

## Effect of Innovation Processes on the Financial Growth of Small Scale Businesses in Custom Market, Juba-South Sudan

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### Abstract

Innovation refers to the introduction of new products, services, processes, or ideas in conducting businesses. It encompasses both technological advancements and non-technological improvements, such as organizational changes or novel marketing strategies. The main aim of this study was to assess the overall effect of innovation processes on the performance and growth of small-scale businesses in Custom market. The study adapted a descriptive survey design, by quantitative approaches to enrich the understanding of the phenomenon under study. The study adopted; descriptive Statistics; Mean, Percentages, Frequencies, Standard deviation and Inferential Statistics; Correlation analysis to determine the relationships, ANOVA to test the model fitness, and Regression analysis to test the effect of independent variables on the dependent. The research findings stated that, ideas development had a weak positive insignificant relationship with and financial growth. Idea development had no statistical effect on financial growth. It also revealed that based on idea selection had a strong positive significant relationship with financial growth. The findings also indicated Idea implementation had a weak positive insignificant relationship with financial growth and it had no statistical effect on financial growth. It was recommended that business idea development should be done by in-depth exploration of passion, skills and keen observation to identify market gaps and opportunities thus improving financial growth. There is also need for a study to identify customers' satisfaction factors that can be improved through innovation processes by the small scale businesses in Custom market, Juba South Sudan.

**Key words:** idea selection, idea development, idea implementation and financial growth

### Introduction

The role of innovation in small-scale businesses is crucial in such a context where resources are limited and the business environment is evolving. Adebayo highlighted the importance of innovation for economic growth in post-conflict nations, emphasizing that small businesses often act as the backbone of such economies. In Juba, the capital city, the entrepreneurial spirit is high, but the lack of infrastructure and support for innovation hampers the growth potential of small businesses. Deng and Akol (2016) noted that while Juba has a vibrant market, the integration of innovative processes in business operations is not widespread, primarily due to limited access to technology and funding. Moreover, the study by Kuir and Machar (2017) shed light on the cultural and social factors in South Sudan that influence business innovation, suggesting a unique blend of traditional and modern practices in business operations.

The country's reliance on oil revenue and the need for diversification of its economy call for a shift towards more sustainable and innovative business practices. The research by Amum (2018) emphasized that innovation in small-scale businesses could lead to increased productivity, job creation, and economic diversification, which are vital for the country's stability and growth. However, the challenges faced by small-scale businesses in Juba, such as limited access to capital, training, and infrastructure, hinder their ability to innovate and grow. The insights provided by Chol and Piol (2019) indicated that the government and international organizations need to play a more active role in supporting these businesses through policy reforms and initiatives that foster an environment conducive to innovation.

The effect of innovation processes on the financial growth of small-scale businesses presents a global tapestry of diverse experiences and developmental trajectories. Globally, the nexus of innovation and small-scale business growth has been extensively documented, with research emphasizing its critical role in economic development and sustainability (Williams R., 2020).

Innovation-driven small businesses contribute significantly to economic dynamism and job creation (Johnson C., 2017). Innovation has demonstrated the transformative impact of technological on in small-scale businesses, driving both domestic growth and global competitiveness (Kim H., 2005; Takahashi Y., 2018). Show the importance of government support and favorable policies in nurturing innovation among small businesses (Brown M., 2020). Integration and innovation in small-scale enterprises is a key factor in maintaining economic resilience and competitiveness within the European Union (Luka, R. (2017). This global perspective underlines the universality of the theme, albeit with regional variations influenced by local economic, cultural, and policy contexts.

In Africa, innovation processes in small-scale businesses is marked by diverse experiences reflecting the continent's varied economic landscapes. Across the continent, innovation has been increasingly recognized as a crucial driver for small business growth and economic development (Nkosi Z., 2020). In North African countries like Egypt and Morocco, there has been a notable emphasis on integrating digital innovation in small enterprises, leveraging the growing tech-savvy population and government initiatives (El-Sayed H., 2021; Amine T., 2022). In Central Africa, countries such as Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo have witnessed a gradual yet steady growth in small business innovation, mainly driven by grassroots initiatives and the informal sector's resilience (Mbala K., 2021; Tshimanga J., 2022). West Africa, exemplified by nations like Nigeria and Ghana, has seen a burgeoning entrepreneurial spirit, with small-scale businesses increasingly adopting innovative practices in response to local market needs and global trends (Adeoye B., 2022; Mensah K., 2023). This overview highlights the varied but progressive nature of innovation in small-scale businesses across Africa, underlining the critical role of contextual factors, including regional policies, economic conditions, and cultural influences.

Innovation processes in small-scale businesses has been shaped by a unique blend of traditional entrepreneurial spirit and the increasing influence of modern technology. The region has experienced a notable shift towards embracing innovation in business practices, significantly impacting economic growth and development (Mutua K., 2021). In Kenya, counties like Nairobi and Mombasa have become hubs for innovative small-scale businesses, largely driven by the growing ICT sector and supportive government policies (Omondi P., 2022). In Uganda, Kampala and Entebbe have also witnessed a similar trend, where small businesses are increasingly adopting innovative solutions to overcome market challenges and seize new opportunities (Nakato S., 2021). In Rwanda, Kigali has emerged as a leading example of how innovation can transform the small business sector, particularly through the integration of digital technologies and supportive governmental frameworks (Kagame T., 2022). This East African perspective underscores the region's dynamic and evolving landscape of small-scale business innovation, reflecting the impact of both internal and external factors, including technological advancements, policy environments, and market demands.

The study of the effect of innovation processes on the financial performance of small-scale businesses in South Sudan offers a distinct perspective, reflecting the country's unique post-conflict economic landscape. Since its independence 9<sup>th</sup> July 2011, South Sudan has faced numerous challenges in stabilizing and growing its economy, with small-scale businesses playing a pivotal role (Deng A., 2021). In states like Central Equatorial and Jonglei, there has been a gradual recognition of the importance of innovation in driving economic growth and stability in small businesses (Machar T., 2022). However, the implementation of innovative practices in these regions has been hindered by various factors, including limited access to technology, insufficient funding, and infrastructural challenges (Kiir L., 2023).

Focusing on specific areas within South Sudan, innovation in small-scale businesses varies significantly. In Payams and Bomas across the country, traditional business practices have dominated, with innovation being a relatively new concept largely influenced by external interventions and the gradual penetration of technology (Akol P., 2021). In urban areas like Juba, small-scale businesses have shown a greater

inclination towards innovation, utilizing technology and new business models to enhance their operations and market reach (Barney, J. B. (1991). However, the overall pace of innovation adoption in these areas remains slow due to the aforementioned challenges.

In Juba, the current situation presents a mix of challenges and opportunities for small-scale businesses in terms of innovation. However, the lack of a robust support system, including financial services and business training, continues to limit the potential of these businesses (Garang D., 2022). Despite these challenges, there is a growing awareness among business owners in Juba about the benefits of innovation, leading to gradual changes in business practices and strategies (Nyandeng A., 2023).

### **Problem Statement**

Despite the crucial role of small-scale businesses in the economic landscape of South Sudan, there remains a substantial gap in the integration and effective utilization of innovation processes within these enterprises. The effects of this problem on individuals and the community are multifaceted. For business owners and employees, the lack of innovation can lead to reduced efficiency, profitability, and market competitiveness, potentially resulting in business closure and loss of livelihoods. For the community, this stagnation in business innovation can lead to a slowed economic growth, reduced job creation, and a diminished quality of goods and services available to consumers.

There have been attempts to address this problem, including studies and initiatives aimed at enhancing innovation in small-scale businesses. However, these efforts have often been hindered by a lack of comprehensive understanding of the local context, insufficient funding, and gaps in policy implementation. Furthermore, existing research has primarily focused on macroeconomic factors, with limited attention to the specific challenges and needs of small-scale businesses in post-conflict settings like Juba.

### **General objective of the study**

The general objective of this study was to assess the overall effect of innovation processes on the performance and growth of small-scale businesses in Custom market.

### **Specific Objectives**

- i. To examine the effect of development factor on the financial growth of small scale businesses in Custom market.
- ii. To evaluate the effect of selection factor on the financial growth of small scale businesses in Custom market.
- iii. To assess the effect of implementation factor on the financial growth of small scale businesses in Custom market.

### **Theoretical framework of the study**

The study was guided by the Theory of Localized Innovation Systems by Mawien (2020). This theory posits that innovation in small-scale businesses is significantly influenced by localized factors such as cultural norms, economic conditions, and the regulatory environment. Mawien (2020) argues that innovation is not merely a product of individual enterprise effort but is deeply rooted in the local context, where community practices, resource availability, and governmental policies play pivotal roles. This perspective is essential in understanding the dynamics of innovation in small-scale businesses, especially in diverse and evolving economic landscapes like Juba, South Sudan.

However, the theory has met with some opposition. Deng (2021) criticizes it for overly emphasizing local factors and neglecting the impact of global economic trends and technological advancements on innovation. Deng contends that in the age of globalization, external influences cannot be overlooked in understanding business innovation. Similarly, Akol J (2022) argues that the Theory of Localized Innovation Systems underestimates the role of international collaboration and cross-border knowledge transfer in fostering innovation, especially in the context of developing economies.

On the other hand, scholars like Alier (2021) and Garang (2022) support Mawien's theory. Alier emphasizes the importance of local cultural and social structures in shaping business practices and innovation patterns,

particularly in post-conflict societies. Garang further reinforces this viewpoint, highlighting how localized economic policies and governmental support significantly impact the innovation capabilities of small-scale businesses, lending credence to the theory's emphasis on local context.

In the context of the study on the effect of innovation processes on financial performance of small-scale businesses in Juba, the Theory of Localized Innovation Systems is particularly relevant. It provides a framework to analyze how local factors in Juba, such as cultural practices, economic conditions, and government policies, influence the adoption and nature of innovation in small-scale businesses. This theory aids in understanding the unique challenges and opportunities faced by these businesses in a post-conflict setting and allows for a tailored analysis that considers the specificities of the local environment.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design, as defined by Kumar (2014), is a framework for collecting and analyzing data in a way that combines relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. In the context of this study, a descriptive survey design was employed. This design was appropriate as it allows for an accurate portrayal of the characteristics of innovation processes in small scale businesses and their effects. The study utilized quantitative approach to enrich the understanding of the phenomenon under study.

The target population refers to the entire group of individuals or objects to which researchers are interested in generalizing the findings (Battaglia, 2012). The target population for this study consisted of small scale business owners and managers in Juba, South Sudan. Juba, being the capital and largest city, hosts a myriad of small scale businesses across various sectors. According to the South Sudan National Bureau of Statistics (2023), there are approximately 5,000 registered small scale businesses in Juba. These businesses are diverse, ranging from retail, services, manufacturing to technology sectors, providing a representative sample for understanding the impacts of innovation.

The study adopted the following procedures; Descriptive Statistics; Mean, Percentages, Frequencies, Standard deviation. Inferential Statistics; Correlation analysis to determine the relationships, ANOVA to test the model fitness, and regression analysis to test the effect of independent variables on the dependent and T-test to test the hypotheses.

## Results

### Descriptive Statistics

The study requested the respondents to give their opinion in regards to the effect of idea development, idea selection and idea implementation on the financial growth of Small scale businesses. The findings were analyzed in order of the specific objectives. The questionnaire response was based on a 5 point Likert scale which was coded with numerical values for ease of data analysis where; 1 for strongly disagreed, 2 for disagreed, 3 for neutral, 4 for agreed and 5 for strongly agreed.

### Idea development

The study had sought to establish the level of idea development factor on financial growth of small scale businesses in Custom market.

<b>Idea Development table</b>			
	N	Me an	S.D
Our firm usually offers chances to listen to reviews from our clients and suggestions from the employees	9 3	4.2 2	.77 8
Development of new ideas for better products and services provided by our business is our ultimate goal.	9 3	4.1 7	.63 6
Business idea development is by identifying a differentiated solution that meets customer's needs.	9 3	4.1 1	.65 0
Developing new business ideas is by having an accurate understanding of the market trends and its dynamics.	9 3	4.0 3	.71 4

Business idea development is by in-depth exploration of your passion and skills and keen observation to identify market gaps and opportunities	9 3	4.0 2	.83 4
Valid N (listwise)	9 3	4.11	

**Source: Field Data 2024**

The study results with a mean of 4.11 implied that respondents agreed with the aspect of idea development where firms usually offer chances to listen to reviews from clients and suggestions from their employees while developing ideas to a larger extent. However, Business idea development by in-depth exploration of passion, skills and keen observation to identify market gaps and opportunities was not utilized fully.

### Idea selection

The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on the effect of idea selection factor on the financial growth

<b>Idea Selection table</b>			
	N	Me an	S.D
Cost and benefit as to how much have to be invested to successfully develop the product or solution has to be considered when selecting an idea.	9 3	4.1 9	.798
The abundance of the similar products, services or solutions in the market and clear need for the idea and the gap must be in consideration.	9 3	4.1 3	.912
Customer data and feedback is used to ascertain the validity and value when selecting an idea.	9 3	4.1 1	.890
Thinking about how urgent the needs of the customers and whether those needs are underserved is vital in idea selection.	9 3	4.0 5	.697
Any new developed idea needs to be put on the table to be reviewed by experts and specialists before it is considered	9 3	3.8 7	1.04 5
Valid N (listwise)	9 3	4.07	

**Source: Field Data 2024**

The study results in table above indicated a mean of 4.07 meaning that idea selection was adopted. This implies that the firms usually consider Cost and benefit analysis as to how much have to be invested to successfully develop the product or solution when selecting an idea to a larger extent. However, tabling new developed ideas to be reviewed by experts and specialists before being selected is not used by the farms to a greater extent.

### Idea Implementation

The respondents were asked to indicate their extent of agreement on the effect of idea implementation factor the financial growth and the results is indicated in table

<b>Distributions according to Idea Implementation table</b>			
	N	Me an	S.D
Sourcing the capital required to turn the generated ideas such as funding or resources has to be considered in idea implementation	9 3	4.2 6	.85 9
Designing idea implementation plan with the main objectives in the short term and who to execute them is vital in idea implementation.	9 3	4.2 4	.81 3



Laying promotional strategies and product marketing techniques is vital when implementing an idea	9 3	4.0 1	.80 1
A business idea will only be productive when it is implemented otherwise it's just a thought	9 3	3.9 8	.89 7
Business idea implementation involves setting prices for the newly developed product.	9 3	3.9 5	.75 7
Valid N (listwise)	9 3	4.08 8	

**Source: Field Data 2024**

The findings indicated a mean of 4.088 meaning that idea implementation was used. Firms usually consider sourcing the capital that is required to turn the generated ideas in action through funding or resources when implementing an idea. However, setting prices for the newly developed product is not highly considered by the firms when implementing an idea.

### Financial Growth

The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed to matters regarding financial growth and the results are indicated in table.

Level of Financial Growth table			
	N	Me an	S.D
When the right and productive ideas is selected, business productivity is increased.	91	4.0 9	.85 2
Idea development leads to creation of new products that will benefit the business' financial growth.	93	4.0 9	.65 4
The business has been able to expand its market effectively and efficiently	93	4.0 6	.73 4
Development of new products yields more sales thus growing the business' finance	89	4.0 3	.79 0
The profit margin of the business has increased for the recent period due to innovation processes	93	3.8 6	.91 6
Valid N (listwise)	89	4.02 6	

**Source: Field Data 2024**

The study results indicated a mean of 4.026 meaning the respondents agreed with the level of financial growth as measured with different aspects. This implied that most of the firms believed that when right and productive ideas are selected, business productivity will be increased. However, they were not fully in agreement that the profit margin of their business has increased for the recent period due to application of innovation processes.

### Inferential Analysis

The study adopted correlation and multiple regression analysis to make inferences for the study variables as follows;

### Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis was done using Pearson product moment correlation to determine the degree and the strength of the relationship that existed between the study variables at a significance level of 5%.

Correlations table					
		Idea dev	Idea sel	Idea impl	Financial grow
Idea development	Pearson Correlation	1	.033	.233*	.126
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.754	.025	.228
	N	93	93	93	93
Idea selection	Pearson Correlation	.033	1	.197	.802**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.754		.059	.000
	N	93	93	93	93
Idea implementation	Pearson Correlation	.233*	.197	1	.188
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.025	.059		.071
	N	93	93	93	93
Financial growth	Pearson Correlation	.126	.802**	.188	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.228	.000	.071	
	N	93	93	93	93

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

#### Source: Field Data 2024

The study results revealed that, idea development further has a weak positive linear statistically significant relationship with financial growth ( $r=.126$  and  $p<.05$ ). Idea selection further has a strong positive linear and statistically significant relationship with financial growth ( $r=.802$  and  $p<.05$ ). Idea implementation also has a weak positive linear statistically significant relationship with financial growth ( $r=.188$  and  $p<.05$ ).

#### Regression Analysis

Regression analysis determines the nature and the relationship between two or more variables in terms of mathematical models

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.809 <sup>a</sup>	.654	.642	.248

Source: Field Data 2024

a. Predictors: (Constant), Idea implementation, Idea selection, Idea development.

The study results indicated that innovation processes had a strong positive relationship with financial growth ( $R=.809$ ). The study model also revealed that 65.4% of financial growth is determined by innovation processes while 34.6% of financial growth is determined by other factors out of this study scope.

ANOVA was used to determine the fitness of the model

Table ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.326	3	3.442	56.060	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	5.464	89	.061		
	Total	15.790	92			

Source: Field Data 2024

a. Dependent Variable: Financial growth

b. Predictors: (Constant), Idea implementation, Idea selection, Idea development

Study revealed that the model was fit to determine the effect of the independent variables (Innovation processes) on the dependent variable (financial growth) ( $F=56.06$ ;  $P<.05$ ). This means that innovation processes were found to have a significant effect on the financial growth of small scale businesses in Custom market.

To determine the effect of independent variables (innovation processes) on the dependent variable (financial growth), regression coefficients was generated.

Regression Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	(Constant)	.447	.377		1.187	.238
	Idea development	.097	.064	.098	1.526	.131
	Idea selection	.772	.062	.798	12.539	.000
	Idea implementation	.008	.061	.009	.132	.895

Source: Field Data 2024

a. Dependent Variable: Financial growth

The study revealed that holding all other factors constant, financial growth was at 44.7% (0.447). An increase in one unit of idea development led to 0.098 (9.8%) increase in financial growth which had no statistically significant effect.

An increase in one unit of idea selection led to 79.8% (0.798) increase in financial growth with statistically significant effect.

A change in idea implementation by one unit led to 0.9% (0.009) change in financial growth but the change or variation was statistically insignificant.

$$Y = .447 + .098X_1 + .798X_2 + .009X_3$$

### Conclusion

In examining the effect of idea development on the financial growth of small scale businesses in Custom market. It was concluded that SSBs usually offer chances to listen to reviews from clients and suggestions from their employees. Idea development had a weak positive relationship financial growth. Idea development had no statistical significant effect on financial growth.

The study further sought to evaluate the effect of idea selection on the financial growth of small scale businesses in Custom market. It was concluded that, firms usually consider Cost and benefit analysis has to how much have to be invested to successfully develop the product or solution. Idea selection had a strong positive relationship with financial growth and it also had a statistical significant effect on financial growth.

The study also sought to assess the effect of idea implementation on the financial growth of small scale businesses in Custom market. It is concluded that the firms usually consider sourcing the capital that is required to turn the generated ideas in action through funding or resources. Idea implementation had a weak positive relationship with financial growth but the effect was statistically insignificant.

### Recommendation

To the policy makers and management, it was recommended that business idea development to be conducted by in-depth exploration of passion, skills and keen observation to identify market gaps and opportunities.

It was also recommended that firms should table new ideas to be reviewed by experts and specialists before being selected.



Finally the study recommended that while implementing ideas it is good to consider price setting for the newly developed product.

It was recommended that further study should be conducted to assess the effect of other innovation processes such as idea screening, prototype development and commercialization on the financial performance of small scale businesses in Custom market, Juba South Sudan.

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