
Entrepreneurship Skills and Business Performance in Kisoro District: A Case Study of Kisoro Municipality

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between entrepreneurship skills and business performance in Kisoro Municipality, Kisoro District, Uganda. The primary objectives were to examine the level of entrepreneurship skills practiced by businessmen, assess the level of business performance, and analyze the connection between entrepreneurship skills and business performance. Data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to a sample of 150 entrepreneurs in Kisoro Municipality. Logistic regression analysis was employed to determine the factors influencing the application of entrepreneurship skills and their impact on business performance. The results of the logistic regression analysis revealed several key findings. Higher levels of education, business experience, entrepreneurial training, and capital investment were significantly associated with the application of entrepreneurship skills, which in turn had a positive impact on business performance. Specifically, entrepreneurs with college education had 2.8 times higher odds of practicing entrepreneurship skills compared to those with lower education levels. Additionally, entrepreneurs who had received formal entrepreneurial training showed a 3.32 times greater likelihood of improving business performance. Non-agricultural businesses, with an odds ratio of 3.00, were significantly more likely to benefit from entrepreneurship skills compared to agricultural enterprises. Capital investment also played a significant role, with businesses that had higher capital showing an increased likelihood of higher performance (odds ratio = 2.22). The study concluded that entrepreneurship skills, particularly when combined with access to education, training, capital, and business experience, are essential drivers of business performance in Kisoro Municipality. Non-agricultural businesses, in particular, tend to outperform agricultural businesses, indicating a need for greater support for these sectors. Recommendations include enhancing educational and training opportunities for entrepreneurs, improving access to financial resources, promoting non-agricultural businesses, and strengthening marketing skills to further boost business performance.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship skills, business performance, Kisoro Municipality, logistic regression, education, business experience, capital investment, entrepreneurial training, non-agricultural businesses.

Background of the study

In Uganda, where entrepreneurship is seen as a viable solution to challenges such as unemployment and poverty, the development of entrepreneurial skills has become a key focus of national and local governments. Kisoro District, located in southwestern Uganda, is no exception to this trend (Winny, Kazaara, et al., 2023). The district, which includes Kisoro Municipality, has witnessed growing interest in entrepreneurship as a pathway to economic empowerment, particularly among its young population (Alex & Kazaara, 2023). Kisoro Municipality, the

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administrative and economic hub of the district, has a vibrant entrepreneurial landscape, with businesses ranging from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to micro-enterprises, most of which are involved in trade, agriculture, and services (Turyatamba et al., 2022). However, despite the growth of entrepreneurial activities, the performance of businesses in Kisoro Municipality has been less than satisfactory, with many enterprises facing challenges that hinder their growth and sustainability (Sarah et al., 2024). Entrepreneurship in Kisoro District has the potential to significantly impact the local economy, but the extent of this impact is influenced by various factors, including the skills of the entrepreneurs (Christopher et al., 2022). According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), the informal sector in Uganda, which includes many of the businesses in Kisoro, accounts for about 90% of the total employment in the country (Winny, Ariyo, et al., 2023). This highlights the importance of entrepreneurship in the district's economic structure. However, studies have shown that many entrepreneurs in Kisoro Municipality lack the necessary skills to effectively manage and grow their businesses (Brian et al., 2024). A lack of formal training in areas such as financial management, marketing, and strategic planning has led to poor business performance, limited market reach, and insufficient profitability (Annet et al., 2023).

The National Entrepreneurship Skills Survey (2018) by the Uganda Investment Authority (UIA) found that approximately 50% of entrepreneurs in Uganda, including those in Kisoro District, reported a lack of entrepreneurial training as one of the major challenges affecting their businesses (Brian et al., 2024). Moreover, a survey conducted by the Kisoro District Local Government in 2020 revealed that 60% of small businesses in Kisoro Municipality were operating at a loss or barely breaking even (Ramadhan et al., 2023). This is indicative of the need for a deeper understanding of the relationship between entrepreneurship skills and business performance, as these skills are essential for entrepreneurs to navigate the challenges they face in the competitive business environment (Ntirandekura, Friday, et al., 2022). The importance of entrepreneurship skills in business performance is well-documented in academic literature. According to a study by (Margaret & Kazaara, 2024), the skills of an entrepreneur ranging from technical expertise in their industry to soft skills such as leadership and communication are critical to business success. Effective management skills can help entrepreneurs optimize resources, mitigate risks, and respond to market changes (Benard, 2023). Furthermore, entrepreneurship skills directly affect decision-making, which can lead to improved strategic planning, financial management, and customer relations. In Kisoro Municipality, while some entrepreneurs possess natural business acumen, the majority struggle due to limited formal education or training in essential business functions (Ntirandekura, Ainebyoona, et al., 2022).

A report by the Uganda Small Scale Industries Association (USSI, 2019) indicates that skills gaps in business management, particularly in accounting, inventory management, and marketing, are common among small-scale

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entrepreneurs in Kisoro (Deus, 2023). Without these skills, many businesses fail to adequately manage their finances, leading to cash flow problems and, in some cases, insolvency. The lack of knowledge in marketing and branding also means that many local businesses cannot expand their customer base or compete effectively with larger enterprises, both locally and regionally (N. Faridah et al., 2023). Furthermore, according to a study by the Kisoro Municipality Development Plan (2018), 45% of businesses in the municipality struggle with poor customer retention, which is linked to inadequate marketing strategies and customer relationship management (Ntirandekura, Friday, et al., 2022). The youth population in Kisoro, particularly those between the ages of 18 and 35, represents a growing pool of potential entrepreneurs. The youth unemployment rate in Kisoro District is estimated at 25%, which is higher than the national average of 21.4% (Nelson & Christopher, 2022). This highlights the need for targeted entrepreneurship programs to harness the entrepreneurial potential of the youth and provide them with the skills necessary for successful business management. According to the World Bank (2020), youth entrepreneurship is increasingly seen as a viable solution to unemployment in sub-Saharan Africa, including Uganda. However, for these young entrepreneurs to succeed, they must acquire skills that go beyond the basic knowledge of starting a business (Ivan et al., 2023). Training in areas such as financial literacy, leadership, strategic marketing, and problem-solving are crucial to equipping them with the tools needed to navigate the complexities of entrepreneurship (Akankwasa et al., 2022).

The educational background of entrepreneurs in Kisoro Municipality further exacerbates the challenges faced by local businesses. A significant portion of entrepreneurs in the district have limited formal education, with many having only completed primary or secondary school. According to a report by the Kisoro District Education Office (2019), only 30% of entrepreneurs in the district have received any form of vocational or business management training (Moses & Ntirandekura, 2022). This lack of formal education and training translates into inadequate business planning, poor financial management, and a lack of market awareness, all of which negatively impact business performance. The same report also highlighted that 40% of entrepreneurs in Kisoro Municipality reported not knowing how to access financial services, such as loans or grants, due to insufficient financial literacy (Alex & Julius, 2024).

Statement of the problem

Entrepreneurship is widely recognized as a key driver of economic development, particularly in developing regions like Uganda (Frank et al., 2023). In Kisoro District, located in the southwestern part of the country, entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in the local economy, as it contributes to employment creation, poverty alleviation, and the overall economic growth of the municipality (K. Faridah et al., 2023). However, despite the significant importance of entrepreneurship, business performance remains suboptimal in Kisoro Municipality. A recent study by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2023) highlighted that the district's unemployment rate stands at approximately 9.6%, which is higher than the national average of 8.4%, indicating challenges in job creation, largely due to inadequate entrepreneurship skills among business

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owners and entrepreneurs in the area (Nelson & Christopher, 2022). Many local businesses struggle to achieve long-term success and profitability, with a large proportion failing within the first five years of operation. A study by the Uganda Investment Authority (2022) revealed that about 60% of micro and small enterprises (MSEs) in Kisoro fail to reach sustainability, with common challenges including poor financial management, lack of business planning, inadequate marketing strategies, and insufficient entrepreneurial education (Oscar et al., 2023).

While Kisoro Municipality has witnessed some growth in the number of small businesses, there remains a gap in the entrepreneurial skills necessary for these businesses to thrive and expand (Turyatamba et al., 2022). Entrepreneurs in the district often lack crucial skills in financial management, strategic planning, and market research, which are essential for improving business performance (Tasha et al., 2023). A 2021 report by the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives (MTIC) noted that the lack of access to relevant training and resources significantly hampers the ability of entrepreneurs in Kisoro to build competitive businesses. Furthermore, studies by the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2020) suggest that the performance of small businesses in Kisoro is also constrained by a lack of innovation and limited access to markets, which are directly linked to the insufficient entrepreneurial skills of business owners (Lydia et al., 2023). Given these challenges, there is an urgent need to investigate the role of entrepreneurship skills in enhancing business performance in Kisoro District, specifically Kisoro Municipality.

Specific objectives

1. To find out the level of practicing entrepreneurship skills by businessmen in Kisoro Municipality, Kisoro District.
2. To find out the level of business performance in Kisoro Municipality, Kisoro District.
3. To find out the relationship between entrepreneurship skills and business performance in Kisoro Municipality, Kisoro District.

Methodology

The study was conducted using a descriptive correlational research design, which was deemed appropriate for investigating the relationship between entrepreneurship skills and the performance of businesses in Kisoro Municipality, Uganda (Jallow et al., 2022). This design was selected to provide a comprehensive understanding of how specific entrepreneurial skills impact business success by collecting both qualitative and quantitative data (Abiodun Nafiu, 2012). The descriptive aspect of the design allowed the study to capture the current state of entrepreneurial skills and business performance within Kisoro Municipality, while the correlational aspect helped to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between these variables (Olanrewaju, Waititu, et al., 2021).

The target population for this study was composed of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) operating within

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Kisoro Municipality, which, according to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2023), is home to approximately 1,200 registered SMEs spanning a variety of sectors such as retail, agriculture, services, and manufacturing (Turyatemba et al., 2022). Given the varied nature of businesses in the district, a stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure that different sectors were adequately represented. Stratified sampling was chosen because it allowed for the creation of homogeneous subgroups based on the type of business sector, and then businesses were randomly selected from each subgroup to ensure that the sample reflected the diversity of entrepreneurial activities in Kisoro (Olanrewaju, Waititu, et al., 2021). The final sample size consisted of 120 business owners, which was determined using Cochran's formula for sample size determination in large populations, ensuring that the sample would be statistically representative and provide sufficient data for reliable analysis (A & Ahmed, 2019).

Data for the study was collected through a combination of primary and secondary data sources, with a primary focus on gathering first-hand information from the business owners themselves. Primary data was obtained using a structured questionnaire that was developed specifically for the study (A. Nafiu et al., 2012). The questionnaire was designed to assess two key areas: (1) the entrepreneurship skills possessed by the business owners and (2) the performance of their businesses. The section on entrepreneurship skills sought to capture a range of competencies, including financial management, marketing, business planning, leadership, and innovation, all of which are considered essential for successful entrepreneurship (Moses & Nancy, 2024). The section on business performance focused on factors such as profitability, growth, market expansion, and business sustainability. The questionnaire was pre-tested on a small sample of 10 business owners from a nearby district to ensure clarity, relevance, and reliability. The pre-test results showed that the instrument had a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.87, indicating that the questionnaire was highly reliable.

In addition to the survey questionnaire, in-depth interviews were conducted with 15 key informants. These included local business consultants, government officials from the Kisoro District Business Office, and representatives from entrepreneurship support organizations (Olanrewaju, Lukman Abiodun, et al., 2021). These interviews provided qualitative insights into the broader challenges and opportunities related to entrepreneurship in Kisoro, particularly those that might not have been captured through the survey alone. The qualitative data from these interviews helped to contextualize the quantitative findings and provided a deeper understanding of the barriers to business success in Kisoro Municipality (A. Nafiu et al., 2012). Secondary data was also collected from a variety of reports and publications by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), the Uganda Investment Authority (UIA), and the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives (MTIC). This data helped to provide a broader understanding of the economic and entrepreneurial landscape in Kisoro District and Uganda as a whole, and was used to support and contextualize the

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primary data collected from the field (A & Ahmed, 2019).

Once the data was collected, the quantitative data from the survey questionnaires was entered into SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) and STATA (Statistics and Data Analysis Software) for analysis (Nelson et al., 2022). The first step in the analysis was to perform descriptive statistics to summarize the key features of the data and understand the distribution of both the entrepreneurship skills and business performance variables. Descriptive statistics, including means, frequencies, and percentages, were used to describe the demographic characteristics of the sample, the prevalence of specific entrepreneurship skills, and the overall performance levels of businesses in Kisoro Municipality. This provided a foundational understanding of the data before moving on to more advanced analyses.

Correlation analysis was conducted using SPSS to explore the relationships between the various entrepreneurship skills and business performance indicators (Nelson et al., 2023). The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to determine the strength and direction of these relationships. For instance, the analysis sought to determine whether higher levels of financial management skills were associated with better profitability or whether greater marketing knowledge correlated with increased market reach. This analysis helped to identify the most influential skills for business performance in the municipality.

Results

Table 1: The Level of Practicing Entrepreneurship Skills by Businessmen in Kisoro Municipality, Kisoro District.

Variable	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error	Z-value	P-value	Odds Ratio ($\text{Exp}(\beta)$)	95% Confidence Interval (CI)
Age of Business Owner (years)	0.05	0.02	2.5	0.012	1.05	1.01 - 1.10
Education Level (High School=0, College=1)	0.9	0.3	3	0.003	2.46	1.35 - 4.50
Years of Business Experience	0.02	0.01	2	0.045	1.02	1.00 - 1.04
Access to Entrepreneurial Training (Yes=1, No=0)	1.2	0.4	3	0.003	3.32	1.63 - 6.75
Capital Investment (Low=0, High=1)	0.5	0.2	2.5	0.013	1.65	1.10 - 2.49

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The coefficient for age is 0.05, with a p-value of 0.012, which indicates that as the age of the business owner increases, the likelihood of practicing entrepreneurship skills also increases. The odds ratio of 1.05 suggests that for every year increase in age, the odds of practicing entrepreneurship skills increase by 5%.

The variable representing education level (with college education coded as 1 and high school education coded as 0) shows a significant positive relationship with practicing entrepreneurship skills, as indicated by the coefficient of 0.90 and p-value of 0.003. Entrepreneurs with higher education are 2.46 times more likely to practice entrepreneurship skills compared to those with only a high school education.

The coefficient for years of experience (0.02) is also positive and significant (p-value = 0.045), implying that with more years of business experience, the likelihood of practicing entrepreneurship skills increases. Specifically, each additional year of experience increases the odds of practicing entrepreneurship skills by 2%.

The coefficient for this variable (1.20) is highly significant (p-value = 0.003), and the odds ratio of 3.32 suggests that entrepreneurs who have access to entrepreneurial training are more than three times as likely to practice entrepreneurship skills compared to those without such training. The variable representing capital investment shows a significant relationship with the level of practicing entrepreneurship skills (p-value = 0.013), indicating that businesses with higher levels of capital investment are more likely to apply entrepreneurial skills, with an odds ratio of 1.65.

Table 2: The Level of Business Performance in Kisoro Municipality, Kisoro District.

Variable	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error	Z-value	P-value	Odds Ratio (Exp(β))	95% Confidence Interval (CI)
Business Type (Agriculture=0, Non-Agriculture=1)	0.8	0.35	2.29	0.022	2.22	1.11 - 4.45
Education Level (High School=0, College=1)	1.1	0.4	2.75	0.006	3	1.47 - 6.12
Business Size (Small=0, Large=1)	1.5	0.45	3.33	0.001	4.5	2.52 - 8.07
Access to Capital (Low=0, High=1)	1.2	0.5	2.4	0.016	3.32	1.40 - 7.90
Marketing Skills (Yes=1, No=0)	0.7	0.25	2.8	0.005	2.01	1.21 - 3.35

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The coefficient for business type (agriculture vs. non-agriculture) is 0.80, and with a p-value of 0.022, the result suggests that non-agriculture businesses in Kisoro Municipality are more likely to perform better. The odds ratio of 2.22 indicates that non-agricultural businesses are more than twice as likely to report higher performance than agricultural businesses. The coefficient for education level is 1.10, with a p-value of 0.006, showing that business owners with a higher level of education (particularly those with a college degree) are more likely to experience higher business performance. The odds ratio of 3.00 means that entrepreneurs with college education are three times as likely to have better-performing businesses than those with lower education levels. The size of the business is also a significant predictor of performance. With a coefficient of 1.50 and a p-value of 0.001, businesses with larger sizes are 4.5 times more likely to perform better than small businesses. Entrepreneurs with high access to capital show better performance, with a coefficient of 1.20 and a p-value of 0.016. This suggests that businesses with better financial resources are more likely to perform better, with an odds ratio of 3.32. The variable for marketing skills shows a significant effect on business performance, with a coefficient of 0.70 (p-value = 0.005). The odds ratio of 2.01 indicates that businesses whose owners have marketing skills are more likely to report better performance compared to those without these skills.

Table 3: Relationship Between Entrepreneurship Skills and Business Performance in Kisoro Municipality, Kisoro District.

Variable	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error	Z-value	P-value	Odds Ratio ($\text{Exp}(\beta)$)	95% Confidence Interval (CI)
Entrepreneurial Skills Score	1.5	0.6	2.5	0.012	4.5	1.47 - 13.76
Age of Business Owner (years)	0.03	0.02	1.5	0.133	1.03	0.98 - 1.08
Business Type (Agriculture=0, Non-Agriculture=1)	1.1	0.45	2.44	0.015	3	1.23 - 7.43
Access to Entrepreneurial Training (Yes=1, No=0)	1.2	0.5	2.4	0.016	3.32	1.38 - 7.90
Capital Investment (Low=0, High=1)	0.8	0.3	2.67	0.008	2.22	1.25- 4.00

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The coefficient for entrepreneurial skills score is 1.50, with a p-value of 0.012, which indicates a significant positive relationship between entrepreneurship skills and business performance. The odds ratio of 4.50 suggests that for each unit increase in entrepreneurship skills, the odds of better business performance increase by 4.5 times. The coefficient for age is 0.03, with a p-value of 0.133, indicating that age does not have a statistically significant effect on the relationship between entrepreneurship skills and business performance. The odds ratio of 1.03 suggests a slight increase in business performance with age, but this is not statistically meaningful. Non-agriculture businesses, as indicated by the coefficient of 1.10 (p-value = 0.015), have a significantly higher chance of exhibiting a positive relationship between entrepreneurship skills and business performance. The odds ratio of 3.00 shows that non-agricultural businesses are three times more likely to benefit from entrepreneurship skills in terms of performance.

The positive relationship between access to entrepreneurial training and business performance (coefficient = 1.20, p-value = 0.016) shows that entrepreneurs who have received formal training are more likely to see improvements in business performance, with an odds ratio of 3.32. The relationship between capital investment and business performance is also significant, as indicated by the odds ratio of 2.22. Businesses with higher capital investment are more likely to leverage entrepreneurial skills to achieve higher performance, as the coefficient of 0.80 (p-value = 0.008) suggests.

Conclusions

The study confirms that there is a significant relationship between the level of practicing entrepreneurship skills and the business performance of entrepreneurs in Kisoro Municipality. Entrepreneurs with higher education levels, more business experience, access to entrepreneurial training, and sufficient capital investment are more likely to exhibit strong entrepreneurship skills. These skills, in turn, enhance business performance, especially in non-agricultural businesses that tend to have better performance outcomes compared to agricultural enterprises.

Recommendations

It is crucial to invest in educational programs that focus on developing entrepreneurial skills, particularly at the secondary and tertiary levels. Programs should cover areas such as business management, marketing, finance, and strategic planning to equip entrepreneurs with the necessary tools for success.

More training workshops and seminars should be organized, especially targeting individuals with limited access to formal education. These training initiatives can focus on practical business skills and the application of entrepreneurship in everyday business operations.

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