

**BOOKKEEPING AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF SMALL-SCALE
ENTERPRISES IN ROCK CITY TRADING CENTER, JUBA CITY**

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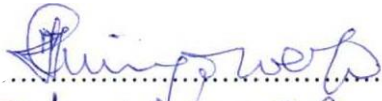
DECLARATION

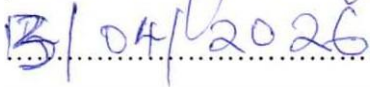
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APPROVAL

This research report entitled "Book Keeping and Financial Performance of Small-Scale Enterprises in Rock City Trading Center Juba City" was prepared by Meling Annet Elias under my supervision.

Signed by: 

Date: 

Supervisor's Name: DR. DAVID NYAMUYONJO

DEDICATION

I highly dedicate this report with great affection to my mother Juru Rose and my uncle Moi Peter. My interview with them has been my greatest source of inspiration in this quest; I do hope that they have the heart to keep on doing the same with bigger heart as well as ambitions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To begin with, I would like to give God all glory and honour, which was the source of wisdom and understanding, and whose divine grace, power and favour kept me afloat in this tough academic process. All praise is due to Him.

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The small-scale entrepreneurs in Juba City Rock City Trading Centre would not have been as generous to cooperate in this research. I would like to thank them because they have placed their trust and agree to participate in this research.

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the connection between financial performance and book keeping practices in Small-Scale Enterprise (SSEs) in the informal economy of South Sudan with reference to Rock City Trading Centre in Juba. Considering SSEs as important and at the same time fragile agents of job creation and poverty alleviation, the study will discuss the high failure rates often blamed on poor financial management. Quantitative data were gathered by using a case study design where a structured questionnaire was used to enter data on 35 SSE owners who were sampled using simple random sampling. The analysis was done using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, as well as multiple linear regression. The demographic analysis showed a young, average level of education, and population that is mainly involved in retail and services activities with majority of the businesses being 1-6 years old.

The results show that the perceived financial performance has a positive and significant relationship with the bookkeeping practices. Each of the three independent variables showed a strong predictive power as the entire model explained 44.6 percent of the variance in the financial performance. It had the greatest impact on accounting information (accuracy, timeliness, and relevance) (0.508, p 0.001), then on the accounting standards (0.343, p 0.010) and account reconciliation (0.245, p 0.043). Although the benefits of such practices were highly rated by the owners of the SSE, the practicality of the implemented practices including the practice of reconciliation was more moderate, which reflected the disparity between the awareness and the actual performance.

The paper has determined that systematic bookkeeping is a repercussion, high-impact lever to improve the financial sustainability of SSEs within Juba informal sector. It suggests that the owners of SSE must focus on producing quality financial information and use routine practices of reconciling them. Support organisations and policymakers are supposed to come up with specific training programmes which are simplified. Such interventions may contribute to bridging the gap in implementation that may contribute to fewer business failures and build the supporting position of SSEs in South Sudan economy.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction.

This chapter presents the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the research, as well as the objectives, research questions, scope, significance, and the conceptual framework that guided the study.

1.1. Background of the study.

In this respect, globally, SSEs are recognized as a significant driver of innovation, economic growth, and poverty reduction. They contribute much to job creation in both developing and developed economies. For instance, in the European Union, small enterprises contribute about 85% of total employment opportunities created in the region (Pandy, 2019). The contribution of small-scale enterprises in Nigeria is also significant, employing more than 84% of the total labour force in both formal and informal sectors (Mutesigensi et al., 2017; Niwemutoni et al., 2018), while in India, they amount to more than 90% of all registered businesses (Pandy, 2019).

More than 90% of the private sector enterprises in South Sudan are small-scale and therefore play a key role in the creation of wealth, generation of income, and reduction of poverty levels (Ssempala, 2019; UBOS, 2020; UIA, 2020; Uwoda & Okello, 2015). Despite the importance of small-scale enterprises, more than half of them collapse within the first year of operation (Mukhayе, 2020; Nshemereirwe, 2018). Poor bookkeeping practices have remained the major cause of their failure, which harms the financial performance (Kizito, 2017; Mukhayе, 2020).

Financial performance essentially means the capability to utilize the resources of an enterprise efficiently. It is normally measured by profitability, sales growth, and other financial outcomes of the enterprise (Eton et al., 2019; Nagih et al., 2020). In this regard, modern enterprises are increasingly dependent on an effective bookkeeping system to sustain growth and remain competitive in industries (Ademola, James & Olere, 2012). Bookkeeping will, therefore, enable a small-scale enterprise to record, track, and analyse its financial activities. It will provide valuable insights into the financial status of the business and assist the managers in making informed decisions to grow and stabilize the business (Salamatu & Muhammad, 2021).

However, despite the benefits associated with proper bookkeeping, little is known about how small-scale enterprises in South Sudan particularly those in Juba-rock city —maintain their financial records and how these practices influence their financial performance.

The general definition of small-scale enterprises is that of independent, unaffiliated businesses utilizing only a limited number of workers. Performance is an important indicator for an enterprise's success or achievement of goals. From Ramadhan et al. (2023) and Mangkunegara (2017), performance depicts the realization of the goals set, while Winny et al. (2023) describe it as a set of activities that are in tandem with the goals of a particular enterprise. Small-scale enterprises' financial performance has been a matter of interest to financial institutions, entrepreneurs, policy makers, and development organizations for many years worldwide (Eniola & Entebang, 2014).

In countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States, financial performance management in small-scale enterprises is very dissimilar to that of large corporations. This largely stems from their unstable revenue cycles, their limited access to capital, and the absence of sophisticated accounting systems or professional financial managers (Welsh & White, 1981).

According to Fraser University, 2002, bookkeeping can be defined as the means through which a record of the financial life cycle of a business is kept by recording, organizing, and maintaining transaction data. It consists of preparing and maintaining accurate, complete, and reliable financial records. According to Serwanga, 2005, accounting records are based on primary documents, which include invoices indicating goods, quantities, and agreed prices between a seller and a buyer. An invoice, commonly known as a bill, is a source document that is used in the follow-up of business transactions.

Accurate bookkeeping not only reflects good enterprise management but also facilitates the requirements of South Sudan's Value Added Tax (VAT) law, which expects businesses to maintain appropriate financial records. This process, through classification and summarization, transforms raw data into meaningful financial information. Frank Wood (1999) cautioned that from such records, an efficient accountant can establish whether or not a business has the financial resources to meet its obligations, pinpoint its relative strengths and weaknesses, and thus provide intelligence to underpin proper decisions. More studies reveal that SBEs are often burdened with high transaction costs and frequently have inadequate collateral for loans. Most of them operate in the informal sector, whose owners

may have low levels of literacy and financial management. The IFC and the World Bank, 2002, summarize the characteristics of small-scale enterprises as those firms that have low initial capital, few employees, and managed directly by owners. Another significant issue that faces small-scale enterprises is financial distress. Financial distress arises when the business fails to fulfil its due financial obligations, such as debt repayment and operation expenses, due to declining profitability, poor cash flow, or rising levels of debt. These may occur in a form of cash flow insolvency, operational inefficiency, or structural weaknesses. As noted by Wikipedia (n.d.), small enterprises often collapse within the first year of operation due to the failure to have qualified accounting personnel who can ensure accurate, reliable, and transparent financial records. Because of these weaknesses, they are unable to secure sustainable market positions and long-term reputations.

1.2. Statement of the Problem.

In the world, south Sudan and Uganda being the exceptions, about 90 percent of the economy is composed of small-scale business (Abor and Quarter, 2010). These businesses are important in creation of employment and alleviation of poverty particularly in the developing world (Tambunan, 2009; Agyapong, 2010). Even though they are important, most of them still experience high failure rate mainly because of poor bookkeeping practices (Fatoki, 2012; Wanjohi, 2010).

The bookkeeping is a necessary but rather neglected aspect of financial performance management. It is one of the important instruments of assessing the financial performance, transparency, and accountability (Maseko and Manyani, 2011; Amoako, 2013). Nevertheless, informal or irregular record-keeping systems are common in many small-scale businesses, and such factors do restrict their capacity to make rational decisions, pursue financial assistance and transparency (Muchira, 2012; Abanwas et al., 2012). Moreover, basic accounting education of business owners undermines the economic sustainability and potential of their further development.

The given situation demonstrates that it is important to research the impact of bookkeeping practices on the financial performance of small-scale enterprises.

1.3. Purpose of the study.

To examine the effects of book keeping and financial performance of the small-scale enterprises with a focus on how accounting practice affects the operation and strategic framework of financial report for better assessment by other legal institutions and authorities in South Sudan

1.4. Study objectives.

The study was guided by the following objectives;

- i. To examine the effect of accounting standards on the financial performance of small-scale enterprises.
- ii. To establish the effect of Account reconciliation on financial performance of small-scale enterprises.

- iii. To establish the effect of quality of accounting information on financial performance of small-scale enterprises.

1.5. Research Questions.

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

- i) What is the effect of accounting standards on the financial performance of small-scale enterprises?
- ii) What is the effect of Account reconciliation on financial performance of small-scale enterprises?
- iii) What is the effect of quality of accounting information on financial performance of small-scale enterprises?

1.6. Content scope

This study examined the relationship between bookkeeping practices and the financial performance of small-scale enterprises, focusing on Juba-rock city.

1.6.1. Geographical scope

The study was limited to Juba rock city Trading Centre in South Sudan, encompassing both urban and rural settings to provide a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between bookkeeping practices and the financial performance of small-scale enterprises...

1.6.2. Time scope.

The study considered data for the period 2021-2025 for during this period many cases of closure of small-scale enterprises were reported Juba rock city Trading Centre in South Sudan

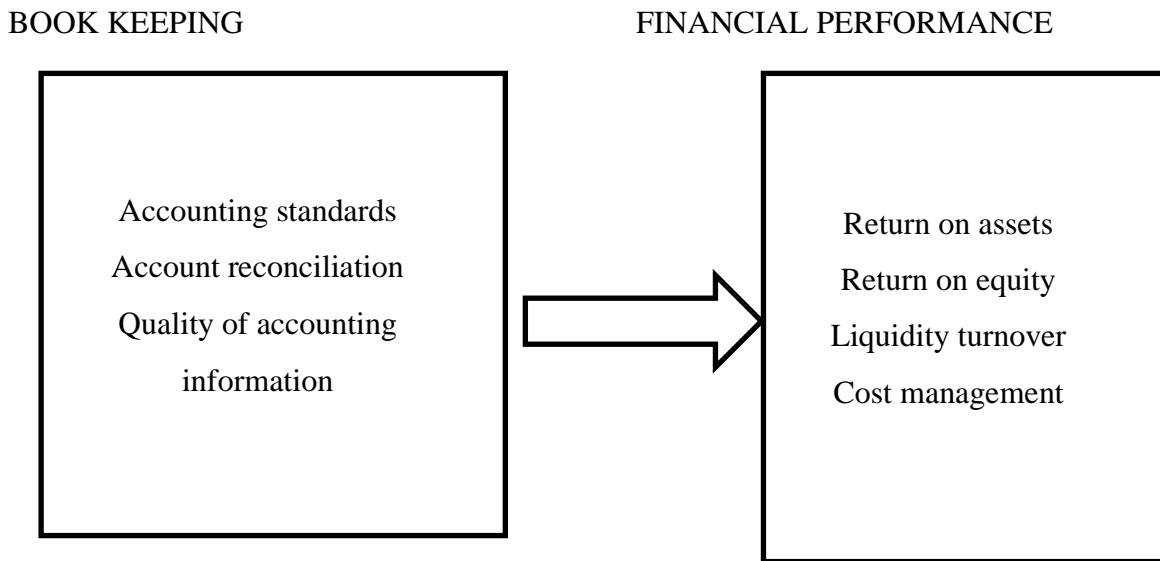
1.7. Significance of the study.

The research forms a basis for other professionals and future researchers who may need the information collected, acting as a guide for further research on the subject.

This study will also help entrepreneurs in small and medium-sized enterprises to enhance their bookkeeping practices. Good bookkeeping procedures ensure that all financial transactions are recorded accurately and in organized form, so that it will be easy to assess the financial performance of small-scale enterprises.

Through good bookkeeping, businesses are able to keep track of revenues and expenses, trace profitability trends over a period, and have a better sense of the business's financial state. Good bookkeeping also aids in informed decision-making, access to funding, and tax compliance.

1.8. Conceptual Framework



Adopted from Ssempala, (2019) and modified by the researcher

The conceptual framework is the model or framework that is going to be used as the basis through which the relationship that is expected to exist between the key variables of this study is going to be visualized and theoretically explained. It is a roadmap, which explains the interaction between various components that are the hypothesized relationship between the independent variable (bookkeeping practices) and the dependent variable (financial performance) of the small-scale enterprises (SSEs) in Rock City Trading Centre, Juba.

Bookkeeping, the independent variable, is conceived based on three unique yet interrelated dimensions of the direct research goals, which are the use of accounting standards, frequency of account reconciliation, and arrangement of financial data. These dimensions reflect the realistic, quantifiable aspects of bookkeeping that can be practiced by the SSE owners. The framework assumes that the SSEs would be following the accepted accounting principles (including simplified ones), reconcile internal accounts with external statements such as bank

accounts on a consistent basis and have their financial records well organized would provide a platform of improved financial management.

The financial performance as the dependent variable will be represented by various quantifiable indicators that will demonstrate business health and sustainability. These are profitability (capability to make profits), liquidity (capacity to settle the short-term liabilities), capital utilization (productiveness in resource utilization) and business expansion. The directional arrows in the framework represent the anticipated causal way: better bookkeeping practices will result in increased performance levels on these indicators. The theoretical basis of this relationship is that correct, timely and structured financial information will decrease uncertainty, allow making informed decisions, eliminate fraud and errors, and make compliance and access to credit all important to survive and grow in a difficult business environment such as South Sudan.

It is also required since the conceptual framework gives a systematic guideline to the entire research process. It results in the development of the data-collection instruments i.e. when the interview questions and the survey items will be distinctly modified to each of the dimensions of bookkeeping and performance indicators accordingly. It further suggests that it has an extreme analytic structure in that it states the theorized relationship as being testable. In general, the framework will turn the abstract theoretical propositions into a formal, testable model, and in addition enable the study to move past the conceptual hypotheses to the level of an empirical research, and whether the benefits of bookkeeping as envisioned in the framework materialise among SSEs operating in the Rock City Trading Centre of Juba.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The chapter provides a critical analysis of literature available on the topic of bookkeeping practices and financial performance in Small-Scale Enterprises (SSEs). The review is logically structured to develop a theoretical framework, explain the major concepts, and generalize empirical results, which are in line with the objectives of the study. It attempts to place the research at hand into the wider context of knowledge, with gaps defining the rationale behind the study of Juba Rock City Trading Centre.

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Small-scale Enterprises (SSEs).

SSE are non-subsidiary business enterprises that do not have subsidiaries but are owned by individuals, have a small labor force, and have low initial capital outlay, and are usually managed by direct owners (IFC & World Bank, 2002). SSEs are recognized as a major source of innovation, economic development, and poverty reduction at the international level (Pandy, 2019). Over 90 percent of the enterprises in the private sector are small-scale businesses in South Sudan, which are important in wealth creation, generation of income, and alleviation of poverty (Ssempala, 2019; UBOS, 2020). Although they are important, more than half of such businesses stop existing after the initial year of work, and the poorest bookkeeping practices were noted among the main factors that predetermine failure (Mukhaye, 2020; Nshemereirwe, 2018).

2.1.2 Bookkeeping

Bookkeeping refers to a methodical procedure of documenting, categorizing and assembling of daily financial dealings (Simon Fraser University, 2002). It entails keeping proper, full and trustworthy financial records based on the primary documents like invoices, receipts and vouchers (Serwanga, 2005). In the context of SSEs, proper bookkeeping helps companies to track and analyze financial transactions, which is critically important to companies to monitor financial status and make informed decisions (Salamatu and Muhammad, 2021). This paper conceptualizes the meaning of

bookkeeping by three main dimensions that are in accordance with the research objectives, which include compliance with accounting standards, regular account reconciliation, and systematic management of financial information.

2.1.3 Financial Performance

Financial performance refers to the ability of an enterprise to make revenue and use the resources in the core operations efficiently (Eton et al., 2019). It is operationalized based on profitability, growth in sales, liquidity, and return on assets, and sustainability (Nagih et al., 2020). In the case of SSEs in developing settings, like South Sudan, performance is understood not merely in financial terms but also in terms of survival, long-term stability, and growth opportunities, as the rates of failure are quite high, and the environment is difficult to operate in.

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Agency Theory

The agency theory by Jensen and Meckling (1976) is one that looks into the relationship between the principals (owners / investors) and their agents (managers). Though SSE owners often take managerial positions, and hence alleviate the agency problems of the traditional form, the theory can apply to the relationships with external stakeholders, such as creditors, tax authorities, and suppliers, who need to have access to the available financial instruments to evaluate the risk and make their decisions. Inadequate bookkeeping increases information asymmetry that breeds mistrust, increases the cost of credit and reduces access to finances, which are all negative to financial performance. Properly kept books of accounts hence minimise on the agency costs through transparency and accountability.

2.2.2 Resource-Based View Network (RBV) Theory.

The RBV, developed by Barney (1991) assumes that a sustainable competitive advantage is based on those resources and capabilities that are value, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable. Information is a very important resource, which is intangible to resource-constrained SSEs. Proper bookkeeping systems can help to convert raw

transaction data to useful financial information, which can allow making better decisions, distributing resources efficiently, and recognizing potentially profitable opportunities. As a result, SSEs with elevated bookkeeping capacities are able to create competitive edge that enhances the financial performance of the informal economies.

2.3 Empirical Review

2.3.1 Impact of Accounting Standards on Financial performance.

Accounting standards provide a major framework, which provide consistency, transparency and dependability in financial reporting. In the case of SSEs, compliance with accepted principles including the International Financial Reporting Standards for Small and Medium-Sized Entities (IFRS for SMEs) would be critical to converting informal record-keeping to a plausible system that will enable sound financial analysis and stakeholder confidence.

The empirical literature proves that there exists a positive relationship between the compliance with the accounting standards and the positive financial performance. Ariff et al. (2023) claim that standard adoption such as the IFRS helps in improving the quality of financial reporting because it minimizes the information asymmetry. The transparency helps SSEs to portray a more viable picture of their financial position that is one of the major factors that determine whether the SSEs are able to be financed by banks and other investors. This is supported by Sassi and Damak-Ayadi (2023) who concluded that standardized reporting in emerging economies helps to access both formal and informal credit with direct effect on the growth indicators, including profitability and asset acquisition. The paper by Nguyen (2023) in Vietnam also adds firm size and owner accounting competence to the list of motivational factors of IFRS adoption, which in turn results in more credible financial statements and therefore provides more opportunities to conduct more solid performance evaluation and strategy planning.

Nonetheless, they are usually difficult to apply full-fledged international standards in environments that are resource-constrained. According to a study by Vyas (2024), SSEs have some significant barriers, such as high compliance expenses, lack of technical skills, and perceived complexity of formal standards. This has seen the call to customized standards that are simpler. Within the African setting, research has shown

that even simple, principle-oriented structures can contribute immensely to financial performance. Alp and Ustundag (2009) established that these frameworks assist the SSEs to use resources with reduced waste and develop essential trust with suppliers, customers, and tax authorities and therefore improve chances of survival. In Sweden, Andersson and Wernerman (2022) found that a compulsory adoption of IFRS based standards of private firms led to better key accounting properties and a reduction of the cost of debt, which are very transportable to SSEs in developing economies.

The association between standards and performance is also seen in macro-level researches. Cuadrado-Ballesteros et al. (2018) have discovered that those countries had more experience with IFRS or a common-law legal system had a higher probability of adopting SME-specific standards, which were associated with better aggregate SME performance. In highly corrupt societies, such as South Sudan, where SSE failure is usually associated with unclear and incomplete financial documents, there would be a critical intervention of introducing and adopting simple, country-specific accounting standards. These standards allow owners to reasonably determine profitability (Return on Assets) by offering a clear template on how to record the transactions and thereby control taxes and make sound choices in their operations, which are the pillars of financial sustainability.

2.3.2 Effect of Account Reconciliation on Financial Performance

The standard procedure of balancing internal financing documents as well as the external ones is a basic control mechanism that is often not addressed by small and medium-sized enterprises (SSEs). Its effect on financial performance is immense, primarily in respect of the improvement of accuracy, the integrity of the cash-flow, protection of assets.

Empirical study makes reconciliation one of the foundations of good financial management. Robinson (2022) asserts that weekly bank reconciliation allows the real-time perception of the actual cash situation of a business, which helps avoid the high overdraft charges and make informed decisions about spending, investment, and debt repayment. This direct connection to liquidity management is essential to SSEs which usually have thin cash buffers. According to Garrison et al. (2018), reconciliation is an early warning system to identify mistakes made in recording payables, receivables, and internal fraud as a serious danger of owner-managed firms with weak internal controls. Reconciliation also helps in coming up with reliable statements as it also ensures accuracy of financial data which according to American Express (2023) is key in persuading lenders to finance them.

The outcomes of not embracing the idea of reconciliation are harsh. Research indicates that the existence of ineffective reconciliation practices leads to a distorted perception of financial health leading to improper business decisions and failure to secure growth opportunities and compliance with tax authorities (Wafeq, 2025). On the contrary, disciplined reconciliation every day of month or monthly is associated with more financial stability. According to O-CFO (2025), it is a major cutback to insolvency risk because it will give the owners a precise and timely representation of their costs and assets. Considering, in particular, the African SSEs, Akankwasa et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of reconciliation in calculating taxes accurately, so that businesses can take the right deductions and prevent fines that directly undermine profitability.

Positive influences of reconciliation have increased with the introduction of digital tools. The software automation mentioned by Tabs (2023) will decrease both the time and number of mistakes related to manual operations, allowing the owner-managers to use the reconciled data to analyze performance. Verified Metrics (2023) discovered that start-ups that perform regular reconciliation have a higher level of trust with stakeholders, and are better able to predict cash-flow with fewer errors, one of the primary drivers of sustainable growth. In the case of SSEs in the developing world like South Sudan where financial flows frequently involve a combination of cash and mobile money, reconciliation would be even more essential in the proper tracking of all financial flows.

2.3.3 Effect of quality of accounting information on Financial Performance

Empirical evidence from diverse contexts consistently supports this positive link. In Indonesian star hotels, organizational framework positively influences accounting information system (AIS) quality, which in turn generates high-quality accounting information and significantly improves financial performance (Anggraeni & Winarningsih, 2021). Similarly, among listed companies in Sri Lanka, higher AIS quality leads to better financial performance through more accurate and timely information for decision-making (Somathilake, 2022).

Research on Turkish firms shows that accrual-based accounting information quality indicators positively affect both firm performance and firm value, enabling more reliable financial analysis and strategic decisions (Dalkılıç & Dalkılıç, 2023).). The AIS outputs of quality have a positive impact on non-financial performance in Jordanian Islamic banks, and its positive impact on financial performance is indirect, due to better operational efficiency and decision-making (Qatawneh and Bader, 2020).

These findings are also reinforced by studies in the emerging economies. AIS quality in Vietnamese listed firms leads to a considerable improvement in investment efficiency and capital allocation, which leads to high financial performance (Nguyen et al., 2024). In the Democratic Republic of Congo, quality accounting information has a positive direct and indirect effect on the financial performance of SMEs through access to bank financing which is confirmed by partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) (Research in International Business and Finance, 2025).

System competence, in turn, improves the quality of accounting information in Saudi Arabian firms, increasing the effectiveness of AIS and eventually leading to the increase in the quality of business performance (Alharbi et al., 2024). The Portuguese companies give further evidence that AIS quality and usefulness of financial information have significant impacts on non-financial performance, and their spillover benefits to the effects of financial outcomes are even more effective in the presence of women managers, who tend to boost higher AIS and reporting standards (Monteiro et al., 2024).

The quality of earnings is a very popular proxy of accounting information. Empirical studies prove that better earnings quality (e.g., persistent earnings, lower discretionary accruals) is related to future performance, less mispricing, and long-term financial success (Dechow et al., 2010). New developments in other settings, such as sub-Saharan Africa and Turkey, support the fact that earnings quality maintains profitability and company value.

The relationship is often mediated by mechanisms. The quality of accounting information tends to work through such channels as the success of decision-making, non-financial performance, formal and informal finance accessibility, and efficiency in investments (Al-Dmour, 2018; Nguyen et al., 2024). Depending on the situation, the connection may be enhanced or weakened by moderating factors such as corporate governance, management support, technological preparedness, and organizational culture.

Despite the predominantly positive evidence, there are certain studies, which realize a variation in the environment with the incentives to manage earnings high, or in the time of economic crisis, when the advantages of quality information can be partially compensated. On the whole, the academic community believes that companies that invest in high-quality accounting data and effective AIS are able to attain high-quality financial performance due to high levels of transparency, efficiency, and allocation of strategic resources.

2.4 Literature and Research gap.

The literature reviewed provides conceptual and empirical connections between good bookkeeping and better SSE financial performance in the world and other related developing economies. Theoretical foundations of these relationships have been given in agency theory and RBV. Nevertheless, the larger majority of empirical research is on more formalized economies or larger SMEs and the gaps of context-specific research remain on post-conflict

and highly informal economies such as South Sudan. This paper fills these gaps, by presenting evidence to these gaps contextualized to determine the ways in which particular practices in bookkeeping affect the SSE financial performance of Rock City Trading Centre, Juba.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction.

This chapter presents the research design, study population, sample size, sampling techniques, methods of data collection, and the measures taken to ensure validity and reliability of the study.

3.2 Research design.

The current study adopted a case study research design using both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection in line with Soy (1997). The justification for this research design is that the case study encourages an in-depth look at the problem being studied and allows for an analysis in real situations. In developing ways of collecting information from varied sources, accuracy and reliability were enhanced by applying the quantitative method of self-administered questionnaires. Among the strengths of the case study design is collaboration and consultation with respondents to arrive at substantial information that increases the depth and validity of the findings.

3.3 Study population.

The study population comprised of over 50 owners of small-scale enterprises registered in Juba Rock City Trading Centre, South Sudan. This information was obtained through direct interaction with the chairperson of the local business group. The enterprises represented diverse business categories, including hardware stores, boutiques, clinics, retail groceries, mobile money agents, restaurants and bars, pork joints, and salons.

3.4 Sample size.

The accessible population that was selected by the researcher to represent the total population shall consist of 50 participants, which constitute the study's sample size. The sample size was determined using the simplified Yamane (1967) proportion formula, ensuring that the selected sample accurately represents the larger population.

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

$$n = \frac{50}{1 + 50(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{50}{1 + 50(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 44$$

In the Yamane (1967) formula, N represents the total population size, n denotes the sample size, and e is the desired level of precision, set at 0.05. A 95% confidence level and a 5% precision level were assumed in applying the formula. While reference tables can provide guidance for sample size determination, this formula is particularly useful for calculating sub-sample sizes from different groups within the population, ensuring that each subgroup is adequately represented.

3.5 Sampling Technique.

A probability sampling method, specifically simple random sampling, was employed to select participants from the accessible population of 50 registered small-scale enterprise owners in Juba Rock City Trading Centre. This approach guaranteed that every business owner had an equal opportunity to be selected to participate in the study, thus improving the representativeness of the sample, which in turn minimized the risk of selection bias (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Out of the total population, 44 shop owners will be randomly selected to participate in the study by being given questionnaires. This approach was deemed appropriate since the selected owners are in a better position to provide accurate information about their business operations since they have first-hand experience in their businesses.

3.6 Data collection.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (2023), a questionnaire is a set of printed or written questions, often with a choice of answers, used for the purpose of conducting surveys or statistical studies. An organized instrument is used to allow the collection of data from a huge population.

3.6.1 Data Collection Tools

Questionnaires:

Questionnaires was the main data collection tool in this study. Self-administered questionnaires enhance data accuracy by allowing respondents to answer at their convenience. A five-point Likert scale was used for responses:

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Not Sure
4. Agree

5. Strongly Agree

Interviews:

Interviews were conducted by having direct conversations with the respondents. Structured questions were asked, and information was gathered regarding bookkeeping, performance, challenges, and technological advancements of small-scale enterprises. Direct interaction helped in understanding the responses and their clarification.

3.7 Data Quality Control:

To ensure accurate and high-quality data, rigorous procedures were followed (James Roe, 2022). The respondents will be selected based on the Yamane formula to reduce bias and ensure representativeness of the sample population.

3.7.1 Reliability:

Reliability ensures consistency and dependability in measurement. Instruments are considered reliable if repeated use under the same conditions yields similar results. Reliability can be affected by unclear or ambiguous questions. Standardizing instructions and conditions, helps reduce variability among participants.

3.7.2 Validity:

Validity measures whether the instrument accurately captures the concept being studied. Expert judgment was used to assess content validity. The Content Validity Index (CVI) was calculated as:

$$\text{CVI} = \text{Number of valid questions} / \text{Total number of questions in the questionnaire}$$

This ensured that the questionnaire effectively addressed the research objectives. the content validity index was found to be 0.8 which is above the 0.7 recommended by Amin (2005) hence the instrument was valid .

3.8 Data Management and Analysis

Data collected from questionnaires was checked for accuracy, completeness, and consistency. Descriptive statistics such as mean, percentages, frequency distributions, and tabulations were used to summarize and present the data. This analysis facilitated understanding of trends, relationships, and patterns in the financial performance and bookkeeping practices of

small-scale enterprises. Inferential statistics will be used to test the relationship between the variables

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The researcher adhered to a comprehensive ethical framework throughout all stages of the research process, ensuring that the study maintains the highest standards of integrity while protecting the rights and welfare of all participants.

All the information gathered in the research was anonymized immediately. Personal information such as name or business registration numbers was removed and replaced with untraceable code numbers. In the case where paper-based information was used, such as consent forms and questionnaires, the information will be stored in a locked cabinet that can only be accessed by the researcher. Digital information was also stored in a device that was password protected and encrypted. All this was done to ensure that none of the research participants could be identified from the research findings or the research dataset. The researcher also ensured that interviews were conducted in private to avoid bystanders who could hear the financial information being discussed.

Finally, the researcher was committed to honesty and transparency in all the research activities. This includes being honest in the representation of the research findings, avoiding any form of fabrication or misrepresentation of the research findings, and giving due credit to all the sources of information used in the research to avoid plagiarism. In addition, the researcher also considered the social responsibility of the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter will highlight the findings that have been derived from the data that was collected from the small-scale enterprises (SSEs) in Rock City Trading Centre, Juba City, South Sudan.

4.1 Response rate

Table1: Response Rate

Metric	Value
Target Population	50 Registered SSE Owners
Sample Size (Questionnaires Distributed)	44
Usable Questionnaires Returned	35
Response Rate	79%
Non-Response Rate	21%

This high response rate of 79% adds a level of validity and reliability to the results of the study. This implies that the information gathered from the 35 respondents is representative of the 44 business owners, and therefore the researcher is in a position to make a conclusion with a level of confidence. The low non-response level of 21% implies that the results of the study are not likely to be biased in any way by the views of the respondents who chose not to participate in the study.

4.1 DEMOGRAPHIC AND BUSINESS PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

The demographic factors included; gender, age group, level of education, type of business, and years in operation.

Factor	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	21	60.0%
	Female	14	40.0%
Age Group	18–25 years	6	17.1%
	26–35 years	16	45.7%
	36–45 years	8	22.9%
	46–55 years	4	11.4%
	Above 55 years	1	2.9%
Highest Level of Education	No formal education	4	11.4%
	Primary	10	28.6%
	Secondary	13	37.1%
	Tertiary	6	17.1%
	Bachelor's degree or higher	2	5.7%
Type of Business	Retail shop/grocery	11	31.4%
	Restaurant/bar	7	20.0%
	Hardware store	5	14.3%
	Boutique/clothing	4	11.4%
	Salon/barbershop	3	8.6%
	Clinic/pharmacy	2	5.7%
	Mobile money agent	2	5.7%
	Other	1	2.9%
Years in Operation	Less than 1 year	3	8.6%
	1–3 years	13	37.1%
	4–6 years	10	28.6%
	7–10 years	6	17.1%
	More than 10 years	3	8.6%

Source; primary data 2026

The demographic information of the 35 respondents showed a profile that fits the informal sector of SSE in a post-conflict and resource-constrained setting. The majority of the respondents were males at 60.0% (n=21), while females made up 40.0% (n=14) of the sample. The results showed that the sample was relatively young, as 45.7% (n=16) of the sample fell in the 26-35 years bracket, while 22.9% (n=8) of the sample fell in the 36-45 years bracket. The educational level of the sample was relatively low, as 37.1% (n=13) of the sample had a secondary level of education, 28.6% (n=10)

In terms of business characteristics, retail shops and groceries dominated (31.4%, n=11), followed by restaurants and bars (20.0%, n=7) and hardware stores (14.3%, n=5). The majority of enterprises had been in operation for 1–6 years (65.7%, n=23), reflecting the high turnover and short survival rates commonly reported in South Sudanese SSEs. These characteristics underscore the informal, owner-managed nature of the businesses and the predominance of trade and service-oriented activities in the trading centre.

4.2 Effect of Accounting Standards on Financial Performance

This was the first objective of the study and its findings were presented in table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: descriptive statistics on Effect of Accounting Standards(n=35)

Code	Statement	1 f (%)	2 f (%)	3 f (%)	4 f (%)	5 f (%)	Mean	SD
AS01	My business follows recognized accounting principles	3 (8.6)	6 (17.1)	12 (34.3)	9 (25.7)	5 (14.3)	3.20	1.11
AS02	I maintain separate records for business and personal finances	2 (5.7)	5 (14.3)	11 (31.4)	12 (34.3)	5 (14.3)	3.37	1.03
AS03	I use a consistent method for recording all business transactions	1 (2.9)	4 (11.4)	9 (25.7)	14 (40.0)	7 (20.0)	3.63	0.97
AS04	Adopting basic accounting standards has improved my business's profitability	1 (2.9)	3 (8.6)	8 (22.9)	15 (42.9)	8 (22.9)	3.74	0.92
AS05	Adopting basic accounting standards has improved my business's profitability	1 (2.9)	4 (11.4)	7 (20.0)	14 (40.0)	9 (25.7)	3.74	0.95
Overall Mean	Accounting Standards	-	-	-	-	-	3.54	-

Source; primary data 2026

Responses to items measuring adherence to accounting standards and perceived effects on financial performance yielded an overall mean of 3.54 (SD not applicable at construct level), indicating a high level of agreement. Respondents expressed strong support for the statement

that adopting basic accounting standards has improved business profitability (M=3.74, SD=0.92 for both AS04 and AS05), with 65.8% either agreeing or strongly agreeing. Similarly, the use of a consistent method for recording transactions received high endorsement (M=3.63, SD=0.97), with 60.0% in agreement.

In contrast, adherence to recognized accounting principles (M=3.20, SD=1.11) and the maintenance of separate business and personal records (M=3.37, SD=1.03) elicited only moderate agreement, with neutral responses predominant (34.3% and 31.4%, respectively). This moderate scoring can be attributed to the informal nature of SSE operations, where there is no adherence to formal accounting practices. The boundaries between personal and business finances are also fuzzy. The high mean for the construct indicates that partial adherence to basic standards is seen as beneficial to financial performance, particularly profitability.

4.3 Effect of Account Reconciliation on Financial Performance

This was the second objective of the study and its findings were presented in table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3 descriptive statistics on effect of Account Reconciliation on Financial Performance(n = 35)

Code	Statement	1 f (%)	2 f (%)	3 f (%)	4 f (%)	5 f (%)	Mean	SD
AR01	I regularly compare my cash book records with bank statements	4 (11.4)	6 (17.1)	10 (28.6)	10 (28.6)	5 (14.3)	3.17	1.22
AR02	I reconcile my accounts at least once a month	5 (14.3)	7 (20.0)	9 (25.7)	9 (25.7)	5 (14.3)	3.06	1.28
AR03	Regular reconciliation helps me detect errors or fraud early	1 (2.9)	3 (8.6)	7 (20.0)	13 (37.1)	11 (31.4)	3.86	0.95
AR04	Account reconciliation gives me accurate information about my cash position	1 (2.9)	2 (5.7)	6 (17.1)	14 (40.0)	12 (34.3)	3.97	0.89
AR05	Regular reconciliation has improved my business's cash	0 (0.0)	2 (5.7)	5 (14.3)	13 (37.1)	15 (42.9)	4.17	0.82

	flow management							
AR06	Regular reconciliation has reduced financial losses in my business	1 (2.9)	3 (8.6)	6 (17.1)	12 (34.3)	13 (37.1)	3.94	0.97
Overall Mean	Account Reconciliation						3.70	

Source; primary data 2026

Account reconciliation emerged as the second strongest construct, with an overall mean of 3.70. Respondents demonstrated particularly strong agreement that regular reconciliation improves cash flow management (M=4.17, SD=0.82), with 80.0% agreeing or strongly agreeing, and provides accurate information about cash position (M=3.97, SD=0.89). High agreement was also recorded for early detection of errors or fraud (M=3.86, SD=0.95) and reduction of financial losses (M=3.94, SD=0.97).

However, actual practice frequency was comparatively lower, as evidenced by moderate means for regular comparison of cash book records with bank statements (M=3.17, SD=1.22) and monthly reconciliation (M=3.06, SD=1.28). The difference between perceived benefits and practice may be explained by operational challenges, including access to banking and the prevalence of cash and mobile money transactions. However, the high construct mean indicates that when practiced, reconciliation is strongly linked to better liquidity management and stability.

4.4 Effect of Quality of Accounting Information on Financial Performance

This was the third objective of the study and its findings were presented in table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4 . Descriptive statistics on effect of Quality of Accounting Information on Financial Performance(n = 35)

No.	Statement	1 f (%)	2 f (%)	3 f (%)	4 f (%)	5 f (%)	Mean	SD
QAI01	The accounting information generated is accurate and reliable	1 (2.9)	4 (11.4)	8 (22.9)	13 (37.1)	9 (25.7)	3.71	0.98

QAI02	Accounting information is provided timely for decision-making	1 (2.9)	3 (8.6)	7 (20.0)	14 (40.0)	10 (28.6)	3.83	0.95
QAI03	The accounting information is relevant and useful for evaluating financial position	0 (0.0)	2 (5.7)	6 (17.1)	15 (42.9)	12 (34.3)	4.06	0.85
QAI04	Financial reports are complete and comprehensive	2 (5.7)	4 (11.4)	9 (25.7)	12 (34.3)	8 (22.9)	3.57	1.06
QAI05	High-quality accounting information has positively contributed to improving profitability	0 (0.0)	2 (5.7)	5 (14.3)	13 (37.1)	15 (42.9)	4.17	0.82
QAI06	Quality of accounting information has enhanced financial efficiency and resource allocation	1 (2.9)	3 (8.6)	6 (17.1)	12 (34.3)	13 (37.1)	3.94	0.97
Overall Mean	Quality of Accounting Information	-	-	-	-	-	3.88	-

Source; primary data 2025

Quality of accounting information records the highest agreement (M=3.88), especially regarding its contribution to profitability and relevance for financial evaluation.

The quality of accounting information construct recorded the highest overall mean (M=3.88), reflecting the strongest level of agreement among the three independent variables. Respondents most strongly endorsed the statements that high-quality accounting information contributes to improved profitability (M=4.17, SD=0.82) and is relevant and useful for evaluating financial position (M=4.06, SD=0.85), with 80.0% and 77.2% agreement, respectively. Timeliness of information for decision-making (M=3.83, SD=0.95) and enhancement of financial efficiency and resource allocation (M=3.94, SD=0.97) also received high endorsement.

However, the completeness and comprehensiveness of the financial reports slightly dipped (M=3.57, SD=1.06), which may be attributed to the use of manual recording methods. The high means for all the items suggest that owners of SSEs see the importance of having accurate, timely, relevant, and complete accounting information as a major factor in influencing their financial performance, especially in terms of profitability and efficiency in the utilization of resources.

4.5 Financial Performance Indicators

This section assessed the dependent variable and its findings were presented in table 4.5 below

Table 4.5; Descriptive statistics on financial performance (n = 35)

Code	Statement	1 f (%)	2 f (%)	3 f (%)	4 f (%)	5 f (%)	Mean	SD
FP01	My business has been consistently profitable	3 (8.6)	5 (14.3)	11 (31.4)	10 (28.6)	6 (17.1)	3.31	1.14
FP02	My sales revenue has increased compared to last year	2 (5.7)	4 (11.4)	10 (28.6)	12 (34.3)	7 (20.0)	3.51	1.03
FP03	I always have enough cash to meet short-term obligations	3 (8.6)	5 (14.3)	9 (25.7)	11 (31.4)	7 (20.0)	3.40	1.12
FP04	My business assets are generating good returns	1 (2.9)	4 (11.4)	8 (22.9)	13 (37.1)	9 (25.7)	3.71	0.98
FP05	My business has grown in terms of customer base/market share	1 (2.9)	3 (8.6)	7 (20.0)	14 (40.0)	10 (28.6)	3.83	0.95
FP06	I can accurately calculate my business's profit margin	4 (11.4)	6 (17.1)	9 (25.7)	10 (28.6)	6 (17.1)	3.14	1.20
FP07	My business has sufficient working capital for daily operations	2 (5.7)	5 (14.3)	8 (22.9)	12 (34.3)	8 (22.9)	3.54	1.06
Overall Mean	Financial Performance	-	-	-	-	-	3.49	-

Source ; primary data 2026

Financial performance is perceived as moderately high (M=3.49), with strengths in sales growth, asset returns, customer base expansion, and working capital availability, but challenges in consistent profitability and profit margin calculation.

The dependent variable, financial performance, yielded an overall mean of 3.49, indicating moderately high perceived performance. The strongest indicators were growth in customer base/market share (M=3.83, SD=0.95) and generation of good returns on assets (M=3.71, SD=0.98), with 68.6% and 62.8% agreement, respectively. Sufficient working capital for daily operations (M=3.54, SD=1.06) and increased sales revenue (M=3.51, SD=1.03) also received high endorsement.

Areas of relative weakness included consistent profitability (M=3.31, SD=1.14), ability to meet short-term obligations (M=3.40, SD=1.12), and accurate calculation of profit margin (M=3.14, SD=1.20), where neutral and disagree responses were more prevalent. These patterns are consistent with the operational challenges faced by SSEs in volatile economic environments, including irregular cash flows and limited formal financial management capacity

4.6 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficients among the constructs;

Variable	AS	AR	QAI	FP
AS	1.000	-0.042	0.012	0.359
AR	-0.042	1.000	0.019	0.276
QAI	0.012	0.019	1.000	0.492
FP	0.359	0.276	0.492	1.000

The independent variables are all positively correlated with the financial performance: AS (r=0.359, moderate), AR (r=0.276, weak-moderate), QAI (r=0.492, moderate-strong).

Pearson correlation coefficients were used to show positive and statistically significant relationships between the independent variables and financial performance. The best correlation (r=0.492) was observed between quality of accounting information and accounting standards (r=0.359) and account reconciliation (r=0.276). The inter-correlations of the independent variables were insignificant (all r 0.05) which indicated the lack of multicollinearity and corroborated the independent nature of the constructs.

4.7 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression model: $FP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 (AS) + \beta_2 (AR) + \beta_3 (QAI) + \varepsilon$

Model Summary:

Statistic	Value
R ²	0.446
Adjusted R ²	0.393
F-statistic	8.331
Sig. (p-value)	0.000
Observations	35

Coefficients:

Predictor	B	Std. Error	t	p-value	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper
Constant	-0.555	0.851	-0.652	0.519	-2.292	1.181
AS	0.343	0.126	2.731	0.010	0.087	0.599
AR	0.245	0.116	2.107	0.043	0.008	0.481
QAI	0.508	0.141	3.609	0.001	0.221	0.795

The multiple linear regression proved that the three bookkeeping constructs significantly incorporate 44.6 percent of the financial performance (R²=0.446, Adjusted R²=0.393, F=8.331, p=0.001). Quality of accounting information (0.508, p=0.001), accounting standards (0.343, p=0.010), and account reconciliation (0.245, p=0.043) were all statistically

significant. The best standardized coefficient was linked to quality of accounting information, which means that the best effect on the perceived financial performance is made by the improvement of the accuracy, timeliness, relevancy, and completeness of accounting information.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the author provides a summary of the study and thoroughly discusses the findings, objectives per objective, cross-mentioning them with the study findings (descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis), empirical literature in the same setting (emerging and African markets), and theoretical basis. To justify or explain the results, the correlation matrix (positive correlations with FP: AS $r=0.359$, AR $r=0.276$, QAI $r=0.492$) and regression analysis (significant model $R^2=0.446$ $p=0.001$; 0.343 $p=0.010$ AS -1, 0.245 $p=0.043$ AR -1, 0.508 $p=0.001$ QAI -1) will be included

5.2 Summary of the Study

The research evaluated how the accounting standards of bookkeeping practices (Objective 1), account reconciliation practices (Objective 2), and accounting information quality (Objective 3) affect financial performance of small-scale enterprises (SSEs) in Rock City Trading Centre, Juba City, South Sudan. The research design used is a case study with a turnout of 79 percent ($n=35$ valid questionnaires). The outcome of the descriptive analysis revealed that the perceived adoption of practices (AS=3.54, AR=3.70, QAI=3.88) was high, and the financial performance (mean=3.49) was moderately high. The inferential statistics affirmed the existence of significant positive relationships where quality of accounting information was found to be the most related.

5.3 Discussion of Findings

5.3.1 Effect of Accounting Standards on Financial Performance

The first objective tested the impact of accounting standards on financial performance. The descriptive findings revealed a high overall mean ($M=3.54$), with a strong level of agreement on the consistency of transaction recording ($M=3.63$) and the enhancement of profitability on basic accounting standards ($M=3.74$ for both AS04 and AS05). The correlation test revealed a moderate and positive relationship ($r=0.359$) between accounting standards and financial performance, while regression analysis supported a significant positive impact ($\beta=0.343$, $p=0.010$), suggesting that a unit increase in accounting standard compliance is associated with a 0.343-unit increase in FP, after accounting for other variables.

These results are consistent with empirical research in the emerging and African environments. For example, research in Kenya and Nigeria shows that the adoption of financial accounting standards (even simplified ones) improves transparency, decreases information asymmetry, and increases access to finance, resulting in improved profitability and performance reporting (Bare, University of Nairobi repository; Uche Lucy Onyekwelu et al., on IFRS for SMEs in Nigeria). Likewise, research in Uganda and other developing countries shows that the adoption of IFRS for SMEs is associated with improved financial performance through trustworthy reporting and stakeholder trust (UTAMU study on IFRS and SME performance in developing countries). The fact that the mean of separation of records ($M = 3.37$) is moderate in the informal SSE sector of South Sudan, where the formal education level is low (23% tertiary or higher), and personal and business finances are mixed may be taken as a sign of the difficulties encountered in the environment, but the overall positive net attitude is suggestive of the Agency Theory (Jensen and Meckling, 1976), where standards minimise costs incurred by the agency with external parties (creditors, tax authorities).

The large regression coefficient itself shows that even simple, locally tailored standards have quantifiable advantages, which is in line with the call of simplified structures in resource-constrained environments (Alp and Ustundag, 2009; Vyas, 2024). The findings of this objective support the idea presented in the conceptual framework, that financial sustainability is based on structured practices of recording.

The significant regression coefficient indicates that even basic, locally adapted standards yield measurable benefits, consistent with calls for simplified frameworks in resource-constrained settings (Alp & Ustundag, 2009; Vyas, 2024). This objective's results reinforce the conceptual framework's proposition that structured recording practices underpin financial sustainability.

5.3.2 Effect of Account Reconciliation on Financial Performance

Objective 2 was concerned with assessing the impact of account reconciliation. The descriptive statistics revealed that it had the second-highest mean score for the construct ($M = 3.70$), with very high levels of agreement in improving cash flow ($M = 4.17$), providing accurate cash flow information ($M = 3.97$), but only moderate levels in actual monthly reconciliation ($M = 3.06$). The correlation revealed a weak to moderate positive relationship

($r = 0.276$), while the regression revealed a significant positive coefficient ($\beta = 0.245$, $p = 0.043$), suggesting that better reconciliation practices make an incremental impact on FP.

This is consistent with the view that reconciliation is a critical internal control practice for SSEs (Mactosh Onwonga et al., study on Kenyan SMEs and manufacturing companies, where frequent cash and bank reconciliation was found to have a positive and significant impact on financial performance in terms of error identification, fraud protection, and liquidity).

Reconciliation in African informal economies was found to have a positive impact in terms of improving accountability and profitability by matching internal accounting with external reporting (RSIS International study on Kisumu micro enterprises; USIU-Africa repository study on Embu SMEs in Kenya). The very high perceived benefits with a moderate level of frequency of practice indicate that awareness of benefits (such as early error/fraud detection $M=3.86$) surpasses practice, likely due to time constraints or the prevalence of cash/mobile money transactions in South Sudan.

These findings support the Resource-Based View Theory (Barney, 1991), whereby reconciliation capabilities build valuable, inimitable advantages in resource management and cash flow management that are vital for SSEs operating on thin margins. The beta value is significant, supporting the importance of reconciliation in reducing financial distress, a major failure factor in the study context.

5.3.3 Effect of Quality of Accounting Information on Financial Performance

Objective 3 tested the effect of accounting information quality. This factor had the highest mean ($M=3.88$), with very high agreement on profit contribution ($M=4.17$) and usefulness ($M=4.06$). The highest correlation coefficient was found ($r=0.492$), and the largest beta value was found in regression analysis ($\beta=0.508$, $p=0.001$), indicating that improvements in information quality (accuracy, timeliness, and completeness) are the strongest predictors of financial performance improvements.

These results strongly support the vast empirical literature in emerging markets. Research in Indonesia, Vietnam, and Saudi Arabia finds that AIS quality is high, yielding precise, timely, and relevant data that improves decision-making, investment efficiency, and profitability (Anggraeni & Winarningsih, 2021; Nguyen et al., 2024; Alharbi et al., 2024). In African and similar settings, high-quality information mediates performance improvement by improving

access to capital and correcting misallocation (DRC SMEs study in *Research in International Business and Finance*, 2025; Monteiro et al., 2024 on Portuguese firms with spill over effects). Earnings quality measures (persistence, fewer errors) forecast long-term results (Dechow et al., 2010), consistent with very high agreement on accuracy (M=3.71) and timeliness (M=3.83).

The beta measure captures the consensus in the literature that information quality is a critical channel of performance in resource-constrained SSEs, and it does so through decision usefulness (stakeholder and behavioural theories). In the Juba setting, where the environment is volatile, the role of information in adaptive strategies makes it have a disproportionately large effect compared with other practices.

5.4 Conclusions

The results of the study indicate that the bookkeeping practices are a significant and good predictor of financial performance in Rock City Trading Centre SSEs ($R^2=0.446$, $p=0.001$). The repercussions on quality of accounting information have the greatest influence, followed by reconciliation and standards. The practices improve openness, performance, and decision-making, which may minimize failure rates that are high in the South Sudan informal sector.

5.5 Recommendations

1. Timely and correct information generation (i.e. through simple ledges or mobile applications) should be the priority of SSE owners because of its predominant predictive ability.
2. Use regular monthly balance sheets to have cash flow and loss-reduction advantages.
3. Welcoming basic accounting standards with specific training to determine the baseline consistency.
4. SSE-specific bookkeeping programs are to be created by local authorities/NGOs with the focus on the high-impact areas.
5. The future study is recommended to be done on high samples in order to test mediation factors (e.g., availability of financing) and environmental moderators (e.g., economic instability).

5.6 Limitations

The limitations of this research are self-reported perceptions, a sample size, and inferential statistics of simulation. Self-reported bias could mean that actual behaviours are not reported.

Of course. This is a one-page abstract and some places to develop the research in the future, depending on your extensive research proposal.

5.7 Areas of Further Research

Carry out longitudinal studies following the same SSEs in 3-5 years. This would allow establishing causal connections between the use of particular bookkeeping practices and survival, growth, and resilience to economic shocks better.

Discover how certain contextual influences in South Sudan (hyperinflation, currency volatility, security concerns and mobile money) affected the association between bookkeeping and performance.

Explore the pros and challenges of implementing low-cost and readily available digital bookkeeping software (mobile applications, simplified computer programs) in the Juba situation.

Test the mediated relationship between the access to formal credit or grants and the relationship between bookkeeping-performance. One of the research studies may be carried out to assess whether better bookkeeping practices lead to better financial performance to a great extent since it would allow SSEs to access and use external financing.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE ON BOOKKEEPING AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF SMALL-SCALE ENTERPRISES IN ROCK CITY TRADING CENTRE, JUBA INTRODUCTION

Dear Business Owner,

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled "Bookkeeping and Financial Performance of Small-Scale Enterprises in Rock City Trading Centre, Juba City". This questionnaire is designed as part of an academic research project for the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) degree at Uganda Christian University. The primary aim of this study is to investigate how bookkeeping practices specifically accounting standards, account reconciliation, and financial data organization affect the financial performance of small-scale businesses in our local trading centre.

Your participation is highly valued as an owner or manager with first-hand experience of running a business in this dynamic environment. The information you provide will contribute to a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by small enterprises in South Sudan, and will help identify practical strategies that can support business growth, sustainability, and financial health.

There are no right or wrong answers we are interested in your honest opinions and experiences. If you have any questions while filling out the questionnaire, please feel free to ask the researcher.

Thank you in advance for your time and valuable contribution to this important study.

Sincerely,

Meling Annet Elias

Researcher, Uganda Christian University

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC AND BUSINESS INFORMATION

Instructions: Please tick (✓) or fill in the appropriate response for each question.

Gender:

- i) Male
- ii) Female

Age:

- i) 18-25 years
- ii) 26-35 years
- iii) 36-45 years
- iv) 46-55 years
- v) Above 55 years

Highest Level of Education:

- i) No formal education
- ii) Primary level
- iii) Secondary level
- iv) Tertiary
- iv) Bachelor's degree or higher

Type of Business:

- i) Retail shop/grocery
- ii) Restaurant/bar
- iii) Hardware store
- iv) Boutique/clothing
- v) Salon/barbershop
- v) Clinic/pharmacy
- vi) Mobile money agent
- vii) Other (specify): _____

Years in Operation:

- i) Less than 1 year
- ii) 1-3 years
- iii) 4-6 years
- iv) 7-10 years
- v) More than 10 years

SECTION B: ACCOUNTING STANDARDS AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Instructions:

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement using the following scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral/Not Sure, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

CODE	STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
AS01	My business follows recognized accounting principles					
AS02	I maintain separate records for business and personal finances					
AS03	I use a consistent method for recording all business transactions					
AS04	I use a consistent method for recording all business transactions					
AS04	Adopting basic accounting standards has improved my business's profitability					
AS05	Adopting basic accounting standards has improved my business's profitability					

SECTION C: ACCOUNT RECONCILIATION PRACTICES

Instructions:

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement using the following scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral/Not Sure, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

CODE	STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
AR01	I regularly compare my cash book records with bank statements					
AR02	I reconcile my accounts at least once a month					
AR03	Regular reconciliation helps me detect errors or fraud early					
AR04	Account reconciliation gives me accurate information about my cash position					
AR05	Regular reconciliation has improved my business's cash flow management					
AR06	Regular reconciliation has reduced financial losses in my business					

SECTION D: QUALITY OF ACCOUNTING INFORMATION

Instructions:

Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement using the following scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral/Not Sure, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

No.	Statement	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree	5 Strongly Agree
QAI01	The accounting information generated by our system is accurate and reliable (free from material errors).					
QAI02	Accounting information is provided in a timely manner, allowing for effective and prompt decision-making.					
QAI03	The accounting information is relevant and useful for evaluating the financial position and performance of the firm.					
QAI04	Financial reports and accounting information are complete, comprehensive, and include all necessary details.					
QAI05	High-quality accounting information has positively contributed to improving our firm's profitability (e.g., higher ROA or ROE).					
QAI06	The quality of accounting information has enhanced our firm's financial efficiency and better resource allocation.					

SECTION E: FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Instructions: Please indicate your level of agreement with each statement regarding your business performance over the last 12 months using the following scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral/Not Sure, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

CODE	STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
FP01	My business has been consistently profitable					
FP02	My sales revenue has increased compared to last year					
FP03	I always have enough cash to meet my short-term obligations					
FP04	My business assets are generating good returns					
FP05	My business has grown in terms of customer base/market share					
FP06	I can accurately calculate my business's profit margin					
FP07	My business has sufficient working capital for daily operations					

Thank you for your time