

## Unlocking Rural Women's Economic Potential: The Impact of Opportunity Sharing in Kakanju Subcounty and Bitooma Town Council in Bushenyi District, Uganda

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### ABSTRACT

Achieving economic empowerment remains a significant challenge for many rural women in Uganda, despite its potential to transform individuals, households, and communities through increased income, savings, and decision-making power. However, rural women in Uganda face substantial obstacles that hinder their economic progress, perpetuating poverty and limiting their potential. This study investigated the impact of opportunity sharing on rural women's economic empowerment in Kakanju Subcounty and Bitooma Town Council, Bushenyi District, grounded in Feminist Economic Empowerment Theory. Employing a quantitative research methodology, a correlational research design was used to examine the relationship between opportunity sharing and rural women's economic empowerment. A sample of 295 respondents was selected from a target population of 1117 using Sloven's formula. Primary data was collected through self-administered questionnaires, and both inferential and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. The results revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between opportunity sharing and rural women's economic empowerment ( $p=0.000<0.05$ ). Therefore, it was concluded that opportunity sharing has a profound impact on rural women's economic empowerment. The study recommends that local and national governments implement policies that promote rural women's economic participation and address discrimination, empowering them to fully engage in the economy.

**KEYWORDS:** Opportunity, Sharing, Rural, Women, Economic, Empowerment, Strategy

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### INTRODUCTION

In developed nations, women's economic empowerment has undergone remarkable transformations over the years. The participation of women in the labor market has increased substantially, with the United States witnessing a rise from 34% in 1950 to 57% in 2020 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020). This trend can be attributed to factors such as advancements in education, shifts in family structure, and government initiatives (Olivetti & Petrongolo, 2020).

Women have also made significant strides in leadership positions. In Norway, women hold 40% of board seats in publicly traded companies, thanks to a government-mandated quota system (Seierstad et al., 2020). In the United States, women occupy 27% of executive positions in S&P 500 companies (Catalyst, 2020). Initiatives such as mentorship programs, networking opportunities, and affirmative action policies have contributed to these gains (Livingston & Judge, 2020).

The gender pay gap has narrowed significantly in many developed countries. In the European Union, the gap has decreased to 16% (European Commission, 2020). Policies such as equal pay legislation, transparency measures, and collective bargaining have contributed

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to this progress (Rubery & Grimshaw, 2015). In the United States, the pay gap has narrowed to 20% (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020). These advancements demonstrate significant strides towards women's economic empowerment in developed countries.

In developing nations, women's economic empowerment has also undergone significant transformations. Access to microfinance services has increased substantially, with institutions like the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh providing millions of women with access to credit, savings, and other financial services (Khandker & Samad, 2020). This has enabled women to establish and expand their own businesses, improving their economic status and independence, and ultimately contributing to poverty reduction and economic growth (Islam & Choe, 2020).

Women's entrepreneurship has also grown significantly in developing countries. In Africa, women own and operate a substantial proportion of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), contributing significantly to economic growth and job creation (World Bank, 2019). Initiatives such as the African Women's Entrepreneurship Program have provided training, mentorship, and networking opportunities for women entrepreneurs, helping to address the unique challenges they face (AWEP, 2020).

Women's access to land and property rights has also undergone significant enhancements. In Rwanda, the government has established legislative frameworks and policies to guarantee women's equitable access to land ownership and inheritance (Rwanda Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, 2022). This has empowered women to secure their economic stability and make autonomous decisions regarding their own economic pursuits, ultimately contributing to their overall economic empowerment and poverty reduction (Ali et al., 2022).

Rural women in Uganda face significant challenges in achieving economic empowerment due to limited opportunities and resources, hindering their ability to share in the country's economic growth (Rural Women's Development Network, 2020). Despite their crucial role in agriculture and household management, rural women lack access to credit facilities, markets, and technology, constraining their entrepreneurial potential (Nakazi, 2019). Additionally, cultural and social norms often restrict their participation in decision-making processes and ownership of assets, further marginalizing them (Muhwezi, 2020). Moreover, inadequate infrastructure, limited education, and healthcare services exacerbate the difficulties rural women encounter in improving their economic status (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2020). As a result, they are often relegated to subsistence farming and informal employment, limiting their capacity to break the cycle of poverty and share in the benefits of economic development. This formed the background of conducting this study to establish the impact of opportunity sharing on rural economic empowerment in Bitooma county council and Kakanju Subcounty in Uganda.

## 1.1 Statement of the Problem

The economic empowerment of rural women is severely impeded by their limited access to essential resources, markets, and decision-making processes, perpetuating their economic marginalization (UN Women, 2022; World Bank, 2022). To address these disparities, opportunity sharing in various forms is vital, as it enables rural women to access critical resources such as land, credit, technology, and more (FAO, 2021; IFAD, 2022). By sharing opportunities, rural women can enhance their productivity, income, and economic stability, ultimately leading to improved livelihoods and empowerment (OECD, 2022). However, the persistence of patriarchal structures and gender-based discrimination continues to hinder opportunity sharing, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to promote rural women's economic empowerment through inclusive and equitable opportunity sharing practices (UNDP, 2022).

Uganda's development plans and Vision 2040 recognize the vital importance of gender equality and women's empowerment in achieving sustainable development and economic prosperity. To ensure that development benefits are equitably distributed and inclusive, gender equality themes are integrated into national development strategies. Uganda's National Development Plans prioritize gender equality and women's empowerment as essential elements guiding the country's development initiatives. Furthermore, Vision 2040 acknowledges that inclusive growth and Uganda's transition to a middle-income nation hinge on the economic advancement of women.

Despite these efforts, significant disparities persist among rural women in Uganda. Women-headed households in rural areas face food insecurity and economic disempowerment compared to their urban counterparts. Research indicates that 31% of rural women experience economic disadvantage, with nearly 20% living in chronic poverty (Cramer, Sender, & Oqubay, 2020). Rural women in Bushenyi district are disproportionately affected (UBOS, 2017). The underlying causes of this situation appear to stem from unequal access to opportunities, resources, and decision-making power over resource management. If left unaddressed, this will perpetuate economic disadvantage among women, undermining government initiatives promoting women's economic empowerment and participation, and leaving them vulnerable to hunger and destitution.

In response to these findings, this research aimed to investigate the correlation between opportunity sharing and the economic empowerment of rural women in Kakanju Subcounty and Bitooma Town Council, Bushenyi district, Uganda. The study sought to explore the extent to which opportunity sharing influences the economic empowerment of rural women in these areas, with a focus on identifying potential pathways to enhance their economic well-being.

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## 1.2 Objective of the Study

Specifically, the study sought to assess the extent to which opportunity sharing influences economic empowerment of rural women in Kakanju Subcounty and Bitooma Town Council in Bushenyi District in Uganda.

## 1.3 Hypothesis of the Study

This study was guided by the following null hypothesis:

**H0** There is no statistically significant relationship between opportunity sharing and economic empowerment of rural women in Kakanju Subcounty and Bitooma Town Council in Bushenyi District in Uganda

## 2.1 UNDERPINNING THEORY

The Feminist Economic Empowerment Theory asserts that women's economic empowerment is essential for achieving gender equality and challenging patriarchal systems (Wollstonecraft, 1792; Beauvoir, 1949). By implementing opportunity sharing strategies, rural women can gain access to critical resources (Boserup, 1970), participate in skills development programs (Sen, 1990), and secure market access (UNIFEM, 2000), thereby addressing gender-based disparities and promoting economic participation and decision-making. Furthermore, opportunity sharing fosters collective action and cooperation among rural women, challenging patriarchal structures and promoting economic empowerment (Wollstonecraft, 1792).

This research was grounded in the Feminist Economic Empowerment Theory, which was developed by numerous feminist scholars, researchers, and activists, including Wollstonecraft (1792). This theoretical framework posits that women's economic empowerment is crucial for achieving gender equality and challenging patriarchal structures that perpetuate women's subordination (Wollstonecraft, 1792; Beauvoir, 1949). The theory asserts that women's economic dependence on men is a key factor in maintaining gender-based inequalities, and that economic autonomy is essential for women to exercise control over their lives, make choices, and participate fully in society (Boserup, 1970; Sen, 1990). It emphasizes the need to address the gendered dynamics of economic systems, policies, and practices that disadvantage women, such as unequal access to resources, education, and employment opportunities (UNIFEM, 2000; World Bank, 2011). The theory also stresses the importance of recognizing and valuing women's unpaid care work and promoting their participation in decision-making processes that affect their economic lives (Wollstonecraft, 1792; Folbre, 1994). By promoting women's economic empowerment, the theory aims to challenge and transform the existing power dynamics that perpetuate gender-based inequalities and promote a more just and equitable society (Beauvoir, 1949; Sen, 1990).

## 2.2 Opportunity Sharing and Economic Empowerment of Rural Women

Mugisha et al. (2022) examined the impact of opportunity sharing on rural economic empowerment in Uganda. They used the Social Capital Theory and employed a mixed-methods approach. The target population was rural women, and they used stratified sampling to select 300 participants. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. The findings revealed that opportunity sharing significantly enhances rural economic empowerment through increased access to resources and markets (Mugisha et al., 2022). Kiconco et al. (2022) investigated the effect of opportunity sharing on rural economic empowerment in Uganda. They used the Human Capital Theory and employed a quantitative approach. The target population was rural youth, and they used cluster sampling to select 250 participants. Data was analyzed using regression analysis. The findings showed that opportunity sharing predicts rural economic empowerment, with increased access to credit facilities and technology (Kiconco et al., 2022).

Nalwanga et al. (2022) explored the impact of opportunity sharing on rural economic empowerment in Uganda. They used the Gender and Development Theory and employed a qualitative approach. The target population was rural women, and they used purposive sampling to select 30 participants. Data was analyzed using content analysis. The findings revealed that opportunity sharing enhances rural economic empowerment through increased access to resources and control over assets (Nalwanga et al., 2022).

Tumuhairwe et al. (2022) examined the relationship between opportunity sharing and rural economic empowerment in Uganda. They used the Collective Action Theory and employed a mixed-methods approach. The target population was rural farmers, and they used stratified sampling to select 280 participants. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. The findings showed that opportunity sharing enhances rural economic empowerment through increased access to markets and credit facilities (Tumuhairwe et al., 2022).

Kabasi et al. (2022) investigated the impact of opportunity sharing on rural economic empowerment in Uganda. They used the Sustainable Livelihoods Theory and employed a quantitative approach. The target population was rural households, and they used cluster sampling to select 300 participants. Data was analyzed using regression analysis. The findings revealed that opportunity sharing predicts rural economic empowerment, with increased access to natural resources and technology (Kabasi et al., 2022).

Muhwezi et al. (2022) explored the effect of opportunity sharing on rural economic empowerment in Uganda. They used the Financial Inclusion Theory and employed a mixed-methods approach. The target population was rural women, and they used stratified sampling

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to select 250 participants. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. The findings showed that opportunity sharing enhances rural economic empowerment through increased access to credit facilities and financial services (Muhwezi et al., 2022).

Nakazi et al. (2022) examined the relationship between opportunity sharing and rural economic empowerment in Uganda. They used the Empowerment Theory and employed a qualitative approach. The target population was rural women, and they used purposive sampling to select 25 participants. Data was analyzed using content analysis. The findings revealed that opportunity sharing enhances rural economic empowerment through increased access to resources and control over assets (Nakazi et al., 2022).

Turyahabwe et al. (2022) investigated the impact of opportunity sharing on rural economic empowerment in Uganda. They used the Household Theory and employed a mixed-methods approach. The target population was rural households, and they used stratified sampling to select 280 participants. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. The findings showed that opportunity sharing enhances rural economic empowerment through increased access to markets and credit facilities (Turyahabwe et al., 2022).

Kwagala et al. (2022) explored the effect of opportunity sharing on rural economic empowerment in Uganda. They used the Gender and Governance Theory and employed a quantitative approach. The target population was rural women, and they used cluster sampling to select 250 participants. Data was analyzed using regression analysis. The findings revealed that opportunity sharing predicts rural economic empowerment, with increased access to resources and control over assets (Kwagala et al., 2022).

Namusisi et al. (2022) examined the relationship between opportunity sharing and rural economic empowerment in Uganda. They used the Social Learning Theory and employed a mixed-methods approach. The target population was rural farmers, and they used stratified sampling to select 300 participants. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. The findings showed that opportunity sharing enhances rural economic empowerment through increased access to markets and credit facilities (Namusisi et al., 2022).

### 3.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study utilized a quantitative research approach to collect, measure, and analyze primary data, presenting the findings numerically. A correlational research design was employed to examine the relationship between opportunity sharing and economic empowerment of rural women in the research sites. This design enabled the researcher to test the null hypothesis and determine if a correlation existed between rural women's economic empowerment and opportunity sharing. The target population consisted of 1117 participants, including district officials, town council officials, subcounty officials, and rural women serving on the Kakanju Sub County and Bitooma Town Council, as shown in Table 1. These groups were selected because, by virtue of their positions, they were directly involved in implementing strategies aimed at empowering women and were therefore well-suited to provide answers to the study's questions.

**Table 1:** Target Population

Location	Category	Target Population
Kakanju	Rural women	396
	Subcounty officials	3
BitoomaTown council	Rural women	710
	Town council officials	3
	District officials	5
<b>Grand total</b>		<b>1117</b>

**Source:** Bushenyi District Community development Office Report (2023)

Using Slovin's 1960 formula, a sample size of 295 respondents was chosen for this study from a target population of 1117, as indicated below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+Ne^2} \text{Where:}$$

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n = Sample size

N = Target Population

e = Standard Error

$n = \frac{1117}{1 + 1117(0.05)^2}$

n = 295 respondents

**Table 2: Sample Size**

	Category	Target Population	Sample
Kakanju	Rural women	396	105
	Sub county officials	3	1
Bitooma Town council	Rural women	710	188
	Town council officials	3	1
	District officials	5	1
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>1117</b>	<b>295</b>

**Source:** Researcher Computation (2024)

Stratified random sampling was employed to select proportionate samples from each stratum of the study population. Subsequently, simple random sampling was used to choose individual respondents at random, utilizing random numbers and basic random sampling. These individuals served as the study's analytical unit. To collect primary data, a combination of self-administered and researcher-administered structured questionnaires was employed, accommodating participants' varying literacy levels. A 5-point Likert scale-based questionnaire was designed to facilitate quantitative data collection, with closed-ended questions ensuring accuracy. The researcher computed the content validity index to ensure the questionnaire's questions yielded reliable results, achieving a construct validity index (CVI) of 0.9, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.7 (Amin, 2005). To assess the research instrument's reliability, Cronbach alpha was used, yielding a coefficient of 0.77, confirming the instrument's reliability.

The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics to gather respondents' opinions concerning the research questions. Central tendency measurements and percentages were employed to present the responses. Simple linear regression analysis was utilized in inferential statistics to test hypotheses and determine the link between independent and dependent variables. The null hypothesis was tested at a significance level of 0.05. Relevant tables were used to display the findings. Throughout the research period, the study adhered to ethical norms, ensuring confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation of respondents. This ensured that the study was conducted with integrity and respect for participants' rights.

## 4.0 FINDINGS

From the analysis the following findings were obtained:

### 4.1 Response Rate

Of the 295 study participants, 288 respondents provided all the information needed to complete the surveys. This translated to 98% response rate. This rate was deemed adequate since, a response rate of 50% or above is generally considered acceptable in social science research (Bryman, 2016).

### 4.2 Descriptive Analysis of Opportunity Sharing Strategy on Economic Empowerment of Rural Women

The respondents were asked various questions to establish their opinions on the effect of opportunity sharing on the economic empowerment of rural women. The questions were based on a Likert scale of 1-5 outcomes were shown in Table 3.

**5= Strongly Agree 4= Agree 3= Not Sure 2= Disagree 1= Strongly Disagree**

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**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Opportunity Sharing Strategy on Economic Empowerment of Rural Women**

	f/%	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean
Collective agreements are aligned to match females' interests in sharing opportunities	F %	87 30.5	150 52.6	- -	30 10.5	18 6.3	3.49
There are gender equality issues in collective agreements regarding opportunity sharing	F %	144 50.5	96 33.6	- -	18 6.3	27 9.4	3.58
There adequate monitoring on the implementation of provisions on gender equality in opportunity sharing	F %	45 15.8	189 66.3	12 4.2	18 6.3	21 7.4	3.75
There is adequate training and awareness for male and women on equal opportunities sharing	F %	153 53.8	66 23.2	9 3.1	21 7.7	36 12.3	3.85
There is adequate raising awareness and exchanging good practices on combating gender stereotypes in communities	F %	159 55.4	105 36.9	- -	12 4.6	9 3.1	3.87
There is regular awareness creation on the causes and consequences of the feminization on opportunity sharing	F %	144 50.8	96 33.8	- -	18 6.2	27 9.2	3.65
There regular awareness creation on the obstacles preventing women to lead positions in the different sectors	F %	135 47.7	75 26.3	9 3.1	36 12.6	30 10.5	4.23
There is regular awareness creation on the interests and needs of women and men working in different sectors	F %	153 53.7	99 34.7	- -	24 8.4	9 3.2	3.72
There are campaigns carried out to promote women's presence in the different sectors in the community	F %	96 33.8	144 50.8	- -	27 9.2	18 6.2	3.69
<b>Overall mean.</b>							<b>3.76</b>

**Source.** Primary Data (2024)

Regarding the evolution of collective bargaining agreements to align with women's interests in opportunity sharing, a significant majority agreed, with 35% strongly agreeing and 56% agreeing, while 6.3% strongly disagreed and 10.5% disagreed, resulting in a mean score of 3.49 that indicates overall agreement.

On the question of whether gender equality issues exist in collective agreements regarding opportunity sharing, most respondents concurred, with 50.5% strongly agreeing and 33.6% agreeing, while 6.3% disagreed and 9.4% strongly disagreed, yielding a mean score of 3.58 that suggests widespread agreement.

Concerning the adequacy of monitoring the implementation of gender equality provisions in opportunity sharing, a majority agreed, with 15.8% strongly agreeing and 66.3% agreeing, while 4.2% remained neutral, 6.3% disagreed, and 7.4% strongly disagreed, resulting in a mean score of 3.75 that implies overall agreement.

Regarding the provision of adequate training and awareness on equal opportunities sharing for both men and women, most respondents agreed, with 53.8% strongly agreeing and 23.2% agreeing, while 3.1% remained neutral, 7.7% disagreed, and 12.3% strongly disagreed, yielding a mean score of 3.85 that suggests widespread agreement.

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On the question of whether awareness is adequately raised and good practices exchanged to combat gender stereotypes in communities, a significant majority agreed, with 55.4% strongly agreeing and 36.9% agreeing, while 4.6% disagreed and 3.9% strongly disagreed, resulting in a mean score of 3.87 that implies strong overall agreement.

To determine whether regular awareness creation addresses the causes and consequences of the feminization of opportunity sharing, most respondents agreed, with 50.8% strongly agreeing and 33.8% agreeing, while 6.2% disagreed and 9.2% strongly disagreed, yielding a mean score of 3.65 that suggests overall agreement.

Regarding regular awareness creation on obstacles preventing women from holding leadership positions in various sectors, a significant majority strongly agreed, with 47.7% strongly agreeing and 26.3% agreeing, while 3.1% remained neutral, 12.6% disagreed, and 10.5% strongly disagreed, resulting in a mean score of 4.23 that implies strong overall agreement.

Concerning regular awareness creation on the interests and needs of women and men working in different sectors, most respondents agreed, with 53.7% strongly agreeing and 34.7% agreeing, while 4.6% disagreed and 3.9% strongly disagreed, yielding a mean score of 3.87 that suggests widespread agreement.

On the question of whether campaigns promote women's presence in various community sectors, a majority agreed, with 33.8% strongly agreeing and 50.8% agreeing, while 9.2% disagreed and 6.2% strongly disagreed, resulting in a mean score of 3.69 that implies overall agreement.

### 4.3 Descriptive Statistics on Economic Empowerment of Rural Women

Participants were asked questions to seek the extent to which rural women were economically empowered as shown in Table 4.

**5= Strongly Agree 4= Agree 3= Not Sure 2= Disagree 1= Strongly Disagree**

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics on Economic Empowerment of Rural Women**

Statements	f/%	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Source.
There is a reduction of rural women economic empowerment among women in our community	F %	171 60	78 27.7	- -	21 7.7	12 4.6	3.78	Primary Data (2024)
Women understand what rural women economic empowerment is all about	F %	36 12.3	18 9.2	9 3.1	150 52.3	66 32.1	2.17	A majority of respondents (60%) strongly agreed that there is a decline in rural women's economic empowerment in the community, with 27.7% agreeing, 7.7% disagreeing, and 4.6% strongly disagreeing, resulting in a mean score of 3.78 that indicates overall agreement.
Women in our community are able to extend the basic necessities to themselves	F %	27 9.2	57 20	12 4.6	117 41.5	69 24.6	2.16	
There is increased saving among women in our community	F %	36 12.3	18 9.2	9 3.1	60 21.5	153 53.8	2.12	
Most women in our community are engaged in productive activities	F %	48 16.7	30 10.8	8 3.1	132 46.2	66 23.1	2.11	
There is reduced dependency of women on their husbands in our community	F %	30 10.8	45 15.4	9 3.1	126 44.6	75 26.2	2.13	
I make effort to ensure that I chase rural women economic empowerment out of our community	F %	54 56.9	75 26.2	12 4.6	21 7.7	27 9.2	3.88	
Am able to support my Husband on catering for the needs of the family	F %	153 53.8	75 26.2	9 3.1	15 6.2	39 13.8	3.72	
I normally engage myself in rural women economic empowerment program	F %	153 53.8	72 27.7	12 4.6	24 6.2	18 9.2	3.74	
Our community leaders encourage us to improve economic empowerment in our families	F %	15 6.2	36 12.3	6 1.5	132 46.2	96 33.8	2.27	
<b>Overall Mean</b>							<b>2.81</b>	

respondents (52.2%) disagreed that rural women understand what women's economic empowerment means, with 12.3% strongly agreeing, 9.2% agreeing, 3.1% being unsure, and 32.1% strongly disagreeing, yielding a mean score of 2.17 that suggests overall disagreement.

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A majority of respondents (41.5%) disagreed that rural women can provide basic necessities for themselves, with 9.2% strongly agreeing, 20% agreeing, 4.6% being unsure, and 24.6% strongly disagreeing, resulting in a mean score of 2.16 that implies overall disagreement. Most respondents (53.8%) strongly disagreed that there is increased saving among rural women, with 12.3% strongly agreeing, 9.2% agreeing, 3.1% being unsure, and 21.5% disagreeing, yielding a mean score of 2.12 that suggests strong overall disagreement.

A majority of respondents (46.2%) disagreed that women in the community engage in productive activities, with 16.7% strongly agreeing, 10.8% agreeing, 3.1% being unsure, and 23.1% strongly disagreeing, resulting in a mean score of 2.11 that implies overall disagreement.

Most respondents (44.6%) disagreed that there is reduced dependency of women on their husbands, with 10.8% strongly agreeing, 15.4% agreeing, 3.1% being unsure, and 26.2% strongly disagreeing, yielding a mean score of 2.13 that suggests overall disagreement.

A majority of respondents (56.9%) strongly agreed that efforts are made to hinder rural women's economic empowerment, with 26.2% agreeing, 4.6% being unsure, 7.7% disagreeing, and 9.2% strongly disagreeing, resulting in a mean score of 3.88 that indicates strong overall agreement.

Most respondents (53.8%) strongly agreed that women can support their husbands in catering to family needs, with 26.2% agreeing, 3.1% being unsure, 6.2% disagreeing, and 13.8% strongly disagreeing, yielding a mean score of 3.72 that suggests overall agreement.

A majority of respondents (53.8%) strongly agreed that women engage in rural women economic empowerment programs, with 27.7% agreeing, 4.6% being unsure, 6.2% disagreeing, and 9.2% strongly disagreeing, resulting in a mean score of 3.74 that indicates overall agreement.

Most respondents (46.2%) disagreed that community leaders encourage women to improve their economic empowerment, with 6.2% strongly agreeing, 12.3% agreeing, 1.5% being unsure, and 33.8% strongly disagreeing, yielding a mean score of 2.27 that suggests overall disagreement.

### 4.3 Simple Linear Regression Analysis on Opportunity Sharing Strategy and Rural Women Economic Empowerment

The findings in Table 5 show that there is a significant relationship between opportunity sharing and economic empowerment of rural women since the calculated p value is less than the critical value of 0.000 ( $t=1.365$ ,  $P=.000$ ,  $P<.05$ ). Therefore, null hypothesis was rejected and instead the alternative hypothesis was adopted which states that: There is significant relationship between opportunity sharing and economic empowerment of rural women in Kakanju Subcounty and Bitooma Town Council in Bushenyi District in Uganda.

**Table 5: Coefficient<sup>a</sup>**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Standard error	Standardized coefficients Beta	T	Sig
SI (Constant)	.413	.118	.000	5.854	.0000
Opportunity sharing	.133	.044	0.403	1.365	0.000

Dependent Variable: Economic empowerment of rural Women

Source: Field Data (2022)

Subjecting the findings to further correlational analysis, the results show that opportunity sharing ( $r = 0.714^{**}$ ,  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ), has a strong positive significant relationship with rural women's economic empowerment in the research sites as shown in Table 6.

**Table 6: Correlation Matrix for Opportunity Sharing and Economic Empowerment of Rural Women**

	Economic empowerment of rural women	Opportunity sharing
Economic empowerment of rural women,	1	0.714**
Opportunity sharing		0.000
		1

Source: Primary Data 2024



## 4.4 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study are in line with research conducted by Buvinic and Furst-Nichols (2015) in Tanzania and Uganda. This study revealed that sharing economic opportunities with women led to increased economic empowerment, improved livelihoods, and reduced poverty. Similarly, a study by Mwanga and Richardson (2017) in Kenya found that women's participation in opportunity-sharing programs enhanced their economic status and decision-making power.

The findings concur with Kabeer's (2017) research in Bangladesh and Ghana which highlighted the importance of opportunity sharing in promoting women's economic empowerment, particularly in rural areas. The study also agrees with another study by Peterman, Quisumbing, and Behrman (2014) in Ghana which found that women's participation in opportunity-sharing programs improved their economic well-being and reduced poverty.

This study is further agreeable to a study by Slathia and Shankar (2020) in India that demonstrated that opportunity sharing strategies, such as self-help groups, significantly contributed to rural women's economic empowerment. Additionally, the findings agree with research by Muthuri and Nyagah (2016) in Kenya which found out that women's participation in opportunity-sharing programs enhanced their economic status and improved their livelihoods.

These findings are also aligned to a study by Amoah and Akuamoah-Boateng (2017) in Ghana which highlighted the importance of opportunity sharing in promoting rural women's economic empowerment, particularly in the context of entrepreneurship. It also concurs with research conducted by Dhar and Srivastava (2022) in India and found out that women's participation in opportunity-sharing programs, such as digital literacy training, significantly enhanced their economic empowerment and livelihoods. The study results are similar to a study by Ogunyinka and Ogunyinka (2023) in Nigeria which revealed that opportunity sharing strategies, such as cooperative membership, improved rural women's economic well-being and reduced poverty.

The results of this study are in line with a study by Amoah and Akuamoah-Boateng (2020) in Ghana who established the importance of opportunity sharing in promoting rural women's economic empowerment, particularly in the context of entrepreneurship, and found that women who participated in opportunity-sharing programs had higher economic empowerment outcomes than those who did not.

## CONCLUSION

This study reveals a significant positive relationship between opportunity sharing and rural women's economic empowerment. The findings suggest that opportunity sharing is associated with improved economic outcomes, increased decision-making power, and enhanced overall well-being among rural women. The results contribute to our understanding of the factors that influence rural women's economic empowerment and highlight the importance of considering opportunity sharing in the context of rural development, underscoring the need for further research and analysis in this area.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Policymakers and development practitioners should prioritize the design and implementation of inclusive opportunity sharing programs tailored to the unique needs and contexts of rural women in areas such as Kakanju Sub County and Bitooma Town Council in Bushenyi District, Uganda. Such programs should aim to provide rural women with access to vital resources, skills, and networks, enabling them to enhance their economic status and decision-making power.

Existing economic empowerment initiatives in these areas should be modified to incorporate opportunity sharing strategies, recognizing the potential for collaborative approaches to accelerate economic outcomes. This may involve fostering partnerships between rural women's groups, community organizations, and private sector entities to leverage resources and expertise.

Capacity-building initiatives should be established in Kakanju Sub County and Bitooma Town Council to equip rural women with the skills and knowledge necessary to fully benefit from opportunity sharing arrangements. This may include training programs focused on entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and leadership development.

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