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**ASSESSMENT OF THE VARIOUS TYPES OF  
INFORMAL HOSPITALITY SERVICES OFFERED BY  
WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN KENYA**

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## **ASSESSMENT OF THE VARIOUS TYPES OF INFORMAL HOSPITALITY SERVICES OFFERED BY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN KENYA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Purpose:** Women have ventured into the informal hospitality sector to provide different services to improve their socio-economic well-being in the developed world and Africa. Similar results to assess informal hospitality services women entrepreneurs in Kenya have also been reported. These services include outside catering, events management, and housekeeping services.

**Methodology:** The study employed a qualitative research design to collect data from women entrepreneurs providing informal hospitality services through interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). The study population was drawn from women groups providing informal hospitality services and are registered by Social Services offices from Muranga, Kakamega, Nakuru, and Kisumu Counties. The study used an in-depth interview where the researcher interviewed eight critical informants from the four Counties. The purposive sampling method was used to pick the eight women entrepreneurs from the universal target population of the study. Further, the researcher carried out one (1) FGD with a total of 8 participants, 6 participants purposively identified from urban-based Sub-Counties and two (2) participants from the rural-based Sub-Counties. The researcher used framework analysis, where the collected data from interviews and FGD were organized into themes based on the study objectives.

**Findings:** The study found out that women in the informal hospitality services in Nakuru, Kisumu, Muranga, and Kakamega Counties were doing outside catering services and events management to improve their socio-economic well-being. The women entrepreneurs found these services profitable and were overwhelmingly willing to continue with the services, unlike housekeeping services that some could offer as free services to the community.

**Recommendation:** The women entrepreneurs in the informal hospitality services in the four Counties need capacity building and more funding from both the County and National Governments so as to expand and diversify their businesses.

**Keywords:** *Socio-economic well-being, Women Entrepreneurs, Informal Hospitality Services*

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Hospitality is defined as taking care of guests or clients and anticipating their needs, the relationship between the guest and the host, or the act or practice of being hospitable, including the reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers (OMICS International, 2019). The hospitality sector is an area that has attracted many players, both formal and informal. Women entrepreneurs have ventured into providing hospitality services in the informal sector. The hospitality industry is broad and rapidly growing, with an estimated global participation of 55% of women. Many women have come together to provide informal hospitality services whenever needed (Mugassa, 2015). Women's hospitality services include outside catering, housekeeping, and events management. The services are usually provided for functions like weddings, parties, funerals, hotels, and other institutions which do not want to employ their staff but want to get the services from specialized people. Hansen (2016) argue that the main reasons for engaging another company or group to do the work were access to external expertise and reduced costs. Archer, Cooper and Ruhanen (2005) assert that the hospitality industry is one of the main economic activities in the world, generating many jobs because it is a service industry that is labor-intensive. The author further notes that although the industry employs many women, not many studies have been carried out to establish the participation of women as entrepreneurs rather than being employees.

As Moeller (2010) reported, hospitality services are considered unique because they increase demand as customers continuously search for several hospitality facilities, including lodging, food, beverage, wellness, and services related to business and parking. The approach outlined emphasizes the provision of hospitality in a fragmented way which is likely to be costly and labor-intensive due to lack of complementarity. Wachiye (2016) emphasized the services offered to tourists visiting research. The findings revealed that customers search for the following services: food and beverage services, business-related services; health-related services; recreational services; lodging services, and parking services. The author, however, noted that the provision of services differed depending on the intent of the customers' visit. In a related study, it was reported that hospitality services included food, drinks, and accommodation (Murray, 2009). The author further noted that the services offered depend on the consumer's choice and the venue and whether the services can be sustained for the benefit of women service providers and the customers.

There is a gap that the current study filled by analyzing the types of informal hospitality services offered by women entrepreneurs in Kenya. Such categories include outside catering, housekeeping, and events management.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Types of Hospitality Services**

Hospitality services mix tangible and intangible components, including food, beverages, beds, ambiance, environment, and staff services, which consist of human interaction and an exchange process. Consequently, it can be ascertained that hospitality includes giving, welcoming strangers, and ensuring their safety and security (King, 2017). According to Hemmington (2007), hospitality services are relationship deeds of kindness, performance, and security extended by a host to a guest to enhance the personal and memorable experience of the latter. In this study, these are services women entrepreneurs provide in the informal sector to meet the needs of their clients. These

services include but are not limited to catering, event management, and housekeeping. When women participate in informal hospitality businesses, they diversify their income resources to boost their socio-economic well-being. The current study assessed the various informal hospitality services offered by women entrepreneurs in Kenya, a literature gap in the previous study in Pakistan where types of hospitality services were not assessed. The findings of Rehman, Moazzam, and Ansari (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 the growth of the female borrowers a considerable improvement in their socio-economic status. These groups of women are likely to be motivated and to have expertise in the field of entrepreneurship.

Hospitality services are considered unique given their characteristics that affect service provision in the industry worldwide (Moeller, 2010). Customers seek various hospitality services categorized as accommodation services, food and beverage services, health-related services, recreational services, business-related services, and parking services. Wachiye's (2016) study on the types of services provided to tourists visiting hotels in the Western Tourist Circuit in Kenya revealed that there were six categories of services provided by hotels, namely: food and beverage services, business-related services, health-related services, recreational related services, accommodation services, and parking services. However, service provision varied based on customers' purpose of the visit. Out of the six categories of services, food and beverage services and accommodation services were reported to have been received by almost every vacationer, honeymooner, and business-oriented customer. The current study assessed the hospitality services women entrepreneurs offered in Kenya, unlike Wachiye's study.

Galdon-Salvador, Garrigos-Simon, and Gil-Pechuan (2016) argue that the main reasons for engaging another company to do the work for an organization are access to external expertise, reduced costs, and allow the organization to focus on core activities. Many women have ventured into their services to different clients, including public and private organizations. In a study carried out in Tanzania by Tranche, Kaufmann, and Wollni (2016), the authors examined the contribution of entrepreneurship in general on women's well-being, but not women entrepreneurs providing informal hospitality services and their socio-economic well-being. Although the practice is gaining momentum, a knowledge gap exists in Kenya, hence the need to study it.

### **2.1.1 Outside Catering Services**

Outside catering services are the preparation and serving of food at a different place away from the business premise; it is also referred to as off-premises catering, where food and drinks are provided instead of the customer going to the catering premises. In outdoor catering, all service is provided in various locations, and the menus typically vary depending on the facilities available (Rotich, Yego & Korir 2012). Changes in the economic status of individuals necessitate that they demand more customized services such as service delivery of supply food and drink to their premises (Rotich et al., 2012). Hospitality clients nowadays prefer privacy and convenience, thus increasing demand for outside catering services. There are no special and fixed services and menu items for outside catering, and the supplier must be versatile to accommodate the clients' needs.

The services provided in outside catering include parties; wedding receptions, funerals; fundraising events; exhibitions; agricultural shows, sports events, and any other social functions. During such kinds of gatherings, the company or the caterer is supposed to provide meals as agreed

in the contract, and these may include a complete meal, snacks, cake for the occasion, flowers, and several women have joined the business because of its benefits. Rotich et al., (2012) observed that (69%) of the participants doing outside catering were female, revealing that women are increasingly getting involved in informal hospitality services; however, outside catering services were not assessed in this current study.

### **2.1.2 Events Management**

Events management creatively uses the technical skills needed to arrange a targeted event for the target audience to accomplish the intended goal, including weddings, gatherings; birthdays; and funerals, among others (Raj, Walter & Rashid, 2017). According to Bowdin, McPherson, and Flinn (2006), the word event management is used by many individuals in a variety of respects; there is an endless debate about the rise of business events, even though there is little evidence to support this because not so much research has been done in this field, despite the fact that it is a real sector of the hospitality industry. The authors further confirm that external factors, such as political, economic, social and technical factors, all have an effect on the provision of such services. Many women are interested in the provision of these facilities because of the advantages of the industry that employs them. These involve improved and more tailored programs, cost-effectiveness, emphasis on core activities, to name but a few. The same idea has been supported by Baytok, Hasan & Zorlu (2013) where the authors note that the key reasons why these organizations choose their programs include achieving economic benefits, increasing quality of care, reducing costs, concentrating on critical skills, expertise, and human capital that is not accessible within the organization.

### **2.1.3 Housekeeping Services**

Housekeeping services entail providing comfortable and luxurious services from lodges, entertainment, business, and leisure needs to clients in need at any given time and ensure a clean, hygienic, and fresh environment (Singh, 2014). Housekeeping services also include providing services like sofa set cleaning, carpet cleaning, office cleaning, hospitality cleaning, industrial cleaning, car interior cleaning, warehouse cleaning, commercial property cleaning, residential cleaning, sanitary and washrooms, laundry, flowers, etc. fumigation. Women in various institutions have offered these services whenever an opportunity arises. Kaur (2015) alludes that factories, offices, schools, banks, hospitals, hotels, restaurants, and other private and government-run entities do not provide these facilities but instead contract service providers. A few empirical types of research have been performed on the documentation of the different types of informal hospitality services provided by women entrepreneurs in Kenya. In this research, the researcher assessed the range of these services provided by women in Kenya.

## **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Study Location**

This study was conducted in four selected Counties: Nakuru, Muranga, Kisumu, and Kakamega, among 47 Counties in Kenya. For the case of Nakuru County, Rongai Sub-County was picked to represent rural setup, whereas Nakuru West and Nakuru East Sub-Counties represent urban setup. In Nakuru County, the land is the primary source of livelihood for many people. All socio-economic activities, including informal hospitality services, largely depend on the land where raw materials for the production of these services. The settlement pattern of Nakuru County is based

on urban and rural setups. The urban population shows a significant growth in towns, attributed to growing social-economic activities. The County has a primary market where farm produce trading takes place, which has helped the women entrepreneurs because they can buy the items they need at wholesale prices. The growth of enterprises has been realized due to enabling environment and support created by the County Government (Nakuru County Integrated Development Plan 2018-2022, 2018). Therefore, Nakuru County was chosen because it is the fastest-growing town in East and Central Africa and can act as a catchment for informal hospitality services for the women entrepreneurs providing outside catering, events management, and housekeeping hospitality services (Un-Habitat, 2010).

Kisumu County is in old Nyanza Province or region, where Kisumu East, Kisumu central Sub-Counties were picked to represent urban setup and Nyakach representing rural. The County comprises urban and rural setups and the rich ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity, with the Luo dominant. The County also has a formal hospitality business; for instance, the County has about 1200 hotel rooms (Murimi, 2020). The County is served with reliable infrastructure, which is an enabler in lowering the cost of doing business by the women entrepreneurs. It is also served by reliable road networks that have made transport efficient for women in the informal hospitality business.

Kano Plains has soil suitable for rice, horticulture, and sugarcane production. Kisumu West Sub-County and upper Nyakach have red-loamy soils suitable for agricultural production. The lake shores are generally swampy and offer fertile ground for horticulture and fish breeding. The justification for the choice of Kisumu County is that rice and other food are grown to provide raw materials used in the informal hospitality industry at affordable prices (Kisumu Integrated Development Plan, 2018). Kisumu County is the home of the Luo tribe, where funeral ceremonies attract large crowds and a cultural practice where people feast in funeral services, which provide business opportunities for women in the informal hospitality services.

In Kakamega County, located in the Western region, Lurambi and Mumias East Sub-Counties represented the urban setup, whereas Mumias West represented the rural setup. The climate is conducive to many activities, including crop and animal production. These have been used as basic raw materials by women in their businesses in informal hospitality at lower prices because they are found locally. The status of roads, access to clean and safe water, quality healthcare, energy access, education, and food production have contributed positively to women's involvement in providing informal hospitality services within the County of Kakamega (Fay, 2018). Kakamega County is the home of many festivals, including bullfighting and traditional circumcision festival. Kakamega County is the home of the largest sub-tribes with diverse cultural festivals. These festivals attract huge crowds, and, in most cases, food is part of the rituals in the festivals. These festivals provide opportunities for women in the informal hospitality sector, which was the target population of this study.

In Murang'a County, Gatanga and Kandara Sub-Counties represented urban setup whereas Kigumo Sub-County represented rural setup. Murang'a County is where Gikuyu and Mumbi, the ancestors of the Kikuyu, started the Agikuyu community. It is a cosmopolitan County located in the former Central Province. The upper part of the County mainly depends on agriculture due to the fertile soils, while the lower part depends on various informal businesses. Other economic activities in the County include small-scale fishing, banking, hotel and tourism, and nut processing.

There is also an active interchange of goods and services concerning labor, education, business, tourism, and infrastructure, among other sectors, that have motivated women to participate in entrepreneurship in the informal hospitality services. Murang'a County has a strong development of self-help groups for women empowerment (Mburu, 2017). Muranga County was chosen for the study because of a strong-based self-help group, which enables women to mobilize their resources to provide hospitality services. Muranga County is inhabited mainly by the Kikuyu tribe; there are festivals like dowry payment and weddings, which also provide opportunities for hospitality services by the women entrepreneurs. The hospitality-related institutions within these Counties also provide entrepreneurship opportunities for women with the necessary skills to provide these services (CIDP, 2018)

### **3.2 Qualitative Research**

The research process involved 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.

#### **3.2.1 Qualitative Interview**

In this study, the researcher interviewed eight critical informants from the four Counties to know the various types of hospitality services women entrepreneurs offer and assess the challenges of providing hospitality services to women entrepreneurs' socio-economic well-being in selected Counties. One participant was purposively picked from rural Sub-County, whereas the other was picked from urban Sub-County. The justification for picking participants from rural and urban Sub-Counties was to get information from diverse socio-economic setups on the types of hospitality services and the various challenges they face in providing these services. The study used an in-depth interview schedule to collect data from the respondents, which helped provide a clearer understanding of the phenomena under investigation, which could not be easily observed or counted (Christensen et al., 2015).

#### **3.2.2 Sampling Technique and Sample Size**

In the case of key informant interviews, the purposive sampling method was used to pick the eight women entrepreneurs from the universal target population of the study. Two women from each of the four Counties were picked based on purposive sampling by including women actively involved in the various informal hospitality services (one group from urban and the other one from rural setup). The researcher purposively picked those women who were not meant to participate in the quantitative cross-sectional survey study.

A Focus Group Discussion was used to generate information on collective views on informal hospitality services and the challenges women entrepreneurs face in providing the services. The researcher also used FGD to synthesize different meanings behind the views necessary to generate a rich understanding of participants' experiences and beliefs on these two themes. A Focused Group Discussion was done in Nakuru County with the participants drawn from 3 Sub-Counties (Rongai Sub-County representing rural whereas Nakuru West and Nakuru East Sub-Counties representing urban) due to convenience and easiness of data collection for the researcher. The researcher carried out one (1) FGD with a total of 8 participants, 6 participants purposively identified from urban-based Sub-Counties and two (2) participants from the rural-based Sub-Counties. The justification for taking 6 participants of the FGD from urban Sub-Counties in

Nakuru County is that the two Sub-Counties being urban are cosmopolitan, likely to have more demand for hospitality services, which is likely to generate various supplies for such services compared to rural-based Sub-Counties.

### **3.2.3 Qualitative Data Analysis**

The researcher used qualitative data analysis techniques that are framework analysis. The data collected from interviews and FGD were organized into themes based on the study objectives in the framework analysis technique. Themes were then analyzed for similarities and differences, which helped put them together in broader thematic areas. Five steps of review of data in the system method adapted from Pope, Ziebland, and Mays (2000) was used for this study. Step one of familiarization is where the researcher got acquainted with raw data by listening to recordings, reading notes taken during interviews, mentioning key ideas and various themes. Step two established a thematic framework; here, the researcher defined all topics of interest, principles, and themes from which the data can be analyzed and referenced, from research questions and objectives. Stage three, which is indexing, the researcher systematically or numerically used thematic framework or index to group data into an index code cluster, typically accompanied by index names or headings, to prevent data loss. Stage four is where the researcher organizes the data according to the relevant part of the thematic framework to contribute to developing order. Step five and the last one are mapping and interpreting. The researcher visually or graphically presents the data using charts to identify definitions, map the spectrum and the phenomena of nature, establish typologies, and find correlations between the analysis variables.

## **4.0 RESULTS**

### **4.1 Types of informal Hospitality Services**

The first theme of the study was on types of informal hospitality services. The results presented under this theme were to answer the research question: What women entrepreneurs in Kenya offer informal hospitality services? The sub-themes included; outside catering, events management, and housekeeping. The aspects analyzed in the sub-themes are the period the women have been in the business, whether the business is profitable if they are planning to continue with the business and the reasons for starting the particular business. The first sub-theme under informal hospitality services was the women's involvement in outside catering services, the years they have been providing outside catering if it is profitable, whether they intended to continue with this business, and why. A further sub-theme that the researcher was interested in was whether they also carry out event management, the period they have been in events management services, whether they intend to continue with it, and if it is profitable. The research further analyzed whether the women also carry out housekeeping services, the period they have been in the housekeeping business, whether they intend to continue with it, and if it is profitable. The details of the sub-themes are presented in Table 1, and after that, discussions are presented.

**Table 1: Results from Interviews and FGD on Type of Hospitality Service**

Section A: Types of Hospitality Services	M RP 1	M RP 2	KR P1	E RP 1	E R P2	N R P1	K R P2	N R P2	NF GD 1	NF GD 2	NF G D3	NF GD 4	NF GD 5	NF GD 6	NF GD 7	NF GD 8
Outside Catering (OC)																
Events Management (EM)																
Housekeeping (HK)																
OC (More than five years)																
OC profitable																
OC Planning to continue																
Offer various EM																
EM more than five years																
EM Planning to continue																

Based on the interviews and FGD, the findings under the informal hospitality services presented in Table 1 revealed that the women in Nakuru, Kakamega, Kisumu, and Muranga Counties are involved in two main hospitality businesses, is outside catering and event management services which form the main sub-theme to be discussed in the findings. The provision of outside catering and events management services was due to the nature of housekeeping services, which is complex, sensitive, and requires enormous capital that the women in informal hospitality services may not afford.

#### 4.1.1 Outside Catering Services

This section presents the results of outside catering services offered by Women in informal hospitality services in Nakuru, Kisumu, Muranga, and Kakamega Counties. The outside catering services offered by the women according to the interviews and FGD results included; Preparing and serving meals and drinks, preparing and serving snacks, baking different types of cakes like wedding and birthday cakes, hiring out kitchen equipment, and hiring tents. The results presented also included the frequency of the services, whether the service is profitable or not, and whether the women interviewed intended to continue offering outside catering services, as presented in Table 1.

The services provided in outside catering include functions such as; parties, wedding receptions, funerals, fundraising events, exhibitions, agricultural shows, sports events, and other social functions. During such kinds of gatherings, the women provide meals as agreed in the contract, and this may include a complete meal, snacks, cake for the occasion, flowers, and several women have joined the business due to its benefits. This finding is confirmed by Rotich et al. (2012), who observed that (69%) of the participants doing outside catering were female, showing that women are increasingly getting involved in informal hospitality services.

*"We started our business in 2015 to get financial upkeep for members, and we identified that there was a gap since no catering services were being offered in the area. We have been offering outside catering services for six years, and we cook and serve food, hire out utensils and tents, provide Public Address and Master of Ceremony services, bake cakes, make yogurts and snacks. We offer these services because we have the capacity and some services are occasional therefore complementing each other as we also provide employment opportunities to the community members. We intend to continue with the outside catering business it gives good profit and provides employment in the area. This business is part-time and flexible, so it does not interfere with one's side job." (MREPI).*

Among the women who offered outside catering services, most of the women from respective sub-counties have been offering them for more than five years, with the least have been in the business for less than five years. All the women interviewed found outside catering profitable and planned to continue with the business. To validate the profitability of outside catering using data collected from FGD as one group started small in the year 2014 and grew into providing various services.

*"We started our business in 2014 in Kachan village with 52 group members, and we have now grown to 106 members. We started the group to offer each other social support in times of need, be it bereavement and funerals, weddings, graduations, dowry payments, conduct fundraisers, especially for our children who are in university and college, to get money to sustain our families and pay for medical bills and NHIF. We bought individual*

*household items like utensils and blankets and later bought utensils for the group. We offer the following services: cooking and serving, and hiring out of tents, seats, and utensils because this is within our capacity. We would like to venture into décor. In 2018 we applied for NGAAF and received Kshs. We used two hundred thousand to buy two tents, and 100 seats boosted our business. Before we bought tents and seats, we would have to hire them when we had a function; this was costly. We were thinking of buying a Public Address system, and then Corona started and disrupted the process. There is a catering training institute coming up, and we would wish to sponsor some of the members to go and train there. Our clients are members and people from the community and surroundings. Members receive services at a lower fee and pay for transportation of equipment, goods, and services. Clients love our services because we have many things to offer. We are clean and observe hygiene protocols, talk and engage with them respectfully and kindly, and do not rush clients to return the hired items as we give them time and do not charge an extra fee. We are currently performing well compared to where we started. We wish to do even better going forward." (NFGD2).*

Training is a significant component in the provision of informal hospitality services. Results from the study revealed that the women also recognize the role of training in enhancing informal hospitality services. They were able to identify the upcoming and existing training institutes that offered training in catering services and were willing to take further steps to mobilize resources within their groups so that they sponsor their members to attend such training for the benefit of the group. Resource mobilization was also a key finding from the study where women mobilized resources through their contributions and obtained loans to finance the outside catering services they offered. Therefore, this finding indicated that women in the County's informal hospitality services under the study were good resource mobilization in attaining their business goals.

In conclusion, from the results presented in Table 1, the research concludes that women in the informal hospitality services in Nakuru, Kisumu, Muranga, and Kakamega Counties were doing outside catering services to improve their socio-economic well-being. The women entrepreneurs found outside catering services profitable and were overwhelmingly willing to continue.

#### **4.1.2 Events management**

Section 4.2.2 presents the results of women's events management services in Counties' informal hospitality services under the study. According to the interviews and FGD results included; Venue decoration services, events coordination, sound and lighting services, entertainment, tents and chairs, venue sourcing, toiletry, media, and security services. The results presented also included the frequency of the provision of the services, whether the service is profitable or not, and whether the women interviewed intended to continue offering outside catering services.

Results revealed that most of the women interviewed offered events management services and have been offering the service for more than five years. These women would like to continue with the service because it is profitable. Some of the women interviewed found events management services easy to carry out since most of them observed they were busy in their farms or other businesses; therefore, they preferred to provide events management compared to outside catering services as reported by the respondent from Nakuru County.

*"We carry out event management business targeting events such as weddings, funerals, dowry payment, seminars, and graduation parties. We have been in the events management business for three years now, and we intend to continue as it is profitable and assists members in many ways, as mentioned above." (KRPI).*

The findings in the disparity in the provision of the services based on the location noted that the group from rural setup specialized more on events management involving the hiring of tents, seats, and other equipment like sufurias, plates caps, among other kitchenware, because of the nature of their daily activities based on the affordable unit cost of one seat to the group members as presented in the framework analysis in Table 1. Outside catering is a highly specialized service that requires specific training compared to events management, which does not require specialized training, making events management popular among women living in the rural setup compared to women in the urban setup who could venture even into outside catering services.

*Our group is called Kokwet Women Group, and we have a total of 110 seats that we hire out. There was a demand for the business, and it was easy and affordable to buy the seats. We are primarily busy farmers, so we just hire them out and proceed with our daily businesses." (NFGD6).*

Different groups had various reasons for starting or choosing their businesses; a group hiring chairs and tents observes that their group was started after the 2007/2008 post-election violence. The group, therefore, was started to uplift the members who were affected by the violence socioeconomically. Women's participation in informal hospitality services here played a leading role in the empowerment of the members out of such a calamity as 2007/2008 post-election violence and, through diligence, has managed to grow up the group.

*We started the business in 2008 after the Post-Election Violence (PEV). Some members were affected by the clashes, so we decided to help them financially by each member contributing Kshs. 100 when we visited them. We started doing table banking and giving out loans to members. Each member would deposit whatever amount they were comfortable with into the bank account. When we saved money from table banking, we started a catering business. To get more funds, we did fundraising, where we invited politicians, friends, and other groups to contribute. We managed to get Kshs. 140,000, which we used to buy seats and tents for 50 people. We continued contributing amongst ourselves to buy a tent for 100 people.*

*When we did not have enough money to buy more equipment, we went to our area MCA to ask for his assistance, and he directed us to the Kenya Women Enterprise Fund office. We wrote a proposal and applied for WEF, and we were allocated Kshs. 100,000, but we did not receive the whole amount due to administrative fees. We used the money to buy more seats and a generator. After a year, we received another Kshs. 200,000 which we used to buy utensils and last year we got Kshs. 350,000, which we are still paying back.*

*Furthermore, we received a Kshs. Two hundred thousand grants from NGAAF, which we used to buy more utensils." (NFGD1).*

The choice of the type of informal hospitality service offered by the groups depended on whether the service is demanding and labor-intensive like those groups who participated in the hiring of tents and chairs, which is not labor-intensive and does not require a high level of skills compared

to outside catering. This finding revealed that the women in the informal hospitality services in the Counties under the study were aware of the risks involved in providing the services based on the labor and skills required, leading them to make deliberate choices in the provision of the services.

*"We decided to engage in this business because most of the members are busy, and the business is not tiresome and demanding. We started our business as table banking but after being given Ksh. 50,000 (WEF), we bought chairs and later got Ksh. 100,000 and bought more chairs and tents. We got another Ksh. 250,000 and bought more seats. We now have 100 seats and one tent. We started this business as it did not require any skill and was easy to manage." (NFGD8).*

FGD established that women offered services specialized as per the location of the businesses; urban and rural locations. In the case of urban location, most of the groups were trained on informal hospitality services, and they had resources, they were comparatively exposed and relatively young, enabling them to offer outside catering and events management services, was confirmed by a participant from the urban-based group who participated in the FGD.

*"We also do events and decorations (flowers in church, parties, crocheting-ceremonial decorations). Additionally, we are hiring out of cups and plates and warmers (cup @ Ksh 5. Plates @ Ksh15). The reason is that there is a demand for these services and we enjoy working. We also have passion and appropriate training. We started with 50 cups and 50 plates..." (NFGD4).*

The results revealed that only a few women were not involved in events management because they were only trained in catering but not in events management services. Again, from FDG, fewer women are engaged in events management because most of them are busy, and the services are not tiresome and demanding.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion from the results presented in Table 1, the research therefore concludes that women in the informal hospitality services in Nakuru, Kisumu, Muranga and Kakamega Counties were involved in outside catering service with an aim of improving their socio-economic well-being. The women entrepreneurs found outside catering service profitable and were overwhelmingly willing to continue with the services. With regards to the results obtained from events management services offered by women entrepreneurs in Kenya, the researcher concludes that the women in informal hospitality services in the four Counties under study offered events management services. The women were willing to continue with the services because they found them profitable.

## **6.0 RECOMMENDATION**

The findings of the current study which was to assess the various types of informal hospitality services offered by women entrepreneurs in Kenya, revealed that women entrepreneurs provide different types of informal hospitality services in Muranga, Kisumu, Nakuru and Kakamega. The general recommendations based on the findings of the study are that women entrepreneurs in the informal hospitality services should concentrate on outside catering and events management services because they are profitable and can improve their socio-economic well-being. While women entrepreneurs were not involved in housekeeping service for commercial purposes and only a few women offered it as a free service to the community. This is due to its nature and complexity which requires enormous capital hence women in the informal hospitality may not

afford. For further research the study should be replicated in other Counties of Kenya to verify the findings of this research.

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