

INFORMAL FOOD VENDING IN OKURYANGAVA, WINDHOEK:
ENTREPRENEURIAL KNOWLEDGE ENHANCEMENT STRATEGIES AND
ASPIRATIONS OF THE SELF-EMPLOYED

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Abstract

This empirical study in application-oriented Human Geography examined conditions of entrepreneurial knowledge and skill enhancement strategies practiced by informal food vendors in Windhoek's Okuryangava suburb, which are apparently required for the achievement of individual aspirations such as socio-economic resilience. Against the analysis framework of the 'Street Vendors Success and Knowledge Gap', the research focused on two components, namely the Social and the Human Capital. In pursuit of this approach, the conducted in-depth, semi-structured face-to-face interviews revealed that vendors carefully observe their competitive terrain, communicate verbally face-to-face as well as remote via cell phones with their social networks in order to obtain and exchange entrepreneurial knowledge. Ultimately, findings confirmed the importance of social networks in the improvement of informal food vendors' business. Simultaneously, the interviews captured the knowledge enhancement aspirations harboured by informal food vendors with few insights into formal entrepreneurial processes such as business management, technical skills and customer care. Interviewees expressed their need for after-hours tuition, delivered through interactive face-to-face teaching modes and / or public media, including learning material. Such expression of interest called for instituted, demand-driven knowledge dissemination systems for informal sector entrepreneurs. The author concluded that the findings of this study could be of assistance to the compilation of syllabi for systematic informal sector education and training in Namibia.

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Dedications

This thesis is dedicated to all the respondents, whose contributions led to an inspiring completion of this study.

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Declarations

I, Maria Kulaumone Hamukoto, declare hereby that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher education.

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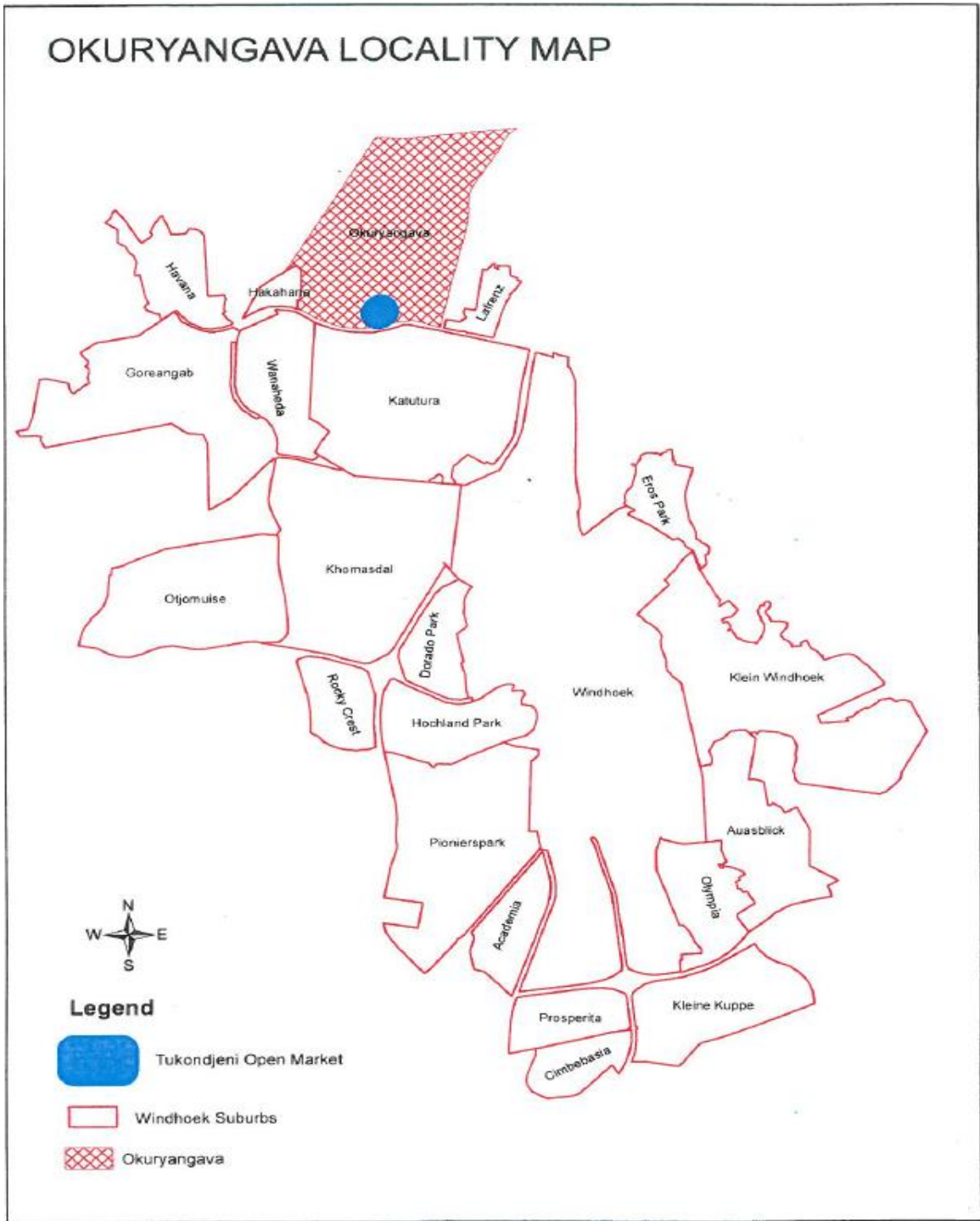


Figure 1: Okuryangava locality map

Source: City of Windhoek

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Description of the study area

Located in the Khomas Region in Namibia, Windhoek is the country's capital city. Compared to other urban areas in the country, the capital city is a premier hub of economic and political activities. According to Pendelton, Nickanor & Pomuti (2012, p.1), Windhoek accounts for "...more than 50% of the country's manufacturing activities, over 80% of its finance and business services, and two-thirds of its community and social services." This makes Windhoek the central focus for many rural migrants seeking to make a living. With reference to the 2011 Census, the city hosts 16.2% of the national population (from 13.7% in 2001) and 36% of the total urban population. Pendelton *et al* (2012, p.1) conclude that the population of Windhoek will reach half a million people by 2020, if the current growth rate (5%) is maintained.

A suburb of Tobias Hainyeko Constituency, Okuryangava is an informal settlement in Windhoek established in the 1990s, situated in northern Windhoek. With reference to Pendleton *et al* (2012), Tobias Hainyeko area of Windhoek is, among others, an important destination for migrants from different parts of Namibia. Haimbodi (2014) states that Okuryangava and other suburbs of Windhoek such as Havana and Hakahana are home to the poorest of the population.

The physical characteristics of Okuryangava show the spreading of informal food businesses, featured by provisional 'stationary' self-constructed shops. It is assumed that most people engaged in the informal economy in this suburb are driven by the dire need to combat the critical effects of poverty and food insecurity.

1.2 Orientation of the study

Poverty and unemployment in rural areas has caused individuals and families to migrate from villages in search of a better survival in the cities (Bhowmik, 2005). Misra and Alam (2014) observe that migration contributes significantly to the growth of cities. In the context of Africa, the African Development Bank (2012) reports an urbanization rate of 3.5% per year for the last two decades. According to the report, this rate of growth is expected to hold into 2050. More than half of Africa's population is estimated to be urban by 2030, and it is anticipated that urbanization will continue to increase unemployment. Against this background, economic insecurity might likely affect the majority of urbanites in Southern Africa, and Windhoek may be of no exception.

Pendleton, Nickanor and Pomuti (2012) conclude that Namibia is urbanizing rapidly, and that Windhoek is apparently the most attractive destination for migrants in the country. The 2011 National Census of Namibia reports an accelerating urbanization for Windhoek with an annual population growth of five percent (2001: 235,500 inhabitants; 2011: 318,700 inhabitants).

Often migrants from rural areas lack formal education, which usually does not allow access to qualified employment. Guha-Khasnobis and Kanbur (2006, p.

207) explain how the urban informal economy is associated with unique characteristics such as easy of entry, low initial capital and little requirement for a high level of skills. As a result, it remains the most accessible option for economic survival in urban informal settlements (Kanyenze *et al.*, 2003, p. 9). In Windhoek, Sem (2010) reports that the majority of the poor resorts to informal food vending in order to overcome imponderability pertaining to unemployment. Acs and Kallas (2008) assert that many operators in the informal food businesses lack entrepreneurial skills essential for success.

Generally observed in urban settings worldwide, Ruskulis (2001) underlines that informal vendors draw skills and knowledge from other people in their social networks. Wongtada (2014) emphasizes that processes of obtaining knowledge from social networks remain hardly understood. Among informal food vendors prevails intensifying competition, predominantly obscuring success for many. This situation calls for training and education.

Against this background, the empirical study examined knowledge enhancement strategies as well as knowledge enhancement aspirations of self-employed urban dwellers operating in the peripheral communities of Windhoek. This localized field study focused on the unwrapping of socio-cultural practices exercised under urban conditions of social networks regarded as one of the success factors of informal vendors. The study revealed informal food vendors' preferred means to effectively teach them essential tools for their survival and growth.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Irrespective of countries' development classification and covering the period from 1999 to 2010, Wongtada (2014) observes that studies in this field focus mainly on problems of street vending and pay little attention to factors relating to the success of entrepreneurs. She further notes that business strategies of vendors often are simple and lack differentiation. They face fierce competition leading to low earnings and profits. Vendors apparently do not have time to attend regular structured trainings as their daily tasks absorb most of their time. Their low education level reduces their interest in searching for more information and self-improvement. Lack of information about informal vendors' social knowledge acquisition methods, and their effectiveness for success thereof, keeps the obstacle of knowledge deficiency in this sector unaddressed. It was assumed that missing experience-based information about strategies to become a successful survivor in the informal sector economy, results in limited success for new entrepreneurs. Social connections with weak knowledge that is required lead to a repetition of what failed other entrepreneurs. Systematic capacity-building, which focuses on entrepreneurial training and application, is hardly offered to the informal sector.

1.4 Research objectives

In the context of the evolving society of Namibia, and linked to Wongtada's 'Street Vendors Success and Knowledge Gap' analysis framework, the objective of the application-oriented thesis on urban and economic geography sought to namely:

- (i) exemplify processes employed by food vendors in order to obtain knowledge from their social networks;
- (ii) assess their networks effectiveness in enhancing vendors' success;
- (iii) identify food vendors' core competencies required to compete in changing business environments demanding increasing flexibility;
- (iv) examine vendors' preferences pertaining to methods of education and training;
- (v) conclude how results generated from field data collection and analysis for this study impacted informal sector education, training programmes and syllabus development in Namibia.

1.5 Significance of the study

The researcher advocates localized research in knowledge enhancement and aspirations of agents in a demographically dominant sector. Findings are required that strengthen, expand and even introduce knowledge and skills dissemination programmes along with syllabus development for informal food vendors in Namibia. Such investigation facilitated insights into processes furthering vendors' success.

The provision of new knowledge to the field of economic and social geography in Namibia together with findings of this research are expected to have impact on strategies addressing obstacles in the informal sector. The findings demonstrate how approaches to the dissemination of knowledge to the informal sector enable the delivery of demand-driven knowledge in effective manners; potentially making the informal vending to serve as training ground for

entrepreneurs who move on to build their businesses in the formal sector. The synthesis of this research revealed shortcomings pertaining to methods and practices learned from social networks and their actors that could help build junior entrepreneurs' capacity.

1.6 Limitation of the study

This empirical case study experienced short-comings in primary data capturing evolving from the fact that approximately 12 people, who were approached to render their time for interview, were unwilling to respond. This resulted in a reduction of the planned number of (N=80) to N=70. Additionally, the limitation was inherent in the focus of the case study on Windhoek, which excluded experiences that might be discovered in Namibian towns such as Walvis Bay, Okahandja or Rundu. The study encountered an extensive challenge of language barrier. The researcher speaks English and the local language of Oshikwanyama, while most participants spoke Rukwangali. As a result, the researcher only interviewed non-Oshiwambo speaking respondents who understand English and those who could get assistance of translation from a nearby vendor.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2. Conceptual framework

The case study integrated components of Wongtada's 'Street Vendors Success and Knowledge Gap' analysis framework, translating the Giessen-Amsterdam Model of Small Business Owners' Success (Rauch & Frese, 2000). The application-oriented concept engineering for this study focuses on Social Resource Capital and Entrepreneurial Human Capital components. This framework informs the study that vendors gain (entrepreneurial) knowledge from their social networks (see causal relationship between Social Capital and Human Capital, Fig. 2, p. 8). However, according to Wongtada (2014, p. 72) vendors' methods of doing so are not well understood. Her framework therefore served as a reference for embarking on this field work case study to uncover vendors' knowledge tapping methods and link research results with their Applied Business Strategies considered as educational and training success-builders for Business Success in the informal sector economy of food vendors in the local study area of Okuryangava. An extract featuring Wongtada's selected components as highlighted in Figure 2, together with the findings of the study (p. 62) was redesigned.

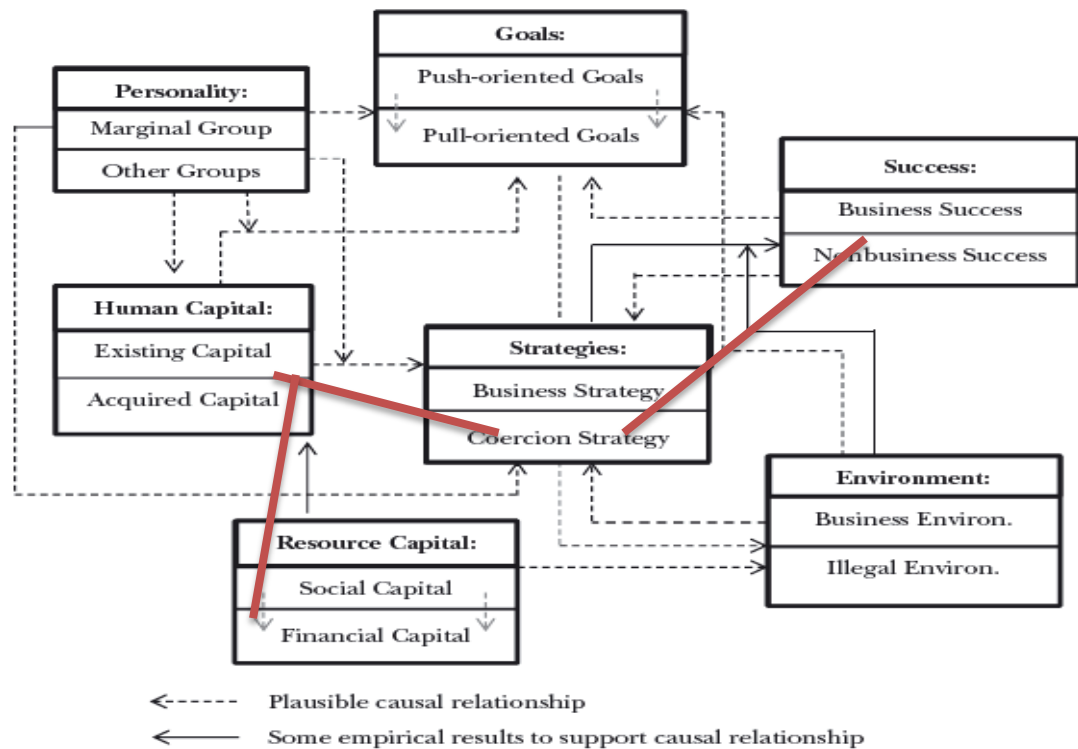


Figure 2: A proposed model for street vendors' success and knowledge gaps

Source: Wongtada (2014, p. 71)

2.2 Literature review

This section analyses research conducted on poverty and unemployment, informal economy, food vendors, human capital, social capital and competition in informal food businesses (inter-) nationally.

The National Planning Commission of Namibia (2007, p. 8) states that poverty remained among the development challenges in Namibia since independence. Publications on development in Namibia underline that poverty reduction and employment creation have been amongst prominent features in the country's contemporary development agenda. Oyugi (2008, p. 14) argues strongly that

these priorities have not changed throughout the successive five-year National Development Plans (NDP), starting with the Transitional National Development Plan, NDP1 (1995/96 to 1999/2000) and NDP2 (2001/02 to 2005/06). The National Planning Commission (2012) in its document titled *Annual economic development report* explains that poverty remains a problem, with rural areas accountable of 37.4% of the poor population; compared to 15% in urban areas. The report further states that about 29.0% of the Namibian population lives below the poverty line while about 15.0% are severely poor.

The Namibia Statistics Agency (NSA) reported in 2013 (p. 75) the country's unemployment rate as standing at 29.6%. When disaggregated by regions, the Khomas Region shows an unemployment rate of 27.7%, in comparison to unemployment in Kunene, Kavango, Oshana and Ohangwena with rates of 39.8, 35.6, 33.6 and 32.7 percent respectively. The NSA further sorts figures of unemployment by age across Regions. Results for youths aged 15 to 34 years indicate that 41.7% nationwide are unemployed, while in the Khomas Region the rate is at 36.7%. Omusati, Ohangwena and Okavango Regions show the highest rate as 57.1%, 54.8%, and 53.3% respectively. Figures imply a relationship between unemployment and level of education. For instance, people with only primary and junior secondary education are likely to be unemployed compared to those with secondary and post-school education. The NSA indicates that the unemployment rate of the population with primary and junior secondary education is standing at 31.7%, and 36.6 % respectively. These two figures were the highest

recorded in the category of unemployment by educational level in the country. Statistics presented above explain the raise of rural-urban migration in Namibia.

Unfortunately, aspirations harboured by the majority of rural migrants are not often fulfilled after having moved to urban areas. Research underlines that due to lack of employment opportunities, people engage in informal activities of enterprises by means of self-employment in order to maintain their livelihoods. Such a part of the urban labour market is well known as the informal sector.

Writers indicate that the concept of 'informal sector' has received extensive scholarly attention since it was first introduced by Hart in the 1970s. According to Gërxhani (2004) Hart's original notion of the informal sector is practically limited to the self-employed. This surfaces in the discussion of Bromley and Gerry (1979) saying that Hart introduced the concept of informal sector to describe a part of the urban labour force which works outside the formal labour market. The authors explain that Hart considered the informal sector as almost identical for categories of (small), self-employed individuals. Following the early work by Hart, according to Gërxhani (2004) the pioneering research on the informal sector is broadly considered to be a report of the International Labour Office (1972) on employment in Kenya. In line with employment aspects of the informal economy, the International Labour Office initially defined the "informal sector" in 1972 (p. 6), characterizing the sector based on seven factors: ease of entry; reliance on indigenous resources; family ownership of enterprises; small scale of operations; labour-intensive and adapted technology; skills acquired outside the formal school system; and unregulated and competitive markets.

According to the International Labour Organization, quoted in Kanyenze *et al* (2003, p. 9), the informal economy refers to:

Very small units producing and distributing goods and services, and consisting largely of independent, self-employed producers in urban areas of developing countries, some of whom employ family labour and/or a few hired workers or apprentices; which operate with very limited capital, or none at all; which utilize a low level of technology and skills; which therefore operate at a low level of productivity; and which generally provide very low and irregular incomes and highly unstable employment to those who work in it. They are informal in the sense that they are for the most part unregistered and unrecorded in official statistics; they tend to have little or no access to organized markets, to credit institutions, to formal education and training institutions, or to many public services and amenities; they are not recognized, supported or regulated by the government; they are often compelled by circumstances to operate outside the framework of the law, and even when they are registered and respect certain aspects of the law they are almost invariably beyond the pale of social protection, labour legislation and protective measures at the workplace.

Budlender (2011) explains that employers and own-account workers are considered to be in informal self-employment if their enterprise is not registered as a company and does not have detailed formal accounts.

Literature indicates that the accurate number of informal sector operators in Africa is not known, however, unofficial estimates indicate a large magnitude of this sector. With reference to De Beer, Fu and Wunsch-Vincent (2013) estimates suggest that for most middle- and low-income countries, employment in the informal economy accounts for more than half of non-agricultural employment over the past two decades. They report that the rate of informal versus formal employment is highest in Sub-Saharan Africa, followed by Southern and Southeastern Asia and Latin America. They conclude that such employment ratio supports the literature that describes the informal economy as a “permanent feature” in regions such as Latin America and Africa.

Furthermore, De Beer *et al* (2013) underline two theories, namely: the exclusion and the self-selection theory explaining why people participate in the informal economy. According to them, the exclusion theory suggests that informal employment is a response to unemployment as people are excluded from formal jobs by high entry barriers, whereas the self-selection theory regards informal employment as workers’ voluntary choice.

Tshuma and Jari (2013, p. 250) emphasize that the informal sector in developing countries does not only make a significant contribution towards the gross domestic product, but it is a major potential source of entrepreneurship, thus a source of income too especially for the less educated and less skilled. Wongtada

(2014) concludes that the informal economy is a viable option for people facing economic hardship, as it serves as a social safety net for the unemployed.

The Namibian Informal Economy Survey-NIES (2001) investigated informal enterprises countrywide. The findings of the study reveal that a large number of informal enterprises are involved in food vending. Broadly speaking, in urban settings most informal vendors are also referred to as street vendors.

Bhowmik (2005, p. 2256) defines a street vendor as a person who offers goods for sale to the public without owning a permanent built-up structure from which to sell. She explains that street vendors may be stationary in the sense that they occupy space on the pavements or other public/private spaces or, they may be mobile in the sense they move from place to place carrying their merchandise on push carts or in baskets on their heads.

Teltscher (1994) stresses that informal vending is similar to other entrepreneurial operations in terms of economic activities, as an informal entrepreneur employs production factors to sell a good or a service in order to generate profit. Reynolds, Bygrave, Autio, Cox, and Hay (2002) assert that while theories imply that some entrepreneurs take on their venture by choice, typical informal vendors are necessity-driven entrepreneurs who start businesses due to lack of alternatives to sustain their living.

Couyoumdjian and Larroulet (2009) emphasize the significance of informal vendors, arguing strongly that necessity-based entrepreneurs can be important to a country's development as they represent a form of human resourcefulness and

many of them capture the sense of entrepreneurial spirit. Their argument is supported by Amorós and Cristi (2010), who report from their research titled *Poverty, human development and entrepreneurship* that entrepreneurship activities have a positive effect on human development, for example, in poverty reduction. The authors are convinced that their findings prove that entrepreneurship is not only relevant for the economies of developing countries, but it is also necessary. Amorós and Cristi (2010) conclude that while small informal entrepreneurs are generally involved in low productive activities resulting in low impact on economic growth, they can contribute to social and anti-poverty interests.

For urban settings, Mukhola (2014) explains that informal food vending is not only a source of income for the operators, but it is also a source of inexpensive nutritional food for the low income residents. Pendelton *et al* (2012, p. 23) discovered that 66% of the inhabitants in the informal settlements of Windhoek purchases food from urban informal vendors. Crush and Frayne (2011, p. 782) argue that “the informal food economy plays an essential role in the provision of urban households and in making food available to the urban poor. In line with Crush and Frayne’s view, Patel, Guenther, Wiebe and Seburn (2013, p. 31) are convinced that the ability to buy food in a ready-to-eat form also gives the poorest of the urban poor, those without the time or infrastructure needed for cooking, an equal opportunity to be food secure. Patel *et al* (2013, p. 1) conclude that informal food vendors have “...become enabled actors of a food chain that provides nutritious food for the poor and other classes in the urban landscape”. They maintain that by strengthening opportunities for the informal food business

growth, "...vendors would benefit from increased sales and improved social standing...." (2013, p.1). At the same time, poor urban consumers would benefit from lower prices for the informal food business products they already consume.

Research focusing on problems facing informal food vending has been conducted widely especially in developing and middle income countries. However, field studies focusing on factors relating to their success are scarce, inviting further research.

This research gap is marked by Wongtada (2014) who emphasizes that factors facilitating success of informal vendors need further examination to advance existing knowledge in this field, and, subsequently, improve vendors' chance of success. Investigations on processes, which may guide vendors into success, are overdue. Haan presented a paper in 2002, focusing on approaches of training for the informal sector, aimed mainly at preparing vocational youth trainees for informal sector employment. Due to the curriculum-oriented nature of such approaches, the study did not specify training approaches suitable for unskilled vendors who are already operational in the market. Likewise, the research paper presented by Schilderman in 2002, titled *Strengthening the knowledge and information systems of the urban poor*, focused on strengthening knowledge of urban poor in general to improve their living standards and welfare. The paper did not include entrepreneurial knowledge essential for the self-employed.

Being pushed into this livelihood by lack of opportunities to make a living, Wongtada (2014) argues that typical street vendors possess insufficient human capital prior to their engagement in these operations. According to her, human

capital comprises education, experience, knowledge, and any skills crucial for business success. Westhead, Ucbasaran and Wright (2005) interpret that human capital increases owners' capacity to discover and exploit business opportunities, giving an example that prior knowledge enhances owners' entrepreneurial alertness, preparing them to discover specific opportunities that are not visible to other people.

Becker (1964) indicates that human capital theory assumes that people attempt to receive compensation for their investment in human capital. In agreement with Becker, Cassar (2006) explains that once individuals enter entrepreneurship, those who have invested more in their human capital are likely to strive for more growth and profits in their business, compared to those who have invested less in their human capital simply because they want to receive higher compensation for their human capital investments. The arguments propose that according to human capital theory, human capital leads to entrepreneurial success.

Similarly, Rauch and Frese (2000) explain that the human capital theory is concerned with knowledge and experiences of small-scale business owners. Brüderl, Preisendoerfer and Ziegler (1992) elaborate that the underlying assumption of the theory is that the human capital of the founder improves chances of small enterprises to survive. Rauch and Frese (2000) describe human capital as a resource which makes the founder more efficient in organizing processes and in attracting customers. The authors conclude that since the theory is concerned with knowledge and capacities, it implies processes as well; exemplifying that human capital can be trained and improved.

In the Giessen-Amsterdam Model noted by Wongtada (2014), human capital is found to be positively related to success. In their study investigating the human capital-success relationship, Bosma, Van Praag, Thurik and De Wit (2004) confirm that human capital enhances entrepreneurial performance. Unger, Rauch, Frese and Rosenbusch (2011) clarify that several variables moderate the human capital-success relationship. For instance, the relationship between human capital and success is likely to be higher for younger than for older businesses. According to Rauch and Frese (2000) the Giessen-Amsterdam framework proposes that human capital is related to business success via goals and strategies. In agreement with Rauch and Frese, Baum, Locke and Smith (2001) underline that human capital is related to planning and business strategy, which in turn positively impacts success.

Given the importance of knowledge (human capital) for growth and success, Schilderman (2002) contests that urban poor require knowledge and information to improve their livelihoods. He clarifies that specific needs of urban poor differ from location to location, and in order for development agencies to respond to them effectively, investigations will always be required.

The author claims that civil society and government agencies are responsible for disseminating knowledge how to cope with urban economical challenges. However, such organizations have not been effective in disseminating relevant knowledge to the urban poor, resulting in only limited impact at the grassroots level. He concludes that underlying reasons appear to result from training agencies' insufficient attention to the exploration of information needs and

resources of the urban poor, and their often top-down dissemination style as well as usage of inappropriate information resources.

Liimatainen (2002, p.15) argues that “the core issue in providing relevant training is to identify what the real training needs are.” She contests that entrepreneurs and informal sector workers are clients of training providers, therefore their needs must be transformed into demands for services. The author insists that training must respond to clients’ demands rather than demands of the donors, NGOs or other suppliers of training. She concludes that training needs to address clients’ immediate needs in order to ensure a high degree of its relevance.

Blunch, Canagarajah and Raju (2001) emphasize strongly that the informal sector is very much demand driven. The authors emphasize that skills which are in demand are directly linked to activities undertaken or to be undertaken. They justify their point, stating the often repeated argument that the majority of informal sector participants did not receive any formal education and, of those who have, a vast number has only obtained some basic or primary education. Pranger (2005) further underlines informal economy operators’ need for entrepreneurial knowledge, arguing that the owners of African small businesses usually come from within the micro and small enterprises sector itself, and only few have learned their skills in larger companies beforehand. He explains that vendors predominantly acquire entrepreneurial skills in autodidactic manner. He states that lack of skills could be a result of limited actions of the national and local governments in individual countries and cities. The author concludes that

informal businesses have little growth prospects as entrepreneurs and possess little vocational and managerial skills to develop their enterprises.

Referring to the Indian context, Krishna (2005) notes that

In recent years a number of governmental and non-governmental organisations have initiated programmes or taken steps in education, training and skill development with a view to establishing decent work in the informal economy. Such initiatives have been scattered and not well documented. There is limited information about the extent and type of educational and training programmes, which either reach out to or arise within the informal sector (p.184).

Krishna's view appears to apply to Namibia. In Namibia, training programmes whose agendas include training for entrepreneurs exist as demonstrated in the work of Tonin and Venditto (2000) as well as Barkhuizen and Bennett (2014). Apart from limited information about the extent and type of education and training such programmes offer, localized studies seem to prove that available programmes are not accessible to all self-employed entrepreneurs who direly need education and training for survival and growth.

A paper presented by Tonin and Venditto in 2001 investigates new ways to transfer entrepreneurial education to previously disadvantaged individuals in Namibia, using a case study of The Adult Skills Development for Self-

Employment (ASDSE) Project in Namibia. According to the authors, ASDSE is a Government of Namibia's national project implemented in 1995 as a commitment to generate an environment conducive to encourage self-employment in the informal sector and develop income-generating skills for the unemployed and underemployed. Tonin and Venditto report effectiveness of the project's training of participants in respect to their businesses turnover and management. However, the ASDSE project seems to have a limited outreach to the general informal sector operators. This is a result of training that is primarily offered to small groups and individuals rather than to communities at large. Tonin and Venditto explain that the project firstly trains a group of district members who are required to be part of the National Literacy Programme of Namibia (NLPN). Such trainees are later assigned tasks for selecting, training and mentoring entrepreneurs from their district that are viable for receiving loans according to the project's criteria. The project's criteria include characteristics such as (i) the business is not registered, (ii) owner has never received any form of loan from a local financial institution before, (iii) the business generates an average income of N\$80.00 per day. It is the selected small business owners who undergo training prior to receiving loans. Recipients of training may impart skills to other entrepreneurs in their communities. However, that might not effectively influence human capital of the majority of entrepreneurs left out by the project. Such scenario invites further investigation on training approaches open to all informal sector operators including street vendors.

In 2014, Barkhuizen and Bennett examined the effectiveness of adult training programmes offered by the Centre for Enterprise Development (CED) of the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST). According to them, the Centre delivers training programs to address needs of entrepreneurs in business management. Their assessment yields positive results about the impacts of the offered training on participants' businesses. Ultimately, their report implies that CED training is not intended for general public entrepreneurs, but rather academic entrepreneurs studying at NUST.

Against the background that the majority of the poor are not catered for by existing entrepreneurial schemes, skills and knowledge for most self-employed in the country did not make significant improvement in the past two decades. In 2012, the National Planning Commission of Namibia highlighted the need for training and education of self-employed in the country. Subsequently, in 2012, the Commission's document titled *National Human Resources Plan* stresses that the development of the SME sector needs to address effectively constraints impeding SME development, such as lack of (i) managerial and financial skills, (ii) business know-how, and (iii) business linkages. Moreover, the National Planning Commission (2012) underlined the importance of skills in relation to growth and success as well as human development, stating that a country's prosperity is dependent on the number of its people that are employed and how productive they are, which in turn rests on the skills they have and how effectively those skills are used. As recent as 2014, the African Development Bank states that for Namibia, lack of entrepreneurial and business management skills among micro, small and

medium enterprises is of continuing concern. These reports prove that the challenge of lack of knowledge and skills among self-employed informal sector operators in Namibia remains unaddressed, justifying significance for research aiming to enhance understanding on how to tackle this challenge better.

Wongtada (2014) explains how vendors act as agents in tackling knowledge-based constraints, rather than remaining passive victims of their destitute conditions, clarifying that even though vendors lack background and skills necessary to conduct a business; they acquire them from their social networks. The author defines social networks, also known as social capital, as personal networking which benefits sellers through provision of preferential treatment and cooperation. She states that social networks of street vendors include their extended family members, friends, ethnic groups, and other vendors. Uphoff (2001, p. 222) infers the element of cohesiveness in social networks in her explanation, underlining that 'social' originality is taken from the phenomenon of friendship, implying some personal attachment, cooperation, solidarity, mutual respect and a sense of common interests. Arrows (2001) expresses the self-gainfulness motive for entering into social networks, explaining that the term 'capital' implies three aspects, namely: an extension of time, deliberate sacrifice in the present for future benefit and alienability. Wongtada maintains that social capital is vital to new vendors as it can supplement their lack of human capital and helps them to deal with the harsh business environment. In fact, Babb (1998) considers social capital more important than human capital for underprivileged self-employed vendors since they face many constraints to be managed by themselves. Agadjanian (2002)

concludes that their social capital supports them during the start-up and continues to assist them throughout the life-cycle of their business.

- Neighbourhood-based groupings
- Gender and age-based networks and associations
- Kinship-based associations (including rural-urban linkages)
- Networks based on a common area of origin
- Politically-based networks
- Religious and ethnic linkages and associations
- Savings and credit groups
- Employment-based networks and associations (such as trade unions, informal associations, trading networks)

Box 1: Examples of social networks in urban areas

Source: Rakodi & Tony (2002, p. 135)

Nijkamp (2003) warns that despite being a desirable or necessary condition, social networks are by no means sufficient for enterprises' growth. In line with Nijkamp's view, Wongtada (2014) is convinced that skills acquired through networks are associated with high risk of failure. Schilderman (2002) supports Nijkamp and Wongtada's views, underlining that information from social networks is often incomplete, unreliable and of poor quality. Schilderman implies misery experienced by most vendors when explaining that the poor are not always able to check incompleteness and unreliability of such knowledge. But, even in cases they do, they sometimes tend to believe people they trust, for instance close

friends, relatives, religious leaders or teachers, rather than better informed contacts who are distant to them. Their arguments confirm that despite possession of knowledge learnt from social networks, informal vendors require education and training for their business survival and growth.

This need is demonstrated in Krishna (2005), who argues that:

In a situation of continuing poverty, very low formal education levels and illiteracy, low productivity and a quite distressing economic development situation in the informal sector, one may regard education, and particularly knowledge and skills, for poor people in the informal sector as key ingredients in anti-poverty strategies and programmes directed at social and economic development. Small technical changes which improve living and working conditions, technical and social skills which help to add value to micro-enterprises and their management, and the development of networks with a range of formal and government agencies—all these elements demand awareness, education, knowledge and, above all, training in skills (p.184).

Sunley (2000) agrees with Krishna in his statement that “poor economic performance is likely to be reinforced by poor levels of educational attainments” (p. 196). He suggests that “...the depiction of learning as the most important economic process could be taken to imply that lack of economic growth can be explained by relative absence of learning and knowledge accumulation” (p. 196).

Similarly, it is underlined in Namibia's Fourth National Development Plan-NDP4 (2013) that education is acknowledged as the single most important aspect of human development and a critical success factor for economic advancement and increased equality.

In case of vendors, education and training is particularly important for them to cope with the changing and competitive business environment of the informal sector. Cohen (2010) states that vendors face competition from new traders. Due to limited product differentiation this leads to an overall drop in consumer demand resulting in varying and lower profits. Pranger (2005) explains that most informal entrepreneurs respond to market and customer needs by avoiding concentrating on single line business. The author elaborates that instead of selling larger quantities of the same products, vendors offer different products and services. From their research titled *Competition and Management Issues of SME Entrepreneurs*, Southiseng and Walsh (2010) report that competition also increases in the sector as substitute products are introduced, with compelling bargaining power from buyers. Companion (2010) indicates the ineffectiveness of vendors' attempts to eliminate competition and ensure repeat of clientele, explaining that vendors sometimes offer small loans to their customers that are never repaid or sell products at lower prices, ultimately incurring losses.

Sheppard (2000) states that within economic thinking, one of the prevalent metaphors expressing how competition works is '*competition as evolutionary progress.*' According to him, the conception is inspired by Darwin's evolutionary theory. He explains that the view in the social Darwinism theory is that

“competition in society, as in nature, promotes survival of the fittest and progress to a better future” (p. 169). The author elaborates that this implies that “competition is not only a foundational idea in economic and social theory, but also in biological evolutionary theory” (p. 169). He clarifies his point, exemplifying that “just as animals struggle to survive and evolve, so must humans compete to survive and prosper”. He deduces that this shows that “competition and self-interest behavior simply reflect human nature”, and that they are old, inescapable, natural, beneficial and key to economic growth and prosperity (pp.169-170).

Given that competition is inescapable, Khan (2010) suggests that in order to overcome challenges pertaining to competition, vendors need to be equipped with strong core competencies. The author defines core competencies as a set of variables such as special skills, processes, knowledge and expertise. He discusses that by using these sorts of variables, a business can gain long-term development and experiences. Furthermore, he emphasizes that this value helps protect businesses from competitors because it is difficult for rivals to access and imitate that value.

In line with Khan, Sunley (2000, p. 196) agrees that while information has become plentiful, knowledge is a scarce resource. He asserts that tacit knowledge, individual skills, organizational routines, and specific skills are difficult to replicate elsewhere as they rely on high levels of trust, and may therefore sustain a business’ advantage even in the context of rapid product

imitation. He describes entrepreneurs' engagement in interactive learning and multi-skilling as critical, arguing that their capability to learn rapidly and apply such learning to production and sales are the most important components of their enterprises' viability. Haan (2002) concluded that technical skills together with other types of support related to markets and information are direly needed to enable informal sector entrepreneurs to diversify their product range and acquire possibilities to escape from the impending saturation of conventional informal sector markets. Moreover, Liimatainen (2002) stresses that those better-educated entrepreneurs are generally more responsive to policy measures, which is vital for the sector's development. The author suggests that improving productivity is needed for the survival and growth of informal units and also imperative to their gradual formalization.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The empirical case study was based on qualitative data collection by semi-structured face-to-face interviews and secondary data-mining. These data collection methods were essential for answering the research objectives outlined in 1.4 on page 4, which sought to explore and comprehend knowledge acquisition processes and skills needs of self-employed informal food vendors in the Okuryangava suburb of Windhoek. Complementary to the qualitative method, quantitative data collection was applied to report about frequencies pertaining to respondents of the study. Capturing of secondary data was commenced prior to fieldwork through reviewing of library materials and desk reading of existing literature addressing the informal food vending phenomena (see literature review, pp. 8-27).

Literally, the target population comprised all food vendors, working from provisional 'stationary self-constructed shops', operating adjacent to the formal municipal Okuryangava market, regardless of gender, age, descent or any other aspect. The initial idea of including mobile vendors was dropped as there were no mobile vendors on sight during the period of the study.

Seventy informal food vendors (24 M; 46 F) operating from provisional 'stationary, self-constructed shops' were selected through purposive sampling. Due to the dominance of women operators in the informal sector, an equal number of male and female vendors could not be established through convenience sampling. In addition, there were hardly any mobile informal food vendors during the period of the study. Hence, stratification of vendors into categories of operation, namely, 'mobile' sale points and provisional 'stationary, self-constructed shops' could not be performed.

Backed-up by interview guides, camera, notebooks and maps, the researcher visited vendors' operation sites for data collection during weekdays and weekends, both in the mornings and afternoons. First-hand information was captured by taking notes during interviews. In consent with the interviewees, photographs were taken on study sites for extra illustrations of the research scenes.

The data were analysed as follows:

Information from the respondents was examined and sorted in a logical order (see empirical findings, pp. 29-60). This allowed the researcher to identify patterns such as vendors' processes of obtaining entrepreneurial knowledge and aspirations for furthering their success. Appropriate themes were established from the data in order to provide clear answers to subjects in question. Further, data were scrutinized and meanings were assigned (refer to discussion, pp. 60-79). Furthermore, themes were assigned to identical categories of data to summarize the information in a meaningful manner. Comprehensible depictions of different issues were reflected and conclusions were made. Tables were designed to show frequencies of respondents' traits or responses. Narrative texts, accompanied by figures featuring respondents' quotes on specific issues were used to present the findings. An extract linking the study's findings to Wongtada's analysis framework which were integrated in this study was redesigned.

With anticipation that the majority of respondents were likely to be Oshiwambo-speaking, Oshiwambo and English were used during field work. Preceding the data collection, the researcher verbally explained either in English or Oshiwambo the purpose of the research and the principle of confidentiality of the interview outcome throughout and after the study. In order to protect respondents from any harm,

interviewees' identity was coded in advance. In addition, it was emphasised that they may stop the interview at any time and leave the researcher should they have felt uncomfortable for whatever reason. The bi-lingual explanation was handed out in writing to a potential respondent for signature (informed consent).

CHAPTER 4: EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to examine knowledge enhancement strategies and aspirations of informal food vendors operating in the Okuryangava suburb of Windhoek. It sought to comprehend the education and training methods considered appropriate by the informal food vendors. Data were collected through semi-structured face-to-face interviews. This chapter presents findings generated from the primary data collection of empirical field research.

In the beginning, the study aimed at including mobile vendors. Surprisingly, it turned out that there were hardly any mobile informal food vendors available on all weekdays during the period of data collection. This resulted in a refrain from stratifying vendors into the two categories: 'mobile sale points' and 'provisional stationary' self-constructed shops respectively.

4.1 Demographic information

A generally high number of female vendors, compared to male vendors were encountered. As a result, participants could not be grouped into equal categories of male and female as proposed earlier.

The researcher interviewed 70 informal food vendors operating in the surroundings of the Tukonjeni municipal market of Okuryangava. Out of 70 participants, 46 were

female, while 24 were male. The data show that majority of respondents are aged between 25-29 years old followed by those aged between 20-24 and 35-39 years, respectively. The oldest participant was 68 years of age, while the youngest was 19 years old. Table 1 and 2 show the gender and age ranges of the participants.

Table 1: Gender of the participants (N=70)

	Frequency
Male	24
Female	46
TOTAL	70

Table 2: Age range of participants (N=70)

Age range (Years)	Frequency
15 -19	1
20 – 24	13
25 – 29	19
30 – 34	11
35 – 39	13
40 – 44	8
45 – 49	0
50 – 54	2
55 – 59	2
60 – 64	0
65 – 69	1
TOTAL	70

With reference to Table 3, eighteen participants have obtained secondary education, while 25 obtained junior secondary education, representing the majority of the participants. Whereas twelve obtained only primary education, eleven interviewees

have not attended formal schooling. However, two of them indicated that they had attended an adult literacy programme, where they learned how to write their names and a few words in their mother tongue. The data show that four participants attained tertiary education. They said they sell part-time as they were still studying towards their first degree.

Table 3: Educational attainment (N=70)

Level of education	Frequency
No schooling	11
Primary	12
Junior secondary	25
Secondary	18
Tertiary	4
TOTAL	70

As to respondents' places of origin, the figures highlight that 47 respondents hail from Owamboland in northern Namibia, while eleven migrated from Rundu in north-eastern Namibia. Four participants are from the neighbouring countries, Zimbabwe and Zambia respectively. Other participants moved from various places in north-western and central parts of Namibia. The table below summarizes data relating to the participants' places of origin.

Table 4: Respondents' places of origin (N=70)

Place of origin	Frequency
Caprivi	1
Katima Mulilo	2
Okakarara	1
Opuwo	1
Owamboland	47
Ruacana	1
Rundu	11
Windhoek	1
Zamiba	1
Zimbabwe	4
TOTAL	70

In addition, the study looked into the period of time the respondents operated their business. The answers reveal that respondents have operated in the informal food vending for a considerably longer period. While ten interviewees have run their business for less than one year, eighteen have operated for a period between five and nine years. The research established that a total number of 20 interviewees have operated in the informal food vending enterprises for a period between 10 and 44 years. The longest period of selling reported was 43 years. Table 5 (p. 34) summarizes the participants' period of operating their business.

Table 5: Participants' period of operating their enterprises

Period of operating business	Frequency
Less than 1 year	10
1-4 years	22
5-9 years	18
10 -14 years	8
15 - 19 years	4
20 – 24 years	5
25 – 29 years	2
30 – 34 years	0
35 -39 years	0
40 – 44 years	1
TOTAL	70

4.2 Entrepreneurial knowledge providers

Individual participants mentioned several people in their social networks from whom they seek entrepreneurial knowledge. Forty-seven interviewees (15 M; 32 F) answered that they consult, in priority, other vendors in search for knowledge and skills. They approach other vendors as they are the ones with experience in business. One participant (15fWC-hm) explained: “A person who does not know business cannot give someone business skills.”

According to her, neighbours, for example, are customers. Other participants explained that they approach experienced vendors as they are the people that could tell how they started their business. Apart from or in addition to other vendors, thirteen participants (5 M; 8 F) said they seek entrepreneurial knowledge from their friends who own business. Two of the participants explained:

“Family often does not care much and they could be jealous too. A friend could give you better guidance. It is in few cases when a family member can help, unless they own a business too” (25mVL-hm).

“Between your own sibling and a friend, a friend would be the one to share their knowledge with you and not your sibling” (09mTW-hm).

Box 2: Reasons for not asking family members.

Nevertheless, twelve participants (4 M; 8 F) said they consult family members for business advice. Seven interviewees (2 M; 5 F) specified that they ask family members, who have businesses for relevant guidance and support. One vendor said she seeks entrepreneurial knowledge from all people in her social network. The table below sums up interviewees responses on who they seek entrepreneurial knowledge from. Individual vendors mentioned several people; hence the total number of the frequencies will be more than 70.

Table 6: Entrepreneurial knowledge providers

Entrepreneurial knowledge providers	Frequency
Family	12
Family with business	7
Friends	6
Friends with business	13
Other vendors	47
Neighbours	2
All people	2

4.3 Entrepreneurial knowledge tapping methods

The processes of obtaining entrepreneurial knowledge reported by the respondents were: face-to-face interactions, electronic communications, situation analysis and application of desirable personalities.

4.3.1 Face-to-face interactions

Face-to-face interactions included asking, discussing with someone and attending entrepreneurial meetings. Asking someone means simply posing a question or questions casually when a vendor runs into another or others without necessarily having formal business meetings. Participant (08mTW-hm) explained: “I take time off from my business and walk around asking people entrepreneurial ideas.”

56 respondents (21 M; 35 F) asked other people questions related to the following topics:

- start-up capital acquisition,
- how they started their business,
- how they price their products,
- marketing strategies,
- whether certain products bring profit,
- types of problems in selling certain products,
- how to store products, for example, perishable ones,
- ingredients for making certain products,
- where to access stock.

While the majority of respondents explained that they gather information from various people, a counter narration was presented by one respondent who elaborated that:

“I hardly ask anyone questions like how they started their businesses and how they are making profit. The reason is that some people do unclean deeds to come up with their business or to make their businesses successful. Such people would never share their ways for reaching where they are with their businesses with anyone” (11mWC-hm).

Box 3: Reason against gathering information from people.

Whereas 56 vendors reported that they ask people without engaging in formal meetings, 24 (4 M; 20 F) underlined the importance of discussing with a person. Participants who use this process said they use phone calls only to make appointments with the people and discuss all things when they sit together. Discussing with other business people requires the sacrifice to travel if necessary (sometimes out of Namibia) to receive business guidance. This testimony is expressed in the following quotations:

“I once travelled to South Africa only to see someone whom I wanted to discuss serious business matters with. Another time, I went to Noordoewer, outside Windhoek to see another person that I wanted to learn entrepreneurial knowledge from” (02mTW-hm).

“When I need to learn important things about business, I travel out of Windhoek. For example, I catch buses to go to the north to see people with entrepreneurial experience” (10fTW-hm).

Box 4: Interview responses regarding discussing with someone.

Respondents indicated that sitting and discussing with someone is more important than simply asking a person wherever one finds him/ her. During such talks, people tend to

tell the truth and according to one of the respondents, they also discuss things which cannot be communicated over the phone.

Furthermore, two of the vendors said they attend meetings in which entrepreneurial knowledge is imparted. They explained:

“The meetings that I attend are often arranged for formal market operators who belong to certain organizations. I learn about the meetings from such vendors that I know, then I go to attend too. Such meetings there are usually conducted by people from other countries, such as South Africa, who are also entrepreneurs, sharing their success stories. Much skills and knowledge is shared, for example, how to control our temper with our customers. I attend those meetings even when they are held out of Windhoek. After the following two weeks, I am going to attend one of those meetings which is going to be held in Ongwediva” (14fWC-hm). “I attended three meetings for entrepreneurs in which I have learned things such as how to control a business so that it remains functioning” (24fVL-hm).

Box 5: Interview responses expressing attendance of entrepreneurial meetings

4.3.2 Situation analysis

Interviewees said apart from asking other people in their social networks, they also enhance their entrepreneurial knowledge through observation and imitation. They said that they observe what others are doing at their businesses and learn in the process. Participants said they observe things such as how other vendors measure and price their products; new and different products they are adding to their businesses. One of the respondents explained that she observes what other are selling and try to see how she can differentiate her products from others.



Figure 3: Different product ranges: Drinks and Chillies

Source: Hamukoto (2016)

Other interviewees said they go around and observe for example, the places where they can buy products for selling. One of the participants explained:

“I always wanted to sell dried chilli but I did not know where to get it from and nobody could tell me. One day when I was walking in Tukondjeni municipal market, I found people buying chilli from someone who supplies it from Zambia. I asked him his contact number and after, I was able to contact him to place my own orders. Today I sell chilli too” (07fTW-hm).

Box 6: Observation as a process of obtaining entrepreneurial knowledge

In addition to observations, participants stated that among their processes of obtaining knowledge, imitation plays a role. According to them they observe how others are doing certain things in their business and copy it. Participant (02fTW-hm) confidently revealed: “I look at other vendors and see what products are bought by many customers; then I start selling the same products.”

However, one of the vendors who also imitates reported that imitating is not always effective. Participants who use observation were 44 (11 M; 33 F), while those who use imitation were 5 (2 M; 3 F).

4.3.3 Electronic communication

Cell phone communications were indicated as another main method used by informal food vendors when seeking entrepreneurial knowledge from people in their social networks. This is reported by 26 participants (5 M; 21 F) who said that they generally approach people by means of phone calls to seek entrepreneurial knowledge. This includes people who also live within Windhoek. Respondents who use electronic communications said they also use Facebook-Facebook and text messages (3 M; 4 F).

4.3.4 Application of desirable personalities

Participants said they exercise desirable personalities to complement their attempts to obtain entrepreneurial knowledge from other people. The data indicate that vendors establish a good relationship with people from whom they intend to learn from. These relationships are characterized by helping them when needed, buying from selected vendors and showing respect to them.

Fourteen respondents (6 M; 8 F) explained that they initially create a good relationship with someone when they wish to learn entrepreneurial knowledge from him/her.

“I act friendly with someone whom I wish to learn from, happy and making jokes with them” (06fTW-hm).

“When I want to learn from someone, I create a good relationship with them first. This could take as long as one week, only then I could start asking a person about entrepreneurial skills”(09mTW-hm).

“Creating a good relationship first with a person is good. For example, inviting such a person out to some social place to relax together, so you are both at ease and it is safe to discuss business related contents. A good, comfortable atmosphere still need to be established in order to allow for one to make their inquisition related to business even though the person whom they are asking is their friend”(18mWC-hm).

Box 7: Interview responses explaining creation of a good relationship.

Interviewees explained that they create cordial relationships first, as people do not often like to share their entrepreneurial knowledge with people whom they do not have a close relationship with. Such connections and dealings are not only built with other vendors, but also with customers. One of the respondents who sell meat that is supplied from outside Windhoek needs to connect with customers in order to get sufficient number of people who want to buy so that she can place bulk orders. Participants who use this method emphasized its importance, even prior to being questioned by the researcher.

Fifteen interviewees (4 M; 11 F) explained that they assist someone with things related to business in order to obtain entrepreneurial knowledge from them. The majority of them responded that before they opened their own businesses, they sold on behalf of someone else. In the process, they learned different things such as how people make profit and what type of products are good to sell, for example, the type that does not

easily get spoiled such as chilli and dried meat. Interviewee 02mTW-hm explained: “I helped someone when they were storing their products for selling. In doing so, I learned how I can store my products, especially perishable ones, so that they do not get spoiled.”

Furthermore, 13 interviewees (4 M; 9 F) said in order to learn things such as how to measure and price their products, they buy from other vendors selling items of similar type. In doing so, they show support to other vendors. They said they opt for this method because normally when they only ask a person about how they are pricing their items, they refuse to tell.



Figure 4: Buying from competing vendors: Nuts and mopane worms.

Source: Hamukoto (2016)

Additionally, participant 30fVL-hm who sells cooked food said she likes buying from people who sell the same food as hers to taste and ask about ingredients from those, whose food she finds tasting better.

Showing of respect was also reported to be among the personal characteristics exhibited, when searching for entrepreneurial knowledge. One participant emphasized:

“I show respect to people before even attempting to ask them about any business skills. People can only help you if you are respectful to them. If you do not have respect for people, they will not be willing to help you” (19fWC-hm).

Box 8: Role of respect in search of entrepreneurial knowledge

4.4 Reactions towards entrepreneurial knowledge seekers

The study queried the participants about how people in their social networks react when they approach them in search for entrepreneurial knowledge. Reactions indicated by respondents were: positive response, negative response and selectivity.

4.4.1 Positive response

Thirty-eight participants (14 M; 24 F) said that other vendors would normally welcome them when they approach them with inquires regarding entrepreneurial knowledge. They said there are some people who are willing to help and they tell the truth. For example, share how they get profit and loss, and encourage the person to go ahead and see for themselves how the business would go. While other respondents agree that other vendors often react positively when approached, they argued that it does not mean they always share their knowledge with those inquiring.

“Vendors are generally not rude people. When approached, they would react positively, they may not only give you the kind of information that you are looking for” (18mWC-hm).

“There are some people who are encouraging. They say go ahead, there is profit. Start and see for yourself” (02fTW-hm).

Box 9: Positive responses towards knowledge seekers

4.4.2 Negative response

The data show that when approached for entrepreneurial knowledge, some people do not tell the truth, others hesitate sharing their entrepreneurial knowledge, some discourage the inquirer and others get angry when asked.

Twenty-five participants (8 M; 17 F) specified that other vendors do not provide truthful information when they ask them. For example they give unspecified information such as certain products could be obtained in many places in Windhoek, but they would not tell where exactly.

“When I ask other vendors what kind of ingredients they cook their food with, some only say I add things for tasting, but would not mention the names of such ingredients”(30fVL-hm).

“Some people can tell you that certain products are available at low costs at a specific place but when you go there, such products are not there or they are at high prices. In the process, you waste your time and the money which you have spent on transport” (02mTW-hm).

“Some do not tell the truth about the cost of the stock, for example, they could say the products are expensive so that you do not go to the places where they say they come from” (10fTW-hm).

“Other vendors often lie, except for those selling in formal municipal markets. Those ones would tell you almost everything when you ask them” (14fWC-hm).

“Business is just a game. A jealous person cannot tell another person clear and complete information” (25mVL-hm).

“They do not tell the truth because they don’t want another person to come at the same level with them” (70fVL-hm).

Box 10: Negative responses towards knowledge seekers

Additionally, 16 interviewees (4 M; 12 F) said some people do not like to be asked.

They hesitate to share their entrepreneurial knowledge when asked.

When asked some people say ‘I don’t have time, I’m busy or I will tell you another day but they don’t’ (05fTW-hm).

“Some people just say do your own things” (37mTW-hm).

“When asked, some vendors simply say they cannot help” (53fWC-hm)

”Other vendors refuse to tell how much they are selling their products if they know that you also sell the same products. They do this to avoid competition” (21fVL-hm).

Box 11: People’s tendency to hesitate sharing their knowledge.

In addition, 10 respondents (1 M; 9 F) reported that some vendors try to discourage others when approached for entrepreneurial knowledge.

“Some people can tell you, there is no profit in this business, I am even planning to quit, but they remain there for years” (03fTW-hm).

“Some vendors provide exaggerated information such as they are buying their stock from South Africa in order to discourage you from going ahead” (55fWC-hm).

“Some people could just even say you don’t have to sell these things” (67fVL-hm).

Box 12: People’s tendency to discourage others.

According to one of the participants, discouragement is experienced also from family members, exemplifying a case whereby one’s parents might not like his/her business ideas, hence they discourage him/her when approached for entrepreneurial knowledge in that particular business.

Moreover, three interviewees (3 F) said some vendors become angry when asked for entrepreneurial knowledge, especially if one is selling products similar to theirs. According to one interviewee’s opinions, they want to be the only ones selling such products.

“They tend to be rude” (12fWC-hm).

“Most vendors get angry especially when asked where they get their stock from and how much they are selling their products” (45fWC-hm).

Box 13: People’s tendency to get angry when asked.

When asked for a possible reason for such reactions, they replied:

“They just don’t want to help” (15fWC-hm).

“They think the person wants to sell next to them” (62fVL-hm).

Box 14: Interview responses on reasons for unfriendly responses.

4.4.3 Selectivity

Participants revealed that people tend to be selective in whether to share their entrepreneurial knowledge or not, depending on two factors: their relationship with the person asking (4 M; 9 F) and the behaviour that one had approached them with (3 M; 5 F). Participants said if a person is their friend they may share their knowledge with them. If not, they would hardly tell the person anything.

4.5 Implication of acquired human capital on vendors' strategies and success

Sixty-seven participants (24 M; 43 F) indicated that they apply their acquired entrepreneurial knowledge and skills to their business strategies. Against that background, they reported an improvement in their businesses. The main improvement reported by the vendors was that of their profit and increase in their merchandises.

“My sale points have increased, due to skills I obtained from social networks. Today, I have four (4) sale points operating in different locations within Windhoek” (02mTW-hm).

“I started selling only few onions and potatoes but today I am a retailer of onions and potatoes” (15fWC-hm).

“At first I did not know where to buy stock and where to sell, but with help of people from my social networks, now I know” (41fWC-hm).

“When I started, I did not know how to cut my biltong and which spices to flavour them with. With skills that I have obtained from my social network, I now cut and spice my biltong appropriately. Now I make profit compared to when I started” (17fW-hm).

Box 15: Implications of vendors' acquired knowledge on their strategies and success.



Figure 5: Increase in the stock of onions and potatoes.

Source: Hamukoto (2016)

Another improvement reported by participants was that of product range. They said people tell them what kinds of products make profit so they keep adding such varieties to their business.

Further, three female participants commented that they have not really benefited from social networks.

“Social networks have made only an average contribution to my business” (01fTW-hm).

“Social networks made no contribution to my business. I’m not making profit” (69fVL-hm)

“Social networks did not bring any changes to my business. I do not talk with either my neighbours or other vendors in my surroundings due to conflicts between us. People do not want me to sell my things. My business is not making any profit” (28fVL-hm).

Box 16: Interview responses indicating ineffectiveness of social networks.

4.6 Effectiveness of knowledge tapping methods

While some interviewees asserted that their methods of obtaining entrepreneurial knowledge are equally effective in improving their business, a considerable number of participants explained that their methods are not equally effective in improving their businesses. Participants consider some of the processes of obtaining entrepreneurial knowledge more effective than others in bringing improvement in their business. Their opinions regarding the effectiveness of the methods are discussed below.

Eighteen interviewees (5 M; 13 F) said that their methods to obtain entrepreneurial knowledge from people in their social networks make an equal contribution to the improvement in their human capital and, ultimately, an improvement in their businesses.

The participants pointed out specific methods as most effective compared to others. Counter arguments were presented surrounding the method of face-to-face and situation analysis.

Twenty-three participants (6 M; 17 F) indicated that asking is better than observation in the sense that only looking and not getting further explanation of what is on sight is often insufficient. In line with this view, participants explained:

“Observation is not enough because you don’t know how much effort you are going to apply in the business, what are the risks and advantages” (29mVL-hm).

“Even if I don’t get an answer from one person, I can still proceed to other people. In my opinion, observation is not good enough because even if you see things which others are selling, you would still not know where such products come from and you can only get that information mainly when you ask” (23fVL-hm).

Box 17: Interview responses against observation.

Alternatively, 8 interviewees (4 M; 4 F) said observation is better than asking as people do not always share their knowledge when one asks.

“Observation is better than asking because when you ask, some people do not even answer, while with observation, you see and make your own decisions”(15fWC-hm.

“Observation is more important because it involves analysis of the ease of getting customers. First, one needs to observe, and then ask” (25mVL-hm).

“Asking is not good because when you ask, you will get confused” (44mWC-hm).

Box 18: Interview responses in favour of observation.

Furthermore, five participants (2 M; 3 F) praised working for someone, especially selling for them, as a way of enhancing their knowledge and improving their business. They said this method is important as it is practical, which helps a person to acquire hands-on business knowledge.

Electronic communication was considered less effective. Participants said phone calling is less effective and costly. Also phone conversations tend to be terminated due to network failure or if a phone's battery runs out of power. The use of Facebook-Facebook and text messages was also reported to be less effective due to a slow or lack of response from recipients.

4.7 Effect of distance on vendors' search for entrepreneurial knowledge

Participants were asked whether geographic distance affects their learning from the people in their social networks. The respondents indicated that they overcome the barrier of distance physically (6 M; 9 F) and electronically (11 M; 27 F) as established in earlier sections. It was also discovered that some vendors are affected by distance in their search for entrepreneurial knowledge from distant people and therefore only approach people locally (8 M; 22 F). Their expressions are quoted as follows:

“I mostly speak to the people who are close but when information from people nearby is unreliable, distance does not matter anymore, I call people even if they are far to help me” (63fVL-hm).

“Sometimes, those who are close may not be experienced; the person who is far could be the one helpful. In that case, I call them” (10fTW-hm).

“Often when I call people for advice, they say I should go to them so we could talk. I therefore travel to see distant people for entrepreneurial knowledge” (11mWC-hm).

“Some skills needs are urgent so I ask the people who are close and whom I can show what I am talking about. I do not always consult people who are far as their phones could be off or I may not have credit to call them” (03fTW-hm).

“I often ask people nearby. I hardly ask those who are far because it is costly to call them” (06fTW-hm).

Box 19: Effects of distance on vendors’ search for entrepreneurial knowledge.

4.8 Specific skills needed for furthering vendors’ success

In addition to examining the processes employed by the informal food vendors in their attempts to obtain entrepreneurial knowledge, this study sought to comprehend vendors’ skills needs essential for improvement in their business and coping in the competitive informal market. The data show that the skills needed by the participants were: business management, maintenance of clientele and technical business skills. It was found that vendors also aspire to get motivated.

4.8.1 Business management skills

Sixteen interviewees (4 M; 12 F) said that they need skills on how they can count their stock and profit. For the items such as fruits, vegetable and meat, the quantity of the stock is not fixed. A box of apples or tomatoes can have any amount of apples or tomatoes. As a result, they said they experience difficulty determining their actual profit. Respondent 58mWC-hm interpreted: “For items as sweets and chips, I always know how much profit I can get because their quantity is fixed; however, it is difficult with fruits and vegetables.”



Figure 6: Fruits and vegetables have an unfixed amount.

Source: Hamukoto (2016)

Similarly, two participants explained:

“I wish to establish my own shop where I could sell my things and leave the streets. I sell different products and I just mix up the money from all the products. In the end often I do not know in which products I made profit or a loss. I need skills on how I could record my income according to the products that I sell” (25mVL-hm).

“I would like to open my own shop one day and sell my stuffs there. Therefore, I need skills on managing massive stock such as how to count stock, determine profit and loss and paying of employees whom I would need to hire. In 2015, I have four (4) sales points in different locations of Windhoek. I would like to learn how I can control my business so it can go on smoothly” (02mTW-hm).

Box 20: Interview responses indicating need for business management skills.

4.8.2 Maintenance of clientele

Participants indicated that they need customer care skills, cooking skills as well as language skills. Fourteen interviewees (7 M; 7 F) said they need skills on how to communicate appropriately with their customers in order to maintain clientele. One

such example, defined by one of the vendors included the need to not get angry even if the customers get angry with them. One of the respondents strongly asserted:

“I want training on how to treat customers regardless of their state, whether drunk, mentally challenged, etc. Simply not well said words by an entrepreneur can chase away so many customers. Thus, I want to learn how to be tolerant even when myself I am not in a good frame of mind” (25mVL-hm).

Box 21: Need for customer care skills

Eight participants said they wish to acquire skills on cooking different meals that they wish to sell or are already selling.

“I need skills on how to make fat cakes, different types of bread, what kind of pans to use for different bread and knowing about the expiry of such products” (21fVL-hm).

“I wish to one day grow my business into a take away or restaurant. So, I need to learn how to cook and prepare different things such as salads” (30fWC-hm).

“I roast Russians and I would like to learn how to cook it and also learn different ways of having it served” (41mWC-hm).

Box 22: Interview responses explaining need for cooking skills.



Figure 7: Some of the informal vendors who wish to transform their business into formal business: Retailer (above), Wholesaler (below).

Source: Hamukoto (2016)

Furthermore, five respondents (5 F) reported the need for language skills to be able to communicate with customers, exemplifying English, Afrikaans and Oshiwambo. They

said these languages are widely spoken by customers and sometimes they lose customers due to language barriers.

4.8.3 Technical business skills

Participants reported that they need technical skills such as how to read and write (2 M; 4 F), how to get a loan for their business (2 M; 4 F), agricultural skills (2 F) so they could produce their own stock, for example, carrots and cabbage, how to obtain machinery and appliances such as fridges from assisting organizations (2 F) as well as skills on product differentiation and pricing of products (1 F).

4.8.4 Motivation

Three of the vendors indicated to be in need of moral support.

“I would like for the government to motivate us, tell us what to do if we fail on specific areas of our businesses so that we do not end up sitting at home if we fail in our business” (02fTW-hm).

“I would like get an opportunity to travel to other places to see how other vendors are conducting their businesses” (04fTW-hm).

“I would like education on challenges in business” (19fWC-hm).

Box 23: Interview responses showing need for moral support.

4.9 Informal food vendors’ preferred modes of teaching

Lastly, interviewees were asked to suggest their preferred methods for bringing training and education to them. Individual participants gave several suggestions. Their suggestions for methods of training and education were: face-to-face interactions, establishment of fixed support system as well as use of printed materials and media.

4.9.1 Face-to-face interactions

Respondents' suggestions pertaining to face-to-face interactions were: conducting of meetings with vendors, afternoon classes, training during weekends, evening classes, visiting of individual vendors, training during less busy hours and normal classroom style.

Twenty-two vendors (9 M; 13 F) said education and training for them would be delivered effectively through meetings in order to allow, for example, the demonstration of how to bake bread. For instance, trainers could organize a day or days in a week, come to nearby places to meet people and train them face to face. They need to have different time slots for people to choose according to their schedules.

Thirteen vendors (3 M; 10 F) suggested that training be conducted in the late afternoon hours after they have closed down. They suggested times between 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. weekdays. Whereas, eight vendors (1 M; 7 F) said training may be conducted during weekends because they close early, for example, Saturdays after one o'clock. In addition, six participants suggested evening classes between 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., so they could attend after they have closed.

Furthermore, four interviewees (4 F) said training officers could go to individual stands and talk to vendors personally. Two out of the 70 participants suggested that educational sessions should take place for two hours between 9 a.m. to 12 o'clock. They said that time would be suitable as that is when most people are at work and the number of customers declines. Respondent 24fVL-hm said: "Education and training for vendors

could be delivered in a normal classroom-training style, for example, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. People can sacrifice their time to attend.”

4.9.2 Introduction of fixed support system

Twelve participants (5 M; 7 F) said informal education agencies could establish their offices where vendors could seek entrepreneurial advice at their spare times. Vendors also suggested the establishment of a school of entrepreneurs (3 M; 5 F). According to one of the interviewees' opinion (10fTW-hm), such a school should have different time slots and levels to accommodate different vendors.

4.9.3 Use of printed materials and media

Printed materials and media included use of radio, provision of books and use of newspaper. Eleven vendors (6 M; 5 F) said radio will be appropriate to bring education and training to them. They said they will be able to receive the information, while not losing their time for work. One of the interviewees suggested that entrepreneurial knowledge could be brought on radio immediately after news because most people listen to news.

Eight out of seventy participants (3 M; 5 F) suggested that training agencies may give them books with entrepreneurial information so they could read by themselves. Similarly, eight vendors (4 M; 4 F) said information pertaining to entrepreneurship may be printed in newspapers and leaflets. Trainers could also give vendors booklets so they could read on their own.

Two interviewees (2 F) said entrepreneurial education may be delivered through television. One of them (03fTW-hm) suggested: “Entrepreneurial education may come

in a form of brief messages, preferably between soap operas on television as many people like watching soaps.” Facebook was also mentioned as suggested media to deliver entrepreneurial knowledge (2 F).

In conclusion, the data reveal that the participants seek entrepreneurial knowledge mainly from people who are also entrepreneurs, whether they are family members or friends. The study established that face-to-face interactions, situation analysis and application of desirable personalities are methods employed by vendors in their attempts to obtain entrepreneurial knowledge. Participants indicated that most people often react positively when approached in search for entrepreneurial knowledge; however, that does not mean they are always willing to share their knowledge. They said that people tend to not tell the truth, hesitate sharing their knowledge or simply discourage the inquirer completely. While some participants considered their methods of obtaining entrepreneurial knowledge equally effective, others had opposite opinions about the effectiveness of their methods. The study found that distance does not affect vendors as the majority said they either call or travel to reach distant people. Business management skills, maintenance of clientele and technical business skills were identified as skills needed by participants. They suggested methods such as face-to-face interactions, introduction of fixed support system and use of printed materials and media as appropriate to effectively deliver education and training to them.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This study aimed at examining entrepreneurial knowledge enhancement strategies and aspirations of informal food vendors, focusing on the Okuryangava suburb of Windhoek. It sought to identify informal food vendors' skills needs, essential to cope in the competitive informal sector. These skills include flexibility to adjust to the ever changing business environment in the informal sector. Thus, the thesis examined the informal food vendors' preferred modes and means that might bring entrepreneurial education and training to them.

5.1 Demographic information

The data reveal that female participants outnumbered their male counterparts. This confirms dominance of women in the informal sector as noted by previous researchers. The dominance of women particularly in food related enterprises is thought to be linked to socially constructed gender roles whereby food preparation and catering is generally women's responsibility.

The high concentration of participants with junior secondary education within the youth age range implies the significance of informal business to youth who left school with education not qualifying them for formal employment. Likewise, the data validated that informal food vending is the main source of employment for people with primary education as well as those who never received formal education. The study also found that informal food enterprises are not only a source of income for the less educated, but also for people who have attained tertiary education, as represented by the four

undergraduate students who said that they participate in the informal business partially to generate income needed for their human basic needs.

The number of participants declined starting from the 'age of 40 years' as well as from the period '25 years of operation', implying that although vendors tend to operate for a considerably long period such as more than ten years, they do not seem to keep informal food vending as their life-time job.

Participants indicated that they migrated from different parts of Namibia including neighbouring countries. The majority of participants were from Owamboland, which confirms dominance in number of migrants that came from Ovamboland in Windhoek, as underlined by Pendelton, Nickanor and Pomuti (2012).

5.2 Entrepreneurial knowledge providers

Participants indicated that they prefer seeking entrepreneurial knowledge from other vendors. Even interviewees who said they consult friends and family, they specified that they approach those who also own businesses. Their reasons included the notion that people who also own businesses have entrepreneurial experience and understand business better than those who do not. This shows that vendors are selective when deciding from whom they seek entrepreneurial knowledge. It implies that they seek entrepreneurial knowledge based on their perceptions on who might have skills that are transferable, and exclude those in their social networks they believe do not understand business. This is thought to limit vendors' possibilities of obtaining additional knowledge from non-entrepreneurs who might as well have understanding of relevant business principles. The study also revealed that the preference of other vendors by a

higher number of participants is a result of social complexity such as jealous family members. It was established that compared to relatives, non-relatives tend to be willing to guide and share their knowledge with them.

5.3 Entrepreneurial knowledge tapping methods

Interviewees mentioned that they mainly obtain entrepreneurial knowledge through face-to-face interactions, situation analysis, electronic communications and application of desirable personalities.

5.3.1 Face-to-face interactions

More than half of the interviewees said that they use this method to obtain entrepreneurial knowledge from others. This indicates that, despite the competition among vendors, an element of social cohesiveness still exists between them.

Interviewees perceive sitting and discussing with someone as a safe and reliable method of obtaining entrepreneurial knowledge. According to them, this is the method through which they communicate serious business matters, including issues that cannot be discussed over the phone. The possible distance which they asserted to be capable of travelling only to have a discussion with someone such as to places outside Windhoek or even Namibia indicates the seriousness of this method to vendors. They consider sitting and discussing as a way that allows a calmer atmosphere and therefore reinforces trust and openness between the people involved.

Only two participants mentioned that they attend entrepreneurial meetings which are often organized for formal vendors, for example, those who operate in the formal municipal markets. They said that they inquire from those who operate in formal

markets about their meetings, and then they go to attend as well. The findings reflect a situation noted by Wongtada (2014) that informal vendors tend to lack interest to seek information and knowledge. The data indicate that the participants who attend entrepreneurial meetings have obtained junior secondary education, implying that educational attainment plays a role in inducing individuals' interest in searching for knowledge and self-improvement.

5.3.2 Situation analysis

The process of situation analysis involved observation and imitation. Participants said they also enhance their entrepreneurial knowledge through making observations. Considering that some of them have never attended school, it could be concluded that vendors apply their innate thoughtfulness to analyze a situation and relate to it. Despite that they may see each other as rivals due to the closeness of their sale points, closeness seems to benefit them in a sense that it provides an opportunity to observe one another's work, which enables them to figure out possible ways necessary to bring change to their business.

Participants sell nearly similar products. However, only five out of 70 admitted that they imitate what other vendors are offering. This seems to imply that, even though they do it, imitation of others' business is not something vendors are very proud of.

5.3.3 Electronic communication

This involved phone calling, text messages and the use of Facebook-Facebook. The use of IT facilities has spread across a wide range of social networks, enabling people to share information and knowledge across space regardless of where they are. Vendors

reach people by electronic means such as phone calls in search of entrepreneurial knowledge.

Communication via cell phone text messages is less costly; however, only four participants said they use them when seeking entrepreneurial knowledge. This could be because text messaging is slow and time consuming. This method is also associated with a low rate of timely response by the recipients. Vendors therefore seemingly avoid approaching people for entrepreneurial knowledge by way of text messages.

Facebook is also one of the IT-facilities utilized for communication and knowledge transfer. However, only two interviewees said they communicate with people through Facebook-Facebook. This could be due to the fact that Facebook requires internet connection, which most vendors might likely not have access to. In addition, one needs to be able to read and write, particularly the English language in order to communicate via Facebook. Furthermore, just like text messages, Facebook is also time-consuming and people often hardly respond on time. This method was mentioned by participants with junior secondary and secondary education respectively, again showing that among other factors, educational attainment influences vendors' utilization of some facilities such as Facebook.

5.3.4 Application of desirable personalities

This process included selling for a vendor, establishment of good relationships, buying from other vendors and showing respect.

Participants realize that, in the absence of formal training and entrepreneurial education, the best way to enhance entrepreneurial knowledge is practical work experience the in

'real world'. They indicated that before they started their business, they were selling for a vendor for two to three years and that was how they gained entrepreneurial knowledge and confidence to establish their own business. The findings are similar to Pranger's (2005), whose research was based in Durban, South Africa, and Maputo, Mozambique. He found that owners of small businesses come from within the micro and small enterprises sector itself and only a few have learned their skills in larger companies beforehand. Pranger (2005) reported that informal enterprises' operators predominantly acquire entrepreneurial skills in autodidactic manner. The researcher thought they preferred this method due to its practical nature.

There is no doubt that personalities of vendors affect their acquisition of knowledge from people in their social networks. The study found that, in order to obtain knowledge from someone, participants put their best personalities at work. This includes being friendly, having good sense of humour and even being generous to the people whom they wish to gain entrepreneurial knowledge from. The study established that vendors still need to work hard on the social factor, such as participating in social events together, and using these opportunities as a means to make their entrepreneurial inquiries. This implies that vendors consider others' psychological statuses by not only dropping their inquiries at random. It also indicates that participants exercise moral and ethic values in their attempts to obtain entrepreneurial knowledge.

Buying from other vendors was indicated as one alternative to asking someone. Instead, vendors approach others as customers and buy from them. While being supportive to others, they acquire entrepreneurial knowledge from them such as how they measure and price their products.

A cultural value was reflected in the method of showing respect for people in order to reinforce their willingness to share entrepreneurial knowledge. Surprisingly, it was only one respondent who said she uses this method. This vendor originates from Oshiwambo culture, and when someone does not respect people, their upbringing is questioned. The use of this method by only one participant seems to indicate that, when people settle in urban areas, their cultural values begin to diminish due to the heterogeneity of lifestyles in urban settings.

5.4 Reactions towards entrepreneurial knowledge seekers

As depicted from the interviews, vendors are generally friendly people. However, they are highly conservative with their entrepreneurial knowledge. Thus, their warm welcoming of someone when approaching them does not imply that they always share their knowledge. However, participants underlined that, of course, vendors who want to inspire others and, therefore, are willing to help, do exist.

The study discovered harsh realities experienced by the participants in their processes of seeking entrepreneurial knowledge. Interviewees reported that some people tend to tell lies. Others hesitate sharing their knowledge completely, while for some, sharing knowledge with someone depends on their relationship with him/her. Interviewees also said that other people attempt to discourage the inquirer. It was further established that some people respond unfavourably when asked for entrepreneurial knowledge, whereas others assess the attitude of the person asking them to decide if whether they will assist or not.

Based on the reactions mentioned above, participants obtain entrepreneurial knowledge from people in their social networks though accomplishing such acquisition does not happen easily. The results relate to the conclusion of Sunley (2000) that while information can be plentiful, knowledge is a scarce resource. In this case, the data prove that even information itself does not appear to be plentiful. This is indicated by facts such as people provide information that is not true and hesitate to share their knowledge. The study found that entrepreneurs conceal their entrepreneurial knowledge from their counterparts to protect their business from competing vendors. This experience-based information reflects short-comings pertaining to processes of seeking entrepreneurial knowledge from people in informal vendors' social networks. The provision of this knowledge indicates particularly to junior entrepreneurs, what it takes to obtain entrepreneurial knowledge from social networks. These networks have shown a potential in assisting in the revision of currently applied processes of seeking entrepreneurial knowledge to become successful in the informal economic sector.

Strengths of relationships were found to play a significant role in people's decisions whether or not to share their entrepreneurial knowledge. This was thought to be an indication that trust is necessary before one imparts their entrepreneurial knowledge. It therefore justifies the need for establishing a good relationship with others in order to learn from them as revealed in earlier sections.

5.5 Implications of acquired human capital on vendors' strategies and success

Surprisingly, almost all interviewees admitted that social networks have contributed positively to their business. The main example of improvement given was that of increased profit and stock. Some of the respondents reported to have started selling a

few items, for example onions and potatoes, but during the period of the study, they were operating as retailers of onions and potatoes. The study concludes that participants seem to integrate their Human Capital acquired from their Social (Resource) Capital with their existing human capital into their Business Strategies, leading to improvement such as in profit and expansion of stock. Applying these findings to Wongtada's 'Street Vendors Success and Knowledge Gap' analysis framework, the empirical results confirm a causal relationship between Human Capital (acquired and existing) and (Business) Strategies. The findings further correspond with an observation by Baum, Locke and Smith (2001), in which they note that human capital is related to planning and business strategy, which in turn positively impact success.

Linking the findings of the study components of Wongtada's 'Street Vendors Success Model and Knowledge Gap' analysis framework, the following framework was extracted:

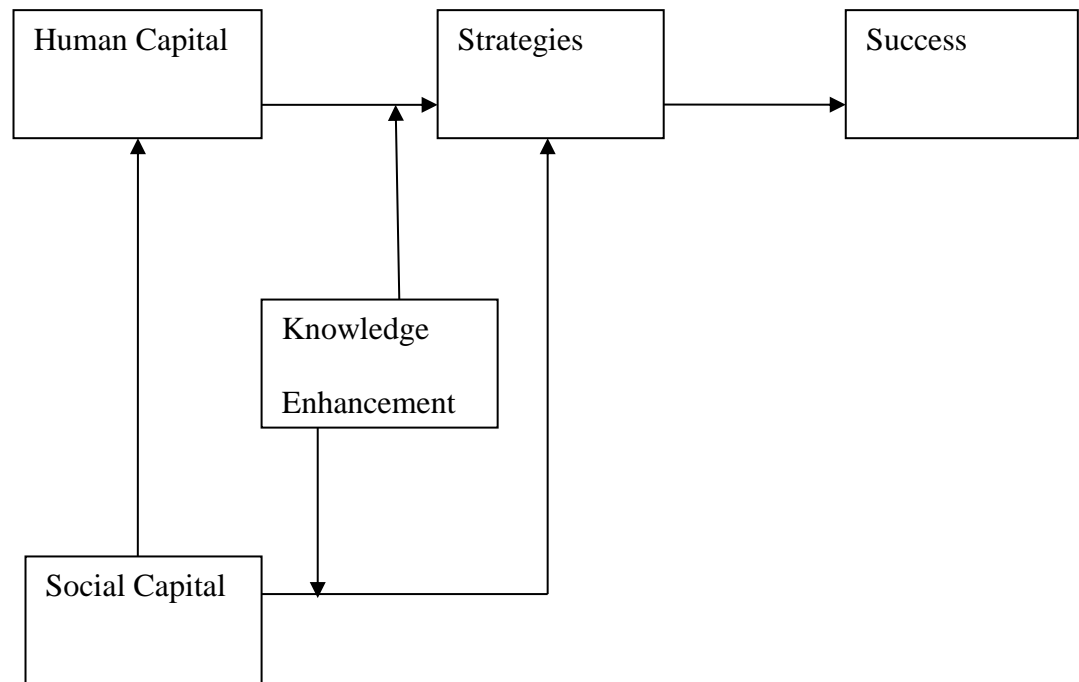


Figure 8: Vendors' entrepreneurial knowledge capacity-building and success

Adopted: Hamukoto (2016)

The arrows in the flow chart indicate causal relationships between the factors. The framework shows that Social Capital and Human Capital are positively related. Human capital, as found in this empirical study, influences business strategies of vendors, yet, however, it does not directly influence knowledge enhancement as evident in people apparently not always willing to share their knowledge or people providing incomplete knowledge to others. Thus, Knowledge Enhancement moderates between Human Capital and Strategies. Simultaneously, social capital influences strategies. For example, some vendors are illiterate and their strategies are directed mainly by word of mouth from social networks. Once again, knowledge enhancement moderates between

social capital and strategies. Business strategies, as stipulated in Wongtadas' analysis framework, are directly linked to success.

5.6 Effectiveness of knowledge tapping methods

Participants provided varying opinions regarding the effectiveness of methods they apply to obtain entrepreneurial knowledge from their social networks. Some found their methods to be equally effective in improving their knowledge and, ultimately, their business. Others found theirs not to be equally effective. The method of face-to-face interaction (asking) was found to be better than that of situation analysis (observation) by some participants in the sense that explanations are given, compared to only viewing. Observation was considered better than asking by other participants, because when one poses a question, some people do not answer. The data show that participants who favour observation represent a mixture of people who operated for both short and long periods in the informal food enterprises, meaning that the duration of an operation does not always have an impact. It could not be concluded, for example, that the shorter the period of operating, the more likely the person is to prefer observation, because they have not yet established a ground and social business network. Such a case depicts disparities in individuals; and further demonstrates that personality plays a role in successful acquisition of entrepreneurial knowledge from others. For example, introverted people might likely prefer only observation, while extroverted people might likely opt to ask questions rather than observe only.

Additionally, some participants found the method of discussing with someone more effective in enhancing their entrepreneurial knowledge. They said this is because sitting and discussing with someone minimizes chances of dishonesty. This method was

thought to be orderly; although, it may require advance arrangements. It may also involve costs when travelling outside Windhoek or Namibia is required. Probably this explains why this method is practiced is by the minority.

Lastly, some participants pointed out that selling for someone prior to the establishment of one's own business is an effective method in enhancing one's entrepreneurial knowledge. However, since the initial capital for starting an informal food business is often very low, as stated by Guha-Khasnobis and Kanbur (2006), many vendors did not start selling for someone first, in order to raise start-up capital for their own business. Only a minority of the participants indicated to have practiced this method, and having found it effective.

5.7 Effect of distance on vendors' search for entrepreneurial knowledge

Participants use information technology, namely cell phones, to overcome spatial barriers such as distance. More than half of the interviewees said that distance does not affect their learning from others as a result of their access to mobile communication. Despite interviewees who continued to often prefer approaching people who are close, the study revealed they opt to call distant people as a last resort when the input of those nearby is unsatisfactory or do not have the experience the vendors wish to learn. However, thirty participants reported that they hardly seek entrepreneurial knowledge from the people who are far away due to reasons such as high charges on phone calls and urgency of some skills needs, requiring attention of people nearby.

Moreover, fifteen participants mentioned that their seeking of entrepreneurial knowledge is not hindered by distance. These vendors overcome the distance barrier by

travelling to see those who live away. The willingness of such vendors to travel only to see a person in order to discuss indicates an overwhelming willingness to find entrepreneurial knowledge.

Concerning the point of informal food vendors' learning and distance, the study presents findings opposite to an explanation given by Schilderman (2002) that the urban poor are not always able to check incompleteness and unreliability of the knowledge they get from other people, but even when they do, they tend to trust people such as close friends or relatives rather than perhaps better informed contacts who are distant to them. Mobile communication therefore enables a flow of entrepreneurial knowledge and information across space. Likewise, the availability of active transportation and improved road networks foster interactions of people from different places, allowing sharing of entrepreneurial knowledge and skills.

5.8 Vendors' entrepreneurial knowledge aspirations for furthering their success

Participants indicated that they need to acquire numerous skills to improve their business performance. Skill needs such as stock-taking, profit and loss analysis, record keeping and basic literacy were assumed to have been raised against the background that some people have never attended formal schooling; therefore struggle to calculate and make written entries of their business' income, profit and stock.

Interviewees showed a high interest in learning customer service skills. They need to learn how to maintain customer satisfaction, regardless of circumstances. Judging from the data, the need for knowing how to handle customers effectively is more important

than some of the skills related to business management and cooking. This implies the importance of clients' relationship to entrepreneurs.

Some interviewees expressed their desire to transform their businesses into formal businesses. This was raised particularly by those who sell fruits and vegetables. They would like to establish their shops where they will be selling their products in a well organized manner such as in shelves. Generally observed, the vendors of fruits and vegetables were short of space in their stands due to large quantities of their products, resulting in some of their products getting mixed up with one another. Ideally, mixing up of such different and highly perishable products should to be avoided; hence, interviewees' demand for the establishment of shops offering better space for their merchandises.



Figure 9: Products mixed due to limited space: Fruits and veggies.

Source: Hamukoto (2016)

Another skill the participants express they needed was to learn how they could access business loans to uplift their business. Even though participants indicated improvement

in their business such as in profit and stock as mentioned earlier, their indication for a need of bank loans depicts their need for a helping hand in order to achieve success in their business.

Other skill needs such as language, agriculture-based, motivation and moral support showed desire for participants' self improvement and growth. Vendors wish to be able to speak several local languages, acquire agricultural skills on the products they sell to be self-reliant and inspired to strongly keep going with their enterprises. Such support could be useful, personally and professionally.

Machinery and appliances such as refrigerators could be of great importance to vendors. However, only one participant said that she needs guidance on how she can obtain a fridge from assisting organizations. It was assumed that participants hesitated asking for such items because, apart from their high prices, vendors may not have access to electricity at their homes or shop sites.

The skills needed on product differentiation and pricing of products was thought to be a direct requirement, as a means to separate their business from competitors. One participant expressed the need for skills on how she can differentiate her products from those of other vendors and maintain that difference. Another vendor indicated that she needs to learn how she can balance the prices of her products so that there is something for everyone. This seemed to imply the need for minimization or elimination of competition between vendors.

5.9 Informal food vendors preferred modes of teaching

5.9.1 Face-to-face interactions

These interactions are characterized by meetings with entrepreneurs, afternoon classes, training during weekends, evening classes, visiting individual vendors, training during less busy hours and normal classroom training style.

Meetings with vendors were preferred by a majority of the participants. It was thought that they preferred meetings, as they combine people from different places, allowing vendors to meet and exchange knowledge with their peers. Moreover, gatherings could promote opportunities for vendors to make social connections with new people, resulting in extensions of their social networks for knowledge transfer.

Participants expressed an interest in attending relevant entrepreneurial education and training programmes. However, they expressed concern about the possibility of losing time for working when attending such sessions. This concern was demonstrated in their suggestion of afternoon classes at times between 2 and 6 p.m. when shops are usually closed. The findings reflect a situation similar to Wongtada's observation, (2014) that vendors do not often have time to attend regular classroom style as their daily tasks already absorb most of their time.

Furthermore, they said that conducting entrepreneurial education and training sessions during weekends, exemplifying Saturdays, would suit them too as they close their sale points early during weekends, compared to weekdays. Sundays, for example, were not suggested likely because most participants attend church. It was also suggested that evening classes during weekdays between 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. could suit them so they can

attend lectures after they have closed. The suggestion of evening hours indicates how much vendors are willing to sacrifice for their learning of entrepreneurial knowledge.

The suggestion for training officials to visit individual vendors was another indication for vendors' concern of time. Instead of closing their business in order to attend a meeting or classes, four respondents indicated their desire that facilitators visit their individual stands and talk to them in person.

Vendors examined the period when the flow of customers is minimal, then suggested the use of such period for entrepreneurial education and training sessions. They said a two-hour session from 10 a.m. to 12 o'clock would suit them, because they could return to work from 1 o'clock when people are on lunch, and the customer rate rises.

Only one of the participants mentioned that education and training for vendors could be delivered in a normal classroom-style, for example, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. According to her, people can sacrifice their time to attend. Her point underlines the power of priority in a sense that when one direly needs to achieve something, they put it first regardless of circumstances. She is therefore convinced that even though working time is important to vendors, they would still be able to leave their shops to attend entrepreneurial education and training sessions should they really need to obtain entrepreneurial knowledge and skills that such sessions are offering.

5.9.2 Introduction of a fixed support system

The research suggests that participants need a fixed support system which could be readily available to assist them throughout their entrepreneurial journey. Instead of only meeting facilitators once or few times and probably never again thereafter, participants

said informal education agencies could establish their offices where vendors could seek entrepreneurial advice at their spare times.

Participants were highly heterogeneous in terms of their educational attainment. Thus, they indicated concern about whether other methods such as meetings and radio would entirely address all vendors' needs, given their differences, for example, that some have never attended formal school. They suggested that the establishment of a school of entrepreneurs would minimize the exclusion of some vendors, who might require slow explanation and pace of learning. They said such schools should have different time slots and levels in order to accommodate as many vendors as possible.

5.9.3 Use of printed materials and media

The role of technology with its fast spread of knowledge and information to people across space was once again manifested in vendors' choice for radio as a medium in support of communicating entrepreneurial knowledge. Participants supported the utilization of radio, as radios are generally affordable. Also, many radios operate on dry battery, requiring no electricity. Again, radios are portable and appear in various sizes, including pocket-fitting sizes. Additionally, since cell phones are equipped with radio, vendors are convinced that the use of radio could effectively deliver entrepreneurial education and training.

Interviewees also showed interest in receiving entrepreneurial reading materials. They mentioned that entrepreneurial information may be printed in newspapers, leaflets and booklets. This was suggested mainly by people with either junior secondary, secondary or tertiary education. This pattern in educational attainment indicates that such methods

might be beneficial only to some vendors. It implies that provision of reading materials to vendors may require an application in conjunction with other methods such as face-to-face lecturing.

Two interviewees said entrepreneurial education may be delivered through television. Compared to the radio, the use of television to offer entrepreneurial education was mentioned only by two interviewees. The reason could be that many participants do not own television because television is generally expensive and requires access to electricity, which the majority of participants might not have.

Only two out of seventy respondents suggested the use of Facebook in imparting entrepreneurial knowledge to vendors; consequently, most of the vendors might not use this social network.

The empirical study reflected that participants prefer to seek entrepreneurial guidance from other vendors. Their main methods of obtaining entrepreneurial knowledge were: face-to-face interactions, situation analysis, electronic communication and application of desirable personalities. It could be established that participants apply moral values in attempts to find entrepreneurial knowledge. The study found that other vendors tend to conceal their entrepreneurial knowledge and that strengths of relationship plays a role in whether to share knowledge. Nevertheless, participants admitted improvement in their business due to input from social networks. Few of the interviewees aired their opinion that social networks made no improvements in their business. The empirical findings confirm a causal relationship between the Human Capital and Strategies in Wongtada's 'Street Vendors Success and Knowledge Gap' analysis framework. While some considered all their methods of searching for entrepreneurial knowledge equally

effective, others confirmed effectiveness of only some but not all methods. It was concluded that personalities contributed to the disparities in perceptions of their entrepreneurial knowledge acquisition methods. Cell phones were found to be vendors' preferred facility in overcoming their knowledge acquisition barriers pertaining to distance. Participants indicated to be in need of numerous skills such as those related to business management, maintenance of clientele and business technical skills. They suggest that education and training could be delivered effectively if conducted face-to-face, exclusively after their working hours and by means of printed materials and media. They also advocated for the establishment of fixed support systems, such as offices of facilitators and school of entrepreneurs where they could always turn to during their entrepreneurial journey.

CHAPTER 6: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Recommendations

Social networks support informal vendors during the start-up and continue to assist them throughout the life of their business (Agadjanian, 2002). The field research confirmed that entrepreneurial knowledge can be obtained from social networks; however, it is scarcely acquired. In order to secure a smooth system of acquisition of entrepreneurial knowledge, the study suggests that it is the responsibility of the Government and non-governmental organizations to maximize the mobilization of entrepreneurial knowledge enhancement channels primarily targeting the informal economy operators. The study recommends that this could be achieved by:

- (i) designing of active and consistent entrepreneurial education and training programmes for informal economy operators, which should comprise different levels, starting with basic to more advanced – depending on the education levels of the participants;
- (ii) encouraging particularly junior entrepreneurs to participate in knowledge and capacity-building systems to minimize endurance experienced during the search of entrepreneurial knowledge from other people in vendors' social networks.
- (iii) strengthening Human (Resource) Capital of the informal vendors. This could enable them to apply such capital to their Business Strategies which is found

to be directly linked to (Business) Success in the Giessen- Amsterdam Model of Small Business Owners' Success.

Offering systematic entrepreneurial education and training in the informal sector could potentially make informal vending serve as a training ground for entrepreneurs who tend to move on to transform their business into formal businesses.

6.2 Conclusion

This study pursued five objectives:

The first objective sought to exemplify processes employed by food vendors in order to obtain knowledge from their social networks. In essence, informal food vendors use processes of face-to-face interactions, situation analysis, electronic communication as well as application of desirable personalities. Given these findings, vendors apply multiple methods in their search of entrepreneurial knowledge. Such methods range from observatory, practical and verbal communication, face-to-face and electronic communication.

The second objective was to assess social networks' effectiveness in enhancing vendors' success. The findings emphasized that social networks have made notable improvement in participants' business, and that they play a role in the entrepreneurial journey of informal food vendors. The empirical study also confirms causal relationships between the Human Capital and Strategies in Wongtada's 'Street Vendors Success and Knowledge Gap' analysis framework.

The third objective examined food vendors' core competencies required to cope in a changing business environment, demanding increasing flexibility. The main skills needed, expressed by the participants, were related to business management, maintenance of clientele and business technical skills. Based on these findings, it was concluded that a variety of skills needs to be acquired in order to complement vendors' entrepreneurial knowledge obtained from their social networks; only then their human capital would be enhanced, which is essential for their businesses' growth and success.

The fourth objective examined vendors' preferences pertaining to methods of education and training. Participants' preferred modes of entrepreneurial education and training were: face-to-face interactions, introduction of fixed support system as well as use of printed materials and media. Given these findings, participants were keen to take on entrepreneurial educational programmes, should some be made available for them.

Lastly, the fifth objective was to conclude how results generated from field data collection and analysis for this study could play a role in informal sector education and training programmes in Namibia. Results and data analysis of this study could be of assistance to the compilation of a syllabus for informal sector entrepreneurial education in Namibia. The empirical field study presents an overview of the type of skills and guidance needed by informal food vendors. Against this background, informal sector entrepreneurial knowledge dissemination programmes in Namibia could deliver demand-led knowledge. Entrepreneurial education and training for informal operators in Namibia may include literacy, basic mathematics, business management and book-keeping. Youth who had reached matric could serve as informal sector training agents in their respective communities. The research's discovery of vendors' preferred times

for classes may support the design of timetables and schedules for conducting entrepreneurial education and training. Finally, the findings could enable the informal sector education programmes in Namibia to deliver entrepreneurial education and skills in vendors' preferred methods of education, which could enhance such programmes' effectiveness.

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APPENDIX 1: KEY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Target group: Informal food vendors operating adjacent to Tukondjeni municipal market of Okuryangava, Windhoek.

Method: Semi-structured interviews focusing on knowledge enhancement strategies and aspirations of informal food vendors in Okuryangava.

Background information

Sex: Male [] Female []

Place of origin.....

Age:.....

Education: Primary [] Secondary [] Tertiary []

Length of time in food selling business:.....

Years living in Windhoek:.....

1. Which people in your social network do you seek entrepreneurial knowledge from?
2. How do you approach them?
3. How do people react when you approach in search for entrepreneurial knowledge?
4. Are the people, specially other food vendors, always willing to share their entrepreneurial knowledge?

5. In what other ways do you obtain entrepreneurial knowledge from others?
6. Are your knowledge tapping methods equally effective in improving your business?
7. Have the social networks contributed to an improvement in your business? Explain.
8. How does the distance between you and other people in your social network affects your search for entrepreneurial knowledge?
9. What specific skills do you need in order to eliminate competition and for better performance in your business?
10. In what ways would you prefer entrepreneurial education and training for you to be conducted?