



## Effects of Selected Women's Economic Empowerment Programs on Poverty Alleviation in Marigat Ward, Baringo County, Kenya

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**Abstract:** Women's economic empowerment programmes have emerged as powerful tools for alleviating poverty in developing countries, aligning with the central goal of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. These programmes acknowledge the widespread discrimination experienced by women and girls across the world. Consequently, the study investigated the impact of women's economic empowerment programmes on poverty reduction in Marigat Ward. Specifically, it aimed to assess the effects of skill development, table banking, market connections, and networking and mentorship on poverty reduction. The research adopted a cross-sectional approach and was conducted in Marigat Ward, Baringo County, focusing on women who had benefited from empowerment projects. Stratified random sampling was employed, resulting in a sample size of 334 individuals. Additionally, 15 Key In-depth Interviewees (KIIs), comprising empowerment program leaders, were purposefully selected for face-to-face interviews. Data collection utilized questionnaires and interview schedules, with subsequent analysis involving filtering, coding, and input into SPSS version 26.0. The gathered data encompassed quantitative and qualitative aspects, with descriptive statistics like percentages, frequencies, and tables employed for analysis. Qualitative data underwent thematic examination aligned with research goals. Positive and strong associations were identified between women's skill development, market connections, mentoring and networking, and poverty reduction, with correlation values of .233\*\*, .129\*\*, and .248\*\*, respectively. The research, at a 95% significance level, concluded that skills development, market connections, mentoring, and networking significantly influenced poverty reduction among women, with values of .001, .010, and .001, respectively. However, table banking exhibited a minor impact on poverty reduction among women, with a significance value of .659. Notably, mentoring and networking emerged as the most influential factors in women's poverty alleviation, followed by skills development, market connections, and, to a lesser extent, table banking. These findings underscored the pivotal role of social work in advancing gender equality and poverty reduction through targeted programs and practical guidance.

**Key Words:** Women's Economic Empowerment Programmes, Poverty alleviation, Skills Development, Table Banking, Mentorship and Networking

## 1.1 Study Background

In recent years, women's economic empowerment projects have emerged as powerful tools for poverty reduction in developing countries (Bashir, 2017). Poverty is one of the most pressing issues confronting mankind, posing a significant barrier to realizing human rights and

sustainable development (Muigua, 2018). Women's economic empowerment has emerged as a critical tactic in an age distinguished by continued attempts to eradicate global poverty and promote equitable development. Programmes aimed at increasing women's economic empowerment have garnered attention and support across the globe as a powerful driver for poverty reduction and long-term progress. Women, who comprise nearly half of the world's population, are an important but underutilized resource in the battle against poverty. This realization has motivated governments, non-governmental organizations, and international organisations to engage in focused programmes to lift women's status and improve their socioeconomic status (Ndirangu & Gicheru, 2019).

Ensuring social empowerment holds equal importance, intending to remove obstacles that impede women's participation in decision-making, liberate them from violence and discrimination, and foster an inclusive and supportive atmosphere (Sen, 2019). Empowering women in these aspects diminishes gender-based discrepancies and cultivates fairer societies. This empowerment is pivotal not just for achieving gender equality but also carries extensive implications for global societal development and progress. It provides women with the tools, resources, and opportunities necessary for informed decision-making and taking charge of their lives, thereby contributing to the establishment of more just and thriving communities (Muhia, 2020). About 43% of the agricultural workforce comprises women, contributing 50% of global food output. Past studies have shown that granting women greater control over household finances increases spending on nutritious food. This is because women prioritize allocating funds to wholesome and high-quality meals rather than making detrimental choices related to food, leisure, or alcohol consumption (Oladokun et al., 2018). The advancement of women's empowerment is widely acknowledged as a primary objective in rural development, primarily seeking to reduce households' vulnerability to poverty and food insecurity (Sinharoy et al., 2019). Promoting women's empowerment stands as a crucial strategy in addressing poverty.

Over the past two decades, Kenya has significantly progressed in combating poverty. As reported by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2019), there has been a noticeable decline in the national poverty rate over eleven years, dropping from 46% in 2005 to 36% in 2016. However, despite these improvements, poverty remains a formidable challenge, particularly in rural areas where its prevalence significantly exceeds that in urban regions. The issue of poverty among women in Kenya remains a major concern, marked by substantial disparities and obstacles. According to Porth et al. (2021), 45% of women in Kenya live below the poverty line. Individuals face various challenges, including limited access to educational resources, healthcare services, and economic opportunities. Gender inequality, cultural norms, and systemic barriers contribute to the persistence of poverty among women (Kassie et al., 2020). Addressing this situation requires comprehensive efforts, encompassing improved access to quality education, healthcare services, and financial resources, along with the promotion of gender equality, to lift women out of poverty and facilitate their full participation in Kenya's development. Numerous non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international aid entities are actively engaged in poverty alleviation programmes in Kenya. These organizations assist in education, healthcare, agriculture, and microfinance. For example, entities such as Oxfam, World Vision, and CARE International have implemented diverse projects to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development.

It has helped women break free from social, economic, political caste, and gender-based oppression by empowering them (Cherutich et al., 2020). Consequently, there is an enhancement in the social, economic, cultural, and political standing of women while also ensuring that marginalized individuals are not disregarded within the fabric of society. This text

provides an expanded analysis of the significance of economic stability, political rights, social rights, judicial strength, and other rights. According to Al-Najjar and Al-Saqer (2023), achieving successful women's empowerment necessitates the implementation of legal reforms, political mobilization, public education, and heightened awareness. The inclusion of women's economic empowerment in development aid initiatives has been observed since 1990.

Compared to their male counterparts, women are more likely to spend more of their wages on children and education (Parveen *et al.*, 2021). Empowering women to earn, acquire assets, and enhance their financial security contributes to developing industrial capacity, providing employment and stimulating economic growth (Kabugua, 2019). Women in business are more likely to contribute to long-term development and become stars in developing economies (Osei, 2020). Women continue to create firms throughout the globe, but fewer than males in less profitable areas that expand slowly and consequently fail in the end.

Economic empowerment programmes primarily focus on supporting women, enabling them to boost their self-assurance and self-worth for the sake of stability and advancement (Wachira, 2015). As a result, they have gained independence in decision-making across various areas, such as property transactions, arranging marriages for their children, pursuing education for their offspring, and matters related to family planning. According to Kinyanjui (2014), programs for economic empowerment have made significant progress in empowering women, leading to sustained development. The augmentation of women's ability to secure rights and well-being through economic empowerment has played a pivotal role in reducing poverty and enhancing economic growth and effectiveness.

In Marigat Ward in Baringo County, the high levels of poverty among women remain a significant concern. According to Kokwon *et al.* (2020), this situation is troubling, as a substantial number of women in the area are grappling with poverty. A study by Muhia (2020) indicates that around 70% of women in Marigat Ward experience economic hardships, lacking access to essential resources and opportunities for socio-economic progress. This alarming inequality emphasizes the immediate requirement for targeted interventions and policies aimed at empowering women, advancing gender equality, and alleviating poverty through inclusive economic growth and social support systems (Chepchieng, 2021). Ongoing efforts have been made to address the root causes contributing to this issue, including limited educational opportunities, gender-based biases, and a shortage of financial resources, to enhance the well-being of women and foster a fair and prosperous future for everyone. Considering the existing circumstances, the study aims to investigate the impact of women's economic empowerment programmes on reducing poverty in Marigat Ward.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

The primary objective of enhancing women's economic empowerment is closely linked to enhancing health and nutrition, ensuring food security, eradicating hunger and reducing poverty. Poverty is a significant deficiency in overall well-being, influenced by factors such as education, assets, housing, healthcare, nutrition, and the realization of specific human rights within a society (Sharaunga *et al.*, 2019). Strengthening women's empowerment and raising their status can substantially impact achieving various development goals and promoting positive societal change. Many rural development programs address household vulnerability to poverty and food insecurity by prioritizing women's economic empowerment (Akter *et al.*, 2019). Empowering women is also a critical tool in the fight against poverty. In Kenya, there exists a notable gender-based disparity in poverty rates, with women being significantly affected. About 54% of women in rural areas and 63% in urban areas live below the poverty

line (KNBS, 2023). Despite efforts from both governmental and non-governmental entities, women in Kenya remain more vulnerable to poverty and unforeseen challenges compared to men. In Baringo County, many women struggle with dependency and lack the means to achieve economic autonomy within their families and communities (Kabugua, 2019). Various obstacles, such as limited access to credit facilities and adherence to traditional gender roles, hinder women from realizing their economic potential and overall well-being. This situation contributes to an unequal distribution of resources, with women constituting a substantial portion of the world's most impoverished individuals. Despite the importance of selected women's economic empowerment in societal poverty alleviation, few studies have focused on this aspect in rural counties, particularly in Baringo County. Existing literature includes a study by Gachemi (2018) that examined the significance of women's groups in promoting economic empowerment within specific groups in Magutu Division, Nyeri County. Kabugua (2019) researched the determinants of women's economic empowerment in Kirima Sub-Location, Nakuru County. However, these studies did not specifically concentrate on the connection between women's economic empowerment programs and poverty alleviation. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by investigating the effects of selected women's economic empowerment programmes on poverty alleviation in Marigat ward, Baringo County.

### 1.3 Purpose of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to examine the effects of selected women's economic empowerment programmes on poverty alleviation in Marigat Ward.

### 1.4 Materials and Methods

The study employed a cross-sectional research design to analyse the effects of women's economic empowerment programmes on poverty reduction in Marigat Ward, located in Baringo County, Kenya. The study utilised both qualitative and quantitative data to accomplish its objectives. The study's target population consisted of members of 16 self-women groups registered with the social development office with a membership of 2025.

The sample size of the women surveyed was ascertained using Yamane's 1967 formula.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: N = Population size

n = sample size

e = Margin error of the study set at  $\pm 5\%$

Sample size will be =  $\frac{2025}{1+2025(0.05)^2} = 334$  respondents.

= 334 respondents, who were 16.5% of the target population

The study employed the Proportionate Stratified random sampling method, in which each women's group was considered a distinct stratum. This approach led to selecting respondents from a total of 16 strata. The study utilized a simple random sampling technique to select participants from the 16 strata.

The research used questionnaires to collect data from women who benefitted from the empowerment initiatives. The questionnaire included closed questions in a standardized, uniform form for all respondents. Closed-ended questions were used to enhance the consistency of responses across respondents. Further, data collection involved interviews with officials, leaders of women's groups, heads of development programs, and community and county leadership in Marigat Ward. This method was deemed suitable and efficient for obtaining in-depth information, as it allowed for probing further into the subject. The interview guide was crafted with questions aligned directly with the study objectives. The structured interviews were chosen for their ease of analysis, cost-effectiveness, and ability to serve as a foundation for result generalization. The gathered data underwent a thorough review for completeness before being coded and input into SPSS version 26.0. Combining quantitative and qualitative data, the study employed descriptive statistical methods such as percentages, frequencies, and tables for processing and analysis. This approach proved advantageous, facilitating the clear presentation of findings through figures and tables as needed. Additionally, the research involved regression analysis and correlation analysis to ascertain the relationships between the study variables. Thematic analysis guided by the study objectives, utilizing Narrative analysis that focused on individual experiences within the story, was applied to analyze the qualitative data. The subsequent regression model was utilized for further examination.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \epsilon$$

The variables were identified as follows:

Dependable variable  $Y$  = poverty alleviation among women

Independent variable  $X_1$  = Skills Development

Independent variable  $X_2$  = Access to Capital

Independent variable  $X_3$  = Market Linkages

Independent variable  $X_4$  = Networking & Mentoring

$\beta_0$  – Constant, while  $\beta_1$ ,  $\beta_2$ ,  $\beta_3$  and  $\beta_4$  are coefficients of determination and  $\epsilon$  is the error term.

## 1.5 Results and Discussion

**Response rate:** The study achieved a response rate of 87.6%, which was excellent for the statistical analysis (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2009).

### *Skills Development*

The respondents agreed about the emphasis placed on developing leadership abilities and taking initiative (Mean=4.3610), as well as the improvement in the development of soft skills (Mean=4.2347). Furthermore, the participants agreed that there were accessible business development programmes (Mean=4.1877) and that financial literacy was improved (Mean=4.0758). Further, the respondents agreed that the knowledge acquisition and understanding level was promoted (Mean=4.0217) and that collaboration and teamwork skills were encouraged in all group meetings (Mean=4.0108). Moreover, the respondents agreed that the adaptability and flexibility of women were enhanced (Mean=3.8736) and

that the programmes encouraged problem-solving and critical thinking (Mean=3.7184). Additionally, the respondents agreed that regular feedback from mentors, trainers, or supervisors made women understand their strengths and areas for improvement (Mean=3.7112) and that the application of skills learnt was evident in the ward (Mean=3.5668). The results indicate that respondents in Marigat ward, Kenya, were aware of the relevance of skill development in poverty reduction. See Table 1. Further, the study used an interview guide to establish the influence of skills development on poverty alleviation among women members of women empowerment initiatives in Marigat ward, Baringo County of Kenya. The participants in unison held that skills development equipped women with marketable skills that led to income generation, which included agriculture, handicrafts, or small-scale business management, where women were better positioned to engage in income-generating activities. In addition, the majority held that through skills development, women improve their employability in both formal and informal sectors, where acquiring relevant skills made them more attractive to potential employers, increased their chances of securing higher-paying jobs, and provided opportunities for upward mobility within their careers. Further, most held that skills training equipped women with the knowledge and tools to start and manage their businesses. Moreover, the participants held that skills development often included financial literacy and management components, which helped women learn how to budget, save, and invest their earnings wisely.

Additionally, some participants held that skill development boosted women's confidence and self-esteem as they acquired new skills and saw their abilities improve. They were more likely to take on leadership roles, voice their opinions, and actively participate in decision-making. Also, the participants held that skill development contributed to building sustainable livelihoods for women, which helped them diversify income sources and develop skills aligned with the local economy, making women less vulnerable to economic shocks and fluctuations. Further, participants held that women who received skills training often shared their knowledge with other community members, creating a multiplier effect, as community members collectively acquired skills that benefitted the entire locality.

**Table 1: Skills Development**

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Developing leadership skills and taking initiative are emphasized by programme managers	4.3610	.97412
Soft skills development is enhanced	4.2347	.73659
Entrepreneurship development programs are available	4.1877	.71788
Financial Literacy is enhanced	4.0758	.87933
Level of knowledge acquisition and understanding is promoted	4.0217	.90863
Application of collaboration and teamwork skills are encouraged in all group meetings	4.0108	.91082
Skill adaptability and flexibility among women is enhanced	3.8736	1.28900
Problem-solving & critical thinking is encouraged by the programmes	3.7184	.95939
Regular feedback from mentors, trainers, or supervisor’s women understands their strengths and areas for improvement	3.7112	.90669
Application of skills learnt is evident in the ward	3.5668	1.37790

Source: Field data, 2022

**Table Banking**

The respondents agreed that sustainability and growth for businesses were enhanced (Mean=4.5018) and that organizations offering table banking conducted member satisfaction surveys (Mean=4.4874). In addition, the respondents agreed that loan disbursements were timely (Mean=4.3899) and that loan repayment durations were sufficient (Mean=4.2202). Further, the respondents agreed that table banking had enhanced the creation of new businesses and employment generation (Mean=4.2130) and that amounts of savings contributions had been enhanced (Mean=4.1913). Additionally, the respondents agreed that the number of groups formed grew yearly (Mean=4.1408) and that the interest rates charged were favourable to businesses (Mean=4.1408). Also, the respondents agreed that group loan portfolio quality was enhanced (Mean=3.8014). The results show that respondents in Marigat ward, Kenya, were aware of the importance of table banking in poverty reduction among women. See Table 2. Further, the study used an interview guide to establish the influence of table banking on poverty alleviation among women members of women empowerment initiatives in Marigat ward, Baringo County of Kenya. The participants held that table banking provided a platform for women who had limited access to formal financial institutions to access credit and savings services. In addition, they held that table banking fostered a sense of empowerment and skill enhancement and promoted Collective Responsibility and Support, where members supported each other by providing loans, sharing business ideas, and offering encouragement.

Also, participants held that the access to capital through table banking enabled women to diversify their sources of income as they invested in a range of activities, such as agriculture, retail, or handicrafts, and the diversification helped reduce vulnerability to economic shocks. Further, participants held that table banking led to increased Household Welfare as women increased their income and financial management skills, and household welfare improved, which further promoted the achievement of children's education, healthcare, and overall quality of life. Moreover, participants held that table banking groups provided a space for knowledge sharing and networking. In addition, participants held that table banking initiatives were often community-driven and locally managed, promoting a sense of ownership and contributing to the program's sustainability over the long term.

**Table 2: Table Banking**

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sustainability and Growth for businesses is enhanced	4.5018	.71538
Organizations offering table banking conduct member satisfaction surveys	4.4874	.84529
Loan disbursements are timely	4.3899	.55785
Loan repayment durations are sufficient	4.2202	.64146
Table banking has enhanced the creation of new businesses, employment generation	4.2130	.81746
Amounts of savings contributions have been enhanced	4.1913	.65069
The number of groups formed is growing each year	4.1408	.70585
The interest rates charged are favourable to businesses	4.1408	.76022
Loan portfolio quality for groups is enhanced	3.8014	.97446

Source: Field data, 2022

### ***Market Linkages***

The respondents agreed that commodity prices were fairly regulated (Mean=4.2852) and that business linkages supplemented and complimented the sustainability of businesses (Mean=4.2744). In addition, the respondents agreed that market information was readily available for the women (Mean=4.2563) and that financial market interactions encouraged women to participate in entrepreneurship (Mean=4.2022). Moreover, the respondents agreed that market linkages enhanced labour mobility (Mean=4.1949) and that coordination and harmonization of economic policies were transparent (Mean=4.1300). Additionally, the respondents agreed that there was market entry support for new entrepreneurs and businesses (Mean=4.1191) and that trade flows into the Marigat ward grew yearly (Mean=4.0036). Further, the respondents agreed that women participated in trade fairs and exhibitions in the ward/county (Mean=3.9242) and that there was a market expansion for goods/services (Mean=3.9025). The findings imply that the respondents were aware of the role of market linkages in poverty alleviation among women in Marigat ward, Kenya. See Table 3. Further, the study used an interview guide to establish the influence of market linkages on poverty alleviation among women members of women empowerment initiatives in Marigat ward, Baringo County of Kenya. The participants held that market linkages provided women access to larger markets and better selling opportunities, leading to increased sales and higher income for the women involved. In addition, participants held that engaging with markets often required women to enhance their product quality, packaging, pricing, and negotiation skills. Further, the participants held that market linkages encouraged women to diversify their product offerings based on market demand, reducing their reliance on a single income source and providing a buffer against economic shocks.

Additionally, most participants held that engaging with markets enhanced women's access to resources such as credit, technology, and information. This improved access to resources and enabled them to invest in their businesses, adopt innovative practices, and make informed decisions, further contributing to poverty alleviation. Additionally, participants held that successful market linkages empowered women by increasing their participation in economic activities and decision-making processes. In addition, participants held that market linkages encouraged women to add value to their products through processing, packaging, or branding, which enhanced the marketability of their products and enabled them to capture a larger share of the value chain, resulting in higher profits. Also, participants held that engaging with markets exposed women to a network of suppliers, buyers, and other stakeholders as the network for collaborations, knowledge-sharing, and learning opportunities, ultimately contributing to improved business practices and income levels. Furthermore, participants held that sustainable market linkages led to the long-term viability of women's businesses, where women were better positioned to make continuous investments in their enterprises, supporting poverty alleviation in the community.



**Table 3: Market Linkages**

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Commodity prices are fairly regulated	4.2852	.79961
Business linkages supplement and complement the sustainability of businesses	4.2744	.72519
Market Information is readily available for women	4.2563	.87808
Financial Market Interactions encourage women to participate in entrepreneurship	4.2022	.94539
Market linkages have enhanced labour mobility	4.1949	1.04513
Coordination and harmonization of economic policies are transparent	4.1300	.98783
Market Entry Support for new entrepreneurs and businesses	4.1191	.93845
Trade flows into the Marigat ward are growing each year	4.0036	1.03384
Women take part in trade fairs and exhibitions held in the ward/county	3.9242	1.00255
There is a market expansion for goods/services	3.9025	1.10067

*Source: Field data, 2022*

### **Networking & Mentoring**

The respondents agreed that mentors helped women set goals (Mean=4.3682) and that collaborative projects or partnerships were well distributed in the ward (Mean=4.2960). In addition, the respondents agreed that the programs mentored women with relevant individuals in their industry or field (Mean=4.2852) and that mentors held regular meetings with the women's group (Mean=4.1733). Moreover, the respondents agreed that mentors actively shared their expertise, knowledge, and experiences with their mentees (Mean=4.1227) and that mentors held long-term relationships with the women groups (Mean=4.1119). Additionally, the respondents agreed that mentors provided honest and constructive feedback to their mentees (Mean=4.0866) and that mentors were readily available to provide guidance (Mean=4.0181). Also, the respondents agreed that Peer-to-Peer support amongst women existed (Mean=3.9675) and that networking events for women were held in Marigat ward (Mean=3.9061). The results suggest that respondents in Marigat ward, Kenya, were aware of the function of networking and mentoring in poverty reduction. See Table 4. Further, the study used an interview guide to establish the influence of networking and mentoring on poverty alleviation among women members of women empowerment initiatives in Marigat ward, Baringo County of Kenya. Participants held that networking involved building and maintaining connections/avenues with strategic individuals, organisations, and institutions, which enhanced poverty alleviation. In addition, participants held that networking provided access to resources such as information, training, and funding opportunities where women learnt about financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and other skills that contributed to income generation and economic self-sufficiency. Further, participants held that building networks facilitated access to larger markets for products and services produced by women. Collaborative efforts and partnerships resulting from networking helped women increase their customer base and expand their businesses.

Additionally, participants held that networking platforms enabled the exchange of experiences, challenges, and success stories, which helped women adopt effective strategies and avoid pitfalls, leading to more informed decision-making. Moreover, participants held that mentoring involved the guidance and support provided by experienced individuals to those with less experience. Also, participants held that mentoring relationships often involved skill transfer and capacity-building, where

mentors offered practical guidance on various aspects of business development, from product quality improvement to marketing strategies. Furthermore, participants held that mentoring provided emotional and psychological support, helping women build confidence and resilience in their entrepreneurial pursuits, increasing self-assurance, leading to better negotiation skills and more assertive engagement with markets. Finally, participants held that mentors introduced mentees to their networks, expanding their connections and opening doors to potential partnerships, collaborations, and market opportunities.

**Table 4: *Networking & Mentoring***

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Mentors help women set goals	4.3682	.67684
Collaborative projects or partnerships are well distributed throughout the ward	4.2960	.64753
Mentors’ women with relevant individuals in their industry or field they are in	4.2852	.58505
Mentors hold regular meetings with women's group	4.1733	.72152
Mentors actively share their expertise, knowledge, and experiences with their mentees	4.1227	.67520
Mentors hold Long-term relationships with the women's groups	4.1119	.77443
Mentor provides honest and constructive feedback to their mentees	4.0866	.75642
Mentors are readily available to provide guidance	4.0181	1.13078
Peer-to-peer support amongst women exists	3.9675	1.19587
Networking events for women held in the Marigat ward	3.9061	1.20018

*Source: Field data, 2022*

***Women Empowerment Programs and Poverty Alleviation***

The respondents agreed that the percentage of women engaged in formal employment had increased (Mean=4.4838) and that ownership of property by women had been enhanced (Mean=4.3971). Furthermore, the participants concurred that there had been an augmentation in income levels (Mean=4.3105) and an enhancement in women's decision-making ability (Mean=4.2888). In addition, the participants agreed that there had been a promotion of social protection (Mean=4.1949) and a rise in female literacy rates (Mean=4.0578). Additionally, the respondents agreed that financial inclusivity for women had been enhanced (Mean=4.0000) and that access to basic services had been enhanced, e.g., healthcare, safe drinking water, secure housing, etc. (Mean=3.9495). Moreover, the respondents agreed that gender equality and empowerment had been enhanced (Mean=3.8375) and that women's entrepreneurship had been promoted, e.g., women-owned businesses increased (Mean=3.5776). The results imply that the respondents were aware of what poverty alleviation entails among women and recognized the role selected women's economic empowerment programmes played for poverty alleviation in Marigat ward, Baringo County, Kenya. See Table 5.

**Table 5: Poverty Alleviation among Women**

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
The percentage of women engaged in formal employment has increased	4.4838	.86640
Ownership of property by women has been enhanced	4.3971	.74288
Income levels have increased	4.3105	.96927
The decision-making capacity of women has been improved	4.2888	.66729
Social protection has been promoted	4.1949	.56297
Female literacy rates have increased	4.0578	1.07857
Financial inclusivity has been enhanced	4.0000	.76613
Access to basic services has been enhanced e.g., healthcare, safe drinking water, secure housing etc	3.9495	1.12497
Gender equality and empowerment have been enhanced	3.8375	1.01383
Women's entrepreneurship has been promoted e.g.; women-owned businesses increased	3.5776	1.30991

Source: Field data, 2022

**Bivariate Analysis**

Results indicate a strong and statistically significant positive association (correlation coefficient of .233\*\*) between skills development and poverty reduction among women. Furthermore, there is a weak and non-significant link (correlation value of .020) between table banking and poverty reduction among women. Moreover, a strong and substantial positive association (correlation value of .129\*\*) exists between market linkages and poverty alleviation among women. Similarly, mentoring and networking also have a strong and significant positive correlation (correlation value of .248\*\*) with poverty alleviation among women. The findings suggest that variables with positive correlation values are strongly associated and exhibit parallel movement. See Table 6.

**Table 6: Bivariate Analysis**

		Skills Development	Table Banking	Market Linkages	Mentorship & Networking	Poverty Alleviation among Women
<b>Skills Development</b>	Pearson	1				
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
<b>Table Banking</b>	N	277				
	Pearson	-.065	1			
	Correlation					
<b>Market Linkages</b>	Sig. (2-tailed)	.280				
	N	277	277			
	Pearson	.014	.101	1		
<b>Mentorship &amp; Networking</b>	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.811	.093			
	N	277	277	277		
<b>Poverty Alleviation among Women</b>	Pearson	.154*	.239**	.170**	1	
	Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	.000	.005		
<b>Poverty Alleviation among Women</b>	N	277	277	277	277	
	Pearson	.233**	.020	.129*	.248**	1
	Correlation					
<b>Poverty Alleviation among Women</b>	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.740	.032	.000	
	N	277	277	277	277	277

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

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

Source: Field data, 2022

**Model Summary**

The women empowerment programmes (skills development, table banking, market linkage and networking and mentoring) explained 57.3% of poverty alleviation in Marigat ward as represented by R<sup>2</sup>. This consequently suggests that unexamined variables play a role in contributing 42.7% towards the mitigation of poverty. Therefore, it is imperative to conduct further research to identify the additional variables that contribute to the 42.7% poverty reduction in Marigat Ward, located in Baringo County, Kenya. See Table 7.

**Table 7: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.757 <sup>a</sup>	.573	.096	.36700

a. Predictors: (Constant), Mentorship & Networking, Skills Development, Market Linkages, Table Banking

Source: Field data, 2022

**Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)**

The analysis employed an analysis of variance (ANOVA) to examine the differences in skills development, table banking, market linkages, networking and mentoring, and poverty alleviation among women, as depicted in Table 4.14. Based on the presented outcomes, it can be observed that the p-value (sig.) was 0.000 (P<0.05), suggesting that skills development, table banking, market linkage, and networking and mentoring exhibited a statistically significant impact on poverty alleviation among women, with a confidence level of 95%. The F critical value at a significance level of 5% was determined to be 8.332, exceeding the threshold of 0.05. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. See Table 8.

**Table 8: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.489	4	1.122	8.332	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	36.635	272	.135		
	Total	41.124	276			

a. Dependent Variable: Poverty Alleviation among Women

b. Predictors: (Constant), Mentorship & Networking, Skills Development, Market Linkages, Table Banking

Source: Field data, 2022

**Coefficients of Determination**

The model was  $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \varepsilon$  became:

$$Y = 1.790 + .236 X_1 + .031X_2 + .115X_3 + .262X_4 + \varepsilon$$

Based on the regression equation, when all factors, including skills development, table banking, market linkages, networking, and mentoring, are held constant at zero, the estimated level of poverty alleviation among women is 1.790. The findings additionally demonstrate that an increase of one unit in skills

development is associated with a 0.236 increase in the level of poverty alleviation among women when considering the four variables. An increase of one unit in table banking is associated with a 0.031 increase in the level of poverty alleviation among women. Furthermore, it can be observed that an increase of one unit in market linkages is associated with a 0.115 increase in the level of poverty alleviation among women. Similarly, a one-unit increase in mentorship and networking is associated with a 0.262 increase in the level of poverty alleviation among women. At the significance level of 95%, skills development, market linkages, mentorship and networking were significant factors influencing women's poverty alleviation, with significant values of .001, .010 and .001, respectively. Further, the findings show that table banking was an insignificant factor in influencing poverty alleviation among women, with a significance value of .659. Mentorship and networking were the most significant factors in poverty alleviation among women, followed by skills development, market linkages, and table banking, which had a negligible influence on poverty alleviation among women. See Table 9.

**Table 9: Coefficients of Determination**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.790	.495		3.617	.000
	Skills Development	.236	.070	.197	3.390	.001
	Table Banking	.031	.070	.026	.442	.659
	Market Linkages	.115	.065	.093	1.603	.010
	Mentorship & Networking	.262	.076	.208	3.441	.001

a. Dependent Variable: Poverty Alleviation among Women

Source: Field data, 2022

**Discussion of the Findings**

The study revealed a significant and positive impact (p=.001) of skills development on poverty alleviation among women participants in women empowerment initiatives in Marigat ward, Baringo County, Kenya. These findings suggest that increased skills development leads to greater poverty alleviation. This aligns with Abduvaliev and Bustillo's (2020) research, which found that skills development significantly influenced economic growth and poverty reduction in CIS countries. Additionally, the results are consistent with Hoff and Stiglitz's (2018) assertion that self-help groups promote women's economic empowerment more effectively. They also support Kessy and Temu's (2018) conclusion that skills development reduces irrational decision-making and promotes objective decision-making. Moreover, Yator's (2021) research agrees, highlighting skill development's significant influence on poverty alleviation. Similarly, Gitonga's (2018) findings affirm that skill development significantly contributes to the socioeconomic empowerment of women. On the other hand, the study found that table banking had a positive but insignificant impact (p=.659) on poverty alleviation among women involved in selected women's economic empowerment initiatives in Marigat ward, Baringo County, Kenya. These results suggest that increased table banking activities contribute to poverty alleviation, but the impact is not statistically significant. This aligns with Wachira's (2015) research, indicating that table banking facilitates increased access to credit, provides opportunities for women entrepreneurs, and enhances

financial management skills, collectively contributing to the economic empowerment of individual women. Furthermore, the results align with Wanaswa's (2015) study, which suggests that women's participation in table banking is driven by their aspiration to accumulate funds for educational expenses for their children or to invest in entrepreneurial endeavours. Additionally, the findings are consistent with Kosgei et al.'s (2018) research, which demonstrated a positive correlation between table banking groups' resources and women's socio-economic empowerment in Kenya. Lal's (2018) assertion that table banking positively impacts poverty alleviation aligns with these results.

The study found that market linkages had a positive and significant impact ( $p=.010$ ) on poverty alleviation among women involved in women empowerment initiatives in Marigat ward, Baringo County, Kenya. These findings suggest that an increase in market linkages leads to a higher level of poverty alleviation. This corresponds with Bharti and Shylendra's (2018) research, indicating that the networking power in market linkages significantly influences women's empowerment. Additionally, the results are consistent with Gupta and Yesudian's (2016) study, emphasizing the importance of women's groups in facilitating attitude transformation among their members. These groups are crucial in altering women's perspectives on various topics, including taboos, myths, farming techniques, and overall community advancement. Moreover, women's groups act as a vital intermediary between residents and the government, effectively mobilizing community members to support developmental initiatives. Furthermore, the results align with Gichuki et al.'s (2015) research, which suggests that female entrepreneurs experienced workforce growth after participating in market-organized seminars. This expansion is attributed to their successful entry into new markets.

The study discovered that mentorship and networking had a positive and significant impact ( $p=.001$ ) on poverty alleviation among women participants in women empowerment initiatives in Marigat ward, Baringo County, Kenya. These results suggest that an increase in mentorship and networking contributes to higher levels of poverty alleviation among women members on empowerment programmes in the specified area. These findings align with the research conducted by Ouko et al. (2022), indicating that the growth of women-owned micro and small enterprises can be attributed to education and management training facilitated through networking and mentoring. Furthermore, the results support the claims made by Nguyen et al. (2018) regarding the positive impact of women's participation in group settings. Specifically, participation in such groups has been observed to foster the development of leadership skills, promote independent thinking, cultivate a business-oriented mindset, and facilitate the development of entrepreneurial qualities. Additionally, it has been noted that women's involvement in these groups enhances networking opportunities, which can be leveraged as an effective marketing strategy. Moreover, the findings are in agreement with Ongera et al. (2016), who found that women were empowered to make independent decisions regarding their production methods, sought training from microfinance institutions on financial and business management skills, and frequently utilized networking and mentoring as an effective platform for knowledge sharing and networking. The results also align with the assertions made by Hays (2021) that networking and mentoring have enhanced the resilience of the rural impoverished population by bolstering their self-assurance, social status, and communication abilities and inducing behavioural modifications.

## **1.6 Conclusions**

The first aim was to examine the impact of skills development on poverty alleviation among women involved in women empowerment initiatives in Marigat ward, Baringo County, Kenya. The study determines that skills development had a positive and significant effect ( $p=.001$ ) on poverty alleviation among these women. The research highlights the emphasis on developing leadership skills, taking initiative, and enhancing soft skills. Additionally, the study notes the availability of entrepreneurship development programs and financial literacy improvement.

The second objective was to assess the impact of table banking on poverty alleviation among women participants in women's economic empowerment initiatives in Marigat ward, Baringo County, Kenya. The study concludes that table banking had a positive but insignificant impact ( $p=.659$ ) on poverty alleviation among these women. It indicates that sustainability and business growth were enhanced, and organizations offering table banking conducted member satisfaction surveys. Furthermore, the study notes the timely disbursement of loans and sufficient loan repayment durations.

The third objective aimed to determine the influence of market linkages on poverty alleviation among women involved in women empowerment initiatives in Marigat ward, Baringo County, Kenya. The study finds that market linkages positively and significantly impacted ( $p=.010$ ) poverty alleviation among these women. It notes that commodity prices were fairly regulated, business linkages complemented the sustainability of businesses, and market information was readily available for women. Additionally, financial market interactions encouraged women to participate in entrepreneurship.

The fourth objective focused on establishing the impact of networking/mentoring on poverty alleviation among women members of women empowerment initiatives in Marigat ward, Baringo County, Kenya. The study concludes that mentorship and networking had a positive and significant effect ( $p=.001$ ) on poverty alleviation among these women. It points out that mentors helped women set goals, collaborative projects or partnerships were well distributed in the ward, and programs mentored women with relevant individuals in their industry or field. Moreover, mentors held regular meetings with women's groups.

In the multivariate analysis, the study determines that with all factors held constant at zero, poverty alleviation among women would be 1.790. It further establishes that a one-unit increase in skills development would result in a 0.236 increase in poverty reduction among women. Similarly, a one-unit increase in table banking would lead to a 0.031 increase in poverty reduction among women, and a single increment in market connections would result in a 0.115 rise in poverty reduction. Additionally, a one-unit increase in mentoring and networking would lead to a 0.262 rise in poverty reduction among women.

At a 95% significance level, the study concludes that skills development, market linkages, and mentoring and networking were significant factors in influencing poverty alleviation among women, with significant values of .001, .010, and .001, respectively. In contrast, table banking was deemed an insignificant factor in influencing poverty alleviation among women, with a significance value of .659. Finally, the study determines that mentoring and networking were the most significant factors in poverty alleviation among women, followed by skills development, market linkages, and table banking, which had a negligible influence on poverty alleviation among women.

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