

ENHANCING SUSTAINABILITY OF BEAUTY PARLORS IN NANYUKI TOWN THROUGH ENTREPRENEURIAL CREATIVITY

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of Study: This study investigated the influence of entrepreneurial creativity on sustainability of beauty parlors in Nanyuki Town.

Problem Statement: Beauty parlors to a great extent contribute to employment creation and revenue generation for both business owners and the government. However, many of these businesses face stagnation and a high risk of closure in their early years.

Methodology: A descriptive research design was employed, targeting 127 owners of registered beauty parlors in Nanyuki Town. Given the small population size, a census method was utilized to select all respondents. Primary data was collected through a semi-structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics mean, standard deviation, and coefficient of variation as well as regression analysis.

Result: The findings revealed a strong positive association between entrepreneurial creativity and sustainability ($r = 0.75$, $p < 0.01$).

Conclusion: The study concludes that although the cost-effectiveness of new processes received somewhat less emphasis, the overall view is that creativity is a key factor in achieving sustainability.

Recommendation: The study recommends enhanced access to diverse sources of capital, including loans and grants tailored for small and medium-sized beauty parlors. It also suggested collaboration with financial institutions to enhance funding access and the provision of financial literacy training on financial management and loan repayment strategies, enabling beauty parlor owners to manage their finances more effectively.

Keywords: *Entrepreneurial Creativity, Sustainability, Beauty Parlors, Business Innovation, Nanyuki Town*

INTRODUCTION

Sustainability is integral to the long-term success and resilience of business organizations in the modern business environment. Sustainability in business organizations is a multifaceted concept that encompasses economic, social, and environmental dimensions. It reflects the ability of a business to thrive in the present while ensuring the well-being of future generations and the planet (Gwyn et al., 2019). In today's dynamic business environment, where globalization, technological advancements, and shifting consumer preferences are prevalent, sustainability has emerged as a critical factor for long-term success and resilience. The business environment is in a constant state of flux, influenced by various factors such as technological advancements, economic shifts, socio-cultural changes, and environmental concerns. Over the past few decades, the pace of change has accelerated, driven by globalization and digitalization, making adaptation imperative for survival (Morrisson, 2021).

In today's hyperconnected world, businesses face unprecedented challenges and opportunities. Globalization has opened up new markets and increased competition, while advances in technology have disrupted traditional business models (Asaph, 2022). Moreover, consumers are becoming more socially and environmentally conscious, demanding transparency and sustainability from the companies they engage with. Survival in this dynamic environment requires businesses to be agile, innovative, and adaptable. Those that fail to evolve risk becoming obsolete or being overtaken by competitors who are quicker to embrace change (Friar & Meyer 2020). Strategic measures and decisions are essential not only for staying competitive but also for long-term viability.

Furthermore, a growing number of consumers base their purchasing decisions on the sustainability credentials of a company. 57% of consumers, according to a survey conducted by IBM in 2020, are willing to modify their purchasing behaviors in an effort to lessen their negative environmental impact. Businesses have the ability to support customer loyalty, attract fresh clientele, and bolster their brand reputation by conforming to consumer expectations and values (IBM, 2020). In addition, environmental, social, and governance (ESG) considerations are gaining greater traction among investors. Financially, a growing body of evidence indicates that firms with strong ESG performance tend to outperform their competitors. Organizations can potentially expand their

capital resources and decrease their cost of capital by incorporating sustainability principles into their overall business strategy (Friar & Meyer, 2020).

Entrepreneur creativity and financial accessibility are the primary causes of many beauty parlor failures (Neecker et al., 2019). Lack of finance has also been cited as one of the most severe restrictions confronting beauty parlors and impeding their expansion (Oketch, 2021). Sustainability of beauty firms demands greater market research, which has lagged in the three decades from 1990 to 2020, as well as a focus on difficulties that impede growth. Globally, beauty parlors are categorized under micro and small businesses (MSEs) which are the foundation of all economies (Friar & Meyer 2020). They play a crucial role in fostering economic expansion, vitality, and adaptability in developed and industrialized nations, in addition to emergent and developing ones.

Micro and small businesses are the most prevalent form of business organization, comprising, depending on the country, more than 95% and up to 99% of all businesses. They comprise 60–70 percent of net employment creation in Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) nations. Particularly important for introducing new products or processes to the market are small businesses (OECD, 2018). Denanyoh et al. (2023) argue that the global expansion of MSEs in Latin America is more probable when they are endowed with favorable environmental conditions, effective assistance programs, and solid government policy frameworks.

Several research that uses field trials to assess returns on capital for microenterprises reveal that some firms earn very high returns (Daniels et al., 2019). They quote a case study from Mexico, where they discovered that the expected monthly returns for micro companies ranged between 20% and 33%. These rates are significantly greater than those provided by the majority of formal lenders, suggesting that certain microentrepreneurs may be able to acquire additional capital, personnel, and revenue. Their performance in Africa has been abysmal, despite the obvious significance of these myriad policy efforts that African governments have implemented over the course of the past two decades in order to encourage the growth and survival of micro, small, and medium-sized companies (MSEs) across the African continent. As stated by Bula and Tiagha (2022), MSE mortality in Africa continues to be exceptionally high.

In South Africa, micro and small enterprises (MSMEs) contribute to over 55% of the country's total employment and 22 percent of its GDP (Irene, 2015). According to ENSR (2019), 68 million jobs were created in the European Union (EU) by MSEs that employed a maximum of 250 individuals. Tanzania has adopted a range of policies in an effort to generate revenue, develop infrastructure, and increase employment opportunities through the establishment of new SMEs and the enhancement of the performance and competitiveness of existing ones (Lodel & Lilie, 2022).

The significance of beauty parlors in Kenya with regard to social, political, and economic progress is widely acknowledged (Mohamed & Mnguu, 2024). Their ability to provide a substantial number of individuals with products, services, income, and employment at reasonable prices underscores their significance. Nabintu (2013) asserts that despite the widespread recognition of the growth contributions made by small enterprises, micro and small entrepreneurs encounter a multitude of obstacles that hinder their sustained existence and progress. A study conducted by the KNBS in 2022 found that within the initial few months of operation, three out of every five businesses fail. Consequently, there has been an increasing preoccupation and interest among governmental bodies and development organizations to enhance the operations and expansion of MSMEs. Furthermore, data from a number of African nations indicates that MSEs contribute 18% of the national GDP and employ more than 3.2 million individuals in Kenya.

From a commercial standpoint, Kigundu (2022) describes sustainability as the ability or capacity of designed programs to consistently respond to identified community needs. In general, sustainability refers to the endurance of processes and/or systems. In business, the interdependence of creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship strongly influences sustainability. A firm is considered sustainable if it has no negative effects on the community, society, economy, or local environment's triple bottom line. Swierczek and Haida (2018) discussed how businesses might thrive and fail. Most business owners seek a 40% sustainable business. Growth is one of the most important goals in running a sustainable practice.

In Kenya, external regulatory frameworks, market dynamics, consumer preferences, and stakeholder expectations shape the sustainability agenda for businesses (Kigundu, 2022). The government is enacting laws and regulations to promote sustainability and hold businesses accountable for their environmental and social impacts. Moreover, consumers are increasingly

demanding sustainable products and services, forcing companies to adapt or risk losing market share. Investors and other stakeholders are also paying closer attention to companies' sustainability performance, leading to greater scrutiny and transparency. This study sought to evaluate contributing determinants of sustainability in SMEs, taking a major focus on Beauty Parlors in Kenya.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises are very important in the economic trajectory of Kenya. According to Nyakeira (2019), SMEs are a significant source of job creation and form a huge portion of the country's GDP. Among these SMEs, beauty parlors in Nanyuki Town represent a crucial sector, offering various beauty and grooming services to local residents and tourists. However, despite their economic importance, many of these beauty parlors face sustainability challenges that hinder their growth and long-term viability. As revealed in a survey conducted by the Kenyan Ministry of Trade and Industry in 2023, SMEs accounted for over 80% of all businesses in the country and contributed approximately 40% to the national GDP. Within the beauty industry, beauty parlors in Nanyuki Town alone generated an estimated revenue of Ksh.50 million annually, employing over 500 individuals directly and supporting numerous ancillary businesses such as suppliers of beauty products and equipment, transportation services, and advertising agencies (Statistica, 2023).

SMEs, including beauty parlors, play a crucial role in Kenya's economic development by fostering entrepreneurship, creating jobs, and driving innovation. They contribute to reducing poverty, wealth creation, and the empowering of marginalized groups, particularly women and youth. Moreover, the beauty industry has emerged as a significant contributor to Kenya's tourism sector, attracting both domestic and international visitors seeking beauty and wellness services. Similar to the majority of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), beauty parlors experience a notably low rate of success, with 60% of their operations failing within the initial three years due to substantial obstacles (Sharu & Guyo, 2015). Their inadequate performance has hindered their capacity to make the necessary contribution to the development of Kenya's GDP (Gichuke, 2013). Previous research studies by Aluoch (2018) and Murimi et al. (2021) on SME sustainability in Kenya have identified various factors influencing the success and longevity of small businesses.

These factors include access to finance, market dynamics, regulatory environment, infrastructure, human capital, and networking opportunities. In Kenya, there is widespread concern that these microenterprises are not expanding in terms of employment and sales. Survival rates in the MSE sector are poor, Lolama (2021) quantifying that 59% of Kenya's MSEs failed during the first three years of operation. Only 34.8 percent of the MSEs that survived grew at an average yearly pace of 24.0 percent. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) fail to capitalize on technological advancements, superior product and service quality, novel marketing strategies, and innovative organizational frameworks, according to Damanpour et al. (2009).

Despite the growing importance of the beauty industry in Kenya (valued at Ksh.100 billion (Mputhia, 2021)), a notable gap in the literature exists, with regards to the sustainability of beauty parlors, particularly in small towns like Nanyuki. Existing studies tend to focus on SMEs in urban areas or specific sectors such as agriculture or manufacturing, overlooking the unique challenges and opportunities faced by beauty businesses in semi-urban or rural settings. Additionally, while some research discusses the overall conduct of SMEs on the economy, there is a lack of in-depth analysis of the beauty industry's specific impact on local economies and communities.

This research study sought to address the aforementioned gaps by undertaking an extensive and exhaustive investigation into the determinants of sustainability for beauty parlors in Nanyuki Town, Kenya. By focusing specifically on this niche sector within the SME landscape, the study sought to provide valuable insights into the challenges encountered by beauty entrepreneurs, the strategies they employ to vanquish these challenges, and the potential opportunities for growth and expansion. Additionally, by examining the socio-economic impact of beauty parlors on the local community, the study is set to shed light on the broader implications of the beauty industry for Kenya's economy and society. Overall, the research sought to contribute to the body of knowledge on SME sustainability in Kenya while offering practical recommendations for policymakers, industry stakeholders, and aspiring entrepreneurs in the beauty sector.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To assess the influence of the entrepreneur's creativity on sustainability of beauty parlors in Nanyuki Town.

RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the influence of an entrepreneur's creativity on the sustainability of beauty parlors in Nanyuki Town?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study primarily benefits small business owners by highlighting issues that promote sustainable entrepreneurship in the country. Small company owners are likely to gain from the study's findings because they will be able to recognize aspects that are critical for sustainable entrepreneurship and aid them in making educated decisions about the business's growth. SME business officials and regulators will gain insight into the aspects that influence the long-term financial success of SMEs. This would enable them to create policies and legislations that will promote the growth of SMEs in the country for both county and national governments.

Any initiative would benefit the community, women, young people, and the unemployed by allowing them to indulge in income-generating activities and other farm-based value additions. Micro enterprises benefit the county financially by collecting taxes, and their sustainability should be improved in order for Laikipia County to earn income. Findings to the study are likely to aid researchers and scholars by adding to their knowledge of the factors impacting sustainable entrepreneurship in SMEs. Researchers and academics can use the findings of this study in their publications as long as the subject incorporates issues impacting the sustainable finance of SMEs.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

The study was anchored on Knowledge-Based Theory of the Firm. The Knowledge-Based Theory of the Firm (KBTF), initially proposed by Penrose in 1959, is a strategic management framework that underscores the importance of information and knowledge as crucial resources for achieving competitive advantage and enhancing firm performance. According to KBTF, firms differentiate themselves not only through their tangible assets but also through their capacity to acquire, create, disseminate, and effectively utilize knowledge. Penrose was the first to introduce this concept, and later scholars such as Barney and Machey (2016) further expanded on it. The theory highlights the significance of knowledge in boosting the productivity of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the broader economy (Romer, 2001). In countries with a highly educated and trained workforce, SME and economic performance are generally more favorable. This is because well-

educated personnel are more proficient in acquiring and applying new skills, which in turn enhances the efficiency, productivity, risk management, and innovation of SMEs (Sharu & Guyo, 2013).

Furthermore, the knowledge-based approach differentiates between two types of learning according to their respective contexts (Zerenler & Mete 2008). Exploratory learning is internal to the SME and can only be acquired through internal experiments; it is therefore experiential. Exploitative learning, on the other hand, is externally acquired. Entrepreneurs are required to gain experience through practical learning. Behavior can be associated with the development of entrepreneurial attitudes and competencies through the use of education. An informed entrepreneur can readily arrive at the correct conclusions regarding which markets to enter, what product to develop, and what selling price to establish from a strategic standpoint (Hart, 1992). According to Njoroge and Gathungu (2013) “these decisions consistently differentiate between SMEs with high and low performance and consequently, the analysis, planning, and control procedures of SMEs are influenced by education and training”

Whereas the knowledge-based theory accentuates the role of knowledge creation and innovation in driving firm performance, examining how beauty entrepreneurs generate and leverage knowledge to innovate in service offerings, marketing strategies, or customer experiences would enable the study to provide insights into the mechanisms through which knowledge contributes to sustainability. In emphasizing the importance of dynamic capabilities in responding to competitive pressures and market dynamics, investigating how beauty parlors adapt their strategies in response to competitive threats or opportunities would help the study shed light on the role of knowledge-based dynamic capabilities in enhancing sustainability. The theory also suggests that financial resources alone may not be sufficient for sustained competitive advantage; rather, the ability to leverage knowledge effectively is critical ((Sharu & Guyo 2013). By exploring how beauty parlors utilize financial resources to invest in knowledge creation, human capital development, or technological innovations, the study can highlight the interplay between financial capital and knowledge assets in driving sustainability.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Entrepreneur's Creativity and Sustainability

Creativity is the capacity to generate, express, or implement original ideas, methods, and perspectives. Given that we now live in a modern era, company success is more likely for entrepreneurs that possess strong creative abilities. Developing economies are typified by a dynamic commercial environment and volatility. SMEs lacking in originality face challenges in maintaining steady and robust development, which might ultimately lead to their eventual elimination by competitors. So as to maintain their relevance to customers, prosperous business proprietors, and entrepreneurs must consistently demonstrate ingenuity. As stated by Coad et al., the innovative thinking of managers will grant their organizations distinct competitive advantages that stimulate expansion and financial resources. This formed the basis for the research's first hypothesis, which states that entrepreneurs' capacity for creativity foretells the long-term success of their businesses.

According to Weerasiri, Zhengang, and Perera (2022), the ability to generate novel ideas serves as an illustration of how creativity underpins innovation, develop something new, invent something, and generate something via imaginative and visionary skill. While some innovative ideas are brilliant and amazing, others are merely modest but helpful concepts that no one else appears to have thought of. Other definitions of creativity include the capacity for novelty and change, a mindset, an openness to experiment with concepts and chances, a flexible point of view, and the habit of appreciating the good while seeking for methods to improve it.

Innovation is crucial for SMEs as much as for large companies (Jong & Vermeulen, 2016). According to Sandvik and Sandvik (2003), innovation is often regarded as a business's primary value capacity and one of the most potent competitive weapons. In light of the resource constraints that businesses face, innovation is also regarded as a useful strategy for raising productivity levels. According to Bakar and Ahmad (2020), a firm's capacity to innovate its products and business model is essential for taking advantage of new possibilities and gaining a competitive edge.

The relationship between firm performance and familiarity with innovation and research was examined by McAdam and Keogh (2024). It was discovered that firms with a positive outlook on innovations achieve higher scores in competitive environments, thereby increasing their

competitive advantage. Yahya, Marwan, and Muna (2023) “conducted an integrated innovation-performance analysis on 184 manufacturing firms operating in Turkey.” The researchers investigated the “impact of organizational, product, process, and marketing innovation on various dimensions of firm performance, including production, market, innovation, and finances.” There was empirical support for a positive correlation between innovations and the performance of businesses.

Sustainability of Beauty Parlors

As highlighted by Gagnon (2022), sustainability is the ability of an entrepreneur to account for the requirements of current and future generations while maintaining the global ecology. Sustainability focuses on the growth of an entrepreneur, the protection of nature, the support of life, and the pursuit of a business owner to create future products and service offerings for profit (Gagnon, 2022; Shepard & Patzelt, 2021). Rajasekaran (2023) posits that sustainability underscores the significance of harmonizing three primary objectives pertaining to the future progression of humanity: the ecological, the economic, and society and ethics. The objectives of people, profit, and the environment are as follows: to meet the demands of the present generation while safeguarding the requirements of future generations (Rajasekaran, 2023).

Sustainability, per Gobble (2022), serves as a catalyst for both expansion and innovation. Gobble defined sustainability as concern for the social and environmental impact on the market, community, and business. Gobble (2022) defines sustainability as a business practice. Activities of a company must be sustainable for the benefit of the entire world (Gobble, 2012). Sustainability extends beyond the environmental and social impact of a company to incorporate its investors and the triple bottom line. True sustainability entailed a wide range of innovation addressing commercial and societal effects, reshaping the business system (Rajasekaran, 2023).

Manna, Marco, Khalil, and Esola (2021) define sustainability as the implementation of strategies and policies that satisfy the requirements of present society while safeguarding the interests and well-being of future generations. Globally, sustainability is an enormous challenge in both the private and public sectors of industry (Manna et al., 2011). Sustainability is regarded not only as an issue, but also as a prerequisite across all sectors, regardless of scale (Manna et al., 2021). Sardana (2024) examined the significance of globalization in the context of sustainability

initiatives within organizations. Globalization has bestowed upon the majority of organizations the competitive edge necessary to initiate innovation and gain a competitive edge. The situation in which an organization works on a global scale, executives consider the demands of the consumers as well as the critical competencies required to run a successful firm. Globalization provides opportunities for business executives to build new markets and enhance income, leading in growth.

Lubin and Esty (2024) noted the widening divergence between corporate America and sustainability. Some business owners believe that the most important aspect of sustainability is financial gain and competitive power. Mainstream investors believe that long-term leadership determines a firm’s profitability and market performance. Sustainability influences a company's competitive advantage, productivity, market success, value drivers, and financial materiality, contrary to prevalent belief. Values-promoting, sustainable reporting is desired by investors. Long-term information that investors can identify, quantify, and relate to conventional financial terms is desired.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework under consideration operates under the assumption that the dependent variable "Sustainability of beauty parlors" is subject to the influence of entrepreneurial creativity. The conceptual framework for the investigation is depicted in Figure 1.

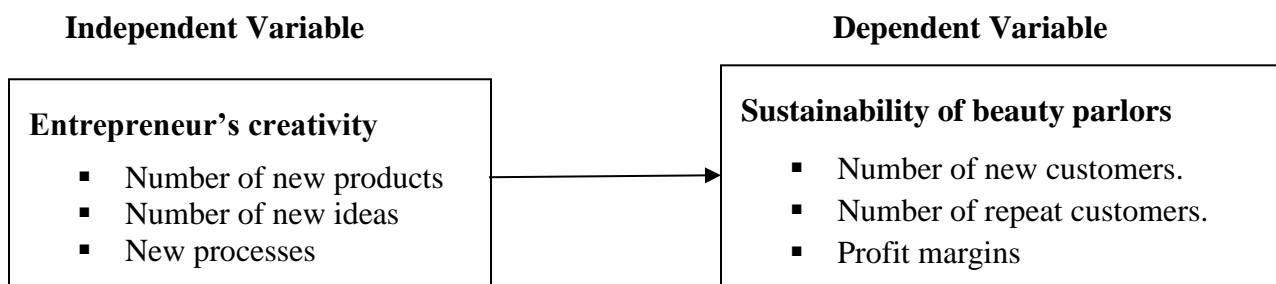


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author (2024)

METHODOLOGY

Patten (2017) defines a research design as a strategy for collecting, analyzing, and quantifying data in order to answer research questions. The present study employed a descriptive research methodology. This form of inquiry delineated the current state of affairs and had the potential to unveil novel insights and significance. The target population was 127 owners of registered beauty parlors in Nanyuki Town consisting of male and female entrepreneurs, as per the Laikipia County records (LMoT, 2023). A sample size refers to the subset of a population selected for study to draw conclusions about the entire population (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). In cases where the target population is relatively small, the census method is often preferred. The census method involves collecting data from every member of the target population, eliminating the need for sampling. The present research employed primary sources of data. Primary data is considered to be authentic and is utilized because of its proximity to the truth and the simplicity of error control (Lohr, 2023). Data analysis involves the organization, classification, and interpretation of the collected data (Kombo & Tromp, 2019). The completed questionnaires were coded after being edited for consistency and completeness before response processing. This investigation produced quantitative data. Quantitative data was analyzed using Excel software. Frequencies, percentages, linear regression, standard deviation, and measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode, skewness) were used to analyze the quantitative data. The quantitative data was presented through tables and frequencies. Additionally, to estimate the interrelationship between independent and dependent variables, a multiple regression model was implemented. The following regression model was used:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta X + \epsilon$$

Where;

Y = dependent variable (sustainability)

a =constant or intercept

X = entrepreneur's creativity

e= Error term of the equation

To show how variables of the sampled data were to the population mean, "the coefficient of variation (CV)" was computed. The researcher employed an analysis of variance (ANOVA) test to see if "the means of independent (unrelated)" research groups differ in any statistically meaningful ways.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 127 research instruments were distributed to participants at beauty parlors in Nanyuki Town. Out of these, 102 completed questionnaires were returned. This yields a response rate of 80.3%, which is considered high and adequate for the research. Sataloff and Vontela (2021) indicate that a response rate of around 50% is generally effective for research studies, underscoring the robustness of the current response rate. The demographic results revealed that 62.7% of the respondents were female, while 37.3% were male. This indicates that the majority of employees in beauty parlors in Nanyuki Town were female. Majority of respondents were aged 31–40 years, comprising 45.1% of the sample, followed by those aged 21–30 years at 33.3%. A smaller proportion of respondents, 24.5%, were in the 41–50 years age bracket, and only 1.0% were 51 years and above.

This age distribution indicated that the workforce in beauty parlors in Nanyuki Town was predominantly middle-aged, with a significant representation of younger adults as well. The findings showed that the majority hold undergraduate degrees (42.2%), followed by those with diplomas (37.3%), indicating a significant number of individuals with vocational or technical training. A notable proportion possess postgraduate degrees (22.5%), suggesting a trend towards advanced education within the industry. Fewer respondents have only secondary school education (17.6%) or certificates (9.8%), reflecting entry-level positions or roles requiring less formal education. This distribution highlights a varied skill set and knowledge base among beauty parlor staff, potentially impacting service quality and management practices. According to the findings, the majority of 77 respondents (76.5%), have been in the industry for 1 to 5 years. This indicates a relatively young workforce with less experience in the beauty industry. In contrast, 24 respondents (23.5%) have been in the industry for 6 years or more, reflecting a smaller group with more extensive experience.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Entrepreneur’s Creativity and Sustainability of Beauty Parlors

The second objective sought to assess the influence of the entrepreneur’s creativity on sustainability of beauty parlors in Nanyuki Town. To achieve this, respondents were asked to express their level of agreement with various statements regarding different aspects of an entrepreneur's creativity that are believed to influence the sustainability of beauty parlors. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Entrepreneur’s Creativity and Sustainability of Beauty Parlors

No.	Statement	N	Mean	Std Deviation	CV (%)
1	Number of new products introduced in the market affects the sustainability of beauty parlors	102	4.14	0.94	22.8
2	The number of new products bought affects the sustainability of beauty parlors	102	4.13	0.95	23.0
3	The number of new ideas generated by business owners affects the sustainability of beauty parlors	102	4.07	0.91	22.3
4	The number of new ideas commercialized affects the sustainability of beauty parlors	102	4.03	0.96	23.8
5	New processes created by business owners affect the sustainability of beauty parlors	102	4.02	0.92	22.9
6	The cost-effectiveness of new processes created by business owners affects the sustainability of beauty parlors	102	3.76	1.05	27.8
Overall Mean			4.03		

Source: Research Data (2024)

Table 1 reveals that the number of new products introduced in the market received a mean score of 4.14, indicating strong agreement that such innovations positively affect sustainability. Similarly, the number of new products bought also scored well, with a mean of 4.13, reflecting consensus on its importance for sustaining beauty parlors. The number of new ideas generated by business owners had a mean score of 4.07, showing agreement that idea generation is crucial for sustainability. However, the number of new ideas commercialized had a slightly lower mean score of 4.03, suggesting a strong but less emphatic recognition of its role. New processes created by business owners were rated with a mean of 4.02, indicating general agreement on their impact.

Finally, the cost-effectiveness of new processes received a mean score of 3.76, the lowest among the statements, suggesting some concern about the balance between cost and effectiveness in maintaining sustainability. The overall mean score for entrepreneurial creativity was 4.03, showing that respondents generally perceive entrepreneurial creativity as significantly influencing the sustainability of beauty parlors, though there are variations in the perceived importance of different creative aspects. The finding is in agreement with the finding by McAdam and Keogh (2024) who found that firms with a positive outlook on entrepreneur’s creativity achieve higher scores in competitive environments, thereby increasing their sustainability. Similar findings were recorded by Yahya, Marwan, and Muna (2023) who found a positive correlation between entrepreneur’s creativity and sustainability of businesses.

Sustainability of Beauty Parlors

The dependent variable was sustainability of beauty parlors in Nanyuki Town. To achieve this, respondents were asked to express their level of agreement with various statements regarding different aspects of sustainability of beauty parlors. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Sustainability of Beauty Parlors

No.	Statement	N	Mean	Std Deviation	CV (%)
1	The number of new customers is an indication of business sustainability	102	4.12	0.83	20.1
2	The number of new customers actually buying is an indication of business sustainability	102	4.07	0.85	20.9
3	The number of repeat customers is an indication of business sustainability	102	4.02	0.79	19.6
4	The frequency of repeat customers is an indication of business sustainability	102	4.03	0.8	19.8
5	The number of years customers patronize beauty parlors is an indication of business sustainability	102	3.71	1.05	28.3
6	The ability to pay for the customers prioritizing the beauty parlors is an indication of business sustainability	102	4.02	0.87	21.6
Overall Mean			4.01		

Source: Research Data (2024)

Table 2 shows that respondents generally agree on the significance of various factors related to customer acquisition, retention, and payment as indicators of the sustainability of beauty parlors in Nanyuki. The number of new customers is considered a significant indicator of a beauty parlor's sustainability, as reflected by the mean score of 4.12, with a standard deviation of 0.83 and a coefficient of variation (CV) of 20.1%. This suggests that acquiring new customers is crucial for the sustainability of these businesses. Similarly, the statement regarding the number of new customers actually buying received a mean score of 4.07, with a standard deviation of 0.85 and a CV of 20.9%. This indicates that respondents view the conversion of new customers into actual buyers as an essential measure of sustainability.

The number of repeat customers also emerged as a key factor, with a mean score of 4.02, a standard deviation of 0.79, and a CV of 19.6%. This suggests that having a high number of repeat customers contributes positively to the sustainability of beauty parlors. Additionally, the frequency of repeat customers was highlighted as an important indicator, with a mean score of 4.03, a standard deviation of 0.80, and a CV of 19.8%. Respondents agree that frequent visits by repeat customers are a critical component of a beauty parlor's sustainability. The duration of customer loyalty, indicated by the number of years customers patronize beauty parlors, received a mean score of 3.71, with a standard deviation of 1.05 and a CV of 28.3%. While this shows moderate agreement on its significance, there is greater variability in opinions, suggesting some uncertainty among respondents regarding the importance of this factor.

Finally, the ability of customers to prioritize and pay for beauty parlor services was also recognized as an important factor, with a mean score of 4.02, a standard deviation of 0.87, and a CV of 21.6%. This indicates that respondents believe that customers' willingness and ability to pay are crucial for assessing the sustainability of beauty parlors. The overall mean score for sustainability indicators is 4.01. This reflects a general consensus among respondents that factors related to customer acquisition, retention, and payment are vital for the sustainability of beauty parlors in Nanyuki. This finding is in agreement with the finding by Rajasekaran (2023) who found that sustainability underscores the significance of harmonizing three primary objectives pertaining to the future progression of humanity: the ecological, the economic, and society and ethics.

Inferential Statistics

Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between the independent variables (entrepreneur’s innovation, entrepreneur’s creativity, competitive strategies, and capital accessibility) and the dependent variable (sustainability of beauty parlors). Table 3 shows correlation analysis.

Table 3

Correlation Matrix

Variable	Sustainability of Beauty Parlors	Entrepreneur's Creativity
Sustainability of Beauty Parlors	1.000	0.75**
Sig. (2-tailed)		<0.001
N	102	102
Entrepreneur's Creativity	0.75**	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	<0.001	
N	102	102

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

Correlation analysis results in Table 3 shows that entrepreneur’s creativity shows a strong positive correlation with sustainability ($r = 0.75^{**}$), suggesting that creative efforts are significantly beneficial for business sustainability.

Regression Analysis

The model's ability to significantly improve the dependent variable's prediction over a model without predictors is tested using the F-statistic, which is the proportion of the MS of the regression coefficients to the Mean Square of the Residual. With a significance level (Sig.) of 0.000, the model is considered statistically significant, implying that it accounts for a significant proportion of the variance seen in the dependent variable. Thus, this ANOVA table attests to the regression model's general efficacy in elucidating the variability in the dependent variable.

Table 4

Regression Coefficients

Predictor Variable	Unstandardized	Std Error	Standardized	t-value	p-value
	Coefficient		Coefficient		
	(B)		(β)		
Constant	1.1	0.5		2.2	0.030
Entrepreneur’s Creativity	0.4	0.09	0.32	4.44	0.000

The regression analysis in Table 4 identifies significant positive contributions of various predictors to the sustainability of beauty parlors. Similarly, Entrepreneur’s Creativity shows a coefficient of 0.40 ($p < 0.001$), meaning that creativity significantly boosts sustainability, with each unit increase in creativity leading to a 0.40 unit rise in sustainability.

CONCLUSIONS

The second research objective examined the influence of entrepreneurial creativity on the sustainability of beauty parlors in Nanyuki Town. The results highlight that entrepreneurial creativity is perceived as a significant driver of sustainability. Respondents agreed that the introduction of new products, the generation and commercialization of new ideas, and the creation of new processes are crucial for sustaining beauty parlors. Although the cost-effectiveness of new processes received somewhat less emphasis, the overall view is that creativity is a key factor in achieving sustainability. The strong positive correlation between entrepreneurial creativity and sustainability confirms that higher levels of creativity are closely associated with better sustainability outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION

Encouraging the development and introduction of new products is vital for enhancing sustainability. Beauty parlors should focus on creating products that meet customer needs and collaborate with local suppliers and manufacturers to diversify their offerings. Supporting the generation and commercialization of new ideas through mentorship opportunities, business incubators, or innovation contests can further stimulate creativity. Additionally, optimizing process costs is important; beauty parlors should develop strategies to balance cost and

effectiveness in new processes. Training on cost management and efficiency optimization can help improve operational effectiveness while managing expenses.

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