

**EXPERIENCES OF VEGETABLE VENDORS DURING THE COVID 19  
PANDEMIC. A CASE STUDY OF VENDORS IN HARARE CBD**

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## DECLARATION FORM

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The study explored the experiences of vegetable vendors during the Covid 19 era in Harare central business district. The study had the following objectives To explore the experiences of vegetable vendors during the Covid-19 pandemic, to analyse the challenges experienced by vegetable vendors during the Covid-19, to evaluate the copying strategies that were adopted by vegetable The study made use of a qualitative research design making use of convenient sampling technique to identify respondents for focus group discussions whilst purposive sampling technique was implemented to identify key informants. The study found out that the major theme that came from the study was that most vegetable vendors experienced violent raids from the police officers, the other theme that came from the study was that the vegetable vendors experienced fear and uncertainty during the COVID 19 lockdown. The other theme that also came from the study was that vegetable vendors lacked savings to provide for their needs. The vendors adopted copying strategies such as extension of selling hours and selling at home. The research recommends that government should assist vendors with funds and grants, there is need for partnership between NGOs to assist vegetable vendors as well as need to provide food security to vegetable vendors.*

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## **ACRONYMS**

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>WHO</b>      | <b>World Health Organization</b>          |
| <b>COVID-19</b> | <b>Corona virus disease 2019</b>          |
| <b>NGOs</b>     | <b>Non- governmental organizations</b>    |
| <b>WFP</b>      | <b>World Food Program</b>                 |
| <b>ZRP</b>      | <b>Zimbabwe Republic Police</b>           |
| <b>CBD</b>      | <b>Central Business District</b>          |
| <b>ILO</b>      | <b>International Labor Organization</b>   |
| <b>SLA</b>      | <b>Sustainable Livelihoods Approach</b>   |
| <b>UNDP</b>     | <b>United Nations Development Program</b> |
| <b>ZUPCO</b>    | <b>Zimbabwe United Passengers Company</b> |

## Contents

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| DECLARATION FORM .....   | ii  |
| ABSTRACT.....  | iii |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....   | iv  |
| ACRONYMS .....   | v   |
| CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....  | 1   |
| 1.1 INTRODUCTION .....   | 1   |
| 1.2 BACKGROUND .....   | 1   |
| 1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT .....  | 3   |
| 1.4 JUSTIFICATION .....  | 4   |
| 1.5 RESEARCH AIM .....   | 4   |
| 1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES .....  | 4   |
| 1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....  | 4   |
| 1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY.....  | 5   |
| 1.9 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY .....   | 5   |
| 1.10 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS.....  | 5   |
| 1.11 PROJECT OUTLINE.....  | 6   |
| 1.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY .....   | 6   |
| CHAPTER TWO THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .....  | 7   |
| 2.1 INTRODUCTION .....   | 7   |
| 2.2 DEFINING INFORMAL TRADERS .....  | 7   |
| 2.3 VEGETABLE VENDOR.....  | 7   |
| 2.4 SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS APPROACH .....                                     | 8   |
| 2.5 COVID19 AND INFORMAL TRADERS - A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE .....                | 9   |
| 2.6 Challenges faced by vegetable vendors .....                                | 10  |
| 2.7 MEASURES TAKEN TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF COVID19 ON VEGETABLE VENDORS- ..... | 11  |
| 2.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY .....  | 13  |
| Chapter 3.....   | 14  |
| RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....   | 14  |
| 3.0 INTRODUCTION .....   | 14  |
| 3.1 DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA.....   | 14  |
| 3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN .....  | 14  |
| 3.4 TARGET POPULATION OF THE STUDY .....                                       | 14  |
| 3.5 SAMPLING .....   | 15  |
| 3.6 DATA COLLECTION METHODS .....  | 15  |
| 3.7 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS.....   | 16  |
| 3.8 DATA ANALYSIS .....  | 16  |
| 3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION.....   | 16  |
| 3. 10 CHAPTER SUMMARY.....   | 16  |
| CHAPTER 4 .....  | 17  |
| DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS .....                   | 17  |
| 4.0 INTRODUCTION .....   | 17  |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 4.1 EXPERIENCES OF VEGETABLE VENDORS. ....                                     | 17 |
| 4.2 CHALLENGES FACED BY VEGETABLE VENDORS.....                                 | 19 |
| 4.4 MEASURES TAKEN TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF COVID19 ON VEGETABLE VENDORS- ..... | 21 |
| 4.5 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS .....   | 24 |
| CHAPTER 5:SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECCOMENDATIONS .....            | 26 |
| 5.1 INTRODUCTION. ....   | 26 |
| 5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDING .....   | 26 |
| 5.3 CONCLUSION.....  | 27 |
| 5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS. ....  | 27 |
| 5.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY.....   | 28 |
| REFERENCES .....   | 29 |
| APPENDIX A .....   | 32 |
| CONSENT FORM.....  | 32 |
| RESEARCH TOOLS .....   | 33 |
| APPENDIX B .....   | 33 |
| APPENTIX: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION.....  | 34 |
| APPENTIX: PLAGARISM REPORT .....   | 35 |

# **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter we are going to look at the problem statement which defines the objectives of the study. It will also give brief information on the research questions, significance of the study, limitations as well as the delimitations and the definition of the key terms and phrases.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND**

In the 1990s Zimbabwe embarked on the structural adjustment policy which compromised the proceeding of socialist policies. This resulted in more poor Zimbabweans being vulnerable to the tragedies of capitalist hegemony. Government then embarked on the establishment of array of support like commercial banks such as Agribank and CBZ as well as vocational training centres aimed at empowering workers in the informal sector. However, although these interventions strategies were implemented, there remained the wide gap between the poor and the rich. The economic turndown which followed structural adjustments programmes and ultimately led in lack of employment and increased poverty within the urban dwellers and they were left with very limited options, with street vegetable vending being among low capital potential livelihoods for poor urban population (Njaya, 2014). Vending is one of those informal sector activities that are essential survival and livelihood strategies pursued in urban areas in Zimbabwe as a result of economic crisis.

Informal trading forms part of the largest informal sector and vending is one of the major activities. According to Chirisa, (2014) vending is a major characteristics of informal traders in Zimbabwe, vending has managed to sustain livelihoods in a weak economy. The National Vendors Union of Zimbabwe is the mother regulatory board



responsible for all the affairs and activities of vendors. In Harare fruits and vegetable vending has been viewed as a business with no bounds (Chikoto, 2015). However, the activity has been met with so much opposition from the government and the city council in Harare. According to Rusvingo (2015) with so much poverty preying on Zimbabweans from all corners it remains to be found out how street vending is becoming a menace to Harare City Council.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a bigger shock to the market and economy at large, on informal traders. In Zimbabwe street vending is an outcome of the desire to supplement their sources of income, or to generate revenue in the households in the absence of other means (Mitulah, 2003). Zimbabwe economic woes saw vast numbers of major companies lay off a greater portion of workers in 2014 according to the country's retrenchment board and unemployment rate stood at 80% and was to rise (Rusvingo, 2015). It is therefore this high unemployment rate which has resulted in women, children and men embark into street vending as a way to assist the family at large and supplement the spouse's income.

A study carried out by Mazhambe, (2017) aimed at exposing how vending has contributed to the Zimbabwe's economy, was conducted in Harare Central Business District. The research's outcome indicated that 86.6% of street vendors relied on street vending as the only source of revenue entirely, suggesting that street vending has risen to be a significant means or way of employment for the poor urban residents. The study further suggest that the majority of vendors in Harare CBD are females. A very small portion of the respondents roughly generated profits averaging more than US\$10 daily. The majority of vendors operated illegally without a hawker's license. According to the study, the main cause why people in urban areas resorted to vending was as a result of very limited employment opportunities. The study highlighted that street vending contributes largely to Zimbabwe's economic development through job creation, providing counter means of revenue especially for women and providing very cheap and affordable commodities to the low-income earners in the city

(Rusvingo, 2015)

According to Mhlanga (2020), in a bid to end the chaos in Harare CBD the Harare town council implied and ordered the vendors selling on undesignated places to evacuate and move to proposed respective markets by April 2015. The National Vendors Union of Zimbabwe opposed this move made by the city council arguing that unless the government had created decent employment or if vendors had found a new home in Harare CBD. Vendors preferred to conduct their sales in the CBD because of high customer turn up in the area.

Against such a background the researcher is of the view that Covid19 came in and a lot of challenges affected the vegetable vendors operating in Harare who already have been under a poverty trap.

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Normally, people are supposed to be employed formally. However because of lack of industrialization in countries like Zimbabwe, it has led to the informal sector being the major form of employment for most people regardless of their level of education. Vending has become the major employment in the informal sector with most people being vegetable vendors. Normally these people survive by selling this vegetables on a daily basis which ultimately becomes their income which they receive on a daily basis. With the coming in of COVID 19 pandemic, it led to a number of challenges that were as a result of the COVID 19 regulations like lockdown regulations like staying indoors for more than 2 weeks in some instances. This led to a situation where most vendors were unable to go and sell their farm produce hence resulting in a number of challenges as they need to pay their day to day bills on moneys from vending. It becomes prudent for this study to look at the experiences of vegetable vendors during the COVID 19 pandemic.

## **1.4 JUSTIFICATION**

It would add knowledge in academia about the experiences of vegetable vendors during the COVID 19 pandemic. It benefits the vendors as their challenges will be reviewed and have a way forward on helping them. It benefits their families as they would know the harsh experiences faced as well as the coping strategies implemented by the vendors. Organizations working with vendors will know the real life issues affecting them. It is also significant on policy to enable safe working conditions thus policy will also benefit

## **1.5 RESEARCH AIM**

The study aims at to explore the experiences of vegetable vendors during the COVID 19 pandemic.

## **1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

- To explore the experiences of vegetable vendors during the Covid-19 pandemic
- To analyse the challenges experienced by vegetable vendors during the Covid-19
- To evaluate the coping strategies that were adopted by vegetable vendors during the Covid-19 pandemic

## **1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- 1 What were the experiences of vegetable vendors during the COVID 19 lockdown?
- 2 What challenges were faced by vegetable vendors during the COVID19 pandemic?
- 3 What coping strategies were adopted by vegetable vendors during the COVID19 pandemic?

## **1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The major limitation of the study was time management as the student was expected to be doing other modules related to social work honours degree at the same time doing the research. In order to balance the two, the student had to work overnight.

The other limitation encountered was shortage of electricity to keep the electrical gadgets switched on due to load shading that was experienced in the country. To solve this the student had to work at night when electricity was available and also make use of solar charged torch cell as well as candle for lighting purposes

## **1.9 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study is going to be undertaken in Harare CBD hence it will not be a true reflection of the experiences associated with vendors as it has only used 1 district and not covering other cities, urban areas, border towns as well as remote country sides which are rural areas. The sample of the study that is going to be used is also going to be small hence it cannot be overgeneralized to a larger population like a country's population.

## **1.10 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS**

### **COVID 19**

According to the World Health Organization (2020) COVID 19 is defined as illness caused by a novel coronavirus now called severe acute respiratory syndrome which was first discovered in Wuhan city. On January 30, 2020 the WHO declared the COVID 19 outbreak a global health emergency. On March, 11 2020, the WHO declared COVID 19 a global pandemic, it's the first such designation since declaring H1N1 influenza a pandemic in 2009.

### **VEGETABLE VENDOR**

According to Majithia, (2000) a vegetable vendor is defined as a person who offers vegetable goods for sale to the public without having a permanent built up structure

but with temporary static structures or mobile stall. Vegetable vendors may be stationery by occupying space on the pavements or other public or private areas, or maybe mobile in the sense that they move from place to place carrying their wares on push carts in cycles or baskets on their heads or may sell their wares in buses (Gomez, 2008).

## **1.11 PROJECT OUTLINE**

The project consist of 5 chapters with the first chapter being an introductory chapter while the second chapter is the literature review chapter which is going to review other studies that have been conducted by other people. The third chapter is the methodological chapter while the forth chapter is the data presentation chapter which is going to present the findings. Finally the last chapter is the chapter summary and recommendations which is going to come up with recommendations that would have been drawn from the findings of the study

## **1.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

The first section of the research proposal introduces the background and introduction of the study. The chapter also justified the significance of the study and statement of the problem research questions are also contained in the introduction, organization of the study and definition of terms.

## **CHAPTER TWO THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter will review literature contested at global, regional and local perspective on COVID19 and informal traders focusing on vegetable vendors. Literature review help the researcher in exposing out relevant facts authored by other writers in relation to the research under study. This chapter will also further present the theoretical framework which will guide the research.

### **2.2 DEFINING INFORMAL TRADERS**

International Labor organization, (2010) defined informal traders as the non-registered, non-accounting and non-tax paying grassroots-based individuals or group of household members whose business practices are based on street vending or hawking but not limited to selling or providing small quantities of goods and services to an undefined market to earn a living

Additionally, Informal traders can be defined as people that conduct business but are not registered (Horn, 2011). They work from a business premise but often they sell their goods and or services on street pavements, from homes, designated informal trader markets as recommended by the relevant municipal by laws) or they operate on a mobile basis.

### **2.3 VEGETABLE VENDOR**

According to Bromley, (2012) a vegetable vendor is defined as a person who offers vegetable goods for sale to the public without having a permanent built up structure but with temporary static structures or mobile stall. Vegetable vendors may be stationery by occupying space on the pavements or other public or private areas, or

maybe mobile in the sense that they move from place to place carrying their wares on push carts in cycles or baskets on their heads or may sell their wares in buses (Gomez, 2008).

## **2.4 SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS APPROACH**

The sustainable livelihoods framework (SLF) is an approach for undertaking policy work on alleviation of poverty. It “was put forward in the late 1990s to capture for a variety of purposes, the multiple features that include people's efforts to attain and sustain an adequate living” (Ellis, 2006). It pictures what people do in order to earn a living, the resources available which people exploit in hunt of better survival and livelihood strategies, the difficulties they encounter, as well as the institutional and policy contexts that are either conducive or hinder the progress in pursuit of a sustainable livelihood (Ellis, 2006). The SLA bases on what people possess, the assets, and aims at having an in-depth understanding on the various processes by which people exploit these resources in activities or livelihood strategies with the aim of changing the assets into positive livelihood outcomes.

A sustainable livelihood refers to a living that adequately satisfy the basic needs of human beings and protect them from shocks and stresses (Chambers, 1995). Thus a livelihood sustainable when it meets or copes with the needs of the current generations without compromising those of the future generations hence maintaining the opportunities and resources for both now and in the future (Majithia, 2020)).

The framework aims to strengthen the positive aspects which are the ones promoting choice as well as flexibility. It also seeks to put an end to the negative influences (Mitulah, 2013), mainly imposed by transforming structures and processes.

The approach has been chosen by the researcher because it allows for a more detailed understanding of the underlying causes behind poverty through putting priority on various factors, that impact directly or indirectly challenge poor people's access to different resources of various types hence their livelihoods. Finally, it manages to provide a much more realistic approach for evaluation of the direct and indirect

impacts on people's living conditions than, for instance, one dimensional productivity or income criteria.

## **2.5 COVID19 AND INFORMAL TRADERS - A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

COVID-19 as a pandemic continued to disturb the economy on a global scale, affecting both the health and the livelihoods of many people who were at risk and affected as a result of very low earnings and increased poverty (Fox and Signe, 2020). Informal sector employment is a giant income earner for almost 60 percent of households in Africa and also for over 80 percent of rural setting homesteads (Fox and Signe, 2020). The International Labour Organization (ILO 2020) argued that to die from starvation or the virus were challenge many informal economy workers came across (Fox and Signe, 2020). The ILO estimated that of the informal sector workers in Africa, a greater percentage of them lived in countries that had laid down full or partial lockdowns already (ILO, 2020).

The World Food Program Analysis put forward that restrictions and closing up of markets in Central and West Africa impacted negatively 80% of smallholder farmers and informal traders. Containment measures worsened the economic hardship to the already affected casual workers in Kenya, yet they constitute a large portion of the whole workforce, (WFP,2020).

Globally the informal traders were affected because they lacked savings possess savings to provide and cater for their needs due to economic challenges. Most governments in the African continent usually forcefully close down informal markets when confronted with these global challenges as was happening in Zambia where the government deployed military officers to apply force and shut down informal markets amid the ongoing Covid 19 outbreak. Small scale farmers and traders lost their fresh produce, hence crippling their livelihood strategies for survival (Motala, 2020). A greater proportion of the informal traders had no decent houses, nutrition among other basic services. During the Covid 19 outbreak many homesteads were in need of



economic assistance in Liberia and Sierra Leone as a result of shutting down of informal sectors and their activities (ILO, 2020).

## **2.6 Challenges faced by vegetable vendors**

Zimbabwe is well known for pounding upon informal traders (Gumbo, 2017). Disturbing information of a national crackdown on vendors have been circulating, especially in the poorer slum urban areas, where police officers violently raided street vendors and destroyed their goods for sale. (Muchini, 2011). Most vegetable vendors possess limited financial affluence which lacks saving set aside, and they cannot survive without conducting their daily routines of street vegetable selling. (Quartz Africa, 2020). There was a spherical effect at hand as these many low-income earning households failed to manage to stock up food resources hence more was expected from small scale traders.

The World Food Programme published and warned that more than 200 million people largely affected by food insecurity being induced by COVID-19. Most of the people at risk are residents of ESA countries (WFP, 2020). Informal traders were faced with food insecurity challenges due to their inability to have food reserves. Food insecurity limited the food choices in terms of quality and quantity, which could negatively affect the optimal immune system functioning. There addressing of income loss as a constraint in low income earning households by allocating cash transfers reduced the nutritional challenges as was done in South Africa where the COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress grant that is paid to individuals who are unemployed and do not receive any other form of social grant were implemented WFP, (2020).

In countries located in sub-Saharan Africa, informal traders are often characterized by having very weak social contract with their state, and this has worsened their vulnerability and exposed them during the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic also exposed gross general inequalities coupled by issues of domestic violence UNDP, (2020). Pandemics have exposed the weakness in more societies and the COVID-19

pandemic has resulted in increased gender-based violence. In Zimbabwe Musasa project noted between March 30 and April 9 2020 more than 700 cases of gender-based violence had been recorded from 500 to 600 cases which were normally recorded before the Covid 19 pandemic. The project director argued that economic challenges and poverty caused gender-based violence According to Musasa, (2020) report, it argue that some of the violence that women face is due to exposure to inequalities and poverty.

Vegetable vendors were affected the most by the Covid19 pandemic. The effects of COVID19 hit most on the informal traders economically, (Ndlovu 2020).argues that the COVID-19 lockdown in Zimbabwe was a challenge for the informal sector traders since they operated on subsistence basis. This worsened their situation as they were already living in extreme poverty. The potential impact travel restrictions as well as lockdown measures increased vulnerability of vegetable vendors, coupled with subsistence style of living of vegetable vendors it even became harder to survive under lockdown conditions as they could no longer rely on street selling to make a living. Lockdown measures combined with deprivation of access to markets, ultimately, predicted and meant an existential threat (Mutambanengwe, 2020). COVID 19 affected women and youth, who makes up the majority of the population (ZIMVAC,2020).

## **2.7 MEASURES TAKEN TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF COVID19 ON VEGETABLE VENDORS-**

Vegetable vendors in Harare have shown resilience during this crisis period. The state and local government had come up with some ideas to let the vegetable vendors, continue operating although taking into consideration the unfavorable working conditions encountered by this constituency as a result of the pandemic. The following are some of the measures taken to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on

informal traders ( Ndhlovu, 2020).

Vegetable vendors encountered mobility challenges during the lockdown period. However, the governments across the continent realized that vegetables vendors were also a vital part of the essential services staff whose businesses needed security and had to be protected to reduce the impact of the virus on their sales. In Zimbabwe the government continued with the ban of kombis and Mushika shika but allowed public transport operators under ZUPCO to operate to ensure a safe movement of vendors into markets and reaching their customers.

Vegetable vendors adopted key health measures necessary for their survival in the streets whilst they conduct their selling activities. The measure where so as to contain the further spread of Covid 19 as well reducing of the possible risks of contracting the virus. Wearing of masks was a compulsory obligation for every street vendor, use of alcohol sanitizers soap and running water to wash hands regularly and visiting Covid 19 screening points are the measures implemented to contain spread of the Covid 19 virus. Government ministries could enforce and inspect the way these measures were carried out (WHO 2020).

Vegetable vendors throughout the country still opposed the notion of selling their good at home. A number of them turned their homes into market places, where they could sell their goods (Mutambanengwe, 2020). Through selling at home and some of the vendors used their social media platforms such as WhatsApp to advertise and sell their vegetable products and in the process the could receive orders from customers and could end up making deliveries to their customers.

Informal traders are characterized by long working hours as noted by Chirisa, (2018). However, during the COVID-19 period to ensure maximum profits vegetable vendors had to extent their working hours and due to the fact that there were restrictions on the mobility and movement of people hence they had to extent their hours of operations

and the Herald of March (2020), revealed that informal traders turned the night for a hive of activities where they could sell their products.

## **2.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter has reviewed literature on the experiences of vegetable vendors during the COVID-19 pandemic. The chapter has presented the definition of informal traders and paying particular attention to vendors in the context of the research study. The study has also presented literature on the global perspectives regarding informal traders and how they were diversely affected by the pandemic. The chapter has also presented literature on the economic challenges of the pandemic on the vendors, as well as the measures implemented to reduce the impact of the pandemic on the vegetable vendors.

## **Chapter 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 INTRODUCTION**

The chapter will focus on the methodology that the researcher will use to gain an in-depth understanding on the impact of COVID 19 pandemic on vegetable vending Harare CBD. Justification on the choice of methodology will be provided for this research. The chapter will therefore present sections of research design, target population, justification, sampling and sampling techniques, data collection, data analysis and data presentations as well as ethical issues in this research such as privacy and confidentiality.

#### **3.1 DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA**

Harare is situated in the Harare metropolitan province which is on the north eastern part of Zimbabwe. Harare is the largest as well as the capital city of Zimbabwe. It is the most populous city with an estimated population of 2.123 million of people.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research will make use of qualitative research design. Qualitative research design has the following advantage. Qualitative research is adopted by the researcher because it will allow for probing of information thus more information can be obtained through one-on-one interaction with the research subject.

#### **3.4 TARGET POPULATION OF THE STUDY**

The study is going to target vegetable vendors that are selling their farm produce in Harare According to National vendors Union of Zimbabwe association there are more

than 5000 vendors operating in Harare CBD. The study will also target key informants from Ministry of Local Governance (City of Harare), Ministry of Small to Medium Enterprises as well as NGOs that work with vendors. A population is defined as a collective term used to describe the total quantity of things that is subject of the study (Braun, &Clarke, 2019).

### **3.5 SAMPLING**

Sampling is the analysis of a group by determining the characteristics of a significant percentage of its members chosen at random (Strydom, 2019). Convenient sampling technique is going to be used to identify respondents for the focus group discussions. The respondents are going to be put into cohorts by age and a group of 6-12 people are going to participate in the study. The advantages of using convenient sampling technique include the fact that it's not costly as well as not time consuming as compared to other sampling strategies (Clark, 2013) Purposive sampling technique is going to be used to identify the key informants. Advantages of purposive sampling technique include the fact that it allows the researcher to gather qualitative responses which lead to better insights and more precise results (Creswell, 2013). A sample is defined by Creswell, (2013).as a sub set of a population selected for measurement, observation or questioning to provide statistical information about the population.

### **3.6 DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

Focus group discussions and key informants interviews are going to be used as data collection methods. The advantages of using focus group discussions is that it allows for measuring of reactions, not just opinions. It takes place face to face as well as provide a hands on approach to give detailed insights into key questions (Creswell 2013). The advantages of using key informant interviews include the provision of information about participants or situations where participants are less able to provide the perspectives themselves or where the researcher themselves cannot know the research population in detail (Clark, 2011).

### **3.7 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS**

Interview guides are going to be used to collect data. Advantages of interview guides are that it creates a structured process as well as reducing the risk of biasness in the interview process as it provides all respondents with the same candidate experience (Clark, 2018).

### **3.8 DATA ANALYSIS**

Data is going to be analyzed thematically. This is the breaking down of data into manageable and readable themes, trends and patterns. The advantage of thematic analysis is that it offers a more accessible form of analysis, particularly for those early in their research (Clark, 2018).

### **3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

The study will make use of the following research ethics; confidentiality, informed consent, no harm, privacy and client self-determination.

### **3. 10 CHAPTER SUMMARY.**

This chapter has highlighted how the research was done. It starts with explaining the introduction of the chapter, research design and justification, study population and sample size, research instruments and ethical considerations that were done by the researcher. This chapter has been done to give the reader a glimpse of how he is going to conduct his research and other things to consider when carrying out a research project.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.0 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings and discuss the findings on the experiences of vegetable vendors during the Covid 19 pandemic. It presents, analyse as well as discuss data on the experiences, challenges and measures taken to solve the challenges.

#### **4.1 EXPERIENCES OF VEGETABLE VENDORS.**

The majority of the vendors reported that they feared being infected by the corona virus. They were afraid of the destructive nature of Covid 19. They went further on to say they feared that it was incurable. Some respondents also reported that, although they were afraid of the corona virus, they also feared poverty. This led them to continue selling on the streets even though they knew they would be exposed to Covid 19 virus. They argued that they needed to generate income for their families to survive. This was supported by the key informant who highlighted the fear was coupled and worsened with the absence of social safety nets since they lacked protective clothing hence putting their health at risk. One respondent had this to say,

*"Vegetable vendors were caught with fear and  
uncertainty over their lives during the Covid 19  
pandemic."*



The majority of vegetable vendors stated that they had a nasty experience with the municipal police as well as the ZRP as their goods were confiscated and destroyed. The minority reviewed that they were pained by being forced to pay huge amounts of money for bribe in order for them to remain selling their goods on the streets. Others also expressed their anger of being beaten up arguing that it was violation of their human rights by the law enforcers. This was also supported the key informant who highlighted that there was tension between the police officers and vendors as the police officer became hostile towards the vendors ordering them to vacate the streets. One respondent had this to say,

*"The police could pound on vegetable vendors daily and violently raid them."*

The study found out that vegetable vendors reported that they could travel to nearby farms to purchase food stuff for resale. The majority of vegetable vendors reported that could reach out Goromozi, Shamva and Chihota. The minority opted for Mbare Musika as it was easily accessible considering the travel restrictions that were present. They cried foul over the status of the vegetables they purchased as they would have lost their freshness thus low quality. In order for them to access the farm produce, vegetable vendors also experienced difficulties in traveling as they lacked travel letters which needed approval and also authorize vendors to travel around farms buying farm produce. One respondent had this to say;

*"Traveling to the nearby farms was made difficult due to travel restrictions."*

## **4.2 CHALLENGES FACED BY VEGETABLE VENDORS.**

The majority of the participants highlighted that they lacked savings to cater for their needs. They went on to say that the pandemic struck as an emergency and they had no stocked up items as back up during the Covid 19 lockdown. The respondents reiterated that the situation could even worsen as they could even fail to sell their goods the whole day thus they could not generate revenue. The minority reported that they ended up using money set aside as capital used to buy farm produce for resale in order for them to provide for their families. This was supported by key informants who added that their income levels drastically declined since their livelihoods were greatly affected as a result of low turnout of customers on the streets to purchase vegetable vendors stuff. One respondent had this to say,

*"The income levels declined hence We could not set aside money for use during emergencies because of low profits made daily as result of Covid 19 pandemic"*

Covid 19 led to vegetable vendors encountering more loss than profits as a result of low flow of customers on the streets paved way for food insecurity to be a challenge faced by vegetable vendors. Food insecurity was not only a trade challenge but a personal challenge at large. The majority of vendors conveyed that they had very little food for human consumption. The respondents went on further to indicate that they had no food reserved for use in crisis. The minority could turn their attention to the

perishable goods they sold in order to feed their families before they go bad or decay.

They stressed out that they could not buy enough food during this period since their financial capacity was limited to buy food as their income levels drastically declined.

One responded had this to say;

*"Our nutritional choices were also limited in terms of quality and quantity resulting in our nutritional needs being left out."*

Extreme poverty was also a challenge to the vegetable vendors during these difficult times. The majority of vegetable vendors stressed out that their living conditions had worsened since life had been made even more difficult by the corona virus. The respondents went on to say that they failed to afford the basic commodities for their families. They went on further to report that vending was no longer profitable to them to such an extent that they failed to raise enough money for rent and other basic services such as education and medical services hence they could do nothing to support and provide for their families. Very few vendors indicated that they did not decline as they tirelessly moved around homes selling their produce to customers this was cemented by key informant who stated that livelihood strategies of vendors was disrupted. The key informant went on to say that there was a sharp decline in levels of income on the vendors as a result of low sales on the streets. One respondent had this to say,

*They could no longer generate enough money to assist families back at home.*

Covid 19 exposed inequalities which became the foundation of conflicts leading to domestic violence which was a psychosocial challenge that vegetable vendors encountered. The majority of vegetable vendors indicated that men were financially powerful hence imposed authority on how money was to be spent which was conflicting with their wives' ideas. The respondents also blamed poverty to be a major cause of conflicts during the Covid 19 era. They went on further to indicate that they mainly encountered intimate partner violence in which they assaulted each other. The minority put all their blame on economic crisis as the root cause of conflicts at homes. This was cemented by key informants who argued that vegetable vendors were involved in cases of domestic violence during the pandemic arguing that economic challenges, poverty at home and inequalities paved way for conflicts that caused couples fight each other during this period. One respondent had this to say,

*“Women looked upon men and failure to provide for the family by  
men could trigger conflicts within the house.”*

#### **4.4 MEASURES TAKEN TO REDUCE THE IMPACT OF COVID19 ON VEGETABLE VENDORS-**

Vegetable vendors encountered mobility challenges during the lockdown period. The majority of vegetable vendors reported that they were provided with public transport by the government. The respondents said that ZUPCO ensured safe travel into the CBD where they sold their goods. They went further indicating that the bus fares were cheap and affordable hence they could reach their respective market places on

time since ZUPCO buses operated according to planned time tables. The minority stuck to mushika shika and kombis arguing that ZUPCOs were not readily available.

One respondent had this to say

*"We could now travel safely into town where  
we carried out our business."*

The majority of vegetable vendors reported that there was introduction of health measures to contain the further spread of the virus. The respondents reported that they put in place hand washing stations where there were alcohol sanitizers, soap and water as well as carrying out daily disinfectant spraying. They went on to report that there was compulsory wearing of masks at work places and anyone who fell sick or who suspected being infected was supposed not to come for work. Very few vendors elaborated that once the outbreak had flooded the streets, they did not want to risk their lives and they stayed home. These measures were enforced by the ministry of health and child welfare. This was supported by key informant who argued that vegetable vendors were responsible for ensuring their safety in the streets as they ended up having regular checkup points where they could wash their hands and also carry out temperature reading as precautionary measures against the spread of the Covid 19 virus. One respondent had this to say,

*"Vegetable vendors reduced the risks of markets becoming  
the source of outbreaks."*

The majority of vegetable vendors reported that they resorted to selling at homes. The respondents highlighted that they turned their homes into market places. They went on to add that they could advertise their goods on social media platforms and could end up making home deliveries to various customers. Very few respondents indicated that selling at home generated quick money to buy food stuffs for their families as most vendors argued that selling at home could not match the number of customers they used to sell their goods to on the streets.. One respondent had this to say,

*Our homes were turned into market places. We could no longer rely with the streets as people were not moving.*

The majority of vegetable vendors revealed that they resorted to extending their selling hours. The respondents reported that they had to sell even at night to generate more income as they argued that it was the period which customers were moving back to their homes. They further reported that they even made more money during the late hours at night as extending hours of operation could compensate the fewer numbers of customers during the day and generate some income. The minority opposed this move as they argued that they were afraid of being robbed of their goods and money by thieves during the night. This was cemented by the key informant who reported that vegetable vendors had got used to selling for long hours hence they had to extend selling hours so that they sell their goods to customers at any particular time hence turning the night into a hive of selling activities. One respondent had this to say,

*"Vegetable vendors had to extend their working hours so as to*

*maximize the little profits they were getting."*

## **4.5 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The major theme that came from the study was that most vegetable vendors experienced violent raids from the police officers. This is in line with Gumbo (2017), who argued that police officers were raiding vegetable markets and destroyed the farm produce. Thus it can be noted that vendors had a nasty experience with the police on the streets as they were cruelly tortured.

The other theme that came from the study was that the vegetable vendors experienced fear and uncertainty during the COVID 19 lockdown. This is also in line with ILO (2020) that argued that the fear and uncertainty over their jobs and lives were some of the major severe impacts that Covid 19 had on the informal traders particularly the vegetable vendors.

The other theme that also came from the study was that vegetable vendors lacked savings to provide for their needs. This is in line with Ndebele & Matamire (2020) who argued that many vegetable vendors experienced precarious financial challenges without savings and were unable to survive without their daily trade. Thus it can be noted that many low income households cannot afford to stock up food as reserve for use in crisis.

The other theme that came from the study was that vegetable vendors were living in

extreme poverty. This is in line with Mhlanga, & Ndhlovu, (2020). who argued that COVID 19 was a challenge to the informal traders particularly vegetable vendors who operated on subsistence basis and were already mired in extreme poverty hence coming in of Covid 19 intensified the poverty amongst vegetable vendors.

The chapter has managed to present, analyze and discuss the findings on the experiences, challenges and measure taken by vegetable vendors during the Covid 19 pandemic



## **CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECCOMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION.**

This chapter presents the summary of the research on the experiences of vegetable vendors during the Covid 19 pandemic. It also provides the conclusion as well as the recommendations to different stakeholders who are responsible for the well-being of vendors.

### **5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDING**

The study consisted of five chapters, of which chapter 1 was an introductory chapter which had the problem statement and objectives of the study which led out on how the study was going to be carried out. The following chapter, chapter 2 which was a literature review chapter which reviewed literature on other findings that were in relation to the objectives of the study. The literature was also used to develop the tools of the study. The third chapter was a methodological chapter which was used and a design on how data was going to be collected. The fourth chapter presented the findings of the study and a discussion of the findings of the study. Finally, the fifth chapter is a conclusion chapter which also includes recommendations that were drawn from the findings of the study.

### **5.3 CONCLUSION.**

The study therefore concludes that vegetable vendors experienced fear and uncertainty as a result of Covid 19 pandemic, also experienced nasty relations with the police as well as transport challenges. The study further concludes that vegetable vendors faced a lot of challenges which include food insecurity, poverty at trade level as well as, domestic violence and lack of savings at personal levels. The research also took into cognisance that some of these challenges already existed before covid 19 but rather they were worsened with the coming of the pandemic. After encountering a variety of challenges, the research therefore concluded that vegetable vendors resorted to their own coping strategies such as selling at home and extending selling hours to address the financial difficulties brought about by the pandemic.

### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS.**

The following recommendations were made

- The government should assist vendors with funds and grants.
- There is need to provide food security to vegetable vendors.
- There is need for partnership between NGOs to assist vegetable vendors.
- There is need to improve the provision of social security mechanisms on informal traders particularly vegetable vendors.
- Policy makers should include informal traders in National Social Security Authorities rather than focus on the formal sector alone.
- The social work profession should advocate for vendors.
- There is need to adopt a more developmental approach to assist vegetable vendors in life threatening challenges
- Relevant stakeholders concerned with vegetable vendors should provide

assistance in times of crisis.

## **5.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY.**

This chapter outlined summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations of the topic under study.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **CONSENT FORM**

My name is B1852195, a fourth year student doing a social work degree with Bindura University of Science Education. I am carrying a research on experiences of vegetable vendors during the COVID 19 pandemic in Harare Central Business District as part of the fulfillment of the degree requirement. The information from this study might intensify the understanding of the vast experiences of vegetable vendors during the COVID 19 pandemic, the challenges experienced, how they coped to these challenges and the support systems available to help them overcome the challenges.

I thereby invite you participate in this study. Please note that your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Participation in the study will include responding to an interview that is very short and it will take place at your earliest convenience and on a setting where you feel comfortable which is suitable for you. You also have the right to terminate your participation at any time that you choose and want.

With your permission the interview will be recorded. The data collected through the interview will be handled and held confidential and efforts will be made to maintain your privacy and anonymity. Please feel free to ask questions regarding the study. I will do my best to provide clarity. My contact details are as follows 0785 187341

If you wish to receive a summary of the results of the study, an abstract will be available.

Thank you in advance for your time and cooperation.

Participant

Researcher

Signature .....

Signature.....

# RESEARCH TOOLS

## APPENDIX B

### Interview guide for key informants

#### 1: Personal Information

1. Name of department represented.....

1. What were the experiences of vegetable vendors during the Covid 19 era

2. Can you comment on the challenges faced by vegetable vendors during COVID-19 era?

3. How did the pandemic worsen the situation and disrupted lives of vegetable vendors operating in the CBD?

4. In what way did Covid 19 contribute to food insecurity amongst vegetable vendors?

5. Did Covid 19 pandemic lead to domestic violence?

6. Can you suggest ways of strengthening those coping mechanisms to make them more effective?

Thank you for your time and co-operation.



## **APPENTIX: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION**

1. Where did people get farm produce for sale during Covid 19?
2. How actually did COVID 10 affect the trade in the streets?
3. How did people survive without day to day trade coupled with lack of savings?
4. In what ways did Covid 19 contribute to food insecurity?
5. How did income loss worsen food insecurity?
6. In what way did the lockdown expose inequalities that led to domestic violence? 7.
7. How did the government assist during the Covid 19 era?
8. How did vendors get into town (means form of transport?)
9. How effective was selling at home in generating profit?

## APPENTIX: PLAGARISM REPORT

|                     |  |              |                |
|---------------------|--|--------------|----------------|
| Basira dissertation |  |              |                |
| ORIGINALITY REPORT  |  |              |                |
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