



RESEARCH ARTICLE

KNOWLEDGE OF STREET VENDORS IN OVERCOMING CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH THE GOVERNMENT REQUIREMENTS- A SOUTH AFRICAN CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine whether micro-enterprises such as street vendors have administrative knowledge to overcome challenges associated with the government requirements. A questionnaire was administered to street vendors around the Johannesburg area to fulfil aims of this study. Descriptive results reveal a significant number of street vendors would abandon their current economic activity for jobs that pay at least US\$200 a week; most street vendors have below high school education; and the vast majority of street vendors do not have any business administrative training. Inferential results reveal that government policies on micro-enterprises are almost unknown to street vendors; government laws on micro-enterprises are perceived as an impediment to street vending; and law enforcement agencies on micro-enterprise are perceived as hindering street vending. This study contributes to the understanding of fissures in the dissemination of government requirements to street vendors; and the comprehension of cracks in channels available to influence government policies, laws, and practice in favour of street vendors. Accordingly, there is a need for government to socialize street vendors (not through law enforcement) about policies, laws, and practices that nurture micro-enterprises

INTRODUCTION

Street vending is ubiquitous, especially in developing countries and despite its role in pro-poor economies, it has received little attention; much has been focused on its negative impacts like, use of public space, congestion, health and safety risks, tax evasion and the sale of shoddy merchandise (Mramba, 2015). The positive role of street vendors is in providing essential commodities to common people at affordable prices and at convenient places; however, micro-enterprises have decorated the streets of Harare and have become an increasingly visible and disruptive locus of conflict between the government's efforts to maintain public order on one hand and the citizens' efforts to generate income on the other (Njaya, 2014). Some of the largest and fastest growing sectors of African economies are dominated by micro-businesses: wholesale and retail trade, transportation, restaurants, electronic media reproduction, carpentry, construction, real estate, etc. (Benjamin *et al.*, 2014). In sub-Saharan countries where formal employments are little and the level of education of many youth is minimal, informal business could serve as an alternative source of employment (Mramba, 2015). Permanent protected jobs in the organised sector are shrinking and even those with requisite skills are unable to find employment, street vendors try to overcome their problems by pooling their meagre resources and starting their own micro-enterprises (Bhowmik, 2010).

Unemployment, low productivity in agriculture and the need to migrate to the urban to search for employment has forced millions of the youth in developing countries to engage in micro-enterprises (Aryeetey, 2009). Lyons and Msoka (2010) define street vending as all non-criminal commercial activity dependent on access to public space, including market trade, trade from fixed locations and hawking (mobile vending). Street vendor may refer to vendors with fixed stalls, such as kiosks; vendors who operate from semi-fixed stalls, like folding tables, crates, collapsible stands, or wheeled pushcarts that are removed from the streets and stored overnight; vendors who sell from fixed locations without a stall structure, displaying merchandise on cloth or plastic sheets; or mobile vendors who walk or bicycle through the streets as they sell (Roever, 2010; Njaya, 2014). Njaya (2014) noted that solutions that involve the creation of off-street markets could not work because customers did not necessarily follow the vendors who are then rapidly replaced by new vendors in their previous location. In this study, the terms "street vendor", "informal traders", "street trader", "hawker" and "micro-enterprise" have the same meaning and they are often interchanged. The micro-enterprise faces many challenges due to the absence of supportive laws, regulations, and policies of the government; as a consequence their contribution to the income poverty reduction is minimal (Mramba, 2015). In Tanzania, street traders are usually concerned with confrontation with local authorities, and at the end they lose their products and money (Mramba, 2015). The authorities in most cases hound them out of the streets or force them to pay bribes in order to remain (Bhowmik, 2010).

Vendors are continuously on the run due to constant harassment, assault and seizure of goods by the local government authorities or police in and other users of the city space (Asiedu&Agyei-Mensah, 2008). Street vendors lack formal association(s) that can coordinate strategies across different groups to gain recognition by the state and hence achieve sectorial governance (Njaya, 2014). The purpose of this study is to determine whether street vendors have administrative knowledge to overcome impediments associated with government requirements. Subsequent sections of this study are organised into: Literature Overview, Theoretical Foundations, Research Methodology, Study Findings, Discussion of Results, and Conclusions and Recommendations.

Literature Overview

Characteristics of micro-enterprises were studied in South African cities (Horn, 2011; VanEeden, 2011; Roever, 2010). The informal sector mainly attracted young people, 60% of the surveyed traders have been in business for less than five years, and respondents had at least secondary education (Horn, 2011). Arts and crafts comprise a relatively small component of micro-enterprises, and have generally operated for five years or longer (Van Eeden, 2011). Further, crafts businesses demonstrated strong spatial correlations between recognised tourist routes in the cities (Van Eeden, 2011). Roever (2010) compiled information on the extent of organization among street traders and found the empirical importance of micro-enterprises as a major issue in Latin American urban governance.

Micro-enterprises are claimed to be important for surviving or escaping poverty in developing country cities (Lyons & Msoka, 2009). Although food micro-enterprises are illegal and unrecognised, they significantly helped to reduce unemployment, increased incomes of vendors, provided strong economic linkages in the economy and provided urban dwellers with inexpensive, varied products and nutritious indigenous meals lastly (Njaya, 2014). Rolfe *et al.* (2010) studied the extent to which African street vending trade spawns viable micro-enterprises, and found that the median income for retail micro-enterprise falls below the minimum wage and the best chance to success seems to be locations in urban areas.

Micro-enterprises such as street vending business operations and its interventions can lead to an income poverty reduction (Aryeetey, 2009; Mramba, 2015; Njaya, 2014). Drawing out some of the barriers hindering the micro-enterprises in the growth process Aryeetey (2009) suggested that under conditions of high unemployment and growing poverty, micro-enterprises are likely to expand and should be viewed more positively with a view to enhancing their productivity by removing institutional obstacles to the achievement of higher productivity. Mramba, (2015) found that street vending business, like any other micro- enterprises, is important to the livelihood of many less educated Tanzanians.

The main reason for the extensiveness of the micro-enterprise lies in regulations, restrictions and the high cost of entering the formal sector (Granström, 2009). Njaya (2014) found, after reviewing the Public Health Act of Zimbabwe, that it has origins in colonial stringent conditions for registration; and were designed to protect macro-enterprises while subjecting micro-enterprises (traditionally by indigenous communities) to

harassment for failure to meet prescribed standards. Mramba (2015) identified their challenges as absence of supportive laws, regulations, and policies of the government; as a consequence their contribution to the income poverty reduction is minimal. Furthermore, they are challenged by unstable security, unplanned policies on urban development, and harassment from the owners of macro-enterprises, and low level of business skills (LargasFalla, 2013). Lawmakers must consider mechanisms by which street vendors can have their interests represented without being overruled by other interests that may be more politically powerful, such as local law enforcement agencies, neighborhood associations, or retailers (Frank, 2010).

A key component of the African agenda should be to improve the collection and analysis of data on micro-enterprises with the key objective of identifying segments in the micro-enterprises that can be targeted with appropriate policies (Aryeetey, 2009). Therefore, this study aims to determine whether micro-enterprises such as street vendors have administrative knowledge to overcome challenges associated with the government requirements presented in this literature overview.

Theoretical Framework

De Soto (1989) provides a theoretical framework to guide this study to determine whether micro-enterprises such as street vendors have administrative knowledge to overcome challenges associated with government requirements. The theory of De Soto (1989) is summarised hereunder:

The existence of massive exclusion generates two parallel economies, legal and extra-legal. An elite minority enjoys the economic benefits of the law and globalization, while the majority of entrepreneurs are stuck in poverty, where their assets (adding up to more than US\$10 trillion worldwide) languish as dead capital in the shadows of the law. In order to survive, to protect their assets, and to do as much business as possible, the extra-legal create their own rules. But because these local arrangements are full of shortcomings and are not easily enforceable, the extra-legal also create their own social, political and economic problems that affect the society at large. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, responsible nations around the developing world have worked hard to make the transition to a market economy, but have failed. Populist leaders have used this failure of the free market system to wipe out poverty in the developing world to beat their "anti-globalization" drums. But the real enemy is within the flawed legal systems of developing nations that make it virtually impossible for the majority of their people (and their assets) to gain a stake in the market.

The people of these countries have talent, enthusiasm, and an astonishing ability to wring a profit out of practically nothing. What the poor majority in the developing world do not have is easy access to the legal system which, in the advanced nations of the world and for the elite in their countries, is the gateway to economic success, for it is in the legal system where property documents are created and standardized according to law. That documentation builds a public memory that permits society to engage in such crucial economic activities as identifying and gaining access to information about individuals, their assets, their titles, rights, charges and

obligations; establishing the limits of liability for businesses; knowing an asset's previous economic situation; assuring protection of third parties; and quantifying and valuing assets and rights. These public memory mechanisms in turn facilitate such opportunities as access to credit, the establishment of systems of identification, the creation of systems for credit and insurance information, the provision for housing and infrastructure, the issue of shares, the mortgage of property and a host of other economic activities that drive a modern market economy.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The function of the research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained enables this study to determine whether micro-enterprises such as street vendors have administrative knowledge to overcome challenges associated with the government requirements, as unambiguously as possible. Data in this study is collected through a survey tool distributed to street vendors, and the survey consists of the following six research constructs: (a) profile of the micro-enterprise practitioners; (b) government policies on micro-enterprise; (c) laws obstructing micro-enterprises; (d) micro-enterprise enforcement agencies; (e) macro-enterprise obstacles; and (f) economic value of micro-enterprises.

The first five constructs of the questionnaire represented factors that were hypothesised to have a possible impact on the economic value of micro-enterprises. Thus, the independent variables of this study are represented by the first five research constructs, and the last construct is the resultant or dependant variable. In this study Sixty-five questions will constitute the survey instrument where fifteen questions concerned the profile of the micro-enterprise practitioner through a mixture of nominal and ordinal attributes (see table above). The remaining fifty questions have 5-point Likert-scale ordinal attributes, and are equally distributed among the five ordinal construct (see table above). Data will be quantitatively analysed using the SPSS software package. First, reliability and validity tests will be performed on collected data. Then, descriptive statistical analysis will be performed on collected data. Inferential statistical tests will also be used to test the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable. Correlation tests will be conducted with a confidence level of 99% and all other tests will be performed with a confidence level of 95% unless otherwise specified.

Study Findings

Data Reliability and Validity

Findings on the reliability and validity tests performed on the collected for all the Likert-scale based research variables are summarised in the table below:

The questionnaire employed to collect data for this study is both valid and reliable for constructs and items contained in Table 2 above. Therefore, analysis of results will only be based on valid and reliable constructs and items from Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics

This section quantitatively describes the main features of a collection of information from street vendors, or the quantitative description of street vendors itself.

The descriptive statistics computed by this research shows a perceived profile of street merchants as: 59.17% male; 77.50% are between 18 and 50 years old; 56.20% have been trading for over 4 years; 55.50% have a below secondary education; 89.16% earn below US\$200 per week; 30.83% trade in foods and 20% trade on "other"; 57.5% trade at a fixed location without a stall; 50.83% trade in moderately crowded city areas; 60.51% support between 2 and 6 dependants; 56.67% were previously employed; 79.17% have no employees; 63.3% have been allocated trading spots; 63.34% will quit for a weekly wage of at least US\$200; and 75.83% have not been trained in any form of business administration.

Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistics allows us to draw conclusions from data that might not be immediately obvious. Thus, regression analysis was performed between each profile item of street vendors, against the dependent variable on the economic contribution; and correlation tests were also performed between each Likert-scale based research variable against the dependent variable.

Regression Analysis

Of the 15 profile items of the street vendor, 11 did not relate to the dependant variable (i.e. Economic Contribution). Items that are related with the dependant variable are: educational level (0.041), vending stall type (0.00), and training in business administration (0.043).

Correlations

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Regression analysis reveals the following significance between relationships of items from the profile of street vendors (respondents and independent variable) and economic contribution of street vendors (dependent variable): (i) educational level (0.041), (ii) vending stall type (0.00), and (iii) training in business administration (0.043). Therefore, only the preceding items from the profile of the street vendor are discussed hereunder. Majority of street vendors who informed this study (55.50%) have a below secondary education. Schooling does not seem to be significant in determining the value-add in the microenterprise space, because, education becomes less attractive when the easy entry to informality ensures a minimum income (Granström, 2009; Horn, 2011; Njaya, 2014; Roever, 2006).

Thus, this finding is validated by De Soto's (1989) assertion that people from developing countries have talent, enthusiasm, and an astonishing ability to wring a profit out of practically nothing. This study finds that 57.5% of street vendors use fixed location without a stall, and confirms the assertion of Njaya (2014) that the facilities used included kiosks, open spaces, wooden or canvas or polythene stalls, hawker's kiosks, push carts, cycles, collapsible stands, semi-fixed stalls such as folding tables, crates, trucks, other vehicles, vans and vans with specific food service equipment. In many cases stalls or tables are erected in public space in outright contravention of planning law and municipal bye-laws (Lynos & Brown, 2011; Mramba, 2015).

Table 1. Questionnaire Structure

Section	Construct	Purpose	Variables	Measure
A	Profile of the micro-enterprise practitioners	Qualities that makes the respondent succeed	15 and independent	Nominal and Ordinal
B	Government policies on micro-enterprise	Government policies that relate to hinder/empower	10 and independent	5-point Likert scale and ordinal
C	Laws obstructing micro-enterprises	Laws that hinder/empower	10 and independent	5-point Likert scale and ordinal
D	Micro-enterprise enforcement agencies	Agencies that enforce government policies and laws	10 and independent	5-point Likert scale and ordinal
E	Macro-enterprise obstacles	Obstruction of micro-enterprise by macro-enterprises	10 and independent	5-point Likert scale and ordinal
F	Economic value of micro-enterprises	Contribution of micro-enterprises to the economic development	10 and dependent	5-point Likert scale and ordinal

Table 2. Reliability and validity of Likert-scale based research variables

Construct	Survey items	Retained Items	Cronbach coefficient (α)
Governmental Policies (B)	10	7 (i.e. B3, B4, B5, B6, B7, B8, B9)	0,93
Obstructing Laws (C)	10	6 (i.e. C5, C6, C7, C8, C9, C10)	0,92
Enforcement Hindrances (D)	10	5 (i.e. D6, D7, D8, D9, D10)	0,87
Established Business (E)	10	6 (i.e. E5, E6, E7, E8, E9, E10)	0,89
Economic Contribution (F)	10	6 (i.e. F4, F5, F6, F7, F9, F10)	0,79

Table 3. Correlations

		Policies	Laws	Enforcement	Established Business	Economy
Policies	Pearson Correlation					
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N					
Laws	Pearson Correlation	-0.51				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000				
	N	119				
Enforcement	Pearson Correlation	-0.43	0.49			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000			
	N	119	119			
Established Business	Pearson Correlation	-0.47	0.48	0.46		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0,00	0.00	0.00		
	N	119	119	119		
Economy	Pearson Correlation	-0.34	0.41	0.31	0,49	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	
	N	119	119	119	119	

Results of the preceding table reveal that all Likert-type variables are interrelated as depicted in the diagram below

This finding articulates with the view of De Soto (1989) that local arrangements are full of shortcomings and is not easily enforceable; the extra-legal also create their own social, political and economic problems that affect the society at large. Overwhelming respondents (75.83%) of this study have not been trained in any form of business administration, and seem as a consequence of the earlier finding that 55.50% have a below secondary education. Nevertheless, these vendors are capable of adjusting their commercial strategies to capture clients in multiple strategic locations (Roever, 2006). This finding is aligned with the view of De Soto (1989) that disadvantaged people often have talent, enthusiasm, and an astonishing ability to wring a profit out of practically nothing. Figure 1, above, depicts correlation inferences of this study where all Likert-type constructs are interrelated. Accordingly, variables assumed independent in this study are inferred dependant.

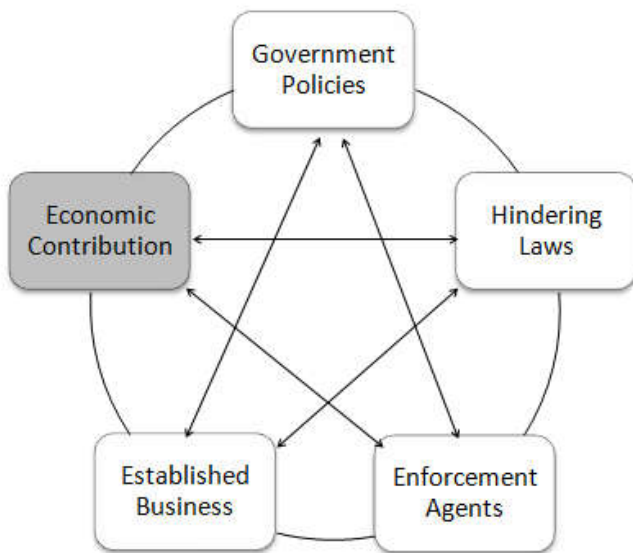
Governmental Policies

The gap between policy and environment for implementing development policies is wider in Africa than elsewhere, and hence the emergence of economic arrangements that allow agents to achieve their smaller; government

Policies weaken the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policies and programmes aimed at reducing poverty (Aryeety, 2009). Review of comparative laws demonstrate, even the best laws are meaningless if they cannot be adequately enforced, if they are impracticable, or if there is not a forum for dispute resolution (Frank, 2010). There are those who advocate growth at all cost and those who suggest that the emphasis be placed on policies that directly affect the poor; other economists have argued that it is also necessary to analyse the critical pathways by which broad-based growth leads to poverty reduction instead of focusing on only pro poor policies (Aryeety, 2009). Thus, De Soto (1989) is validated on the fact that an economic activity such as identifying and gaining access to information is crucial.

Obstructing Laws

The street vendors face many challenges due to the absence of supportive laws, regulations, and policies of the government; as a consequence their contribution to the income poverty reduction is minimal (Bhomwik, 2010; Mramba, 2015). Usually governments do not provide access to infrastructure and other public services such as toilets ((Aryeety, 2009).



1. Correlation of Lickert-type Constructs

Bhomwik (2010) points to the need for urban planning, policy and management interventions to adopt a specific, rather than generic approach to street trading. The preceding assertions support De Soto (1989) in that the real enemy is within the flawed legal systems of developing nations that make it virtually impossible for the majority of their people (and their assets) to gain a stake in the market).

Enforcement Hindrances

There is large-scale destruction of stalls and tables, wares and goods critical to the economy of the poor and potentially of value to the economy of the country (Lynos& Brown, 2011). Currently the government of Tanzania is using millions of money to pay police and security guards to remove street vendors, such amount of money could be used for income poverty reduction. The future studies should test the model in different African countries (Mramba, 2015). Despite these violent evictions and confiscations of merchandise, street traders continued to occupy new locations and to operate outside the bounds of the law (Njaya, 2014). The country's legal codes need to legalize a far broader range of businesses offer more stability, and reduce the barriers for upward mobility for those micro-enterprises which are able to expand (Lynos& Brown, 2011). The foregoing supports the view of De Soto (1989); namely, local arrangements are full of shortcomings and are not easily enforceable.

Established Business

The positive role of street vendors is in providing essential commodities to common people at affordable prices and at convenient places (Njaya, 2014); which is something established business finds difficult to accomplish. Some policies are aimed directly at reducing barriers to entry and asset accumulation for small firms, or raising wages and work conditions for vulnerable workers (Aryeety, 2009); established business may use their financial and political influence to oppose such policies. Established business tends to influence government laws to create uneconomic off-street markets for the microeconomic sector (Njaya, 2014).

Lawmakers must consider mechanisms by which street vendors can have their interests represented without being overruled by other interests that may be more politically powerful, such as local law enforcement agencies, neighbourhood associations, or retailers (Frank, 2010). De Soto (1989) asserts that the real enemy is within the flawed legal systems of developing nations that make it virtually impossible for the majority of their people to gain a stake in the market.

Economic Contribution

Economic contribution of street vending confirms previous studies (Mramba, 2015; Bhomwik, 2010; Granström, 2009; Lynos& Brown, 2011; Aryeety, 2009). Street vending acts as a substitute of employment for those who lacked such opportunity in formal sector due to low level of education (Mramba, 2015). In most cities in the world the urban poor survive by working in the informal economy (Bhomwik, 2010). The microenterprise sector offers jobs where high education is not needed (Granström, 2009); The income from microenterprise sector provides is probably the only means of survival for the majority of urban poor, and the income it provides allows children of the poor to continue in education and rural families to benefit from remittances, thus supporting inter-generational escape from poverty and informality on the one hand (Lynos& Brown, 2011). The informal economy directly or indirectly has linkages with the formal economy (Aryeety, 2009). De Soto (1989) is confirmed on the observation that local arrangements are full of shortcomings and are not easily enforceable, whence the extra-legal also create their own social, political and economic problems that affect the society at large.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study set to determine whether micro-enterprises such as street vendors have administrative knowledge to overcome challenges associated with government requirements. A survey tool was developed, on the basis of concepts from previous studies, to collect information to fulfil the objective of this study. Five variables emerged, namely, (a) profile of the micro-enterprise practitioners; (b) government policies on micro-enterprise; (c) laws obstructing micro-enterprises; (d) micro-enterprise enforcement agencies; (e) macro-enterprise obstacles; and (f) economic value of micro-enterprises. Data was collected from street vendors around Johannesburg area, and validity and reliability tests were performed to ensure integrity of research items of the questionnaire.

Descriptive results reveal a significant number of street vendors would abandon their current economic activity for jobs that pay at least US\$200 per week; most street vendors have below high school education; and vast majority do not have any business administrative training. Inferential results of this study reveal that street vendors do not have administrative knowledge to overcome challenges associated with the government requirements. Consequently, government policies on micro-enterprises are almost unknown by street vendors; government laws on micro-enterprises are perceived as an impediment; law enforcement agencies on micro-enterprise are perceived as hindering street vending. There is a perceived interrelationship among all constructs of this study.

This study contributes to understanding gaps in the dissemination of government requirements among street vendors; and the comprehension of cracks in channels available to influence government policies, laws, and practice in favour of street vendors. Accordingly, there is a need for government to socialize street vendors (not through punitive law enforcement) about policies, laws, and practices applicable to micro-enterprises. Limitations of this study are that majority of street vendors are accustomed to gifts/dishes in exchange for responding to questionnaires, apparently practiced by market researchers. As well, most willing respondents had difficulty with English, and required the researcher to interview and record their responses, whence anonymity could be compromised. Further studies are needed to determine responses of government (provincial and municipal) officials, paid to nurture microenterprises, on the gaps in the dissemination of government requirements among street vendors; and on lack of knowledge about channels available to influence government policies, laws, and practice in favour of street vendors.

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