

## **Informal Trading, Disharmony Amid In flexible Informal Trading in Gweru; In Pursuit of Pro informal trader policy implementation.**

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**ABSTRACT:** *In recent years there has been unparalleled growth of informal traders in Gweru. The informal trading sector, sometimes referred to as vending, shadow market or black market, has fuelled a new dispensation of unregistered businesses reckoned lawless. From the viewpoint of law makers and law enforcers, the sector has no place in the Central Business District (CBD.) The sector is blamed for illicit business dealings such as selling of unauthorised wares, selling at undesignated places, tax evasion and other unregulated activities. A counter insurgency has since developed between informal traders and authorities, resulting in the CBD becoming more of a war zone than a trading zone. Policy makers are equally blamed for crafting deficient and fragmented statutes which on the whole do not condone informal trader 'participation. The growing disharmony has climaxed to a complex confrontational set up characterised by several sporadic clashes between the traders and law enforcers 'characteristic of an uncivilised society. This research was piloted using the pragmatic approach as it accommodates both quantitative and qualitative methods. The population comprised, vendors, ordinary citizens(both men and women and municipal officers. The conducted survey made use of interviews, questionnaires, observations, and documentary evidence. The paper mainly sought to justify how effective policy implementation could become the ultimate antidote that brings harmony to the city of Gweru for the sake economic growths' sake for sporadic and violent encounters between the law enforcement agents and the informal traders.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Informal trader; sustainable livelihoods; vendor, street trader, policy; vending.*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

Informal trade is a form of trading mostly practiced across the African continent. The sector is referred to with derogatory names such as vending, black economy, underground economy, street trading and many others. Informal trading is generally looked down upon as it is considered ungovernable and unlawful. Although there are many advantages derived from informal trading, the sector has no trading right and place in the Central Business District, (CBD), Mitulla, 2006. Mitulla, 2006 goes on to point out that involvement, enablement and social involvement have increased economic growth volume but is still senseless to the underprivileged informal traders. This paper focussed on recent informal trading activities in Gweru, a city situated in the central part of the country. The paper is strongly aroused by the policy disharmony that has manifested especially in the CBD, between the informal traders and law enforcement agents. In order to penetrate policy challenges faced by informal traders in the city, the researcher made an attempt to provide some operational definition of the key terms such as, policy informal trade and sustainable livelihoods. Further on the study attempted to investigate the nature of confrontation, such antagonism and disharmony experienced by the traders, the lawmakers and the law enforcers. The author found it necessary and important to illuminate the role played by informal traders by making reference to contributions they make to economic development, despite the adverse environment surrounding their area of operation. Tshuma, and Jari, 2013 pointed out that the informal sector can be an improved basis of revenue if promoted. In line with Tshuma, and Jari, 2013, Gweru ought to abolish informal trading practices characterised by oppressive restrictions. This can only be achieved by adopting appropriate policies robust enough to sustain the livelihoods of the Gweru citizens. From the conducted survey and explored literature the paper recommended that;

- To eliminate discriminating the poor, informal traders should have trading space in Gweru City.
- Pro poor Policies should be put in place
- The informal traders themselves should be part of the policy formulation and implementation
- Informal traders should seriously be considered as people in business whose contribution to the economy is market driven and not politically influenced,

### **1.2Informal Trading**

For so many years Gweru City has always experienced informal trading mostly as vending or street traders. The closure of almost all industries in the city led to unparalleled levels of unemployment. Mainly due to unemployment, there has been an influx of illegal vendors. Gweru City Council has however remained the responsible authority for allocating trading bays for its registered traders. Trading bays are allocated in both the high density areas and the central business district (CBD). Recently most vendors have deserted bays in the high density areas opting to trade illegally in the CBD. The move has built up untold animosity between the informal traders and the law enforcers, a position which has motivated and drawn the attention and focus of this research. The informal sector is a term used to refer to some business category deemed to operate outside the dictates of the law. Chidoko et al, (2006) are of the opinion that the sector is operated by people with no strong financial base. Small businesses operated by vendors, street traders, newspaper sellers are generally placed in this category. The sector is viewed in a pejorative way and is sometimes referred to as the shadow market, underground market or black market. It is the purpose of this paper to establish whether it is the blackness in the black market that breeds disharmony in the CDD or it is the blackness in policy crafting and implementation. Informal trading is known to be driven by individuals, some of whom are very innovative and for this reason are sometimes referred to as entrepreneurs. The Journal of African Studies and Development (JASD), (2013), mention that although loudly pronounced in economically and technologically advanced countries, entrepreneurship is more significant in developing countries. Therefore informal trade or whatever it may be referred to as, has potential to play some of the major roles played by the formal sector such as employment creation, poverty reduction and contribution to economic growth of a country. In Zimbabwe informal trading activities can operate differently in different places for example vending in rural areas may not be subjected to harsh and imposing situations when compared with the same form of trading in a the city or town like Gweru. Informal sectors in Gweru range from those registered by the municipality and operate from small shops, fruit and vegetable vendors, flea markets which sell new and old clothes. All these operate from both the central business district and from the high density areas. There has been a general tendency by the registered traders to disregard paying rentals, adopting a wait and see attitude. Many of them have opted to increase their income by subletting their bays to those who do not have bays to trade from.

### **1.3Gweru'sInformal Trading Climate; Policy Guided or not**

Informal trade is a typical part of buying and selling that despite some of its ugly aspects is remarkably being economically accepted in cities that once vehemently resisted them. In some cases informal trading is fuelled by cross border Traders who in many cases bring legitimately produced goods in the city but which goods will have according to Moisé-Leeman (2009), eluded payment of duty at border posts. Such goods are further sold in the city from unauthorized sites, in the streets and some at registered places. Those who sell from authorized points unfortunately evade paying rentals to the municipality and because of that, council has developed a negative attitude toward the informal sector. The ever increasing deterioration of the urban surroundings owing to street trading and other vending activities have increased concern and need for relook on policies relating to city control. Some of the issues that are fueling policy relook are selling from pavements and other undesignated places; tax evasion. It is for these and many other reasons that the economic excellence and expertise of informal trading has remained overlooked yet very observable. In Gweru, hostilities have been witnessed between the vendors and the powers that be. It is believed that informal trading is not only limited to only those areas most people are familiar with, but as Krishna Prasad Timalsina, 2011, informed, the sector is made up of mainly masked and unresolved forms of trade.

According to Kanjeresince, 1994 South Africa has taken major steps to develop its small and medium enterprises in order to have traders stimulated in line with the growth policy of that country. However the same has not happened in Zimbabwe where colonial informal trading practices continued to reign and informal trading remain extremely challenging. Remains of the colonial policies that outlawed informal trading, such as the Vagrancy Act of 1960 continued to show their ugly face in Gweru. Feremenga (2005) bemoaned the performance of such decrees as similar to the colonial masters' laws, which pursued to disadvantage town and city based informal trading. The early post independent government of Zimbabwe banned the many negative informal trading policies, many of them, bylaws as such policies impeded development, UNDP, 2010 AccordingtoKanyenze. 2003, the push by the inter-Ministerial Deregulation Committee sought to eliminate licencing, an element thought to suffocate economic development The highlycommercial and highly urbanised national policies and the socialist political philosophysimultaneously brought into the country with the advent of independence in Zimbabwe were not only economically incoherentbut grossly constituted policy inconsistent. When Gweru's industrial fame affixedto such companies as, Bata Shoe Company, Zimbabwe Glass Company, Zimbabwe alloys collapsed, the majority of people in the city resorted to informal trade for their livelihoods, Although the informal sector seemingly have the potential to expand employment opportunities for people, policy restrictions such as licensing, high tariffs, inadequate trading space, poor infrastructure and fundingare

among the many inhibiting growth factors of the sector. Mupedziswa, 1991. Mupedziswa (1991) detects that many fragments of legislature and by-laws are reproachful to the informal sector with some especially bylaws becoming outdated. Statutory Instrument (SI) sixty four limited the importation of certain simple wares into the country and this was deteriorating enough to informal trading. Informal traders in Gweru who traded in such products were not spared of the negative impact of SI sixty four. The general perception by scholars, politicians as well as key stakeholders is that there is need for policy review and that such review should at all cost robustly transform the informal sector. More significant was the Murambatsvina period of 2005. The politically motivated pronouncements which were not well understood since the pronouncement came as either policing or policy. Murambatsvina indiscriminately destroyed poor people's poor trading areas and made the urban poor poorer. The programme launched by the government of Zimbabwe generated destruction in all towns and cities. Popularly known as Operation Clean-up, the operation puzzled all the people as such received wide spread criticism from all parts of the country.

#### **1.4 Public Policy**

Informal trading in Gweru cannot be separated from public policy since it is public policy formulated at both national and local level that characterises behaviour of informal traders. There are many meanings signed to public policy. According to Dye (2002:18), public policy is "whatever governments choose to do or not to do". In line with Kahiha (2009) public policy should be viewed as a commitment to a strategy of accomplishment approved to by a collection of individuals with the authority to carry out the plan. This explains why informal traders should be a part of the collection of individuals that develop policies. The informal sector is made up of individuals who hold unique and commonly inharmonious potentials on which procedures complications, goals and alternatives ought to be ordered at any given time. The fundamental principle here is that due attention should be given to the description that policy. In most cases the policy formulation follows a clearly defined presented approach.

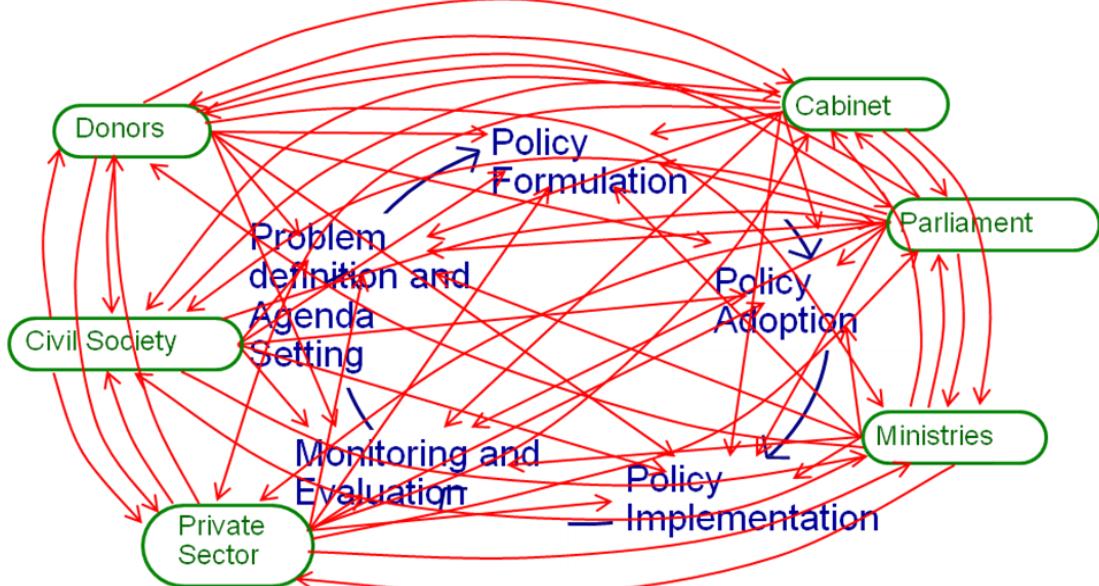
#### **1.5 The Policy Formulation Process**

The policy development process follows a staged approach. The University of Queensland, (2014) states. This study considers the following key aspects:

- Needs analysis: When those in authority are able to single out what informal traders want.
- Policy setting: noting critical areas of the problem to be addressed, for example, selling at undesignated areas.
- Policy management: Deals with the procedures of co-ordinating and handling policy in both the crafting and implementation by both law makers and law enforcers.
- Stakeholder development: provide opportunities for components for staff development programmes, say for example in areas such as buyers and supplier. Covers over the way in which policy can be sensitive to and forms the surroundings in which the SME sector operates including the performance and conduct.
- Development of specialist establishments: Such institutions played a critical role in Gweru where fruit and vegetable markets were constructed at mkoba .6; mkoba.14; mkoba.15 and mkoba.16. These were built by Africare, a Non-Governmental Organisation intervention (NGOs).
- Programme development: Involves such effort by well-wishers in aspects such as training and financing of informal traders. Covers programmes specifically designed to support SME development in key areas such as finance, counselling and consultancy, training and education, information and communication technology, innovation, incubation and the provision of premises as well as specialist services such as export market support.

Each policy cycle begins with the identification of a societal problem and its placement on the policy agenda. Subsequently, policy proposals are formulated, from which one will be adopted. In the next stage, the adopted policy is taken to action. Finally, the impacts of the policy are evaluated. This last stage leads straight back to the first, indicating that the policy cycle is continuous and unending. This sequential model of the policy cycle represents a simplification. In the real world, different political actors and institutions may be involved in different processes at the same time. Yet the policy cycle provides a useful heuristic for breaking policy making into different units for being able to illustrate how policies are actually made (Makinde, 2005). Figure 1 shows the stages in policymaking and the common actors.

**Figure 1: Steps in Policy Making and the Actors**



Source: Matondi, Havenvik, and Beyene (2011)

Figure 1 expresses and informs that policy making process staged and in this case has five stages. It is an intricate process that includes relations amid countless participants. The prudence of a policy rests on the fact that the process takes a multi-sectorial methodology that involves key participants a diverse mechanism such as the concerned individuals or clusters (Van, 2008). A policy cycle develops from identified issues that are credible to be developed into policies. It

### **1.6 Trading Position and space**

Medullar (2006) confesses that The highest encounter experienced by street traders, vendors and all informal traders is where to operate from. Most vendors favour to trade in the street, on pavements and adjacent to shop entrances owned by big companies. In Gweru, they cluster at places such as Pick and Pay and any other points concentrated with dense human traffic. All these areas are not recognised for trading; hence they are attractive hunting ground for the Zimbabwe Republic Police and the municipal police. Noncompliance on the part of vendors has led to unending street battle between these informal traders and law enforcing agents. Authorities are blamed for failing to come up with policies that are pro poor such as those that target, space provision and improved structure for shelter. The bays officially allocated to certain individuals by council are in many cases abandoned, yet they remain owned by their occupants who benefit from subletting them. These bay owners sublet their bays to those who do not have any....and move to points in the CBD were there is increased people movement. Mitullar 2006rther notes that the problem with space provided especially in the CBD is not permanent in nature and displacement by local authority can be effected as the responsible authority wishes. With the advent of COVID 19 and lockdown effected on 30 march 2019, in Gweru, all the vendors were given two days to remove their temporary structures before council moved in to demolish the rest of the bays in the city. Traders, who used to occupy an area popularly known as Swift, A, B, and C, were moved to an alternative place, after the National Railways demanded the place which they claimed to be officially theirs. Such inconsistent placement of people has nothing to prove except regrettably the absence of appropriate policy for placement of informal traders. The closure of the central business district due to COVID 19 and lockdown has done very little or nothing to stop illegal trading in the city. Instead, there has been a very serious proliferation of traders in the suburbs where almost every household and every street has become a selling point. The expectation was that informal traders would respect the lockdown as a national policy and keep indoors but unfortunately informal trading has proved to reign over any form of restricting policy.

### **1.7 The Regulatory Framework, (Policies/Bylaws)**

By laws in Gweru are yet to be formally received by key stakeholders such as informal traders so they can read and comprehend the direction council is taking. What this explains is that informal traders are not effectively part of the resolutions that council comes up with. By laws relating to tariff charges and infrastructure development are generally viewed as imposed on traders. When new tariffs are introduced, there is resistance to pay with traders maintaining a wait and see attitude. The market stall structures put up by council are in many cases substandard and users are not given the opportunity to contribute with ideas or materials. In

the process, they opt to unlawfully construct their own or put up plastic paper covered temporary shelters which are not user friendly under unfavourable weather conditions. Gweru has experienced situations when vendors have had to push council to come to supply quarry stone to fill in the water logged points and due to protocol and financial challenges, the sorry situation is that council only responds when the traders are already immersed in water. What this explains is buyers are not attracted to the place up until the season is over; therefore there is no regulation to protect the traders. Goods are confiscated without any supporting by laws and the same goods are later got rid of in a way that distresses the informal street trader and pleases the police. When that scenario of heavy-handedness becomes so domineering traders face the challenge of meeting not only the cost of replacing their ` goods but most importantly the lawsuit process and costs. Researchers are in agreement that central government through its various arms should protect informal traders from such unfair and illegitimate practices. In Gweru efforts to bail out vendors from harassment and confiscation of goods by the municipal police has not been forthcoming but instead what has featured most is the dramatic, hostile and chaotic confrontation between the police and the traders. The associations that represent vendors have proved to have no capacity to represent their clientele because of the clientele's incapacity to contribute financially to the associations. For those who sell from shop verandas and the street, they encounter with the police creating yet another problem, that of bribing the law enforcement agents if one wanted to survive street trading. The issue of bribes is confirmed by Munyaradzi, (2015) when he submits that some of the police benefit from the vulnerability of informal traders and solicit bribes. Traders, in the process feel protected by the bribed police, although in actual fact they are disadvantaged. For those who cannot afford bribes, the goods are confiscated with some kept by the police for personal unauthorised consumption. Uys and Bauw, (2007) have reverberated that the policies both at local and national level are not coherent and robust enough to support the informal sector. Chirisa, (2012) endorses this view when he appeals that policy makers should ensure that policies they come up with should involve the informal sector since it has proved to be the largest employer.

### **1.8Disparaging Perception**

The fact that the informal sector is generally looked down upon, it has become abundantly clear that informal traders do not pay tax. It has also been under observation that informal traders shun adherence to stipulated regulations. Consequently, informal traders have as a result been shunned by the business community, the public and law authorities. Local authorities do not espouse or sustain the failure by informal traders in that such practice by these traders contributes to council's financial burden. Since most vendors evade taxation, what they do not know is that they are evading development, Uys and Blaauw, (2007). Why the vendors are particularly viewed in an undesirable way is that they themselves lack the wisdom of understanding that they play a role in the entire development of a nation. The disapproving of informal trade in many countries is steered by formal businesses, politicians and councils themselves. Legodi et al undated confirms this when he mentions that the disapproval of informal economy is entrenched in municipalities and other forms of the economy. It has also been observed that in Zimbabwe, government position in marginalising vendors is rooted from the vendors' incapacity to contribute to the national economy through payment of taxation. The sector assumes some self-imposed protection by not paying taxat the detriment of their business growth in that they don't receive lawns or grants from central government and should therefore not protest grumble, Legodi et al undated.

### **1.9Women Related Challenges**

There are more women vendors in Gweru than men. The observation has been that certain challenges although they may affect every trader, are peculiar to women. Women are known to be a weaker sex and as such may not certain conditions such as those subjected to them by the prevailing bylaws. The intermittent police blitz and harassment that takes place in the city is unbearable for the weaker sex. Barker (2007) informs that in general reservations affecting both men and women street traders mugging and unlawful violent behavior from criminals. Most vendors in Gweru city jointed informal trading as a sector easy to join as it does not demand heavy financing. However the majority do not have enough to sustain the business. The majority do not work and as such do not qualify for loans because they have no security to cover the loan. In the process they become vulnerable to the economic changes and technical innovations. This is supported by According to Saunders and Loots (2006) who submit that in South Africa the informal sector is vulnerable to microeconomic and macroeconomic trends. Zimbabwe has experienced very serious economic challenges ranging from unemployment, droughts, food shortages and currency instability. No doubt small traders in Gweru felt the impact as evidenced by the large number of people who moved into vending in order toirk a living. For many the dream of enriching themselves from vending has only been a mirage when it emerged that the sector was not as lucrative as they thought. The traders especially those who registered with council found themselves in debt, with arrears of over thousands of Zimbabwean dollars let alone the monthly dues ahead of them. Access to the

accounts section revealed that at some time early in 2020, a randomly selected 3 500 bay occupantsrs owed the local authority Z\$1 737150 000.

### **1.10 Benefits of Informal trading**

Despite lack of recognition and the derogatory perception given to informal trading, the sector has proved to benefit the economy in many ways. The closure of 80% of industry in Gweru rendered the majority of people jobless and asresult, the jobless opted join the informal sector. The persist an economic instability coupled by runaway inflation and poor currency management and ever increasing prizes of goods and services has led to poverty as people fail to afford basic commodities and services. According to the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises (2002) quoted by Mzumara (2011), SMEs employ less than 100 people. According to Newberry (2006), owners of small business derive personal satisfaction in running such businesses. Many informal traders in Gweru have managed to move to beyond satisfying their financial needs for sustainable livelihoods to financial independence not connected to employment, (Grava, 2013). Economists can hardly conclude compounding thenation's GDP without making reference to the contribution of the informal sector. are the engines for economic growth in a country (Newberry, 2006).

## **II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES (PURPOSE)**

The objective of the research were

- to explore the policy making process and its relevance to informal trading
- Identify and explain informal trading policy related challenges that have hindered progress in in Gweru.Investigate the impact of informal trader harassment on economic development
- Investigate causes of bay abandonment by traders optingfor CBD
- Recommend the adoption of prudent policy options to eliminate confrontational behaviour in the city.

## **III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS**

This section clarifies the methodology and data analysis. This study was steered using pragmatism approach which favours the use of qualitative and quantitative methods. Saunders et al (2012) encourages the use of pragmatism research idea as it is said to give room to many ways of deducing meaning from our environment, hence the use of such approach Approaches such as, questionnaires and interviews. Data collected from documents was analysed and triangulated with responses from other data sources .Targeted traders were those trading in fruit and vegetables (in both the cbd and suburbs), clothing (in both the cbd and the suburbs, street vendors), traders from shops and Council officials. Probability and non-probability sampling procedures were used to target all informal and Purposive sampling was employed to the obvious targets such as council officers and the municipal police. Officially authorised municipality documentation was instrumental in providing the required data. Respondents largely provided information through structured and unstructured questionnaires, interviews as well as closed and open ended responses. Best and Kahn (1993) agree that interviews enable individuals to speak their mind as well their feelings “the purpose of interviewing people is to find out what is in their mind –what they think or how they feel about something”. In choosing probability and no-probability sampling, the researcher sought to conform to (Kothari 2004) who mentions that the two methods have the potential to accommodate pragmatism.

### **3.1 Population**

As put forward by Henning, 2004,population is the group of concentration and interest from which the researcher would generalises the outcomes of the study.This research drew its population from official council documents, informal traders, and council officials. Below is the tabular representation of all identified traders from both the CBD and other outlying area (Table.). The areas were deliberately chosen because they happen to represent the much of the informal trading in Gweru. The table served to show the type of ware in both the CBD and the outlying areas (suburbs). The table indicates the total number of bays in both the two main areas as well as the abandoned bays. Further explanation is provided in the data analysis section.Table .1 shows the population of bays and those that are not occupied. The population of bays occupied ad not occupied is of interest to the researcher in that when triangulated with the interviews will explain why certain bays in other areas are abandonedTable 1 show that there are quite a number of fruit and vegetable markets in the high density subduesthan in the cbdoGweruaaltho more fruit and vegetable traders in the central business district than in the suburbs

**Table 1: Population Statistics**

Wares	Population of traders (Urban)	Population of traders (High Density Areas)
Clothing	1319	64
Fruit and Vegetables	890	104
Firewood	0	33
Others	213	213
Total	2422	414

Source: Research Primary Data (2018)

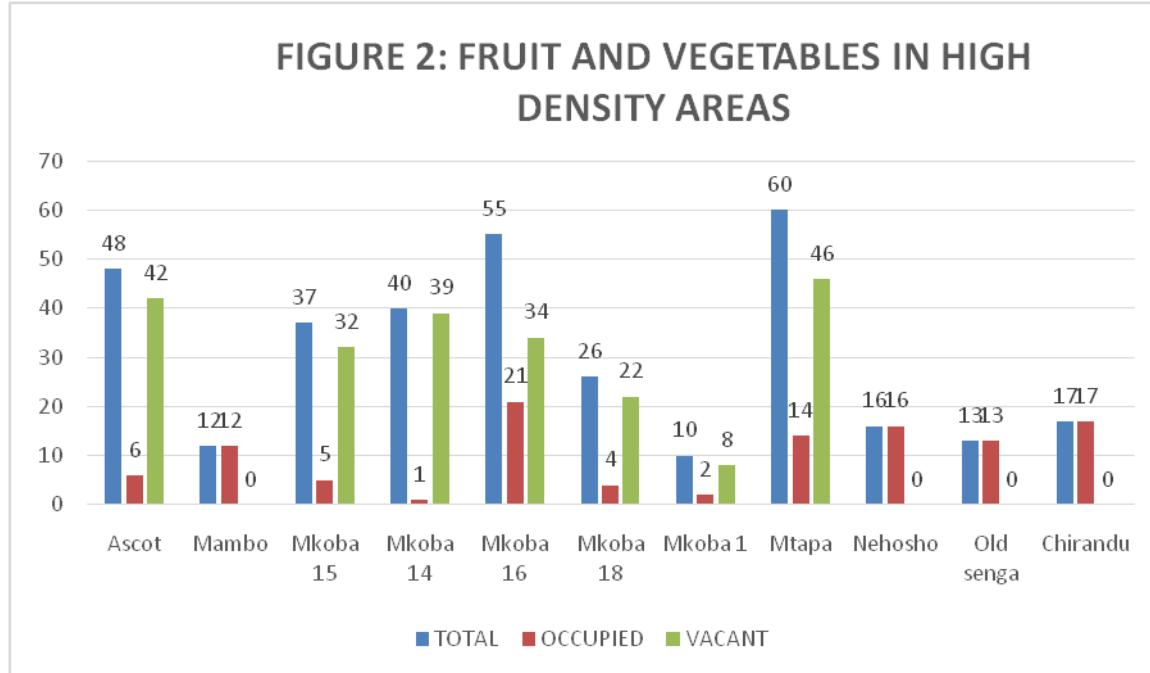
### 3.2 Sample

A sample is a proportion of a population. Clarke and Cookt (1994 notes that a sample should be imagined as a bigger population in miniature. It should have the capacity to reproduce the same characteristics as the bigger population. In this research, simple random sampling and convenience sampling were used. Names o traders in each category and area were randomly drawn from the council register .Clarke and Cookt 1994 further notes that the method is representative in that the member is chosen, independently of which other members have been selected. About convenience sampling, Clarke and Cookt1994 informs that...

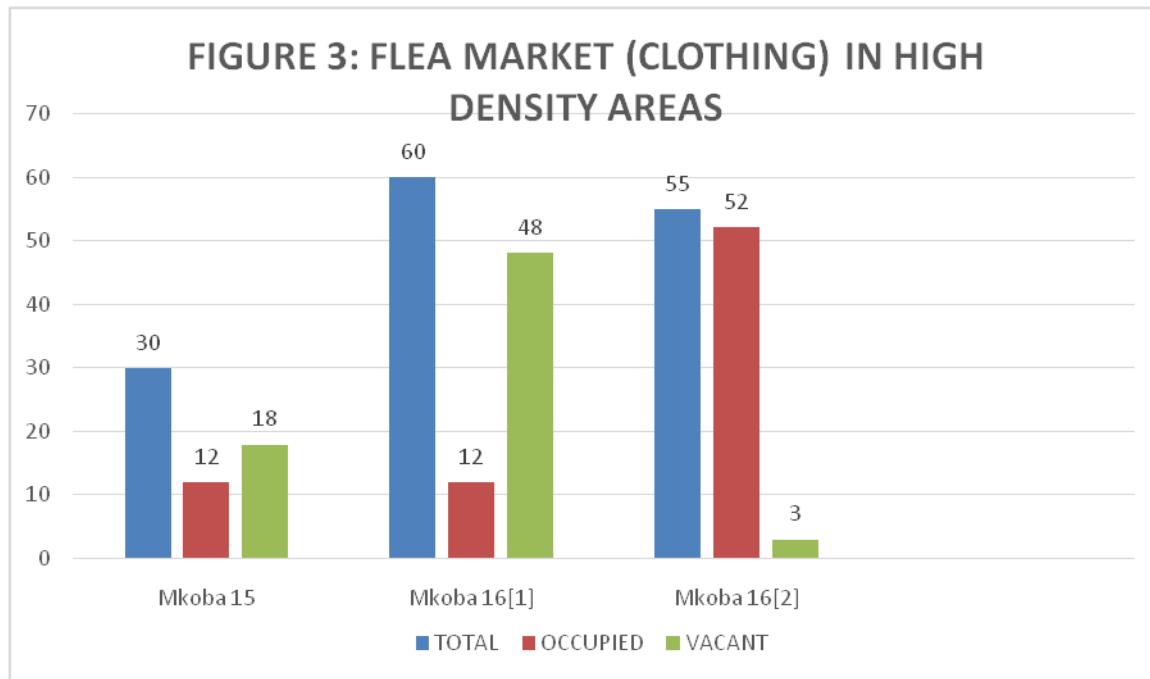
**Table 2: Sampling Techniques and Research Instruments**

Key Respondents	Research Design	Sampling Technique	Sample Size	Research Instrument (s)
Gweru Informal Traders	Qualitative	Purposive	20	Focus Group and Interview
Vendors Association leadership	Quantitative and Qualitative	Convenience	5	Questionnaire, Focus Group
Council Officials	Qualitative	Purposive	10	Interview

### Distribution of Informal Trading bays in Gweru



Source: Research Primary Data (2020)



#### IV. Data Analysis

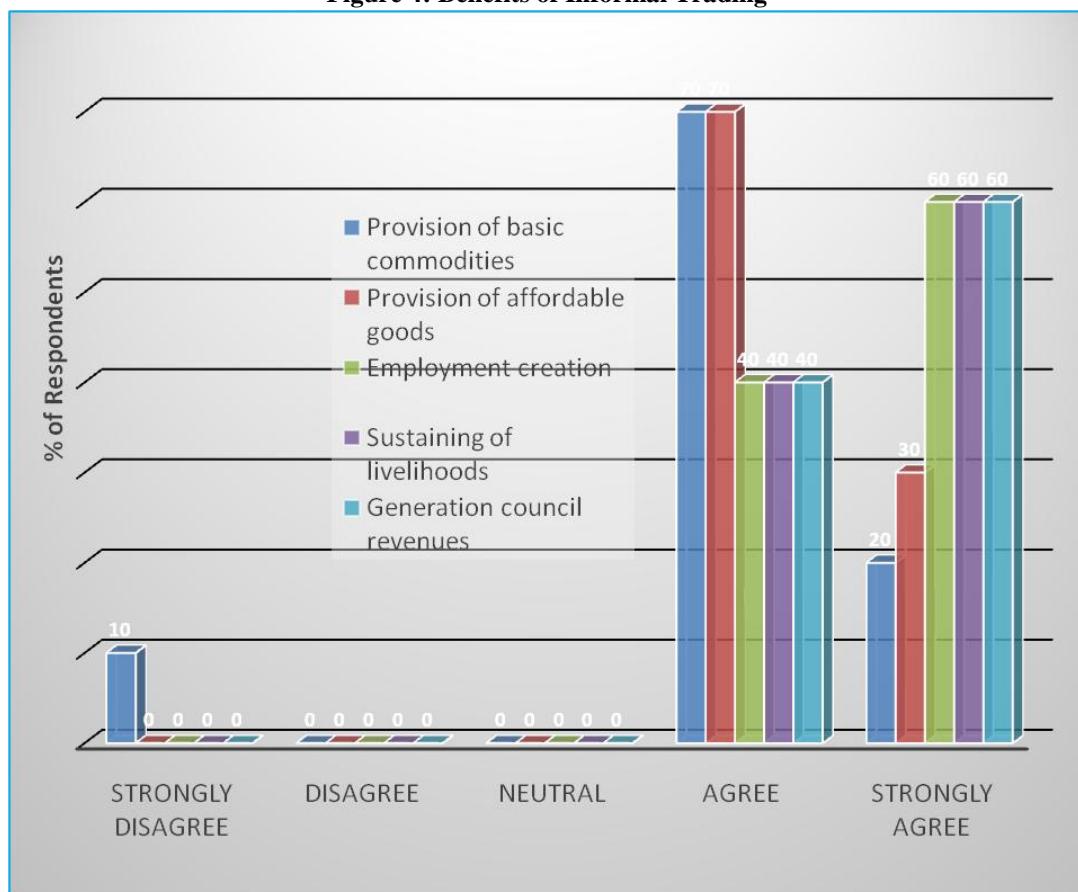
This paper looked on data presentation, analysis, discussion, and interpretation. The paper focussed on informal trading policy disharmony in the city of Gweru. The purpose of the study was to reduce disharmony between traders. There were five specific research objectives, the first one being to explore the policy making process and its relevance to informal trading, the second to identify and explain informal trading policy related challenges that have hindered progress in in Gweru The other to investigate the impact of informal trader harassment on economic development also to investigate causes of bay abandonment by traders opting for CBD and to recommend the adoption of prudent policy options to eliminate confrontational behaviour in the city. The overall objective was to establish benefits of informal trading for economic development.

Table 1 indicates population used in this investigation representing active traders in the identified areas. The table also indicates 2422 traders in urban centre and 414 traders in high density areas representing 83% and 17% respectively.

#### Benefits of Informal Trading in the City of Gweru

There are a myriad of benefits of informal trading in the City of Gweru. Figure 4.1 illustrates the findings.

**Figure 4: Benefits of Informal Trading**



The benefits derived from informal trading are plentiful and they are critical in that they address the issue of basic commodities which are cheap to access. The generality of informants, with regard to food provisions strongly agree that informal trading is assisting in provision of basic commodities.

shows the benefits of informal trading which addresses the objective of the study. The results indicate that informal traders are benefiting in provision of basic commodities, provision, provision of affordable goods, employment creation and sustenance of livelihoods, though 10% were failing to afford basic commodities. Most informal traders were benefiting most in terms of employment and sustaining their livelihoods, and also a source of revenue for the Council. The majority of the respondents (60%) strongly agreed that informal trading was a source of revenue for the Council. Moreover, an official in the Ministry of SMEs who was interviewed said the following, “the informal traders are part of the SMEs, which are essential in a number of ways. The informal traders create employment and they ensure that the owners are able to meet their basic needs.” This finding is supported by literature and Grava (2013) argued that one of the reasons is to generate income, which is essential for sustaining livelihoods. The other reason is to attain financial independence and not to rely on income from an employer. Moreover, the small businesses are the engines for economic growth in a country (Newberry, 2006

## V. FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

In Gweru there are more fruit and vegetable sellers in the central business district than in the outlying areas such as residential suburbs. So many reasons were advanced for this status quo.

- (i) The cbd area especially for those who prefer to sell from the streets requires strict adherence to the rule of law.
- (ii) There is stiff competition among traders in the cbd where only traders who are financially strong can stand the heat.
- (iii) Most bays in the suburbs have been abandoned because those who occupied these bays accumulated arrears ballooned by the runaway inflation which has ravaged the country from the early years of independence in 1980.
- (iv) Although there is nothing written to that effect, authorities appear to be conscious of the plight of traders in the suburbs although at times they carry out blitz to remind them to adhere to the rule of law.
- (v) The majority complain of lack of provision of trading space by the local authority in the cbd

National and local authorities policy crafting has not been inclusive enough to accommodate the very basic requirements of informal traders.

Traders generally resist the existing trading environment and in the process clash with the law enforcement agents.

Traders resist to pay and at one time they were bailed out by the government which cancelled all the debts informal traders had accumulated.

For those allocated bays by the local authority, they sublet them for some few Zimbabwean dollars equivalent to about US\$10 to around US\$20 and this is a lot of money by Zimbabwe standards.

Informal trade goods are cheaper than those bought from big corporates such as supermarkets.

There is no policy to compel traders to pay tax and for this and other reasons they have no access to **government financial support**.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

The investigation came to the conclusion that there has been disregard of appropriate policy implementation which has resulted in the harassment of informal trader in Gweru. Over the past four years after Zimbabwe became independent the regulations that controlled vending were haphazard in nature. Local authorities have taken it upon themselves to control and upgrade markets and the task has been insurmountable. Unemployment due to economic instability left most people in the city as vendors. The ever increasing cost of living has forced most informal traders to go out in the street and legally or illegally eke a living. The heavy handedness of local authority police should be replaced by the application of proper legislation. The vendors should have a place in the Central Business District.

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