

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE LIVELIHOOD OF INFORMAL SECTOR
WORKERS: A CASE STUDY OF STREET VENDORS IN EENHANA TOWN,
OHANGWENA REGION, NAMIBIA

A MINI THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

OF

UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

BY

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OCTOBER 2024

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ABSTRACT

The global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been extensive and has resulted in significant negative consequences, particularly impacting individuals employed in the informal sector. Among the most susceptible groups are street vendors, who face increased vulnerability due to their limited skills and resources for coping with such crises. This research aimed to investigate the effects of COVID-19 on the informal sector in Eenhana Town, Ohangwena Region, Namibia. A quantitative research approach was used, and descriptive statistics on income before, during, and after COVID-19, frequency table, and crosstabulations were used to present the research results. A sample of 133 respondents of street vendors were targeted using a stratified sampling method. Data was gathered using a quantitative survey questionnaire. The data collected through the questionnaires was subjected to statistical data analysis techniques utilising version 23 of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software. Many informal sector workers had livelihood losses, with high rates of job and income losses amongst street vendors. The Namibian government has implemented support programmes, but few are aware of them, thus indicating a lack of cohesion between the government and the sector. The research found that it is important to increase the involvement of informal workers in decision-making processes to promote a sustainable recovery and protect against potential crises.

KEY WORDS: COVID-19, street vendor, informal wage employment, livelihood, employment, unemployment, informal economy

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	i
LIST OF TABLES	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	v
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND/OR ACRONYMS	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
DEDICATION	viii
AUTHOR’S DECLARATION	ix
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Problem statement	2
1.3 Research objectives	4
1.4. Significance of the study	4
1.5 Limitation of the study	5
1.6 Delimitation of the study	5
1.7 Definition of key concepts	5
1.8 Thesis	7
1.9 Structure of the thesis	8
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	10
2.1 Introduction	10
2.2 Defining the informal economy, its nature and characteristics	10
2.3 Perspective on the “informal economy” concept	13
2.4 Outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic	14
2.5 The global impacts of COVID-19 pandemic	15
2.6 Covid-19 and the informal sector in Africa	16
2.7 The informal sector and the COVID-19 pandemic in Namibia	18
2.8 The economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the informal sector	20
2.9 The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the livelihood of informal sector workers	23
2.10 Conceptual framework	26
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	30
3.1 Introduction	30
3.2 Research philosophy	30
3.3 Research design and methodology	31
3.4 Quantitative research method	32

3.4.1 Population	32
3.4.2 Study setting	33
3.4.3 Sampling method	34
3.5 Research instruments	35
3.6 Procedure	37
3.7 Data analysis	37
3.8 Reliability and validity	38
3.9 Ethical considerations	40
3.9.1 Respect research respondents	40
3.9.2 Confidentiality and anonymity	40
3.9.3 Integrity and academic professionalism	41
3.10 Fieldwork experience	42
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS	43
4.1 Introduction	43
4.2 Survey completion rate	43
4.3 Demographic information	44
4.4 Business and economic activities	48
4.5 Socio-economic status and COVID-19 pandemic	52
CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS	60
5.1 Introduction	60
5.2 Findings and discussions	60
5.2.1 The socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the livelihood of street vendors	61
5.2.2 The importance of street vending businesses at generating income for the poor during COVID-19 pandemic	64
5.2.3 The contribution of street vending to the socioeconomic lives of Eenhana Town	65
5.3 Pressure and Release model of the impacts of COVID-19 on the livelihood of street vendors in Eenhana	66
CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	70
6.1 Introduction	70
6.2 Summary	70
6.3 Conclusion	73
6.4 Recommendations	75
6.5 Areas for further research	77
REFERENCES	79
APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	95
APPENDIX B: RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER	96

APPENDIX C: COLLECTION PERMIT	97
APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM	98
APPENDIX E: QUESTIONNAIRE	100

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Head of Household	44
Table 4.2: Sex of respondents	44
Table 4.3: Age of respondents (last birthday)	45
Table 4.4: Average earning per month (in Namibian Dollar)	48
Table 4.5: Type of products sold	49
Table 4.6: Location of business	50
Table 4.7: Effects of COVID-19 pandemic lockdown on business	50
Table 4.8: Contributions/benefits of street vending business to household livelihood in time of COVID-19 pandemic	52
Table 4.9: Social provision to street vendors' livelihood	52
Table 4.10: Managing business during the COVID-19 lockdown	53
Table 4.11: Coping with family during the COVID-19 lockdown	54
Table 4.12: Impact of business on the well-being of the family	55
Table 4.13: Business long-term plans	55
Table 4.14: Business income sustainability	55
Table 4.15: Monthly business profit (in Namibian Dollar)	56
Table 4.16: Overall effect of COVID-19 on income	56
Table 4.17: Alleviation of COVID-19 effects on business and income	57
Table 4.18: COVID-19 pandemic effects on business crosstabulation with Business payment of bills and food	58
Table 4.19: COVID-19 pandemic effects on business crosstabulation with business taking care of school needs	58

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1: Pressure and Release (PAR) model the progression of vulnerability (Wisner, Blaikie, Cannon, & Davis, 2004)	28
Figure 4.1: Rate of Response	43
Figure 4.2: Marital status	45
Figure 4.3: Educational Status	46
Figure 4.4: Educational level	46
Figure 4.5: Number of vendors' household member	47

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND/OR ACRONYMS

ILO	International Labour Organisation
NSA	Namibia Statistics Agency
PAL	Pressure and Release
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
NDPs	National Development Plan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
WB	World Bank
EIG	Emergency Income Grant
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
IMF	International Monetary Fund
AU	African Union
WIEGO	Women in Informal Employment Globalising and Organising

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank my Maker, the Almighty GOD, who availed the opportunity for me to do this project. My Lord, Jehovah Rohi, has been there to protect, strengthen and guide me during the course of the project. Behind every pursuit of a person lies the invisible efforts of many others.

I express my profound gratitude for the valuable and expert guidance rendered to me by my supervisor, Dr Kolawole Omomowo. I am very grateful for constant guidance, advice, encouragement, support, valuable discussions and critical evaluation of my work. I consider myself very fortunate to have had an opportunity to work with him and tap from his experience and expertise.

My sincere thanks go to the respondents who generously contributed their time and knowledge to this study. Without their cooperation, this research would not have been possible.

I am also grateful for the unlimited assistance from prodigious friends such as Titus Nghipulile, Lucas Patemashela, Timoteus Sheyavali, and Sackaria Naftal.

I am indebted to my parents, Immanuel Handjaba Hawanga and Getrud Ndeshipanda Hilikilwa-Hawanga, for their unconditional love, unwavering support, and constant encouragement throughout my academic journey. Their belief in me has been a driving force behind my accomplishments.

Finally, a special thanks to my sons Oovetate Hawanga and Ooveuke Hawanga, as well as my siblings, the rest of the extended family, and friends for their understanding and patience during the demanding times of this research. Their encouragement and belief in my ability have been a constant source of motivation.

DEDICATION

I dedicate the research to my family who spent their valuable time and effort supporting me throughout the research. I also dedicate the research to my supervisor and friends who stood by me through encouragement and support.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I, Oyetate E. Hawanga, hereby declare that this study is my own work and is a true reflection of my research, and that this work, or any part thereof has not been submitted for a degree at any other institution.

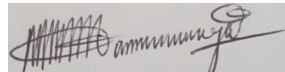
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Two billion individuals aged 15 and older worldwide are engaged in informal employment, constituting 61.2% of the global workforce, and in this regard, informal employment may exist within the informal sector, the formal sector, and or the household sector. To be more specific, 51.9% of these workers are affiliated with the informal sector, 6.7% are formally employed, and 2.5% are engaged in household-based work (International Labour Organization, 2018). It is worth noting that informality, as defined by Narula (2020), is a prevailing characteristic in all economies. It encompasses employment arrangements, practices, and business activities that are either unregulated or subject to minimal government oversight, resulting in limited or no access to public support systems. As a result, those engaged in the informal sector do not have access to the social safety nets offered to their counterparts in the formal sector through government initiatives. As observed by Komin et al. (2020), informal sector workers tend to experience lower levels of educational attainment, income, and economic opportunities, and they also face challenges in accessing low-interest financial services offered by traditional banking institutions.

In numerous African nations, the informal sector has traditionally been recognised as a catalyst for economic growth, a means of income generation, and a driver of economic diversification (ILO, 2018). Onyishi et al. (2020) reported that the COVID-19 pandemic has imposed significant challenges on African communities, as well as on their means of living and economic engagements. The global COVID-19 pandemic has presented unparalleled difficulties on a worldwide scale, with profound effects on economies, societies, and individuals' means of support (United Nations, 2020). In urban areas, the repercussions of the pandemic have been notably severe, thus amplifying pre-existing socio-economic inequalities

and presenting substantial obstacles for marginalised communities. These challenges are particularly pronounced in urban areas, where social networks play a crucial role within the urban informal economy. The Namibian government has taken measures to bolster existing income and cash transfer programmes aimed at assisting the economically disadvantaged and other vulnerable groups who have borne the brunt of the pandemic's impact (UN, 2020).

Prior to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, businesses, including those within the informal sector, were functioning under standard operating conditions. However, Julius et al. (2020) highlight the adverse consequences of the pandemic and the precautionary measures instituted by the Namibian government to combat the virus. These actions adversely affected the informal business sector. Consequently, nationwide lockdowns, curfews, and various restrictions were enforced to mitigate the situation, thereby affecting businesses in multiple ways, particularly those in the informal sector, which heavily depends on daily interactions with customers for income generation. Due to preventive measures such as quarantines and lockdowns, customers avoided crowded markets, thus leading to reduced demand for their products and potential wastage of perishable goods. Additionally, the informal sector, which lacks job security, faced the likelihood of severe job and income losses (Keulder & Stoman, 2020). It is important to recognise that the pandemic has had negative consequences for both the formal and informal sectors of the economy. Given these ongoing events and difficulties, there is a pressing need for a thorough examination of how the COVID-19 has impacted workers in the informal sector.

1.2 Problem statement

According to the Namibia Informal Economy case study report for the years 2016/2017, there has been a discernible rise in the recognition of informal economic activities in Namibia since the nation achieved independence in 1990. However, the size and development of these

activities have not been well studied. The Namibia Statistics Agency labour report of 2018 indicates that females were in irregular occupations at a higher rate than males. Furthermore, informal workers accounted for 41.8% of the workforce in urban areas and 78.9% of jobs in rural areas. The Kavango West and Ohangwena regions have the highest percentages of informal workers, with 90.5% and 82.7% respectively (NSA, 2018). During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Eenhana Town Council recorded a total of 412 formally registered businesses and 637 informal traders within the town, alongside 205 street vendors (Eenhana Town Council, 2020). It is crucial to note that individuals engaged in informal sectors were at the highest risk of enduring the economic repercussions induced by the coronavirus pandemic, as noted by Julius et al. (2020).

The present research effort was directed towards conducting an examination of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on informal workers, with particular attention given to street vendors operating in Eenhana town, Ohangwena region, Namibia. This pursuit is substantiated by prior research conducted during and subsequent to the COVID-19 pandemic, during which lockdown restrictions were imposed worldwide. For instance, Swarna et al. (2022) reported that approximately 98% of informal workers experienced income losses during the COVID-19 lockdown, based on their study conducted in Bangladesh. Similar findings were observed by Strauss and Rosenberg (2021) who examined the informal sectors of several African countries, including Mozambique, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) South Africa and Kenya. These studies collectively emphasised the significant socio-economic consequences of the pandemic on individuals engaged in the informal economy, including street vendors. There is, therefore, a need for deeper scrutiny into the precise involvement of street vendors in the socio-economic framework of the community amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Gaining insights into the role of street vendors in maintaining livelihoods during the pandemic is crucial for devising focused interventions to assist vulnerable communities and cultivate resilience during

times of crisis. It is important to highlight that no prior documented information or research has investigated the socio-economic factors affecting street vendors in Eenhana Town, located in the Ohangwena region, in response to the disruptions caused by the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown measures.

1.3 Research objectives

1.3.1 Analyse the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on street vendors in the Eenhana Town Council.

1.3.2 To interrogate the importance of street vendors in income generation for the poor during the COVID-19 pandemic in Eenhana Town Council.

1.3.3 To interrogate the resilience of street vendors' livelihood in the face of socio-economic challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic in Eenhana Town Council.

1.4. Significance of the study

This research has enhanced our understanding of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on street vendors in the studied area. The results of this study may offer valuable insights for shaping future policies aimed at protecting the livelihoods of those involved in the informal sector during pandemics. The importance of this research extends to various stakeholders, including the informal sector, private businesses, government entities, policymakers, and the broader community. These findings have the potential to better prepare those engaged in the informal sector to navigate difficult situations, akin to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Having actual data can assist the government and policymakers in developing strategies, measures, and policies that promote the continuation and survival of the informal sector businesses in Eenhana in order to assist families and individuals in generating income for

survival and poverty alleviation. To revive the struggling economy, the government should develop swift and efficient strategies customised for the informal sector. Furthermore, this study adds to the current body of knowledge and existing literature on the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.5 Limitation of the study

This study faced some limitations that might have had an impact on the results and conclusions. A notable restriction was the constraint related to time and budget, which restricted the scope of the research. Additionally, due to the ever-evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and the continuous emergence of new research findings, fully grasping the complexities of the pandemic can pose challenges for researchers.

1.6 Delimitation of the study

This study concentrated solely on street vendors operating within the Eenhana Town Council. As a result, the findings from this research cannot be generalised to the entire national population or to other segments of the informal economy.

1.7 Definition of key concepts

Street vendor: A street vendor is defined as an individual who sells goods to the public without having a permanent and fixed structure for conducting their business. Street vendors may either be stationary, where they occupy specific spaces on sidewalks or other public/private areas, or mobile, as they transport their merchandise and shift from one location to another (Muiruri, 2010). In this study, the terms 'street vendor' and 'hawker' are employed interchangeably, and they carry the same significance.

Informal wage employment: Workers engaged by formal or informal establishments, or employed as domestic labour by households, without the inclusion of social protection

contributions, fall into the category of informal employment. Notably, specific forms of wage labour exhibit a higher propensity to be considered informal, as observed by Chen (2012). These categories encompass workers in informal businesses, individuals engaged in casual or daily labour, temporary or part-time employees, paid domestic labourers, unregistered or unreported workers, and industrial outworkers, often referred to as homeworkers.

A livelihood: The United Nations Development Programme India (UNDP-India) and the International Recovery Platform (IRP) have elucidated the concept of livelihood as a well-recognised phenomenon rooted in the innate human capacity to formulate and execute strategies aimed at ensuring their survival. Chambers and Conway (1991) endorse the definition of livelihood, which comprises individuals, their capabilities, and the resources they rely on for sustenance, including food, income and assets. A livelihood can be deemed sustainable when it demonstrates resilience against and recovery from various stresses and unexpected disruptions. Moreover, it should be capable of preserving or enhancing its capacities and assets in the present and future without endangering the underlying natural resource base, as highlighted by Morse et al. (2009).

Employment in the informal sector: This term includes all the roles within informal sector businesses or all the people involved in work for at least one informal sector enterprise during a specified reporting period, without regard to their employment classification or whether it was their primary or secondary occupation (Husmanns, 2004).

Informal economy: This is characterised as an assemblage of entities dedicated to generating commodities or services primarily to offer work opportunities and income to those participating. These entities typically operate with a minimal organisational structure, where there is little or no differentiation between labour and capital as production components, and they often work on a small scale (OECD, 2002). If there are any employment arrangements,

they primarily rely on informal recruitment methods, family ties, or personal and social networks, as opposed to structured contractual agreements with established safeguards.

1.8 Thesis

This study, conducted in Eenhana Town, Ohangwena region, sheds light on the essential role of the informal sector, particularly street vending, within the local economy. Prior to the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, street vendors were crucial in income generation for a substantial segment of Eenhana's residents, despite their limited formal education and reliance on informal economic activities.

This study examined the impacts of COVID-19 on individuals engaged in the informal sector, with a specific emphasis on three primary goals: evaluating the socio-economic consequences on street vendors, probing their involvement in generating income for the underprivileged, and assessing their broader socio-economic contributions during the pandemic. The research revealed that the informal sector experienced substantial adverse effects due to COVID-19, resulting in income reductions and job losses for street vendors. Lockdown measures resulted in reduced income, lack of customers, and financial hardships, with monthly income dropping significantly. It was concluded that the pandemic had an adverse effect on income and profit for street vendors, who are crucial for income generation in low-income countries. Many street vendors struggled to sustain their businesses and they faced potential extreme poverty. Lastly, the investigation unveiled that street vending enterprises significantly influenced households by supplying income for sustenance, covering utility expenditures, and supporting educational costs. Street vendors' reliance on their savings during the COVID-19 lockdown had implications for their ability to secure an adequate food supply. Nevertheless, the pandemic

compelled temporary shutdowns and exacerbated financial hardships, thus resulting in an accumulation of debts among street vendors.

Despite these challenges, street vendors implemented safety precautions, continued to provide essential good to the community, and offered suggestions for post-lockdown recovery, thereby emphasising the need for government financial support. In summary, the study emphasised the crucial role played by street vendors in Eenhana's economic environment and their vulnerability to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. It underscored the significance of specific interventions aimed at revitalising this sector and sustaining livelihoods.

1.9 Structure of the thesis

A brief overview of the organisational structure of the thesis is outlined as follows:

Chapter two offers an examination of the current body of literature in this field, as well as combining conceptual frameworks with practical research to establish a foundation for understanding the context and significance of the study.

Chapter three outlines the research methodology employed in this study. It elaborates on the research design, data collection techniques, sampling methods, and data analysis procedures. Additionally, this chapter clarifies the justifications for selecting specific research approaches and offers a solid rationale for their appropriateness in addressing the study's objectives.

Chapter four is devoted to presenting and analysing the data gathered throughout the study. It provides a detailed examination of the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on street vendors, their role in income generation for the economically vulnerable, and their contributions to the socio-economic welfare of the community. The analysis is supported by relevant data and research results.

Chapter five involves a thorough discussion of the research findings. It offers an interpretation of the data by establishing connections between the findings and the study's objectives. This chapter explores the implications of the research results and examines their alignment with the existing literature and the conceptual framework.

Chapter six functions as the apex of the study, delivering a recapitulation of the principal findings and their importance. It furnishes a concluding synthesis that unifies the study's aims and results. Moreover, Chapter six puts forward recommendations based on the study findings, thereby offering potential strategies or approaches to address the challenges faced by street vendors in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a review and evaluation of the existing literature concerning the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on informal workers, with a specific focus on street vendors, is presented. The primary purpose of this literature review, as per the guidance of Rowley and Slack (2004), is to re-evaluate the available body of knowledge and connect it with the study's subject and objectives. This approach ensures that the study builds upon the current state of knowledge in the research area and avoids unnecessary duplication of prior research (Knopf, 2006). The literature discussion encompasses various facets related to the informal sector by covering topics such as its definitions, classifications, livelihoods, and quantifiable indicators. It further explores the broader role of the informal sector in Africa and subsequently delves into its specific relevance within the context of Namibia. To ensure the literature's relevance and applicability to the study, a comprehensive analysis of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on this sector is conducted. Finally, the chapter provides a concise explanation of the Pressure and Release (PAR) model, which serves as the study's conceptual framework. This model aids in understanding the progression of vulnerability by identifying its root causes.

2.2 Defining the informal economy, its nature and characteristics

The concept of "informality" first emerged in the 1970s, as documented by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1972. Ongoing debates among scholars persist regarding the origins of informality, with continuous discussions regarding the definition and measurement of informality, as emphasized by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development/International Labour Organization (2019). Charmes (2012, p. 4) pointed out that one of the early proponents of this concept, Hans Singer, in the early 1970s, likened the

informal sector to a "giraffe" that is challenging to define using conventional standards but is easily recognisable in practical terms. Economists categorise economies into two primary segments: the formal economy and the informal economy (Chen, 2012). The formal economy encompasses activities that are subject to regulation by state laws and other legal instruments, including policy regulations. Consequently, formal economic activities are characterised by comprehensive organisation and meticulous documentation. In contrast, the informal economy is marked by lower levels of regulation and organisation. The term "informal economy" encompasses all economic activities conducted by workers and economic entities that lack adequate coverage under formal arrangements, either legally or practically (Nauk, 2009). Unlike formal economic activities, informal economic activities operate outside the formal purview of the law. This means that they function beyond the scope of legal regulations, or they operate within this scope, but the law is either not applied or enforced. Additionally, these activities may be discouraged from compliance due to inappropriateness, excessive burdens, or the imposition of excessive costs, in accordance with the ILO (2021).

Although informality is generally characterised by a lack of strict legal regulation and limited organisation (Onwe, 2013), it is widespread in both developed and developing nations. It acts as a source of livelihood for a substantial segment of the working-age population, offering the earnings required to sustain their households. Moreover, numerous individuals are employed in informal businesses. Given these economic realities, countries are now recognising the importance of not only formal economic activities but also gathering data on informal economic activities. This data is crucial for devising practical policies, including those outlined in National Development Plans (NDPs). Informal activities within urban economies can be broadly categorised into two groups. The first category encompasses informal jobs, which include individuals working on a casual, day-wage basis for formal, licensed businesses, as well as self-employed workers striving for subsistence (Chen, 2012). In essence, this category

includes people and traders who may engage in piecework within their own premises, street vendors, domestic workers, waste pickers, wholesale market porters, newspaper vendors, market vendors, and numerous other informal workers. The present study concentrated on street vendors among the various informal job categories. The second category involves informal businesses, such as marketplaces, vendors, restaurants, and small, makeshift factories (Narula, 2020). People employed in these informal businesses are vulnerable as they can encounter problems such as non-payment of salaries (owing to businesses not making profit and absence of capital to cater for salaries) or retrenchment without warning. Additionally, they often operate in dangerous situations with no benefits such as sick pay or health care.

As outlined by Onwe (2013), the informal economy exhibits distinct characteristics, including minimal requirements for professional qualifications (often involving skills acquired outside of formal education), operating on a small scale, and utilising labour-intensive production methods, sometimes coupled with adapted technology. As previously discussed, informal employment encompasses both self-employment (typically aimed at generating income sufficient for self-sustainability) and wage employment, which often lacks formal recognition, regulation, or legal protections. Self-employment encompasses categories like own-account workers, family business proprietors, and unpaid family labourers. Wage employment can be categorised into two distinct groups: wage workers and wage employers. Wage workers encompass a wide range of individuals, including employees of informal establishments like bars and salons, casual labourers without a permanent employer, home-based workers, paid domestic workers, temporary and part-time employees, as well as unregistered workers. Conversely, wage employers pertain to those who own and operate informal businesses.

Moreover, other academics have contended that the informal sector comprises economic endeavours related to the creation and dissemination of goods and services, which operate without registration and regulation by the state or local government, even in situations where

comparable activities are subject to regulation (Sinclair, 1978). Nonetheless, these unregulated activities acquire various designations contingent upon the context. As suggested by Hope (2001), the subterranean economy, which is also known as the informal, clandestine, underground, shadow, secondary, black, inconspicuous, unofficial, or parallel economy, has risen as a noteworthy element within the economic endeavours and progress of African countries.

2.3 Perspective on the “informal economy” concept

The potential of the informal sector to mitigate poverty and unemployment is indirectly underscored (ILO, 2020). The aim is to acknowledge the contribution of the informal sector and advocate for informal economic practices. It is recognised that the competitiveness of the informal sector is rooted in the absence of bureaucratic and hierarchical structures, an unregulated operational environment, and informality, all of which render business within the informal sector cost-effective and profitable for its participants (Otekhile & Matthew, 2017). In this regard, Hope (2001) suggests that the creation of job opportunities within the informal economy provides strong evidence that, even in the face of uncontrolled inflation, a significant number of capable and willing workers can secure employment within a free-market framework. However, it is arguable that the absence of regulation can serve as a deterrent, thereby posing a risk to the vitality of the informal sector (Hope, 2001). This is primarily because, as a sector that does not contribute taxes, governments often tend to neglect or, at best, completely overlook it, thus leading to significant consequences. The reformist perspective does not adequately consider the structural interdependence of the informal sector with the formal economy. From a Marxist standpoint, small entrepreneurs and individuals engaged in informal sector activities are akin to how Trotsky viewed the peasantry. Trotsky contended that the presence of a weak capitalist class in a less developed country with a substantial peasantry does not necessarily rule out the possibility of a socialist revolution (Gerry, 1987).

The informal sector has a long conceptual history. Narula (2020) states that individuals and small companies that do piecework on their own property, as well as street traders and the bulk of domestic workers, fall under this grouping. It could be posited that this is one of the economic sectors most susceptible to disruptions and highly responsive to external disturbances.

2.4 Outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic

The coronavirus family comprises a variety of viruses, and only six of them are recognised for causing respiratory tract infections in humans, varying in severity from mild to severe. These viruses are 229E, NL63, OC43, HKU1, SARS-CoV, and MERS-CoV (Lone & Ahmad, 2020). Among these, the virus responsible for the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), officially named severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), evolved into a global health crisis (Schwettmann, 2020). Since its initial identification in Wuhan in late 2019 and its subsequent declaration as a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020, COVID-19 has caused significant disruptions in the global economy, thereby particularly impacting sectors like transportation, tourism, and the global supply chain (Pitoyo et al., 2021). This pandemic has wielded significant repercussions not only on public health but also on the economy at large. The virus' inherent unpredictability, combined with government policies such as the implementation of social distancing measures and lockdowns, has resulted in reduced consumer demand for products as a consequence of a significant decrease in global manufacturing operations. Moreover, economic activity across continents has been hampered as workforces remain at home in efforts to combat the virus (Wana et al., 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic persists as an ongoing global crisis, with a toll of over 5.9 million deaths worldwide and severe socio-economic repercussions in nearly every nation.

2.5 The global impacts of COVID-19 pandemic

Considering the repercussions of COVID-19 lockdowns in other geographical regions, the cases of Thailand and India provide valuable insights. As reported by Komin et al. (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic, alongside the ensuing economic recession, exacerbated the already precarious circumstances of informal sector labourers in Thailand. This was manifested in the form of reduced incomes and limited savings. This viewpoint is further substantiated by Narula (2020), who argues that the COVID-19 crisis heightened the vulnerability of those engaged in informal economic activities. The stringent lockdown measures imposed by the Indian government to contain the spread of COVID-19 had a direct and adverse impact on economic pursuits. This impact was especially severe for informal sector workers who rely on these economic endeavours for their livelihoods (Estupinan & Sharma, 2020). It is a fact that many informal workers are often more vulnerable to the disease because they provide services that necessitate face-to-face interactions (World Bank, 2020). The examples here can include street vendors, barbers, hairdressers, etc. The lockdown measures prevented direct interactions between these types of informal workers and the community (customers). This led to individuals employed in the informal sector finding themselves in financially precarious circumstances, thereby making it impossible for them to meet critical financial obligations, including those related to food and housing. As such, they accumulated more debt in their efforts to secure their livelihoods, as they resorted to borrowing money for this purpose.

Given the global repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, including notable increases in mortality rates in regions like China, the United States, and Europe, it is worth highlighting that the African continent witnessed a relatively lower degree of impact (El-Sadr & Justman, 2020). Despite the COVID-19 pandemic having killed many people across the globe especially in 2020 and 2021, the informal workers had to continue working in order to survive. An estimate suggests that out of the 1.6 billion informal workers, with a particular emphasis on

women, a substantial number persisted in their work to provide sustenance for themselves and their families. This was a result of their incapacity to depend on income substitutes or savings amidst the lockdowns triggered by the pandemic (ILO, 2020). Many of these informal sector workers faced the unfortunate dilemma of choosing between "succumbing to hunger" or "the virus" if they were to cease working and adhere to lockdown measures (ILO, 2020, p.1).

2.6 Covid-19 and the informal sector in Africa

The COVID-19 pandemic stands as the most substantial global calamity since the Second World War. The extensive lockdown measures implemented worldwide to mitigate the disease's spread had a profoundly adverse impact on economies and labour markets to an unparalleled degree (ILO, 2020). Considering the vulnerability of informal businesses and informal workers, it is expected that the lockdown measures had devastating impacts on the survival of such businesses and thus the livelihood of those dependent on the income generated from informal economic activities. They are the most vulnerable because as previously discussed, they have the least job security. Additionally, their revenue generation is dependent on the informal networks, which unfortunately was difficult to maintain when the COVID-19 lockdown condition was in place.

As per the ILO (2018), informal employment constitutes 86% of the overall employment in Africa. In Sub-Saharan Africa alone, informal employment accounts for 89%. A Geopoll SMS poll survey conducted at the peak of the lockdown (between 11 June and 16 July 2020) in five African countries (Mozambique, South Africa, Republic of Congo (DRC), Kenya and Nigeria) found that 20% of informal sector workers indicated that it was unlikely to still have a job after the COVID-19 lockdown measures were uplifted (Strauss & Rosenberg, 2021). In the same poll, 37% of the informal workers expressed uncertainty on whether they would be able to

return to work after the lockdown. Contrary to the poll results for formal sector workers, about 9% of the informal sector workers indicated the unlikelihood of them getting back to their jobs post the lockdown. About 22% of formal sector workers were uncertain. The poll results imply that the lockdown induced anxiety within the communities, primarily stemming from the uncertainty surrounding job security in both formal and informal sectors. Notably, the level of uncertainty was more pronounced among informal sector workers. The results from the South Africa's NIDS-CRAM survey conducted by Ranchhod and Daniel (2020) show that women in general, particularly poor women, have borne two-thirds of job losses since February 2020 until the end of April 2020. According to the South Africa Rapid Gender Assessment Report (2020), the findings indicate that the majority of respondents, specifically 72% of women and 73% of men, encountered financial difficulties during the pandemic. Additionally, approximately 1 in 5 respondents, comprising 21% of women and 22% of men, reported that the primary breadwinner in their households had lost their job during that period. In terms of governmental support received by women, about half (52%) reported not receiving any government assistance, thus encompassing both financial aid and resource support. Among those who received assistance, the most common forms included COVID-19 relief grants (22%) and the newly introduced social protection grants (19%). Other types of aid consisted of food parcels (7%), cash assistance (7%), and preventive supplies (2%). This difference in support received can be attributed to factors such as lower educational attainment among women, legal constraints, social or cultural norms, and demographic characteristics (Malta et al., 2019).

The ILO report (2013) indicates that informal employment constitutes a substantial portion of non-agricultural employment across Sub-Saharan African nations, ranging from 33% in South Africa to as high as 82% in Mali. These figures underscore the persistent importance of considering this significant sector of the economy. ILO (2020) emphasises that the informal

economy predominantly comprises sectors and subsectors that are exceptionally susceptible to the consequences of COVID-19 and the accompanying measures aimed at enforcing physical distancing. These measures include mobility restrictions and partial or complete lockdowns. It is worth highlighting that the wholesale and retail trade sector has been substantially impacted. This sector represents 25% of all informal non-agricultural employment worldwide, and in developing countries, that figure rises to 33% (ILO, 2020). A significant portion of this workforce is comprised of street vendors and other traders who conduct their businesses without a fixed physical location.

2.7 The informal sector and the COVID-19 pandemic in Namibia

As previously discussed, the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant lockdown measures have had and continue to exert a significant impact on the economic welfare of both businesses and households. In alignment with international recommendations, the Namibian government swiftly instituted a series of containment measures, subject to periodic review, aimed at mitigating the virus' transmission (Ministry of Finance, 2020). These measures encompassed actions such as the closure of educational institutions, restrictions on both domestic and international travel, the widespread availability of hand sanitizers, installation of handwashing facilities in public and private spaces, mandatory mask-wearing, enforcement of social distancing, and limitations on the size of gatherings in places like open markets, places of worship, and social events such as weddings and funerals. The most impactful of these measures was the imposition of an economic lockdown, which initially restricted the free movement of individuals within the country and subsequently between regions or towns. This lockdown also necessitated the closure of all non-essential service businesses. The COVID-19 pandemic in Namibia coincided with a period when the country was already facing economic challenges, as the economy was experiencing a downturn characterised by slow growth, with

key sectors such as agriculture, mining, and construction underperforming (Keulder & Stoman, 2020). In an effort to prevent a total collapse of employment and to alleviate the hardships faced by both businesses and households, the Namibian government implemented financial relief measures that aligned with global trends (Ministry of Finance, 2020). Namibia's Finance Minister, Ipumbu Shiimi, introduced the initial phase of the government's economic stimulus and relief package on April 1, 2020, and this package was valued at N\$8.2 billion and encompassed various measures, including the implementation of an Emergency Income Grant (EIG) aimed at assisting informal sector workers. However, it is important to note that the grant constituted a one-time cash payment of N\$750.00 per eligible individual, contingent upon specific criteria. It was estimated that this grant would benefit as many as 739,000 Namibians (Ministry of Finance, 2020). The target beneficiaries were Namibian adults between the ages of 18 and 59 who had suffered job or income loss within the informal sector directly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They were individuals who were unemployed and had witnessed a deterioration in their livelihoods as a result of the impact of COVID-19 and the various nationwide public health protective measures.

According to the Namibia Statistic Agency Labour Force Survey report (2018) the informal employment sector employs 58% of the working population in Namibia. Among the entire population of employed individuals, 47% of men and an even higher proportion, specifically 53% of women, were engaged in the informal sector. Additionally, informal employment constituted 42% of the urban employed population and a significantly larger percentage (58%) of the rural employed population. The Kavango West and Ohangwena region have the highest percentages of informal employment, with 91% and 83%, respectively. The region with the lowest percentage of workers in informal employment is !Karas region which recorded about 35%. Julius et al. (2020) assert that even though the informal sector may not be formally included in the calculation of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the substantial income losses

resulting from lockdown measures have a significant impact on this sector. The loss of jobs has a pronounced effect on the country's employment landscape, as these individuals experience temporary unemployment, subsequently leading to a reduction in domestic consumption.

The pandemic has caused significant disruptions to the labour environment, thus leading to substantial impacts on employment, the economic well-being of workers and their families, and businesses, with a particular emphasis on micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises, on a global scale (ILO, 2020). As businesses increasingly turn to layoffs and wage reductions to ensure their survival, households are encountering growing financial pressures. According to Keulder and Stoman (2020), the pandemic has notably altered work routines for Namibians, with nearly 45% indicating changes in their workplace. Over half, or 51%, have experienced shifts in their working hours, with the majority (36%) witnessing a reduction in working hours, which likely translates to corresponding decreases in wages and salaries. As Keulder and Stoman (2020) hypothesise, despite these measures, many businesses resorted to temporary closures, significant layoffs, or wage cuts to endure the pandemic, all of which have had a substantial impact on Namibian households.

2.8 The economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the informal sector

According to the WHO (2021), as of November 1, 2021, data from the WHO showed that the worldwide COVID-19 virus had impacted in excess of 246.6 million people, leading to over 5 million fatalities. Jackson et al. (2021) reported that by August 23, 2021, over 80 countries had taken measures like border closures for countries with high infection rates, business shutdowns, self-quarantine orders for citizens in contact with infected individuals, and school closures, affecting approximately 1.5 billion children. Stojkoski et al. (2022) observed that numerous governments enforced measures such as social distancing, which entailed the closure of

educational institutions, airports, borders, restaurants, and retail establishments, and these measures were aimed at curbing the potentially devastating transmission of the COVID-19 disease. Mishra et al. (2020) similarly highlighted that to curb the virus' transmission, numerous countries imposed lockdowns on various facilities, services, educational institutions, industrial sectors, and daily markets. In the most severe cases, citizens were even confined to their homes (Keulder & Stoman, 2020). It can be argued that the COVID-19 pandemic had catastrophic effects on those who fell ill with the virus, thus resulting in significant loss of life, as well as on tens of millions who grappled with unemployment and the erosion of their means of subsistence (UNDP, 2021).

The UN (2020) reported that the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic had negative consequences for economies worldwide. This impact was felt not only in developed economies but also in vulnerable ones, thus leading to substantial disruptions in production networks. Additionally, there was a noteworthy decline in agricultural operations, tourism, trade, and industrial activities (Buheji et al., 2020).

Some significant impacts and concerns raised in relation to healthcare services, the economy, and social life, as highlighted by Mishra et al. (2020) are as follows: Healthcare impacts: Challenges in identifying, isolating, and treating suspected or infected patients; healthcare professionals being overburdened; patients with other illnesses being affected due to a lack of attention; a decrease in the availability of medications in pharmacies due to an influx of cases; and a high level of assurance is required. Economic impact: A slowdown in the accumulation of essential goods; disruptions in the supply chain; losses in national and global trade; and reduced income in the global market. Social impacts: Service sectors struggling to find viable support options; cancellation or postponement of international and national sports events; a severe impact on the tourism sector; restrictions on various festive occasions; unwarranted anxiety among the general public; distancing from family, friends, and relatives; closures of

cafeterias, restaurants, shops, recreational centres, and gyms, among others. From the listed impacts, the overarching summary is that the health system was overburdened with the health workers (who were also contracting the virus at an alarming rate) being overwhelmed and focus was mainly on COVID-19 patients while people seeking health care for other conditions or diseases were not prioritised. Additionally, deviating from the usual norm, the patients were many people some of whom succumbed to the virus, and this affected many people who lost their loved ones including the breadwinners or employers (including those in informal sectors) since people are exposed. This negatively affected the social side of the population. Economically, the livelihoods of people were affected, with high degrees of uncertainty about the future job security and survival of businesses.

According to estimates presented by ILO (2020), the decline in labour income is predicted to worsen the levels of poverty for informal workers and their families. This expected rise is projected to be more than 21% in upper-middle-income countries like Namibia, nearly 52% in high-income countries, and 56% in lower- and low-income countries. The report by the ILO (2018) established a link between the level of economic development and the prevalence of informal employment. In lower- and middle-income countries, the informal sector contributes up to 35% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), in contrast to advanced economies where it makes up 15% (International Monetary Fund, 2021). Furthermore, a report by the United Nations Development Programme (2015) highlighted a strong connection between poverty and participation in the informal economy. Therefore, it is anticipated that developmental policies should prioritise facilitating the transition of individuals from informal to formal employment. Nonetheless, this transition will take time and require a dual strategy that concentrates on increasing income (via enhanced productivity and improved access to credit, among other measures) and enhancing living conditions, particularly social protection, for those involved in the informal sector.

As indicated by the African Union (2020), despite lower infection rates from the COVID-19 pandemic compared to other regions, African countries are still anticipated to face economic slowdowns due to the widespread disruptions in global supply chains. Similar to previous pandemics such as the H1N1 outbreak in 1918-1919 (commonly known as the Spanish flu), the H2N2 event in 1957–58 (the Asian flu), the H3N2 occurrence in 1968–1969 (the Hong Kong flu), the H1N1 pandemic in 2009–2010 (often referred to as the swine flu), and the HIV/AIDS crisis in the 1980s, COVID-19 has impacted various facets of the economy, particularly through both demand-side and supply-side channels (Anyanwu & Salami, 2021).

According to the WB (2020), demand-side channels refer to the impacts on consumption, investment, trade, and travel, which are influenced by factors such as avoidance, fear, and uncertainty. In contrast, supply-side channels involve disruptions in the workforce and supply chains, business closures, and rising operational costs. These effects have been further compounded by demographic factors, particularly the contrast between the young and the elderly populations, inadequacies in healthcare systems, the absence or insufficiency of social safety nets, cross-border impacts from travel, and the macroeconomic responses of governments, including the credibility of these responses. In this context, the current research is significant as it seeks to investigate the economic and social effects of the pandemic, as well as the related lockdown measures on individuals employed in the informal economy, with particular attention to street vendors.

2.9 The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the livelihood of informal sector workers

According to Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing [WIEGO] (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic had an abrupt and severe impact on the financial stability of workers

in the informal sector, and in many cases, this negative consequence could result in enduring income loss. Since the commencement of the COVID-19 pandemic, individuals in this economically vulnerable group, who typically earned around \$1.90 per day, experienced an unprecedented 80% reduction in their income (Hossain, 2021). Genoni et al. (2020) documented the repercussions of this income loss on the livelihoods of individuals in rural Bangladesh. Their research revealed that 63% of affected individuals had to curtail their food consumption, 50% sought assistance from friends, 33% received support from the government, 55% had to tap into their savings, 22% of households actively explored alternative means, and another 22% were compelled to secure loans. The livelihoods of these informal workers suffered significant setbacks when the lockdown measures were put in place, mainly due to their meagre daily wages, which prevented them from stockpiling food and other essentials in advance of the lockdown.

Many students, particularly those with parents involved in informal economic endeavours, encountered severe disadvantages due to the shutdown of educational and training institutions. This disadvantage stemmed from their inability to access and benefit from remote and online learning methods due to the absence of the necessary equipment and/or internet connectivity, as noted by Schwettmann (2020). Pitoyo et al. (2021) argue that the informal economy often witnessed the presence of uncompensated family labour, especially in enterprises owned by families. Moreover, Swarna et al. (2022) emphasise that individuals with higher educational attainment, at a statistically significant level of 1%, incurred a food expenditure deficit of US\$ 4 in comparison to those who had not received formal education. The closure of schools and increased domestic requirements have also led to 31% of respondents in this study considering stepping back in their careers. This decision arose despite the fact that a majority, constituting 53%, expressed extreme concerns about meeting their financial obligations (GeoPoll's Report, 2021).

According to the ILO (2020), informal workers experienced a notable increase of 56% in relative poverty within the first month of the crisis. This phenomenon can be attributed primarily to the loss of jobs and income, coupled with the substantial healthcare expenses incurred by households, as identified by Dzawanda et al. (2021). GeoPoll's report (2021) underscores that unemployment rates have remained persistently elevated, with women being particularly hard-hit by the multifaceted repercussions of COVID-19 across various domains. This impact has extended to areas such as employment, income, gender-based violence, and education.

During the period of lockdown measures, the employment landscape was marked by considerable unpredictability, thereby causing elevated levels of stress and anxiety among individuals involved in the informal sector. To cope with the pandemic's challenges, survey participants indicated that they adopted particular survival tactics. According to Pitoyo et al. (2021), these strategies included a 76.6 percent reduction in their spending and the pursuit of additional employment to supplement their income. This shift in employment dynamics may have contributed to a sudden increase in mental health conditions. Pitoyo et al. (2021) argue that in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, households consisting of 1-3 members predominantly resorted to survival strategies due to their smaller family size and the difficulties faced by the sole income earner in meeting the household's basic needs, households with 4-6 and 7-9 members were more inclined to employ a consolidation strategy as their primary approach. This was made possible by the increased number of working household members, thereby allowing for the sharing of essential provisions. Household size appears to play a significant role, potentially boosting overall earnings and improving livelihood strategies. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that these patterns may be shaped by additional variables like the ages and health statuses of individuals within the household. Demographic

characteristics of the study participants are also examined to provide empirical support for these assertions that are found in the existing literature.

2.10 Conceptual framework

The research explores the investigation and utilisation of the Pressure and Release (PAR) model, as depicted in Figure 3.1. The Pressure and Release (PAR) model was developed by a Canadian geographer, Ben Wisner, in the late 1990s (Wisner et al., 2004). This model provides a framework for understanding the cause and dynamics of disasters in the context of disaster risk reduction and management. This model is employed as a structure for assessing the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on street vendors in Eenhana town. The PAR model is based on the concept that a disaster results from the interaction of two contrasting forces: the elements that create vulnerability on one side and the actual exposure to risk on the other (Awal, 2015). Figure 3.1 portrays a disaster occurrence when a substantial number of vulnerable individuals are exposed to a hazard, resulting in significant damage and disruptions to their livelihoods. The underlying causes of people's vulnerability are deeply ingrained in social processes, often unrelated to the specific disaster event. The PAR model conceptualises a disaster as a point of convergence between these opposing forces, thus highlighting the dynamic interplay between vulnerability and natural hazard events (Wisner et al., 2003). Significantly, economic, demographic, and political factors emerge as the central underlying factors of susceptibility, maintaining and extending vulnerability across time. These factors influence how resources are assigned and shared among different segments of society and are, in turn, influenced by economic, social, and political frameworks, as well as the legal establishment and enforcement of rights, gender relations, and other components of the ideological framework.

Twigg (2001) introduced a model that outlines the progression of vulnerability, delineating three key levels: root causes, dynamic pressures, and hazardous conditions. The root causes are closely intertwined with the role of the government, the nature of law enforcement, military governance, adherence to legal principles, and the government's administrative capacity. Dynamic pressures encompass various factors such as the emergence of epidemic or pandemic diseases like COVID-19, rapid urbanisation, existing foreign debt (as opposed to historical debt), and specific structural adjustment programmes (Wisner et al., 2003). Additionally, dynamic pressures may involve export promotion, which, in certain cases, can undermine food security. Unsafe conditions refer to situations where individuals are compelled to reside in perilous locations, lack effective state protection, are forced into hazardous occupations (e.g., street vending on busy streets), possess minimal food entitlements, or have entitlements vulnerable to sudden and severe disruptions. Furthermore, these unsafe conditions are influenced by the initial well-being of individuals and households and how their well-being varies over time. It is crucial to consider patterns of access to tangible resources, such as financial assets and food reserves, as well as intangible resources, including support networks, knowledge of survival strategies, sources of assistance, emotional resilience, and the ability to function effectively during crises.

THE PROGRESSION OF VULNERABILITY

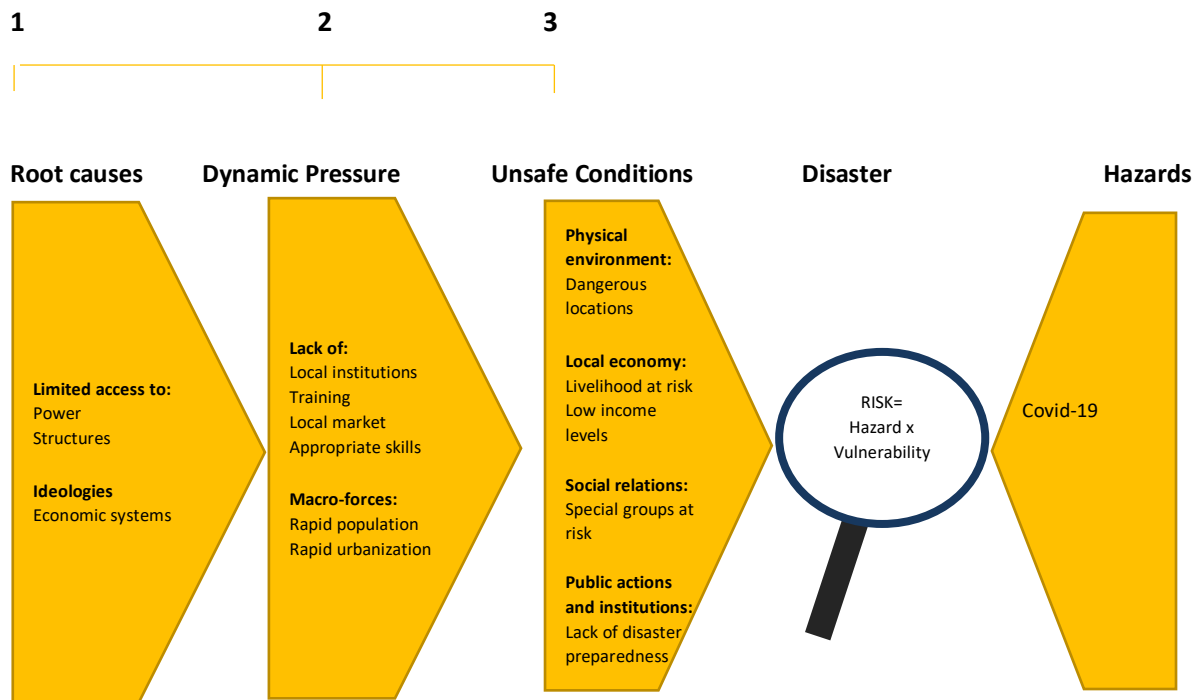


Figure 3.1: Pressure and Release (PAR) model the progression of vulnerability (Wisner et al., 2004)

This framework informed the study by elucidating that street vendors should be assessed in the case of emergence of any hazards such as COVID-19 pandemic. The PAR model can broadly be divided into two sections: (1) the development of the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e. pressure), and (2) pressure reduction, which can include COVID-19 pandemic improvements adaptation as well as the intervention aimed improving the livelihood such as employment security. The research adopted a holistic approach to assess the impacts of the threat (COVID-19) on street vendors in Eenhana town. This approach sought to gain insights into how individuals adjusted to the new circumstances during the lockdown, which likely led to income loss and, consequently, adverse consequences for their livelihoods.

In Eenhana town, informal traders faced constrained access to resources within a competitive yet inadequately regulated sector. The absence of government taxation on informal activities

served to rationalise unfavourable conditions for enhancing day-to-day livelihoods within the informal sector (ILO, 2018). These conditions encompass deficiencies such as the absence of investment opportunities and financial support from financial institutions due to the informal nature of activities like street trading. Furthermore, the absence of formal Acts and policies to govern informal businesses resulted in the sector being overlooked during times of adversity and economic turmoil (ILO, 2021). This is a huge burden to the already surviving by-day livelihoods of low-income earners, such as street vendors. Many informal traders lack the essential skills needed to bolster their businesses when confronted with economic shocks, thus putting many enterprises at risk of closure, income loss, and impeding their ability to recover.

This has been a causality of many internal and external factors that vary from power dynamics, access to resources, job security, and structures that undermine its contribution to day-to-day livelihoods for the poor. The preparedness of informal traders to overcome the economic and social negative impacts of the outbreak was minimal and with limited structural support from the government institutions at a local level further contributing to its vulnerability and inability to cope with the disturbances.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an outline of the research procedures that steered this investigation. The comprehensive approach governing the entire research process is conventionally referred to as the research methodology (Collins & Hussely, 2009). Within this chapter, discussions are provided concerning the research approach, research design, the study population, sampling methods, and field data collection techniques. Additionally, this chapter delves into an explanation of the data collection instrument utilised, as well as addressing its validity and reliability, and presents an extensive elucidation of the data analysis techniques by underscoring their importance in the research. Finally, the ethical principles applied in this study are assessed and expounded upon.

3.2 Research philosophy

This study adhered to the positivist research philosophy, which has its historical roots dating back to the 17th and 18th centuries, as influenced by philosophers such as Descartes and Locke (Park et al., 2020). Positivism, often associated with experiments and quantitative research, represents an evolution of empiricism and was formally named as positivism by Auguste Comte in the 19th century. As stated by Saunder (2009), positivism is in concordance with the philosophical standpoint of natural scientists. When applied to observable social phenomena, it aims to yield law-like generalisations akin to those observed in the physical and natural sciences. Moreover, the positivist research philosophy asserts that scientific methods, which involve experimentation, observation, and experience-based reasoning, should be employed to elucidate human behaviour (Kivunja & Kuyina, 2017). As a result, the positivist paradigm lends itself to quantitative research (Okesina, 2020). This implies that the research philosophy supports quantitative methods, including statistical analysis and numerical data coding, thus

making it well-suited to this particular study. As corroborated by Magos (2021), the positivist research philosophy is conducive to the use of questionnaires and the testing of questionnaire validity and reliability, among other quantitative techniques. Each of these approaches is congruent with and directly tackles the research's stated problem and objectives, which are focused on evaluating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economic well-being of informal sector workers situated in Eenhana town, Ohangwena region.

3.3 Research design and methodology

A research design involves organising the parameters and methods for collecting and analysing data, with the goal of harmonising its adherence to the research objectives while taking into account considerations of efficiency and methodology (Akhtar, 2016). The study utilised a sample survey research design, which involved gathering data from a representative subset of the target population (Apuke, 2017). This approach aimed to provide insights into the research objectives by collecting data from a diverse yet representative group of individuals (Taherdoost, 2016). To ensure the relevance of the data, the survey instrument was meticulously crafted to capture information specifically related to the study's focus, particularly concerning the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the livelihoods of informal sector workers. The survey was conducted using structured questionnaires, which allowed for a standardised approach to data collection and analysis. Through this research design, the study was able to gather quantitative data on relevant variables for the research topic for analysis.

Primary data was gathered through a survey questionnaire comprising closed and open-ended questions. The research combines descriptive and analytical elements, as it not only delineates variables but also explores the relationships between demographic characteristics and livelihood factors. Before the commencement of fieldwork, secondary data was amassed through an examination of library resources and a thorough review of existing literature concerning informal vending practices, as elaborated in Chapter two. The research's analytical

framework elaborated upon in this study is rooted in the Pressure and Release (PAR) model, which was introduced in Chapter two. This model is based on the idea that a hazard emerges as a result of the interplay between two contrasting factors: vulnerability on one side and physical risk on the other. The model provides a framework for tracing the development of vulnerability and it was used to examine the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on street vendors in Eenhana town.

3.4 Quantitative research method

This study employed a quantitative methodology along with an array of secondary resources. Quantitative analysis, as defined by Apuke (2017), involves elucidating phenomena by collecting numerical data, which is subsequently subjected to mathematical techniques, particularly statistical methods. Opting for a quantitative research paradigm offers the advantage of enabling the selection of samples from individuals, communities, or organisations, thereby ensuring that the outcomes are representative of the population under scrutiny, as suggested by Neuman (2014). In line with this quantitative approach, the incorporation of statistical and numerical data holds substantial significance as it serves to delineate the percentage of individuals reliant on the informal economy as their primary income source. According to Crosswell (1994), this approach has demonstrated its ability to mitigate the risks associated with bias and inaccuracies inherent in data collection using quantitative approaches.

3.4.1 Population

A study population can be defined as "the entire set of subjects/elements for which inferences are to be drawn" (Singleton & Straits, 2010, p. 14). Tarsi and Tuff (2012) offer a definition of population as a collection of individuals belonging to the same species, coexisting in a shared

geographic region, and engaging in interbreeding. Typically, members of a population depend on comparable resources, encounter similar environmental limitations, and count on the presence of other members for their survival (Tarsi & Tuff, 2012). According to Eenhana Town Council (2020) during the COVID-19, a total of 412 formal registered businesses and 637 informal traders were registered in Eenhana town, with 205 street vendors. This number only includes Namibians, thus non-citizens are not included. The population of the study is 205 street vendors registered by the Eenhana Town Council during COVID-19 pandemic.

3.4.2 Study setting

The research was carried out within the town of Eenhana. Eenhana Town Council serves as the governing body tasked with the administration and management of municipal affairs within the confines of Eenhana town, whereas Eenhana town denotes the geographic locale or settlement where individuals reside and conduct daily activities. Eenhana is among the four official regional capitals in the Oshiwambo-speaking Northern Regions of Namibia, alongside Omuthiya (Oshikoto region), Oshakati (Oshana region), Outapi (Omusati region), and Eenhana (Ohangwena region) (Eenhana Town Council, 2021). According to the Local Authorities Act, specifically Act number 23 of 1992, Eenhana was initially designated as a settlement and the administrative hub for the Ohangwena Region. Subsequently, it attained town status on April 15, 1999, and transitioned to self-administration on July 1, 2002. In the period preceding Namibian independence, Eenhana primarily served as a strategic military base for the South African Defence Force, facilitating their operations in Angola. During that time, there were limited public infrastructure developments, with the presence of only a secondary school and a combined school.

According to NSA (2011), the Ohangwena Region had a population totaling 245,446 individuals. This positions Ohangwena as the second most densely inhabited region in

Namibia, with the exception of the Khomas Region, where the capital city, Windhoek, is located. Information provided by the National Planning Commission [NPC] (2015) indicates that all the constituencies within Ohangwena witnessed substantial reductions in poverty, with the most noteworthy decrease amounting to 34%, equivalent to 8,290 individuals, as recorded in the Endola constituency. Despite this decline, Ohangwena remains one of the country's five poorest regions. The region's economically active population is estimated to be 49% of the total population, with 43% unemployed. The agricultural sector is the largest employer, employing more than half 51% of the working population (NPC, 2015).

According to Eenhana Town Council (2020), during the COVID 19 registration period, 412 formal registered businesses and 637 informal traders were registered in Eenhana town, as requested by the central government. All the informal traders that are located near Mobile Telecommunications Company (MTC), First National Bank (FNB) complex, Nangy kitchen, Oshinanena, Ministry of Agriculture Water and Land Reform to Onawa service station, Informal traders at Eenhana district hospital, along SWAPO office, under the tree near Monte Carlo bar and OK grocer were the respondents. Out of the 637 informal traders recorded, 205 were Namibian street vendors, excluding non-citizens. The informal traders offer diverse goods and services to the public, which includes products such as vegetable and fruits, Dried food (*mahangu* and sorghum seed, meat and fish), second hand clothes/ brand new, poultry products, home cooked food, fresh meat, *oshikundu* and *kapana* (Eenhan Town Council, 2020).

3.4.3 Sampling method

To select study respondents, a stratified random sampling technique was utilised. This method entails dividing the overall population into separate subgroups or strata, from which a random sample is chosen (Taherdoost, 2016). The stratified random sampling method reduces the biasness as it ensures that all possible respondents (population) have equal chances to be selected and form part sample. In this study, the strata were based on places where the street

vendors sell their goods or offer services. Such places are MTC, FNB complex, Nangy kitchen and Oshinanena, Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform to Onawa service station, informal traders at Eenhana district hospital, next to SWAPO office, under the tree near Monte Carlo bar, Ok Food and opposite old Eenhana hospital. The quantity of respondents was contingent upon the population present at a specific site; the higher the number of individuals at the location, the more questionnaires were administered.

The sample was determined considering the 95% confidence interval and 0.05 margin of errors. Equation (1) was applied to estimate the sample size and the estimate was 133 participants as the calculation below shows.

$$n = \frac{z^2 p(1-p)/e^2}{1+(z^2 p(1-p)/(e^2 N))} \quad (1)$$

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 * 0.5(1-0.5)/0.05^2}{1+(1.96^2 * 0.5(1-0.5)/(0.05^2 * 205)} = 133$$

Where N is the target population (205), z is statistical parameter indicating the variation in the standard deviation (for 95%) confidence interval, this is equal to 1.96, e is the margin of error (this was 0.05 or 5%) and p is the expected frequency (this was set at 0.5). The study estimated a population target of 133 street vendors, and only 121 (91%) of these respondents agreed to participate, the other 12 (9%) respondents refused to participate.

3.5 Research instruments

A survey questionnaire with a quantitative nature was employed, featuring a combination of closed and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions have enough alternatives to choose from or fit into the information provided by the respondent. However, open ended questions are open for answers in data management that are post-coded (Acharya, 2010). The researcher and a research assistant were present when the questionnaire was administered. Questionnaires represent text-based tools designed to pose a series of inquiries or statements to survey

participants, who then respond by marking, numbering, checking a box on paper or online, or providing structured responses (Young, 2015). Acharya (2010) define the questionnaire as a document that contains questions which are carefully crafted to elicit responses related to the variables chosen for analysis.

The research data was acquired using a questionnaire that was designed in accordance with existing literature to evaluate the ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic on street vendors in Eenhana Town. The questionnaire encompassed an assortment of question types, including structured, unstructured, semi-structured, and open-ended, with the aim of extracting comprehensive insights from the respondents. The template of the questionnaire is provided in Appendix E, consisting of three separate sections (A, B, and C). Section A includes demographic variables, covering aspects such as age, gender, marital status, income level, educational background, educational achievements, and the number of household members. Section B includes variables pertaining to business and economic activities (years of being a vendor, income (before, during, and after Covid-19 pandemic lockdown), type of product sold by the respondent and location). Section C contains structured socioeconomic questions. The questionnaire was in English.

The researcher explained everything to the respondent before issuing the questionnaire and he also availed himself while the respondent was answering so that clarification about the question could be given. The researcher also translated the questionnaire to Oshikwanyama. Questions were translated into the native language for street vendors who spoke other native languages, such as in Oshikwanyama (Appendix E, people who don't understand English, the question for e.g., 1.7, number of household members was translated as *Meumbo omulimo vangapi?* in Oshiwambo). This was to ensure the quality of the data as most vendors are Oshiwambo speakers.

3.6 Procedure

Fives research assistants were recruited by the researcher to assist with data collection over a two-week period (10 working days during the office hours only). The research assistants received training to ensure that they had a good understanding of the research objectives, ethical considerations, and the proper techniques for phrasing questions in a way that fosters respondents' confidence and upholds result accuracy. The questionnaires were administered before or during normal working hours, from 08H00am to 17H00pm by the research assistants. Given the potential language barrier faced by street vendors in the study, research assistants underwent careful selection and comprehensive training to effectively convey the questionnaire content. Special attention was dedicated to upholding respondent' autonomy and ensuring their comprehension of the questions, thus enabling them to provide responses independently. To safeguard the ethical integrity of the data collection process, the researcher maintained a continuous presence in Eenhana town, thus monitoring the progress and promptly addressing any ethical dilemmas or concerns that emerged. This proactive approach not only upheld ethical standards but also cultivated a climate of ethical reflection and accountability among research assistants, thereby bolstering the overall ethical conduct of the study.

3.7 Data analysis

Statistical data analysis method was used in this study for data analysis. Subsequently, the data was cleaned and validated to eliminate duplication, typing errors, and any data incompleteness, thereby enhancing data quality and ensuring more precise, coherent, and dependable information to assess income levels before, during, and after the COVID-19 period. Descriptive statistics, including Measures of Central Tendency (mean, median), and Measures of Dispersion (range, standard deviation), were computed. To explore the relationship between socioeconomic factors, such as education and income, in connection with variables related to the COVID-19 pandemic, frequency tables, and cross-tabulations were employed. Cross-

tabulation was employed to examine associations related to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on businesses, including their ability to cover expenses such as bills, food, and educational costs.

The data analysis was facilitated with the use of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 23 software. This software package provides statistics ranging from simple descriptive numbers to complex multivariate matrices analyses as well as create tables and graphs such as histograms, scatterplots, and other methods (Arkkelin, 2014). SPSS is proficient at managing substantial datasets and executing the full array of analytical procedures described in this study, thus making it a prevalent choice in the fields of social sciences and business.

3.8 Reliability and validity

The necessity of verifying the validity and reliability of the measurement scales utilised in research cannot be emphasised enough (Surucu & Maslakci, 2020). In research, reliability and validity represent pivotal elements, as they gauge the precision and appropriateness of the tools utilised for data collection (Drost, 2011). It is essential to acknowledge that the importance of these elements can vary depending on the type of research. In this study's context, the researcher conducted an assessment of the data collection instruments' validity and reliability.

As stated by Bell (1993), validity refers to how well an instrument accurately measures the constructs it intends to assess (p. 65). Bless and Higson-Smith (2000), on the other hand, define measurement reliability as the extent to which an instrument consistently produces similar results when tested multiple times. Even though some errors may occur, a reliable instrument should exhibit a significant level of stability over time. To maintain this consistency in the findings, the researcher employed a checklist encompassing various topics and a set of sample

questions designed to explore these topics comprehensively, including potential follow-up inquiries.

Validity and reliability are susceptible to potential challenges. These challenges may arise when participants provide different responses to the same questions on different occasions or when their responses exhibit bias. For instance, some respondents displayed reluctance to take part in the study, suspecting that my involvement was related to the Eenhana Town Council's intention to compile their names for potential relocation to the open market. Furthermore, there is the possibility of participant withdrawals. To address this concern, I took steps to clarify the study's goals and objectives to all participants, thereby ensuring their comprehensive understanding of the research purpose.

3.9 Ethical considerations

Ethical principles of respect for research respondents, prevention of harm and ensuring good to research respondents, confidentiality and fairness to research respondent were observed in the study.

3.9.1 Respect research respondents

When doing a self-administered questionnaire survey, the key ethical considerations to address are ensuring that respondents have provided informed consent, thereby ensuring no harm comes to respondents, and ensuring confidentiality and privacy (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018). The researcher acquired ethical clearance from the Ethics Committee at the University of Namibia, specifically the Humanities, Society, and Development's Decentralized Ethics Committee. Additionally, an official letter was dispatched to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Eenhana Town Council to seek authorisation for conducting interviews with the street vendors within the Eenhana Town. The respondents were provided with a firm commitment to uphold the confidentiality and anonymity of the information they shared. They were also guaranteed that their involvement in the study would not lead to any harm or occupational insecurity. Furthermore, they were required to sign a form acknowledging their informed consent, signifying their voluntary agreement to partake in the research. It was stressed that the participants had the option to discontinue their involvement in the study at any time if they wished to do so. The responses were aggregated, and their names were not mentioned in the report. This is stated in Appendix D (informed consent).

3.9.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality and anonymity are ethical practices aimed at protecting respondents' privacy when collecting, analysing, and reporting data (Coffelt, 2017). Wiles et al. (2008) emphasises the significance of maintaining confidentiality in social research, highlighting that participants

should be informed about who will be able to access their data and should also receive details about the anonymisation process. Therefore, “anonymity is a vehicle by which confidentiality is operationalized” (Wiles et al., 2006, p.2). The identities of the respondents were protected in order to prevent future tracking. All data was strictly confidential and accessible only to the researcher and the supervisor. The researcher ensured the confidentiality of data and records by anonymising identifiable respondent information through the use of codes. Data were collected from the research assistant (they signed non-disclosure letter) on the same day it was collected and stored in a password protected file which will be destroyed after five years in line with UNAM policy.

3.9.3 Integrity and academic professionalism

The findings are presented with full transparency and integrity, and there is no manipulation of the data or its analysis. Proper attribution to other scholars' ideas is maintained to avoid any plagiarism. Plagiarism, as defined by Merriam-Webster's online dictionary (2010), involves actions such as (a) taking and utilising someone else's concepts or expressions as if they were one's own, (b) employing sources without providing the proper credit, (c) committing literary theft, and (d) asserting ideas as novel when they already exist in another source. Plagiarism can manifest in various ways, and intentional plagiarism takes place when an author deliberately copies an entire text, paragraph, or data and presents it as their original work. Unintentional plagiarism, on the other hand, can occur when the author is either unaware of previous research, lacks knowledge of ethical writing practices, or is uncertain about proper citation methods, thus resulting in similarities with existing articles (Roka, 2017). Shahabuddin (2009) points out that plagiarism can lead to legal and ethical issues for students and faculty, thus potentially resulting in severe consequences. Thankfully, there are strategies available for preventing plagiarism.

3.10 Fieldwork experience

It was difficult to conduct field research because some vendors refused to speak with researcher. The fieldwork experience involved the researcher and the research assistant visiting a location where every street vendor expressed a strong willingness to take part in the study. They were made aware that the study would involve only a portion of them, so the researcher determined the required number of participants based on the various locations where street vendors conduct their businesses. It was also difficult to take photographs in the streets for use as evidence in my study due to aggressive street vendors who believed that it would provide additional evidence that could be used against them. In general, owing to the nature of my respondents, conducting the research took time because the traders had to attend to their customers as well as talk to the research assistant. Nonetheless, we were able to complete the fieldwork.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is focused on the presentation, analysis, modelling, and discussion of the data. Information was subjected to statistical analysis using SPSS, and tables and charts were generated using Microsoft Office 365 (Excel) to create visually appealing and easily editable formats. These findings pertain to the study's focus community and are subsequently presented and discussed. In this context, existing literature is interwoven with the outcomes derived from the data analysis. The literature serves to reinforce, verify, and substantiate the research findings and interpretations. This chapter covers the data, results, and their discourse concerning the research queries and the applicable literature regarding the subject being investigated.

4.2 Survey completion rate

Figure 4.1: Response rate

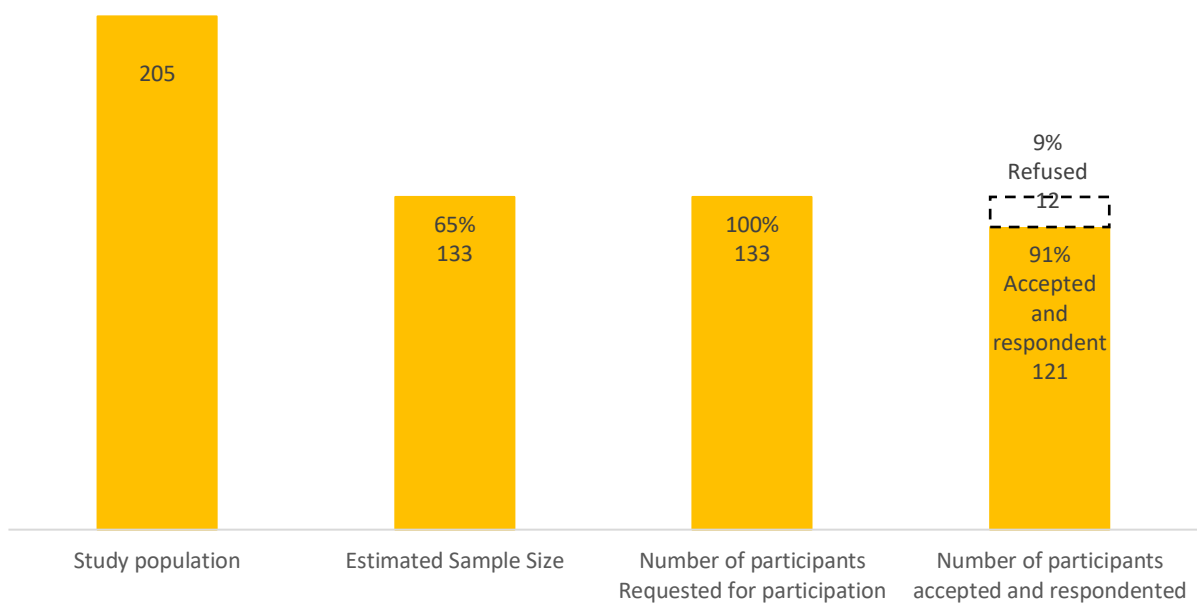


Figure 4.1 above indicates the study population of 205 street vendors, with an estimated sample size of 65%. It shows that 100 (100%) of the sampled respondents were approached to

participate in the data collection activity, and only 121 (91%) of these respondents agreed to participate and responded, the other 12 (9%) respondents refused to participate.

4.3 Demographic information

Table 4.1: Head of household

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Yes	64	52.9
No	57	47.1
Total	121	100.0

Table 4.1 displays that 64 (53%) of the street vendors that participated in the study are head of households, while 57 (47%) vendors are not heads of households.

Table 4.2: Sex of respondents

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Female	109	90.1
Male	12	9.9
Total	121	100.0

Table 4.2 indicates that the study respondents consist of 109 (90%) females and 12 (10%) males. According to Macharia (1997), existing literature on street vending in different contexts highlights that women often engage in informal work due to a lack of skills for more lucrative employment opportunities, as they typically occupy subordinate roles in family income generation strategies. Street vending, in this context, provides maximum flexibility for balancing work and childcare responsibilities. Agadjanian (2002) contended that the historical involvement of men in street vending has been noteworthy, highlighting the existence of gender specialisation and hierarchy within this industry.

Table 4.3: Age of respondents (last birthday)

Mean		33.76
95% Confidence interval for mean	Lower Bound	31.42
	Upper Bound	34.99
Median		33.50
Std. Deviation		8.052
Minimum		16
Maximum		56
Range		40

Table 4.3 displays the average age of the respondents as 33 years, accompanied by a standard deviation of 8.052 years. At 95% confidence level, the mean age of the vendors in Eenhana town falls between 33 and 35 years old. The youngest vendor that participated in the study is aged 16 and the oldest vendor is 56 years old, which means that there is an age range of 40 years between the youngest and the oldest vendor who participated in the study.

Figure 4.2: Marital status

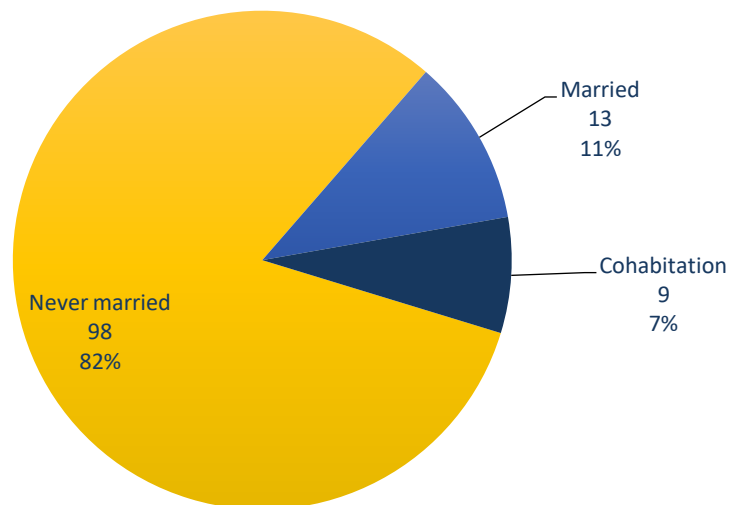


Figure 4.2 shows that 98 (82%) respondents are not married, 13 (11%) of them are reported to be married and 9 (7%) are cohabitating. None of them are divorced, separated, and widowed.

Figure 4.3: Educational status

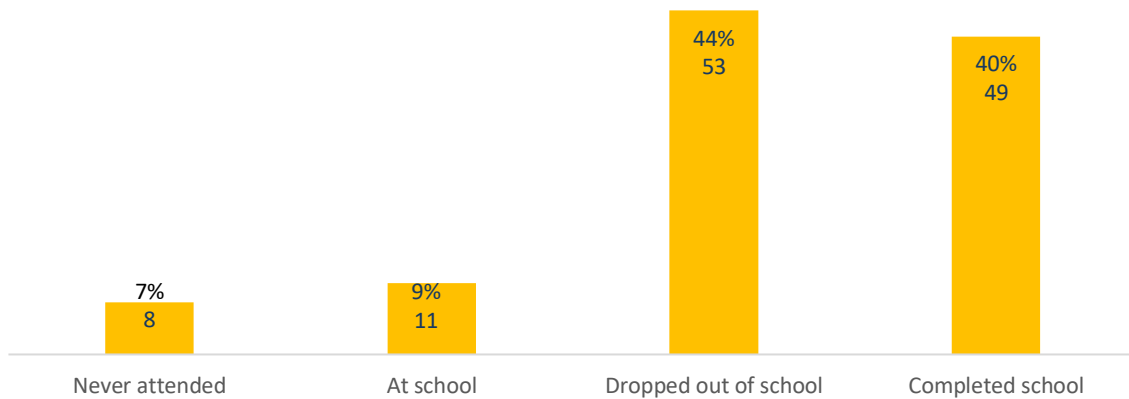
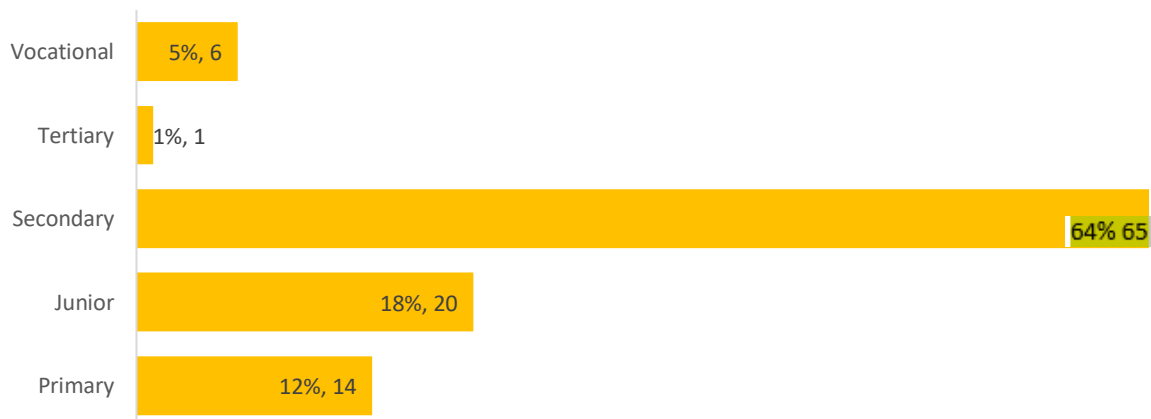


Figure 4.3 above indicates that 8 (7%) street vendors never attended school, 11 (9%) are still at school, while 53 (44%) of the vendors dropped out of school. There are 49 (40%) street vendors who completed school in Eenhana town who participated in the study.

Figure 4.4: Educational level



Street vendors in many urban areas across Africa typically have low levels of formal education and turn to informal sector work because they lack the qualifications and experience needed to enter the formal job market (Nickanor et al., 2021). In Figure 4.4, it is indicated that 14 (12%) of the respondents completed primary school, 18 (20%) attended school until junior grades, and 65 (64%) have secondary education. It is also indicated that 6 (5%) and 1 (1%) have vocational and tertiary educational, respectively. Research conducted in Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, South Africa, Uganda, and Zimbabwe, it was observed that the prevalent educational attainment among street vendors was limited to primary or secondary education at most (Nani,

2016). In comparison to this study, most street vendors had a secondary education. Street vendors of a younger age demonstrated comparatively higher educational attainment in contrast to their older counterparts.

Figure 4.5: Number of vendors' household members



Figure 4.5 illustrates the number of household member of vendors. 36 (30%) vendors have less than three household members, 47 (39%) vendors have three to five household members, and 22 (18%) vendors have 6 to 8 household members. Only 7 (6%) vendors reported that they have 9 to 11 household members, and 8 (7%) vendors have 12 or more household members. These findings support the findings of Chille (2020), who discovered that differences in income in small businesses have an impact on family size, social structure, and income earned.

4.4 Business and economic activities

Table 4.4: Average earning per month (in Namibian Dollar)

Measure		Pre COVID-19	During COVID-19	Post COVID-19
Mean		\$2,766.95	\$178.60	\$953.35
95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	\$2,209.93	\$81.25	\$721.44
	Upper bound	\$3,323.97	\$275.96	\$1,185.26
Median		\$2,000.00	\$0.00	\$500.00
Std. Deviation		\$3,055.241	\$533.989	\$1,272.041
Minimum		\$100	\$0	\$20
Maximum		\$20,000	\$5,000	\$8,000
Range		\$19,900	\$5,000	\$7,980

Table 4.4 shows a noteworthy reduction in the income of the respondents, both during and after the COVID-19 lockdown, which has had an impact on households and individuals in Namibia. It is indicated in Table 4.4 above that the average earning per month before COVID-19 was N\$2766.95 while during COVID-19 the average income was N\$178.60 and after the COVID-19 lockdown the average income was N\$953.35. The minimum earning before COVID-19 was N\$100.00 and during COVID-19 was N\$0.00 while after lockdown was N\$20.00. Maximum earnings before COVID-19 lockdown was N\$20000.00, during COVID-19 lockdown was N\$5000.00 and after COVID-19 lockdown was N\$8000.00. The pandemic conditions and restrictive measures that came with it hindered access to these commodities and services, including staple foods such as *kapana* and *oshifima* (a traditional porridge made from mahangu). These are essential components of the Namibian diet and disruptions in their availability had significant repercussions for households relying on them for sustenance. Just as in this finding, research carried out in Bangladesh by Swarna et al. (2022) revealed that, during the COVID-19 lockdown, approximately 98% of informal workers encountered reductions in their income. On average, these losses amounted to BDT 6,829, which is equivalent to around US\$ 80 or N\$1,384.99, based on a sample of 1,867 workers. Respondents were unable to engage in trade during the initial phase of the complete lockdown because of constraints on mobility. In Namibia, the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown was implemented in stages, including Stage 1 Full Lockdown (March 28 – May 04, 2020), Stage 2 Strict Precautions

(May 05 – June 01, 2020), Stage 3 Moderate Precaution (June 02 - June 29, 2020), Stage 4 Relaxed Precaution (June 30 – September 17, 2020), and Stage 5, the New Normal (September 18 – December 30, 2020) (Office of the President Namibia, 2020). It was reported that even after the lockdown restrictions were eased, they continued to face challenges in operating their businesses.

Table 4.5: Type of products sold

	Frequency	Percent
Vending on clothing (Second-hand clothes/ brand new)	46	28.9%
Vegetable & fruits vending	42	26.4%
Dried food (<i>Mahangu</i> and sorghum seeds, dried fish, spinach and meat, chill etc.)	31	19.5%
Vending on home cooked food	20	12.6%
<i>Oshikundu</i>	14	8.8%
Fresh meat	4	2.5%
<i>Kapana</i>	2	1.3%
Total	159	100

Table 4.5 shows the variety of products sold by the respondent, shedding light on the diverse nature of street vending activities. Forty-six (28.9%) vendors sell clothes, which includes both second-hand and brand-new clothes. This indicates a considerable presence of clothing vendors within the street vending sector. Forty-two (26.9%) vendors, representing a substantial portion, focus on selling vegetables and fruits, highlighting the importance of fresh produce in street vending businesses. Furthermore, 31 (19.5%) vendors are involved in selling dried food items such as *mahangu* and sorghum seeds, dried fish, spinach, and meat, chilli among others. This reflects the inclusion of staple food products in the street vending market, catering to the dietary needs of the local population. Additionally, a notable proportion of vendors, 20 (12.6%), specialise in selling home-cooked food, suggesting the availability of prepared meals for customers. On a smaller scale, the data indicates that 14 (8.8%) vendors sell *oshikundu*, a traditional Namibian beverage, showcasing the diversity of products offered. Moreover, 2 (1.3%) sell *kapana*, a popular grilled meat dish, and beauty products which adds further variety to the street vending landscape. There are two vendors who indicated that they sell salt, two

vendors indicated that they sell beauty products and one vendor stated that she sells dairy products. Overall, Table 4.5 offers a nuanced understanding of the range of products sold by street vendors, thus highlighting the importance of these vendors in providing diverse goods to consumers in the local market.

Table 4.6: Location of business

Locations	Frequency	Percent
MTC, park, FNB complex, Nangy kitchen and Oshinanena	34	28.1%
Alongside SWAPO office	30	24.8%
Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform to Onawa service station	27	22.3%
Informal traders at Eenhana district hospital	15	12.4%
Under the tree near Monte Carlo bar	12	9.9%
OK grocery	1	0.8%
NORED	1	0.8%
Opposite old Eenhana Hospital	1	0.8%
Total	121	100.0%

Table 4.6 displays that 34 (28.1%) respondents are operating their business at MTC, park, FNB complex, Nangy kitchen and Oshinanena. There are 30 (24.8%) street vendors operating alongside SWAPO office, 27 (22.3%) are operating at the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform to Onawa service station, 1 (0.8%) operates at OK grocery, NORED and opposite old Eenhana Hospital.

Table 4.7: Effects of COVID-19 pandemic lockdown on business

Effects	Frequency	Percent
Loss of income	99	82.5%
Increase in debt	17	14.2%
Increase in income	2	1.7%
Scarcity of stock	2	1.7%
Total	120	100.0%
<i>Missing (participants not responded)</i>	<i>1</i>	

Table 4.7 depicts the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic-induced lockdown on business. Approximately 99 (82.5%) street vendors experienced income loss, 17 (14.2%) had their debt increased, while 2 (1.7%) experience income increase, and 2 (1.7%) had stock scarcity during

the COVID-19 lockdown. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound and extensive effect on labour markets, particularly affecting informal workers in developing economies. The consequences have been severe due to the existing underdevelopment in various aspects that amplify the economic shock on livelihoods during the pandemic. These include prevalent poverty, limited access to financial systems, and a lack of formal education (Aguirre & Hannan, 2021). These susceptibilities, marked by reduced income and increasing debts, have the capacity to push individuals into severe poverty, with this consequence being especially prevalent among women, given that they make up the majority of street vendors.

4.5 Socio-economic status and COVID-19 pandemic

Table 4.8: Contributions/benefits of street vending business to household livelihood in time of COVID-19 pandemic

Contribution/benefits	Frequency	Percent
To buy food, feed my family	41	37%
Municipal utilities (water and electricity)	35	31%
Make profit	21	19%
No benefit	11	10%
Invest in transport	3	3%
Invest in school	1	1%
Total	112	100%
<i>Missing (participants not responded)</i>	9	

In Table 4.8, 41 (37%) respondents said street vending contributed to buying food/feeding their family, and 35 (31%) street vendors stated that they allocated a portion of their income towards municipal utilities. These utilities are essential for ensuring access to clean water and reliable electricity to meet their daily requirements. Twenty one (19%) respondents indicated that street vending provides profit as a benefit to the household, whereas 11 (10%) respondents obtained no benefit, 3 (3%) have invested in transportation, and only 1 (1%) invested in education.

Table 4.9: Social provision to street vendors' livelihood

Social provision	Frequency	Percent
No government intervention	73	63.5%
The government gave us NAD 750.00	38	33%
Received drought food	4	3.5%
Total	115	100%
<i>Missing (participants not responded)</i>	6	

Table 4.9 shows the extent to which the government's contributions to the livelihoods of street vendors through the provision of social support during the COVID-19 pandemic. Seventy-three (63.5%) respondents received nothing from the government, 38 (33.0%) respondents received N\$ 750.00, once off from the government. Four (3.5%) respondents received drought food. Namibia implemented an economic stimulus and relief initiative designed to alleviate the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic. The newly appointed Finance Minister, Honorable

Iipumbu Shiimi, unveiled this initiative on April 1, 2020, to alleviate the pandemic's impact in Namibia (Ministry of Finance, 2020). The primary stage of the Economic Stimulus and Relief Package was explicitly formulated to counteract the negative consequences of the initial 21-day lockdown, which concluded on April 20, 2020. This relief package included a range of measures, including salary subsidies and government-supported loans, which were accessible to businesses operating in sectors directly affected by the lockdown, whether they were formal or informal. Furthermore, one-time income grants were distributed to individuals who lost their jobs due to the pandemic and its consequences (Ministry of Finance, 2020). However, the findings from this study indicate that most of the respondents did not receive any aid from the government, despite the existence of these programmes. It seems that the respondents did not benefit from these initiatives, which could be attributed to their perception that the government's requirements for financial aid were overly complex.

Table 4.10: Managing business during the COVID-19 lockdown

	Frequency	Percent
It was very difficult to cope with business during COVID-19, there was no customers	92	82.1%
We had to adjust to accommodate the COVID-19 regulations	15	13.4%
Products went to waste and made a loss	5	4.5%
Total	112	100.0%
<i>Missing (participants not responded)</i>	9	

Table 4.10 displays how the respondents coped with business during the COVID-19 lockdown. Ninety-two (82.1%) respondents said that it was difficult to manage business during COVID-19 due to the lack of customers. Fifteen (13.4%) respondents also noted that they had to adjust to accommodate the COVID-19 regulations and only 5 (4.5%) respondents indicated that their products went to waste and made loss. Customers refrained from visiting crowded markets due to preventive measures like quarantines and stay-at-home orders, thus leading to reduced demand for street vendors' goods and losses from unsold stock. Job and income insecurity in this sector is expected to result in substantial losses (Julius et al., 2020). The businesses that were part of this study experienced a range of consequences as a result of the COVID-19

pandemic. The government's implementation of a series of lockdowns to curb the virus's spread posed a significant challenge for these businesses, particularly during the initial lockdown. Subsequent lockdowns also gave rise to additional challenges for street vendors. This situation could have dire consequences for poverty in disadvantaged communities, where the informal sector frequently represents a precarious means of sustaining livelihoods.

Table 4.11: Coping with family during the COVID-19 lockdown

	Frequency	Percent
It was very difficult to cope	94	83.9%
We got assistance from the village	8	7.1%
We had to adjust to COVID-19 regulations	7	6.3%
We lived on our savings	2	1.8%
It created an opportunity to spend time with family	1	0.9%
Total	112	100.0%
<i>Missing (participants not responded)</i>	9	

Table 4.11 above illustrates how vendors coped with their families during the COVID-19 lockdown. It indicates that 94 (83.9%) respondents said that it was very difficult to cope, 8 (7.1%) street vendors narrated that they received assistance from their villages and another 7 (6.3) respondents stated that they adjusted to COVID-19 regulations. Only 2 (1.8%) respondents narrated that they lived on savings and 1 (0.9%) indicated that COVID-19 lockdown created an opportunity to spend time with family. COVID-19 pushed many households into vulnerability, and they struggled to afford basic food (Namibia Red Cross Society, 2021). During the national lockdown, many households lost their sources of income, hence, they adopted several mechanisms to deal with the crisis. For instance, some got assistance from the village, such as food, some lives on their savings and others sold valuable household assets.

Table 4.12: Impact of business on the well-being of the family

Impact of business	Frequency	Percent
EDUCATION: The business pays school and books	62	40.8%
HOUSING: My business pays the house bill and buy food	53	34.9%
INCOME: There was no profit, I used up my savings	37	24.3%
HEALTH: Social well-being and self-esteem	0	0.0%
Total	152	100.0%

Table 4.12 displays that 62 (40.8%) street vendors said profit from their business is used to pay for school fees and books. On housing, 53 (34.9%) respondents indicated that their business profit is used to pay the house bill and buy food. Thirty seven (24.3%) respondents stated that their businesses did not make a profit and that they used up their savings.

Table 4.13: Business long-term plans

Long-term plans	Frequency	Percent
To expand my business and open a new branch	103	92.00%
To register my business and expand	9	8%
Total	112	100%
<i>Missing (participants not responded)</i>	9	

Table 4.13 shows the street vendors' long-term plans for their businesses. There are 103 (92.0%) of the respondents with plans to expand their business and open a new branch within Eenhana Town Council and/or other towns, 9 (8%) respondents plan to register the business and expand. Street vendors want their business to grow, but profit is required for the business to grow.

Table 4.14: Business income sustainability

Income sustainability	Frequency	Percent
Not sustainable because there is no major profit	61	60.40%
Sustainable in terms of savings	36	35.60%
It depends on the customers	1	1.00%
Sustainable depend on the profit	1	1.00%
Through saving within organization	1	1.00%
I don't know	1	1.00%
Total	101	100.00%
<i>Missing (participants not responded)</i>	20	

Table 4.14 indicates that there are 61 (60.4%) respondents who have stated that their businesses are not sustainable because there was no major profit, 36 (35.6%) respondents indicated that

the business is sustainable in terms of saving. One (1.0%) respondent said business sustainability depends on customers, 1 (1.0%) respondent said it depend on profits and 1 (1.0%) said saving is important. One (1.0%) respondent did not know how their business income can be sustained. The informal sector is critical in providing unemployed people with income opportunities. In this troubled Namibian economy, the sector has the potential to create more job opportunities; however, sustainability concerns exist during and post covid-19 lockdown (Julius et al., 2020).

Table 4.15: Monthly business profit (in Namibian Dollar)

		Statistic
Mean		\$856.85
95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	\$649.60
	Upper Bound	\$1,064.09
Median		\$500.00
Std. Deviation		\$1,101.772
Minimum		\$0
Maximum		\$8,000
Range		\$8,000

Table 4.15 shows the average monthly business profit of N\$ 856.85. The minimum earning of street vendors is N\$0.00 and the maximum earning is N\$ 8000.00.

Table 4.16: Overall effect of COVID-19 on income

	Frequency	Percent
Adverse	111	97.4%
Moderate	3	2.6%
Total	114	100%
<i>Missing (participants not responded)</i>	7	

Table 4.16 indicates that most street vendors in Eenhana town described the overall effect of COVID-19 on income as adverse. One hundred and eleven (97.4%) respondents stated that COVID-19 effects on income is adverse while 3 (2.6%) respondents indicated that the effect is moderate. The global effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have been profound, leading to a substantial loss of human lives and creating unprecedented challenges for public health, the food industry, and the informal labour sector, all of which have borne negative effects. The

pandemic has brought about severe economic and social repercussions, pushing tens of millions of individuals into extreme poverty and causing a rise in the number of undernourished individuals (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020).

Table 4.17: Alleviation of COVID-19 effects on business and income

	Frequency	Percent
Government intervention in terms of financial support, employment creation and training	55	48.2
Practice prevention measures	37	32.5
I don't know	11	9.6
Pray to God	4	3.5
Create more business hotspot with demand	4	3.5
Educate community about COVID-19	2	1.8
Vaccination	1	0.9
Total	114	100.0
<i>Missing (participants not responded)</i>	7	

Table 4.17 shows how the effects of COVID-19 on business and income could be alleviated. Fifty-five (48.2%) Street vendors indicated that the impact of COVID-19 on their business and income could be alleviated through government intervention with financial support, employment creation and training, while 37 (32.5%) said by practicing prevention measures. Four (3.5%) respondents indicated that the effect of COVID-19 can be alleviated by creating more business hotspots with demand and 2 (1.8%) said that by educating the community about COVID-19. Eleven (9.6%) vendors had no opinion on how the effects of COVID-19 can be alleviated, 4 (3.5%) respondents prayed to God, while 1 (0.9%) suggested vaccination to alleviate the effects of COVID-19.

Table 4.18: COVID-19 pandemic effects on business crosstabulation with business payment of bills and food

		Business payment of family bills and food					
		Yes		No		Total	Total Percent
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent		
COVID-19 pandemic lockdown effect on business	Loss of income	43	43.4%	56	56.6%	99	100
	Increase in income	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	2	100
	Increase in debt	7	41.2%	10	58.8%	17	100
	Scarcity of stock	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	2	100
	Total	52	43.3%	68	56.7%	120	100

Percentages and totals are based on respondents

Table 4.18 illustrates the reduction in earning caused by COVID-19 is associated with 43 (43.4%) of the respondents whose business pays bills and food for their family and 56 (56.6%) respondents said that their businesses do not pay their bills and food. An increase in income is associated with 1 (50.0%) respondent whose business pays bills and food and 1 (50.0%) whose business does not pay bills. An increase in debt affects businesses due to COVID-19 is associated with 7 (41.2%) respondents whose business pays the bills and food and with 10 (58.2%) respondents whose business do not pay the bills and food for their family. The scarcity of stock is associated with 1 (50.0%) respondent whose business pays the bills and food and 1 (50.0%) respondent whose business does not pay the bills.

Table 4.19: COVID-19 pandemic effects on business crosstabulation with business taking care of school needs

		Business takes care of the school needs					
		Yes		No		Total	Total Percent
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent		
COVID-19 pandemic lockdown effect on business	Loss of income	53	53.5%	46	46.5%	99	100
	Increase in income	0	0.0%	2	100.0%	2	100
	Increase in debt	8	47.1%	9	52.9%	17	100
	Scarcity of stock	1	50.0%	1	50.0%	2	100
	Total	62	51.7%	58	48.3%	120	100

Percentages and totals are based on respondents

Table 4.19 depicts the reduction in earnings (loss of income) caused by the lockdown measures implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic linked with 53 (53.5%) respondents whose businesses take care of the school needs and 46 (46.5%) respondents whose business does not take care of the school needs. Increases in income are associated with 0 (0.0%)

respondents whose business takes care of the school needs and 2 (100.0%) respondents whose business do not take care of school needs. Increases in debt affect businesses due to COVID-19 as associated with 8 (47.1%) respondents whose business take care of the school needs, and with 9 (52.9%) respondents whose businesses do not take care of the school needs. Lastly, scarcity of stock is associated with 1 (50.0%) respondent whose business takes care of the school needs and 1 (50.0%) respondent whose business does not take school needs.

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

5.1 Introduction

The dependent variables for this study used in this analysis are food and feeding and paying of education, while the independent variables are livelihood factors that affect the family's livelihood such as loss of income, increase in debts, and using up savings.

5.2 Findings and discussions

The economic and social disruption resulting from the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic had profound implications for individuals of various backgrounds. Livelihoods were significantly disrupted by the pandemic, with the extent of its impact being contingent on various factors, including geographical location (urban or rural), gender, educational attainment, occupation, and the age of informal sector workers in Eenhana Town Council. It was especially harsh on those working in the informal sector as lockdown measures closed-up public spaces used by vendors. Street vendors, whose livelihoods rely on their presence in public places, have been hit particularly hard. Trading was prohibited by the government, but vendors had to make significant changes to their work and improve their livelihood. Many street vendors experienced significant customer loss.

In this study, female respondents outnumbered their male counterparts, as street vendors as indicated in Table 4.2, with 90.1% of businesses being run by women who care for their families. This study finding can be related to Hamukoto's (2016) observation that women predominate in the informal sector; of the 70 participants, 46 (65%) were female and 24 (34%) were male in Windhoek, Namibia. This meant that any impact on the business was transferred directly to the family, and family survival was undermined. Female vendors perceive vending

as a substantial and long-term source of employment, similar to domestic services, while male vendors regard their present occupation as a temporary disruption in their overall work trajectories.

5.2.1 The socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the livelihood of street vendors

Street vending's principal contribution to household income during the COVID-19 pandemic primarily centred on securing food for the sustenance of the family. This observation aligns with the findings of the ILO (2020), which revealed that workers who ceased working and stayed at home during the COVID-19 lockdown were at risk of losing their jobs and, consequently, their livelihoods. For many individuals in the informal economy across the continent, they faced a grim choice between "succumbing to hunger" or "the virus." This research revealed that the local government, administered by the town council, did not implement social programmes to aid the informal economy during the COVID-19 pandemic. Only a small segment of the population received a one-time social assistance payment of N\$750.00 from the government. Additionally, the study highlighted a noticeable decrease in the average monthly income of street vendors, dropping from N\$2,766.95 before the COVID-19 lockdown to N\$178.60 during the lockdown phase, primarily attributable to business closures. The average monthly money income increased to N\$953.35 after COVID-19 lockdown (Table 4.4). Keulder and Stoman (2020) indicated that many small businesses such as street vending closed temporarily during the pandemic due to the lockdown measures to survive the pandemic and these actions had significant impacts on households who depend on street vending business, as they could no longer generate the needed income to support their livelihood.

Income loss due to COVID-19 is associated with 53.5% of respondents whose businesses provide for school needs and 46.5% of respondents whose businesses do not provide for school needs (table 4.19). These findings substantially corroborate the conclusions drawn by the ILO (2020), thus emphasising that the informal sector, particularly its predominant sectors and subsectors, encountered notable challenges pertaining to income loss during the COVID-19 lockdown. The repercussions of COVID-19 were most intensely experienced by individuals employed in the informal sector. In Eenhana town, street vending stands as a prevalent economic pursuit, playing a significant role by contributing 37% towards the provision of food and sustenance, as well as 19% to overall profit and income (Table 4.8), thereby contributing to the livelihoods of the local households. Street vending tends to provide employment opportunities, especially for low-income households where formal employment is limited. Street vendors can earn profits from their sales, which can help to supplement household income and contribute to household livelihoods.

All countries, regardless of financial level, considerably increased social protection programmes in reaction to the crisis. As of May 2021, a collective sum of 3,333 social protection measures aimed at mitigating the consequences of COVID-19 had been devised or put into effect across 222 different countries or territories. This data was compiled through a joint initiative involving the World Bank and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). It is important to recognise that the specific interventions implemented to address the pandemic's impacts have varied across countries with different economic statuses, and in many cases, existing national initiatives were adapted or expanded to mitigate the pandemic's effects (ILO, 2022). The study findings indicated that the government offers a single assistance payment of N\$750.00 to 33% of the respondents. A majority of 63.5% of the respondents did not receive any form of government support, while a mere 3.5% received drought food support (Table 4.9). This study shows the fragmentation in

the social policy (social provisioning) regime prevailing in Namibia, where a significant proportion of the population are left out of the social policy architecture (Omomowo & Namupala, 2021).

Their predicament was further aggravated by the unexplained surge in essential commodity prices during the lockdown period when they were devoid of any source of income. This resulted in the escalation of food insecurity and hunger among the community of informal traders (Dzawanda et al., 2022). A study undertaken by the ILO (2020) estimates that the reduction in income from labour contributes to an increase in relative poverty levels for informal workers and their families, and this increase is projected to be over 21% in upper-middle-income countries, which includes Namibia. About 52% in high-income countries, and 56% in low-income nations. The study respondents portrayed their overall experience with COVID-19 as overwhelmingly negative, with 97.4% perceiving it as adverse, while only 2.6% considered it moderate, as indicated in Table 4.16. According to UNDP (2021), the COVID-19 pandemic has unleashed catastrophic repercussions, infecting millions of individuals worldwide and resulting in numerous fatalities. It also left tens of millions jobless and stripped them of their means of subsistence. This crisis forced businesses to shut down, thus leaving employees in a lurch. About 48% of the respondents expressed the view that government's financial support, job opportunities, and training might help mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on their businesses and earnings (Table 4.17).

Street vendors have long-term business plans that include expanding their business and opening a new branch, as well as expanding to other locations within Eenhana town. Because there is no profit, street vendors stated that their businesses are not sustainable.

5.2.2 The importance of street vending businesses at generating income for the poor during COVID-19 pandemic

Street vending is a vital component of the informal sector, particularly in economically disadvantaged nations, and it plays a pivotal role in income generation for impoverished individuals. The research revealed that women engage in street vending within this sector because of a limited number of formal opportunities in the labour market. These findings are consistent with Onwe's (2013) argument that the informal sector typically features low entry prerequisites which may include professional qualifications obtained through non-formal education, small-scale business operations, and labour-intensive production methods, occasionally incorporating adapted technologies. Additionally, it is observed that increased years of education, particularly of higher quality, lead to greater income levels and, subsequently, improved living standards for families.

Previous studies have demonstrated that street vendors must work nearly every day in order to pay for their essential costs, which include transportation, housing, and food (Martinez & Young, 2022). People primarily work in informal businesses to make money to support their families. They usually fund the businesses with personal savings and help from acquaintances and relatives. As indicated in Figure 4.5, about 39% of Eenhana vendors who participated in the study had three to five household members, 30% had less than three household members, while 18% had six to eight household members, and 6% had nine to eleven household members. Seven percent of the respondents had 12 or more household members. The most popular products sold were clothing (second-hand/new) and dried food (*mahangu* and sorghum seeds, dried fish, spinach and meat, chill etc.). These products are a reflection of a variety of factors including cultural traditions, economic realities, sustainability considerations, and the usefulness of these things in addressing local community needs.

The income derived from the sales by street vendors serves as a crucial means of supporting their families and sustaining their livelihoods, particularly during challenging periods such as a pandemic. As shown in Table 4.18, approximately 43% of the respondents indicated that their business managed to cover their costs and provide access to food for their households during the COVID-19 pandemic. The remaining 57% of the respondents stated that their businesses did not cover their bills or provide food for their families. Nyabeze and Chikoko (2021) argue that households involved in informal sector activities faced challenges in affording their daily food needs and managing their expenses, which resulted in a decrease in consumption as a means to adapt to income shortages. Consequently, each day that street vendors are unable to operate represents a day where they lack the resources required to fulfil their livelihood needs. In this regard, the COVID-19 pandemic acted as a significant obstacle, elevating the risk that a considerable number of them might transition into extreme poverty as a result.

5.2.3 The contribution of street vending to the socioeconomic lives of Eenhana Town

The pandemic forced street vendors to temporarily shut down their businesses, which resulted in further financial hardships. Street vendors stated that it was difficult to conduct business during COVID-19 due to the lack of customers, and they had to adjust to accommodate the COVID-19 lockdown regulation. Similarly, Julius et al. (2020) enlighten that the constant loss of income due to lockdown measures has a substantial effect on the informal sector. Table 4.10 and Table 4.11 depict the respondents' livelihood challenges during COVID-19. Approximately 82.1% of the respondents said that it was difficult to get customers due to lockdown, which makes some of their goods go to waste when they could not be sold, thus causing loss of income. Thirteen percent of the street vendors adjusted to accommodate COVID-19 regulations, whereas 83.9% of the respondents attest that it was difficult to meet

family needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, 37% of the street vendors were very clear that the street vending business contributes to their family livelihood, especially generating money income to cover essential expenses such as food to feed their families, water bills, and electricity bills (Table 4.8). About 7.1% of the respondents reported that they obtained assistance from their extended family (Table 4.11). It appears that the income reductions stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic have led to an increase in indebtedness among street vendors. About 14% of the vendors indicated increases in their debt during the pandemic (Table 4.7), and 24% of street vendors' businesses lost profit and ended using up their savings.

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, street vendors had a significant impact on the socioeconomic conditions of many of the individuals in Eenhana town. Given the extensive employment reductions and business shutdowns caused by the pandemic, street vending emerged as a significant source of income for many. In order to keep their business operating in those challenging times, street vendors were able to adapt and develop new methods of selling their goods. To protect themselves and their clients, they put in place safety precautions including social distance. Food and other necessities sold by street vendors have been critical during the pandemic outbreak. Due to the locals' lack of access to shops and supermarkets, street vendors were able to supply them with the necessities for survival.

5.3 Pressure and Release model of the impacts of COVID-19 on the livelihood of street vendors in Eenhana

To establish a structure for quantitative investigation, this research utilised the Pressure and Release (PAR) model (see Figure 3.1), which scrutinises the development of vulnerability. Vulnerability is determined by a combination of underlying causes, ongoing pressures, and

hazardous conditions, expressed as $\text{Vulnerability} = \text{Root Causes} \times \text{Dynamic Pressures} \times \text{Unsafe Conditions}$.

Difficulties in obtaining essential services like education and stable employment opportunities, marginalised populations such as informal sector workers encountered hardships associated with poverty and precarious living conditions that were exacerbated by income reduction amid the COVID-19 pandemic. In this study, vulnerability is primarily characterised as the combination of poverty and joblessness, and the findings indicate that street vendors were disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Poverty is both a cause and a result of disaster risk (particularly in the Eenhana town) because the study underscores the vital role that street vendors play in supporting household livelihoods, especially in terms of providing essential needs like food. The income derived from street vending serves as a critical means of survival for many families, particularly during challenging times like the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, this combination frequently leads to heightened susceptibility to the impacts of various hazards.

Root causes pinpoint the fundamental elements that give rise to the susceptibility of street vendors to the repercussions of COVID-19. This study shows the negative socio-economic implication of government policy of restricting movements during COVID-19 pandemic on the business of street vendors. This uncovers pre-existing socio-economic inequalities, lack of social protection and inadequate legal frameworks. For example, street vendors often operate in the informal economy without formal contracts or social security benefits, thus making them susceptible to economic shocks. Dynamic pressures entail an assessment of the direct effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on street vendors. This involves assessing the direct impacts on their livelihoods, such as lockdowns and mobility restriction decreased consumer demand, and caused disruptions in supply chains as well as closure of public spaces. These dynamic pressures lead to loss of income, inability to operate or access vending spaces, and customers,

depleting of savings, increases in debt and challenges in meeting the daily needs of street vendors in Eenhana town. Mitigation mechanisms and coping strategies are the diverse steps, policies, or activities implemented prior to or during challenging situations like COVID-19, which are designed to forestall, minimize, or eradicate risks to individuals or assets, and to diminish the real or potential outcomes, severity, vulnerability, damage, hardship, or distress linked to such events.

Unsafe condition: Examine the intermediate and long-term consequences faced by street vendors due to the COVID-19 crisis.

Disasters and emergency response: This aligns with existing literature by indicating the adverse effects of lockdown measures on the informal sector's economic activities. Here is a summary of vendors' encounters during the COVID-19 pandemic: Economic implications: Street vendors and small businesses, in particular, experienced a significant downturn in their business operations due to the substantial adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Reduced consumer spending, movement limitations, and lockdowns all contributed to a drop in vendor sales and earnings. Businesses being closed: Due to lockdowns and other social isolation tactics, several vendors were compelled to temporarily or, in some cases, permanently stop work. Income loss: The pandemic caused vendors to lose income, which had an impact on their livelihood and their capacity to provide for their families. This loss of income might be brought on by the decreased pedestrian clientele, declining demand for non-essential goods, or business closure. Government support and interventions: To assist vendors hit by the pandemic, different governments in various regions have put in place financial aid programmes and relief measures.

Overall, the study's results contribute to a deeper understanding of how the Pressure and Release Model can be used in social analysis, to show the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on

the livelihood of street vendors. The effects of the pandemic on the vulnerable population such as street vendors were exposed, with the interconnectedness of vulnerabilities, risks, and capacities.

CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the study's outcomes and the conclusions of research objectives. Furthermore, it offers suggestions that can be valuable to prospective researchers and policymakers in the context of COVID-19's impact on informal workers. Given the WHO's formal declaration of the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, the knowledge gleaned from this study can be advantageous for enhancing readiness in the event of future pandemic crises or other situations requiring restrictions on economic activities.

6.2 Summary

It came to light during the course of the study that people in Eenhana town were involved in informal activities such as vending of clothing (including both new and second-hand clothes which they buy from Angola), vegetables and fruits (e.g., onions, tomatoes, cabbage and etc.), dried food (*mahangu* and sorghum seeds, dried fish, spinach and meat, chill etc.), and home cooked food and drinks (*oshikundu*, fresh meat and *kapana*). The informal sector allowed individuals to generate income and earn wages, thus making a case for the informal economy being a significant means of livelihood for the majority of Eenhana town's impoverished residents. The majority of Eenhana town vendors acquired low educational qualification (primary or secondary) and thus their inability to participate in formal economic activities. Nevertheless, prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent lockdown measures, these individuals could support themselves and their families by means of their street vending businesses. The study had the following core objectives: firstly, to scrutinise the socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on street vendors in Eenhana town, Ohangwena region; secondly, to delve into the role of street vendors in income generation for

individuals experiencing poverty; and lastly, to investigate the influence of street vendors on the socioeconomic livelihood of residents amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

In relation to the first objective, the key finding was that the informal sector experienced a significant and adverse impact due to the COVID-19 pandemic, thereby pushing many informal businesses to the brink of collapse and leaving workers stranded due to movement restrictions. This regrettable situation led to street vendors experiencing both income reductions and job losses. These vendors play a crucial role in supporting their households' livelihood through their businesses. Furthermore, the COVID-19 lockdown resulted in vendors not having customers for their goods and this negatively impacted them and their family's education, household, and income. The average monthly money income for street vendors decreased from N\$2766.95 before the pandemic to N\$178.60 during the lockdown. Many small businesses, such as street vending, closed temporarily during the pandemic, thus affecting households relying on these businesses. The study findings showed that the street vendors who contribute (on average) about 37% to both food and feeding were negatively affected by the lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic to all informal sector contributions or the whole of Eenhana town.

Considering the second objective, it was determined that most respondents viewed the influence of COVID-19 on their earnings in a negative light, with their profits and income suffering adverse effects due to the lockdown that was imposed by the pandemic. This impact was especially notable as it pertained to how street vendors play a vital role in income generation for economically disadvantaged individuals, especially in low-income nations. Street vendors frequently participate in the informal sector because formal sector opportunities are limited. The informal economy is typified by minimal entry prerequisites, small-scale operations, and labour-intensive production techniques. Street vendors fund their businesses with personal savings and some help from acquaintances and relatives. The most popular

products sold are clothing and dried food. Income generated from the sales of street vendors serves as a means to support families and maintain their livelihoods. However, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, just 43% of the respondents reported that their enterprises managed to generate adequate income to cover their bills and to ensure that their families' food requirements were met.

Finally, looking at the last objective, this study revealed that a significant proportion of vending businesses primarily contribute to supporting households by purchasing food to sustain their families, and thus covering household expenditures like water and electricity payments, paying for education-related costs including school fees and stationery, and ensuring that there are financial resources that are available for healthcare services. However, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated street vendors to temporarily cease their operations, thus leading to financial challenges for them. The lack of customers and lockdown regulations made it difficult for vendors to conduct business and this resulted in a loss of income. A total of 83.9% of respondents reported difficulties meeting family needs, with 37% of street vendors stating that their business contributes to their livelihood. Moreover, the loss of income led to increased debt among street vendors, with 14% experiencing increased debt and 24% losing profit. Street vendors have had a significant impact on the socioeconomic lives of Eenhana town residents by providing essential food and necessities during the COVID-19 outbreak. They have implemented safety precautions and have provided essential goods to locals who lack access to shops and supermarkets.

Overall, the street vendors reported that the business income was not viable during the lockdown that was imposed in reaction to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, primarily because of a decrease in profit margins. In most cases, the profit margin was reduced to 0% or to the negative (i.e., they were making loss). Some informal businesses survived on the savings which they had before the lockdown. The respondents provided suggestions to mitigate the

aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown on street vendors. They suggested that government involvement, like providing financial assistance akin to start-up funding, might act as a means to revitalise and rejuvenate these businesses.

6.3 Conclusion

This study has offered an understanding of the complex dynamics between street vendors and the informal economy in Eenhana town, Ohangwena region, and how the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent lockdown measures significantly impacted this dynamic.

The results highlight the crucial function carried out by street vendors as a substantial source of income and livelihood for most of the economically disadvantaged individuals in Eenhana town. These individuals managed to support themselves and their families through street vending, even though they had limited formal education and limited employment prospects in the formal sector. They were a vital part of the neighbourhood economy prior to the pandemic, thereby making a major contribution to both overall revenue and food security. However, the COVID-19 outbreak presented this industry with serious difficulties. A significant number of street vendors were on the brink of financial distress as a result of the lockdown measures that were implemented to control the virus' transmission. Reduced incomes and employment losses spread, thereby negatively affecting not only the vendors but also their families, households, and general stability. The magnitude of the situation was made clear by the sharp decline in the monthly average revenue that occurred during the lockdown.

The study also emphasised the vulnerability of street vendors to economic upheavals, especially in economically disadvantaged nations where the informal sector plays a pivotal role in assisting underprivileged populations. The epidemic provided significant challenges despite the vendors' adaptability and resiliency, thus potentially driving some of them and their families into extreme poverty. The study also highlighted the several ways in which the street vending

business helps households, including not only food and dietary needs but also necessities like electricity bills, educational fees, and medical care. Due to the lockdown measures imposed due to the pandemic, these vital income streams were disrupted, thereby causing street vendors to accumulate more debt and experience financial hardships. The lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic had consequences for the food security of street vendors, and this led them to rely on their savings as a necessity.

Despite the difficulties, street vendors demonstrated impressive fortitude by taking safety precautions and carrying on with providing necessities to their communities. However, many of them suffered losses, thus greatly jeopardising the viability of their businesses. These results make it clear that the government's action is necessary to aid street vendors in recovering after a lockdown. In order to revive these businesses and support them in resuming their essential role in the economic and socioeconomic fabric of Eenhana town, respondents suggested providing financial support in the form of seed investment.

This research highlights the significance of street vendors in the informal sector and emphasises their susceptibility to external disruptions as exemplified by the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Given their significance as a lifeline for both vendors and their communities, it urges targeted actions to guarantee the resilience and sustainability of street vending operations.

6.4 Recommendations

The Namibian government, through its various structures dealing with the informal business sector, should conduct a thorough assessment of the situation, assist informal sector businesses in registering with relevant bodies, and expedite the support processes to avoid further devastation to struggling and collapsing businesses. Moreover, in accordance with the conceptual frameworks elucidated in this study, the ability of informal traders to alleviate the adverse economic and social impacts of the pandemic was constrained. Their vulnerability and their inability to effectively address these disruptions were exacerbated by the absence of structural assistance from local government institutions.

To tackle the matter concerning street vendors, the Namibian government should undertake the formal registration of informal enterprises and their workforce. This step would facilitate the tracking of employees and ensure that they can access the requisite government support. The private sector can also be invited to collaborate with the government in order to assist informal businesses in caring for their employees, even after paying taxes. This can be achieved by enhanced reputation: A company's reputation as a socially conscious and community-focused organisation can be enhanced by working with the government to help informal businesses. This favourable reputation may increase brand value and consumer loyalty.

Informal workers lack job stability, social safety, and access to formal employment benefits, which makes them more susceptible during times of crisis. Here are some recommendations to alleviate the impacts of COVID-19 on the livelihoods of informal sector workers:

- Debt relief and financial counselling: Provide debt relief initiatives and financial counselling services to street vendors facing heightened indebtedness as a result of the pandemic. These measures can mitigate financial strains and forestall additional economic challenges.

- **Government support and funding:** Campaign for enhanced governmental backing and financial allocation towards informal sector enterprises, including street vending, via schemes like initial capital provisions, subsidies, and business enhancement initiatives. Such efforts can invigorate economic resurgence and foster entrepreneurship within the informal economic sector.
- **Collaboration and partnership:** Encourage cooperation and alliances among governmental bodies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and community-based organisations (CBOs) to formulate comprehensive and enduring strategies for aiding street vendors and informal labourers.
- **Social safety nets:** Especially aimed at those who no longer have their main income source, evaluate the feasibility of implementing social safety nets for street vendors in vulnerable situations. These safety nets can help alleviate short-term financial hardships.
- **Data collection and research:** To facilitate the development of policies and actions based on reliable information, it is essential to consistently collect data and conduct research on the informal sector and street vending. This ongoing research can provide insights into evolving challenges and prospects. Governments and organisations should engage in comprehensive data collection and research to better understand the demands and issues encountered by informal sector workers.

It is important that all street vendors are encouraged to be in the formal open markets. Individuals engaged in informal labour do not possess the means to endure the impacts of the pandemic. Neglecting their support could result in an unparalleled labour market crisis and exacerbate poverty. Collaborative efforts involving financial technologies, workers' unions, business associations, networks, and local governmental bodies can extend assistance to informal workers and entities. Incentives and technical guidance, when provided adequately,

can enable the transition of informal businesses into formal entities future. The study emphasises the importance of governments carefully considering how to aid those engaged in informal sector employment, thus potentially transitioning them into more formal employment arrangements with increased security, protection, and contributions to taxes and social security.

These suggestions are formulated to address the immediate and long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the livelihoods of informal sector workers. By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders can contribute to improving the resilience, livelihoods, and well-being of street vendors and their families during national emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

6.5 Areas for further research

The study proposes conducting additional studies that engage diverse stakeholders to gain deeper insights into the far-reaching impacts of COVID-19 and the pandemic's implications, and to devise pragmatic and efficient remedies that can assist all those substantially impacted by the pandemic. Moreover, there is a need for further investigations into various segments of the economy to estimate the consequences of the pandemic on the Namibian economy. Such study holds significance not only for the government but also for the global community. Additionally, it is advisable to conduct more research in various urban and rural areas to understand the pandemic's influence on various parts of the country.

It is also essential to recognise the value of incorporating both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies in forthcoming studies. The current study investigation solely employed quantitative methods to establish the fundamental understanding of the phenomenon being examined. Nevertheless, the integration of qualitative methods would have been beneficial for obtaining more comprehensive insights into the circumstances. Utilising mixed

methods, which combine both qualitative and quantitative approaches, is advantageous as it allows these two methods to complement each other. This allows the shortcomings of one approach to be counterbalanced by the advantages of the alternative method. Additionally, there is a recommendation for further research that is aimed at scrutinising street vending through the lens of gender disparities. This approach would provide valuable insights into how poverty affects individuals differently based on their gender.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Ethical Clearance Reference Number: SHS 0012 Date: 03 December 2021

This Ethical Clearance Certificate is issued by the University of Namibia Decentralized Ethics Committee (DEC) in accordance with the University of Namibia's Research Ethics Policy and Guidelines. Ethical approval is given in respect of undertakings contained in the Research Project outlined below. This Certificate is issued on the recommendations of the ethical evaluation done by the School of Humanities, Society & Development Decentralized Ethics Committee.

Title of Project: The Impact of Covid-19 on the Livelihood of Informal Sector Workers: A Case Study of Street Vendors in Eenhana Town Council, Ohangwena Region, Namibia

Researcher: Oyetate E Hawanga
Student Number: 201101754
Supervisor(s): Dr. K.E. Omonowo

Centre for Research Services

Take note of the following:

1. Any significant changes in the conditions or undertakings outlined in the approved Proposal must be communicated to the ethics committee. An application to make amendments may be necessary.
2. Any breaches of ethical undertakings or practices that have an impact on ethical conduct of the research must be reported to the ethics committee
3. The Principal Researcher must report issues of ethical compliance to the ethics committee (through the Chairperson) at the end of the Project or as may be requested by the ethics committee
4. The ethics committee retains the right to:
 - i) Withdraw or amend this Ethical Clearance if any unethical practices (as outlined in the Research Ethics Policy) have been detected or suspected,
 - ii) Request for an ethical compliance report at any point during the course of the research.

The ethics committee wishes you the best in your research.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Trywell Kalusopa'.

Prof. Trywell Kalusopa (Chairperson, Decentralised Ethics Committee)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Davis Mumbengegwi'.

Prof. Davis Mumbengegwi (Head, Multidisciplinary Research)

APPENDIX B: RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER

CENTRE FOR RESEARCH SERVICES

Office of the Pro-Vice Chancellor: Research, Innovation & Development

University of Namibia, Private Bag 13301, Windhoek, Namibia

340 Mondame Ndemulayo Avenue, Pionees Park, Office F223 - Fblock, Second Floor

☎ +264 61 206 4673; ✉ mallembulu@unam.na; URL: <http://www.unam.edu.na>



RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER

Date: 6/12/2021

Student Name: Oyetate E Hawanga

Student Number: 201101754

Programme: MASTERS ARTS DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Approved Research Title: The Impact of Covid-19 on the Livelihood of Informal Sector Workers: A Case Study of Street Vendors in Ernhana Town Council, Ohangwena Region, Namibia

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I hereby confirm that the above mentioned student is registered at the University of Namibia for the programme indicated. The proposed study met all the requirements as stipulated in the University guidelines and has been approved by the relevant committees.

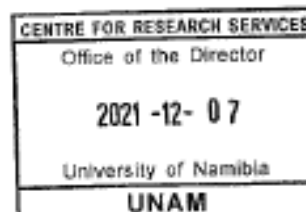
The proposal adheres to ethical principles as per attached Ethical Clearance Certificate.

Permission is hereby granted to carry out the research as described in the approved proposal.

Best Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'AEE', is written over a horizontal line.

Dr. AEE Shikongo
Head: Postgraduate Support Services
Tel: +264 61 206 3129
E-mail: aeshikongo@unam.na



APPENDIX C: COLLECTION PERMIT



Eenhana
Town Council

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Enquiries: Mr Mwaninga

05 January 2022

Oyeta E. Hawanga
MADS candidate
University of Namibia
Oshakati Campus
Cell: 0814197444

Dear Mr Hawanga,

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A MINI RESEARCH STUDY
AMONG STREET VENDORS IN EENHANA**

Reference is made to your letter dated 13th December 2021 on the above-mentioned subject.

Eenhana Town Council is cognisant that research is one of the main academic functions of an institutions of high learning and took note of your research topic: **The impact of Covid-19 on the livelihood of Inform Sector Workers: A Case Study of Street Vendors in Eenhana Town, Ohangwena Region.**

Based on the above, you are hereby informed that approval has been granted for you to conduct a research study among selected street vendors in Eenhana.

We hope you find the above lucid

Yours Respectfully,

G. M. Benjamin
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



All Official correspondences must be addressed to the Chief Executive Officer
Tel: +264-65-290600, Fax: +264-65-263068 E-mail: mwaninga@eenhanatc.com.na www.eenhanatc.org.na
108 Church Street, P/Bag 88007, EENHANA-NAMIBIA

APPENDIX D: CONSENT FORM

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE LIVELIHOOD OF INFORMAL SECTOR WORKERS: A CASE STUDY OF STREET VENDORS IN EENHANA TOWN COUNCIL, OHANGWENA REGION, NAMIBIA

INFORMED CONSENT

This study is being conducted to understand the impact of COVID-19 on livelihood of informal sector workers in Eenhana town. The results will be used for my master's thesis and other academic publications.

Your participation

You are selected to participate in the study because you meet the participation criteria. You will be asked questions about COVID-19, and how your business. Whatever you say will be kept confidential. The researcher will be summarising information from many respondents and will not link your responses to you in the report. We appreciate that you will give honest answers to the questions to help us better understand this issue.

Voluntary participation and withdrawal

You are free to choose whether to take part in this study or not. If you choose not to take part, you will not be negatively affected in any way. You may stop your participation at any time without any penalty. You are also free to choose to not answer question.

Risks and discomforts

We do not anticipate any major risk or discomfort for taking part in this study. However, if for any reason you think that you may become upset by taking part in this study, please feel free to not participate. If you choose to take part, and if you feel uncomfortable about any question, or are troubled by things that are asked, you are free to withdraw from the study without any prejudice.

Benefits of the study

There are no costs to you for participating in this study other than the time you will spend to complete this questionnaire. The information you give will help with improving our knowledge of street vendors in Namibia.

Contacts and Questions

You may ask any questions you have now. If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you may contact The University of Namibia for Dr Kolawole Omomowo Telephone Number: +264 61 2063808

Agreement to participate (Separate sheets for each participant)

- I have read/heard the information sheet and had the opportunity to have my questions answered.*
- I understand that whatever I say will be treated confidentially and will not be linked to my name.*
- I understand that I can stop participating at any point and this decision will not affect me negatively.*
- I understand that this is a research project, and it will not necessarily benefit me personally.*
- I am aware of the telephone number of a person I can contact should I have any questions or concerns about this study.*

Read out the informed concern sheet

My signature confirms that I am willing to participate in this study and agree to respect other participants' privacy and confidentiality. I confirm that I agree to participate in the study and my questions have been answered

Signature of participant _____ *Date* ___/___/2022
Signature of researcher _____ *Date* ___/___/2022

APPENDIX E: QUESTIONNAIRE

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Student's Name: **Oyetate Etuna Hawanga**; Student Number: 201101754

Study Title: The impact of COVID-19 on the livelihood of informal sector workers: A case study of street vendors in Eenhana town council, Ohangwena region, Namibia

Street vendors Questionnaire

LOCATION IDENTIFICATION		
1	Region	Ohangwena
2	Town	Eenhana
3	Location	
4	Questionnaire Number	D DM M=Sequential number

INTRODUCTION

My name is Oyetate Etuna Hawanga I am a Masters' student at the University of Namibia (UNAM). I am conducting a study on the impact of COVID-19 on the livelihood of informal sector workers: a case study of street vendors in Eenhana town council, Ohangwena region, Namibia. The study aims to analysing the effect of COVID-19 pandemic on informal workers focusing on street vendor in Eenhana town in Ohangwena region. All the information provided will be kept confidential. The findings of the study will be used only for academic purposes (master's thesis and other publications)

I have selected you to participate in my study, because you belong to the group of the people I want to include for my research. I would therefore like to invite you to complete this questionnaire. The research I am conducting has been approved by the UNAM Research Ethics Committee. I would appreciate it very much if you would complete this questionnaire, and I would like to assure you of the following:

- a. You do not have to fill this questionnaire if you do not want to.
- b. You can stop filling in the questionnaire and stop participating at any time if you want to, and there will be no negative consequences for you.
- c. Your participation is completely anonymous. This means that, even if I ask information that might identify you or if I know you, I am not allowed to make your identity know to anyone. When I report on my questionnaires' data and results, I will not mention any personal information about participants that might identify them.
- d. All completed questionnaires and data will be stored in a safe and secure place, and only authorised university officials, my supervisor and I will have access to it. After five years, all questionnaires and data will be destroyed in an environmentally friendly way.

If you have any question about this questionnaire or if you do not understand anything, please feel free to ask me, and I will be happy to explain it to you. If you want to know more about the research I am doing, please feel free to ask me, and I will be happy to tell you more. It should take +-10minutes for you to complete the questionnaire. You can reach me on my cell phone at 0814197444, or send an e-mail to ohawanga4@gmail.com. If you want more information about the study you can contact(Oyetate and contact details 0814197444) or Centre for Research & Services at kmbulu@unam.na if you have any further queries about the study

or if you have any concerns or complaints that have not been adequately addressed by the research team.

Thank you very much for your willingness to participate in this research.

INSTRUCTIONS: Please respond to the questions below by putting a cross (x) under the appropriate box or fill in the dotted space provided.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHICS INFORMATION						
Head of household	Sex	Age	Marital status	Education status	Education Level	Number of household member
1=Yes 2=No	1=Male 2=Female	(last birthday)	1=Never married 2=Married 3=Cohabitation 4=Divorced 5=Widow/Widower 6=Separated	1=Never attended 2=At school 3=Left school 4=Completed school (If Answer= 1 go to A7)	1=Primary 2=Junior 3=Secondary 4=Tertiary 5=Vocational	1=Less than 3 people 2= 3-5 3= 6-8 4= 9-11 5= 12 or more
1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.6	1.7

2

SECTION B – BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

2.1. How long have you been a vendor?

1=0-2 years 2=3-5 years 3=6-8 years 4=9-11 years 5=12-14 years 6=15 years or more

2.2. Do you pay a monthly/ yearly instalment to the Local Authority for conducting business here?

1=Yes 2=No

2.3 If yes, how much do you pay? N\$ _____

2.4 What is the average amount of money you earn per month?

1=Before COVID-19 lockdown N\$ 2=During COVID-19 lockdown N\$ 3=After COVID-19 lockdown N\$

2.5 How do you finance your business?

- 1= Personal savings
- 2= Loan (please specify source of loan _____)
- 3= Formal employment (please specify _____)
- 4= Informal employment (please specify _____)
- 5= Support from acquaintances (please specify _____)
- 6= Other _____

2.6 What type of products do you sell?

- 1= Vegetables & fruits vending
- 2= Dried food (Mahangu and sorghum seeds, dried fish, spinach and meat, chilli etc.)
- 3= Vending on clothing (Second hand clothes/ brand new)
- 4= Poultry products vending
- 5= Vending on home cooked food
- 6= Fresh meat
- 7= Oshikundu
- 8= Kapana
- 9= Other (_____)

2.7 Where do you sell your Products?

- 1= MTC, park, FNB complex, Nangy kitchen and Oshinanena
- 2= Ministry of Agriculture to Onawa service station
- 3= Informal traders at Eenhana district hospital
- 4= Alongside SWAPO office
- 5= Under the tree near Monte Carlo bar
- 6= OK grocer
- 7= Other _____

2.8 Why are you working in an informal sector?

- 1= Interested in business
- 2= Lack of formal employment
- 3= To make money to support my family (specify _____)
- 4= To cater for my school needs (specify _____)
- 5= Other _____

2.9 Knowing that there are established markets in Eenhana, why did you choose to operate from here?

- 1=Cannot afford rent
- 2=Most convenient
- 3=Profitable location
- 4=Scarcity of stock
- 5=Other (please state) _____

2.10 How did the covid-19 pandemic lockdown affect your business?

- 1=Loss of income
- 2=Increase in income
- in
- 1=Increase in debt
- 3=Scarcity of stock
- 4=Other (please state) _____

2.11 Have you ever received any training and mentorship on how to run a business?

- 1=Yes
- 2=No

2.12 If yes,

- 1=No skills/Not important
- 2=Basic/ Somehow important
- 3=Average/ important
- 4=Advanced/very important

SECTION C – SOCIO-ECONOMIC (STRUCTURED QUESTIONS)

3.1 What are the contributions/ benefits of the informal economy/business to your household in time of the pandemic?

.....
.....

3.2 Are you a member of any organizations that assist you in your informal employment setting?

Yes No

If yes, specify.....

3.3 How has government, through the town council, contributed to the informal economy during covid-19 pandemic?

.....
.....

3.4 How did you cope with your business during the covid-19 lockdown?

.....
.....

3.5 How did you cope in your family with the COVID-19 lockdown?

.....
.....

3.6 What specific impact did your business have on the well-being of your family (including yourself) in terms of the following in time of covid-19 pandemic? (education, housing, health, self-esteem and income)

.....
.....

3.7 What are your long-term plans for your business?

.....
.....

3.8 How sustainable is the income from your business?

.....
.....

3.9 How much profit do you make from your business on monthly basis?

.....
.....

3.10 Overall, how would you describe the effect of covid-19 on your income (No impact, adverse or moderate impact)?

.....
.....
.....

3.11 How do you think the effect of COVID-19 on business and income could be alleviated?

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