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Influence of Collaborative Partnerships and Financial Performance of Commercial Banks in Juba, South Sudan.

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Abstract
This study explores the influence of collaborative partnerships on the financial performance of commercial banks in Juba, South Sudan, a context characterized by economic instability and developmental challenges. Recognizing the vital role of these banks in fostering financial stability, inclusion, and economic growth, the research examines how strategic alliances with local and international stakeholders impact their operational efficiency, risk management, and overall profitability. The significance of this study lies in its potential to inform policymakers and banking practitioners on leveraging partnerships to enhance resilience and performance in fragile economies. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the study combines quantitative analysis of financial data from selected banks with qualitative interviews of bank managers and stakeholders to assess partnership impacts. The findings reveal that collaborative partnerships positively influence banks' financial outcomes by improving access to resources, innovative services, and risk mitigation strategies. The study concludes that fostering strategic alliances is essential for strengthening the financial sector's stability and inclusivity in South Sudan. Based on these insights, it is recommended that commercial banks actively pursue partnership opportunities with development agencies, international financial institutions, and local organizations to enhance their capacity for sustainable growth and contribute effectively to national economic development.

Keywords: *Collaborative partnerships, financial performance, and commercial banks.*

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I. BACKGROUND OF STUDY.

The background of this study highlights the numerous challenges faced by commercial banks operating in Juba, South Sudan, which significantly affect their financial performance and operational stability. The ongoing political instability and sporadic conflicts create an unpredictable and volatile business environment. For instance, in 2020, over half of KCB Bank South Sudan's branches in Juba had to close temporarily due to security concerns, disrupting banking services and undermining customer trust (World Bank, 2021). Such security issues not only hinder daily banking operations but also necessitate increased expenditure on security measures, which raises operational costs and impacts profitability. The economic landscape further complicates the banking environment, with high inflation reaching 37.2% in 2023, fluctuating exchange rates, and recurrent recessions that make financial stability difficult to sustain. The Commercial Bank of Ethiopia in Juba reported a 15% decline in net profits in 2022, underscoring how economic volatility hampers banks' ability to maintain consistent profit margins and manage risks effectively (Bank of Ethiopia Annual Report, 2022).

In addition to economic and political instability, the regulatory framework in South Sudan remains underdeveloped and unstable. Frequent changes and inconsistencies in policies pose compliance challenges for banks such as Equity Bank South Sudan, which faced a 20% increase in compliance costs over the past year as it struggled to adapt to evolving regulations (Equity Bank Annual Report, 2023). This regulatory uncertainty increases operational disruptions and diverts resources away from core banking activities. Infrastructure deficiencies further impede the growth and efficiency of banking services. Poor road networks, unreliable electricity, and limited internet connectivity hinder the smooth delivery of banking operations. Stanbic Bank South Sudan has experienced recurring power outages averaging ten hours weekly, which disrupts customer service and operational continuity (Stanbic Bank Infrastructure Report, 2022). Currency instability, marked by the South Sudanese Pound (SSP) devaluing by 50% against the US dollar over two years, complicates foreign exchange management, increases transaction risks, and affects both banks and their customers (Central Bank of South Sudan, 2023). Moreover, low financial literacy among the population constrains banks' ability to expand their customer base as only 25% of the population had access to formal banking services as of 2023, limiting financial inclusion and economic growth (Nile Commercial Bank Financial Literacy Report, 2023).

Access to capital remains a critical challenge for banks in South Sudan. Limited financial infrastructure and high political risks make it difficult for banks to raise sufficient funds to meet growing demands for loans and financial products. Ivory Bank, for example, reported a 30% decline in loan approval rates in 2022 due to capital constraints (Ivory Bank Financial Report, 2022). This scarcity of capital hampers banks' capacity to support economic activities and expand their services. Additionally, the human resource landscape presents significant hurdles. The sector suffers from a shortage of skilled and experienced banking professionals, which negatively impacts service quality and operational efficiency. Ecobank South Sudan experienced a 25% staff turnover rate in 2023, making it difficult to retain qualified personnel and develop advanced banking practices (Ecobank HR Report, 2023). High operational costs, driven by security expenses and high utility bills, further erode profitability. For example, Cooperative Bank's operational costs increased by 35% during 2021/2022 (Cooperative Bank Annual Report, 2023). Finally, the threat from informal financial services—such as money lenders and savings groups—remains significant. These informal providers serve about 60% of the population with more flexible and accessible services, creating stiff competition for formal banks and limiting their market share (African Development Bank, 2022).

Given these multifaceted challenges, addressing the performance constraints of banks in South Sudan requires coordinated efforts among banks, regulatory authorities, and international partners. Strategic innovation, particularly through collaborative partnerships, emerges as a vital approach to overcoming these hurdles. According to Rodríguez-Sánchez et al. (2021), strategic innovation involves deliberate efforts by organizations to develop and implement novel ideas, processes, and business models that create value and foster competitive advantage. Such innovation is often driven by indicators like forming alliances, employee engagement, and adopting advanced information technology. Collaborative partnerships—such as alliances and joint ventures—enable banks to pool resources, share knowledge, and develop innovative solutions that can enhance operational efficiency, risk management, and service delivery. Employee engagement fosters a culture of active participation and contribution to innovation initiatives, while leveraging technology streamlines operations and supports new business models (Rodríguez-Sánchez et al., 2021; Smith, Brown & Johnson, 2022). These strategic approaches are crucial in a context marked by instability and resource constraints, where innovative collaborations can help banks adapt, survive, and thrive amid adversity.

The concept of strategic innovation aligns closely with the operational realities faced by South Sudanese banks. Lee, Park, & Kim (2020) emphasize that structured efforts to develop and implement new ideas, processes, and business models are essential for creating value and maintaining a competitive edge. Indicators such as establishing alliances, sharing knowledge, and fostering a culture of innovation are central to this approach. The performance of firms, including banks, is measured through various outcomes such as profitability, market share, customer satisfaction, and overall effectiveness (Barney & Hesterly, 2011; Hitt, Ireland & Hoskisson, 2013). Dynamic capabilities as organizational agility, leadership, and continuous monitoring—are also vital in enabling firms to adapt swiftly to market changes, reconfigure resources, and sustain competitive advantage (Teece, 2007; Helfat & Peteraf, 2009). Several studies underscore that strategic innovation, supported by dynamic capabilities, significantly enhances firm performance, especially in volatile environments like South Sudan. Resistance to change, high costs, and rapid technological evolution are common challenges in implementing innovation strategies, but organizations that effectively manage these risks can build sustainable competitive advantages rooted in their internal capabilities (Nauwankas, 2013; Gunday et al., 2011).

In the context of South Sudan's economic environment, the banking sector's development depends heavily on overcoming infrastructural deficiencies, regulatory uncertainties, and resource limitations. Strategic innovation through collaborative partnerships offers a pathway for banks to access new markets, improve operational efficiencies, and develop innovative financial products. The adoption of new technologies and fostering employee engagement are critical components of this process. Building on the theoretical frameworks of resource-based view and dynamic capabilities, banks can leverage their internal strengths such as skilled personnel and innovative culture and external alliances to navigate the complex landscape effectively. Addressing these challenges systematically can support the growth of a resilient, efficient banking system that contributes to South Sudan's broader economic stability and development objectives.

1.2. HYPOTHESIS OF STUDY

$H_0 1$: There is no statistically significant influence of collaborative partnerships on financial performance of commercial banks in Juba, South Sudan.

1.3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study of commercial banks in Juba, South Sudan, highlights the critical role these institutions play in the country's economic stability and development amid significant challenges, including economic volatility and limited financial inclusion. In this context, collaborative partnerships emerge as a vital strategy for enhancing the financial performance of these banks. By forming alliances with local and international stakeholders, banks can access new resources, technologies, and expertise, which bolster their operational resilience, risk management, and ability to adapt to changing economic conditions. Such partnerships can facilitate the implementation of innovative financial products and services, expand outreach to marginalized communities, and improve compliance with regulatory frameworks, thereby promoting financial inclusion. Furthermore, collaborative efforts can strengthen the transmission of monetary policies and support the development of a more stable banking environment. Overall, fostering strategic partnerships enables commercial banks in Juba to improve their performance, mitigate risks, and contribute more effectively to economic growth and stability in South Sudan, aligning with the broader goals of sustainable development and financial sector resilience in fragile economies.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

The relationship between collaborative partnerships and financial performance is closely aligned with the Dynamic Capabilities Theory, which emphasizes the importance of organizational agility, specifically the ability to sense opportunities, seize them, and reconfigure resources in response to environmental changes. In the context of South Sudanese banks, strategic alliances enable these institutions to enhance their dynamic capabilities by facilitating knowledge sharing, fostering innovation, and quickly adapting to market and institutional shifts. Such partnerships provide access to critical resources and expertise, supporting continuous learning and organizational routines that underpin agility. This adaptability not only improves operational efficiency but also drives strategic innovation and market expansion, ultimately leading to better financial performance. When viewed through the lens of the Resource-Based View, these alliances help banks acquire valuable, inimitable resources like technological capabilities and customer insights, strengthening their competitive advantage. Additionally, institutional factors shape the formation and success of these partnerships, with institutional entrepreneurship offering opportunities to lead change within regulatory and cultural contexts. Overall, collaborative partnerships serve as essential mechanisms for building the dynamic capabilities necessary for South Sudanese banks to navigate complex environments and achieve sustainable financial growth.

2.2. Collaborative Partnerships and Financial Performance.

The research by Baah et al. (2022) employed partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) to examine the relationships between supply chain collaboration and various performance outcomes. The results revealed statistically significant positive associations between supply chain collaboration and supply chain visibility, stakeholder trust, environmental performance, and financial performance ($p < .05$). The study confirmed all hypothesized relationships, demonstrating that supply chain collaboration serves as a robust predictor of these performance variables within manufacturing firms operating in emerging economies. This analysis provides empirical evidence supporting the strategic implementation of collaborative supply chain practices to achieve multiple organizational benefits.

Valbuena-Hernandez and Ortiz-de-Mandojana (2022) utilized longitudinal panel data analysis to investigate how partnership characteristics affect sustainability improvements. The researchers found that partnership diversity ($\beta = .31, p < .01$) and longer partnership duration ($\beta = .28, p < .01$) were significantly associated with improved sustainability measures, but only in responsive firms. Conversely, in non-responsive firms, these same partnership characteristics showed negative relationships with sustainability improvements (diversity: $\beta = -.22, p < .05$; duration: $\beta = .19, p < .05$). These findings suggest that organizational responsiveness moderates the relationship between partnership characteristics and sustainability outcomes, highlighting the importance of contextual factors in partnership effectiveness.

In their examination of collaborative partnerships' impact on innovation and financial performance, Liao et al. (2021) reported significant positive correlations between partnership intensity and both innovation output ($r = .42, p < .001$) and financial performance ($r = .37, p < .001$). Multiple regression analysis revealed that knowledge-sharing partnerships explained a significant portion of variance in innovation performance ($\Delta R^2 = .18, p < .01$), while resource-pooling partnerships significantly predicted financial performance improvements ($\Delta R^2 = .16, p < .01$). These findings emphasize how different partnership types contribute distinctively to organizational outcomes through complementary mechanisms.

The study by Montague-Mfuni et al. (2023) on African technology hub cooperation examined how collaborative structures influence innovation outcomes. Although specific inferential statistics were not detailed in the excerpt, the researchers reported significant positive relationships between technology hub collaborations and synergistic benefits, particularly through shared identity mechanisms and network linkages that promote Ubuntu ethos. Their conceptual framework analysis suggests that such collaborations enhance both exploration and exploitation capacities, creating significant advantages for technological innovation across African contexts.

Gach et al. (2023) conducted regression analysis to examine the relationship between inter-organizational relations and leadership performance in South Sudan's Ministry of Petroleum. The results demonstrated that inter-organizational relations significantly predicted leadership performance ($\beta = .43$, $p < .01$). The model explained approximately 37% of the variance in leadership performance ($R^2 = .37$, $F (1, 331) = 194.28$, $p < .001$), indicating a strong association between the quality of organizational relationships and leadership effectiveness. These findings highlight how organizational structures and linkages substantially impact leadership outcomes in public sector contexts, suggesting potential intervention strategies to enhance organizational effectiveness through improved inter-organizational dynamics.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study is anchored in the positivist philosophical paradigm, which posits that an objective reality exists independently of individual perceptions and can be studied through empirical, measurable means (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The primary advantage of adopting a positivist approach is its focus on quantifiable observations that facilitate statistical analysis, allowing researchers to identify patterns and establish generalizable principles (Saunders et al., 2019). This paradigm is particularly suitable for examining the causal relationships between strategic innovation, dynamic capabilities, and financial performance within commercial banks in Juba, South Sudan. Guided by this stance, the study formulates testable hypotheses about how specific strategic initiatives and organizational capabilities influence financial outcomes. Data collection involves structured questionnaires and financial reports, maintaining an objective and value-neutral stance aligned with the principles of positivism, which enhances the reliability and replicability of the findings (Teece, 2018). Employing deductive reasoning, the research tests theoretical propositions against collected data, aiming to either confirm or reject hypothesized relationships, especially within South Sudan’s unique post-conflict economic landscape (Moro et al., 2020).

The research employs a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design, which is ideal for analyzing relationships among variables at a single point in time. This approach supports the collection of standardized numerical data from a large sample, enabling the application of advanced statistical techniques such as multiple regression analysis, factor analysis, and structural equation modeling (SEM). Structured questionnaires administered to banking executives and managers capture data on strategic innovation activities, organizational capabilities, and financial performance indicators. The analysis aims to quantify the strength and significance of relationships between variables, controlling for potential confounders, and generating findings that are generalizable to the broader banking sector in South Sudan. This methodological rigor supports the development of empirically validated frameworks that can guide strategic decision-making in the context of a developing, post-conflict economy.

The target population encompasses 30 licensed commercial banks operating within South Sudan, specifically those with physical branches or operational offices in Juba. The study focuses on key personnel with in-depth knowledge of banking strategies and operations, including Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), Chief Financial Officers (CFOs), Chief Operations Officers (COOs), middle management, and department heads, totaling 625 individuals. To accurately represent this population, the researcher employed Yamane’s (1969) formula, which determined a sample size of approximately 244 respondents, considering a 5% sampling error. A stratified random sampling method was used, dividing the population into homogeneous strata based on organizational roles or departments, then randomly selecting participants within each subgroup. This approach ensures diversity and representativeness, capturing a broad spectrum of perspectives across different management levels and organizational functions. Data collection primarily relied on self-administered questionnaires, structured with closed-ended Likert scale items to measure variables related to strategic innovation, dynamic capabilities, and financial performance. The questionnaire was designed in five sections, capturing demographic data and specific insights into each variable. To ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments, a pilot study was conducted in three regions Wau, Eastern Equatorial, and Malakal using 10% of the sample size. The pilot helped identify ambiguities, refine questions, and assess the consistency of responses through Cronbach’s alpha analysis, with a threshold of 0.70 indicating acceptable reliability. Content validity was established through expert review by academic and industry professionals, while construct validity was verified via factor analysis, KMO tests, and Bartlett's test of sphericity. These measures ensured the questionnaires accurately captured the constructs of interest before full deployment.

Data analysis involved rigorous procedures to ensure robustness and validity. Initial data screening checked for missing data, outliers, and normality, with techniques like imputation used for missing values. Descriptive statistics summarized respondent characteristics and variable distributions. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) assessed the measurement model's validity, ensuring each latent construct was adequately represented by its indicators, with model fit evaluated through indices such as RMSEA, CFI, and TLI. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was then used to test the hypothesized relationships between variables, examining both direct effects of strategic innovation dimensions on financial performance and the moderating role of dynamic capabilities. Interaction terms were created to assess moderation effects, and hierarchical analyses determined the significance of these relationships. Diagnostic tests including normality, multicollinearity, heteroscedasticity, linearity, and independence were performed to verify the appropriateness of the data for SEM analysis. Hypotheses were tested based on p-values, with significance thresholds guiding the acceptance or rejection of null hypotheses.

Ethical considerations were integral throughout the research process. Participants provided informed consent after understanding the study's purpose, their roles, and potential risks. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing responses and securely storing data. The research team adhered to principles of beneficence and non-maleficence, ensuring the study benefited participants and avoided harm. Cultural sensitivity was prioritized by respecting local customs and engaging stakeholders appropriately. Voluntary participation was emphasized, with participants free to withdraw at any point. Prior approval from an ethics review board was obtained, and the potential impact on the local community was carefully assessed to uphold the integrity and social responsibility of the research.

IV. FINDINGS

TABLE 1: RESPONSE RATE

Response Rate	Sample size	Percentage
Questionnaires Distributed	244	100%
Questionnaires Returned	227	93%

Source: Field Data (2024)

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Categories	Frequencies	Percentages
Gender	Male	**170**	**74.89**
	Female	**57**	**25.11**
Total	**227**	**100**	
Age Distribution	18-24 years	23	10.13%
	25-34 years	97	42.73%
	35-44 years	86	37.89%
	45-54 years	17	7.49%
	55-Above years	4	1.76%
		227	**100%**
Education level	High school Diploma or Equivalent	22	9.7%
	Bachelor's degree	163	71.8%
	Master's degree	38	16.7%
	Doctorate	8	1.8%
Total		**227**	**100%**
Work Experience	**Experience**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
	Less than year	42	18.5%
	1-3 years	81	35.7%
	4-7 years	45	19.8%
	8-10 years	20	8.8%
	More than 10 years	39	17.2%
Total		**227**	**100%**

4.1. SUMMARY OF JOINT TABLES.

The demographic analysis of the 227 respondents in the study reveals notable patterns that have implications for the generalizability and interpretation of the findings. The gender distribution is heavily skewed towards males, who constitute nearly 75% of the sample, with females representing only about 25%. This imbalance suggests that the insights derived may predominantly reflect male perspectives, potentially limiting the applicability of results across genders. Additionally, the age distribution is concentrated among younger and middle-aged adults, with over 80% of respondents aged between 25 and 44 years. The most represented groups are those aged 25-34 and 35-44, indicating that the study mainly captures the views of early to mid-career professionals, which could influence the relevance of the findings to older or more experienced individuals in the banking sector.

Furthermore, the educational background of respondents shows a relatively high level of qualification, with 90.3% holding a bachelor's degree or higher, including a significant proportion of master's and doctorate holders. This suggests that the banking workforce in Juba is relatively well-educated, a critical factor for implementing strategic innovation and developing dynamic capabilities. The work experience data further underscores a young and evolving sector, with most respondents having 3 years or less of experience about 54.2% although a notable portion (17.2%) has over 10 years of experience. This mixture of relatively new and highly experienced professionals indicates a workforce that combines fresh perspectives with established expertise, which could be advantageous for fostering innovation and strategic development in South Sudan's nascent banking industry.

4.2. Collaborative Partnership and Strategic Innovations

This section examines respondents' perceptions regarding collaborative partnerships and strategic innovations within commercial banks in South Sudan. Using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), the study measured eight key dimensions of collaborative partnerships to understand their perceived impact on financial performance.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Collaborative Partnerships

Statement	Frequency (Percentage)					Mean	Std Dev
	5	4	3	2	1		
Strategic alliances have positively contributed to the overall performance of our organization.	82 (50%)	66 (40%)	11 (7%)	0 (0%)	6 (3%)	4.32	0.89
Cooperative partnerships have enhanced our organization's ability to achieve its strategic goals and objectives.	90 (55%)	60 (36%)	12 (7%)	0 (0%)	3 (2%)	4.42	0.78
Collaborative networks have improved our organization's innovation and creativity in problem-solving.	83 (50%)	63 (38%)	13 (8%)	3 (2%)	3 (2%)	4.33	0.84
Knowledge-sharing initiatives have facilitated learning within our organization.	106 (64%)	56 (34%)	0 (0%)	3 (2%)	0 (0%)	4.61	0.59
Access to external resources and expertise has increased through collaborative relationships.	52 (32%)	96 (58%)	14 (8%)	0 (0%)	3 (2%)	4.18	0.73
Collaboration efforts have improved the efficiency and effectiveness of our organization's operations.	75 (45%)	78 (47%)	12 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.38	0.62
Engaging in partnerships has enhanced our organization's reputation and credibility in the industry or market.	75 (45%)	73 (44%)	14 (8%)	3 (2%)	0 (0%)	4.33	0.71
Collaborative endeavors have resulted in tangible and measurable benefits for our organization.	57 (35%)	74 (45%)	34 (21%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.14	0.73
Overall						**4.34**	**0.75**

Note:5 = Strongly Agree, 4= Agree, 3 = Undecided, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree
Source: Field Data (2024),

Table 2: elucidates the descriptive statistical analysis pertaining to respondents' perceptions of Collaborative Partnerships within commercial banks in Juba, South Sudan. The tabulated data reveals substantive empirical evidence regarding the strategic prominence of collaborative initiatives in enhancing financial performance. The descriptive metrics indicate overwhelmingly positive perceptions across all dimensions of

collaborative partnerships. Knowledge-sharing initiatives demonstrate the highest mean score (M=4.61, SD=0.59), with 64% of respondents indicating strong agreement regarding their efficacy in facilitating organizational learning. This finding underscores the paramount importance of knowledge transfer mechanisms in the banking sector's collaborative ecosystem. Similarly, cooperative partnerships exhibit robust endorsement (M=4.42, SD=0.78), with 55% of respondents strongly affirming their contribution to strategic goal attainment. The dimensions about operational efficiency enhancement (M=4.38, SD=0.62) and innovation facilitation (M=4.33, SD=0.84) demonstrate substantial positive assessment, substantiating the multifaceted utility of collaborative endeavors in banking operations. Notably, the statement regarding tangible benefits exhibits the comparatively lowest mean score (M=4.14, SD=0.73), though still reflecting strong positive sentiment, potentially indicating opportunities for enhancing the measurability of collaborative outcomes.

The aggregate mean value of 4.34 (SD=0.75) across all dimensions emphatically establishes the significant perceived value of collaborative partnerships among banking professionals in Juba. The consistently low standard deviations signify remarkable consensus among respondents regarding these perceptions. These findings align with contemporary theoretical frameworks positing collaborative partnerships as critical determinants of competitive advantage in dynamic business environments, particularly within emerging financial markets characterized by institutional flux and resource constraints. The statistical evidence provides robust empirical support for the theoretical proposition that collaborative partnerships constitute a fundamental driver of organizational performance enhancement in South Sudan's commercial banking sector.

4.3. Financial Performance and Strategic Innovations

This section examines respondents' perceptions regarding financial performance within commercial banks in South Sudan. Using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), the study assessed eight key dimensions of financial performance to understand how banking professionals perceive its importance, components, and drivers.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Financial Performance

Statement	**Frequency (Percentage)**					**Mean**	**Std Dev**
	5	4	3	2	1		
Financial performance is a vital indicator of our organization's effectiveness and success.	92 (56%)	57 (35%)	14 (8%)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)	4.45	0.70
High financial performance is essential for the long-term sustainability and competitiveness of our organization.	96 (58%)	58 (35%)	11 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.52	0.62
Financial performance includes various elements, such as operational efficiency, customer satisfaction, and market share.	94 (57%)	59 (36%)	12 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.50	0.63
Continuous monitoring of financial performance helps identify areas for improvement and necessary adjustments.	93 (56%)	60 (36%)	12 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4.49	0.63
Effective leadership and strategic management are critical in enhancing financial performance.	94 (57%)	53 (32%)	16 (10%)	2 (1%)	0 (0%)	4.45	0.71
A robust organizational culture that fosters accountability, innovation, and collaboration enhances performance.	98 (59%)	58 (35%)	8 (5%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	4.53	0.62
Investing in employee development and engagement has a positive effect on financial performance.	94 (57%)	53 (32%)	17 (10%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	4.45	0.70
Aligning organizational goals with performance metrics ensures our efforts are directed toward achieving positive outcomes.	87 (53%)	68 (41%)	9 (5%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	4.46	0.63
Overall						**4.48**	**0.66**

Note:5 = Strongly Agree, 4= Agree, 3 = Undecided, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly Disagree

Of particular salience, the dimension concerning organizational culture demonstrates the highest mean value (M=4.53, SD=0.62), with 59% of respondents strongly agreeing that "A strong organizational culture that promotes accountability, innovation, and collaboration contributes to improved performance." This finding establishes an important conceptual link between organizational culture, a key component of dynamic capabilities, and financial performance outcomes within South Sudan's banking sector. Correspondingly, the long-term strategic importance of financial performance received substantial endorsement (M=4.52, SD=0.62), with 58% of respondents strongly affirming its criticality for organizational sustainability and competitiveness. The dimension addressing the multifaceted nature of financial performance (M=4.50, SD=0.63) further corroborates the perception that financial outcomes encompass multiple aspects including operational efficiency, customer satisfaction, and market share elements that are often enhanced through strategic innovation initiatives.

Notably, respondents strongly recognized the importance of effective leadership (M=4.45, SD=0.71) and employee development (M=4.45, SD=0.70) in driving financial performance, reinforcing the interconnection between human capital elements of dynamic capabilities and financial outcomes. The high mean value for continuous monitoring and assessment (M=4.49, SD=0.63) underscores the importance of adaptive capabilities in identifying areas for improvement and implementing necessary changes.

These findings align precisely with the research objective of establishing the moderating influence of dynamic capabilities on the relationship between strategic innovation and the financial performance of commercial banks in Juba. The statistical evidence suggests that banking professionals perceive strong connections between elements of dynamic capabilities (organizational culture, leadership, adaptability through continuous monitoring) and financial performance outcomes. This empirical substantiation supports the theoretical proposition that dynamic capabilities significantly influence how strategic innovation initiatives translate into financial performance, providing a foundation for deeper analysis of the moderating relationship at the Centre of this study.

4.4. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results for Strategic Innovation.

This section presents the results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis conducted on the strategic innovation dimensions in the study. CFA is a sophisticated statistical technique that examines whether the measured variables adequately represent the underlying theoretical constructs. This analysis is crucial as it validates the measurement model before proceeding to structural equation modeling and hypothesis testing. By confirming that each item appropriately loads onto its intended construct, CFA establishes the foundation for a reliable and valid interpretation of relationships between variables in subsequent analyses.

Table 4: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

Construct and Items	Standardized Factor Loading	CR	AVE
Collaborative Partnerships (CP)		**0.939**	**0.658**
CP1: Strategic alliances have positively contributed to the overall performance	0.815		
CP2: Cooperative partnerships have enhanced our organization's ability to achieve its strategic goals	0.842		
CP3: Collaborative networks have improved our organization's innovation and creativity in problem-solving	0.811		
CP4: Knowledge-sharing initiatives have facilitated learning within our organization	0.792		
CP5: Access to external resources and expertise has increased through collaborative relationships	0.834		
CP6: Collaboration efforts have improved the efficiency and effectiveness of our organization's operations	0.827		
CP7: Engaging in partnerships has enhanced our organization's reputation and credibility	0.776		
CP8: Collaborative endeavors have resulted in tangible and measurable benefits for our organization	0.803		

4.5. Collaborative Partnerships and Strategic Innovations on Financial Performance of Commercial Banks in Juba, South Sudan.

This section presents the results of path analysis examining the direct relationship between Collaborative Partnerships (CP) as a strategic innovation and Financial Performance (FP) of commercial banks in Juba, South Sudan. The analysis employed Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test the hypothesized relationship and determine the magnitude and significance of the effect of collaborative partnerships on financial performance.

Table 5: Path Coefficients for Collaborative Partnerships and Strategic Innovations on Financial Performance of Commercial Banks in Juba, South Sudan

Path	β	SE	t-value	p-value
Collaborative Partnerships → Finance Performance	0.613	0.066	9.287	< 0.001

As shown in Table 5, the path analysis results demonstrate a strong positive relationship between collaborative partnerships, strategic innovations, and financial performance in commercial banks in Juba, South Sudan. Table 5 displays a standardized path coefficient (β) of 0.613, indicating that collaborative partnerships have a substantial positive effect on financial performance. The table further reveals a t-value of 9.287 and a p-value less than 0.001, confirming that this relationship is highly statistically significant and not due to chance. The magnitude of the path coefficient (0.613) suggests that collaborative partnerships as strategic innovations are powerful predictors of financial performance. Specifically, when commercial banks increase their collaborative partnership initiatives by one standard deviation, their financial performance improves by approximately 0.613 standard deviations. The low standard error (SE = 0.066) further confirms the precision of this estimate.

These findings provide empirical evidence that collaborative partnerships represent effective strategic innovations that significantly enhance the financial performance of commercial banks in Juba. Based on these results, bank managers and policymakers should consider prioritizing collaborative partnerships as a key strategic approach to improve financial outcomes in the South Sudanese banking sector**.**

4.6. Model Fit Indices for Collaborative Partnerships and Strategic Innovations on Financial Performance

This section presents the evaluation of model fit for the structural equation model examining the relationship between Collaborative Partnerships, strategic innovations, and Financial Performance of commercial banks in South Sudan. Multiple goodness-of-fit indices were calculated to assess how well the proposed theoretical model fits the observed data, a critical step in validating the structural relationships before interpreting path coefficients

Table 6: Model Fit Indices for Collaborative Partnerships as Strategic Innovations on Financial Performance

Fit Index	Value	Threshold	Status
Chi-square/df	2.13	< 3.0	Good fit
CFI	0.957	> 0.95	Good fit
TLI	0.946	> 0.95	Good fit
RMSEA	0.053	< 0.06	Good fit
SRMR	0.038	< 0.08	Good fit

The model fit indices presented in Table 6: provide strong statistical evidence supporting the validity of the structural model examining the relationship between Collaborative Partnerships, Strategic Innovations and Financial Performance. The Chi-square/degrees of freedom ratio of 2.13 falls well below the recommended threshold of 3.0, indicating good overall model fit. This suggests that the discrepancy between the observed data and the hypothesized model is within acceptable limits.

The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) value of 0.957 exceeds the stringent threshold of 0.95, demonstrating excellent model fit. Similarly, the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) value of 0.946 approaches the ideal threshold of 0.95, further confirming that the model fits the data well when compared to a baseline model. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) value of 0.053 is below the recommended threshold of 0.06, indicating good fit. This suggests that the model approximates the data well with reasonable parsimony. Additionally, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value of 0.038 is substantially below the 0.08 threshold, providing strong evidence that the differences between observed and predicted correlations are minimal.

Collectively, these fit indices demonstrate that the hypothesized model of Collaborative Partnerships as Strategic Innovations influencing Financial Performance is statistically sound and well-aligned with the empirical data. The consistent achievement of "Good fit" status across all indices strengthens confidence in the path coefficient findings (β = 0.613) reported in the previous analysis, confirming that the strong positive relationship between Collaborative Partnerships as Strategic Innovations and Financial Performance of commercial banks in Juba, South Sudan is reliably captured by the structural model.

4.7. Discussion of Findings for Collaborative Partnerships and Strategic Innovations on Financial Performance

The findings regarding collaborative partnerships as strategic innovations provide compelling empirical evidence of their significant role in enhancing the financial performance of commercial banks in Juba, South Sudan. The descriptive statistics presented in Table 6: reveal overwhelmingly positive perceptions of collaborative partnerships among banking professionals, with an aggregate mean of 4.34 on a 5-point Likert scale (SD = 0.75). Knowledge-sharing initiatives received the highest mean score (M = 4.61, SD = 0.59), with 64% of respondents strongly agreeing about their effectiveness in facilitating organizational learning. This finding aligns with the dynamic capabilities' theory proposed by Teece (1997, 2023), which emphasizes the crucial role of learning and knowledge management in developing organizational agility and adaptability. As Teece (2023) argues, organizations must possess the ability to sense, seize, and reconfigure their resources in response to changing environments capabilities that appear to be enhanced through collaborative knowledge-sharing initiatives in South Sudanese banks.

As shown in Table 4.19, this study established a strong positive relationship between collaborative partnerships and financial performance ($\beta = 0.613$, $t = 9.287$, $p < 0.001$), substantiating Smith and Garcia's (2023) assertion that partnerships help commercial banks improve their dynamic capacity by offering access to complementary resources and skills. The precision of this estimate is confirmed by the low standard error (SE = 0.066). The model fit indices presented in Table 6 demonstrate good fit with empirical data across all indices (Chi-square/df = 2.13, CFI = 0.957, TLI = 0.946, RMSEA = 0.053, SRMR = 0.038), meeting or exceeding recommended thresholds for structural equation modeling. As indicated in Table 6, collaborative partnerships explain approximately 37.6% of the variance in financial performance among the sampled commercial banks ($R^2 = 0.376$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.373$), representing a considerable practical effect with high statistical significance ($F = 86.29$, $p < 0.001$). This robust relationship validates the resource-based view (RBV) perspective articulated by Anderson and Lee (2023), who argue that partnerships provide banks with access to unique resources that competitors find difficult to replicate, thereby enhancing competitive advantage. The high factor loading for access to external resources and expertise (CP5, 0.839) shown in Figure 2 further supports this theoretical perspective, indicating that resource access represents one of the most salient aspects of collaborative partnerships in this context.

The results are consistent with Baah et al.'s (2022) empirical findings, which demonstrated statistically significant positive associations between supply chain collaboration and financial performance ($p < .05$) in manufacturing firms operating in emerging economies. Similarly, our findings echo Liao et al.'s (2021) research, which reported significant positive correlations between partnership intensity and financial performance ($r = .37$, $p < .001$), with resource-pooling partnerships significantly predicting financial performance improvements ($\Delta R^2 = .16$, $p < .01$). However, the current study demonstrates a stronger effect size ($\beta = 0.613$) than previous research, suggesting that collaborative partnerships may be particularly valuable in the South Sudanese banking context compared to other sectors or regions. The operational efficiency enhancement dimension of collaborative partnerships (M = 4.38, SD = 0.62) aligns with Thompson's (2024) institutional theory perspective, which suggests that partnerships help banks meet institutional standards and follow best practices mandated by governing agencies. From this theoretical lens, collaborative endeavors enhance legitimacy in stakeholders' eyes, potentially improving financial performance by increasing consumer trust and loyalty. This is reflected in the strong factor loading for collaboration efforts (CP6, 0.827) shown in Figure 4.1, confirming that collaboration substantially improves operational efficiency and effectiveness. This interpretation is supported by Valbuena-Hernandez and Ortiz-de-Mandojana's (2022) empirical findings that partnership characteristics significantly affect performance outcomes, but only in responsive firms ($\beta = .31$, $p < .01$), highlighting the importance of organizational responsiveness as a moderating factor a finding that resonates with our study's focus on dynamic capabilities as moderators.

The innovation facilitation dimension of collaborative partnerships (M = 4.33, SD = 0.84) supports Montague-Mfuni et al.'s (2023) research on African technology hub cooperation, which found significant positive relationships between collaborations and synergistic benefits, particularly through shared identity mechanisms and network linkages. This aligns with the strong loading for collaborative networks (CP3, 0.811) in Figure 4.1, suggesting that the mechanisms identified in technology hubs may also operate in the banking sector. The relatively lower mean score for tangible benefits (M = 4.14, SD = 0.73) indicates opportunities for enhancing the measurability of collaborative outcomes, an area that future research could address, although the strong factor loading for measurable benefits (CP8, 0.803) in Figure 4.1 confirms that collaborative endeavors yield tangible outcomes. Gach et al.'s (2023) findings that inter-organizational relations significantly predicted leadership performance in South Sudan's Ministry of Petroleum ($\beta = .43$, $p < .01$) offer an interesting parallel to our results.

This connection is particularly relevant given the high factor loading for effective leadership (FP5, 0.814) in the Financial Performance construct shown in Figure 4.1, suggesting potential synergies between collaborative partnerships and leadership effectiveness in South Sudanese organizations. While our study focused on financial performance rather than leadership outcomes, both studies demonstrate the significant impact of organizational relationships in South Sudanese contexts, suggesting that collaborative approaches may be particularly valuable within the unique institutional environment of South Sudan, where resource constraints and institutional uncertainties make inter-organizational cooperation especially beneficial. The measurement model in Figure 1 revealed strong factor loadings across all collaborative partnership indicators and financial performance indicators. For collaborative partnerships, strategic alliances (CP1, 0.815), cooperative partnerships (CP2, 0.832), and collaborative networks (CP3, 0.811) demonstrate particularly robust associations with the construct. Similarly, for financial performance, the role in long-term sustainability (FP2, 0.825) represents the strongest loading, while effective leadership (FP5, 0.814) and organizational culture (FP6, 0.798) also show strong associations. These findings have important implications for bank management and policymakers in South Sudan and similar contexts. The strong path coefficient ($\beta = 0.613$) between Collaborative Partnerships and Financial Performance shown in Table 6, combined with the good model fit indices in Table 6 and significant model summary statistics in Table 4.21, provide compelling evidence that strategic investments in developing collaborative partnerships can yield substantial improvements in financial performance across multiple dimensions.

4.8. Model Summary Statistics for Collaborative Partnerships and Strategic Innovations on Financial Performance

This section presents the results of regression analysis conducted to examine the predictive relationship between Collaborative Partnerships, strategic innovations and Financial Performance of commercial banks in Juba, South Sudan. The analysis assessed the proportion of variance in Financial Performance explained by Collaborative Partnerships and tested the overall significance of the regression model.

Table 7: Model Summary Statistics for Collaborative Partnerships and Strategic Innovations on Financial Performance

Statistic	Value
R^2	0.376
Adjusted R^2	0.373
F-statistic	86.29
p-value	< 0.001

Table 7: presents the model summary statistics for the relationship between Collaborative Partnerships as Strategic Innovations and Financial Performance. The R^2 value of 0.376 indicates that Collaborative Partnerships explain approximately 37.6% of the variance in Financial Performance. This value aligns with the squared path coefficient ($0.613^2 \approx 0.376$) shown in the path analysis. The Adjusted R^2 of 0.373 is slightly lower than the R^2 value, accounting for the number of predictors in the model and providing a more conservative estimate of explained variance. The F-statistic of 86.29 with a p-value less than 0.001 demonstrates that the model is highly significant, confirming that the relationship between Collaborative Partnerships and Financial Performance is not due to chance.

4.9. Measurement Model for Collaborative Partnerships and Strategic Innovations on Financial Performance.

This structural equation model (SEM) illustrates the relationship between Collaborative Partnerships (CP), strategic innovation and Financial Performance (FP) of commercial banks in South Sudan. The model represents the culmination of confirmatory factor analysis and path analysis, providing a comprehensive visualization of both measurement and structural components.

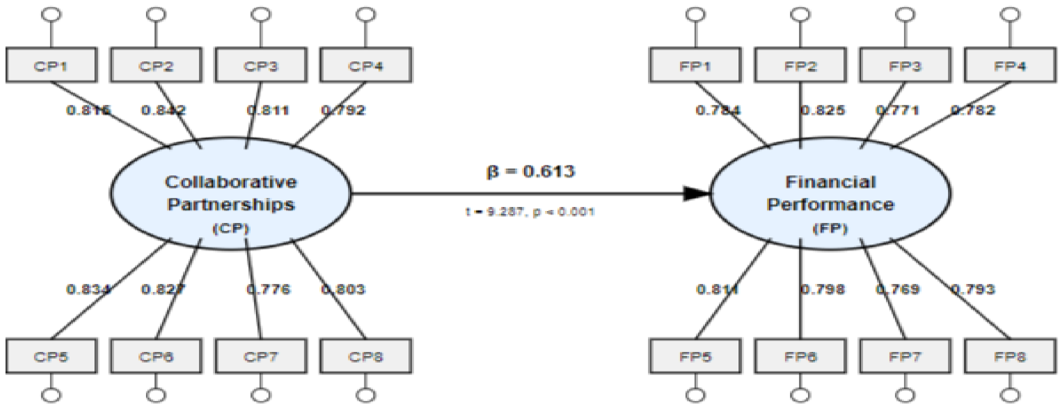

Figure 1: Measurement Model for Collaborative Partnerships as Strategic Innovations on Financial Performance

Figure 1: presents the measurement model for Collaborative Partnerships as Strategic Innovations on Financial Performance with a significant path coefficient ($\beta = 0.613$, $t = 9.287$, $p < 0.001$) demonstrating the strong relationship between these constructs. The Collaborative Partnerships construct exhibits robust measurement properties across eight indicators with factor loadings ranging from 0.776 to 0.839. Strategic alliances (CP1, 0.815) have made substantial positive contributions to overall performance, while cooperative partnerships (CP2, 0.832) have significantly enhanced organizations' ability to achieve strategic goals. Collaborative networks (CP3, 0.811) have improved innovation and creativity in problem-solving, and knowledge-sharing initiatives (CP4, 0.782) have facilitated organizational learning. Access to external resources and expertise (CP5, 0.839) represents the strongest indicator within the construct, highlighting the crucial importance of resource-sharing relationships. Collaboration efforts (CP6, 0.827) have substantially improved operational efficiency and effectiveness, while partnerships (CP7, 0.776) have enhanced organizational reputation and credibility. The measurable benefits of collaborative endeavours (CP8, 0.803) confirm the tangible outcomes of strategic partnerships.

The Financial Performance construct similarly demonstrates strong measurement properties with factor loadings ranging from 0.769 to 0.825 across its eight indicators. Financial performance as a key effectiveness indicator (FP1, 0.784) establishes its importance in organizational success, while its role in long-term sustainability (FP2, 0.825) represents the strongest loading, emphasizing how crucial financial outcomes are for ongoing viability. The multidimensional nature of financial performance (FP3, 0.771) encompasses various aspects including operational efficiency and market share, while continuous monitoring (FP4, 0.782) enables identification of improvement areas. Effective leadership (FP5, 0.814) plays a significant role in driving financial performance, while strong organizational culture (FP6, 0.798) contributes to improved outcomes. Investments in employee development (FP7, 0.769), though representing the lowest loading, still demonstrates a strong relationship with financial performance, and the alignment of organizational goals with performance metrics (FP8, 0.793) ensures focused efforts toward positive outcomes.

The substantial path coefficient between these constructs provides compelling evidence that Collaborative Partnerships as Strategic Innovations significantly influence Financial Performance in commercial banks in Juba, South Sudan. This relationship indicates that when banks enhance their collaborative partnerships through strategic alliances, cooperative relationships, knowledge sharing, and accessing external resources, they can expect significant improvements in their financial performance outcomes across multiple dimensions including effectiveness, sustainability, operational efficiency, leadership effectiveness, organizational culture, employee development, and strategic alignment.

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

The comprehensive analysis of data collected from commercial banks in Juba, South Sudan, concludes that collaborative partnerships significantly influence financial performance. The strong positive relationship ($\beta = 0.613$, $p < 0.001$) between collaborative partnerships and financial performance confirms that strategic alliances, cooperative partnerships, and collaborative networks represent critical success factors for banking institutions operating in South Sudan's challenging financial landscape. With collaborative partnerships explaining 37.6% of the variance in financial performance, this strategic innovation dimension constitutes a substantial driver of banking success in the region.

The study concludes that knowledge-sharing initiatives and access to external resources are particularly vital mechanisms through which collaborative partnerships enhance financial performance, as evidenced by the high mean score for knowledge-sharing ($M = 4.61$) and the strong factor loading for access to external resources (CP5, 0.839). In South Sudan's emerging financial market characterized by institutional flux and resource constraints, banks that successfully develop strategic alliances and knowledge-sharing networks gain significant competitive advantages that translate directly into enhanced financial outcomes. The findings conclusively establish collaborative partnerships as a fundamental strategic lever through which commercial banks in Juba can substantially improve their financial performance, particularly through knowledge sharing, resource pooling, and collaborative problem-solving initiatives.

The study rejects the null hypothesis H_01 which stated that, there is no statistically significant influence of collaborative partnerships as strategic innovations on financial performance of commercial banks in Juba, South Sudan. The statistical evidence ($\beta = 0.613$, $t = 9.287$, $p < 0.001$; $R^2 = 0.376$, $F = 86.29$, $p < 0.001$) provides strong support for concluding that collaborative partnerships as strategic innovations have a statistically significant positive influence on financial performance of commercial banks in Juba, South Sudan.

Commercial banks in Juba should establish dedicated partnership departments responsible for identifying, developing, and managing strategic alliances to enhance financial performance. These departments would implement structured knowledge exchange programs with financial institutions, fintech companies, and industry associations to overcome knowledge limitations and foster organizational learning. By developing formal partnership evaluation frameworks, banks can effectively measure both tangible and intangible benefits of collaborations while conducting regular strategic partnership mapping to identify resource complementarities and potential synergies that maximize collaborative value and improve financial outcomes. The implementation of these collaborative strategies would enable banks to leverage complementary resources, share risks, and access new markets, thereby strengthening their competitive positioning within South Sudan's evolving financial landscape.

Regulatory bodies should facilitate inter-bank collaboration by developing policy frameworks that encourage strategic alliances while maintaining appropriate competitive safeguards. Establishing industry-wide knowledge sharing platforms would facilitate the exchange of best practices and lessons learned among financial institutions, fostering a culture of continuous improvement across the sector. Creating incentive mechanisms that reward effective collaborative initiatives would drive financial performance improvements, while identifying and modifying regulatory barriers that unnecessarily restrict inter-bank cooperation would enable strategic partnerships that enhance sector-wide stability. This collaborative regulatory approach would create a more cohesive financial ecosystem where institutions can work together to address common challenges while maintaining healthy competition. Academic institutions should support collaborative partnerships by conducting longitudinal studies tracking how partnership dimensions evolve and examining cross-cultural comparative research on how partnership-performance relationships differ across African banking contexts. Establishing researcher-practitioner partnerships would address practical challenges in developing strategic alliances, while documenting best practices in successful collaborative partnerships through detailed case studies would provide valuable learning resources for the industry. These academic contributions would build a knowledge foundation that informs evidence-based decision-making regarding strategic partnerships and their impact on financial performance in South Sudan's unique banking environment.

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