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**Entrepreneurial Learning and Growth of Small and Medium-Sized Food and Beverage
Manufacturing Enterprises in Nairobi Metropolitan Area, Kenya**

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examined how entrepreneurial learning influences the growth of Small and medium-sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprises in the Nairobi Metropolitan Area, Kenya. This study was prompted by the limited growth experienced by SMEs in the Food and Beverage manufacturing sector within the Nairobi Metropolitan Area (NMA).

Methodology: Using descriptive and explanatory research designs, the study collected data from 139 SME owners in the Nairobi Metropolitan Area. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis and simple linear regression were used to analyze quantitative data, while thematic analysis was used to analyze qualitative data, which was used to supplement the quantitative results.

Findings: The study found a moderate positive and statistically significant relationship between entrepreneurial learning and the growth of small and medium Food and Beverage manufacturing enterprises in Nairobi Metropolitan Area, Kenya. Regression results revealed that entrepreneurial learning significantly predicts SMEs' growth; entrepreneurial learning enhances SMEs' growth $\beta = 0.300$, $t = 6.743$, $p = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$, accounting for 30.2% of the variation in SMEs' growth ($R\text{-squared} = 0.302$)

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy:

The study was informed by experiential learning theory, which describes the continuous process by which individuals develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to start and manage a new venture. The second theory was the Schumpeterian theory of innovation, which argues that innovation is a driver of economic development and coined the idea of creative destruction, where innovations replace outdated industries. To business owners, the study recommends that strengthening both formal and informal learning mechanisms should be prioritized in order to greatly enhance the sustainability and expansion of food and beverage manufacturing SMEs in the Nairobi Metropolitan Area.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurial Learning, Growth, Entrepreneurship, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises*

JEL Classification: L25, L26, M13, M53

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INTRODUCTION

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are widely acknowledged to play a significant role in job creation, revenue generation, innovation, and economic growth. Recent data from UN Trade and Development shows that micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) account for 90% of businesses worldwide and play a significant role in employment and economic activity, especially in developing regions (UN Trade and Development, 2024). Their significance is especially evident in developing nations, where small businesses create self-employment opportunities, bolster local economic activities, and play a role in engaging in local, regional, and global value chains (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2024; UN Trade and Development, 2025).

In Kenya, MSMEs represent a significant part of private-sector engagement in areas like trade, services, manufacturing, and agriculture, with the informal sector being a crucial provider of jobs. The Economic Survey 2025 indicated that overall employment, not counting small-scale agriculture and pastoral work, hit around 20.8 million in 2024, with the informal sector representing 17.4 million jobs; furthermore, 90% of the jobs added in that year originated from the informal sector (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [KNBS], 2025). Even with their numerical and employment importance, Kenyan businesses still encounter challenges that hinder productivity, innovation, formalization, and growth. Recent evidence from the World Bank highlights insufficient access to finance, skill limitations, low levels of technology adoption, and poor firm-level productivity as significant obstacles hindering Kenyan MSMEs from surviving and growing (World Bank, 2024, 2025).

The World Bank additionally indicates that Kenya generated around 782,000 jobs in 2024; however, almost 90% were established in the informal sector, underscoring the ongoing difficulty of producing productive and sustainable employment via firm expansion (World Bank, 2025). Thus, allowing small businesses to evolve into efficient, creative, and sustainable growth-focused enterprises continues to be a key element of Kenya's overall economic change and private-sector development strategy.

The food and beverage manufacturing industry holds a significant place due to its strong ties to consumer markets, employment, agriculture, and value addition. In addition to generating markets for farmers, food and beverage manufacturing SMEs also contribute to industrialization and the food supply by transforming agricultural and other raw resources into products with higher economic value. Food and Beverage manufacturing SMEs have shown significant activity in Kenya, according to recent data. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS, 2025), the production of manufactured food items increased by 9.8% in 2024 compared to 1.2% in 2023. The subsectors that contributed to this growth included dairy products, baked goods, processed fruits and vegetables, animal feed, and fats and oils. The manufacture of soft drinks was a major factor in the 4.4% growth of the beverages industry.

Nevertheless, growth in sector-level output does not automatically imply that each small and medium-sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprise is experiencing consistent growth. SMEs often operate under resource limitations, such as restricted financial access, management difficulties, insufficient technology, poor market connections, and scarce business-support services. The World Bank (2023) points out that shortcomings in managerial, entrepreneurial, and socio-emotional skills are some of the limitations hindering the growth and productivity of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises in Kenya. These results are pertinent to the current research as these skills can similarly be cultivated through entrepreneurs' interactions,

experiences, reflections, experimentation, and involvement with other market participants. The problem, then, is not just whether entrepreneurs have specific skills at a certain moment but how they obtain, modify, and utilize knowledge and abilities as their enterprises face evolving circumstances.

This learning process can be especially crucial for SMEs in food and beverage manufacturing enterprises, as their ability to compete hinges on ongoing adjustments to manufacturing technologies, quality benchmarks, consumer tastes, packaging needs, food safety rules, marketing strategies, and supply chain factors. Entrepreneurs who learn from customers can enhance products and recognize shifting preferences; those who learn from suppliers can boost production efficiency and manage inputs better; and those who consider past business experiences may refine financial, marketing, and operational choices. Consequently, this study emphasizes entrepreneurial learning as the means by which knowledge and experience transform into enhanced entrepreneurial action, instead of viewing socio-emotional or managerial skills as separate explanatory elements.

An essential viewpoint for comprehending how entrepreneurs acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to address such difficulties is provided by entrepreneurial learning. Drawing on Politis (2005) and Cope (2005), entrepreneurial learning has been defined as the ongoing process through which entrepreneurs gather, analyze, transform, and apply information from experience and other sources to enhance entrepreneurial activity. Politis (2005) defines entrepreneurial learning as an experiential journey whereby entrepreneurs convert their career and business experiences into knowledge that aids in recognizing opportunities, exploiting them, and addressing challenges linked to entrepreneurial endeavors. In the same way, Cope (2005) perceives entrepreneurial learning as an evolving process formed through linked experiences and activities across time. In line with these viewpoints, the current study considers entrepreneurial learning as the fundamental explanatory concept, instead of equating it with a specific source of knowledge gain, like formal entrepreneurship education.

Entrepreneurial learning can take place through both structured and unstructured methods. Formal education can offer one avenue of knowledge, while experimentation, analyzing business wins and losses, engaging with customers and suppliers, networking, mentoring, solving problems, and observing competitors can present further learning experiences. Thus, these activities are viewed as part of the larger learning process instead of isolated explanatory constructs. Likewise, in this study, managerial and socio-emotional capabilities are not viewed as separate constructs. When these abilities are developed or enhanced through experience, contemplation, engagement, or various learning methods, they signify possible results or expressions of entrepreneurial learning. This conceptual boundary allows the research to concentrate on how entrepreneurs' ability to learn and utilize knowledge connects to the expansion of food and beverage manufacturing SMEs in the Nairobi Metropolitan Area.

In Nairobi Metropolitan, one of Kenya's principal industrial and economic hubs, the significance of these qualities is especially clear. Nairobi offers access to sizable consumer markets, financial institutions, skilled labor, infrastructure, and business networks due to its strong business concentration. This provides multiple opportunities and pressures for entrepreneurs to acquire information and learn through market interactions, supplier relationships, competitor observation, experimentation, and problem-solving. According to the World Bank (2021), a significant percentage of Kenya's formal businesses and MSMEs are located in Nairobi, making the metropolitan area a crucial setting for enterprise development and entrepreneurship. At the same time, scaling up from small operations into larger and more

productive businesses continues to be a struggle for Kenyan companies, many of which are located in Nairobi. This provides a crucial context for examining if and how entrepreneurs' capacity for learning supports the growth of small and medium-sized manufacturing businesses.

Studies conducted in Kenya provide evidence of a relationship between entrepreneurial skills development and SME growth. For instance, Kamaru (2023) examined MSME growth in Nairobi and entrepreneurial and business-management skills, finding that skills development is associated with enterprise growth. Similarly, Wachira et al. (2023) examined entrepreneurial training and the performance of small and medium-sized manufacturing enterprises in Nairobi County. While these studies provide useful evidence on skills development and formal training, they do not fully capture the broader process through which entrepreneurs continuously acquire and apply knowledge from diverse experiences and interactions.

Previous studies conducted in Kenya provide evidence of a relationship between SME performance and entrepreneurial skills. For instance, a University of Nairobi study by Kamaru (2023) looked at the growth of MSMEs in Nairobi and the development of entrepreneurial and business management abilities, and it found that skills development is a crucial factor in firm growth. Similarly, Wachira et al. (2023) examined entrepreneurial training and the performance of small and medium-sized manufacturing enterprises in Nairobi County. While these studies provide useful evidence on skills development and formal training, they do not fully capture the broader process through which entrepreneurs continuously acquire and apply knowledge from diverse experiences and interactions.

This distinction offers a crucial rationale for investigating entrepreneurial learning. Although formal entrepreneurship training is one organized way for entrepreneurs to learn, entrepreneurial learning goes beyond attending training courses. Learning from business experience, experimentation, introspection, customers, suppliers, rivals, employees, mentors, networks, and solutions to business issues are all included. Therefore, formal training, management abilities, and socio-emotional skills are not considered as supplementary explanatory factors in addition to entrepreneurial learning in this study. Instead, they are viewed as contextual components or as possible origins and expressions of the larger learning process. The study therefore focuses on whether and how entrepreneurs' ongoing acquisition, interpretation, and application of knowledge through entrepreneurial learning are associated with the growth of small and medium-sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprises in the Nairobi Metropolitan Area.

Statement of the Problem

Small and medium-sized businesses significantly contribute to Kenya's economic growth through the creation of jobs, revenue, innovation and value addition. The Food and Beverage subsector is very significant because it connects agricultural production output with industry processing, markets and consumer demand. According to recent data, Kenya's food manufacturing sector has a considerable growth potential, with manufactured food product production expected to rise dramatically in 2024 (KNBS, 2023). Despite this potential, many small and medium-sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprises continue to struggle to achieve sustained growth.

Limitations in entrepreneurial talent, such as the capacity to acquire, analyze, and apply knowledge in dynamic business environments, have been linked to the growth challenges faced by SMEs. Food and beverage manufacturing enterprises must contend with shifting consumer

tastes, technological change, competition, fluctuating input prices, and regulatory constraints. Given these conditions, entrepreneurs must continually learn from suppliers, consumers, competitors, and other business stakeholders. According to the World Bank (2023), Kenyan MSMEs' productivity and expansion are hampered by a lack of managerial and entrepreneurial skills, weak business capabilities, and limited access to networks, information, and mentorship.

Therefore, entrepreneurial learning may be essential for helping businesses innovate, adapt, make better decisions, and take advantage of new business opportunities. In this study, SME growth refers to changes in an enterprise's economic size and market position over time. It is operationalized using three indicators: growth in net profit, growth in market share, and growth in net assets. Net profit growth captures changes in the firm's financial returns; market-share growth captures the firm's increasing position relative to competitors in its target market; and net-asset growth reflects an expansion in the firm's asset base and productive capacity.

The techniques by which entrepreneurs learn via experience, experimentation, introspection, and interactions with others are all included in entrepreneurial learning (Politis, 2005; Cope, 2005). While previous research in Kenya has looked at the relationship between SME growth and entrepreneurial training, business skills, and other entrepreneurial capabilities, entrepreneurial learning as a continuous and multifaceted process has received relatively little attention, especially in the food and beverage manufacturing enterprises in Nairobi Metropolitan Area

Because businesses operating in the same business environment may have varied growth results despite dealing with similar market and regulatory constraints, this leads to an empirical gap. While some businesses grow in terms of revenue, employment, manufacturing capacity, and market reach, others either stagnate or barely make ends meet. Therefore, it remains unclear how much variability in entrepreneurs' learning processes drives these disparities in firm growth. Policymakers, enterprise-support organizations, and entrepreneurs may have little direction on which learning processes should be reinforced to enable sustainable SME growth in the absence of empirical evidence on this link.

Therefore, the inadequate empirical knowledge of the impact of entrepreneurial learning on the growth of small and medium-sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprises in the Nairobi Metropolitan Area, Kenya, is the issue this study attempts to solve. As a result, the study aims to investigate the ways in which experiential learning, entrepreneurial competencies, intentions and attitudes and entrepreneurial formal learning impact these businesses' growth as determined by metrics like net profit, market share and net assets.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Experiential Learning Theory

Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), formulated by David Kolb (1984), offers a valuable theoretical framework for understanding how entrepreneurs gain and progressively enhance the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for initiating and operating a new business. The theory views learning as an ongoing process where knowledge is formed by transforming experiences. Instead of considering learning as the passive gathering of data, ELT highlights learning via experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation. In a business setting, this process is especially important as entrepreneurs work in uncertain conditions where

learning often happens through resolving issues, engaging with others, learning from errors, and adjusting to evolving situations.

Kolb's cycle of experiential learning includes four interconnected stages: direct experience, reflective observation, theoretical conceptualization, and active experimentation. Concrete experience takes place when an entrepreneur directly participates in a business venture or faces a specific business scenario. Reflective observation entails analyzing and assessing the events that occurred, encompassing the recognition of achievements, errors, difficulties, and insights gained from the experience. Abstract conceptualization takes place when the entrepreneur creates or alters ideas, principles, strategies, or explanations as a result of reflection. Ultimately, active experimentation takes place when the entrepreneur implements these freshly generated ideas or methods in future business scenarios. The cycle is ongoing because the results of experiments produce new experiences that form the foundation for additional reflection and learning.

The theory posits that entrepreneurial learning endeavors enhance SME growth not only because entrepreneurs gain knowledge, but also because they convert business experiences into practical knowledge and then utilize that knowledge in new business contexts. Frequent engagement in the experiential learning cycle can enhance entrepreneurs' skills in identifying opportunities, addressing challenges, adjusting to environmental shifts, refining business processes, and making well-informed choices. These improved abilities can, in turn, lead to better business results and small to medium enterprise expansion.

Thus, Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory provides the theoretical explanation for the relationship between entrepreneurial learning activities and SME growth in this study. The four stages of the learning cycle explain the mechanism through which entrepreneurs convert experience into knowledge and subsequently use that knowledge to modify their actions. Entrepreneurial learning is therefore conceptualized as the process through which experiences, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation develop the capabilities required for entrepreneurs to respond effectively to business challenges and pursue growth.

The Schumpeterian Theory of Innovation

Schumpeter is considered as the founder of innovation theory. He introduced the concept of innovation in 1934, where he argued that innovation is a driver of economic development and coined the idea of "creative destruction," where new innovations replace outdated industries. This theory argues that entrepreneurs who create and adopt innovations gain profits. Entrepreneurs must engage in creative destruction to realize profits. The innovation theory was linked to the explanation of growth of small and medium sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprises.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the surveyed theories, a conceptual framework that illustrates the interplay of variables was developed to direct the investigation. The link between the independent and dependent variables was examined via the conceptual framework. According to Kothari (2004), an independent variable is considered as a variable that influences or causes changes in the dependent variable. The independent variable evaluating growth of small and medium-sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprises was entrepreneurial learning.

The study operationalized entrepreneurial learning through three dimensions: entrepreneurial competencies, entrepreneurial intentions and attitudes and formal learning. These dimensions

illustrate the various methods by which entrepreneurs acquire, develop, and apply knowledge, skills and abilities essential to launch, manage and grow a business. Entrepreneurial competencies pertain to the entrepreneur's capacity to obtain and utilize knowledge, skills, and abilities in undertaking entrepreneurial tasks and addressing business obstacles. Entrepreneurial intentions and attitudes pertain to the entrepreneur's mindset and readiness to participate in entrepreneurial endeavors and seek out business prospects. Formal learning involves systematic and organized education conducted in recognized academic or training environments.

Entrepreneurial Learning

SMEs Growth



Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Entrepreneurial learning is progressively acknowledged as a vital skill that allows entrepreneurs to obtain, analyze, and utilize knowledge to enhance business choices and organizational results. It pertains not only to formal education or training in entrepreneurship but to the ongoing process where entrepreneurs gain knowledge from experiences, experimentation, interactions with customers and other parties, addressing challenges, and both successful and failed business endeavors. Recent studies highlight that entrepreneurial learning is especially crucial for SMEs as entrepreneurs often work in environments characterized by limited resources, uncertainty, and fast-evolving markets.

Lafuente et al. (2025) note that entrepreneurs and SMEs acquire knowledge through various experiences, such as successes and failures, whereas technological advancements can necessitate ongoing enhancement of skills and understanding. In the same way, Soelberg et al. (2024) highlight entrepreneurial learning as a crucial process enabling entrepreneurs to generate value and enhance their skills. The importance of entrepreneurial learning for business growth can be illustrated by how learning enhances entrepreneurs' ability to recognize opportunities, address operational issues, engage with customers, and launch new products and processes. Acquiring knowledge allows entrepreneurs to transform experience into insights that can then be utilized for business choices and strategic initiatives.

Mai and Nguyen (2023) argue that the entrepreneurial ecosystem affects organizational learning, creativity, and success. Lopez and Teixeira (2024) argue that innovation in entrepreneurial firms comes from continuous learning processes, accumulation as well as development of knowledge that may come from relationships, experience, skills and innovation. Shen et al. (2021) identified entrepreneurial learning channels as formal organisation learning, intergenerational learning and social network learning. They further opined that strategic capability such as learning leads to resources growth and competitive advantage in the firm.

Lopes and Teixeira (2024) discussed modes through which firms learn to achieve market distinctiveness as experiential, formal, through networks and vicarious learning. Leiva et al.

(2014) identified three constructs of learning such as experiential, formal and vicarious. They argued that experiential learning occurs when learners acquire knowledge through experience while vicarious learning occurs when entrepreneurs acquire knowledge through observation of other peoples' behaviours or actions. Finally, they explained formal learning as the one that takes place when entrepreneurs consult sources that include book, articles and training.

For any growing nation like Kenya, micro, small, and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) are the primary forces driving economic growth and innovation (Nyaramba & Thurania, 2023; Usoroh 2021). Micro, Small and medium-sized businesses also introduce new products and services, ideas that may be tested and implemented, and jobs for people in every country (Muturi, 2015). Establishing a small business is an accomplishment, but keeping it going is a difficult task. Globally, governments and policymakers are highly concerned with high growth-oriented SMEs because they are key drivers to the economy and development of any nation.

A well-established MSME indicates that the economy of a country is booming. Scholars have given different definitions for growth. Insah et al. (2013) noted that both qualitative and quantitative methods can be employed to assess business growth. Quantitative metrics might comprise sales income, output level, workforce size, and profitability, whereas qualitative metrics could involve market standing, product excellence, customer loyalty, and various non-financial indicators. A study by Neneh and Zyl (2017) used employment, sales and asset growth to measure growth. Firm growth can be understood as an increase in the size and economic activities of a business, reflected in indicators such as revenue generation, value addition, and expansion in the volume of business (Gupta et al., 2013).

Different methods have been employed by earlier scholars to explain the elements influencing SMEs' growth. Numerous scholars argue that external and environmental factors have a significant influence on the performance and growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (Asma, 2015). The business environment has an impact on the expansion of SMEs. The business will expand if the business climate is favorable. However, an adverse atmosphere prevents SMEs from growing. According to Asma et al. (2015), a complex regulatory framework and a high tax rate may significantly impede the expansion of SMEs.

SMEs find it expensive to follow these business rules and laws, which impedes their ability to expand. Many governments and policymakers have concentrated their efforts on the development of the SMEs sector to support their economic growth and development because of the crucial role that SMEs play in a nation's economic progress. Likewise, Kenya's government has encouraged the expansion of SMEs. Through different initiatives such as the establishment of a Credit Guarantee scheme for banks to lend more money to business owners, the rollout of hustler fund to promote access to affordable credit to sections of the population who were facing the high cost of borrowing to finance their small businesses, market access to expand the market for Kenyan communities, working space which is critical in providing equipped facilities to promote a decent working environment for local groups and partnerships to enhance growth of SMEs (Nyaramba & Thurania, 2023). Despite these government efforts, the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) reported that, on average, 46.3% of established businesses closed within their first year of operation, highlighting the significant survival challenges facing small businesses in Kenya (KNBS, 2016).

Empirical Review

Entrepreneurial Education and Business Performance

Many studies have confirmed the relationship between entrepreneurial learning and organizational outcomes such as performance and growth. Shen et al. (2021) conducted a study in China that examined 411 businesses and looked into the connection between entrepreneurship education and business performance. To gather information, they employed a questionnaire and a survey. They found that entrepreneurial learning has a positive and significant relationship with firms' performance. They also discovered that the link is mediated by entrepreneurial self-efficacy.

Rafiki et al., (2021), conducted a study to examine the dimensions of organizational learning (OL), entrepreneurial orientation (EO), personal value toward the firm performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in North Sumatera, Indonesia. The study used a quantitative methodology using SmartPLS of the structural equation model. A survey was done by distributing questionnaires to the respondents (owner-managers) of SMEs across sectors. Using a convenient sampling technique, 128 respondents are selected. The study used a cross-sectional survey design. Their study found that the innovativeness of EO and personal value both have a significant relationship with firm growth. The study also reported that organizational Learning was significantly related to the innovativeness of entrepreneurial orientation, risk-taking of entrepreneurial orientation and proactiveness of entrepreneurial orientation.

Entrepreneurial Orientation and Organizational Performance

Gomes (2022) conducted research in 159 Brazilian architectural and urban planning associations. They discovered that the association between entrepreneurial orientation and company performance is mediated by entrepreneurial learning capabilities. In Vietnam, Mai and Nguyen (2023) did a study in 200 firms and collected data from the founders of the start-ups. The research was done in start-ups that were operational for five years. They found that organisational learning bolsters learning capability.

In Turkey Iyiola et al. (2023) conducted a study among 421 managers of start-up businesses using cross-sectional and quantitative data. They found that learning orientation had a positive relationship with enterprise performance. Propensity to take risk moderated the relationship between learning orientation and enterprise performance. Lopez and Teixeira (2024) did a qualitative, explorative and descriptive multiple case studies on entrepreneurial firms in Brazil. They found that experiential, through networks, formal and vicarious learning are important modes to help entrepreneurs achieve distinction in the market place through innovative solutions.

Entrepreneurship Orientation and SMEs/ Business Growth

Dzomonda and Masocha (2018) conducted a study on the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and growth among SMEs in South Africa. The study adopted a survey approach, collected data through questionnaires, and used structural equation modelling (SEM) with SmartPLS 3 to analyze the data. A sample of 212 SMEs was chosen using a convenience sampling technique. The study's findings demonstrated a strong positive correlation between EO and employee, market share, and sales growth, whereas profitability growth did not show a significant positive correlation with EO.

A study on entrepreneurship orientation and its effect on business growth among SMEs in South Africa was carried out by Neneh and Zyl (2017). Proactiveness, risk-taking, and inventiveness were the entrepreneurial dimensions that were employed and the growth of SMEs dimensions were employment, sales, and asset growth. Using data collected from 285 SMEs, the results indicated that EO had a significant positive association with SME growth (employment and sales growth), but most SMEs showed a moderate level of EO. In order to assess the relationship between EO and the expansion of SMEs in South Africa.

Entrepreneurial Training and Business Growth

Nuel and Chika (2022) conducted a study to examine the relationship between entrepreneurship training and business growth among SMEs in Southeast, Nigeria. A survey procedure was adopted for the study, which drew on both secondary and primary data. Their study targeted two hundred and fifty (250) small businesses (SMEs). Data were collected using a questionnaire and analyzed using Ordinary Least Square Regression. Their study revealed that entrepreneurship training has a positive impact on the business growth of the SMEs in Southeast Nigeria. Their study concluded that entrepreneurship training is one of the key factors influencing SME growth, as well as the extent to which further training is based on the availability and relevance of training needs and programs.

Omotayo et al., (2018) conducted a study on the effect of entrepreneurship skills development on Youth Employment in Kwara State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised of 195 students enrolled in International Vocational, Technical & Entrepreneurship College (IVTEC), of which a sample of 131 respondents was selected. Primary data were used; the data were gathered through a structured questionnaire. The data were analyzed using both Pearson correlation and simple regression analysis. The results of the study revealed that a positive relationship exists between entrepreneurship skills development and youth employment generation.

Usoroh (2021) investigated the impact of competitive aggressiveness and autonomy on the expansion of small and medium-sized businesses in North Central Nigeria. They used a survey research design for their investigation. 13,378 registered SMEs across six states made up the target population, and 388 people made up the study's sample size. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire PLS-SEM was used to analyze the data collected.

The study's findings revealed that autonomy and competitive aggressiveness have positive but insignificant effect on SMEs growth in North Central Nigeria. The study recommended that SMEs owners and managers exercise autonomy to make decisions to help them achieve their corporate visions and compete aggressively to gain sustainable advantage and grow their firms.

A study by Abidemi et al. (2021) looked at the connection between SME performance in Kaduna state and autonomy and competitive aggressiveness. The study focused on SMEs in Nigeria's northwest Kaduna State. One hundred SME owners who were chosen through convenience sampling were given questionnaires. The study's analysis of the data using PLS-SEM showed a significant relationship between the performance of SMEs and competitive aggressiveness and autonomy.

In Nairobi County, Kenya, Isaac et al. (2018) looked into how entrepreneurial approach affected the expansion of small and medium-sized manufacturing businesses. The study included both a descriptive and a cross-sectional research design. A sample size of 265 manufacturing SMEs was chosen from a population of 853 SMEs using stratified random selection. According to the study's findings, the growth of small and medium-sized

manufacturing businesses in Nairobi County, Kenya, was statistically explained by innovativeness, autonomy, competitiveness, and aggression, with the exception of risk-taking and proactiveness. Thus, this study supports the evidence that innovativeness, autonomy, and competitiveness aggressiveness are key entrepreneurial dimensions that are imperative for enhancing SME growth.

Research Gaps

Most of the reviewed studies were conducted outside Kenya, including China (Shen et al., 2021), Brazil (Gomes, 2022; Lopez & Teixeira, 2024), Vietnam (Mai & Nguyen, 2023), Turkey (Iyiola et al., 2023), Nigeria (Nuel & Chika, 2022; Omotayo et al., 2018), and Indonesia (Rafiki et al., 2021). While these studies provide evidence that entrepreneurial or organizational learning can influence business outcomes, their findings may not be directly generalizable to Kenyan SMEs because institutional, economic, cultural, technological and regulatory environments differ across countries. To address this contextual gap, the study linking entrepreneurial learning was conducted in Kenya, where findings can be generalized.

The reviewed studies generally examined SMEs or entrepreneurial firms across different sectors rather than focusing specifically on food and beverage manufacturing enterprises. For example, Rafiki et al. (2021) examined SMEs across sectors in North Sumatera, while Nuel and Chika (2022) focused on SMEs in Southeast Nigeria. Similarly, Iyiola et al. (2023) studied start-ups without restricting the investigation to manufacturing. To address this gap, this study was conducted in Food and Beverage manufacturing enterprises in Nairobi Metropolitan Area in Kenya.

The studies use related but different concepts, including entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial learning, and organizational learning, learning orientation, entrepreneurial skills development and training. These concepts are related but are not necessarily interchangeable. For example, Shen et al. (2021) examined entrepreneurship education and business performance, while Nuel and Chika (2022) investigated entrepreneurship training and SME growth. Rafiki et al. (2021) focused on organizational learning and entrepreneurial orientation. Such studies provide useful evidence on learning-related constructs but do not sufficiently establish the effect of entrepreneurial learning as a distinct construct on SME growth. To address this gap, this study was conducted in Kenya investigating the relationship between entrepreneurial learning and SMEs growth

Most of the reviewed studies concentrate on organizational or firm performance, rather than specifically examining enterprise growth. For instance, Shen et al. (2021), Gomes (2022), Iyiola et al. (2023) and Rafiki et al. (2021) predominantly use firm or enterprise performance as the outcome. There is a need for research that specifically examines whether entrepreneurial learning contributes to measurable SME growth rather than simply general firm performance.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted descriptive and explanatory research designs. A mixed-methods design was used to collect, analyse, integrate, and report both qualitative and quantitative data. This study focused on all registered food and beverage manufacturing SMEs in Nairobi County. According to Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM, 2024) report, there are 139 registered food and beverage manufacturing SMEs in the Nairobi Metropolitan Area. The present study used a purposive sampling technique to obtain the required sample size. The researcher purposively selected all business owners from the 139 food and beverage SMEs in Nairobi Metropolitan Area. Purposive sampling allowed the researchers to select participants

who possess specific knowledge or characteristics relevant to the research question, leading to rich, in-depth data and focused insights (Palinkas et al., 2015). The main data collection instrument for this study was a questionnaire. A questionnaire was used in this study because it allows for the systematic collection of data from a large number of respondents efficiently. Data analysis was guided by the objective of the study, research question and hypothesis. Cronbach's alpha statistics were used to test the reliability of data. Descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, mean, and standard deviation were used to describe the characteristics of variables. Inferential statistics were used to measure the significance of the relationship, while simple linear regression was employed to find out whether entrepreneurial learning had a positive correlation with SMEs' growth. The results were presented in figures and tables.

RESULTS

Response Rate

Owners of 139 registered SMEs in the Nairobi Metropolitan Area that manufacture food and beverages participated in the study. 139 questionnaires were given out by the researcher. 107 completely filled-out questionnaires were collected by the researcher and used for statistical analysis. For this study, the response rate was 76.98%. A response rate of 50% or more is regarded as good for analysis and provides a solid foundation for the study, according to Sekaran and Bougie (2016).

Table 1: Response Rate

Questionnaire	Frequency	Percentage
Returned	107	76.98
Un-returned	32	23.02
Total	139	100

Descriptive Analysis for Entrepreneurial Learning

The study examined the influence of entrepreneurial learning on the growth of small and medium-sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprises in Nairobi Metropolitan Area. The objective was examined by the use of statements on the questionnaire. The statements were on whether owners of the enterprises had the entrepreneurial competences, intentions and attitudes and formal learning that are required to run the enterprises. The respondents were asked to indicate whether they agree or disagree with the statement. After collecting the data, questionnaires were coded and analysed using SPSS. Frequencies of the various outcomes in percentages from the sample and then presented in Table 2 below.

Evidence from Table 2 shows that 93% of the respondents both agreed and strongly agreed that they have become more confident in their ability to identify business opportunities. Those who disagreed were 5.6% while 0.9% were neutral. 75.7% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they can take and manage risks when they arise in the course of doing business. 16.0% disagreed with the statement, while 8.4% of the respondents felt neutral. 70.1% agreed or strongly agreed that they can solve problems creatively when they arise in their business, those who disagreed were 11.2% while 18.7% were neutral with the statements.

77% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they started entrepreneurial activities after school while 20.7% disagreed. 1.9% of the respondents expressed neutrality with the statement. Further, 76.6% of them agreed or strongly agreed that they have been participating

in activities focusing on entrepreneurship. Those who disagreed were 13.0% while 10.3% were neutral.

Another 58.0% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they have participated in an entrepreneurial course, 35.5% disagreed that they have participated in an entrepreneurial course while 6.5% were neutral. In addition, 85.1% agreed or strongly agreed that they were actively involved in entrepreneurial ventures, 11.2% disagreed that they were involved in entrepreneurial ventures while 3.7% disagreed. Those who agreed or strongly agreed that they had a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship were 82.2%, 9.3% disagreed while 8.4% were neutral with the statement. 76.7% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they could start and manage their business, 15.1% disagreed with the statement while 10.3% were neutral

The overall mean of 4.32 implies that the respondents agreed with all the statements about entrepreneurial learning, while the standard deviation of 0.39 implies that the responses were less varied. These findings are consistent with those of Okumu and Mungai (2025), who reported that the majority a similarly high mean score (of 4.57), demonstrating strong agreement regarding entrepreneurial learning. Overall, the results imply that business owners in food and beverage manufacturing SMEs actively engage in entrepreneurial learning activities that enhance their knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for starting and managing entrepreneurial ventures.

The respondents were asked to explain how entrepreneurial learning affects the growth of their businesses. Most of the respondents indicated that entrepreneurial learning gave them the necessary skills to exploit their abilities, engage in active investments, nurture, manage and grow the business as well as handle, deal with, and serve customers. Other respondents indicated that entrepreneurial learning enabled them to determine and identify possible losses and therefore gave them an edge to avoid such risks hence generating business profits. Business owners who engaged in entrepreneurial learning stated that the learning helped them identify gaps and make necessary corrective measures to lure customers and strengthen customer relationships.

They also got ideas on how to identify and solve problems within their businesses. Others indicated that entrepreneurial learning broadened their knowledge about business operations. These responses agree with the study of Lopez and Teixeira (2024), who noted that innovation in entrepreneurial firms comes from continuous learning processes, accumulation as well as development of knowledge that may come from relationships, experience, skills and innovation.

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis for Entrepreneurial Learning

Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	M/SD
1. I have become more confident in my ability to identify business opportunities	2(1.9)	4(3.7)	1(0.9)	70(65.4)	30(28.0)	M=4.29 SD=0.48
2. I can take and manage risks when they arise in the course of doing business	2(1.9)	15(14.1)	9(8.4)	39(36.4)	42(39.3)	M=4.30 SD=0.46
3. I can solve problems creatively when they arise in my business	7(6.5)	5(4.7)	20(18.7)	37(34.6)	38(35.5)	M=4.47 SD=0.50
4. I started entrepreneurial activities after school	6(5.61)	16(15.1)	2(1.9)	44(41.5)	38(35.5)	M=4.10 SD=1.02
5. I have been participating in activities focusing on entrepreneurship	8(7.48)	6(5.6)	11(10.3)	50(46.7)	32(29.9)	M=4.16 SD=0.83
6. I have participated in an entrepreneurial course	12(11.2)	26(24.3)	7(6.5)	32(29.9)	30(28.1)	M=4.29 SD=0.51
7. I am actively involved in entrepreneurial ventures	8(7.5)	4(3.7)	4(3.7)	49(45.8)	42(39.3)	M=4.28 SD=0.71
8. I have a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship	3(2.80)	7(6.54)	9(8.41)	53(49.5)	35(32.7)	M=4.41 SD=0.49
9. I can start and manage my business	9(8.41)	5(4.67)	11(10.3)	37(34.6)	45(42.1)	M=4.55 SD=0.50
Average Mean						4.32
Overall SD						0.39

Descriptive Analysis for Growth of Food and Beverage Manufacturing Enterprises

Table 3 demonstrates results for the growth of Small and Medium Food and Beverage Manufacturing Enterprises in Kenya as the dependent variable. The percentages of all the statements about growth of Small and Medium Food and Beverage Manufacturing Enterprises in Kenya are presented below. The results indicate that most of the respondents agreed with all the statements.

40% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the net profit of their company has increased in the last three years. Additionally, 48.6% of the respondents both agreed and strongly agreed that their company effectively controls unnecessary expenses. Moreover, 56.1% of the respondents both disagreed and strongly disagreed that the company's net profit margin was satisfactory. Further, 26.2% agreed that their company has a larger market share in the sector, 25.2% felt neutral while 20.6% disagreed. The results also indicate that 59.4% of

the respondents both agreed and strongly agreed that their company has expanded into new markets.

In addition, 74.7% both agree and strongly agreed that their customers prefer their products more than those of their competitors. When asked about the satisfaction of their current net asset level, 33.6% indicated they were not satisfied, 25% were neutral while 22.4% indicated that they were satisfied. 34.6% of the respondents felt neutral that the value of their business assets has grown over the last three years, while 47.7% both agreed and strongly agreed. Lastly, most of the respondents, 53.2% both disagree and strongly disagree that their current net asset level is sufficient for their business needs. The overall mean of 4.10 implies that the respondents agreed with the statements about growth of Small and Medium Food and Beverage Manufacturing Enterprises in Kenya while standard deviation of 0.53 implies that the responses were less varied. The findings agree with the study of Neneh and Zyl (2017) who noted that an increase in the size of the business is attained through increased sales, market share, return on investment, profitability, value-added and employment growth.

Table 3: Growth of Small and Medium Sized Food and Beverage Manufacturing Enterprises

S/N	Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	M/SD
1.	The net profit of my company has increased in the last three years.	1(0.9)	15(14.1)	16(15.0)	40(37.4)	35(32.7)	M=4.29 SD=0.73
2.	Our company effectively controls unnecessary expenses	6(5.6)	22(20.6)	27(25.2)	35(32.7)	17(15.9)	M=4.43 SD=0.56
3.	The company's net profit margin is satisfactory	32(29.9)	28(26.2)	29(27.1)	12(11.2)	6(5.6)	M=3.89 SD=0.98
4.	Our company has a larger market share in the sector	16(15.0)	22(20.6)	27(25.2)	28(26.2)	14(13.0)	M=4.07 SD=0.78
5.	Our company has expanded into new markets	3(2.8)	18(16.8)	23(21.5)	37(34.6)	26(24.8)	M=4.18 SD=0.55
6.	The customers prefer our products more than those of our competitors	2(1.9)	7(6.5)	18(16.8)	47(43.9)	33(30.8)	M=4.12 SD=0.71
7.	I am satisfied with my current net asset level	8(7.5)	36(33.6)	27(25.2)	24(22.4)	12(11.2)	M=3.88 SD=1.02
8.	The value of my business assets has grown over the last three years	3(2.8)	16(15.0)	37(34.6)	22(20.6)	29(27.1)	M=4.07 SD=0.80
9.	My current net asset level is sufficient for my business needs	27(25.2)	30(28.0)	13(12.1)	25(23.4)	12(11.2)	M=3.98 SD=0.95
Overall Mean							4.10
Overall SD							0.53

Findings for the Measurements for Growth of Small and Medium-Sized Food and Beverage Manufacturing Enterprises

Net Profits

The study established the trend in growth of small and medium sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprises using the net profit generated for three years thus between 2022-2024. The respondents were required to indicate the profits they made every specific year. The study involved the use of mean net profit per year in order to plot a line graph to determine the growth trend. The findings are in the figure 2. In the first year 2022, the net profit was 13,004,591.84. In the year 2023, the net profit declined seriously to 4,853,693, indicating that most business were almost at closure. This decline can be attributed to the several significant new business regulations and amendments which Kenyan government introduced in the year 2023 (Finance Act, 2023). For example, the Turnover Tax (TOT) rate increased from 1% to 3% of gross sales. In the year 2024, the profits gradually increased to 7,288,100. It can be seen that the profits made by food and beverage manufacturing SMEs declined between 2022 and 2023. From the year 2023 the net profits gradually increased up to the year 2024. This implies that the growth of small and medium sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprises is not steady.

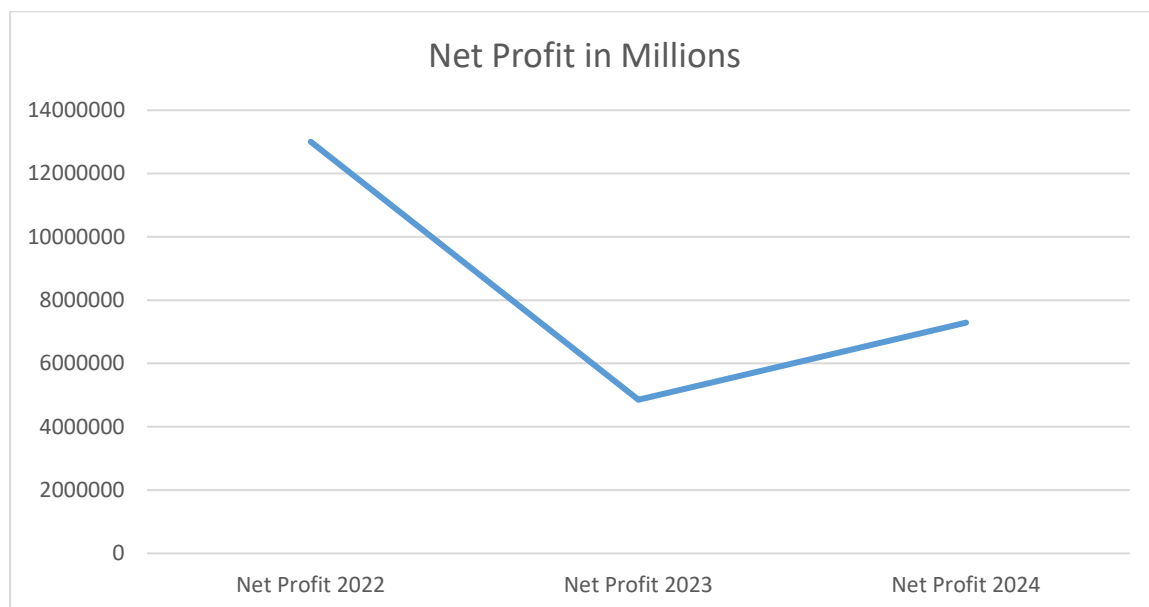
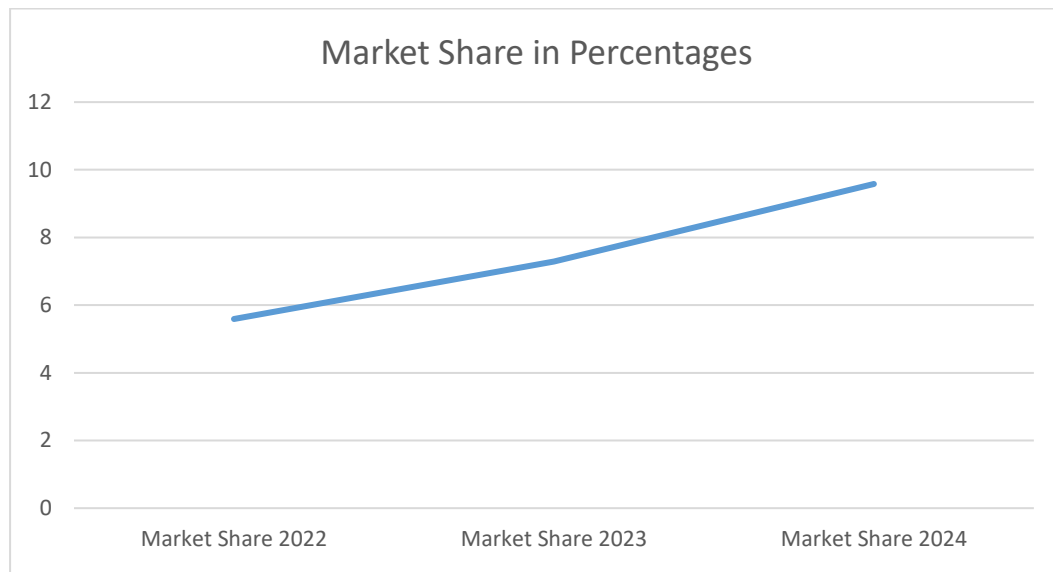


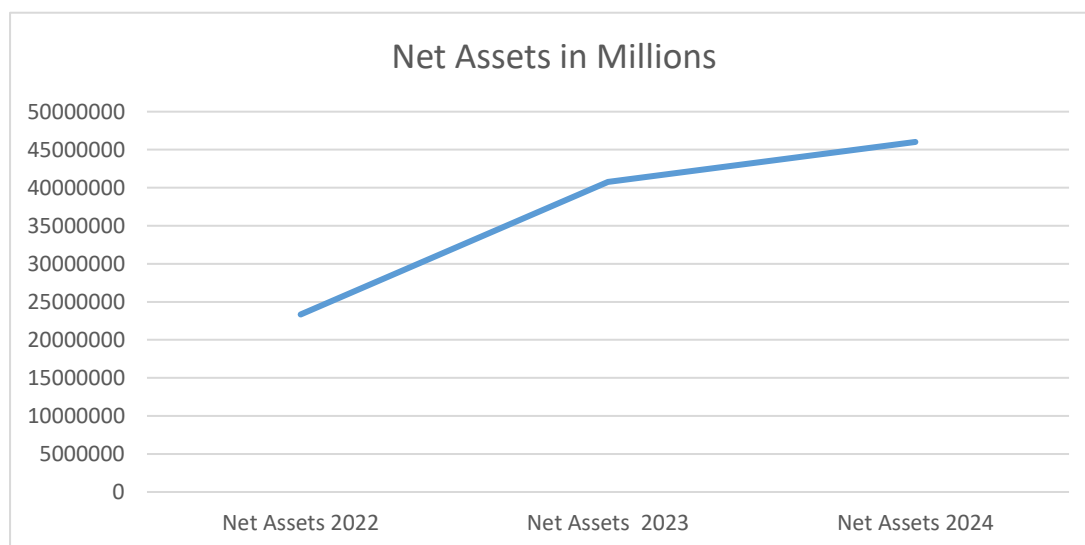
Figure 2: Net Profit

Market Share

Another growth measure used in the study was market share. Respondents were asked to indicate. The study used the mean averages of their market share for each year to show the trend in market share earned. The results obtained are presented in Figure 3. Based on the results, food and beverage manufacturing SMEs experienced a growth in the market share. The average market share in 2022 was around 5.59%, increasing to around 9.58% in the year 2024. This implies that the food and beverage manufacturing SMEs have registered a growth in the market share.

*Figure 3: Market Share***Net Assets**

The study also measured the growth of small and medium-sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprises using net assets. Respondents were asked to indicate their annual sales volume over the last three years from 2022 to 2024. The average volumes of the net assets for each year was used to observe the trend recorded by the enterprises in terms of their net assets. A line graph was used to show trends in net assets recorded by the enterprises from 2022 to 2024. Figure 4 presents the results obtained. In the year 2022 the total value of the net assets was 23339795.92. In the following year 2023, the net asset value increased to 40750000 and in the last year 2024 the net asset value increased to 46021139.19. These findings show that SMES have grown, though slowly, in terms of net assets over the years.

*Figure 4: Net Assets*

Area of Specialization

Results in Figure 4(d) showed that 21.5% of the firms were specialized in Cocoa, chocolate, and sugar confectionery, 15.9% firms specialized in grain mill products, while 10.3% were specialized in dairy products. 7.5% were specialized in bakery products and meat and meat products. The purpose of examining firm specialization was to determine which specific sectors in the food and beverage industry within Nairobi were most actively involved in innovation. The findings imply that the majority of the F& B firms within Nairobi are specialized within the non-alcoholic beverage sector and are more actively involved in innovation. The results on firm's specialization are shown in figure 5.

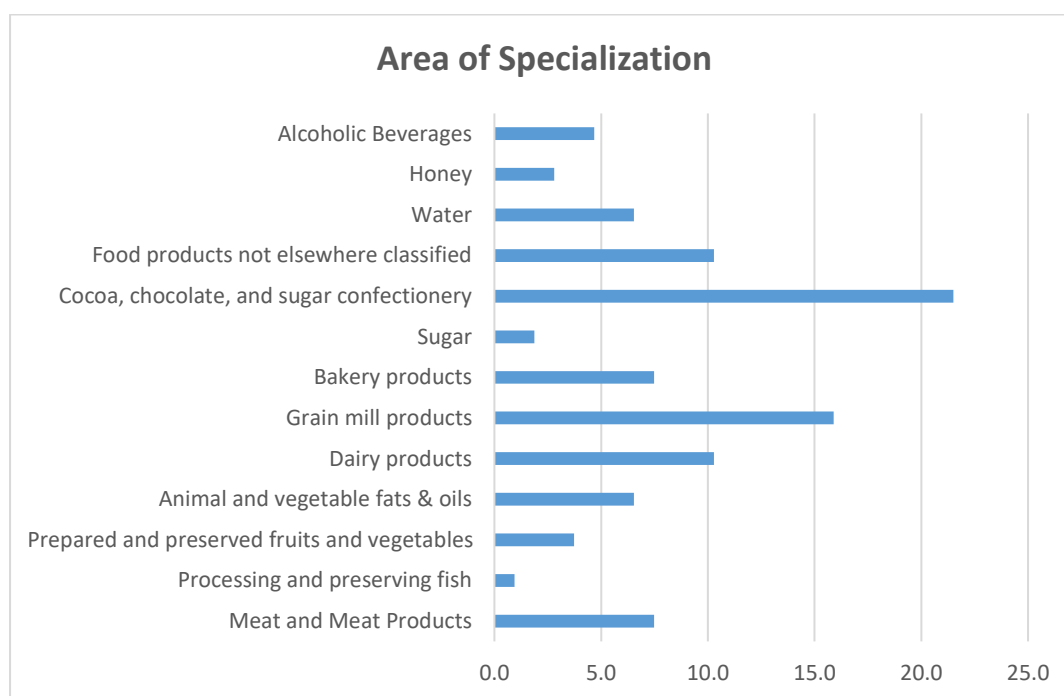


Figure 5: Area of Specialization

Correlation Test Results for Entrepreneurial Learning and SME Growth

Correlation analysis was used to show the direction and strength of relationships between variables. It determines whether two or more variables are related. The Pearson Correlation Coefficient test was employed to examine the relationship between growth of small and medium-sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprises and entrepreneurial learning. The results in Table 3 showed that entrepreneurial learning had a moderate positive relationship with the growth of small and medium-sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprises ($r = 0.550$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that as the entrepreneurial learning by the business owners increases, the growth of small and medium sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprises also increases.

Table 3: Correlation Test Results for Entrepreneurial Learning and Growth of small and medium sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprises in Nairobi Metropolitan

		Correlations	
		Growth	Entrepreneurial_Learning
Growth	Pearson Correlation	1	.550**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	107	107
Entrepreneurial_Learning	Pearson Correlation	.550**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	107	107

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Simple Linear Regression Results for Entrepreneurial Learning and Growth of Small and Medium-Sized Food and Beverage Manufacturing Enterprises in Nairobi Metropolitan

Simple regression analysis was used to find out whether entrepreneurial learning influences SMEs' growth. Regression analysis provided three tables which include the model summary table, ANOVA table, and Coefficients table (Mutua, 2020). The study ascertained whether entrepreneurial learning and growth of small and medium sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprises in Nairobi Metropolitan are related. The following model was used to estimate this relationship:

$$\text{OLS Model: } y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + e$$

Model Summary Findings for Entrepreneurial Learning and Growth of Small and Medium Sized Food and Beverage Manufacturing Enterprises in Nairobi Metropolitan

From the Model Summary Table 4 (a) the values shown are .550 and .302 for R and R², respectively. R is the correlation coefficient, which shows the strength of the relationship between the predictor and outcome variables. R-squared is the coefficient of determination in a simple regression model. The researcher had to square R (0.550) so as to get R-squared (0.302). The R-squared value of 0.302 indicates that 30.2% of the variation in the growth of small and medium sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprises in Nairobi Metropolitan could be accounted for by the predictor variable (Entrepreneurial learning). Despite this meaningful influence, a substantial portion (69.8%) of the variability remains unaccounted for, suggesting the involvement of other factors not included in the model.

Table 4(a): Model Summary Results for Entrepreneurial Learning and Growth of small and medium-sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprises in Nairobi Metropolitan

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.550a	.302	.296	1.64643

a. Predictors: (Constant), Entrepreneurial_Learning

ANOVA Findings for Entrepreneurial Learning and Growth of Small and Medium Sized Food and Beverage Manufacturing Enterprises in Nairobi Metropolitan

It is also known as Analysis of Variance. It uses the F-test to indicate if the independent variable has a significant relationship with the dependent variable or not. If the p-value is less than 0.05, the independent variable has a significant relationship with the dependent variable. If the p-value is more than 0.05, then the independent variable has no significant relationship with the dependent variable.

By regressing the growth of small and medium-sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprises in Nairobi Metropolitan on entrepreneurial learning, the study sought to determine whether entrepreneurial learning significantly predicts the growth of small and medium-sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprises in Nairobi Metropolitan. Results in Table 4(b) indicate that entrepreneurial learning significantly predicts the growth of small and medium-sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprises in Nairobi Metropolitan, as shown by the results of the F-test and the low p-value: $F(1, 105) = 45.471, p < .001$.

Table 4 (b): ANOVA Findings for Entrepreneurial Learning and Growth of Small and Medium-Sized Food and Beverage Manufacturing Enterprises in Nairobi Metropolitan

		ANOVA ^a				
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	123.260	1	123.260	45.471	.000b
	Residual	284.628	105	2.711		
	Total	407.888	106			

a. Dependent Variable: Growth

b. Predictors: (Constant), Entrepreneurial_Learning

Model Coefficient Findings for Entrepreneurial Learning and Growth of Small and Medium-Sized Food and Beverage Manufacturing Enterprises in Nairobi Metropolitan

Furthermore, the study aimed to quantify the influence of entrepreneurial learning on the growth of small and medium-sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprises in Nairobi Metropolitan. The model coefficient Table 4.6 indicates that the predictor variable's coefficient is significant, with P-values below 0.05. Keeping all other variables constant, this suggests that, on average, there is a 0.300 unit increase in the growth of small and medium-sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprises in Nairobi Metropolitan for every unit rise in entrepreneurial learning.

Further, the coefficient Table 4 (c) was used to derive the model equation connecting the predictor and outcome variable. The study used an unstandardized coefficient (B) (Mutua, 2020). According to the results, entrepreneurial learning was a significant predictor of growth of small and medium-sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprises in Nairobi Metropolitan; hence, the fitted model was:

$$\text{SMEs' Growth} = 20.701 + 0.300 \text{ Entrepreneurial Learning} + e \dots \dots \text{Equation 1}$$

The overall results suggest that entrepreneurial learning is a significant predictor of growth of small and medium-sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprises in Nairobi Metropolitan. Therefore, increasing the level of entrepreneurial learning among business owners will be associated with higher levels of growth of small and medium-sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprises in Nairobi Metropolitan.

Table 4 (c): Regression Coefficients Findings for Entrepreneurial Learning and SMEs Growth

Model		Coefficients ^a			T	Sig.
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	20.701	1.733		11.946	.000
	Entrepreneurial_Learning	.300	.044	.550	6.743	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Growth						

a. Dependent Variable: Growth

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**Summary**

The goal of the study was to analyse the influence of entrepreneurial learning on the growth of small and medium-sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprises in Nairobi Metropolitan Area. The literature reviewed indicated that entrepreneurial learning has a critical role in enhancing the SMEs' growth. The ability of entrepreneurs to learn is crucial to the growth process of a firm. Entrepreneurs should learn from mistakes, experience and the decisions they make as well as from their networks.

Based on the descriptive findings, the majority of the respondents agreed with all the statements that were used to measure entrepreneurial learning. Specifically, an overwhelming majority strongly agreed that they had become more confident in identifying business opportunities, they were capable of taking and managing business risks and they can solve problems creatively.

The results further showed that most respondents started entrepreneurial activities after completing school and they have been participating in entrepreneurship-focused activities. A notable number of respondents indicated that they had not participated in a formal entrepreneurship course, while a large number confirmed that they are actively involved in entrepreneurial ventures.

A substantial percentage of the respondents had a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship, and others felt they could start and manage their businesses effectively. Overall, the results imply that business owners in food and beverage manufacturing SMEs actively engage in entrepreneurial learning activities that enhance their knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for starting and managing ventures. Respondents highlighted that entrepreneurial learning equips them with essential skills to exploit opportunities, make informed investment decisions, manage operations effectively, serve customers better, and sustain business growth.

It also enhances their ability to identify potential losses, minimize risks, recognize business gaps, implement corrective measures, strengthen customer relationships, and solve operational problems. Moreover, entrepreneurial learning broadens their understanding of business operations and fosters innovation. Correlation findings showed that entrepreneurial learning has a significant positive relationship with the growth of small and medium-sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprises in NMA. The simple linear regression analysis indicated that entrepreneurial learning is an important predictor of SMEs growth though it explains a moderate proportion of the variance.

The results of the hypothesis test showed a positive and substantial correlation between firm growth and entrepreneurial learning. The null hypothesis stating that there is no significant

influence of entrepreneurial learning on growth of Small and medium-sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprises in Nairobi Metropolitan, Kenya was rejected and the alternative hypothesis, stating that there is a significant influence of entrepreneurial learning on the growth of small and medium sized food and beverage manufacturing enterprises was accepted.

Conclusion

The study concludes that entrepreneurial learning is the first important factor that influences the growth of Food and Beverage manufacturing Enterprises in Nairobi Metropolitan Area. The regression coefficients of the study show that entrepreneurial learning has a significant influence on the growth of Food and Beverage manufacturing Enterprises in Nairobi Metropolitan Area. This shows that entrepreneurial learning has a positive influence the growth of Food and Beverage manufacturing Enterprises in the Nairobi Metropolitan Area.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the study, the researcher established that entrepreneurial learning has a significant and positive influence on the growth of F& B manufacturing SMEs. Although most of the business owners showed strong experiential learning, a notable number of them had not undertaken formal entrepreneurial courses. Given that entrepreneurial learning significantly predicts SME growth, the study recommends that strengthening both formal and informal learning mechanisms should be prioritized. Enhancing entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and attitudes will improve opportunity exploitation, innovation, risk management, and overall firm performance. Consequently, sustained investment in entrepreneurial learning will greatly enhance the sustainability and expansion of food and beverage manufacturing SMEs in the Nairobi Metropolitan Area.

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