 ^b
	Residual	170.466	263	.648		
	Total	214.365	264			
2	Regression	73.118	2	36.559	67.813	.000 ^c
	Residual	141.248	262	.539		
	Total	214.365	264			
3	Regression	84.558	3	28.186	56.673	.000 ^d
	Residual	129.807	261	.497		
	Total	214.365	264			

a. Dependent Variable: Socio-economic index

b. Predictors: (Constant), Provision of informal hospitality

c. Predictors: (Constant), Provision of informal hospitality, Business proximity

d. Predictors: (Constant), Provision of informal hospitality, Business proximity, InteffecXM

Table 14: Model Summary showing Moderating Effect of Business Proximity to Infrastructure on the Relationship between Informal Hospitality Services and Socioeconomic well-being of Women Entrepreneurs

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	2.399	.161		14.863	.000
	Provision of informal hospitality	.415	.050	.453	8.230	.000
2	(Constant)	1.525	.189		8.061	.000
	Provision of informal hospitality	.342	.047	.373	7.262	.000
	Business proximity	.339	.046	.378	7.362	.000
3	(Constant)	-.138	.391		-.353	.724
	Provision_of_informal_hospitality	.921	.129	1.004	7.142	.000
	Business proximity	.909	.127	1.013	7.169	.000
	InteffecXM	-.193	-.040	1.012	-4.796	.000

Dependent Variable: Socioeconomic well-being

The regression test results (see Table 12) indicate an increase in R^2 , which indicates that the variation explained by the addition of the interaction term was 0.053. This change was statistically significant, given that the p-value of the change was 0.000. Cohen (1998) suggests that the change in R^2 be assessed as follows: 0.02 as weak, 0.13 as moderate and 0.26 as substantial. Therefore, the change in R^2 was found to have a weak effect of 0.053. This implies that the moderator variable, which is business proximity to infrastructure, though had a significant moderation effect on the relationship between informal hospitality services and the socio-economic well-being of women entrepreneurs, the effect was not substantial. The interaction relationship was found to be significant, indicating that business proximity to infrastructure moderates the relationship between the provision of informal hospitality services and the socio-economic well-being of women entrepreneurs. This shows that when infrastructure around the business place is well established, the women entrepreneurs do not incur challenges or costs related to poor infrastructure. This consequently translates to profitability and business growth, as a participant reported during qualitative interviews. The findings are in line with Nisthar et al. (2017), who noted that women's socio-economic well-being in the tourism industry can be fully achieved, but they are affected by several challenges. The authors recommend that the government should help women achieve their high economic growth. This was seen when the moderator, business proximity to infrastructure, was introduced in the model. This showed an increase in R^2 . This implies that when the government provides very efficient infrastructure to the women entrepreneurs, they perform better than if they are not provided. This means that the availability of good infrastructure promotes the growth of SMEs.

Women entrepreneurs require these infrastructures in the provision of informal hospitality services. This is supported by Mugo et al. (2019), who reported that the growth of SMEs has a significant, positive correlation with infrastructure. The same sentiment is shared by Obokoh and Goldman (2016), who affirmed that the progression, performance, and success of SMEs in Nigeria are affected by the absence of infrastructure. This makes the women incur high costs associated with poor infrastructure, which negatively affects their performance.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The study was to examine the moderating influence of business proximity to infrastructure on the relationship between informal hospitality services and the socio-economic well-being of women entrepreneurs in Kenya. The hypothesis analysed was that Business proximity to infrastructure does not moderate the relationship between the provision of informal hospitality services and the socio-economic well-being of women entrepreneurs. The findings revealed that the change in R^2 , which shows an increase in variation explained by the addition of the interaction term, was 0.053. The p-value of the change was .000 which was statistically significant, proving that business proximity to infrastructure had a moderating effect on the relationship between the provision of informal hospitality services and the socio-economic well-being of women entrepreneurs in Kenya. This shows that when infrastructure around the business place is well established, the women entrepreneurs do not incur challenges or costs related to poor infrastructure, and the women entrepreneurs make a profit and grow in business, as a participant reported during qualitative interviews. The business proximity to infrastructure affected them positively because of the availability of efficient means of transport together with good roads, their location has a good

supply of electricity, banking facilities are around their location, available fuel for cooking and at the same time, clients ensure there is a constant supply of water during production and service. Such a group, located where there is efficient infrastructure, performed well, and their socio-economic well-being improved.

5.2 Recommendations

The study established that informal hospitality services have a direct influence on the socio-economic well-being of women. Therefore, it is essential for women who wish to start similar businesses to consider offering outside catering and events management services. It will enable them to make profits that improve their socio-economic well-being. Housekeeping services are not favourable for women and are therefore not engaged in them to improve their socio-economic well-being, but as a way to market their services. Other women can emulate this concept by offering free services or samples to market their services and give back to the community.

Since the study has established that business proximity to infrastructure influences the relationship of the provision of informal hospitality services and socio-economic well-being it is therefore recommended that the Government of Kenya should ensure that all these infrastructures are available for women in order for them to perform better in their provision of informal hospitality services: bad roads should be made better; means of transport availed; electricity services; water supply to help the women in their engagements.

5.3 Recommendation for Further Research

1. Further research can also be done on private, individually owned businesses offering the same services and not women's groups, to compare their performances.
2. The study should also be replicated in other Counties of Kenya to find out if similar results will be established.

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