

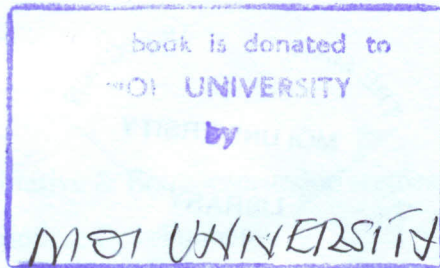
NAT

**THE ROLE OF INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) ON
GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN
ELDORET MUNICIPALITY, KENYA**



BY

AGNES J. RONO



**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF HUMAN RESOURCE
DEVELOPMENT, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN
ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

MOI UNIVERSITY

JULY 2012



ABSTRACT

Women entrepreneurs face specific constraints to their economic empowerment through ICT, which limits their involvement in e-business activities and hinder their growth and competitiveness. This is seen in the digital divide in the lower number of women users of ICT, internet in particular, compared to men. As such, the purpose of this study was to examine the role of ICT in the growth and development of women entrepreneurs through the following objectives: to find out the types of ICTs accessed by women entrepreneurs, to identify the social cultural barriers hindering women's access to ICT, to find out the role of ICT in promoting business to business or business to customers and to find out the challenges facing women entrepreneurs entering the digital economy in Eldoret Municipality. This study was guided by Hunt's theory of equitable distribution of opportunities in the society. The mainstream view of this theory often takes technology as a technical tool that society can use, and as something that in itself is influenced by society. The units of analysis for this study were women entrepreneurs who have been in operation for at least five years within Eldoret Municipality. The study adopted random, stratified and proportionate probability sampling (PPS) techniques. A total of 227 respondents were grouped into strata of area of operation and then proportionate simple random sampling technique was used to select 30% of the population. Questionnaires and interview schedules were the main instruments for data collection and out of the 227 questionnaires there were 177 valid ones which translated to 77.9% of the study sample size. Descriptive methods were employed in analyzing qualitative data where frequencies and proportions were used in interpreting the respondent's perception of issues raised in the questionnaires. The benefits of adopting ICT in business may assist Kenya in designing appropriate strategies and policies to support the objective of encouraging growth and development in female – owned enterprises and in achieving gender balance in context of an open trading system. The study findings revealed ICT promotes growth and lack of funds and technological education were the main challenges facing these entrepreneurs.