



**MICROFINANCE SERVICES AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN
BUTALEJA DISTRICT, UGANDA**

BY

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DECLARATION

I Robert Mahago hereby declare that this submission entitled “Microfinance Services and Economic Empowerment of Women in Butaleja District” is my own work towards the award of a degree of Master of Business Administration (MBA) and that to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published by another person or any material which has been accepted for the forward of any other degree of the University, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

Signed

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APPROVAL

This is to certify that this dissertation titled “**Microfinance Services and Economic Empowerment of Women in Butaleja District**” by Robert Mahago was conducted under our supervision as the Institute supervisors and is submitted with our approval in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of a degree of Master of Business Administration of Uganda Management Institute.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my brothers, sisters and my family. Thank you for the courage you instilled in me. For your patience, sacrifice, and encouragement especially when you painstakingly had to do without me, I am grateful.

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Firstly, I thank the Almighty God to whom all the successes of this work is attributed. My supervisors Dr. Florence Bakibinga Sajjabi (Mrs) and Dr. Stella Kyohairwe, you will always be remembered for your guidance and supervision. I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to the Commercial officer - Butaleja District Local Government, Ms. Namugangu Annet, the staff of Doho Farmer's SACCO and Butaleja SACCO, and all my respondents for their valuable contributions.

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Nevertheless, I must proclaim my acceptance of all remaining errors.

Robert Mahago

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BDLG	-	Butaleja District Local Government
CEEWA	-	Council for Economic Empowerment for Women of Africa
FRIDE	-	Foundation for International Relations and Foreign Dialogue
ICRW	-	International Center for Research on Women
IFAD	-	International Fund for Agricultural Development
MFI	-	Microfinance Institutions
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organization
ROSCAs	-	Rotating Savings and Credit Associations
SACCOs	-	Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations
UCSCU	-	Uganda Cooperative Savings and Credit Union Limited
UMI	-	Uganda Management Institute
UNDPI	-	United Nations Department of Public Information
UNIFEM	-	United Nations Development Fund for Women
VSLA	-	Village Savings and Loan Association

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is about microfinance services and economic empowerment of women in Butaleja district. The objectives of this study were to establish the effect of microcredit, assess the effect of training and to establish the effect of savings on economic empowerment of women involved in microfinance activities in Butaleja district. This study looked at registered SACCOs that were operational with specific focus on Doho Farmers SACCO and Butaleja SACCO, being the prominent ones in Butaleja district. For this study, microfinance services accessed by women in SACCOs in Butaleja district were microcredit, savings and training as discussed in the theory part of the dissertation. The survey method was employed and this involved administering questionnaires to selected SACCO members. The interview and focus group discussion methods were also employed for in-depth information. The study also involved review of documents about SACCOs and their operations, the status of women in Butaleja district, the population, and the economic activities women in Butaleja district are engaged in.

The findings from the study revealed that 88.6% of the respondents acknowledged that access to microcredit had positively contributed to the economic empowerment of women through improvement of their businesses. The study also revealed that 59.1% of the respondents had attained basic training in credit and business management and that they all found it useful in their business operations. The study further revealed that all respondents found micro savings useful to them and 84.1% claimed to have been able support their families through their savings.

In conclusion, based on the findings the researcher recommends that the government through its agencies and SACCOs should extend more credit facilities to women to expand their businesses. SACCOs, NGOs, and government agencies should provide specialized and regular training programmes for women entrepreneurs in order to improve their entrepreneurial skills. Government should institute policies that provide for women rights to possessions so that they are motivated to save not only for further investment but also acquisition of possessions.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Microfinance is a service that is extended to people with low earning capacity, low asset base and with no alternative means of securing or accessing financial services in the banking sector. The microfinancing service may include microcredit, savings, skills training and insurance extended to the unskilled low income earners ultimately to empower them economically (Beyene, 2009). According to Cheston and Kuhn (2002), microfinance institutions and programs initiated by NGOs or governments target women because it is widely believed that microfinancing can be a good starting point for women empowerment. Microcredit and savings provide a strong financial asset base for women to start and or expand their business ventures. The training attained gives women confidence, improves their decision-making abilities thus building their self-esteem and the desire for gender equality and active participation in the economy (Sarumathi & Mohan, 2011).

There are various underlying factors for microfinance programs advocating for or pursuing women empowerment. Some studies portray women as being underprivileged and very vulnerable in their households and communities due to their inability to make decisions, lack of access to production resources and possessions and thus many argue that getting them out this kind of situation is fundamental. Other advocates argue that improving their capabilities in decision making in their business ventures and household matters, improving their access to resources and granting them property and inheritance rights will empower women to have meaningful contributions to their households and the economy (Sarumathi & Mohan, 2011).

This study sought to establish the effect of microfinance services on economic empowerment of women in Butaleja district. Microfinance service was conceived as the independent variable and women economic empowerment as the dependent variable. Microfinance services were looked at in the form of access to microcredit, microfinance skills training and the ability to generate savings while economic empowerment of women was measured in the form of control over resources, ability to make decisions, self-esteem and possessions as explained in the conceptual framework in Figure 2. This chapter covered the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, scope of the study, significance, justification and the operational definitions of the terms and concepts used.

1.2 Background to the study

Microfinancing started in the Jobra village with Muhammad Yunus extending financial services to the rural poor in Bangladesh who wanted to start or expand their business venture but could not secure financial services from banks due to lack of collateral. In 1976, Yunus started experimenting this financial system by setting up the Grameen Bank through which the rural poor accessed microfinance services. The system involved borrowers forming groups through which loans were accessed and the repayment of borrowed funds was done through their respective groups. To ensure minimal default risks, pressure from peers was employed to borrowers to regularly meet their repayment installments in time (Kommentera, 2007). The success of the Grameen Bank was hinged on mandatory frequent and regular meetings for borrowers through which useful information concerning welfare, health, business opportunities, and education was shared or disseminated to them. Many studies show that through this system, women in households with little or no assets were economically empowered and have significantly improved their status, decision making, enhanced self-esteem and autonomy within the household (Kommentera, 2007).

Based on information from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS, 2016), women form more than half of Uganda's population, unfortunately they have not been able to take the lead in the growth and development of the country. In Uganda, policies to deal with gender issues have been formulated based on data from research. However, issues to do with control of production resources like land, business ownership, decisions regarding the management and utilization of household savings, investments and credit, and inheritance rights have been a major obstacle due marginalization of women hindering the realization of women empowerment in the country (National Development Plan [NDP] II, 2015). Consequently, establishing the effect of microfinance services on economic empowerment of women in Butaleja district in terms of decision making, control of resources, self-esteem and possessions was viewed as important by the researcher.

1.2.1 Historical Perspective

During the 1980s, most of the development interventions in the third world countries were apolitical and economic in nature. However, this generated a lot of debate and criticism from the Women movement during the 1980s. This discontent in the development intervention models led to the emergency of the women's empowerment as a concept (Batliwala, 2007). The United Nations Department of Public Information (2000) with the desire to see the position of women in society being enhanced, claimed that the perception of women world over was discriminatory and this needed to change internationally. Following the Mexico conference of 1975, the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and the United Nations Development Fund for Women were established with the aim of putting in place guidelines for observing and protecting women rights, nationally and internationally (Habomugisha, 2005).

On the basis of the 792 (XXIX) resolution on "an integrated approach to women's empowerment", the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) Conference demanded from the Commission secretariat to finalize a study on applicable solutions or mechanisms to put in place a regional financial institution with the main purpose of making financial extension to women easily accessible, affordable and sustainable. It was this same conference that emphasized that states need to put in place policies and laws that advocate equal opportunities regardless of one's gender and age in terms of financial access and protecting women from exploitation by men in the communities (ECA report, 1995 as cited in Habomugisha, 2005). According to the ECA report (1995), an expert group meeting attended by 19 high-level experts invited from member states, held in Kampala, Uganda in 1994 was organized by African Centre for Women (ACW) aimed at working out conditions for forming a bank in Africa with the aim of improving women's access to financial resources (as cited in Habomugisha, 2005).

In Uganda, Women's economic subordination is believed to have begun with the coming of colonial rule and this continued with the post-colonial governments. However, after the National Resistance Movement government taking over power, an enabling environment was created for women to have an economic contribution to their households and the economy generally. The stable political environment in the country attracted many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) particularly those interested in uplifting the economic standards of women. Through NGOs, many women were able to move from the private to the public domain through active participation in income-generating ventures (Habomugisha, 2005). In 1995, a non-partisan and not for profit NGO, the Council for Economic Empowerment for Women of Africa (CEEWA) - Uganda Chapter was registered with a view of empowering women economically (Uganda National NGO Directory, 2014). The main objective of CEEWA-Uganda was to advocate for

increased access by women to and control over financial resources and the enhancement of their capacity to start businesses, expand existing ones and become competitive in a business environment through establishing a capital asset product, reviewing of the lending methodologies by microfinance institutions (MFIs), savings mobilization, credit management, training, research, publications and increasing access to information (Uganda National NGO Directory, 2014).

The microfinance industry in Uganda is fairly new. At the beginning of the 1990's there was no specialized formal financial institution delivering microfinance services but a handful of NGOs and government programs doing so. Microfinance services provided by Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations (SACCOs) have been extended to the people of Butaleja district especially women involved in various income generating activities like farming, animal rearing, and crafts (Commercial office – Butaleja District Local Government [BDLG], 2017). According to Kabuga & Batarinyebwa (1995), the formation of SACCOs in Uganda is argued to have had three main influences including the Campbell, the Church and the Government (as cited in Nuwagaba, 2012). Mr. Campbell had an influence in the formation of SACCOs due to his experience having worked in Cooperatives in Srilanka as a registrar. The church too, especially the Catholics had a hand in the rapid growth of SACCOs in Uganda through clergies who encouraged their followers to participate in SACCO activities through which they would access financial services to enable them set up self-help projects. These efforts resulted into the formation of the current Centenary Bank. In 1972, the Government of Uganda established the Uganda Cooperative Savings and Credit Union Limited (UCSCU) as an apex body for Savings and credit Cooperative Societies (SACCOs) to encourage the formation and development of SACCOs through which the population would access financial services for rural enterprises in form of loans for investment (UCSCU, 2015).

1.2.2 Theoretical Perspective

The study was guided by Moser's Theory of Empowerment. Moser (1993 as cited in Jinia, 2016) pointed out different ways and strategies of empowering women. The theory looked at the wellbeing of people, poverty reduction among people, equitable access to opportunities by all people, the effective resources utilization and capacity building for people especially women. It was observed that the capacity building strategy as an approach to empower women is a recent development whose main purpose is to promote women's social, economic and political participation almost in all aspects of the country's development process. Moser (1993 as cited in Jinia, 2016) asserted that women empowerment entails peoples' capacity to obtain and control economic asset or property. It is important to note that when women are empowered, their sense of belonging is uplifted, their levels of self-esteem are enhanced and their capacity and confidence to engage in gainful employment, participate in economic development of their communities including their homes is much vividly noticed. Griffin (1987) identified key aspects of defining women liberation to include, ability to buy and own assets, the ability to make decision over household issues, ability of having a say in economic planning of their communities and ability to determine and shape their own destiny (as cited in Jinia, 2016).

1.2.3 Conceptual Perspective

Microfinance services are the economic services like microcredit, micro-savings and microfinance skills training provided by the microfinance industry especially the Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations (SACCOs) to the women in Butaleja district (Habomugisha, 2005). The microfinance industry encompasses a broad range of micro businesses that manage money, including SACCOs, and Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs). These self-help credit schemes have proved to be vital in improving the economic status of the poor especially women.

The ownership and governance of SACCOs and VSLAs is by members and therefore all activities are closely monitored and supervised by the members which helps to reduce on default cases that can lead to break down of SACCOs. The level of trust among SACCO members is high and this makes access to financial services easier compared to other MFIs. Decisions regarding advance of loans and access of savings by members are reached easily (Habomugisha, 2005). These micro credit schemes are normally formed by people from the same area, with a common background and interests which makes supervision easy reducing incidences of default (Nuwagaba, 2012).

Empowerment is a state in which one feels that he or she is able to freely and autonomously make decisions regarding utilization of the financial, human and intellectual resources and expression of ideologies including one's values and beliefs (Batliwala, 1994 as cited in Biswas, 2008). The United Nations (2005), listed five elements in which women empowerment may be realized including a feeling of self-worthiness, right to choices, right to determine own destiny, equal access to opportunities and production resources, capacity to play a greater role in directing social and economic activities, nationally and internationally. Economic empowerment of women was described as the ability to appreciate and dignify women's economic contribution in the development process by making it possible for them to equally participate in various economic activities (as cited in Nabayinda, 2014). According to Cohen (1997), from the study carried out by (Schuler and Hashemi) where staff and participants were subjected to interviews in various programs and from the literature they reviewed, they found out six areas in which subordination of women is experienced traditionally including decision making, effective interaction in public domain, participation in community based activities, mobility, vision of a future and security of her economic investments. The empowerment process begins with a woman's self-consciousness

before external factors like physical mobility, paid labor force, role played in every decision made at household and later community level (Shuler and Hashemi, 1993).

In this study, the researcher described economic empowerment of women in Butaleja district in terms of four components including decision making, control of resources, possessions and self-esteem as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

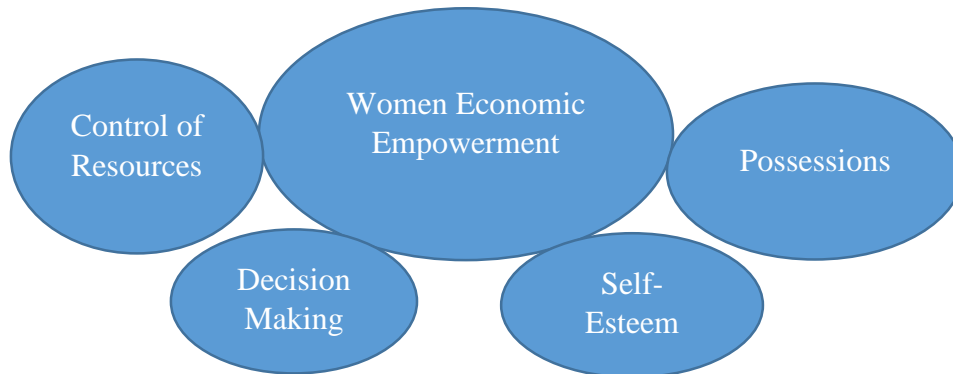


Figure1: Dimensions of measuring women economic empowerment, 2017

Figure 1 above, shows economic empowerment of women in Butaleja district being expressed in terms of four elements including women’s ability to make decisions affecting their households, control of production resources, the right to possessions and having a sense of self-esteem.

1.2.4 Contextual Perspective

Butaleja district was established in July 2005 having been carved from the current Tororo district in Eastern Uganda. In the North of Butaleja district is Budaka district, to the East is Mbale and Tororo districts, Bugiri to the South and Namutumba district to the West. Butaleja district is made up of ten sub counties and these are: Budumba, Busaba, Nawanjofu, Busolwe, Busabi, Butaleja, Mazimasa, Kachonga, Himutu and Naweyo with two town councils of Butaleja and Busolwe (Planning Unit - BDLG, 2017). Butaleja district covers an area of 644 sqkm of which 208 is wet land. The district has a population of 245,873 people of which 126,805 are female and 119,068 are male representing 52% and 48% of the total population respectively. There are 44,374 households whose average size is 5.6 people.

The district has a population of women whose education is low and lacking in skills with a high percentage of teenage pregnancies and early marriages (Planning Unit - BDLG, 2017). Agriculture is the backbone of Butaleja's economy employing about 78 percent of the total labour force most of whom are women and youth although people are engaged in other economic activities like trade, transport, small scale manufacturing, telecommunication services, and fishing. The district has over 8300 acres of land cultivated with rice and this is boosted by river Mpologoma which is the major source of flowing water from Elgon Mountain. NGOs like Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), African Women Service Trust (AWOST), VECO East Africa, and World Vision and the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries through Plan for Modernization of Agriculture (PMA) have empowered the people of Butaleja district especially women through capacity building of farmer groups on food security and nutrition; provision of farm inputs and equipment; training of women covering life skills, livelihood and financial literacy, provision of tools like sowing machines, and hair dryers to those trained (Commercial office – BDLG, 2017). The Commercial sector in Butaleja district has mobilized the people to form or join cooperatives. Currently, there are 13 Cooperatives both production and marketing SACCOs in the district. However, it is only Doho Farmers' SACCO and Butaleja SACCO that are active (BDLG Annual Report, 2014/15). This has left many questioning the viability of SACCOs which had been thought to be the easiest source of microfinance services to the very poor especially the women in Butaleja district. Going by numbers of active women associations at village level, it is indicative enough that majority of the women in Butaleja district prefer participating in setups like VSLAs which are informally organized within their communities and are closer to their homes or business environment with minimal and easier rules and procedures of operation to adhere to (BDLG Annual Report, 2014/15).

1.3 Statement of the problem

Based on information in the Five Year Development Plan (2015/16-2019/20) for Butaleja District Local Government, some of the key strategies for achieving the strategic plan include encouraging and supporting the establishment of village banks (SACCOs), supporting access to production resources, promotion of saving culture through SACCOs, and economic empowerment of all adults especially women through participation in income generating activities in groups (Planning Unit - BDLG, 2015). Whereas the trend of microfinance services provided by SACCOs in Butaleja district has been growing over the past five years, the development of SACCOs in the district has been affected negatively due to lack of practical policies and regulations, inadequate trained personnel to manage them, poor harvest storage, poor saving behavior among local people (Commercial office - BDLG, 2015).

Women who form more than half the population of Butaleja district face challenges in accessing microfinance services in these SACCOs due to constraints related to lack of collateral due to limited possessions, short borrowing period with high interest rates and limited participation in socio-economic activities due to domestic work burden and thus continue to lag behind the development process (Commercial office - BDLG, 2015). The number of women involved in microfinance services provided by SACCOs in Butaleja district has been experiencing an upward trend over the past five years. Cheston and Kuhn (2002) argue that women access to microfinance services alone is not an end itself to male domination but rather a good starting point towards autonomy if the services are well planned and utilized. Knowledge about the outcome of microfinance services in households in Butaleja district remains only partial and contestable. Consequently, an economic analysis of the effect of microcredit, skills training and savings

services in terms of decision making, control of resources, self-esteem and possessions on women in Butaleja district was viewed as an important field of study.

1.4 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to establish the effect of microfinance services on economic empowerment of women in Butaleja district.

1.5 Objectives of the study

- a. To establish the effect of microcredit on economic empowerment of women in Butaleja district
- b. To assess the effect of training on economic empowerment of women in Butaleja district.
- c. To establish the effect of savings on economic empowerment of women in Butaleja district

1.6 Research Questions

- a. What is the effect of microcredit on economic empowerment of women in Butaleja district?
- b. What is the effect of training on economic empowerment of women in Butaleja district?
- c. What is the effect of savings on economic empowerment of women in Butaleja district?

1.7 Conceptual Framework

The fact that this study was carried out purposely to establish the effect of microfinance services on economic empowerment of women in Butaleja district, the researcher conceptualized that microfinance services including microcredit, training and savings have an effect on economic empowerment of women in Butaleja district in terms of control of resources, decision making, self-esteem and possessions as shown in the Figure 2 below.

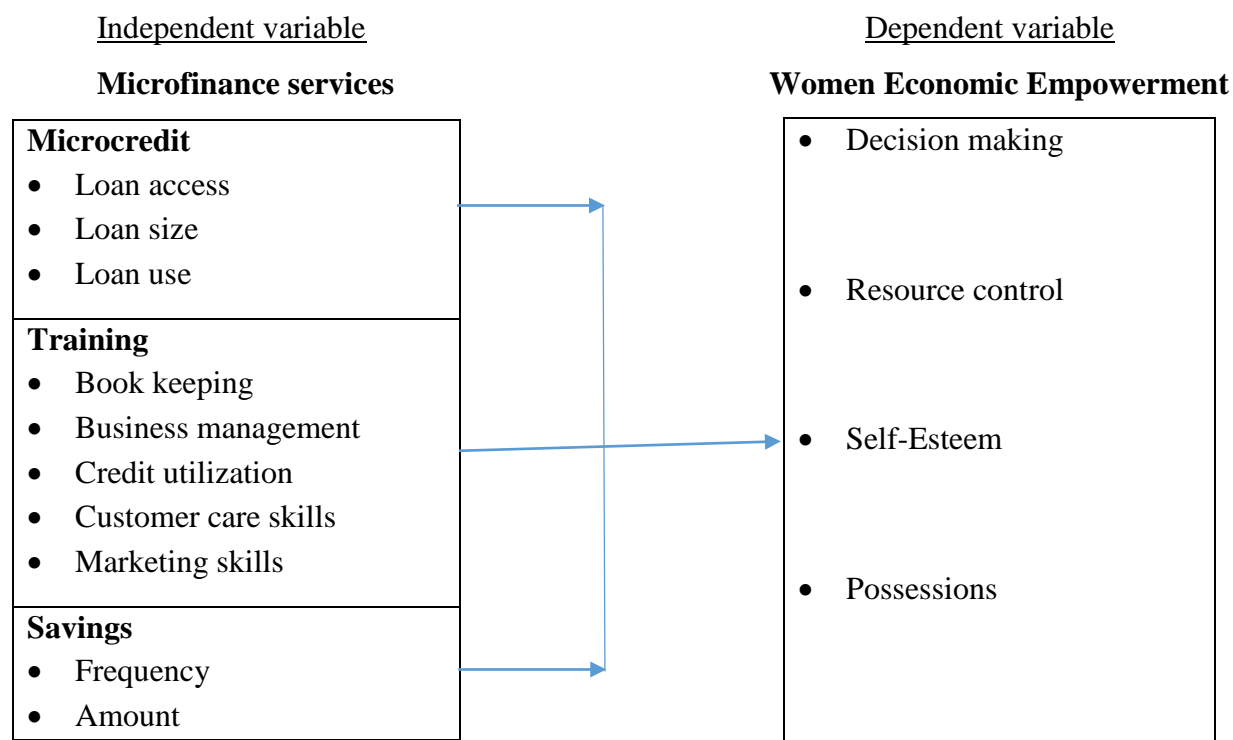


Figure 2: Conceptual framework adopted from Kato (2013)

From Figure 2 above, the independent variable is microfinance services and the study focused on microcredit, savings and training services in Butaleja district with control of resources, possessions, self-esteem, and decision making as elements for women economic empowerment, the dependent variable.

1.8 Significance of the study

The results of the study will inform households and the leaders in Butaleja district with regard to microfinance as an easy source of working capital; networking and one way women in Butaleja district acquire valued skills. The study creates an understanding of how microfinance through formation of women groups will enhance access to financial services to improve the household incomes of women. According to Project Concern International’s Women Empowered (PCI’s WE, 2013), through groups, women share practical ideas, strategies and entrepreneurial skills vital for the growth and development of their business ventures (as cited in Pomeranz, 2014).

Study results will create awareness and understanding of the operations of various SACCOs in Butaleja district. This will provide much needed knowledge on how women groups in other districts can be supported and enhanced to improve their economic status. The results will also add to the existing literature on the effect of microfinance services on economic empowerment of women in Butaleja district (Nabayinda, 2014).

The study will also help the researcher build on his academic qualifications through attainment of a Masters' degree in Business Administration of Uganda Management Institute (UMI).

1.9 Justification of the study

In their study Sultana and Hasan (2010 as cited in Shekilango, 2012) found out that enhancing access to credit services including loans, training and savings improved women's capacity to earn and status in their household as opposed those who were not involved in any microfinance activities. Another study revealed that incomes and savings generated from business ventures acquired from borrowed funds enabled women to accumulate possessions through profits and savings generated from such business ventures (as cited in Shekilango, 2012). Goetz and Gupta (1995) on the contrary argued that women's capacity to start and grow their income generating ventures through access to financial services can be hindered by their own subordination to male pressure when they hand over borrowed funds to their husbands due to lack of autonomy in decision making in their households (as cited in Shekilango, 2012). According to Gibb (2008), tradition plays a big role in the utilization and management of borrowed funds especially by women where in most households, it is the men who determine the allocation of resources and investments regardless of women's interests and sources of investment capital (as cited in Ashwin, Kiran, and Kundan, 2014).

Whereas proponents of microfinance services argue that microfinance services have beneficial and positive economic effects on women entrepreneurs, opponents on the other hand argue that caution must be taken not to be too optimistic about influence of credit services in regard to capacity building of rural poor especially females as there are some negative effects (Rogaly, 1996 as cited in Jinia, 2016). The counter findings in the empirical literature of studies carried out in different geographical locations motivated this researcher to study the effect of microfinance services on economic empowerment of women in Butaleja district. This was mainly because Butaleja is one of the rural districts in Uganda presumed to have a population of women experiencing similar economic conditions like women in other countries where similar studies have been carried out.

1.10 Scope of the study

1.10.1 Geographical scope

The researcher carried out this study in Butaleja district, being one of the rural districts in Uganda presumed to have a population of women experiencing similar economic conditions like women in other countries where similar studies have been carried out. The study covered women accessing microfinance services from Doho Farmers' SACCO and Butaleja SACCO. These SACCOs extend their services to people in the entire district including a few neighboring districts especially women in small groups commonly known as village savings and loan associations (VSLAs). Butaleja district is located in Eastern Uganda, bordering Budaka, Mbale, Tororo, Bugiri and Namutumba districts. In Uganda, SACCOs are legal microfinance institutions offering microfinance services to low income earners especially women.

1.10.2 Content scope

The study focused on microfinance services as the independent variable reflecting on microcredit access, training and generation of savings by women in the various active registered SACCOs.

The researcher focused on assessing the effect microfinance services on economic empowerment of women in Butaleja district in view of their capacity to start income generating ventures to enhance their economic status through resource control, possessions, autonomous decision making and a sense of self-esteem in the household and society.

1.10.3 Time scope

The study covered the period 2014 to 2017 because of the increasing trend of microfinance activities in Butaleja district over the stated period. Over the same period, the number of women accessing microfinance services in the district was growing (BDLG Annual report, 2014/15). Though, there is no empirical evidence of microfinance services empowering women in Butaleja district. The study focused on women who had been involved in microfinance services for at least a year.

1.11 Operational definitions of Key Terms and Concepts

For purposes of this study, the researcher defines operational terms as below:

Microfinance: refers to affordable financial and non-financial services generated and or accessed by women in Butaleja district through member managed groups like SACCOs and VSLAs.

Microcredit: refers to small loans accessed by women of Butaleja district for business investment.

Savings: In this study, savings refer to the difference between household income and consumption by women of Butaleja district during a given year.

Training: refers to equipping women in Butaleja district accessing microfinance services with knowledge and skills necessary in business management and credit utilization.

Empowerment: It means providing women in Butaleja district with necessary skills, knowledge and financial assistance for them to be able survive and make their own economic decisions.

Women empowerment: means letting women in Butaleja district living a dignified life with respect as humans having a sense of self-esteem with a high degree of freedom over resource utilization.

Control over resources: used to refer to women in Butaleja district being able to exercise greater control over resources within the household with a high degree of freedom over usage or utilization of such resources.

Possessions: This refers to the assets or property owned by women in Butaleja district under either modern law or customary law in their individual capacity.

Decision-making: refers to the ability of women in Butaleja district to play a big role in the events that take place both in their households and within the community. This variable is measured by the degree of women involvement in decisions made within the household in Butaleja district.

Self-esteem: used to refer to woman in Butaleja district being able to gain independence and respect in the household because of her ability to meet household expenses with or without her husband because of her involvement in microfinance activities. This can be measured in terms of who provides for the household in absentia of a husband (feeding, clothing, education for children).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher reviewed literature related to microfinance services in Uganda and other parts of the world highlighting the information that is related to the study objectives as argued for and against by some scholars and experts in this field. The purpose of this review was to help the researcher appreciate and gain knowledge on the study topic from the works of researchers and academic experts in this field. It was also intended to help the researcher identify gaps in the research works carried out by other scholars and experts so that further studies can be carried out. The researcher reviewed what other researchers have said about the effect of microcredit, and the influence of generated savings and training attained on economic empowerment of women. This involved reading research works, journals, reports and online information on the topic of study as detailed below:

2.2 Theoretical Review

This study was conceived within the framework of the empowerment theories since their focus is on domination and subordination. The study was guided by Moser's Theory of Empowerment. Moser (1993) described women's empowerment as the self-realization of one's potential and increased awareness of one's internal capabilities. This involves the right to choices, ability to influence change in life and ability to determine the course of action in order to realize the desired transformation in life through unlimited material and non-material resource access and control (as cited in Jinia, 2016). According to Moser (1993), when given access to financial services, women are capable of improving their economic status for not only their households but also in communities where they live.

Improved economic status was an indicator of being poverty free as stated by the Grameen Bank (GB) in its assessment of factors that would make women to be considered as being empowered. These GB indicators that were considered to regard women as being empowered included putting up a shelter, providing household furniture like tables, chairs, beddings for the family, providing clean water for human use, good hygiene, providing food and school fees for school going children, clothing, and protection of the family against killer diseases (as cited in Jinia, 2016). In the Grameen context, women used the microcredit and support of the peers to go over huddles that were holding them back in the development process (as cited in Nasrin, 2016). According to Batliwala (1993), women empowerment as a concept is understood to be an alteration in the ways in which subordination is experienced through fundamental changes in rights to property, governing laws to take care of gender issues, reward for women labor in households, and the traditions that promote male domination.

Rowlands (1995) focuses on the four forms of power including Power over, Power to, Power with and Power from within. Power over refers to the capacity of women to challenge the existing norms limiting their access to information, microcredit and other production resources and assets in the household. Power to reflects on the ability of women transforming the existing chain of command in households to be able to gain access to knowledge and skills, increase networking through group formation, demand a value attachment to housework and family care. Power with refers to the ability of women coming together in groups to have a strong voice collectively to enhance their bargaining power to achieve more than one would individually. For Power from within, Rowlands focuses on increased self-cognizance and realization of one's potential to make an economic contribution. It is a reflection about self and the desire to have one's own aspirations transformed into actions given equal access and rights to property and production resources.

Rowlands (1995) looks at the ability of people especially females having the capacity to make their independent financial decision, having capacity to contribute equally to the development of their homes and community, ability to access loans and pay back without relying on their husbands. In her analysis of the different types of power in which women subordination is played, Rowlands (1995) looks at women's capacity to fight discrimination in all spheres, ability to change the thinking of the powerless, disregarding unpaid housework, building group cohesion and alliances, networking as the way forward for women if they are to realize any meaningful results in the empowerment struggle.

Rowlands (1997) suggests a three-layered empowerment process which shows interaction and overlapping power relations that influence women capacity to keep affront in aspects of economic improvements in their environment as represented in Figure 3 below.

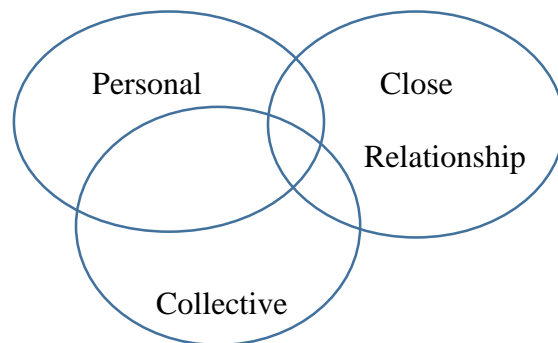


Figure 3: Rowlands' Three dimensions of empowerment

The above figure shows that at an individual level, one develops skills and capacity to make self-appraisal of the activities carried out in order to ascertain her ability to survive subjugation and other factors that act negatively to affect individual growth and contribution to own and society development. Collectively, people always come and forge relationships or from groups in order to achieve more and have more influence in their environment than in isolation. Rowlands argues that for any form of empowerment to be realized, women must be able to come together in groups to be able to sway the nature of association with other establishments by influencing choices and

decisions made within it to be able to widen their market share and to overcome any hindrances to their economic ventures.

According to Stromquist (1993), empowerment as a concept is more than individual involvement and the realization of self. She describes empowerment as a composition of the intellectual, mental and economic status of a person including the political element. The intellectual element refers to appreciation of women's circumstances of relegation and the sources of such circumstances at all societal levels. The mental element includes the thinking and belief that women are capable of changing their lived state. The economic element demands that women get involved in industrious activities that may make them autonomous to some extent despite the difficulty of attaining such autonomy at the start. This involves taking control of economic resources including accumulation of wealth, its distribution, and investment. The political element demands the analysis of the environment politically and socially to be able to mobilize the population for social change. Consequently, the process of empowerment embroils self-cognizance and shared action as key in attaining social transformation (as cited in Medel-Anonuevo, 1995).

The limitations of this study can be viewed in various perspectives. Mayoux (1998 & 2001) understands empowerment to be a change process where groups or individuals with virtually no or little power gain decision making power which changes their life styles. Kabeer (2001) views empowerment as existing in three dimensions including achievements, agency and resources. Stromquist (1993) definition of empowerment consists of four components including cognitive, psychological, political and economic components. It follows from the above varying views that the concept of "women's empowerment" has no clear definition, and is equally difficult to quantify or measure in real terms using elements described by the researcher.

The choice of method to carry out this research is also difficult to make though this study was a lot more qualitative than quantitative in nature. Lastly, empirical data collected was from two SACCOs of the 13 registered SACCOs in Butaleja district. Of the total population of 975 women involved in microfinance services from the two SACCOs only 100 women were involved in this study through a survey and interviews. It can thus be argued that the sample of 100 women of the 975 was not sufficient to justify the findings of this study. With due consideration given to the above limitations, the researcher is convinced that the findings of this dissertation are strong. This is because most of Butaleja's population experience the same environmental and economic conditions and more than 80% of its population belongs to the same tribe and therefore are affected by the same cultural values and beliefs.

2.3 Empirical Review

2.3.1 Introduction

This section reviewed related literature in regard to microfinance services highlighting the effect of each microfinance service on economic empowerment of women in areas studied. According to the Report on the State of the Microcredit Summit Campaign (2001), particular financial and non-financial institutions including NGOs, banks and nonbank financial establishments provide financial services to about 14.2 million women regarded among the poorest in the world however, benefits accruing to women from their access to financial services is still limited due to gender issues despite a substantial increase in the past 10 years (as cited in Abaho, Akisimire & Basalirwa, 2015). Cheston & Kuhn (2005) stated that empowerment is not solely determined by access to resources. It should be noted that empowerment begins with mindset change, when people are given proper training and knowledge on how to handle issues affecting their day-to-day economic and social environment.

With more access to microfinance, women are capable of making bigger contribution to incomes within their households leading to better quality of life and reduced gender inequality (Biswas, 2008).

Because of the varying arguments for and against, among these scholars, the researcher found it necessary to establish the effect of microfinance services on economic empowerment of women in Butaleja district.

2.3.2 Effect of microcredit on economic empowerment of women

According to Al-Amin & Tayub (2008), providing financial services to women leads to increased income for women which brings about improved education and health services, reduced violation of women rights, and increased self-assurance though in contrast, funds extended to women may get into the hands of their spouses which may bring about further subordination and increased violence against women in their households as revealed by some studies. The findings of the research carried out by Jinia (2016) revealed a positive impact of microcredit on empowerment of women which enables women to take a centre stage in the process of making decisions in their households. Puhazhendhi and Satya (2001) found out from their research study that Self Help Groups had been influential in empowering the poor people in rural areas socially and economically (as cited in Ashwin et al., 2014).

A client of Small Enterprise Development Program (Bangladesh), SEDP stated:

In past, I used to have serious challenges in terms of affording to buy anything without asking for freebees from my partner who would instead abuse me physically. But after taking a loan and being able to meet some family needs, he now gives me more value and respect since am able to survive on my own and even make a contribution to the family (as cited in Kulkarni, 2011).

The extent to which microfinance services do empower women have been questioned by some scholars. Some scholars like Goetz and Gupta (1996), based on their findings argued that microfinancing agendas end up disempowering women reducing them to voluntary debt collection agents for agencies that extend credit to them. Al-Amin et al (2013), in their study paper found out that for women to realize the desired changes to the lives, they need other interventions in addition to microcredit at their social, traditional, perceptual and mental levels. According to Malhotra and Mather (1997), the structure of the family plays an influential role in decisions made in households regarding finances and other equally important issues affecting the family. Access to financial services and involvement in activities that generate income creates a strong position for women to bargain for increased participation in making strategic decisions in households (Kimanjara, 2013). This is a position fewer men in Butaleja district would want to live with, based on their culture.

2.3.3 Effect of training on economic empowerment of women

Aware of the poor economic conditions of women in less developed countries living in abject poverty with low levels of education and facing other societal discriminations, training as a microfinance aspect provides the skills and knowledge required by women entrepreneurs (as cited in Maru and Chemjor, 2013). It was observed by Alila (1993) that poor business management and marketing skills, poor planning, and deficiency of available information on the possible assistance are the reasons for the poor performance of female entrepreneurs. Lack of skills is one the reasons that have contributed to the failure by women entrepreneurs to utilize the available microfinance services to their benefit hence the need for training (Maru and Chemjor, 2013). Financially illiterate people hardly plan for eventualities, access high interest loans as observed by Barua and Sane (2014). Training provides an opportunity for people to develop and advance their skills, attitudes and abilities in running their enterprises (as cited in Maru and Chemjor, 2013).

Business training if well designed can be very useful to women in their enterprises and can be vital in complementing their existing skills and knowledge to be employed in the business ventures (Cheston and Kuhn, 2002). Duca & Kumar (2014) stressed that women who have less knowledge about the management of financial services, they are more likely to fail in their businesses even after getting loan simply because they don't have financial and business plans or proposals, don't know how to keep proper records to be able to track their expenditures and incomes (as Cited in Wanjiku & Njiru, 2016).

A female member of Sinapi Aba Trust in an interview commented:

We are now able to plan, calculate and project profit. We have been able to put our borrowed funds to better use. The training provided was very good. I have been able to run my business and utilize my loan money well to be able to save for further investment (Cheston and Kuhn, 2002).

In contrast, Ehlers and Main (1998) argue that the financial help comes with more problems than solution which is harmful as opposed to what promoters believe in, based on the analysis of microenterprise development programs for poor women in the United States. They base their deduction on the fact that not many women realize the growth of their businesses into the formal sector because of gender limitations on the business type and unsuitable microfinance training (as cited in Brau and Woller, 2004). Jinia (2016) observed that for microfinance to empower women, the limiting factors should be eliminated. These include high rate of interest on borrowed funds, overlooking those in dire need, cases of violence in households, unnecessary competition among credit establishments, abuse and mishandling of borrowed funds and deficiency of knowledge and information for borrowers.

According to Swain (2007), women are on the right path in the empowerment process and with NGO interventions in form of financial support, well-designed and focused training, more positive outcomes are likely to be realized.

2.3.4 Effect of savings on economic empowerment of women

The role and contribution of micro savings in empowering women have been overlooked in most studies. A lot of emphasis has been put on access to micro credit service because that is where most financial institutions generally derive much of their profits as opposed to savings. It has been noticed of recent, that micro savings have serious important role to play in enhancing economic development of the country (Pomeranz, 2014). According to Hatch (2010), most institutions extending credit facilities have started considering micro saving as an important aspect in promoting their activities aimed at improving the wellbeing of the people in their community. It has been noticed that credit institutions have continued to offer savings service to people in communities where they are free to deposit and save with them without attracting any charges and this has encouraged many people to come to borrow and save with such credit institutions. Micro savings service encourages many people to come and save and increase their chances of borrowing big amounts of money that can enable them to start or grow their businesses (as cited in Byamuhaya & Fondo, 2014). Many studies on microfinance institutions and their role to improve the economic status of women have pointed to poor saving culture among entrepreneurs to be affecting their capacity to increase their incomes and pay back the borrowed funds (Maru & Chemjor, 2013). According to Plan International (2007 as cited in Nabayinda, 2014), as a result of Ethiopia's household economic empowerment programme, it was observed that communities that adopted the culture of saving realized more incomes from their expanded business ventures accruing from their internally generated savings.

A woman in CARE Tanzania stated:

From the time I joined VSLA I have been able to accumulate savings which have helped me to revive my business which was collapsing. The gains from my business have enabled me to meet my family needs. VSLA has helped me to change my view about myself. I now believe in myself. I no longer fear standing in front of people to provide my opinion on an issue (CARE Tanzania, 2006 as cited in Shekilango, 2012).

Mayoux (2000) widely supports access to savings and credit by women because it builds economic empowerment in association with the kind of choices made regarding credit and savings. Women are able start and invest more in their own economic ventures, attain more possessions which raises their economic status and an improved feeling of self in their households and communities as a result of their economic contribution (as cited in Shekilango, 2012). Availability of savings from their business ventures affects the regularity of movement and association of women due to widened social networks. Their increased control of borrowed funds and savings generated from their businesses is a pathway to women's empowerment (Jinia, 2016). Paradoxically, it has been observed from some studies that some female borrowers give borrowed funds to their spouses who then determine how it is utilized which adversely affects their capacity to plan and invest borrowed funds in order to realize their desired empowerment goal (Jinia, 2016).

According to USAID (2015), women in Northern Uganda have been encouraged to save using a methodology referred to as 'Save with a Purpose' (SWAP) where every new member of a group signs a promise card specifying her target of saving and when her target amount is realized, the organization provides some assistance in addition to her savings to purchase the asset they require. This system has enabled savings to work as a driver of economic improvement.

2.4 Summary of the Literature Review

In this chapter, the study reviews literature relating to the study objectives. From the literature review, several scholars have attempted to research on various study objectives; Narayan (2002), Amin (1998), and Sarumathi & Mohan (2011) reveal that microcredit positively affect economic empowerment of women. A study by Cheston & Kuhn (2002) and interviews carried out by PCI (2013) reveal a positive relationship between microfinance training and economic empowerment of women. Studies and activities carried out by some international organizations like Plan International-Ethiopia (2007), USAID (2015) and CARE Tanzania (2006) showed that savings have greatly improved the economic status of people especially females in local communities. Though scholars like Batliwala (1993, 2007), Ehlers & Main (1998), Goetz and Gupta (1996), Al-Amin and Tayub (2008), have a different perspective and continued to question the potential of microfinance to empower women due gender constraints, inability to make decisions at household and community level and worse still other women access microcredit for their husbands which disempowers them instead. Most studies have focused on microcredit as a factor for women economic empowerment with less attention paid to micro savings and training which this study intends to address. It was also observed that most studies carried out focused on regulated microfinance institutions in Uganda and even the few that focused on SACCOs were carried out in areas outside Butaleja district. According to the Commercial Officer-BDLG, it is widely believed among the illiterate communities that women are not supposed to own property while in a man's home. This has frustrated and discouraged many would be hard working women from getting involved in income generating activities since whatever property is acquired by these women through their hard work is likely to be taken over by their husbands.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the adopted research design in view of the study objectives. It also presents the target population, the sampling procedure, data collection methods employed and instruments used in obtaining data from respondents and other sources. The chapter explains how validity and reliability of instruments used in this study were met, the techniques of data analysis, how the variables were operationalized and further explain how ethical issues were taken care of during the study.

3.2 Research Design

In this study, mixed methods involving integration of phenomenological and survey designs were employed. According to Giorgi (2009), phenomenological studies involve the researcher describing life experiences of participants about an event based on their perception and feelings. It is useful in understanding certain group behaviors from a particular group's point of view. This research adopted survey method to supplement the phenomenological research design. The study employed survey method because it makes it easy to cover a large number of people or respondents in shortest time possible. The method was also considered appropriate because it allows respondents take their own time and answer the questions at their convenient time. This reduces cases of leaving some questions unanswered and also reduces chances of bias from the researcher (Ablorh, 2011). However, much as both survey and phenomenological designs were employed, this study was highly qualitative in nature.

3.3 Study Population

Population may be defined as a group of individuals or items with some similar features from which information can be collected and analyzed (Kimanjara, 2013). In this study, the female members of the selected SACCOs in Butaleja district constituted the population of the study. Therefore, based on the records in the Commercial Office and in the selected SACCOs' offices, and information provided by the SACCO staff and the District Commercial Officer, the study population was estimated to be 975 women, because VSLA membership changes very often, new members join while others exit for various reasons.

3.4 Sample size determination

In Butaleja district, there are thirteen (13) registered SACCOs though only Doho Farmers' SACCO and Butaleja SACCO are active and fully operational with numerous VSLAs attached to them spread all over the district from which women access microfinance services (Commercial officer, BDLG, 2017). The study was carried out among selected female members of Doho Farmers' SACCO and Butaleja SACCO including the staff of the SACCOs and the Commercial Officer, Butaleja district. The main reason for selecting respondents from these SACCOs was the ease of identifying them in their respective SACCOs. It was also easy to identify respondents that had knowledge and expertise on the topic that was under investigation because they are well structured with well-known members. Based on information from the SACCO staff and documents reviewed, Doho Farmers' SACCO is a fairly new and fast growing SACCO whose membership stood at 517 women while Butaleja SACCO is an old SACCO whose membership stood at 458 women as detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Sample size determination

Category	Population	Sample	Sampling technique
Commercial Officer - BDLG	1	1	Purposive sampling
Staff of SACCOs	12	6	Purposive sampling
SACCO female members with formal Education	975	53	Purposive sampling
Other SACCO female members		40	Purposive sampling
Total	988	100	

Source: Author's construct using ideas from Patton, 1990.

3.5 Sampling Techniques and Procedures

In this study, purposive sampling technique was employed. A purposive sample is a non-probability sample that is selected based on characteristics of a population and the objective of the study (Ablorh, 2011). Under purposive sampling there is quota sampling and judgment sampling both of which were employed in this study. The researcher employed quota sampling to select women from each of the sampled SACCO. This was found advantageous because it was one sure way respondents from both SACCOs would be represented much as it does not provide guidelines in the selection of the respondents. The study also used judgment sampling because the respondents in this study were known and easy to select from the available sample. The technique was found useful in selecting a sample of 100 respondents. The researcher used this technique because it helps to interact with persons thought to be knowledgeable about SACCO services and their outcome in Butaleja district (Ablorh, 2011).

3.6 Data collection methods

In this study the researcher employed self-administered questionnaires (SAQs) and interview methods to reach out to the women for personal views and feelings about microfinance services and economic empowerment of women in Butaleja district. The document review method was employed to gather documented information about Butaleja district, SACCOs, microfinance services and women involvement in those services.

3.6.1 Self-Administered Questionnaires

According to Kothari (2004), a self-administered questionnaire is a method employed to collect quantitative data from the field. This method of data collection was employed to collect first-hand information from respondents using structured questions where participants were required to pick their own answer from the provided options. This method was found suitable because it would cover a big number of women in Butaleja district involved in this survey and the target respondents could easily be accessed in their SACCOs.

3.6.2 Interview method

Use of Self-Administered Questionnaire design can gather information quickly among a large number of participants, but such surveys may have limited internal validity and low participation rates. The researcher therefore employed a semi-structured interview study design for in-depth information. Patton (1990), stressed that face to face interviews help to garner the detailed information since the method allows for more exploration and elaboration of the questions in conversational manner. The method has got some advantages including yielding detailed data with new perceptions, allows head-on interaction with respondents, offer prospect of discovering and understanding topics deeper, lets the investigator to experience the sentimental as well as mental aspects of respondents.

However, this method is costly and laborious, and requires well trained interviewers (Patton, 1990). This was used to probe the Commercial Officer-BDLG about the operations of SACCOs, microfinance services and NGO activities in Butaleja district. It was also found very useful in probing the staff of the SACCOs about their respective SACCO operations and performance.

3.6.3 Focus Group Discussions

A focus group discussion is an organized discussion of between 6 and 12 participants structured in a flexible way where all participants have an opportunity to give their opinions. FGDs help the researcher to collect a wide range of data through active involvement of the participants and each problem can be brainstormed and different views collected in a single session hence reducing time and costs of collecting the necessary data (Freitas & Oliveira, 1998). It is comparatively easier to conduct and costs are low in relation to other methods much as bringing together respondents to provide the required information is not easy. This method was used in exploring information from 40 female members, 20 from each SACCO in groups of 10 members.

3.6.4 Document review

The researcher reviewed documents in the office of the Commercial Officer and the Planning Unit – BDLG, and the SACCO offices to complement the other three methods. Document review refers to the collection of information from secondary sources. Documents reviewed included Annual reports, minutes of Council meetings and newsletters. The review of documents helped the researcher to have an idea about SACCOs in Butaleja in terms of performance, leadership, and their mode of operation including the level of involvement of women in their activities. Documents from the Planning unit and the Commercial office provided an insight of Butaleja district including activities of SACCOs, NGOS and government agencies operating in the district.

This method is cheap and convenient in extracting information regarding the background of an event of interest much as it may require a lot of time to gather the required information (Nabaggala, 2015).

3.7 Research Instruments

An instrument is a measurement device. There are two categories of research instruments including those instruments completed and administered by the researcher like the interview schedules and those completed by the participants like the questionnaires. The study employed the following instruments for data collection as detailed below:

3.7.1 Questionnaires

The researcher used questionnaires as the most ideal data collection instrument. Self-constructed structured surveys were employed to gather data in numerical form using closed-ended questions. The closed-ended surveys have predetermined questions with different options from which the appropriate one according to the respondent is picked (Nabaggala, 2015). The tool was used because it helps to collect a lot information in a short time. It was viewed to be an easy way of getting women in Butaleja district involved by providing a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ response. The researcher preferred this kind of questionnaire because the majority of the women in Butaleja district involved in microfinance services have little or no basic education hence it was easier for them to give such responses with guidance (Appendix A).

3.7.2 Interview schedules

According to Kothari (2004), interview schedule is a kind of researcher-completed instrument where collection of data is conducted by completing schedules by the researcher based on interview responses (as cited in Nabaggala, 2015). This must be done in a conducive atmosphere amiable to establish interviewer-interviewee rapport (Nabaggala, 2015).

This was useful in collecting qualitative data from the Commercial Officer, SACCO staff and women in leadership positions believed to be knowledgeable about microfinance services, the operations of the selected SACCOs and are likely to have access to information which other group members may not. The study involved posing questions to the Commercial Officer, SACCO staff and selected women leaders supposedly with a fair understanding of the group members and the responses were recorded on a standardized schedule (Appendix B).

3.7.3 Document review checklist

The researcher used document review checklist to review publications, performance reports and activities carried out in Butaleja district to help him establish the major economic activities in which women are involved and the geographical location of Butaleja district. The researcher reviewed documents to gain knowledge about Butaleja district and the operations and performance of selected SACCOs. Publications on activities of NGOs and government agencies in Butaleja district supporting women striving to empower themselves economically were reviewed. Documents especially in the office of the District Planner and the Commercial Officer were very vital in providing evidence of the contextual background and problem statement (Appendix C).

3.8 Data quality control

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) define data quality to be the level to which data and its collection process meet the desires of users. For any research to be accurate, its findings must be reliable and valid. Among the critical aspects to consider when assessing data for quality are validity and reliability (as cited in Nabaggala, 2015).

3.8.1 Validity of instruments

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) describe validity to mean the precision and applicability of inferences based on the data obtained (as cited in Nabaggala, 2015). The data collection tools before being used were given to supervisors for approval. The researcher also sought the opinion of four experts on the instruments which were useful in establishing the Content validity index (CVI) in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Content Validity of instruments

Raters	Score	Outcome
Rater 1	15/20	0.75
Rater 2	14/20	0.70
Rater 3	15/20	0.75
Rater 4	16/20	0.80
Total		3.00
CVI	3/4	0.75

In this study, four experts were engaged in regard to relevance of survey instruments and the content validity index obtained was 0.75 as reflected in Table 2 above, which indicates a good agreement according to Lawshe (1975).

3.8.2 Reliability of instruments

Reliability of instruments may be defined as the degree to which data can be trusted to denote genuine rather than spurious phenomena. Sources of unreliability are many. For the researcher to be certain of the precision, comprehensiveness, and comparability, the researcher pre-tested all research questions for rationality and "face validity" ("Does the question refer to what it intends to seek?") before a complete survey questionnaire was developed to collect data from 20 sampled female members of selected VSLAs.

The Kuder & Richardson test is used to check the internal reliability of measurements with dichotomous choices. The formula is appropriate for questions with right or wrong as possible outcomes, where a right outcome scores 1 and a wrong outcome attracts a 0 score (Saupe, 1961). From the test carried out, 0.869 was obtained as the value for P_{KR20} which indicates reliability of research instruments (Appendix E).

3.9 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher sought permission to conduct research in Butaleja District from local leaders and the management of selected SACCOs. All these leaders were briefed of the intended research. A copy of a letter of introduction obtained from Uganda Management Institute was presented to district leaders, administrators of SACCOs and all respondents explaining the purpose of the study, seeking consent and support wherever required. Respondents were duly informed and assured that information sought was for study purposes only and will be treated with utmost privacy.

Questionnaires were pretested and vague or irrelevant questions explained or removed. Then actual collection of primary data from the respondents followed where questionnaires were delivered to respondents in groups or individually and completed ones were either immediately picked or were picked the following day. Responses to questionnaires were recorded empirically and precisely. Structured interviews were conducted where sets of questions were posed to the Commercial Officer-BDLG, SACCO staff and a few selected SACCO members in leadership positions. Their responses were recorded on a standardized schedule.

The researcher reviewed publications, annual performance reports, reports from the Commercial office and the Planning unit, and minutes of Council meetings to get an insight on microfinance services and major economic activities in which women in Butaleja district are largely involved.

The researcher also reviewed published dissertations like Ablorh (2011), Shekilango (2012), and Nasrin (2016), and unpublished dissertations like Nabaggala (2015) and internet websites to expound on his knowledge of microfinance services and economic empowerment of women. Documents were reviewed helped the researcher to data on history, management, operations & performance of Doho Framers' SACCO and Butaleja SACCO. Document review was also found useful in problem statement, identifying the gap and justification of the study.

3.10 Data Analysis

The data analysis was done using both qualitative and quantitative methods as detailed below:

3.10.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

Before data analysis, the survey questionnaire was properly checked to ensure completeness, edited and coded before it was entered into the computer. Expressive numerical analysis of quantifiable data was done using EPIINFO. The researcher made use of percentages and frequencies to report on proportions of independent variables.

3.10.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data observed in the field was expressed in write-ups to help enrich the descriptive analysis in the quantitative methods. The study findings were presented using charts, tabulations and percentages in making interpretations.

3.11 Measurement of variables

According to Courtney (2013), study variables can be nominal, ordinal, interval or ratio. Any question on a survey that has yes or no as a possible response is nominal. One value is really not any greater than another. The researcher opted for this kind of level measurement because a variable measured on a "nominal" scale does not really have any evaluative distinction.

Therefore, it was viewed as suitable for women in Butaleja district the majority of who are illiterates and thus may be lacking analytical skills.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

According to Guillemin (2004), it is important to consider the ethical issues to ensure that information gathered does not have any conflicting issues. The researcher made sure that the purpose of research was well explained to the district leaders, SACCO administrators and all respondents to avoid cases of concealment of would be vital information for the study (as cited in Nasrin, 2016). While preparing for data collection, the researcher reviewed all research questions to ensure data quality. All research participants were assured of voluntary participation free from any coercion, and respect for the anonymity and privacy of information supplied (Driscoll, 2011).

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the research results, the socio-economic background and the transformations that have occurred in the lives of women involved in the survey, their businesses, households and their communities after participation in SACCOs services.

4.2 Response rate

Response rate may refer to the actual number of respondents to the questionnaires or actual number of participants in the FGD or interview compared to the target sample or population.

Table 3: Response rate

Type of respondent	Target sample	Actual no. of respondents	Percentage response
District Commercial Officer	1	1	100%
Managers (both SACCOs)	2	2	100%
Credit staff of both SACCOs	4	4	100%
SACCO female members with formal Education	53	44	83%
Other SACCO female members	40	32	80%
Total	100	83	83%

From Table 3, the response rate for the Commercial Officer and staff of SACCOs was 100% since all of them were available and easily accessible at their work places. However, SACCO members with formal education, most of who are teachers were not easy to access as they were reported to be busy teaching at the time of the visit. Though, a few were accessible with permission from their respective Head teachers and this explains the lower response rate of 83%. Similarly, other female SACCO members were equally not easy to find as they spend most of their time tending to their gardens or families at home.

4.3 Socio-economic background of respondents

This section looked the background of the respondents reflecting on their marital status, family size, level of education, age, engagement in business and savings as seen below in Table 4.

Table 4: Socio-economic background of respondents

Variable	Category	Statistics	
		Frequency	Percentage
Age (Years)	16 – 25	8	18.2
	26 – 35	19	43.2
	36 – 45	13	29.5
	46 – 55	4	9.1
	>55	0	0
Marital status	Single	7	16
	Married	35	80
	Widow	2	4
Family size	1 - 3	20	45.5
	4 – 6	17	38.6
	>6	7	15.9
Education level	Illiterate	10	23
	Primary	17	39
	Secondary	9	20
	College	6	14
	University	2	4
Monthly savings	Less than 20,000/=	13	29.5
	20,000 – 50,000	20	45.5
	50,001 – 100,000	7	15.9
	More than 100,000	4	9.1
Main business activity	Farming	21	47.7
	Animal / Poultry rearing	2	4.6
	Trading	11	25
	Processing	3	6.8
	Tailoring	3	6.8
	Others	4	9.1
Engagement in business	Yes	41	93.2
	No	3	6.8

Source: Field data, 2017

From Table 4 above, it can be seen that 90.9% of women interviewed were below 46 years of age. Respondents representing only 9.1% of the total sample were above the age of 45. The results revealed that most people were young and have potential for growth and development if they are provided with some form of economic empowerment.

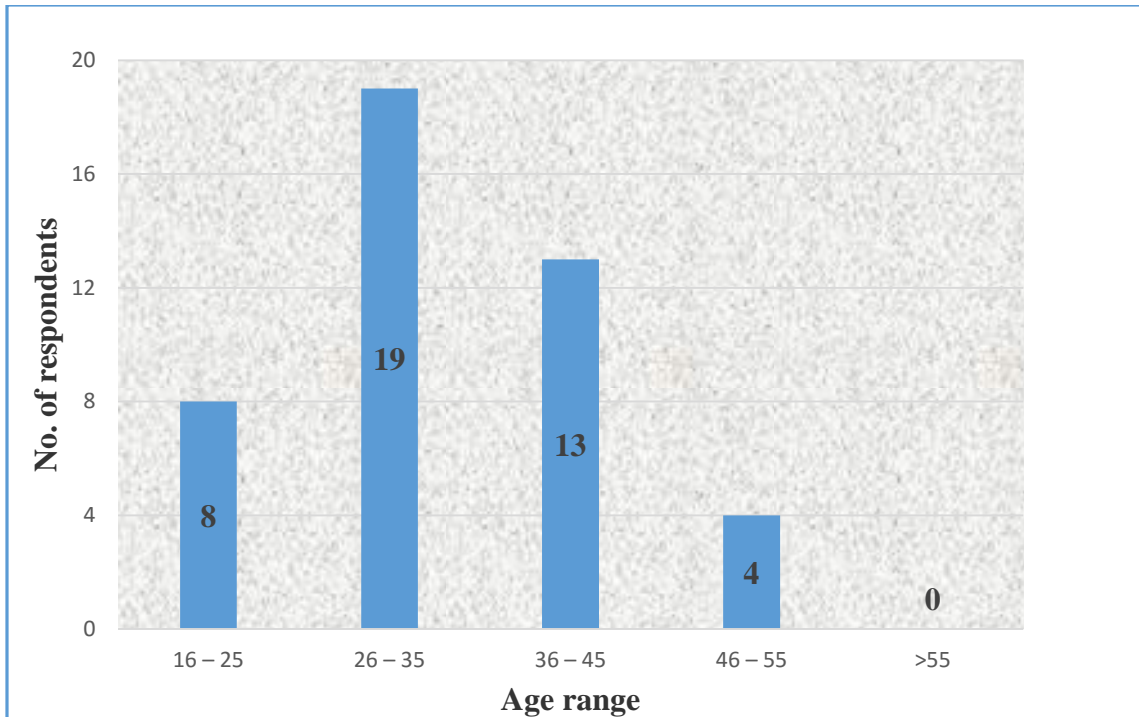


Figure 4: Age distribution of respondents

As we already know that the respondents were only women, the study tried to establish the percentage of those who were married since it in household setting that economic status of women has been greatly influenced either positively or negatively. Table 4 above indicates that 80% of the sample responded that they were married while 16% stated that they were single and 4% were widows as shown in Figure 5 below.

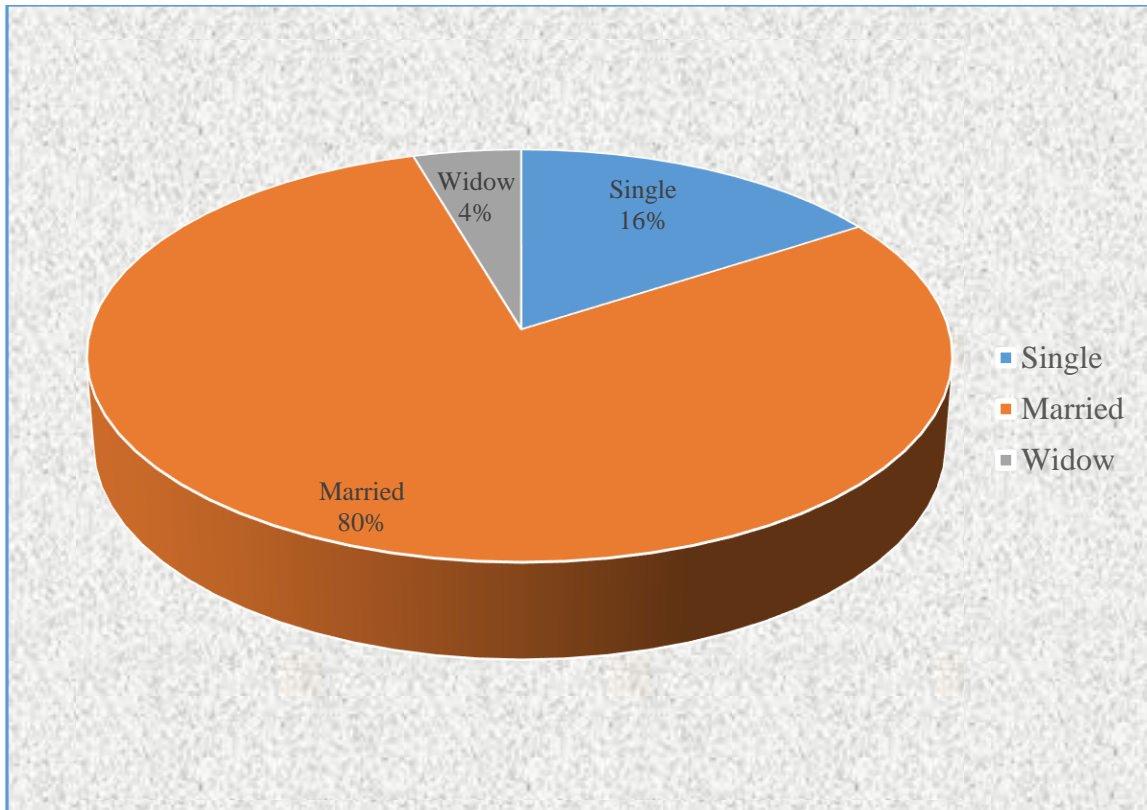


Figure 5: Marital status of respondents

It is also reflected in Table 4 above that the education levels of the respondents are very low where 62% of the respondents were observed to be either illiterates or primary school dropouts who can hardly be employed in the formal sector. An alarming finding is that only 18% have formal education and may be employable in any sector of the economy but most importantly they might be able to make informed decisions affecting their households or community as shown in Figure 6 below. Thus, SACCOs and VSLAs are very critical in educating the masses through sharing ideas in groups but also training clients in basic business and credit management skills and the role of savings in any business venture. According to the District Commercial Officer, the low levels of education were attributed to teenage marriage where so many young girls were forced by their parents or guardians to get married for monetary gains because of wide spread poverty.

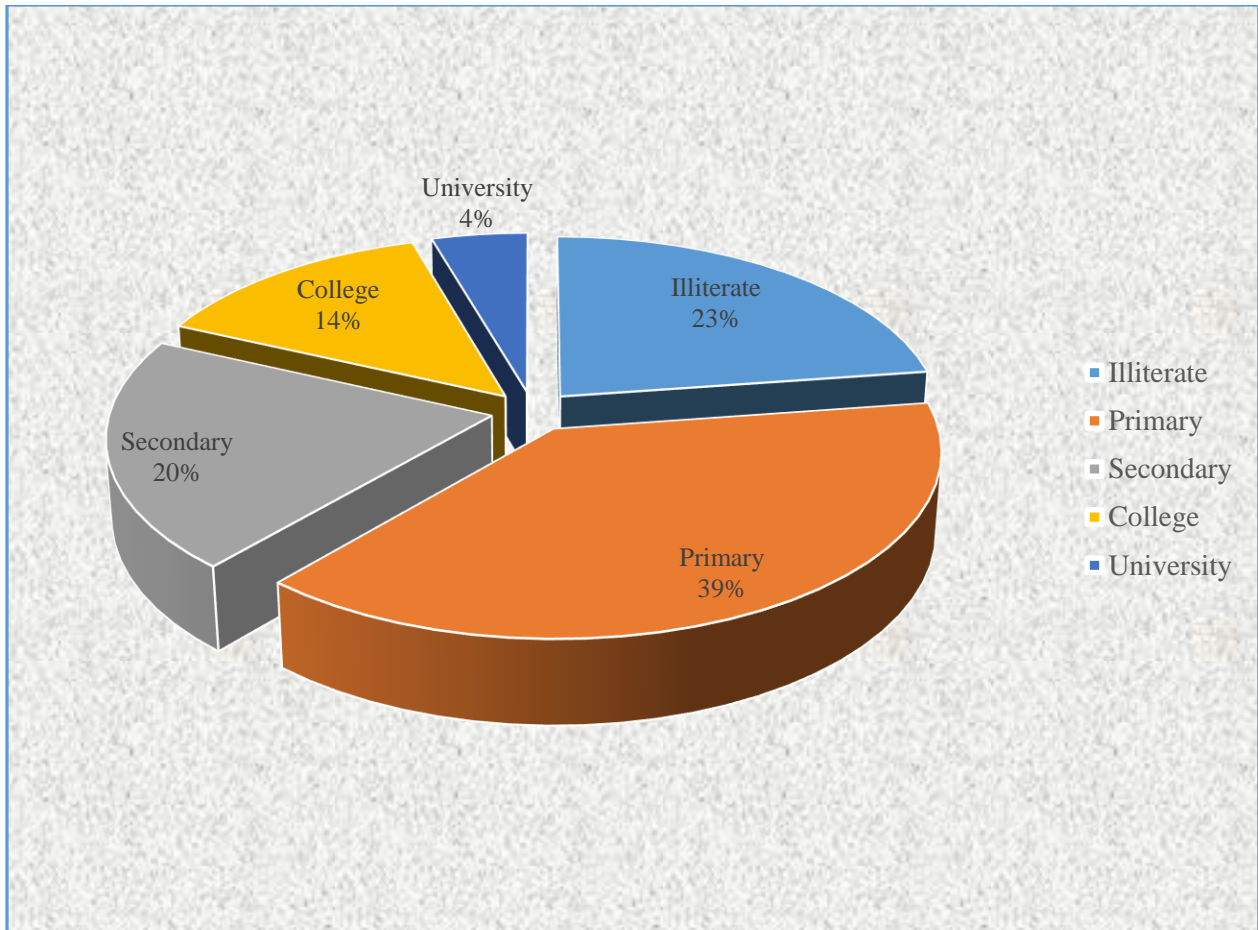


Figure 6: Education levels of respondents

Table 4 indicates the various business activities among participants. The results showed 72.7% of them doing either trading or farming. Only 27.3% of the respondents were involved in other business activities. Almost half of the respondents were engaged in farming as seen from Figure 7 below which indicates that 48% were involved in farming. Based on the responses in the interviews and discussions carried out with some sampled women, it was stated that most of the women involved in farming ventured in rice growing. They claimed that much as rice growing was quite demanding it was well-paying and was hardly affected by seasonality as many other crops were.

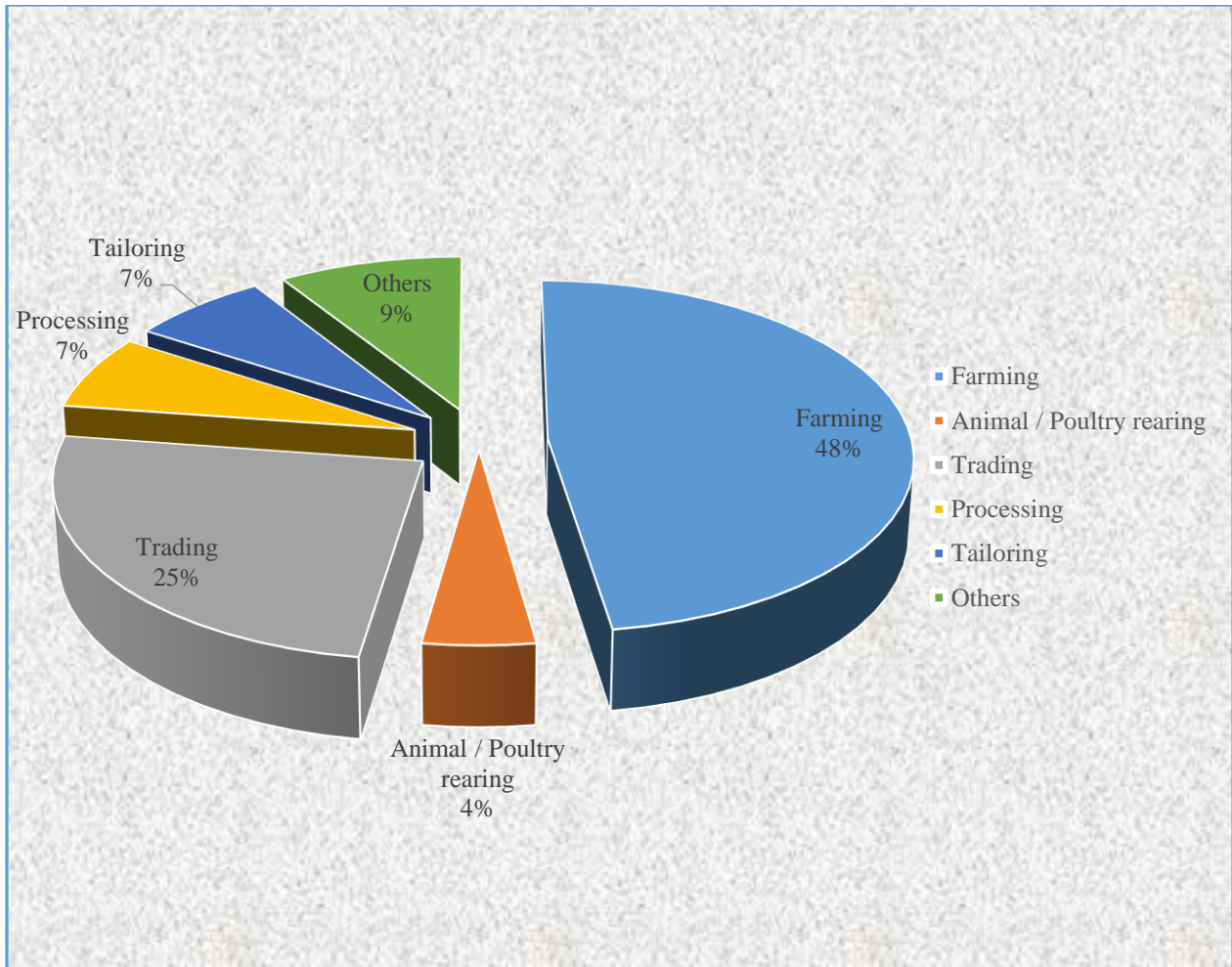


Figure 7: Business activities of respondents

The low levels of incomes among households had a huge bearing on the levels of savings by households. The result showed that people were saving very little from their earnings, where 75% of the respondents stated that they saved not more than UGX 50,000/= and only 4% saved more than 100,000/= per month. It was observed that 93.2% of the respondents were engaged in the various business activities except the 6.8% identified as employees in the formal sector from which they earned a salary, part of which was saved with the SACCOs.

4.4 Findings

This section presents the background information on selected SACCOs in Butaleja district and the study results according to the objectives as detailed below:

4.4.1 Background information on selected SACCOs in Butaleja district

In Butaleja district, there are 13 registered SACCOs with numerous VSLAs attached to different SACCOs. However, for this study, the researcher with the help of the District Commercial Officer, selected Doho Farmers' SACCO and Butaleja SACCO because of their presence in the whole district with a good performance and high population of women (Commercial office records, BDLG). From the documents reviewed and interviews carried out with the SACCO staff and the District Commercial Officer, the following information was obtained.

4.4.1.1 Doho Farmers SACCO

According to a staff of Doho Farmers' SACCO and documents reviewed, the SACCO was registered on December 17, 2014 and acquired a registration No. P4901/RCS. It started operations in January 2015 to provide credit services and business advisory. It is a member owned and member controlled institution. The SACCO is located at Doho irrigation scheme Head offices in Nampologoma, Mazimasa sub-county and stretches to all sub-counties of Butaleja district and even in the neighboring districts of Tororo, and Budaka.

The governance structure of Doho Farmers SACCO consists of the Annual General Meeting under which are five members of the Board of Directors (BOD) and three members of the Supervisory committee elected to manage the affairs of the society on behalf of the members. The BOD in turn employs staff to run the day-to-day affairs of the society and these include the Manager, Accounts Assistant, Loan officer, Ledger keeper, Cashier and a Cleaner.

Doho Farmers SACCO operates in partnership with Doho Irrigation Scheme Farmers' Cooperative Society Ltd (DIFACOS), Uganda Cooperative Alliance (UCA), Microfinance Support Centre (MSC), VECO East Africa and Butaleja District Local Government. Membership to the SACCO is open as such, everyday new members join as others exit. By August 2017, the SACCO had 507 members up from 186 members in 2015, of which 40 are Groups registered as VSLAs of 20-50 members. The institutions which are members are: DIFACOS, Kabasa Memorial Hospital, Pole Pole Guest House, Israel Fast Food Restaurant, Nampologoma Acts Church and Bahaini Enterprises. Every new member is required to pay UGX 45,000/= membership fee and purchase a minimum of 3 shares whose value is UGX 10,000/= each.

The SACCO offers several loan products including: agriculture loans, business, school fees, solar, home improvement and emergency loans at different monthly rates for a period not exceeding six months. These loans are offered at a monthly rate of 3% - 4% except for emergency loans offered at a monthly rate of 10%. Emergency loans are extended to members with a good loan repayment record up to a tune of UGX 200,000/=. Members are required to guarantee their loans using their own property like rice gardens, chattels, motorcycles, and land. Late payment for a loan attracts a penalty of 10% of the instalment passed due. A member is also subjected to a reduction in the subsequent loan amount and the very poor payers are dismissed based on the by-laws. The loan amounts range from as low as UGX 50,000/= to UGX 4,000,000/= which must be serviced within a period of six months. Members are required to pay a loan protection fund of 2% of the approved amount to the SACCO to cover death.

The SACCO also offers affordable financial services to all sectors of the economy through opening and maintaining Business accounts, Individual accounts, Group accounts and Institution accounts.

Group members conduct mandatory weekly meetings during which every member saves a minimum of UGX 10,000/= and these savings had grown by 185% in August 2017 from UGX 22,227,700/= in 2015.

4.4.1.2 Butaleja Savings and Credit Cooperative (BUSACCO) Ltd

Based on the information obtained from a staff of BUSACCO and documents reviewed, it was established that BUSACCO was founded in 2006 by a group of elderly people in Butaleja district. It started in July 2006 as a VSLA with 15 members of which only 4 were women. It acquired a Registration Certificate No. 8854/RCS on February 4, 2009. It has got members in all the sub-counties of Butaleja district. The SACCO is governed by the BOD which is elected and approved by the AGM. The BOD hires full time staff to manage the affairs of the SACCO.

The SACCO membership has been growing over the years from 150 members in December 2006 to 513 members in August 2017 of which 25 members are Groups registered as VSLAs of 20-50 members. BUSACCO savings had accumulated to UGX 33,267,200/= by August 2017 of which UGX 8,825,600 were savings for women compared to UGX 15,655,200 savings for men and UGX 8,876,400/= savings for Institutions. The SACCO has got a number of loan products including commercial loans, agricultural loan, school fees, boda-boda, oxen and ox-plough loan and emergence loans which members access at a monthly rate between 1.6 and 1.9%. Emergency loans accessed at a rate of 4.8%. By August 2017, the SACCO had a loan portfolio of UGX 64,739,600/= of which UGX 23,541,500 were funds borrowed by women.

The major source of funding for BUSACCO is from members own contributions. Every new member is required to pay a total sum of UGX 77,000 broken down as follows: Application for membership (1,000/=), membership fee (10,000/=), share capital (50,000/=), passbook (1,000/=), ledger card (1,500/=), identity card (3,500/=) and loan application fee (10,000/=).

The SACCO had a total share capital of UGX 6,860,000 by August 2017 of which UGX 2,440,000 was share contribution by women. The SACCO outsources funding from other organizations to supplement internally generated funds from member contributions.

In August 2017 the SACCO was servicing a loan of UGX 30,000,000/= secured at a rate of 9% from Microfinance Support Centre.

Table 5: Female population of selected SACCOs in the period 2014 to 2017

SACCO	Nature of membership	Year			
		2014	2015	2016	2017
Doho Farmers' SACCO	Individual	-	27	78	125
	Group (VSLA)	-	206	365	392
	Sub - total	-	233	443	517
Butaleja SACCO	Individual	159	167	171	204
	Group (VSLA)	162	218	248	254
	Sub - total	321	385	419	458
	Total	321	618	862	975

Source: Field data, 2017

As observed from Table 5, the female population of SACCOs both individual members and those in groups grew from a population of 321 women in 2014 to 975 women in 2017. Table 5 shows that most women preferred to join SACCOs not as individual members but as members of VSLAs.

A woman in the FGD said:

Group membership is advantageous because members work together and help one another in the event of problems like sickness and death, and even in moments of joy like marriage and other celebrations. Women interested in positions of leadership and are in groups where cohesion is high, groups provide a good starting point since one is assured of majority support from the members, another woman claimed.

Table 5 above shows a growing trend of women population involved in SACCO activities from 2014 to 2017 as portrayed in Figure 8 below



Figure 8: Trend of female population in selected SACCOs

Figure 8 shows that the population trend of women in the selected SACCOs was increasing over the period 2014 to 2017 from 321 women in 2014 to 975 women in August 2017.

4.4.2 Effect of microcredit on economic empowerment of women

A survey carried out among 44 respondents from Doho Farmers' SACCO and Butaleja SACCO revealed the following:

The survey results revealed that 88.6% of the respondents were involved in microfinance services to access microcredit for their business activities and only 11.4% were engaged in SACCO activities for purposes of saving part of their earnings either through operating an individual savings account or group weekly savings.

Table 6: Access to microfinance services for business purposes

Responses	Number of responses	Percentage
Yes	39	88.6
No	5	11.4
Total	44	100

Source: Field data, 2017

According to a staff of BUSACCO, women join SACCOs primarily to access microcredit either to start a business or to finance existing ones. A key informant of Doho Farmers' SACCO stated that it is very rare to find a woman joining a SACCO solely to save her earnings. These results are in agreement with Rhyne and Otero (1992) who in their study concluded that some of the poor people are willing only to save, not to borrow.

Table 7: Business operation

Operator	Frequency	Percentage
Self	30	75
Family member	6	15
Husband	2	5
Employee	2	5
Total	40	100

Source: Field data, 2017

Projected scenario by the respondents in Table 7 above suggests that 75% of the businesses were run by individual owners and only 5% were operated by employees from outside the family. This could be due to the fact that most businesses were too small to generate revenue from which an employee could be paid. This also meant that such businesses were closed whenever the owners were away for one reason or another and this hindered the growth of such ventures.

Table 8: Sources of start-up capital

Source	Frequency	Percentage
Given	8	20
Loan	22	55
Own savings	10	25
Total	40	100

As reflected in Table 8, 45% of the women started their business activities out of family and personal savings while 55% of the respondents actually got the credit facility from SACCOs, an indicator that microcredit access had a great effect on economic empowerment of women in Butaleja district.

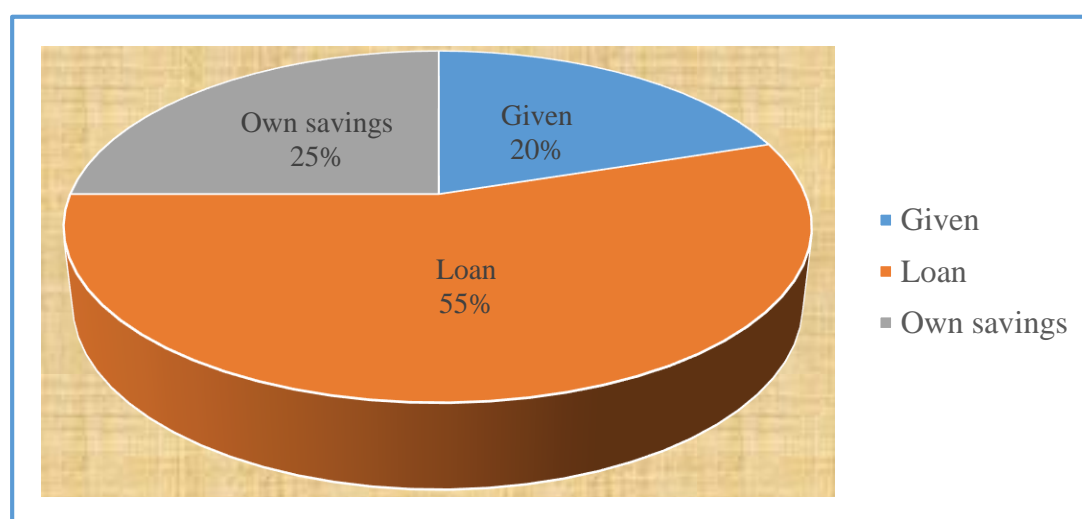


Figure 9: Sources of start-up capital

Table 9: Control over usage of resources in the household

Resource	Self		Both		Husband		Total
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	
Microcredit	14	34.1%	27	65.9%	0	00%	41
Income and savings	20	45.5%	24	54.5%	0	00%	44

Source: Field data, 2017

Table 9 shows that all respondents claimed to have a say in the way microcredit extended to them was utilized in their households. Similarly, all respondents indicated that they were fully involved in the utilization of resources earned by them through their participation in microfinance services. As reflected in the Table 9 above, either the woman herself or both with her husband planned for resources but not the husband alone. Hence, most of the people interviewed showed a good response on question about control of resources within the household an aspect that led to their self-esteem.

Whenever I need a loan or to buy anything for myself, I normally inform my husband to avoid him asking me where I got the money to buy things or to finance my business, a woman in the FGD commented.

This was an indicator that women in Butaleja District still suffer from the traditional or cultural constraints where women are subordinate to men.

Table 10: Decision making in the household

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	41	97.6
No	1	2.4
Total	42	100

Source: Field data, 2017

Table 10 shows that 97.6% of the respondents reported a positive outlook on their ability to make personal decisions as well as family decisions without interference from their husbands. It feels nice when your decisions in regard to resource utilization are respected by your husband (FGD, 2017). Respect of decisions made by women in a household made them to become confident in their daily lives and addressing pertinent issues within the household and even the community as stated by some women.

4.4.3 Effect of training on economic empowerment of women

The deficiency in training and education hampers the involvement of many rural women to engage in more productive and remunerable work, to play decision-making and governance roles in their households and communities limiting their contribution in the development process despite their great contribution in the agricultural sector (Eskola, 2010). This study revealed the following:

Table 11: Basic skills possession

Responses	Number of responses	Percentage of response
Yes	24	54.5
No	20	45.5
Total	44	100

Source: Field data, 2017

As indicated in Table 11, 54.5% of the respondents claimed to possess the basic skills to run their businesses and basic knowledge of microcredit utilization while 45.5% did not and yet business and credit management skills are important for the success of any business venture.

Table 12: Sharing of ideas and training

Responses	Yes		No		Total
Sharing of ideas	44	100%	0	00%	44
Microcredit training	26	59.1%	18	40.9%	44
Training is helpful	26	59.1%	18	40.9%	44
Decision making	44	100%	0	00%	44

Source: Field data, 2017

Table 12 above shows that all respondents acknowledged the fact that sharing of ideas on how to run and manage businesses in groups is the norm, an element that helped them to build individual knowledge base and group cohesion. It was established that 59.1% of the respondents had attained some training in microcredit usage and indeed it had improved their knowledge of business management and credit utilization.

As reflected in Table 12, all respondents claimed to be freely making decisions in their households. A key informant asserted that in most cases, the training provided was tailor made and therefore enabled many of them to run and manage their businesses better resulting into improved gains than before. Some of us involved in rice growing are given fertilizers and are trained on how to apply them, a woman in the FGD claimed. The positive opinion formed by respondents on the question of decision making in regard to microcredit utilization and business management was attributed to knowledge gain attained through sharing of ideas during group meetings and training provided by NGOs and government agencies operating within the district.

4.4.4 Effect of saving on economic empowerment of women

According to an informant, a VSLA member stated that many women preferred group membership as opposed to individual membership because in a group, saving was mandatory which motivated them to work hard to raise the required minimum weekly savings.

Table 13: Frequency of Group meetings and savings

Activity	Weekly		Bi-weekly		Monthly		Total
Group meetings	44	100%	0	00%	0	00%	44
Group savings	44	100%	0	00%	0	00%	44

Source: Field data, 2017

Table 13 shows that all groups in the sampled SACCOs met weekly and it was mandatory for all members to save weekly a certain minimum amount defined in the SACCO regulations. According to the SACCOs' officers, for them to be able to enforce attendance of weekly meetings and ensure weekly savings, a cash penalty for non-attendance was instituted. Further, a reduction in the loan amount for loan clients was imposed on difficult members as a disciplinary measure.

Table 14: Usefulness of savings

Responses	Yes		No		Total
Value savings	44	100%	0	00%	44
Able to support family	37	84.1%	7	15.9%	44
Help to husband	30	68.2%	14	31.8%	44

Source: Field data 2017

Table 14 shows that all respondents acknowledged the fact that savings were an important element in life based on the changes it had made in their lives. 84.1% of the respondents claimed to have been able to contribute towards household needs while 68.2% reported to have bailed out their spouses in times of need when they sought help from them, something that was unheard of the time before their involvement in microfinance activities. During a FGD, many women claimed to be able to support their families with or without their husbands as opposed to the time before they got involved in SACCO activities which enhanced their self-esteem. An officer of BUSACCO claimed that there was a noticeable difference in the life lived by their clients then than before their involvement in SACCO services as many of them could afford basic needs for their families.

Table 15: Women savings contributions

	Annual Savings (UGX)			
	2014	2015	2016	Aug. 2017
Doho Farmers' SACCO		3,265,200	1,692,100	6,767,300
BUSACCO	985,850	10,380,100	2,910,500	8,825,600
Total	985,850	13,645,300	4,602,600	15,592,900

Source: Field data, 2017

Table 15 above shows the savings contribution by women in BUSACCO and Doho Farmers' SACCO in the period 2014 to 2017. From Table 15, a remarkable drop in savings contribution by women in the year 2016 and a rise in 2017 was observed.

According to an officer of BUSACCO, the sharp drop in women savings was attributed to uncertainty of the political environment at the time. Most women were not sure of whether the new leadership at the local level and national level would support the SACCO activities and therefore majority preferred to withdrawal their savings.

Table 16: Household and community attitude towards respondents

Responses	Yes		No		Total
Respect from husband	32	72.7%	12	27.3%	44
Respect from community	38	86.4%	6	13.6%	44

Source: Field data 2017

Table 16 shows that 72.7% of the respondents stated that they were experiencing a difference in attitude, in the way they were being treated and looked at by their husbands and 86.4% claimed to have realized a change in status within the communities where they lived as a result their accumulated savings and investments made out of it.

An informant stated that their perception about themselves in their households and even in their communities had generally changed compared to when all family needs were shouldered by men. On a whole, results from the study show that women had experienced a sense of self-esteem within themselves. By using Branden’s self-esteem theory, results show that women involved in SACCO activities experienced change in the perception of self. Their involvement in SACCO activities made them free and independent minded in decision making and choices, are now recognized, key in every household decision, and are assertive because they were able to set up businesses from which they earn a living.

Table 17: Possessions

Responses	Number of responses	Percentage of responses
Yes	41	93.2
No	3	6.8
Total	44	100

Source: Field data 2017

As observed from Table 17, 93.2% of the respondents owned property like poultry, animals, rice gardens, oxen, ox-ploughs, sowing machines, and salons from savings generated from their businesses. An informant stated that possessions acquired from their savings provided an alternative source of income to the households. The sowing machines, rice gardens and oxen were hired at a fee. A similar argument was advanced by a woman in the FGD who said that possessions like poultry and animals were easily sold off to raise money to meet urgent family needs or expand their businesses. This enhanced their value in the households and thus a feeling of self-esteem within the household.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a general summary, discussion and conclusion from the study, as well as recommendations for policy analysis. At the end of the chapter, limitations of the study and suggestions for further studies are provided.

5.2 Summary of the findings

This section presents objective by objective summary of the major findings obtained from the field. The findings of the study indicated that microfinance services provided by SACCOs to women in Butaleja district has had a positive effect on their business ventures, family livelihood and their social standing as a whole.

5.2.1 Effect of microcredit on economic empowerment of women

Most of the respondents stressed the need for capital to be able to operate their businesses. Indeed, during a FGD, it was stated by one woman that microcredit was an important factor in business start-ups and growth. She claimed that through access to microcredit, she was able to buy an ox-plough and some oxen which helped her not only to expand her gardens but also raise some income for the family through hiring out the services of the oxen and the ox-plough to the members of the community and this in a way enhanced her status in the community. However, much as they acknowledged that having money had changed their status in their households and society, they were other things they need to have their capacity built in society like good education, training and strong family ties.

5.2.2 Effect of training on the economic empowerment of women

The study revealed the need for training in management of micro enterprises and microcredit. One woman during a FGD asserted that failure to provide them with necessary skills, the situation would still be hard for most women in rural areas. The SACCOs in partnership with government and NGOs provided the necessary training to women in business and credit management, and good farming practices as stated by the SACCO officers. However, some women in a FGD argued that this training needed to be regular and frequent for it to deliver the desired goals.

5.2.3 Effect of savings on economic empowerment of women

It was discovered that whereas the culture of saving among many people in Uganda and in particular Butaleja district was very poor, this was not the case with the women involved in SACCO activities in Butaleja district. All the women engaged through the FGD and the key informants indicated that they religiously set aside a specific sum of money to be deposited in the group as a weekly saving. This was possible because saving was mandatory, failure of which attracted a penalty in monetary form and or a loan amount reduction in the subsequent cycle.

5.3 Discussion of results

In this chapter, key findings were discussed. The purpose of this study was to establish the effect of microfinance services on economic empowerment of women in Butaleja district.

5.3.1 Effect of microcredit on economic empowerment of women

The design of the microcredit service was seen as appropriate and it had empowered women entrepreneurs who were SACCO members. This was mainly due to easiness in accessing credit services among female respondents. Credit cycles were observed to be convenient since loan amounts grew with people's capacity to pay back due to business growth. According informants and SACCO officers, microcredit had transformed the lives of many women.

The earnings from their business ventures had given them a financial muscle and elevated them in the hierarchy of decision making and choices over resource utilization. This created a sense of self-esteem in women as a result of financial contributions to the family. This is in agreement with (Shekilango, 2012) who stressed that increased access to credit services by women significantly improved their socio-economic status and are now able to make independent financial decisions. Overall, results are in agreement with the Power over and Power from within, as guided by Rowlands (1995) in the Power Process model and Personal Empowerment Process by Rowlands (1997). Though Gibb (2008) observation that microcredit on many occasions has not empowered women because of the society's traditional setting where financial control and investment is a function of men, can be ignored. The researcher acknowledges from the study findings that although women access to financial services has been eased, their economic independence status in society is yet to be attained partially due to culture and traditions.

5.3.2 Effect of training on economic empowerment of women

The study results show that women needed practical skills such as marketing, business planning, customer handling, financial management, and use of basic ICT in small businesses. This form of empowerment was key because it was upon such technical skills that they would make sound financial decisions. It was observed that women were satisfied with the nature of technical skills they were receiving from SACCOs, NGOs & government agencies. Accordingly, most women who participated in FGD, revealed that training played an important function in equipping them with necessary skills and knowledge to improve their economic status in the society. This is reflected in the Power to, as stated in Rowlands (1995) Power Process model and the Relational Empowerment Process by Rowlands (1997).

5.3.3 Effect of savings on economic empowerment of women

The design of the savings service was observed to be proper since most female respondents agreed that frequency and amount of saving were feasible. The procedure for accessing savings was seen to be simple. However, some women were of the view that SACCOs begin regulating access to savings so that a member withdraws up-to a certain defined percentage of her savings to allow the group retain some portion of the savings for on-lending which would result into profits for the group. An officer of Doho Framers' SACCO argued that most ladies when given access to financial services can easily change their economic status and that of their homes as compared to their male counterparts. This argument was upheld by some women in the FGD who further asserted that in some cases men had turned to them for financial assistance something that gave them a voice in decision making, resource control and a sense of self-esteem in the household. This is reflected in the Power with, in Rowlands (1995) Power Process model and Collective Empowerment Process by Rowlands (1997).

5.4 Conclusions from the study

From the results obtained from the field study carried out from the selected SACCOs operating in Butaleja district, the following conclusions were drawn:

5.4.1 Effect of microcredit on economic empowerment of women

The study results showed that microcredit access had enhanced the women status at household and community level as reflected from the positive change in their household earnings and living standards of the family. There was also increased internal realization of self, gain in confidence and a feeling of self-esteem beyond their households.

5.4.2 Effect of training on economic empowerment of women

Training and knowledge sharing in groups was seen as an important feature within the microfinance service dimensions since it enabled women to access skills and share opportunities with others through networking and meetings held. This accounted for the increased social bondage among women in groups. Considering services received by women from SACCOs, there was need to support sensitization and technical skills such as marketing, customer handling, credit utilization, and financial literacy in order to enable women entrepreneurs put microcredit to good use. This could as well be done by sharing experiences and use of testimonies by successful women so as to inspire and motivate the beginners and others to persist in business in anticipation for success and better still enhance their decision making skills for improved investment outcomes.

5.4.3 Effect of savings on economic empowerment of women

Whereas women joined SACCOs with a purpose of saving among other services and had been motivated to save not only because saving was mandatory but accumulated savings had enabled some of them acquire property like animals, rice gardens, poultry, sowing machines, and oxen, the government had done little to secure their hard earned savings through regulating SACCOs and enforcing women emancipation. Women in Butaleja district still experience high levels of gender inequality as reflected from the inability of girls to inherit family possessions and limited access to family production resources, savings inclusive. Crucial to consider, whereas many females made decisions in households, very few did it unilaterally as acknowledged by many women involved in the FGD and interviews. Decisions regarding utilization of their savings were made in consultation with their spouses which in the researcher's view limited their ability in decision making and resource allocation.

5.5 Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions, the following recommendations are suggested:

5.5.1 Effect of microcredit on economic empowerment of women

The government through its agencies and SACCOs should make efforts to avail more credit facilities to women to enable them expand their businesses since the results from the study confirmed that microcredit had a positive effect on economic status of women in Butaleja district. There government should put in place laws to regulate and standardize conditions for accessing financial services across all SACCOs.

5.5.2 Effect of training on economic empowerment of women

SACCOs with the support of government agencies and development partners need to emphasize the need to provide technical skills and opportunities for women to actively participate in development projects in their communities. This will enhance their business handling capacity leading to improved revenue and thus financial sustainability for women entrepreneurs.

SACCOs should consider providing technical training free of charge to their clients especially women because when they don't have required skills, their businesses will fail and they will not be able to pay back the borrowed funds. Hence, the role of SACCOs to empower women economically will have not been achieve. This will improve not their financial management skills but also the strategies for proper credit utilization and investment plans.

5.5.3 Effect of saving on economic empowerment of women

Government should put in place policies to regulate or limit access to funds by SACCO leaders so as to safeguard women's savings. This will encourage them to save more as well as attracting new savers due to certainty of safety of their savings.

5.6 Contributions of the study

The fact that this study on microfinance and economic empowerment of women was conducted in Butaleja district where there is no empirical evidence of a similar study having been carried out, will be a contribution to the existing literature.

Whereas from the literature reviewed, most of the studies relied on information generated from questionnaires and interviews, in this study the researcher reviewed secondary data in addition to employing methods like focus group discussions and interviews for in-depth information.

In the literature reviewed most researchers conceptualized resource control, decision making and self-esteem as ingredients for women empowerment with little said about possessions. In this study, in addition to all the above ingredients, the researcher conceptualized possessions as one of the key elements in defining women empowerment in Butaleja district.

5.7 Limitations of the study

In this study the researcher relied on women sampled from Doho Farmers' SACCO and Butaleja SACCO majority of who are from the rural areas of Butaleja district. Hence, the study results cannot easily be used to generalize the perception of the socio-economic status of women living in other districts or those living in urban areas of Uganda.

5.8 Suggestions for Further Studies

It is suggested that further studies be done in other SACCOs operating in Butaleja district and other parts of the country with a larger sample. This can help to identify effect of credit institutions in terms of capacity building for both men and women in other parts of the country.

Assessment of the extent to which SACCOs are capable of delivering services to the rural women.

A comparative study among SACCOs is another area where further studies can be carried out.

Finally, further studies may be carried out in other non-economic forms of empowerment.

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Microcredit

1. Do you own a business? Yes No
2. Who runs the business on a day to day basis?
Self Husband Employees Family members
3. What was the source of your startup capital? Own savings Loan Just given
4. Do you get microcredit? Yes No
5. (a) Have you ever got a loan for your husband's usage? Yes No
(b) If yes, who paid it back? Self Husband Both
6. Who has control over usage of microcredit in your household?
Husband Self Both
7. Have you ever got microcredit to pay school fees for your children? Yes No
8. Has microcredit and benefits from it enabled you have a say in your household?
Yes No
9. Are you now able to make important decisions on the usage of microcredit and management of your business freely without interference from your husband? Yes No

Training

1. Do you have the basic knowledge of how to use microcredit? Yes No
2. Do you have the basic skills to run your business? Yes No
3. Do you ever share ideas on how to run and manage your business in your group?
Yes No
4. Have you ever received training on the usage of microcredit and business management in general? Yes No

5. Has this training helped you to use microcredit and or run your business better than before you got involved in microfinance services? Yes No
6. Are you now able to make important decisions on the usage of microcredit and management of your business without fear of your husband? Yes No

Savings

1. How often do you hold group meetings? Weekly Bi-weekly Monthly
2. Is there a penalty for non-attendance of group meetings? Yes No
3. How often do you save? Weekly Bi-weekly Monthly
4. Do you see any value in saving? Yes No
5. Who has control over usage of income and savings in your household?
Husband Self Both
6. Have savings from income earned from your businesses enabled you support your family?
Yes No
7. Are you able to meet your family needs without your husband's contribution?
Yes No
8. Have you ever helped your husband using your savings? Yes No
9. Does your husband value and respect you more now than before you got involved in microfinance services? Yes No
10. Do you own some property got from your income earned and savings? Yes No
11. Do you need to seek consent from your husband on the usage of your property?
Yes No
12. Do people in your household and community show some respect for you because of your business and property which you got from your savings? Yes No

APPENDIX B

Interview Guide for the Researcher

Dear respondent,

I am Mahago Robert conducting a study intended to establish the relationship between microfinance services and economic empowerment of women in Butaleja district.

You have been selected as one of the respondents because of your key position and knowledge about microfinance services and economic empowerment of women in Butaleja district.

Please, answer the following questions as truthfully as possible. All the information given will be kept in strict confidence and will be used only for internal academic purposes at Uganda Management Institute.

Thank you for sparing your valuable time

Mahago Robert

Master of Business Administration

Uganda Management Institute

1. What is the name of your group?
2. What is the location of your group?
3. For how long has the group been in existence?
4. For how long have you been a member of this group?
5. How many people are involved in your group?
6. What are the objectives of your group?
7. How does your group operate?
8. Is it a must for group members to save? How often do group members save?

9. Are group members free to borrow from group savings for business or personal use? If yes, are there some criteria followed to get these funds?
10. Is there any interest on borrowed funds? If yes, what is the rate?
11. Have women in your group been able to use their savings into profitable businesses? If so, have they been empowered economically?
12. Do you also borrow from other institutions like banks or from private persons? If yes, how easy or difficult is it compared to borrowing from the group savings?
13. Do you get some funding from the government or NGOs?
14. Are there some specialized training programmes for women in these groups? If yes, have women been empowered through this training?
15. Are there any other areas you think are not covered under the training programmes where you feel group members need some training?
16. What challenges do you face in running and managing your group? Are there any suggestions on how to address the challenges faced?
17. Does the participation of the women in Butaleja district in microfinance services contribute to an improvement in the living conditions for them and their families?
18. Have any of the women in your group faced some challenges in managing family affairs as a result of their involvement in microfinance services?
19. Is your husband comfortable with your involvement in microfinance activities? If No, why?
20. Which processes of change do you observe in the lives of the women (personal, social, economic, political, legal area)?
21. How widespread are microfinance services in Butaleja district?
22. Why did you decide to join the credit and savings group?

23. When did you join your credit and savings group?
24. (a) Do you own a business or are you a commercial farmer?
- (b) If yes, when did you start it?
- (c) Why did you start it?
25. (a) What are the main challenges you face with your business?
- (b) How do you intend to overcome them?
26. Do women in your group own some property as a result of their involvement in microfinance services?
27. Who is responsible for your family budget?

APPENDIX C

Documentary Checklist

1. Butaleja District Local Government Statistical Abstracts
2. Butaleja District Local Government Quarterly and Annual reports
3. Reports on activities of NGO's and CBO's in the district
4. Minutes of Butaleja District Local Council meetings
5. Published and unpublished dissertations
6. Published journals and articles
7. Internet websites
8. Annual performance reports of Doho Farmers' SACCO

APPENDIX D

The Kuder & Richardson test for Reliability for binary variables

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10	Q11	Q12	Q13	Q14	Q15	Q16	Q17	Q18	Q19	Q20	Total
1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	10
2	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	11
3	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	7
4	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	11
5	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	9
6	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	8
7	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	12
8	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	9
9	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	10
10	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	11
11	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	14
12	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	15
13	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	11
14	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	9
15	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	5
Total	9	15	10	5	15	11	8	15	7	0	5	0	9	5	7	9	7	8	0	7	152

p	0.60	1.00	0.67	0.33	1.00	0.73	0.53	1.00	0.47	0.00	0.33	0.00	0.60	0.33	0.47	0.60	0.47	0.53	0.00	0.47	
q	0.40	0.00	0.33	0.67	0.00	0.27	0.47	0.00	0.53	1.00	0.67	1.00	0.40	0.67	0.53	0.40	0.53	0.47	1.00	0.53	
pq	0.24	0.00	0.22	0.22	0.00	0.20	0.25	0.00	0.25	0.00	0.22	0.00	0.24	0.22	0.25	0.24	0.25	0.25	0.00	0.25	3.298

X- \bar{x}	1.4	7.7	2.7	-2.3	7.7	3.7	0.7	7.7	-0.3	-7.3	-2.3	-7.3	1.7	-2.3	-0.3	1.7	-0.3	0.7	-7.3	-0.3	
(X- \bar{x}) ²	1.96	59.3	7.29	5.29	59.3	13.7	0.49	59.3	0.09	53.3	5.29	53.3	2.89	5.29	0.09	2.89	0.09	0.49	53.3	0.09	383.67

(a) The test statistic is $P_{KR20} = k / (k-1) [1 - (\sum p_j q_j / \sigma^2)] = 0.869$

Where;

k - number of questions = 20

p_j - number of people in the sample who answered the question j correctly

q_j - number of people in the sample who didn't answer the question j correctly

σ^2 - variance of the total scores of all the people taking the test

$$\sigma^2 = \frac{\sum (x_i - \bar{x})^2}{k} = \frac{383.67}{20} = 19.184$$

$$\bar{X} = 152 / 7 = 7.6$$