

**ECONOMIC GENDER PARITY IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR: A CASE OF THE KIKO
MARKET, MUKONO MUNICIPALITY**

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DECLARATION

I, **MWAMISA JENNIFER**, hereby declare that this research dissertation entitled "Economic Gender Parity in the Informal Sector: A Case of the Kiko Market, Mukono Municipality" is my original work and has never been submitted to any higher institution of learning for any academic award.

Mwamisa

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APPROVAL

This research dissertation titled: “ *Economic Gender Parity In The Informal Sector: A Case Of The Kiko Market, Mukono Municipality* ” by Mwamisa Jennifer of registration number S21B34/032, has been submitted to the School of Business in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Bachelor of Science in Economics and Statistics degree of Uganda Christian University with my approval.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the loving memory of my late parents, whose sacrifices and dedication to my education remain the foundation of this achievement. Even in their absence, their love and support continue to sustain me. I am equally grateful to my wonderful siblings for their constant emotional support and encouragement.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS / ACRONYMS

GAD: Gender and Development

ILO: International Labour Organization

NDP III: Third National Development Plan

NGP: National Gender Policy

SACCO: Savings and Credit Cooperative Organization

SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

UBOS: Uganda Bureau of Statistics

UNCST: Uganda National Council for Science and Technology

VSLA: Village Savings and Loan Association

WEE: Women's Economic Empowerment

WID: Women in Development

ABSTRACT

The study examined economic gender parity in the informal sector with specific focus on Kiko Market, Mukono Municipality, Uganda. The study was guided by three specific objectives: to compare physical market placement between men and women vendors in terms of the type of operating space secured; to measure inventory turnover rates as a sales performance indicator by comparing how frequently men and women vendors restocked their primary trade commodities per week; and to assess tangible business growth by determining the proportion of men and women vendors who expanded their product lines within the past twelve months. The study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design. A sample of 375 respondents was drawn from a total vendor population of 2,500 using stratified random sampling proportional to gender composition. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered via Google Forms. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, chi-square tests of association, independent samples t-tests, and Pearson correlation analysis using SPSS Version 26.

Findings on physical market placement revealed a profound and statistically significant disparity: 70.8% of male vendors occupied permanent lock-up stalls compared to only 6.1% of women, while 42.9% of women traded in open ground or unshaded areas compared to 0% of men ($\chi^2 = 189.391$, $p < 0.001$). Findings on inventory turnover revealed a directional gap in weekly restocking frequency with male vendors recording a higher mean score (3.22) than women (2.78), though the difference did not reach statistical significance at the 0.05 level ($t = -1.671$, $p = 0.096$). Structural Likert-scale items revealed that women experienced significantly higher working capital constraints (mean = 4.48 vs. 2.00 for men) and time poverty from domestic labour (mean = 4.47 vs. 1.56 for men). Findings on product diversification revealed the largest gender gap: 66.9% of male vendors expanded their product lines in the past twelve months compared to only 19.2% of women ($\chi^2(1) = 82.223$, $p < 0.001$). Correlation analysis identified significant relationships between stall equity and diversification ($r = .447$, $p < .001$), working capital constraints and diversification ($r = -.442$, $p < .001$), and time poverty and diversification ($r = -.460$, $p < .001$).

The study concluded that significant, structural, and statistically robust economic gender disparities existed at Kiko Market across all three dimensions. The study recommended that Mukono Municipal Council should prioritise construction of affordable permanent stalls with

transparent gender-responsive allocation guidelines; Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) credit histories should be linked to formal financial systems; gender-targeted financial literacy training should be established for female vendors; and enforceable stall allocation guidelines should be developed and implemented at the municipal level.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presented the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, justification of the study, scope of the study, significance of the study, conceptual framework and definitions of key terms. The study sought to investigate the gender parity of vendors at Kiko Market (Mukono Municipality) using three measurable indicators: location within the market, turn over of products and the diversity of products sold as a measure of the growth of a business.

1.1 Background of the Study

Economic gender equality was globally a significant development challenge, especially in sub-Saharan Africa where the informal economy was the main source of employment for most of the workforce. The latest annual report from the World Economic Forum (2023) estimated that at the present rate of change, it would take 169 years to close the global economic gender gap. In low- and middle-income economies, this inequality was most pronounced in the informal economy where women were disproportionately represented in terms of numbers, but disadvantaged in terms of access to resources, income and enterprise sustainability. In Uganda, more than 80 percent of the total employment was in the informal economy; women were over 60 percent of informal workers in the agricultural and trade sub-sectors (Uganda Bureau of Statistics [UBOS], 2021). Despite their dominance, women informal workers on average earned 30 to 40 percent less than men, and female entrepreneurs had consistently smaller and less-capitalised enterprises that were more susceptible to economic shocks than men's enterprises (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2020). These structural inequalities existed despite the presence of formal policy instruments aimed at promoting gender equality, such as the National Gender Policy (2007, revised 2016), Equal Opportunities Commission Act (2007) and the Sustainable Development Goals 5 on gender equality and SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth to which Uganda is signatory.

One overlooked factor in the inequality of the informal markets was location. Where and what kind of space a vendor traded in influenced their vulnerability to weather and theft, visibility to potential customers, storage capacity, and ability to display and variety of their goods. Market stalls with permanent lock-up stalls allowed for security and storage necessary for business success, but these spaces tended to be secured by a combination of monetary, social, and power resources that women in patriarchal markets were less likely to have (Doss, et al., 2020). Studies in major markets in Uganda (Owino, Nakasero, Kalerwe, in Kampala) found that female vendors were more likely to be located in less secure trading spaces (Tumushabe, 2019; Nalunga, 2020). Another key factor in the performance of informal market enterprises was stock management. Regularly replenishing primary commodities corresponded to active turnover of goods, increased cash flow and improved relations with suppliers. A study of East African markets by the ILO (2020) found that male vendors restocked their primary commodities more often than female vendors due to their greater access to trade credit, greater initial capital, and fewer time and income constraints. Connected to this was the aspect of product line diversification: expanding a product line allowed vendors to tap into new markets and customers, stabilise their income streams and grow their market share. Gender disaggregated data from informal markets in Uganda found female vendors diversified their product lines less often than male vendors due to limited access to capital and time, owing to household responsibilities (Nalunga, 2020; Mayoux, 2001).

This research was carried out at Kiko Market (also known as Kame Valley Market) in Mukono Central, in the Mukono Municipality, 20 kilometres east of Kampala on the Kampala-Jinja Highway. Kiko Market was a dynamic peri-urban informal market characterised by the sale of food, clothing and household items, beverages and services. In March 2026, a preliminary mapping exercise determined that the market had a total population of registered vendors of about 2,500 (1,800 women - 72%; 700 men - 28%). Although Kiko Market was one of the biggest informal markets in the increasingly urbanised Mukono Municipality, there have been no previous academic investigations into economic gender parity at Kiko Market, either in the three areas examined in this study.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Economic gender parity in informal markets in Uganda remained a goal. Although national data showed the overall patterns of gender-based economic inequality - such as lower incomes, smaller businesses and worse employment conditions for women - little was known about the processes by which these inequalities played out in particular market contexts. This was especially the case at the neighbourhood level where informal markets like Kiko Market in Mukono Municipality were the main economic spaces for thousands of vendors, yet had rarely been subject to systematic empirical research. This research was inspired by three aspects of economic inequality at Kiko Market. First, preliminary observations showed that men and women vendors did not operate equally within the types of available operating spaces, with female vendors seemingly dominating less secure open spaces whereas male vendors operated within the lock-up permanent sites. Second, there had been no official measurement of the rate of inventory turnover for men and women vendors at Kiko Market and if female vendors turned over their primary product(s) less frequently than male vendors, then this indicated lower levels of sales and economic dynamism. Third, there was no gender-specific measurement of the rate of enterprise expansion among vendors in terms of diversification of product lines.

This lack of local, empirically sound information on these three dimensions meant that policymakers and local governments, market management boards and development agencies did not have the knowledge to inform and guide the development of targeted strategies and measures to address gender disparities in economic activity at Kiko Market. This research contributed to solving this problem by generating systematic, gender-disaggregated primary data on the three dimensions through a survey of Kiko Market vendors.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the extent of economic gender parity among vendors at Kiko Market, Mukono Municipality, Uganda, by comparing men and women vendors on three measurable dimensions: physical market placement, inventory turnover rate, and tangible business growth through product diversification.

1.4 Specific Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

- i. To compare physical market placement between men and women vendors at Kiko Market, specifically the type of operating space secured (permanent lock-up, semi-permanent stall, or open ground).
- ii. To measure inventory turnover rates as a sales performance indicator by comparing how frequently men and women vendors restocked their primary trade commodities per week.
- iii. To assess tangible business growth by determining the proportion of men and women vendors who expanded their product lines within the past twelve months.

1.5 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. How did physical market placements differ between men and women vendors in terms of the type of operating space secured?
- ii. How did inventory turnover rates differ between men and women vendors in terms of weekly restocking frequency of primary trade commodities?
- iii. At what rate did men and women vendors report tangible business growth through the addition of new product lines in the past twelve months?

1.6 Justification of the Study

1.6.1 Academic Justification

While there is an emerging interest in gender and informality in East Africa, the literature remained limited in its operational measurement of gender inequalities across location, turnover, and product diversification within a single peri-urban market. The literature to date was either concerned with gender inequalities at the national scale or relied on more general measures of economic disadvantage. This research addressed this blindspot by producing new empirical evidence specific to Kiko Market, and thus adding to the body of research on gender and informality in developing countries.

1.6.2 Policy Justification

The findings of the study are relevant to Mukono Municipal Council, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, and the Equal Opportunities Commission. The study's finding of gender differences in space allocation, stock performance, and growth at Kiko Market provided tangible evidence at the local level to support gender-sensitive market governance policies. The findings were also very much aligned with the Third National Development Plan (NDP III 2020/21- 2024/25), which prioritised gender equality as a cross-cutting issue and the informal sector as a driver of inclusive economic growth.

1.6.3 Practical Justification

For civil society organisations and development partners in Mukono Municipality, the study provided an evidence base for designing programs. Organisations in the women's economic empowerment, microenterprise development or market systems strengthening spaces were able to draw on the study to understand the pattern of disadvantage amongst female vendors at Kiko Market as opposed to extrapolating from other contexts.

1.7 Scope of the Study

1.7.1 Content Scope

The study was confined to three aspects of economic gender parity among Kiko Market vendors: location in the market, operationalised as the type of space occupied; turnover rate, operationalised as the number of times the stock is replenished per week; and physical market expansion, operationalised as the number of new product lines or secondary commodities incorporated over the last 12 months. This study did not include other dimensions of gender inequality such as income, access to credit, household labour (as an independent variable), or social capital, although these were mentioned as contextual variables.

1.7.2 Time Scope

The study was carried out between February and May of 2026. Primary data collection was done between 25th April and early May 2026. Questions about business diversification were retrospective and referred to the past year (May 2025 to May 2026). The literature review in this study was focused on literature from 2025 to 2026.

1.7.3 Geographical Scope

The research was limited to Kiko Market (also known as Kame Valley Market) in Mukono Central, Mukono Municipality, Mukono District, Central Region, Uganda. This study did not address other markets in Mukono District and other municipalities, although it did compare the findings to similar markets in Uganda, where relevant.

1.8 Significance of the Study

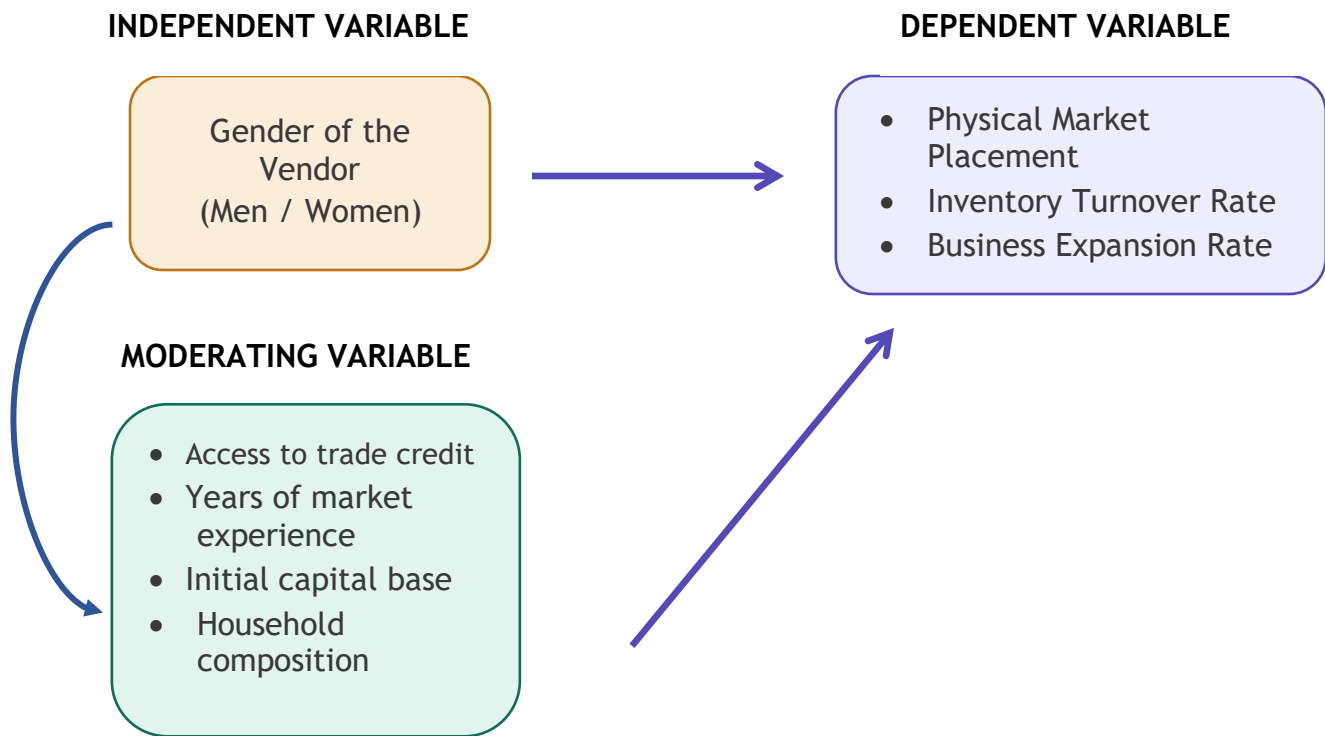
The study's findings were important for a variety of stakeholders. For scholars and researchers, the study was the first to collect systematic, site-specific, gender-disaggregated empirical data on location, turnover, and diversification in a peri-urban, informal market in Uganda, adding to the body of research on gender and informality in East Africa. The study also showed the usefulness of directly observable, quantitative proxy measures for gauging economic gender parity, an approach that could be replicated.

For policy makers and government bodies, the study provided locally relevant evidence for informing gender-sensitive market governance. For civil society and development partners working in Mukono Municipality, the study provided evidence for designing programs. For women vendors at Kiko Market and other informal markets in Uganda, the study helped to raise awareness on the structural inequities they face, and advocacy for their economic plight.

1.9 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework was used to illustrate how the independent variable of vendor gender affects the dependent variables of economic parity, and the moderating effect of contextual variables. Vendor gender (Men / Women) was the independent variable. These were: location in the market (operationalised as the type of market space occupied); turnover of goods (operationalised as how often the vendor restocks goods per week); and rate of business expansion (operationalised as the number of new product lines introduced in the past 12 months). Four moderating variables - access to trade credit, market experience, starting capital and household structure - shaped gender's relationship with these economic outcomes.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework Diagram



Source: Adapted from Kabeer (1999), Moser (1989), and ILO (2020), with modifications by the researcher (2026).

The framework was based on the Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) model of Kabeer (1999), the Gender and Development (GAD) model of Moser (1989) and the Informal Economy Framework by the ILO (2020) and modified by the researcher (2026). This framework assumed that structural inequalities in the moderating variables - rather than any structural differences in vendor capabilities or effort - were the major determinants of gender differences in the three dependent variables.

1.10 Definition of Key terminology.

- **Economic gender parity:** The state of equal economic status, opportunity and outcome between male and female vendors in an informal market, defined by a similar physical location in the market, the rate of inventory turnover and the speed of business expansion.

- **Market location:** Vendor's position in Kiko Market, defined as permanent lock-up, semi-permanent or shaded, or open ground or unshaded.
- **Inventory turnover rate:** The number of times a vendor restocked their main commodity of trade per week, used as a measure of sales and business activity.
- **Product diversification:** The introduction of new commodities or secondary products to the vendor's existing portfolio of products within a given time, as a measure of business growth and expansion.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

To better understand the study variables, this chapter undertook a comprehensive review of the related written materials and literature which provided more light into the major themes of study. The review was organized in such a way that the key contents and specific objectives of the study were reflected. It talked about the discoveries made by the past researchers, indicated discrepancies and gaps within the current body of knowledge and additionally explained the necessity to explore the issue of economic gender parity in Kiko Market, Mukano Municipality.

2.1 Theoretical Literature Review

2.1.1 Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Framework

The research was informed by the Women Economic Empowerment model by Kabeer (1999) that was still one of the most popular models of explaining gender disparities in economic performance in developing nations. The WEE framework was based on three interrelated constructs namely resources, agency and achievements. Resources were viewed as the material, human and social resources that people possessed access to; agency as the ability of individuals to formulate objectives and act on them; and achievements as the physical products of the agency exercised over the resources. Kabeer (1999) hypothesized that the concept of empowerment was not a product but a process that needs change in all the three dimensions to change concurrently.

The WEE framework proved a powerful analytical framework to explain the persistence of gendered differences in market location, stock turnover and product mix, despite the absence of formal legal constraints among informal market vendors. Applying to the case of female vendors at Kiko Market, the lack of access to financial resources limited their choices in terms of getting high-quality stalls, ensuring sufficient liquidity to stock in and out frequently, and investing in product line growth. Such resource deficits were also augmented by reduced agency that was reflected in low bargaining power with the market committees and unequal domestic

labour burdens (Kabeer, 2012). The framework was also quite applicable as the focus on visible and quantifiable successes fitted the three dependent variables that were chosen in this research.

Nevertheless, the WEE framework has been accused of being biased towards seeing empowerment as a process at an individual level, and overlooking structural and institutional constraints (Cornwall and Anyidoho, 2010). This could be applied to Kiko Market where market stalls were not divided just based on the individual vendors but according to the market management standards as well as historical trends of gender segregation. The research was thus attuned to the individual elements of agency emphasised by Kabeer and the social structures that constrained these.

2.1.2 Moser Gender and Development (GAD) Approach

The Gender and Development approach, which was most formulated by Moser (1989) was a theoretical elaboration of the previous Women in Development (WID) approaches, which shifted focus to gendered social relations that created and maintained inequality. One of the key input of the GAD approach was that there was a difference between practical gender needs - needs brought about by circumstances of contemporary disadvantage - and strategic gender interests, which concerned the structural circumstances that created the disadvantages. This distinction had clear implications for the present study; the three indicators of economic gender parity at Kiko Market - location, market turnover, and diversification - were all examples of practical gender needs, while the patriarchal norms that regulated market space, trade credit and domestic labour distributions were examples of strategic gender interests that required structural change.

The GAD method was much more developed than it was when Moser developed it and later scholars have cited the intersectional aspect of gender inequality and its interactions with class, ethnicity, age and household structure (Razavi and Miller, 1995). This intersectional aspect was applicable at Kiko Market in that not all female vendors were equally disadvantaged: the longer their experience, the greater their initial capital, or the more trade credit they received, the less they were disadvantaged by structural factors. This conceptual framework of the study thus factored in the moderating variables, in keeping with the GAD-inspired realization of the fact that gender inequality was never independent of context.

2.1.3 ILO Informal Economy Framework.

The third theoretical basis of the research was the Informal Economy Framework created and perfected by the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2020). This defined the informal economy as economic activity not regulated, not protected and not included in the national financial circuit, with gender as a key dimension of differentiation in the global informal economy. The ILO (2020) claimed that women are not in the least productive, least paid, and least secure parts of informal labour markets by chance, but by design, as market institutions, social norms, and state policy reproduced these structural characteristics.

The ILO framework proved to be very educative as it guided the methodological approach of this study. Its recommendation of gender-disaggregated data collection as the main tool of diagnosing informal economy inequalities was the direct influence on the application of comparative, gender-disaggregated measure on all the three dependent variables. The idea articulated in the framework that the aggregation of the economic data was likely to make the disadvantage of gender invisible supported the logic behind the site-specific empirical method of this study at Kiko Market.

2.2 Location in the Market and Gender

The space distribution of vendors in informal markets was always denoted by the literature as a major determinant of the economic performance. The geographical location predetermined the customer exposure, vulnerability to weather and theft, storage, and display space, and visibility to neighbouring trader networks. The disparity in access to good and safe market spaces was thus a significant aspect of economic inequalities among vendors (Doss et al., 2020).

Bonfiglioli (2019) found that a survey of seven West African cities found women were 2.3 times more likely than men to work in open or temporary markets, whereas men dominated permanent lock-up stalls. This trend was fueled by three self-reinforcing mechanisms that included the reduced financial liquidity of female vendors, decreasing their access to premium spaces; the limitation in informal allocation by social networks of market management structures; positive bias by market management committees in favor of male vendors. The same trends were reported in the urban markets in Kenya, Tanzania and Nigeria (Lyons and Snoxell, 2005; Mitullah, 2003).

The closest Ugandan evidence was found in a study of Owino Market in Kampala by Tumushabe (2019), who found market patriarchy, the informal rules of governance that privileges male traders in the distribution of desirable space, to be a structural cause of spatial gender inequality. These results were replicated by Nalunga (2020) in Nakasero and Kalerwe markets, where she found that spatial inequality was a structural aspect of Ugandan informal markets. Lyons and Snoxell (2005) calculated that gender based spatial disadvantage decreased daily sales by 25 to 35 percent of female vendors compared to similar male vendors in similar product lines even after allocating commodity type and years of experience, which showed that physical location served as a direct factor of economic disparity.

2.3 Inventory Turnover, Trade Credit and Sales Performance.

The most common proxy measure of sales performance, market dynamism, and business viability in the informal enterprise literature was inventory turnover, which is how frequently the vendors replenished the main trade commodities (ILO, 2020; Mead and Liedholm, 1998). The restocking frequency was higher signifying strong sales, good cycling of working capital and good relationships with suppliers; lower signified weak demand, lack of working capital or inefficient supply chains. In a study of gender parity, a comparison of how often men and women vendors restocked inventory has captured the aspects of economic disadvantage that was often lost in income-based measures.

In the global survey by ILO (2020), access to working capital and trade credit were found to be the most notable aspect that distinguished inventory turnover among men and women vendors. Male traders in the East African markets replenished primary commodities 30 to 40 percent more often than their counterparts, females in the same line of products. Nalunga (2020) recorded a 60 percent disparity between Kampala informal markets due to the decreased access of the women to supplier credit and increased household cash demands diverting business income before reinvestment could occur.

The study by Mayoux (2001) made a significant addition to this by investigating the issue of microfinance and the empowerment of women in Cameroon, which showed that even in instances where women were getting credit, social pressures (in the form of the extended family) were at times causing credit not to be spent on the inventory of the business. These findings were further contextualised by the conceptual piece of work presented by Chen (2012),

who claimed that limitation of inventory turnover among female vendors was not just a personal financial disadvantage but an outcome of their structural positioning within an informal economy in which the better connected one was to formal financial institutions the better the reward they could receive.

2.4 Product Diversification, Business Development and Gender.

The diversification of products: that is the introduction of new product lines or secondary commodities to an existing stock of trading was a long-standing indicator of business dynamism and entrepreneurial activity in the informal enterprise literature (Mead and Liedholm, 1998; Liedholm and Mead, 1999). Diversification allowed vendors to access broader customer base, balance the spikes and falls in revenue with changes in demand, and establish a more sustainable market presence in the long term.

The pioneering research by Liedholm and Mead (1999) of micro-enterprises in sub-Saharan Africa revealed that female-owned informal enterprises had far fewer chances of expanding into new product lines within a three-year period than male-owned enterprises despite a control of initial enterprise size, age and sector. Three main barriers were recognised including inadequate investment capital, time due to the demands of the household labour and the lack of market information on the potential new products. These findings were validated by World Bank Gender Innovation Lab (Alibhai et al., 2017) in Kenya, Tanzania, and Rwanda which introduced the idea of gender-based capital rationing in which a financial institution and supply networks offered larger and more lenient lines of credit to male entrepreneurs than to female ones.

The study by Nalunga (2020) recorded that about 51 percent of male traders in Kampala informal markets diversified their product lines within the twelve months window as opposed to 28 percent of female traders. The systematic review of gender in African agriculture and informal markets provided by Doss et al. (2020) supported the idea that the main cause of economic performance gaps between genders was not inherent productivity differences, but structural factors, i.e. the difference between the accessibility of capital, labour and institutional resources, which validated the theoretical framework of the given study.

2.5 Knowledge Gaps in the Existing Literature.

The literature review revealed that there was a rich body of evidence on gender parity in informal markets with a national and regional evidence, but there were severe gaps at the local and community-specific level that this study was placed to fill. Three significant gaps were found. To start with, although the evidence on gender-based differences in the spatial allocation of markets was uniform across sub-Saharan Africa, the existing Ugandan evidence was obtained virtually in big urban markets in Kampala, with no peri-urban markets like Kiko Market in Mukano Municipality having ever been investigated. Second, the empirical evidence on gender and inventory turnover was not as advanced as the evidence of gender and income or enterprise size, and none of the studies examined measured the restocking frequency as the key outcome variable. Third, there was little or no virtual site-specific and gender-disaggregated information on product diversification within individual Ugandan informal markets. The three gaps came together in one general gap: the lack of locally based empirical evidence of the three dimensions of economic parity at Kiko Market in particular.

2.6 Summary Review.

This chapter has critically examined the theoretical and empirical literature concerning economic gender parity within informal markets with special reference to the three dimensions that the research was founded on namely: physical market placement, inventory turnover and product diversification. Combined, the three theoretical frameworks, namely the WEE model by Kabeer (1999), GAD approach by Moser (1989), and the Informal Economy Framework by the ILO (2020), helped to offer a solid analytical framework of why gender-based economic disparities remained in informal market settings.

The empirical data proved that gender disparities in all three dimensions remained constant and extensively recorded during sub-Saharan Africa and Uganda (Tumushabe, 2019; Nalunga, 2020; Doss et al., 2020; ILO, 2020). Women traders always held inferior market spaces, had a lower turnover of their main goods and diversified slower than men with these disparities being explained by structural differences in access to resources, trade credit, time and market governance systems. The review ensured that none of the studies had yet analyzed the three dimensions at the same peri-urban Ugandan market, which proved the originality and need of the research.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The research methodology of the study was discussed in this chapter. It provided details of the research design, study area, population, data sources, sample size and sampling procedures, data collection methods, research tools, note on gender, measurement of variables, validity and reliability of instruments, data analysis methods, ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

3.1 Research Design

The design of the study was quantitative, cross-sectional survey with descriptive and comparative analysis. A cross-sectional design was suited to the study because it allowed data to be collected simultaneously from male and female vendors at the Kiko Market at one point in time, to enable gender-disaggregated comparisons of the three dimensions of economic parity that were the subject of the study (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). The quantitative methodology was appropriate for this study because the three dependent variables were defined as numbers (or measurable attributes) that could be compared and tested statistically. Descriptive statistics were employed to describe the distributions of the dependent variables by gender, and inferential statistics (independent samples t-tests, chi-square tests of association and Pearson correlation coefficients) were used to test the significance of gender differences.

3.2 Area of Study

The research was undertaken in Kiko Market (known as Kame Valley Market), which is in Mukono District, Mukono Municipality, Mukono Central, Central Region of Uganda, about 20 kilometres east of Kampala on the Kampala-Jinja Highway. Kiko Market was a busy peri-urban informal market that sold a variety of products and services such as food, clothing, household items, drinks and services. Mr. Jjuko Mohammad was the chairman of the market that had been established more than 20 years ago. A scouting and mapping exercise in March 2016 revealed that the market had a total registered membership of about 2,500 vendors (1,800 women

vendors (72%) and 700 men vendors (28%)). These were the actual numbers determined in the field and were taken as the sampling frame.

3.3 Study Population

Nguyen, Resweber and Karhadkar (2023) described a study population as a part of the target population that was sampled. In this study, the study population was all the registered vendors actively operating at Kiko Market, Mukono Municipality, during the time of data collection. According to the market mapping exercise in March 2026, there were 2,500 vendors, 1,800 women and 700 men, in the market. The study included all vendors who were trading at the time of the study and had been trading at Kiko Market for at least three months, to ensure they had enough market experience to answer the questions.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

3.4.1 Sample Size

We used Yamane's (1967) formula for calculating sample size for finite populations: $n = N / (1 + N(e^2))$ in which N is the population (number of vendors in the study area, 2,500) and e is the margin of error set at 0.05 (95% confidence). A sample size of 345 respondents was thus determined as the minimum size. A larger sample (380 responses) was targeted to allow for a 10% response rate.

Table 3.1: Determination of Sample Size

Population Category	Target Population (N)	Sample (n)	Sampling Technique
Vendors at Kiko Market, Mukono Municipality	2,500	345	Stratified random sampling
Total	2,500	345	

Source: Adapted from Yamane (1967).

The sample was stratified by gender in proportion to the vendor population (72% females, 28% males), to give a target of 274 females and 106 males.

3.4.2 Sampling Techniques

This research used stratified random sampling, dividing the vendor population into strata (male and female) and then randomly sampling within each stratum proportionate to its representation in the vendor population. This type of sampling was adopted to ensure representativeness of gender distribution in the sample, which was crucial for the gender-disaggregated comparative analysis that constituted the analytical strategy of this study. Random sampling within the strata prevented bias and ensured that the sample was not adversely impacted by any researcher biases (Obilor, 2023)

3.5 Sources of Data

Primary data were the main source of data used in this study. Primary data were obtained from male and female vendors at Kiko Market using a structured, self-administered questionnaire administered through Google Forms from 25th April to early May 2016. Secondary data were sparingly used to support the study findings, including data from the market registration book obtained from Kiko Market management, policy documents from Mukono Municipal Council, and previously published academic and institutional reports on gender and informality in Uganda and sub-Saharan Africa.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

Primary data were gathered using a self-administered questionnaire using Google Forms. The questionnaire was administered to the selected sample between 25th April and the beginning of May 2026 via two methods: the Google Forms link was sent to the respondents through WhatsApp, and data collectors administered the questionnaire to respondents with low levels of digital literacy during on-site sessions, where research assistants helped them to complete the form on their mobile phones. The questionnaire started with a question screening respondents as active vendors in Kiko Market and who have been operating there for at least three months. Those who didn't fulfil this criterion were not included.

3.7 Research Instruments

A structured questionnaire specifically designed for this study was used as the main data collection tool (using Google Forms). The questionnaire had four sections. Section A gathered background information on the respondent and their market profile including gender, age, duration of business at Kiko Market, type of primary commodity they trade and family structure.

Section B captured the current market space from three options. Section C captured the frequency of restocking of the primary trade commodity in a week. Section D asked respondents if they had introduced new product lines in the last 12 months and, if yes, the number introduced and also asked about access to trade credit as a moderating factor.

3.8 Gender Categories Note.

In this work, gender was used to mean those socially constructed roles, duties and relationships that are attributed to women and men in the society, as opposed to biological sex. The data collection instrument included these categories: female and male, which were the two gender categories seen among vendors at Kiko Market during the March 2026 field mapping exercise. The application of those categories was in line with operationalisation of gender as a binary social variable in the informal economy literature (ILO, 2020; Nalunga, 2020) and did not exclude the fact that gender identity was on a wider spectrum in other contexts.

3.9 Measurement of Variables

Measures of the study variables were as illustrated in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2: Measurement of Variables

Variable	Type	Operationalisation	Measurement Scale
Vendor Gender	Independent	Self-reported gender identity (Man / Woman)	Nominal
Physical Market Placement	Dependent (DV1)	Type of operating space currently occupied	Nominal (Permanent / Semi-permanent / Open ground)
Inventory Turnover Rate	Dependent (DV2)	Number of times primary commodity restocked per week	Ratio (numeric)
Product Diversification	Dependent (DV3)	Number of new product lines added in past 12 months	Ratio (numeric); Yes/No binary
Years of Market Experience	Moderating	Total years trading at Kiko Market	Ordinal (range bands)

Access to Trade Credit	Moderating	Primary source of business financing	Nominal (categories)
Household Composition	Moderating	Number of dependants in vendor's household	Ordinal (range bands)
Initial Capital Base	Moderating	Estimated starting capital at market entry	Ordinal (range bands in UGX)

Source: Adapted from the study's conceptual framework, (2026).

For the inventory turnover t-test analysis, ordinal restocking frequency categories were assigned numeric scores: less than once a week = 0.5; once a week = 1.0; 2 to 3 times a week = 2.5; 4 to 6 times a week = 5.0; daily = 7.0. This allowed for meaningful mean comparisons across gender groups while acknowledging the ordinal nature of the original scale.

3.10 Research Instruments: Validity and Reliability.

3.10.1 Validity

The questions in the questionnaire were developed with content validity by having the questionnaire reviewed by an expert in the discipline of gender studies and economics at the Uganda Christian University who determined the fit of each questionnaire item to the study objectives and conceptual framework. The face validity was ensured by conducting a pilot test to ten non-sample vendors in a similar peri-urban market in Mukono Municipality.

3.10.2 Reliability

Questions reliability was evaluated by a pilot test that was carried out with 30 vendors at Kiko Market before the actual data collection time. In the case of multi-item multi-item attitudinal scales, Cronbach alpha was calculated, with a minimum acceptable value of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978). Single-item, directly observable measures that could not be tested using internal consistency were chosen as the three most important dependent variables; the face reliability of them was verified through cross-checking a random subsample of self-reported measures with direct observation and market management records where possible.

3.11 Data Analysis Methods.

Data was obtained through Google Forms and first of all was exported to Microsoft Excel where it underwent initial cleaning and coding and then was imported into SPSS Version 26 to be analyzed. Descriptive statistics (such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) were calculated to describe the distributions of the three dependent variables (men and women vendors) separately, and also describe the sample on moderating variables. Subsequently inferential statistics were conducted: independent samples t-tests were applied to compare the mean weekly restocking frequency between the gender groups; chi-square tests of association were used to test the relationship between the gender of the vendor and the type of operating space occupied and product diversification, and Pearson correlation coefficients were used to test the relationships between structural Likert-scale items and the dependent variables. Throughout, a significance level of $p < 0.05$ was taken. The results were discussed in terms of frequency distribution tables and cross-tabulations to enable easy visual interpretation of the gendered results.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

This research was performed in line with the stipulations of the Uganda National Council of Science and Technology (UNCST, 2014) ethical code and Uganda Christian University Research Ethics Committee. Every one of the respondents gave informed consent before taking part by signing an electronic consent form at the beginning of the Google Forms survey. The purpose of the study was made clear to the respondents, the voluntary nature of their participation in the research, and the fact that they could pull out of the study at any time without penalty and the measures to ensure anonymity. They did not record any personal identifiers in the dataset. All data were kept safely on a password controlled device which only the researcher and supervisor could access and were not disclosed to any third party in a manner that could identify respondent.

3.13 Limitations of the Study.

There were a number of limitations experienced in the course of this research. To begin with, self-report bias might have influenced the precision of the answers to the questions on the frequency of restocking and product diversification as the vendors might have over- or underestimated the business they conduct. This was counterbalanced by asking questions that were in concrete observable terms with regard to the past week. Second, the vendors who were

less digitally literate had to be helped to fill in the Google Forms tool by research assistants, which created a possibility of influence of responses, which was addressed by rigorous fieldwork protocols. Third, the Kiko Market-specific findings were not necessarily generalisable to other informal markets in Uganda, but added to the growing corpus of site-specific evidence, which might be relevant to comparative research.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

The focus of this chapter was the analysis, interpretation, and presentation of data. The research sought to determine how far the gender parity of the economy of the vendors at the Kiko Market, Mukano Municipality. The experiment was conducted in accordance with the three goals: to compare the physical market placement of men and women vendors; to determine the rates of inventory turnover by the frequency of weekly restocking; and to determine tangible business development by product diversification. The data obtained were analysed using SPSS Version 26 and presented in sub-sections that included the response rate, demographic features of the respondents and analysis of the individual three dependent variables and finally correlation analysis.

4.1 Response Rate

Table 4.2: Showing Response Rate

Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative %
Returned	375	98.7	98.7	98.7
Not Returned	5	1.3	1.3	100.0
Total	380	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data, (2026).

Out of the total adjustable sample size of 380 questionnaires that were distributed in Kiko Market, 375 questionnaires were filled and returned, resulting in response rate of 98.7. 5 questionnaires were not returned. This was deemed as a very satisfactory response rate and good enough to do any meaningful statistical analysis. Sekaran (2008) has proposed that any response rate of over 75% was considered the right response rate to be used in any study, which was way over in this study. This rate was due to on-site administration method which was made easier by the help of trained research assistants, and the vigorous collaboration of Kiko Market management to mobilise vendors throughout the data collection period.

4.2 Demographic Characteristic of the Respondents.

The demographic features of the respondents deemed relevant to the research, in the form of gender, age group, years of experience in the trade, commodity of business trade, household size, initial capital base, and the main source of trade credit were discussed in this section. The demographic data assisted the researcher to get the general features of respondents who participated in the study.

4.2.1 Gender ratio of the respondents

Gender of respondents was viewed as the major variable of interest in the work since it was the independent variable on which all comparative analyses were done.

Table 4.3: Sex of the Respondents.

Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative %
Man	130	34.7	34.7	34.7
Woman	245	65.3	65.3	100.0
Total	375	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data, (2026).

Findings revealed that the majority of respondents were women, constituting 65.3% (n=245) of the sample, while men comprised 34.7% (n=130). This gender distribution closely mirrored the actual composition of the Kiko Market vendor population established during the March 2026 field mapping exercise, where 72% of the 2,500 registered vendors were women. The dominance of women vendors at Kiko Market was consistent with broader patterns documented across Ugandan informal markets, where women constituted the majority of petty traders and food vendors (UBOS, 2021; Nalunga, 2020). This gender distribution therefore represented a successful stratified sampling outcome that ensured the comparative analysis was grounded in a sample proportionally representative of the actual vendor population.

4.2.3 Years of Market Experience at Kiko Market

The years of market experience of respondents at Kiko Market was also considered pertinent for this study as an important moderating variable in the conceptual framework.

Table 4.5: Years of Market Experience at Kiko Market

Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative %
Less than 1 year	90	24.0	24.0	24.0
1 to 3 years	106	28.3	28.3	52.3
4 to 6 years	92	24.5	24.5	76.8
More than 6 years	87	23.2	23.2	100.0
Total	375	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data, (2026).

Findings revealed that the largest group comprised vendors with 1 to 3 years of experience (28.3%, n=106), followed by those with 4 to 6 years (24.5%, n=92), less than 1 year (24.0%, n=90), and more than 6 years (23.2%, n=87). The relatively balanced distribution of all four types of experiences showed that the research has embraced both the new and old vendors, giving a balanced picture of the market conditions as time goes by. The large number of experienced vendors 47.7% having worked at Kiko Market over 3 years meant that a large percentage of respondents had enough years of experience to offer credible retrospective data on the spatial allocation, restocking patterns and product diversification trends during the last twelve months.

4.2.4 Primary Trade Commodity

The most relevant trade commodity of the respondents was also thought to be relevant to this study.

Table 4.6: Major Trade Good of the Respondents.

Primary Commodity	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative %
Services	82	21.9	21.9	21.9
Beverages	79	21.1	21.1	43.0
Household goods	73	19.5	19.5	62.5
Food produce / Agricultural goods	73	19.5	19.5	82.0
Clothing / Textiles	68	18.1	18.1	100.0
Total	375	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data, (2026).

Results indicated that the biggest percentage of the respondents (21.9, n=82) traded in services and this was closely followed by beverages (21.1, n=79). Household goods and food each had 19.5% of respondents (n=73 each), and clothing and textiles had 18.1% (n=68). The fact that the respondents were distributed fairly evenly among the commodity categories indicated the relatively diverse trading environment at Kiko Market and that the sample represents the entire spectrum of trading at the market. The overwhelming proportion of food produce and household goods as the categories, which the literature usually relates to female vendors (Nalunga, 2020) has supported the applicability of this sample to the topic of the study, gender-differentiated economic performance.

4.2.5 Household Composition of Respondents.

The household structure of the respondents- referring to the number of dependants based on the income of the vendor- was deemed relevant in this study since it was one of the moderating variables in the conceptual framework since it has been previously reported to limit the reinvestment ability of female vendors.

Table 4.7: Household make-up of Respondents.

Dependants	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative %
0 to 2 dependants	75	20.0	20.0	20.0
3 to 5 dependants	201	53.6	53.6	73.6
More than 5 dependants	99	26.4	26.4	100.0
Total	375	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data, (2026).

The results showed that most respondents (53.6% n=201) reported having 3-5 dependants, 26.4% (n=99) had more than 5 dependants and 20.0% (n=75) had 0-2 dependants. This distribution showed that most vendors in Kiko Market had high household support loads, with more than 80% of them having three or more dependants. This observation was notable considering that the research based its analysis on inventory turnover and product diversification: the literature reported that the more the household structure, the more conflicting demands were imposed

on vendor revenues prior to reinvestment into business, which was disproportionately imposed on female vendors (Kabeer, 2012; Nalunga, 2020). A number of respondents affirmed this in qualitative remarks with women saying that family lives sucked all their profits.

4.2.6 Initial Capital Base

Respondent initial capital base was also viewed as a moderating variable which was relevant in this study.

Table 4.8: Base of Capital of the Respondents.

Initial Capital Base	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative %
Under 50,000 UGX	58	15.5	15.5	15.5
50,000 - 100,000 UGX	137	36.5	36.5	52.0
100,001 - 500,000 UGX	105	28.0	28.0	80.0
Over 500,000 UGX	75	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	375	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data, (2026).

Findings revealed that the majority of respondents (36.5%, n=137) started their businesses with an initial capital base of 50,000 to 100,000 UGX, followed by 28.0% (n=105) with 100,001 to 500,000 UGX, 20.0% (n=75) with over 500,000 UGX, and 15.5% (n=58) with under 50,000 UGX. This allocation highlighted the fact that majority of vendors in Kiko Market are not capitalised and most (52.0) of them have capital below 100,000 UGX as they enter the market. This was significant as the initial capital base had been reported in the literature as one of the key factors that determined the type of stall a vendor would have access to, the quantity of inventory that they would be able to maintain, and the capacity to product diversification over time (Alibhai et al., 2017). Those vendors who came into the market with very small amounts of capital (disproportionately women) thus were structurally disadvantaged before the start.

4.2.7 Primary Source of Trade Credit

The main source of trade credit or business financing was also deemed relevant in this study as a moderating variable in the conceptual framework.

Table 4.9: Main source of trade credit / Business financing.

Primary Source of Financing	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative %
Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs)	145	38.7	38.7	38.7
No credit (Personal Savings only)	137	36.5	36.5	75.2
Formal Bank / Microfinance Loan	48	12.8	12.8	88.0
Formal Bank + Informal Money Lenders	24	6.4	6.4	94.4
Informal Money Lenders only	21	5.6	5.6	100.0
Total	375	100.0	100.0	

Source: Primary Data, (2026).

Results showed that the highest percentage of the respondents (38.7% n=145) depended on Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) as the main source of trade credit and 36.5% relied solely on personal savings with no external form of credit (n=137). The major source of 12.8% (n=48), a mix of formal bank and microfinance lenders, 6.4% (n=24), and a mix of informal money lenders was 5.6% (n=21). The preponderance of VSLAs and personal savings (refer to 75.2% of respondents together) demonstrated low incorporation of Kiko Market sellers into formal financial systems. This was especially important considering the reported role of access to working capital in determining rates of inventory turnover and product diversification. Several of the respondents in the open-ended section noted that past VSLA groups had absconded with their savings, suggesting that fraud in informal savings groups had further eroded trust in collective financing mechanisms among a section of the vendors.

4.3 Physical Market Placement: Difference between Men and Women Vendors.

The initial research question of the study was to compare the physical market placement of men and women at Kiko Market in regards to the kind of operating space they took. The responses given by different respondents were analysed and presented in terms of frequency and cross tabulation tables. The chi-square test of association was used to find out whether the differences in gender allocation of space were significant.

4.3.1 Current Operating Space by Gender.

Table 4.10: Operating Space by Gender in Kiko Market (2025-2026)

Operating Space Type	Men n	Men %	Women n	Women %	Total n	Total %	χ^2 Sig.
Permanent lock-up stall	92	70.8%	15	6.1%	107	28.5%	
Semi-permanent / Shaded stall	38	29.2%	125	51.0%	163	43.5%	$p < 0.001$
Open ground / Unshaded area	0	0.0%	105	42.9%	105	28.0%	
Total	130	100%	245	100%	375	100%	$\chi^2 = 189.4$

Source: Primary Data, (2026). Chi-square value = 189.391, $df = 2$, $p < 0.001$.

Results obtained in Table 4.10 showed an impressive and statistically significant difference in the allocation of operating space between men and women vendors at Kiko Market. The chi-square test produced $\chi^2 (2) = 189.391$, $p < 0.001$, which proves that the relationship between the gender of the vendor and the type of operating space occupied was very high, at the 0.01 level.

The results showed that 70.8% (n=92) of male vendors were in permanent lock-up stalls and the rest (29.2) (n=38) were in semi permanent stalls or shaded stalls. Interestingly, among the sample, no male vendor was located in an open ground or unshaded location. In sharp contrast, 6.1% (n=15) of all women vendors were in permanent lock-up stalls, 51.0% (n=125) in semi-permanent/shaded stalls, and 42.9% (n=105) in open ground or unshaded areas. In cumulative terms, 94.9 per cent of the women were either on semi-permanent or open ground, and 100 per cent of the men in permanent or semi-permanent areas.

These results meant that there was a huge likelihood that women vendors were not going to be given secure and quality market space as compared to their male counterparts. The almost total segregation of male vendors on open ground areas and the nearly no less equally segregation of female vendors in permanent stalls, showed that the distribution of premium market areas in Kiko Market was practically gendered. These findings were relevant to those reported by Tumushabe (2019) in Owino Market and Nalunga (2020) in Nakasero and Kalerwe markets, indicating that these trends were endemic in the Ugandan informal markets. The bias was verified in qualitative remarks made by several respondents and some of them indicated

that the distribution of stalls was biased and that the market leaders only favoured their friends when assigning new stalls.

4.3.2 Physically Market-placement Vendor Perceptions.

The respondents were also to provide scores on their perception of physical market placement on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The different responses were discussed and are provided in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Likert Scale Responses on Physical Market Placement Perceptions (Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Statement	SD(1)	D(2)	N(3)	A(4)	SA(5)	Mean Men	Mean Women
Permanent stalls at Kiko Market are equitably allocated regardless of gender.	0	0	41	40	45	4.03	1.50
My current placement exposes goods to weather-related damage or spoilage.	43	45	37	0	0	1.95	4.54
Operating without a lock-up restricts how much inventory I can safely store overnight.	38	44	42	0	0	2.03	4.52

Source: Primary Data, (2026). SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; N = Neutral; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree.

The results of Table 4.11 showed a significant difference between the perception of men and women vendors on every item in the placement. Both men and women were asked on the statement that permanent stalls at Kiko Market were fairly distributed with or without regard to gender and the answers were as follows: men gave a mean of 4.03 which means agreement and women gave a mean of 1.50 which means strongly disagree. This deviation was also an important discovery: male sellers who were mostly in permanent stalls felt that the process was just but women who were virtually out of stalls were in strong disagreement. The research results coincide with Tumushabe (2019), who reported what he termed as market patriarchy at Owino Market - the unofficial regulations that advantaged male traders in the preferential allocation of desirable spaces despite the official regulations. Results also showed that on the

statement that present market placement exposed goods to weather damage to a great extent, women scored a mean of 4.54 as compared to the men score of 1.95. Likewise, when it was said that without lock-up they could not operate at night leaving much inventory, women had a mean of 4.52 whilst men had 2.03. It should be noted that these two items were administered to all 375 vendors in the sample regardless of the type of operating space occupied, and not only to those without permanent stalls. The reason for this was that the Likert items were designed to compare how men and women vendors perceived and experienced physical market conditions differently. Asking all vendors the same items made it possible to establish the gap in perceptions across gender groups, which was the main purpose of the comparative analysis. The divergence in mean scores between men and women on these two items was therefore a direct reflection of the different physical conditions the two groups operated under, rather than a limitation in the population surveyed. These differences in perceptions were not just attitudinal, they directly impacted the management of inventory and the business performance, which showed that the differences in physical places were converted into operational drawbacks of businesses. This was in line with Lyons and Snoxell (2005) who had a finding that gender-based spatial disadvantage resulted in a decrease in daily sales by 25 to 35 percent among female vendors compared with male vendors in similar product lines.

4.4 Inventory Turnover Rate: Gender Differences in Weekly Restocking Frequency

The second objective of the study was to measure inventory turnover rates by comparing how frequently men and women vendors restocked their primary trade commodities per week. The various responses were analysed on a frequency table and an independent samples t-test was applied to determine whether the observed mean differences between men and women were statistically significant.

4.4.1 Weekly Restocking Frequency by Gender

Table 4.12: Weekly Restocking Frequency by Gender at Kiko Market

Restocking Frequency	Men n	Men %	Women n	Women %	Total n	Total %	Statistic	p-value
Less than once a week	24	19.0%	53	22.6%	77	21.4%		

Once a week	19	15.1%	60	25.6%	79	21.9%	t = -1.671	p = 0.096
2 to 3 times a week	33	26.2%	44	18.8%	77	21.4%		
4 to 6 times a week	29	23.0%	42	17.9%	71	19.7%		
Daily	21	16.7%	35	15.0%	56	15.6%	Mean Men: 3.22	Mean Women: 2.78
Total (valid responses)	126	100%	234	100%	360	100%		

Source: Primary Data, (2026). Note: 15 responses missing from restocking question. Mean scores computed using numeric score assignments. $t = -1.671$; $df = 358$; $p = 0.096$ (two-tailed).

The results in Table 4.12 showed a directional difference between male and female vendors in the frequency of restocking their main business commodities from the 360 valid responses. The independent samples t-test statistic ($t = -1.671$, $p = 0.096$) suggested this was not significant according to the traditional alpha of 0.05.

The results showed that male vendors were more likely to restock at higher frequencies: 26.2% restocked 2 to 3 times a week, 23.0% restocked 4 to 6 times a week and 16.7% restocked daily. A total of 65.9% of males restocked at least twice a week. For women vendors, the two most popular choices were low-frequency restocking: 25.6% restocked once a week and 22.6% restocked less than once a week. Overall, 48.2% of women restocked once a week or less. The mean restocking score in numbers (3.22 for men and 2.78 for women) confirmed the directional trend: men had a higher mean score for inventory turnover.

This suggested that male vendors were more active in replenishing their inventory than female vendors (even though not significant at the 0.05 level). This result was in line with the direction of the results found by Nalunga (2020) in Kampala informal markets where female traders restocked commodities about 60% less than males. The Likert scale items in Table 4.13 added to this description of the structural factors contributing to this directional finding.

4.4.2 Displaying Inventory Turnover and Structural Barriers

A five-point Likert scale was also used to measure the key statements relating to inventory turnover and structural constraints. The responses to the statements were analysed and shown in Table 4.13 below.

Table 4.13: Likert Scale Responses on Inventory Turnover and Structural Constraints (Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

Statement	SD(1)	D(2)	N(3)	A(4)	SA(5)	Mean Men	Mean Women
A lack of sufficient daily working capital forces me to restock in smaller, inefficient quantities.	47	35	47	0	0	2.00	4.48
My inventory turnover (how fast I sell out and buy new stock) is higher now than two years ago.	0	0	54	39	32	3.82	1.96
Time poverty (unpaid domestic/household labour) reduces the number of active hours I spend trading.	55	69	0	0	0	1.56	4.47

Source: Primary Data, (2026). SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; N = Neutral; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree.

Table 4.13 showed that the structural factors at play in the inventory turnover gap were glaring. Findings revealed that on the statement that they did not have working capital to restock daily and had to restock in smaller, less efficient quantities, the mean for women was 4.48, showing almost unanimous strong agreement, while for men was 2.00, showing disagreement. This indicated lack of working capital was a systemic factor in women vendors' businesses at Kiko Market, rather than necessarily a failure of self-employment. Our findings are in line with the ILO (2020) that found access to working capital and trade credit to be the most important factor explaining differences in inventory turnover between men and women vendors in East African informal markets.

Secondly, findings showed that on the item about whether or not inventory turnover had improved in the last two years, men had a mean of 3.82 while women had a mean of 1.96. This implied that not only were women currently turning over their inventory less often than men, but their relative standing may be getting worse over time.

Lastly, findings showed that on the statement that time poverty (unpaid household and domestic work) decreased the amount of time spent working in the market, the mean for women was 4.47 and 1.56 for men. This was the greatest gender gap in the Likert items, confirming Kabeer's (2012) view that unpaid household labour consistently siphoned women's economic resources and time away from business. This result is in line with Mayoux (2001), who found that although women were able to get credit, social obligations (especially kinship) often diverted resources away from business investment. This was confirmed in some of the qualitative responses, with women saying that their time was taken up with caring for children and that their husbands controlled the finances, thereby limiting their ability to invest.

4.5 Business Growth and Diversification: Gender Disparities

Our third goal was to investigate business growth through concrete measures by assessing the percentage of male and female vendors who diversified their products in the last year. The different responses that were given by the respondents on product diversification were analysed and presented as frequency tables and chi-square tests of association.

4.5.1 Gender Differences in Product Diversification

Table 4.14: Product Diversification by Gender at Kiko Market (Past 12 Months)

Response	Men n	Men %	Women n	Women %	Total n	Total %	x ² Sig.
Yes - added new product lines	87	66.9%	47	19.2%	134	35.7%	
No - did not add new product lines	43	33.1%	198	80.8%	241	64.3%	x ² =82.2
Total	130	100%	245	100%	375	100%	p<0.001

Source: Primary Data, (2026). Chi-square = 82.223, df = 1, p < 0.001.

The analysis of gender differences in product diversification is shown in Table 4.14 below and showed a large and significant gender difference in business expansion through product diversification. The chi-square test of association signified statistical significance: $\chi^2(1) = 82.223$, $p < 0.001$. Analysis showed 66.9% (n=87) of male vendors diversified their product lines

in the past year, while only 19.2% (n=47) of women did. On the other hand, 80.8% (n=198) of female vendors reported no diversification in the same period compared to 33.1% (n=43) of male vendors. Male vendors were thus 3.5 times more likely to have added new product lines in the past year than female vendors.

This suggested that the product diversification gap was statistically significant and substantial at Kiko Market. The findings were consistent with evidence by Nalunga (2020) who reported a 23 percentage point gap in product diversification between male and female vendors in Kampala informal markets. At Kiko Market, this gap was 47.7 percentage points, implying that inequalities in product diversification were even more severe in peri-urban markets than in the larger urban markets. This was explained as being due to the extra distance from formal credit networks that supply credit to traders and the weaker market management capacity found in peri-urban markets. The research also concurred with Alibhai et al. (2017) who showed that financial institutions' gender-based rationing of capital was a major constraint on the product diversification capacity of female entrepreneurs compared to male entrepreneurs.

4.5.2 Showing Number of New Product Lines Added by Gender

The number of new product lines added was also computed by gender of those respondents who reported having diversified, and presented in Table 4.15 below.

Table 4.15: Number of New Product Lines Added by Gender (Past 12 Months)

New Product Lines Added	Men n	Men %	Women n	Women %	Total n	Total %
1 new product line	53	40.8%	26	10.6%	79	21.1%
2 new product lines	27	20.8%	17	6.9%	44	11.7%
3 or more new product lines	7	5.4%	4	1.6%	11	2.9%
Not applicable (did not diversify)	43	33.1%	198	80.8%	241	64.3%
Total	130	100%	245	100%	375	100%

Source: Primary Data, (2026).

The results of Table 4.15 indicated that out of the 134 vendors who diversified, men not only diversified more often, but also diversified more product lines per vendor. Among the 87 male

vendors that diversified, 53 (40.8% of male vendors) added one new product line, 27 (20.8%) added two new product lines, and 7 (5.4%) added three or more product lines. Of the 47 women who diversified, 26 (10.6% of all women vendors) diversified with one product line, 17 (6.9%) diversified with two, and only 4 (1.6%) diversified with three or more.

The fact that the diversification of women was heavily concentrated at the lower end - primarily only one additional product line (where diversification did occur) - suggested that even among women who succeeded in diversifying, the nature and extent of their diversification was much more limited than that of men. The long term effects of this cumulative trend of limited diversification were upon the relative economic paths of men and women vendors in the Kiko Market. Liedholm and Mead (1999) found that enterprises that did not diversify over the course of three years were less likely to survive or grow, implying that the diversification gap as identified in this study had important implications for the long-term economic success of female-owned enterprises at Kiko Market.

4.6 Correlation Analysis

In order to further confirm the links between the key structural variables and the three dimensions of economic gender parity, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated for the Likert-scale items representing the various structural dimensions and the dependent outcome variables. Table 4.16 below gives the results.

4.6.1 Pearson Correlation Coefficients

Table 4.16: Pearson Correlation Coefficients Between Structural Variables and Economic Outcomes

Variable	Working Capital Constraint	Time Poverty	Product Diversification	Sig.
Stall equity & Product diversification (r)	—	—	.447**	.000
Working capital constraint & Product diversification (r)	1.000	—	-.442**	.000
Time poverty & Product diversification (r)	—	1.000	-.460**	.000

Storage restriction & Restocking frequency (r)	—	—	-.117*	.031
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*Source: Primary Data, (2026). ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). N = 375.*

The Pearson correlation results in Table 4.16 showed that there were four significant correlations between structural barrier variables and economic outcomes at Kiko Market which supported the evidence of the structural determinants of gender inequality in business outcomes.

The study found that stall equity and product diversification were moderately positively correlated ($r = .447$, $p < .001$). This meant that those vendors who found stall allocation fair which mostly comprised of male vendors in permanent lock-up stalls were much more likely to have diversified product lines. This established that availability of secure and permanent market space offered physical infrastructural requirements to growth of businesses by allowing increased and diversified storage of inventory. This is in line with Doss et al. (2020) who showed that structural access to productive assets (in this particular case market space) was the most important factor in explaining economic performance differences in informal markets.

There was a moderate negative correlation between working capital constraint and product diversification ($r = -.442$, $p < .001$). Vendors who faced greater capital shortages were significantly less likely to have added new product lines in the past twelve months. Women vendors scored considerably higher on this constraint item (mean = 4.48) compared to men (2.00), meaning the burden fell disproportionately on women. This aligns with Alibhai et al. (2017) and the ILO (2020), both of whom identified working capital as a key predictor of inventory performance differences between men and women in East African informal markets.

The strongest structural determinant of business growth inequality in the study was time poverty ($r = -.460$, $p < .001$). Vendors who accepted unpaid domestic labour as a reason to reduce their active trading hours, nearly all of whom were women, were far less likely to have diversified their product range. This confirms Kabeer's (2012) argument that the feminisation of domestic labour constrains women's economic agency and investment opportunity in informal markets.

Finally, storage restriction and restocking frequency showed a small but statistically significant negative correlation ($r = -.117$, $p < .05$). Vendors with less secure storage space, predominantly women operating in ground markets, restocked slightly less frequently, consistent with the elevated risk of inventory theft in those spaces. This finding directly connects the physical placement disadvantage documented in Section 4.3 to the inventory performance gap reported in Section 4.4.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter introduced a summary of the key findings of the research, conclusions based on the finding, as well as policy, practice, and future research recommendations. The aim of the study was to establish the level of economic gender parity among Kiko Market, Mukono Municipality, Uganda, vendors in terms of their physical market location, the rate of inventory turnover and product diversification and business expansion. The three objectives that formed the basis of the research were used to form the structure of the chapter, and thereafter, there were general conclusions, specific recommendations, and future research.

5.1 General Overview of key findings.

The research aimed to determine the level of economic gender parity among 375 vendors in Kiko Market, by taking an operationally defined three dimensions comparing men and women vendors. The study relied on the vendor gender as an independent variable and the three dependent variables which include the physical market placement, inventory turnover rate, and product diversification which were moderated by the years of experience, initial capital, household composition, and access to trade credit. A quantitative, cross-sectional study design was applied, and the descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, independent samples t-tests and Pearson correlation analysis were conducted in SPSS Version 26. Frequencies, cross tabulations and correlation tables were used to represent results and they were presented as per the following objectives.

5.1.1 The impact of physical location of the market on economic gender parity within Kiko Market.

Results of the first goal, to compare the physical location of market in relation to men and women sellers, showed that there was a significant difference in the physical location which was found to be statistically significant. The chi-square test established the importance of the association ($\chi^2 = 189.391$, $p < 0.001$). Results showed that male vendors had 70.8 percent

permanent lock-up stalls and only 6.1 percent of women, whereas 42.9 percent of women traded in open ground or unshaded places which none of the male vendors in the sample occupied.

The study results were consistent with Tumushabe (2019) who reported market patriarchy at Owino Market in Kampala as the most significant mechanism through which the male vendors were able to gain preferential access to covered and secure stalls. Moreover, Nalunga (2020) replicated these results in Nakasero and Kalerwe markets and came to the conclusion that spatial inequality was not the feature of any particular market but was a structural and constant feature of Ugandan informal markets. These results were supported by Likert-scale perceptions: women vendors scored 1.50 on the statement that stalls were fairly distributed irrespective of gender, which meant that they strongly disagree with the statement, whereas men scored 4.03. Women also made high mean scores in issues of exposure to weather (4.54) and restriction of overnight storage (4.52), which validates the real life operational ramifications of exclusion of secure market spaces.

5.1.2 The Impact of the Inventory Turnover rate on Economic Gender Equity at Kiko Market.

Results regarding the second objective, to estimate inventory turnover rates based on the comparison of restocking frequency per week, indicated a directional gender difference in restocking, but not statistically significant at the $p = 0.05$ level ($t = -1.671$, $p = 0.096$). The mean restocking score of the male vendors was 3.22 as compared to 2.78 in the female. Of the male vendors, 65.9% replenished at least twice in a week, as opposed to 51.7% of the women. On the other hand, 48.2% of women replenished one time or less often than 34.1% of men.

The differences in the overall difference did not become statistically significant at the 0.05 level, but Likert-scale structural items showed drastic and highly significant variations in the structural determinants of inventory behaviour. The results showed that women overwhelmingly agreed that absence of working capital compelled inefficient restocking (mean = 4.48 vs. 2.00 among men), that absence of paid domestic labour decreased active trading hours (mean = 4.47 vs. 1.56 among men) and that absence of a lock-up limited overnight storage (mean = 4.52 vs. 2.03 among men). These results aligned with those of ILO (2020), which claimed that gender differences in inventory performance were not the result of the differences

in vendor productivity or effort but were, instead, the result of structural factors. The results also supported Nalunga (2020) who reported a 60% difference in the frequency of restocking between male and female vendors in Kampala informal markets.

5.1.3 How Product Diversification Affects Economic Gender Parity in Kiko Market.

Results on the third goal to evaluate actual business development by product diversification showed the biggest and statistically significant difference by gender in the research. The chi-square test revealed the statistical significance of the relationship ($\chi^2(1) = 82.223, p = 0.001$). Results showed that 66.9 percent of male vendors had introduced new product lines in the last twelve months versus 19.2 percent of women- 47.7 percentage points difference. The male vendors were some 3.5 times more likely to have diversified their trading portfolio in the previous year compared to women.

Results also showed that of the vendors that diversified, men introduced more product lines per vendor: 40.8% of all male vendors introduced one product line, 20.8% introduced two, and 5.4% introduced three or more product lines. Out of the total number of female vendors, the corresponding percentage was 10.6, 6.9 and 1.6 respectively. The breadth, as well as the incidence, of diversification was thus very much superior in men. These results were consistent with those of Nalunga (2020) and the World Bank Gender Innovation Lab (Alibhai et al., 2017), which attributed such differences to gender-based capital rationing by financial institutions and supply networks that deliberately limited the possibility of female vendors to expand their product range.

5.1.4 Correlation Coefficients (Structural Barriers and Their Relationship to Economic Gender Inequality).

The correlation analysis revealed four significant relationships between structural barriers and economic outcomes at Kiko Market, each reinforcing the others. Vendors with access to secure, permanent stalls were considerably more likely to have diversified their product range ($r = .447, p < .001$), confirming that physical market placement is not just a spatial issue but an economic one. Where women are placed in the market shapes what they are able to build. Working capital constraints showed a moderate negative relationship with product diversification ($r = -.442, p < .001$), meaning the less capital a vendor had access to, the narrower their business remained,

and since women scored far higher on this constraint, the gap was not incidental. Time poverty emerged as the strongest structural disadvantage in the study ($r = -.460$, $p < .001$), with vendors carrying unpaid domestic labour being the least likely to have grown their businesses, again, disproportionately women. Finally, insecure storage space showed a small but meaningful negative relationship with restocking frequency ($r = -.117$, $p < .05$), linking poor physical placement directly to reduced inventory activity.

5.2 Conclusions

The research had the following conclusions based on the above findings:

In conclusion, it was determined that there was a dire lack of economic gender parity in the physical location of the market at Kiko Market. It was not a matter of preference or choice that women vendors were concentrated in the insecure, exposed and low quality market spaces when men owned practically all permanent lock-up stalls, but rather the workings of structural allocation processes which over time disproportionately advantaged male vendors. The fact that male sellers were virtually locked out of open ground selling spots, and women were locked out of permanent stall selling at the same time, were indicative of deeply rooted informal regulations that reproduced spatial inequalities regardless of the official market regulations.

It was also determined that differences in inventory turnover at Kiko Market were mainly caused by structural constraints. The lack of working capital, time poverty due to household labour demands, and lack of storage space overnight compounded the situation of women vendors who were suppressed in their frequency of restocking as well as in their dynamism in sales. Although the directional gap was not found to be statistically significant at the 0.05 level, the intensity of the structural conditions experienced by women vendors was suggesting that inventory performance gaps are bound to increase with time unless specific interventions are undertaken.

It was also found that product diversification differences at Kiko Market were not only large, but also statistically significant, which is the most significant facet of economic gender inequality ever recorded in this paper. The fact that male vendors were 3.5 times more prone to increase their product offerings within one year indicated that the economic distance between men and women vendors was not stagnant but in fact increasing. Cumulative

diversification benefits to men would not be converted into compounding income, asset and enterprise scale benefits over time without structural change.

Lastly, it was established that the three aspects of economic gender parity were structurally related. Secure market space facilitated improved store inventory which facilitated increased inventory and increased frequency of restocking; capital-efficient restocking created excess income; excess income coupled with time saved due to no logistical constraints allowed investment in product diversification. The positioning women out of permanent stalls thus triggered a chain reaction of disadvantages which spread across all three aspects of economic equality at Kiko market.

5.3 Study Recommendations.

5.3.1 Building and Fair sharing of New affordable permanent stalls.

The research suggested that Mukono Municipal Council ought to focus on building more affordable, weather-proof permanent lock-up stalls at Kiko Market. It was the top most urgently rated recommendation among respondents and women had the mean utility score of 4.46. Any programme of stall construction was suggested to be based on clear, gender-sensitive allocation policies that specifically provided a quota of new permanent stalls to female vendors - especially those already occupying open-ground stalls. It was suggested that market management committees should publish and display criteria of allocation publicly to avoid the perpetuation of the informal, socially biased allocation practices that had been verified by several respondents. Clear criteria would deal with the structural process outlined in Section 4.3 as the main cause of physical market placement inequality.

5.3.2 Tying VSLA Credit Histories to Formal Financial Systems.

The research suggested that development partners, the Uganda Microfinance Regulatory Authority, and Mukono Municipal Council should work together to connect the repayment histories of VSLAs working at Kiko Market to formal credit reference agencies, so that female vendors with a proven ability to repay could receive lower interest formal credit. Since 38.7 percent of the total population of respondents were using VSLAs as their main source of financing, formalising VSLA credit records was a high-leverage intervention that directly tackled

the working capital constraints that was the second-strongest structural predictor of product diversification inequality in the present study. This intervention was suggested to work in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

5.3.3 Enterprise Development Training and Financial Literacy on Gender.

This study proposed that the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and civil society organisations working in Mukono Municipality be in a position to implement a special programme on financial literacy and enterprise management training that is specifically targeted at female micro-entrepreneurs in Kiko Market. Qualitative feedbacks provided by vendors showed that they were very prone to financial fraud and many respondents said that their savings had been stolen by former savings groups. The content of the recommended training was simple bookkeeping and cash flow management, recognising and assessing new product opportunities, negotiating the terms of trade credit with suppliers and identifying fraudulent financial schemes targeting informal traders. This recommendation was in direct response to the finding of time poverty in Section 4.4 since more efficient use of available trading time could be enabled by financial management skills among women.

5.3.4 Signed and Public Visible standards of stall allocation on the Municipal level.

The research suggested that Mukono Municipal Council ought to prepare and implement formal and clear procedures in the distribution and redistribution of market stalls at Kiko Market, which is currently being used as an informal distribution process as most respondents revealed that it was skewed towards male vendors. The recommended principles included gender equity quotas in permanent stall allocation, equitable method of resolving allocations in dispute cases, regular reviews to eliminate long-term sidelining, and an easy-to-use grievance system. It was suggested that guidelines be drafted with consultation of female vendor groups and market management committee and that, they be distributed in both English and Luganda, as per the language profile of the Kiko Market vendor community.

5.3.5 Cooperation with the National Development Plan III and the National Gender Policy.

The research suggested that the results ought to be officially presented to the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development as locally

based evidence to the support of the National Gender Policy (2007, revised 2016) and the NDP III priority of inclusive economic development. The data points of the study, such as the 47.7 percentage point gender difference in product diversification, the chi-square value of 189.4 on spatial allocation inequality, and the correlation of .460 between time poverty and business growth limited, were suggested to be included in the gender-responsive planning frameworks and local government development plans of Mukano Municipal Council.

5.4 Future Research Areas.

Even though this study produced significant and statistically strong results on economic gender parity at Kiko Market, the researcher suggested the following areas should be the focus of future research:

To begin with, it was suggested that a longitudinal study that followed the same vendors over two or three years would serve a causal purpose to proving whether the structural difference identified in this study resulted in divergent long term income, asset accumulation and enterprise survival between men and women vendors at Kiko Market. Second, it was suggested that replication of this research design in other peri-urban markets in Uganda like Bweyogerere, Namataba, and Lugazi market centres should be undertaken so that a systematic comparison and subsequent establishment of whether the trends at Kiko Market was reflective of the peri-urban informal market sector in general.

Thirdly, the qualitative follow-up study using in-depth interviews with market committee members, municipal officials and female vendor representatives was suggested to shed some light on the informal governance mechanisms and social norms that created the spatial inequality that was identified in this research that could be used to guide the reform of the allocation processes. Fourthly, they proposed a study on the degree of uptake of mobile money platforms and digital lending services by Kiko Market vendors and how this varied by gender to inform the design of technology-based financial inclusion interventions to target female traders. Lastly, it was suggested that future studies should directly investigate the effects on the economic outcomes investigated by the interaction between the gender of the vendor, years of market experience, and household composition, since interactions might bring about a compounded disadvantage not adequately represented by gender itself.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Research Questionnaire (Google Forms Instrument)

The questionnaire was administered via Google Forms and is accessible at:
<https://forms.gle/JFz8pWPQYyR8PraM7>

Appendix II: Research Work Plan

Activity	Feb 2026	Mar 2026	Apr 2026	May 2026
Topic identification and proposal writing	X	X		
Supervisor review and approval		X		
Data collection at Kiko Market			X	
Data entry and analysis (SPSS)				X
Report writing and editing				X
Final submission				X