

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY: APPLIED BUSINESS AND EDUCATION RESEARCH

2024, Vol. 5, No. 1, 46 – 61

<http://dx.doi.org/10.11594/ijmaber.05.01.06>

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## Research Article

### The Influence of Politics, Existing Regulations and Knowledge on Street Vendors' Perception on the Legal Status of Street Vending

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#### Article history:

Submission November 2023

Revised January 2024

Accepted January 2024

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#### ABSTRACT

In the absence of a comprehensive policy regarding the operations of street vending, the presence of contradicting regulations and stances between politicians and government officials on the legal status of vendors, it has been easy for vendors to build various perceptions regarding their legality which at last have led them to clash with urban authorities. For this paper, the researchers determined the influence of politics, existing regulations and vendors' knowledge vendors' perception on the legality of street vending operations in Dar es Salaam and Mwanza Cities, Tanzania. The paper is based on a study in which a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional survey design was used to collect data from 371 respondents who were selected using proportionate stratified sampling. A questionnaire was used to collect data which were then analysed descriptively by computing descriptive statistics and inferentially by multiple regression. The findings revealed that there was a positive relationship between politics, existing regulations and street vendors' knowledge and the perception of street vendors regarding their legality. It is concluded that continuous contradictions in law creation and implementation contribute to more problems than solutions regarding street vending activities in urban settings. It is also concluded that politics and associated actions, existing regulations and their implementation, and street vendors' knowledge positively influence street vendors' perception regarding the legal status of street vending operations. It is recommended that urban authorities and politicians should set a plain ground on which operations of street vending activities will run.

**Keywords:** *Street vending, Legality, Perception, Politics, Vending regulations, Urban settings*

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#### How to cite:

Mubarack, K., Kayunze, K., & Ringo, J. (2024). The Influence of Politics, Existing Regulations and Knowledge on Street Vendors' Perception on the Legal Status of Street Vending. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary: Applied Business and Education Research*. 5(1), 46 – 61. doi: 10.11594/ijmaber.05.01.06

## Introduction

Population growth has been one of the causes of urbanization across the world. It is reported that the world's population increased from 2.5 billion in 1950 to 8 billion in 2023 (UN, 2022). Population increase comes along with urbanization. As the number of people increases, the needs for more land, housing and other social amenities increase (UN, 2022; UNCTAD, 2022). In solving this situation, people move to urban areas or initiate urban centres in order to get access to these needs. Urbanization comes along with attraction of a reasonable number of people from rural settings to urban areas (rural-urban migration) in search for economic fortunes (Sadigov, 2022). Such migrants include a collection of both the old and young, the skilled and unskilled as well as the educated and uneducated.

While literature records the increase in the number of populaces in urban settings, the rate at which employment opportunities grow is on a slow pace in comparison with the number of people in these urban places (ILO, 2009). As a result, the formal employment market is saturated to the extent that it cannot absorb all people in search for such opportunities. As a resilience strategy, most urban dwellers who have failed to secure job opportunities in the formal sector have resorted to informal employment opportunities which, among others, involve street vending (Oosthuizen, 2008). All over the world, the informal sector has been recorded to contribute widely to economies of specific countries (The World Bank, 2019; Dell'Anno, AnaMaria & Balele, 2018). For instance, by 2011 the informal sector contributed up to 10% of the US GDP and 40% of total employment. In developing economies, the informal sector is recorded to contribute about 20% (South Africa, Lesotho, Namibia) to 60% (Nigeria, Tanzania, Benin) to the national income.

Street vending, one of the economic activities in the informal sector, is currently vibrant in all urban settings around the world. It has been recorded to employ a great pool of individuals, young and old. Street vending, therefore, is a livelihood strategy that does not only save vendors alone but even low-income urban dwellers through supplying them with relatively cheap products (Adimasu *et al.*, 2016;

Lyons, Brown & Msoka, 2014; Song, 2020). Street vending has also been associated with remittances (Nurhayati, 2020) and has also been associated with urban security (Koster, 2016). A study by Nirathron (2006) provides that street vending acts like a sponge to the alarming unemployment rate disturbing many countries around the world and a cushion during economic hardships (Steiler, 2018).

Despite the reality that unemployment rate is currently hitting the world, and street vending is among the easiest solutions with other associated benefits, the rate at which the world recognizes street vending as a viable economic activity is not promising. While in some countries governments and urban authorities still create suppressive policies against them, others completely regard them illegal, and any efforts to legalise the activity are highly discouraged (Hanser, 2016). For instance; in some states in the US, UK, among others; street vending is a condemned business (Devlin 2019; Jones, 2003). In these countries, authorities have not legalised street vending because they are of the view that it is a disorderly kind of a business, a sign of poverty, obstruction to urban planning, and a cause of congestion which blocks free vehicular and pedestrians flow, among others (Hove *et al.*, 2020; Horn, 2018; Meneses-Reyes, 2018; Roever, 2016). Thus, in these countries, street vending is illegal. However, on the other side of the coin, some countries have embraced street vending and developed laws to safeguard their business and interests. India, Bangladesh, and South Africa are relevant cases and, in these countries, street vending bears a legal status, and vending runs under the guidance of the existing legal framework (Kalitanyi, 2021; Rogerson, 2016; Mahadevia & Vyas, 2012).

The discussion on the legal status of street vending has attracted many scholars around the world. In Africa, researchers document both legal and illegal status of street vending in different countries and various legalization practices that have influenced the way street vendors perceive their legal status. For instance; in Nigeria, Ghana, Malawi, Zambia, to mention but a few; several contestations regarding street vending legalisation have been recorded, but still street vending bears an

illegal status (Elsayed *et al.*, 2022; Chileshe, 2020; Hove *et al.*, 2020; Recaud *et al.* 2018; Farkour, 2017; Kafafy, 2017; Mazhambe, 2017; Onodugo *et al.*, 2016; Nakibuuka, 2015), as compared to South Africa where street vending enjoys a legal status (Kalitanyi, 2021). While most scholars concur that the legal status of street vending as perceived by street vendors differs from a country to another one, the factors which cause this variation in the legal status and perception include politics, previous orientation of leaders on street vending activities, economic conditions prevailing in the country, and regime changes, to mention but a few (Etzold 2013, 2015; Rahman 2019).

However, these causes are also country specific and do not present similar trends all over the world. For instance, a study conducted by Etzold (2015) in Bangladesh reported that the country's status of street vending and street vendors' perception of their legal status depended on politics and political seasons. Moreover, studies by Crossa (2016) and Onodugo *et al.* (2016) attribute the contradiction in the legal status to discrepancy between the needs of the regulatory framework in different countries and the practices. About the same, Meneses-Reyes and Caballero-Juárez (2014), from their study, argued that in some countries, even when street vending has been granted legal status, urban officials' negative perception to street vending has always influenced them to describe street vending as illegal and take strong actions against them. Studies by various scholars, for example Xue & Huang (2015) and Wheeler (2018) further noted that contradictions among politicians and urban authorities have led to such conflicting legal status of street vending in most urban settings. While urban authorities are determined to follow and implement urban planning regulations most of which are against vendors' inclusion in the urban centres, politicians are pushing for street vendors' inclusion. It is further argued that past street vending legalization processes and countries' economic statuses have contributed to the status of street vending. In China, besides incomplete legalization process of street vending activities, the COVID-19 pandemic changed the illegal status of street vending to legal (He, 2020), and the country emphasized on building

more stalls for street vendors across the country as a move to stabilize the economy shaken by the in-set of the pandemic (Song, 2020).

In the Tanzanian context, street vending has recorded various mile stones. To the current moments, there is no clear and conclusive explanation regarding the legal status of street vending. Every explanation given is either influenced by the existing political situation, laws or vendors' knowledge pertaining to the entire regulatory framework and efforts in safeguarding the operations of street vending. Although the existing by-laws in different urban authorities claim that street vending is legal but it has to operate in designated places, most of which are out of the city, hardly have no social services and far from 'natural markets'; as a solution, political pronouncements allow street vendors to operate anywhere in urban settings (Steiler & Nyirenda, 2022). Moreover, other sector specific laws restrict the operations of street vending at some time and places. For instance, The Urban Planning Act of 2007, the Road Act of 2007, the Environmental Management Act of 2004, the Business registration Act of 2003, among others, jointly restrict the operations of street vending (George, 2022). Moreover, it has been recorded that, at different moments, what street vendors know about their legality influences their perception. For instance, street vendors' knowledge on existing laws is low. Studies by Koma (2017) and WIEGO (2019) clearly reported that street vendors do not know what laws restrict or allow about their operations and efforts made by the government to improve the operations of street vending businesses. However, when asked, they describe themselves to be legal but victimized by authorities which work on their interests. Such a gap in knowledge influences the way street vendors perceive the legality of street vending operations. But still the presence of overlapping issues; including political stances, existing laws, among others; influences street vendors' perceptions as well as making it difficult for one to draw a line between the legal and illegal statuses of street vending. Thus, the following questions were asked: What exactly influences the perception of street vendors regarding their legal status in urban settings of Tanzania? To what extent do

politics, existing laws and street vendors' knowledge influence the perception of street vendors on their legal status? Therefore, the study was intended to determine the influence of street vendors' knowledge, politics and existing laws on the perception of street vendors regarding their legal status in urban settings in Tanzania. Specifically, the study was intended to:

- i. Determine the influence of politics on the perception of street vendors on the legal status of street vending.
- ii. Assess the effect of existing laws and their interpretations on the perception of street vendors on the legal status of street vending, and
- iii. Establish the link between street vendors' previous knowledge on the perception of street vendors on the legal status of street vending.

This paper informs urban authorities on how contradicting realities influence street vendors' rigidity on the status of street vending business in the urban settings of Tanzania. It also informs interventions to minimize the never-ending clashes and contradictions between street vendors and urban authorities regarding the legality of street vending business in urban settings. Such clashes bring about devastating effects including fatal injuries to street vendors that end up being incapacitated, confiscation of vendors' merchandise which impoverishes the vendors, and unnecessary monetary budget that is used to pay urban paramilitia to conduct operations to evict street vendors. Above all, the paper contributes to awakening politicians and government executives on the importance of taking proper directions regarding the operations of street vending business. By so doing, they will not have serious issues regarding politicizing the operations of street vending activities all over the country.

### ***Theoretical linkage of politics, existing regulations and vendors' knowledge and vendors' perception***

Perception is a psychological and mental activity that takes place in the brain. Although several theories explain what perception entails, in this study the Gregory's constructivist

theory of perception was used as a guide. The theory was proposed by Gregory in 1970 and holds that one's perception is influenced by the interpretations of the past experiences, beliefs, expectations and emotions. Although the theory was challenged by the Gibson's theory of direct perception with the idea that one's perception is independent of the environment, as it is innate, in this theory we build on Gregory's development that it is the environment and past experiences that lead to one to perceive a thing in a certain way or a different one. In support of this idea, the work of Tversky and Kahneman (1974) reports that the origin of most perceptions is, in various ways, linked to the history and past experiences of the individual. Such experiences, because they differ from a person to another one, lead to differences in perception too. Although Palmer (1999) had a diversion in the opinions, he did not underestimate the importance of environment and past experiences in generating one's perception. In line with this study, past experiences as well as the environment influence the perception of street vendors on their legal status. Thus, the environment constitutes politics, regulations, and past legalization efforts, to mention but a few. Therefore, in situations where politicians preach of vendors' rights, vendors may perceive themselves legal. Moreover, in a situation where regulations are loose and are implemented loosely, vendors may perceive it as being allowed even where the opposite is true. Therefore, the theory is useful in this study and can help determine how the aspects mentioned can influence the perception of street vendors regarding their legality.

## **Methods**

### ***Research Design***

The study on which this paper is based was quantitative in nature and adopted a cross-sectional survey design. Data were collected once from street vendors in Dar es Salaam and Mwanza Cities, Tanzania. The two cities were included in the study due to the fact that they have many street vendors in comparison with other urban areas in Tanzania. It is reported that Dar es Salaam alone had more than 700,000 by 2010 (Lyon, Brown & Msoka, 2014), but the number was reported at

1,000,000 a few years later (Mramba *et al.*, 2014). Although there is no exact number of street vending activities in Mwanza, the city has a lot of visible street vendors. The two cities have recorded many clashes between vendors and urban authorities at different times.

### **Sampling and Sample Size**

The respondents were recruited from an array of vendors in the two cities with reasonable number of street vendors compared to any in the country. Respondents were sampled based on proportionate stratified sampling (PSS) technique. In this technique, the sample is drawn from developed strata proportionately to the population in the strata (Zewotir, 1998). The researchers treated each street vending hotspot as a stratum. From each stratum, the number of respondents was drawn based on the total population of the hotspot. This explains the differences in the number of respondents drawn from each hotspot. The technique is useful when randomisation is impossible. According to Zewotir (1998) and Kaymaz *et al.* (2019), proportionate stratified sampling is a probability sampling method which makes it possible to choose a sample that is representative of the population. Through proportionate stratified sampling, 371 street vendors were selected, including 171 (46.1%) in Dar es Salaam and 200 (53.9%) in Mwanza, mixing different sex, locations, age, and commodities they sold. Special vending hotspots in Dar es Salaam and Mwanza were places where vendors were concentrated.

### **Data Collection Methods**

A questionnaire was used to collect data from the sampled respondents. The tool had close and open-ended questions relating to street vendors' demographic characteristics and factors influencing their perception on the legality of street vending activities. The tool had a set of five-point scale questions that required the rating of responses where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree. In order to save time, the researchers, together with their trained research assistants, administered the questionnaire to the respondents. Interviewing one respondent using the questionnaire required around 20 minutes. Prior to data

collection, the researchers obtained a clearance permit from Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), and Dar es Salaam and Mwanza City Council Authorities. The researchers further informed the respondents of the intention of the research and requested them to take part in it voluntarily with no expectations for financial gains. The researchers recruited every respondent after they had signed a consent form. It was clarified by the researchers that the data would be confidential and none of the participants' identity would be disclosed; this was observed.

The original version of the questionnaire was translated from English language into Kiswahili—the National Language of Tanzania—by an expert translator. This was aimed at obtaining face validity. The Kiswahili version of the questionnaire was provided to another expert translator who had not seen the original version to back translate it into English language. From the translations, the researchers were in the position to clear ambiguities and complex statements. Those stages were used previously by various scholars, including Mahdaviazad *et al.* (2018) and Mohammedsalehi *et al.* (2015) in their earlier studies.

### **Data Analysis**

Before analysing the data, their validity was determined to check the reliability of the findings. Exploratory Factor Analysis with Principle Component Analysis (PCA) was applied to determine factor loadings for each variable and its components. It is important to consider Varimax rotation; thus, the varimax rotation command was applied. PCA was used with the intention to deduce items and obtain factors with separate variables, but with great relationship (Mohammedsalehi *et al.*, 2015). Pearson's correlation coefficients were computed to determine convergent and discriminant validity as suggested by Williams *et al.* (2012), and the Kaiser Meyer Olkin (KMO) was computed to determine the adequacy of sampling. Moreover, Kronuit Bartlett's index and scree plots were used as suggested by Mahdaviazad *et al.* (2018). The eigenvalue for each extracted factor was maintained at 1 and above, as suggested by Mohammedsalehi *et al.* (2015) and Field (2018). Reliability was measured by

computing Cronbach's alpha values. Findings of reliability statistics for all items revealed that all items scored above 0.7 (0.863); hence all included in the study for further analysis, as recommended by Mohammedsalehi *et al.* (2015).

For statistical analysis, descriptive statistics were computed for demographic characteristics of respondents. For that matter, means, ± standard deviation (SD) and proportions (%) were used. Further, multiple linear regression analysis was done to determine the influence of politics, existing regulations and street vendors' knowledge on the street vendors' perception of the legal status of street vending activities. The regression analysis was used due to its statistical power of explaining the relationship between variables. The regression model was specified as follows:

$$PER = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{EREG_1} + \beta_2 x_{PP_2} + \beta_3 x_{KN_3} + \varepsilon$$

Where PER was the response variable (Vendors' perception on the legal status of street vending (measured by 10 items, 9 of which fitted EFA); EREG represented existing regulations on vendors' perception (measured by 9 items, all of which fitted EFA); PP represented

politics (measured by 5 items, all which fitted EFA); KN was vendors' knowledge of efforts (measured by 6 items, 5 of fitted EFA);  $\beta_0$  was the intercept term;  $\beta_1, \beta_2, \dots, \beta_k$  were regression coefficients; and  $\varepsilon$  was the error term with a  $N(0, \sigma^2)$  distribution.

**Diagnostic tests**

Before the regression analysis was done, all regression assumptions were checked; the data were found to meet the assumptions. According to Pallant (2010), the regression analysis is valid, and findings are generalizable when the assumptions of normality, multicollinearity, homogeneity, heteroskedasticity and autocorrelation are met.

The normality assumption was checked to see if data and errors in the model were normally distributed. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to check for this assumption since the sample size was more than 50, unlike the Shapiro-Wilk test that is used for the same purpose if the sample size is 50 or less. As a rule of thumb, data are considered to be normally distributed if the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is not significant ( $p > 0.05$ ) (Field, 2018). The findings are presented in Table 1 of this study.

Table 1. Tests of Normality of Transformed Data

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
log_EREG	.212	370	.321
log_PP	.241	370	.161
log_KN	.202	370	.441

In Table 1, the findings indicate that the data met the normality assumption in the sense that all the significance levels (p-values) were above 0.05 after being transformed.

The multicollinearity assumption was also tested in the study. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was used to determine if variables were too highly correlated or not. According to Field (2018), variables are considered to be too highly correlated if their VIF score is below or equal to 10. If variables are too highly correlated, one among the two variables has to be dropped during further analysis as they are

considered to be measuring the same effect in the analysis. The findings, as presented in Table 8, indicated that the VIF values for all independent variables were within the given range. They were EREG = 1.459, PP = 1.454 and KN = 1.196. This implies that there was no multicollinearity problem in the dataset.

The presence of homogeneity of variance was also determined. This assumption requires the dataset to provide variance of a similar nature (Biorn, 2017). To test this assumption, the Levene's test was run. The assumption is met when  $P \geq 0.05$ . Table 2 presents findings.

Table 2. Test of Homogeneity of Variance

		Levene's Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
EREG_score	Based on Mean	.667	1	366	.415
	Based on Median	.532	1	366	.466
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.532	1	362.194	.466
	Based on trimmed mean	.538	1	366	.464
PP_score	Based on Mean	3.069	1	366	.081
	Based on Median	1.895	1	366	.169
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1.895	1	335.617	.170
	Based on trimmed mean	2.693	1	366	.102
KN_score	Based on Mean	5.199	1	366	.023
	Based on Median	2.612	1	366	.107
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	2.612	1	352.639	.107
	Based on trimmed mean	3.988	1	366	.047

The findings, as portrayed in Table 2, indicate that the dataset met the requirement of the assumption as the p-values were greater than 0.05 for all variables.

Furthermore, the heteroskedasticity assumption was tested. According to Biorn (2017), the assumption is met when the chi2 is less than or equal to 0.05. The modified Wald test was used, and the findings indicated that the Prob>chi2 = 0.0000, implying that the assumption was not violated. Moreover, autocorrelation was also tested. The assumption entails that there is no similarity among the tested variables repeatedly. In other words, the present values should not give one the chance to predict the other ones. The Woodridge (2002) test was used. A data set is said to have met the

assumption if  $p \geq 0.05$ . According to the findings, the assumption was satisfied because the p-value was 0.622. Having met all the regression assumption requirements, further analysis proceeded, and the results are presented below.

### Results and Discussion

#### Demographic characteristic of the respondents

For the purpose of determining the nature of respondents who took part in the study, data were collected on various socio-demographic variables. The data included age, sex, education, marital status, regions of operation and number of dependants as presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of participants' demographic characteristics (n = 371)

Variable	Frequency	Per cent
<b>Age</b>		
15 - 25	54	15.3
26 - 35	177	50.3
36 - 45	91	25.9
46+	30	8.5
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	224	60.4
Female	147	39.6
<b>Education</b>		
None	33	9.1
Primary	129	35.6
Secondary	179	49.4
Tertiary/university	21	5.8

Variable	Frequency	Per cent
<b>Marital status</b>		
Single	116	31.5
Married	232	63
Widowed	11	3
Divorced	9	2.4
<b>Region of business</b>		
Mwanza	200	53.6
Dar es Salaam	173	46.4
<b>Number of dependents</b>		
Below 15 years	253	
15 – 60 years	282	

The findings in Table 3 portray different characteristics of the respondents. The characteristics are of varied nature depending on the nature of respondents. For instance, with regard to age, while the average age was 34.0, the minimum age was 15 years and the maximum age was 80 years. This can be translated that most of the recruited vendors were of the young generation in the sense that there were more young street vendors than old ones. In terms of sex, despite the number of female respondents being smaller than that of male respondents, 147 female and 224 male respondents, the study implies that there was an increase in the number of female vendors in comparison to previous years (Mramba *et al.*, 2014). The level of education was also among the issues determined. It was revealed that a great portion of respondents (85%) were primary school leavers. Even though, university graduates were among this pool of informal workers. This could have been attributed to an alarming rate of unemployment in the country. The findings further depict that there were more married respondents (65%) than unmarried ones (31.5%). This implies that most of the married respondents hold family responsibilities as they have some mouths to feed as on average, each respondent had more than a dependent to feed and cater for in all aspects of life.

### ***Influence of politics, existing regulations and knowledge on the perception of street vendors regarding their legal status***

For validity purposes, Exploratory Factor Analysis was conducted to reduce items and determine validity of the dataset in general. With the Eigenvalue set at greater than one, as recommended by Tabachnick (2012), out of the 30 items, four dimensions were created which contributed to 58.028% of the total variance. The first dimension contributed 19.711%; the second dimension contributed 16.661%; the third dimension contributed 12.127%; and the last one contributed 9.531%, as depicted in Table 4.4. The extracted dimensions were obtained after the varimax rotation was done. The four dimensions were: EREG = existing regulations on vendors' perception (measured by 9 items), PER = Vendors' perception on the legal status of street vending (measured by 10 items, 9 of which fitted EFA), PP = Politics (measured by 5 items) and KN = Vendors' knowledge (measured by 6 items, 5 of which fitted EFA) (Table 5). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin KMO statistic was 0.954, implying that the sample size was adequate as recommended by Williams *et al.* (2012). The Bartlett's test of sphericity ( $p < 0.000$ ) indicated that it was appropriate for using factor analysis in this study in line with suggestions given by Johnson and Wichern (2002). The findings are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.954
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5682.093
	df	435
	Sig.	.000



Table 5. Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup>

	Components			
	1	2	3	4
EREG2	.758			
EREG9	.753			
EREG7	.744			
EREG6	.737			
EREG4	.734			
EREG1	.729			
EREG8	.714			
EREG5	.709			
EREG3	.706			
PER10	.384			
KN6	.375			
PER8		.722		
PER9		.697		
PER4		.695		
PER1		.684		
PER5		.682		
PER3		.670		
PER6		.670		
PER2		.636		
PER7		.636		
POL2			.803	
POL4			.782	
POL3			.781	
POL1			.769	
POL5			.761	
KN1				.716
KN2				.702
KN4				.644
KN5				.644
KN3				.639

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Table 6. Total Variance Explained

Components	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	11.081	36.937	36.937	5.913	19.711	19.711
2	2.932	9.775	46.712	4.998	16.661	36.371
3	2.036	6.785	53.497	3.638	12.127	48.498
4	1.360	4.532	58.029	2.859	9.531	58.029

After having successfully extracted the dimensions out of the variable constructs, which altogether helped to conclude that the dataset was valid and variables were fit for further

analysis, the data were thus used for regression analysis to determine the influence of politics, knowledge and existing regulatory framework

on the perception of street vendors on the legal status of street vending. Descriptive analysis preceded inferential analysis, and the descriptive analysis results are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics of factors influencing the perception of street vendors

	n	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Mode	Std. Deviation
KN	370	1	5	3.91	4	1.00
PP	370	1	5	3.85	4	0.88
PER	370	1	5	4.06	4	0.81
EREG	370	1	5	4.07	4	0.87

The findings presented in Table 7 reveal that the mean value of various variables ranged from 3.85 to 4.07. While street vendors' mean scores on knowledge and politics were 3.85 and 3.91 respectively, the scores were almost equal to 4, which means that the respondents agreed that politics and vendors' knowledge on what the government was doing for street vendors influenced their perception regarding the legal status of street vending. This was also confirmed by the mode score which shows that most of the respondents scored 4, meaning that they agreed with the statements. With regard to existing regulations, the mean score was 4.07, indicating agree, similar to the mode which also was 4. The mean and mode were used because, according to Shukla and Shaw (2018), they both are measures of central tendency. However, for more confirmation,

regression analysis was conducted as presented in the subsequent tables.

**Regression results on the influence of politics, existing regulations and knowledge on the perception of street vendors regarding their legal status**

The researchers conducted a multiple regression analysis to find out how politics, existing laws on the operations of street vending and knowledge of such laws and government practices on the operations of street vending influenced street vendors' perception on the legal status of street vending operations. The regression analysis was conducted to confirm descriptive findings obtained in the previous table. The findings of the analysis are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Regression results about the influence of politics and existing regulations knowledge, on street vendors' perception

Model	Coefficients <sup>a</sup>								
	Unstand. Coefficients		Stand. Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	1.159	.158		7.335	.000	.848	1.469		
PP_score	.123	.036	.151	3.385	.001	.052	.194	.688	1.454
EREG_score	.274	.040	.306	6.870	.000	.196	.353	.686	1.459
KN_score	.350	.032	.440	10.892	.000	.287	.413	.836	1.196

a. Dependent Variable: PER\_score

The findings presented in Table 8 indicate that all the measured variables had a positive influence on street vendors' perception on the status of street vending business.

With regard to politics, the findings indicate that it had a positive influence on the

perception of street vendors regarding the status of street vending operations in the urban settings. The variable had a p-value of 0.001 (p < 0.05) and a coefficient of 0.123. Thus, one more level in the political stance of politicians regarding the legality of street vending

operations would lead to 12.3% of change of street vendors' perception regarding the legality of street vending business. The findings are in line with findings of various scholars in various contexts. For instance, Etzold (2015) reported that the legality of street vending in Bangladesh, as given by street vendors themselves, was determined by politics. In the same vein, Xue and Huang (2015) and Wheeler (2018) reported that street vendors perceived themselves as legal or illegal by considering the existing politics and contradictions among executives at that moment. In the Tanzanian context, Nyirenda (2021), George (2022) confirmed that, as a result of political pronouncements made by the president, every street vendor regards him/herself legal irrespective of where they operate their businesses. On the same issue, one can simply rule that politics influences perception of vendors on the legal status of street vending in Tanzanian urban settings.

The effect of the existing regulations on the perception of street vendors on the legal status of street vendors was also studied. As the findings in Table 8 indicate, existing regulations had positive effects on the perception of street vendors on the legal status of street vending operations as the p-value for EREG was 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ) with a coefficient of .274. A unit change in the existing regulations or its implementation regarding the operations of street vending operations would lead to 27.4% change in the perception of street vendors' perception regarding their legal status. These findings are in line with those by Meneses-Reyes (2018) who reported that the legal status of street vending in the urban settings was attributed to existing legal status governing its operations (repressive or embracive). Moreover, findings of studies by Crossa (2016) and Onodugo *et al.* (2016) reported that contradictions in the existing laws had affected the way

street vendors perceived their legality. Moreover, the findings are in support of those given by He (2020), Song (2020) and Zhang (2020) who reported that a slight tilt in the legal institutions regarding street vending operations as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic affected the way street vendors perceived their legal status; in this regard they regarded themselves legal and free to trade in newly government-built street stalls. Thus, existing regulations affect the perception of street vendors regarding the legal status of street vending in urban settings.

A link between street vendors' prior knowledge on the available regulations and government efforts to improve the operations of street vending business and vendors' perception on the legal status of vending operations was also determined. The findings indicate that there was a positive link between vendors' knowledge and their perception regarding their legal status. Vendors' knowledge had a p-value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ), and a coefficient of 0.350. Thus, a unit increase in street vendors' knowledge regarding regulations and efforts to improve vending operations, among others, would lead to a 35% change in the perception of street vendors on the legal status of street vending operations in the urban settings. These findings echo those by WIEGO (2019) which have it that clashes between street vendors and authorities are partly caused by street vendors' ignorance of laws and regulations. In the same vein, it is reported by Munishi and Millanzi (2019) and Mmasechancha (2017) that street vendors' knowledge on various issues pertaining to their wellbeing, including efforts taken by the government, influence their perception and actions. Therefore, there is a positive link between street vendors' knowledge on laws and efforts to improve the operations of street vending on the perception of vendors on the legality of their operations in urban settings of Tanzania.

Table 9. Model Summary<sup>b</sup>

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.708 <sup>a</sup>	.501	.497	.430	1.739

a. Predictors: (Constant), KN\_score, PP\_score, EREG\_score  
 b. Dependent Variable: PER\_score

The findings presented in Table 9 are a summary of the regression model with a multiple regression coefficient of 0.708. This is an indication that there was a positive relationship between politics, street vendors' knowledge and existing regulations on street vendors' perception regarding the legal status of street vending businesses in urban settings surveyed. The coefficient of determination,  $R^2$ , was 0.501,

equivalent to 50.1%. Thus 50.1% of street vendors' perception regarding the status of street vending was attributed to vendors' knowledge, existing regulations and politics. The rest 49.9% was attributed to other issues including previous legalisation processes, and contradictions between politicians and urban authorities on the status of street vending, among other issues, which this study did not focus on.

Table 10. ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	67.910	3	22.637	122.680	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	67.533	366	.185		
	Total	135.443	369			

a. Dependent Variable: PER\_score

b. Predictors: (Constant), KN\_score, PP\_score, EREG\_score

The findings presented in Table 10 reveal how well the regression model used in this study significantly predicted the dependent variable. Considering the findings, the Sig. value was 0.000, less than 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ). This indicates that the regression model statistically and significantly predicted the outcome (street vendors' perception on the legal status of street vending in the urban settings). Hence, the results were convinced that vendors' knowledge, existing regulations and politics influence street vendors' perception regarding the status of street vending in the urban settings.

### Conclusions

The main focus of this paper was influence of politics, existing regulations and knowledge on street vendors' perception regarding the legality of street vending operations in the urban centres. Data were collected using a questionnaire which was administered to street vendors. Following descriptive and regression analyses, it was found that political dynamics, existing regulatory framework and street vendors' knowledge on regulations and what had been done to improve the wellbeing of street vending operations positively influenced the perceptions of street vendors regarding the legality of street vending operations. This implies that in a situation where politicians actively give statements in favour of street vending, in turn street vendors regard them as policy

statements, which then allow them to operate anywhere. Moreover, the existing regulations and their implementation can either lead vendors to consider themselves as legal or illegal. For instance, in moments when vendors are harassed, evicted and suppressed, their operations are minimized because they perceive their activities illegal rather than when they are tolerated. Similarly, what street vendors know also is a contributing factor to what they perceive with regard to their legality. Generally, it is evident that the way street vendors perceive their legality changes overtime, and these changes are contributed to by politics, regulations and vendors' knowledge in general.

### Recommendations

Following the above findings and conclusions, the following practical and policy implications were drawn. Contradiction between politicians and executives, especially those in the local governments, create more problems than solutions regarding the legality of street vending operations in urban areas. In the situation where politicians force the existence of street vendors with no consultation with urban authorities, the problem of street vending is not solved; it is rather escalated. Urban authorities will, following the existing regulations, continue to evict vendors. Therefore, there is a need of creating harmony among politicians, urban authorities and street vendors regarding

the legal status of street vendors. This should be directed by creating a win-win situation in which all parties involved will have better yields. Urban authorities allowing the operations of street vendors can collect levies from vendors and use them to control waste collection and urban security.

Because the issue of street vending operations is not clearly spelled out as there are contradictions in the existing regulations and their implementation, there is a dire need to sort out this. Bearing in mind that many young men and women are self-employed in street vending, there is a need of creating a clear street vending policy that will spell out the legality of street vending operations. This is because the business is booming, despite efforts to suppress it. Moreover, considering the rate of unemployment among the youth, uncontrolled rural urban migration and slow pace of industrial development, legalisation of street vending operations based on policy, will not only arrest the rate of unemployment, but also help vendors fight against abject poverty. The policy will help to regulate vending operations in general. The policy may be created after a thorough analysis and adapting best practices from other countries including South Africa, India, and Germany, to mention but a few. However, in creating this policy, there should be involvement of important stakeholders including street vendors themselves.

The continuous and never-ending clashes between urban authorities and street vendors caused by ever-changing perceptions regarding their legality built on politics, regulations and knowledge are detrimental to the working force of the young generation. These clashes are sources of physical incapacitation, poverty, widening social strata in urban settings and economic doom among the involved individuals. In the situation where politicians, public executives and regulations are not speaking the same language, there will always be problems. Thus, there is a need of acting with a single sound, based on the existing rules and regulations of the land. However, regulations have to be realistic and up-to date, so that they align with current needs and situations.

## Acknowledgement

In this study, authors wish to extend their special appreciation to Dar es salaam and Mwanza City Council officials and street vendors from whom data used in this paper were collected. Special thanks are also given to The College of Business Education, BMBF and DAAD for funding this study.

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