



Challenges Facing Women Vegetable Vendors in Arusha, Tanzania: A Case of the Tengeru Market

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analyzed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to analyse the challenges that women vegetable vendors face in Arusha, Tanzania, with a focus on Tengeru market. A cross-sectional research design was adopted in this study. A case study, as opposed to a broad statistical survey, focuses on a specific circumstance. It refers to the process of getting an understanding of a topic without including the entire population. The survey's findings showed that the majority of respondents were female due to the nature of the study, were in their 21s to 25s, and had only completed primary education. The study's findings again showed that the majority of respondents sold vegetables in their local community markets to generate revenue. Also, the majority of these people were participating in vegetable vending activities due to persuasion from their families, spouses, local government officials, societal seminars, and other groups. Furthermore, it was found that a few individuals claimed that the income they were generating from their activities was insufficient to satisfy their households' requirements or other socioeconomic activities.

The study discovered that vegetable vendors faced numerous challenges, including a lack of assistance from the government or their families, a lack of confidence, a lack of skills and knowledge, and work interruptions due to violence against women. According to the study, the government should assist them by providing loans, enacting laws and regulations, raising awareness, and developing useful materials.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Vegetable production constitutes a substantial part of the world economy. The statistics show that the world's leading three producers of fresh vegetables are China, India, and the United States of America. China is the leading producer with an annual production volume of nearly 554 million metric tons, followed by India with approximately 127 million metric tons of fresh vegetables. Cabbage, Chinese spinach, Chinese cabbage, Bok Choy, cucumber, white radish, and Chinese eggplant are the main vegetables produced in China. India is the largest producer of vegetables such as ginger and okra and ranks second in production of onions, cauliflowers, brinjal, and cabbages [1].

"Women's general disadvantaged employment positions have contributed to the debate that the labor market itself is "feminized," which suggests that the employment in which women engage is associated with low pay, insecurity, and precariousness [2]. Furthermore, the "feminization" of the global labor force is connected to urban growth and the expansion of informal employment [3]. Sub-Saharan Africa is urbanizing at an average rate of almost 5 percent annually, which is twice as high as in Asia and Latin America" [4]. "The economic liberalizations in East Asia that have been characterized by an increase in urban-based employment have generally not taken place in sub-Saharan Africa" [5].

"It has been stated that African urbanization is not consistent with the assumptions of conventional economic theory since the link between industrialization and urbanization has not been witnessed in the region" [6,4]. "Instead, urbanization is occurring at lower rates of economic growth and is accompanied by a lack of employment generation as well as an increase in slum dwellers" [4]. "Moreover, the general lack of jobs in African cities becomes further challenging when the urbanization process has not been preceded by an overall structural transformation in the agricultural sector" [7].

"Although there has been an increased participation of women in the micro- and small-enterprise (MSE) sector and particularly the vegetable vending sector over the past few years, women vegetable vendors are still found predominantly in low-growth areas, earning lower revenues than their male counterparts. Several

studies on women entrepreneurs have been conducted by a number of researchers. For example, a study by [8] on women entrepreneurs found that poor infrastructure, high production costs, and a non-conducive business environment tend to impact business women more than men" [8].

Despite the existence of abundant scholarly work on challenges facing women vegetable vendors, these studies overlooked challenges facing women in the informal sector on balancing their reproductive roles of childcare and productive roles in Tanzania. Besides, the literature has generalized the problems to all levels and types of enterprises in the informal sector. In reality, the incidence and impact of these constraints may vary significantly depending on the size and category of the enterprise or entrepreneur. It should be noted that the role of childcare in many countries, including Tanzania, is gendered towards women.

"Hence, despite the important role played by women in the informal sector, particularly in the vegetable vending sub-sector, in meeting the vegetable demand of urban dwellers in developing countries including Tanzania, there is a concern about the ability of those women to balance their involvement in the vegetable vending business with the provision of child care at home" [8]. The study had the following objectives:

- i. To explore the factors that influence women to join in vegetable vending activities in Tengeru market,
- ii. To examine the challenges facing vegetable vending activities by women in Tengeru market

Even though other researchers have done a lot of studies, none of them have focused on the women who sell vegetables at Tengeru Market. So, this study analyzed the challenges facing women vegetable vendors at the Tengeru market.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The study conducted by [9] assessed the factors that influenced the challenges facing fruit vendors in Bolivia. It found that poverty, a lack of formal employment, and the influence of the vitamins found in carrots were the reasons people in Bolivia engaged in vegetable vending

activities. This high altitude stretches from northern Peru, through the pluractional state of Bolivia, into northern Chile and northeast Argentina. In line with altitude and on the valley floors, subsistence-based production adds cereals to carrots and potatoes, the main staples of the country. In Kenya, carrots—which are a source of diets in sub-Saharan Africa—make up more than half of smallholder household production [9].

The report of [10] shows that vegetables are one of the richest sources of vitamin A and an excellent source of antioxidants. Example: Carrots are fat-free, low in sodium, cholesterol-free, a good source of vitamin C, and low in calories [10]. Tanzania has rich natural resources for agricultural development. The country has 94.5 million hectares of land, of which 44 million hectares are classified as arable, but only 24% of the arable land is under cultivation. About 12 million hectares are suitable for the production of carrots. The findings from [11] show that 39% of the produced carrots are exported to different countries like Sudan, Malawi, and Zambia, as well as other countries nearby Tanzania where production is low, and the remaining 68% are consumed by the Tanzanians themselves. In addition to that, carrot farming is a source of employment opportunities among smallholder farmers in Tanzania, which generates multiplier effects on the economy that contribute to poverty [12]. This recognizes the importance the vegetable business for the economy, community livelihood and sustainability.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was carried out in Arumeru district, Arusha, Tanzania. The district is one of the six in the Arusha Region. The economy of the district is entirely dependent on agricultural business. It lies between longitudes 36.50 and 37.50 east and latitudes 3.50 and 3.70 south of the Equator. The equatorial climate of the district is favorable for food and cash crop cultivation throughout the year. The cultivation ranges from grains, legumes, and vegetables to fruits, and it is predominantly characterized by small-scale farmers. The district is in a good location for the export of agricultural produce because of its proximity to the commercial markets in major towns and cities in East Africa [12].

The study involved respondent's ages 15–above 50 years. According to the findings, the majority of respondents were between the ages of 21 and 25, with only a few respondents over the age of

40. The marital status of the respondents shows that 48.3% were married, 43.3% were single, and 8.3% were divorced. Also, 20% of respondents were employed, 46.7% were self-employed, most in vegetable vending in local community markets, and 33.3% were unemployed. Also, most of the respondents were self-employed due to the problem of finding employment, and many of them still perform different activities so as to generate income for the wellbeing of their families.

In fulfilling the purpose of the study, a cross-sectional design was employed to facilitate the collection data at once over a specified period of time. The design was chosen because it satisfied the requirements of the objectives of the study. A sample of 60 respondents was drawn from the population of vegetable women vendors by using a multi-stage sampling procedure. At first, the Arumeru district was conveniently selected from a list of local markets with vending activities within the region. At the second stage, Tengeru market was chosen purposively from a list of local markets within the district because it is the largest market. At the last stage, 60 vegetable vending women were selected randomly.

The study used both qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data involved gender, marital status, and the level of education, whereas the quantitative data covered age, family size, input costs, and output. The data was collected by using semi-structured questionnaires. This tool of data collection was relevantly applied because of the suitability and reliability of the methods designed for data collection in the study area.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The study involved respondents who were aged between 15 and 50 years. According to the findings, the majority of respondents were between the ages of 21 and 25, with only a few over the age of 40. Other groups included 23.3% of those aged 15-20 years, 28.3% of those aged 26–30 years, and 11.7% of those aged 36–40 years, according to the findings.

4.2 Marital Status of Respondents

The marital status of the respondents is well presented in Table 2. It shows that 48.3% were

married, 43.3% were single, and 8.3% were divorced. The findings show that most of the respondents were married. Even through normal observation, the study shows that most of the respondents were married, and they were conducting those activities for the wellbeing of their families.

Table 1. Age of respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
15-20	14	23.3
21-25	20	33.3
26-30	17	28.3
36-40	7	11.7
Above 40 years	2	3.3
Total	60	100.0

Source: Survey Data, 2022

Table 2. Marital status of respondents

Marital status	Frequency	Percent
Married	29	48.3
Single	26	43.3
Divorced	5	8.3
Total	60	100.0

Source: Survey Data, 2022

4.3 Factors Influencing Women to Join into Vegetable Vending Activities

According to the findings, 30% were unemployed and decided to engage in vegetable vending activities to improve their lives, 30% were poor, 26.7% had a low income, and 13.3% were influenced by their peers.

These findings show that most women in the community engaged in vegetable vending activities due to unemployment and excessive poverty. To them, vegetable vending activities help them to get their basic needs met, improve their wellbeing, improve their households, and improve the community at large.

The results of this study were similar to the results of a study done by [9]. That study looked at the problems fruit vendors in Bolivia face. It found that poverty, a lack of formal employment, and the influence of the vitamins found in carrots were the reasons people in Bolivia engaged in vegetable vending activities in the study area.

This high altitude stretches from northern Peru through the pluractional state of Bolivia into northern Chile and northeast Argentina. In line with altitude and on the valley floors,

subsistence-based production adds cereals to carrots and potatoes, the main staples of the country.

Table 3. Factors influencing women to join into vegetable vending activities

Factors	Frequency	Percent
Unemployment	18	30.0
Poverty	18	30.0
Low income	16	26.7
influence from peer groups	8	13.3
Total	60	100.0

Source: Survey Data, 2022

In Kenya, carrots—which are a source of diets in sub-Saharan Africa—make up more than half of smallholder household production [9]. Generally, there were many factors that affected women and caused them to engage in income-generating activities in order to improve their economic status.

4.4 Challenges Facing Women in Conducting Vegetable Vending in Arusha

Based on the findings presented in Table 4, 23.3% of respondents lack support from the government, 25% lack support from their husbands, 16.7% face poor perception from community members on vegetable vending, 11.7% are affected by a lack of confidence, and another 11.7% are faced with gender-based violence that affects their vending activities.

The findings demonstrate that the majority of women suffered from a lack of support from their husbands and the government, which had an impact on women's ability to engage in vegetable vending activities.

The study was similar to the study conducted by [13], found that "vegetable vending activities are very much the domain of women in many countries, including Tanzania. "There is generally a shift towards eating vegetables prepared outside of home" [10].

"Millions of people use street food daily because they work far away from their homes and the vendors offer a wide variety of foods at a low cost and are easily accessible. Street vegetable vending assures vegetable security for low-income urban populations and offers opportunity for developing small-scale entrepreneurs" [10].

Table 4. Challenges faced women in conducting vegetable vending activities

Challenges	Frequency	Percent
Lack of support from the government	14	23.3
Lack of support from their husbands and families	15	25.0
Poor perception from the community members	10	16.7
Lack of confidence	7	11.7
Lack of skills and knowledge	7	11.7
Gender based violence	7	11.7
Total	60	100.0

Source: Survey Data 2022

The study results are in line with those reported by [14], who explained that "poor infrastructure facilities, lack of entrepreneurship skills, technical support and training, unreliable business premises, a lack of reliable markets, a lack of capital, and competition were the major obstacles for income-generating activities to flourish".

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The study found that vending vegetables and being an entrepreneur are important for women in the community because they help reduce poverty, solve unemployment, lower the number of people who are dependent on the government, and help women generate income. People who don't have regular jobs have started selling vegetables to make money for their families and the community as a whole.

The study found that poverty, family pressure, female-headed households, a lack of formal employment, and being dependent on men are some of the things that lead women in the community to become vegetable entrepreneurs and generate income.

The study found that women face different problems when vending vegetables in their communities. They are faced with a lack of funds, poverty, a lack of knowledge and skills, a lack of support from their families, a lack of support from their husbands, and a lack of support from the government.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the conclusion made above, the study recommends the following: The Arumeru District should improve the infrastructure of Tengeru Market, including storage facilities, racks, shelter,

water supply, electricity, and drainage systems, to enhance women's vegetable-selling businesses. With the help of NGOs and the government, registered women's groups should lend money to help make it easier for women who sell vegetables to get more money, such as through soft loans that help them get more capital to grow their businesses.

Also, the government should help the women who sell vegetables at Tengeru Market and other places in the Arusha area. Building capacity for vegetable vending businesses should also be given priority to help women improve their businesses. This will increase the value of vegetables and, thus, their market availability. Also, husbands and the entire community should be educated on women's empowerment so that they allow them to engage in vegetable and other small businesses to help improve family life.

CONSENT

In ensuring ethical issues in this research work, the researcher considered the privacy of information and data given by respondents, the use of polite language, as well as the use of all principles of data collection accordingly.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interest.

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