

Title

The vices of corruption within Zimbabwe's informal sector: Lessons from vendors in Harare's Central Business District

Author/s

Cornelius Dudzai, Master of Social Work and Teaching Assistant, University of Zimbabwe, Department of Social Work, Email: corneliusdudzai9@gmail.com

Charles Kiiza Wamara, Doctoral student, Orebro University, School of Law, Psychology and Social Work, Sweden

Carol Mhlanga, Master of Social Work, University of Zimbabwe, Development Practitioner

Abstract

This paper illustrates the effects of corruption on vending activities in Zimbabwe. The paper's findings are based on a case study that was conducted at Gulf-Complex which is a market area in Harare Central Business District. The study employed semi-structured interviews with twenty vendors who operate around Gulf-Complex Building. In order to solicit further understanding from officials' point of view, the study also benefited from the input of six City of Harare Police Officers. The study established that the severity of corruption in vending is due to bad governance coupled with lack of transparency and

accountability in the local government. The forms of corruption that occur in vending within Harare's Central Business District include extortion, bribery and nepotism. The negative consequences of corruption include limiting the chances for business growth, discouraging new investment and reducing the amount of tax collected by the local government. The paper concludes by proposing policy recommendations that can be implemented to tackle emerging challenges associated with corruption within the vending community in Zimbabwe's informal sector.

Key words

corruption, vending, informal sector, Zimbabwe, Harare

Introduction

Corruption has become a major problem for the informal sector in Zimbabwe. The informal sector operators (hereafter referred to as vendors) are reportedly forced to pay bribes to be able to continue carrying out their business operations. Vendors who fail to pay bribes to local government officers often get harassed and their commodities get confiscated by local authority officers. The existence of corruption among informal business operators flies in the face of Harare City Council's bye-laws that encourage and permit vendors to operate after paying a stipulated licence fee.

Background

By definition, corruption is the misuse of office for unofficial ends (Tiihonen, 2003:6). By misuse of office for unofficial ends, an official would be misusing authority and public resources for private benefits. On the other hand, vending refers to an activity that is carried outside enclosed premises or covered workspace on street pavements, sidewalks, but also at bus stops and in other public places carried out by self-employed workers (Bhowmik, 2005). The existence of corruption in vending is such that there are at least two parties that get engaged in corrupt tendencies. These are local government officials and the vendors themselves. The local government officers are supposed to fulfil a normal obligation of promoting sanity in the City of Harare and are mandated to collect taxes from registered vendors. Besides the officers from Harare City Council, there are Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) Officers who are meant to work with local government officers in maintaining law and order in designated sites where vendors operate. The second party involved within this equation are the vendors whose public responsibility is to pay taxes to Harare City Council. Corruption occurs when both parties deviate from their normal obligations. In this case, the local authority government officers who are supposed to collect taxes from vendors demand kickbacks and vendors who are required to pay taxes bribe the officers instead of paying actual tax. Premised on this explanation, corruption that occurs within vending in Harare's Central Business District is such that Harare City Council Officers and Zimbabwe Republic Police Offices sometimes deviate from their roles in order to benefit from bribes given by vendors. Willingly or unwillingly vendors become active participants of corruption as they offer bribes to officials to avert correct payment of taxes as well as continue vending in undesignated areas. The effect is deleterious as the local government fails to receive taxes that can contribute to meaningful revenue for the upkeep and maintenance of the city.

The general aim of the study was to examine the implication of corruption on vendors' socio-economic wellbeing.

Corruption and the informal sector

Different scholars have pointed out that informality is common in developing countries. According to Marxie-Lina and Frederic (2014), informality such as vending is common in Latin American countries such as Bolivia, Colombia and Uruguay. In these developing countries of Latin-America, corruption is also common due to high levels of informalities (Klein, 2008). A 2014 study in Barranquilla (Colombia) indicated that there is an inextricable nexus between corruption and the informal sector (Marxie-Lina and Frederic, 2014). This suffices to say in Latin American countries such as Colombia, the corroboration between corruption and informality is such that the two complement one another. To that effect, Nyarku (2016) submits that corruption enables ease of doing business in the shadow economy.

The impact of corruption on the informal sector has also been indicated to be a major problem in African countries such as Ghana and Nigeria. According to Nyarku (2016), there is also a close relationship between corruption and the informal sector in African countries. In most instances, there is a negative correlation between corruption and the informal sector and in rare circumstances, there is a positive relationship in African countries such as Ghana and Nigeria (Nyarku, 2016: 158). The negative correlation between corruption and informal sector businesses is opined by Aidt (2008) who states that corruption impedes growth of vending enterprises. High levels of corruption in the informal sector in some African countries such as Ghana and Nigeria imply that vendors incur losses that are determined by corruption expenses. As such, they fail to expand. It is further explained by Gaviria (2002) that corruption negatively affects informal sector businesses growth and development in such a way that sales growth enormously face diminution and the employment growth of such enterprises is hampered. Besides, Oppong et al (2014) are of the submission that a high rate of corruption affects the record keeping of Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Given the fact that there is improper record keeping, most fail to pay fees and taxes to the government. Daniel and Ahmad (2013) also submit that corruption increases the cost

of investment and doing business among SMEs. As the costs of doing business get up surged, potential business growth is undermined. The same applies to vending enterprises that fail to grow since corruption is adding up a burden of unnecessary and unplanned investment costs.

According to Burger and Holland (2006) as cited in Kanu (2015: 14), corruption negatively influences markets and competition; leads to mistrust amongst the citizens of a country; erodes the rule of law; destroys government legality and compromise the integrity of SMEs. Odi, (2014) likens corruption to a cancer and states that corruption is an impediment for cultural, economic and political development of any country which destructs the functioning of several organs of the government. Mendoza et al (2013) further postulate that corruption has an impact of either throwing sand or greasing the wheels of commerce. By that, it means that vendors who are able to bribe authorities operate without harassment and they may operate even at undesignated places where there is high demand for their products. Vice versa is also true for vendors who cannot bribe authorities as they risk eviction and confiscation of goods.

Friedman et al (2000) state that it has been indicated in Sierra Leone that corruption has led to an overwhelming majority of SMEs operating in the shadow economy. This implies that SMEs remain in-formalised and it is this informality that leaves the SMEs vulnerable to unproductivity (Dabla-Norris et al, 2008). The notion of unproductivity is further supported by De Rosa et al. (2010), who submit that as a firm's productivity is minimised due to corruption, profitability of the firm becomes minimal. The fact that corruption limits the profitability of a firm is an indication that corruption is a monetary limitation for SMEs (Daniel and Alma, 2012).

Different scholars also indicate that corruption has an overall effect of hampering economic growth. Private investment in the form of SMEs is regarded as key towards economic growth through contributing to a higher Gross Domestic Product (GDP) through payment of taxes (Mauro, 1995). Given high levels of corruption in an economy, vice versa is true since besides avoidance of tax payment to the government, corruption is responsible for bringing down private investment in the form of SMEs (Acs et al., 1997).

The Public Choice Theory and its relationship to corruption in vending

In order to understand the root cause of corruption in vending in Zimbabwe, the research employed the Public Choice Theory. Public Choice Theory can be defined as a theory that analyses politics from an

economist's perspective (Sandstrom and Sandstrom, 2005). The perspective regards individuals and groups such as bureaucrats and public servants as rational egoists whose primary concern is benefiting their own interests. Applying this to corruption in vending, it could be deduced that revenue officers and police officers from Harare City Council may fall in the category of rational egoism with the primary concern, not of maintaining sanity in the city through ensuring that vendors operate at designated places but of benefiting from bribery fees paid by unscrupulous vendors. The Rochester School (2014) also argues that at the heart of public choice theory is the notion that an official at any level be they in public or private sector, "acts at least partly in his own self-interest, and some officials are motivated solely by their own self-interests". This applies to vendors in Harare who opt not to pay taxes to Harare City Council but instead opt to pay bribery fees to council officers so that they may continue to operate illegally.

The Public Choice Theory is such that public officials manipulate economic policies for pecuniary ends and promote various forms of rent-seeking activities. Public officials exploit the system to their advantage because of weak restraining institutions. The case could be argued to be no exception to Harare where officers who are supposed to promote order and sanity in vending take advantage of a somehow "weak" Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission and a somehow "weak" rule of law and engage in the rent-seeking activities that pertain to corruption. Robinson (1999) argues that this theory tends to be premised on a simplistic view of the public which assumes that state organisations and public officials are exclusively motivated by self-interest, and leaves little room for active and conscious intervention.

The Public Choice Theory is established in the neo-liberal paradigm (Moyo, 2014: 63). In this case, according to Bazan (2009), neo-liberal paradigm which is also known as the Washington Consensus refers to a set of economic policies advocated for by neo-classical economic theory. It is a doctrine that encourages the implementation of reforms to promote the operation of markets that includes economic and political reforms for the sake of triggering a process of revolutionary social change. Moyo (2014) is of the view that public officials manipulate macro-economic programmes and policies pecuniary ends and promote various forms of rent-seeking activities.

Public Choice Theory concerns the behaviour of public sector bureaucrats, which is at the centre of the theory. While office bearers in both the public and private institutions are supposed to work in the public interest, putting into practice the policies of government as efficiently and effectively as

possible, they become self-interested and motivated by benefiting themselves (Niskanen, 1973). The realisation that employees in different sectors are driven by self-interests is an extremely serious conclusion in understanding manifestation of corruption in Zimbabwe's vending enterprise which sees Harare City Council Police Officers apply extortion in order to get kickbacks from vendors in Harare Central Business District. There are also submissions from female vendors in Harare which demonstrate that sex-extortion (insisting for sexual benefits from female vendors) is often used by unscrupulous male Municipal Police Officers who in turn ensure that compliant female vendors would later operate without having their goods confiscated. The above sentiment implies that the Public Choice Theory is relevant to vending since personal interest may override City of Harare Authorities' choice of bringing sanity to the city by making sure that vendors operate at designated sites and besides, they pay stipulated taxes as per Harare City Council's bye-laws. To that effect, police officers from Harare City Council may subvert existing rules and generate extra-legal income for themselves by receiving kickbacks from vendors who operate without the necessary requirements.

Methodology

Study Area

The study was carried out at Gulf Complex, a Shopping Centre located in Harare Central Business District (CBD). Harare City Council requires only vendors who sell airtime, fruits, vegetables, and dried food to operate around Gulf Complex. Vendors at Gulf Complex just like any other vendors are supposed to pay rates to Harare City Council as encapsulated in Statutory Instrument 159 of 2014 of the Harare Vendors Bye-Laws.

However, the area has been occupied by vendors some of whom are not registered and they sell products like second hand cellphones and cellphone accessories. The study noted that there are also vendors who sell illegal products like marijuana, glue for sniffing and cocaine at the complex. There are also vendors who trade from vehicles which are parked near the Gulf Complex Building. These vendors and many others operating at Gulf Complex are unregistered with Harare City Council. This is largely due to failure to meet the compliance costs that is required by the local government. Corruption easily takes place between Revenue Officers from Harare City Council and the unregistered vendors. It was vendors' submissions to the study, that when Revenue Officers from Harare City Council move around intending to collect and record taxes, they encounter such unregistered traders. Instead of evicting the vendors, Revenue Officers were reported to often extort these vendors. The vendors

added that, it is also vendors who plead with the Revenue Officers and deliberately seek to pay bribery fees to secure their "illegal" operations on undesignated operations. According to vendors within the area, the Zimbabwe Republic Police who often assist the City Council in maintaining order at vending sites in Harare have also resorted to corruption when dealing with vendors. As a way of evading the arresting powers vested in the Zimbabwe Republic Police, and eviction from operating sites the vendors also bribe the police officers.

The study area was strategically chosen as there was a vendor within the area who was willing to assist with the location of other study participants. The sensitivity of the topic "corruption" necessitated the engagement of participants who were unafraid and willing to discuss on-goings at Gulf Complex market area. Snowballing was thus the primary sampling technique utilized for the study

Research Design

A case study design was employed for the overall research. Yin (1984: 23) defines a "Case study as a research method that investigates contemporary real-life phenomenon through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships in a small geographical area that might comprise a limited number of individuals chosen as subjects of study is selected in a case study method". The major reason for making use of the Gulf Complex case study was to bring an explanation on the causal relationships between vending and corruption, bring a description on the real-life context of corruption and make an evaluation of corruption in vending at Gulf Complex.

Target population

The population for this study comprised vendors operating at Gulf Complex. The number of vendors who trade at Gulf Complex is not fixed as new vendors often venture into the business at the area almost daily while a few leave the vending site. Nevertheless, there were more than a hundred vendors at the time of the study. Information collected from National Association of Vendors' Union of Zimbabwe (NAVUZ) supported this finding, with a record of ninety vendors at the Complex. The study subscribed to this threshold and stopped at the twenty vendors. There was also repetitive information, from semi-structured interviews on reaching the twentieth vendor.

Snowball sampling procedure, allowed the engagement of willing participants. Surprisingly, the majority of vendors at Gulf Complex were open enough to discuss the issue of corruption, resulting in twenty participants. One vendor known for

selling fruits at a corner of Gulf Complex assisted in reaching and engaging with other participants. Vogt (1999) asserts that snowballing is as a technique for finding research subjects whereby one subject plays a key role in locating other relevant research subjects.

Key informant interviews were also employed in soliciting information from six Municipal Police Officers referred to by another well-connected vendor. Additionally, some of the secondary data was collected from the National Association of Vendors' Union of Zimbabwe (NAVUZ).

The study adopted four major processes of interviewing explained by Patton (2002) which included the development of a research plan. Verification on the information needed and participants providing the information was also done. Further to plan development, was the use of an interview protocol that included the rules that were to guide the administration and implementation of the interviews to be conducted. These were the instructions followed for the semi-structured interviews. They guided the study to ensure consistency between interviews and also maximizing findings' reliability. As an aftermath, data collection was done. Data collected was recorded, transcribed and analyzed. During the data analysis stage, all the interview responses were read through and patterns identified in responses.

Findings and Discussion

The analysis resulted into three overarching themes that is; forms of corruption, reasons behind corruption in vending and effects of corruption on vending.

Forms of corruption that take place in vending

The study established that the most common forms of corruption that take place in vending are bribery, extortion, clientelism and nepotism. Submissions from participants indicated that bribery is the most common form of corruption that is rife in vending. According to Devine (2010), bribery is an act of giving money or certain goods and services to authorities or an official so as to obtain favourable treatment from them. In this case, it was indicated that bribery occurs as officials from Harare City Council are given unreceipted money by vendors so that the vendors are not evicted from their vending sites and have their goods confiscated. Besides, vendors are always in a predicament as at times their goods and services get stolen by other vendors. When they report the cases to the police, the police often require the payment of bribes for them to write a docket and to carry out an investigation on the

theft. One vendor who sells second hand cell phones and cell phone accessories was quoted saying:

The situation has now become pejorative. I often recall a certain incident which I recorded as a black experience in my four years of vending when I had my I-pad stolen by my peers at the market. When I reported the matter to the police at the Market Square Police Office, the officer who handled my case insisted for a US\$5 bribery fee before he could write a docket and make a further investigation into my case. Due to the fact that I was financially quagmire, I could not pay the bribery fee and as a result, the officer could not even make a further investigation into the case.

The above submission is a clarion indication that bribery is also rife between vendors and members of the Zimbabwe Republic Police. Due to inconsistencies in government policies whereby vendors are often given the green light to operate and afterwards, the vendors face eviction threats, vendors are left with no other alternative except bribing City Council Revenue Officers and Zimbabwe Republic Police Officers.

Further, extortion is also a severe common form of corruption that is prevalent in vending. Extortion is when officials use power and influence to threaten the citizenry so as to drive certain individual utilities from them (Doig, 2006). It was indicated that some Revenue Officers from Harare City Council threaten vendors with eviction powers in order to receive kickbacks from vendors. Aside that, unscrupulous Zimbabwe Republic Police Officers also employ extortion to threaten vendors who are ignorant of the laws of the land by taking advantage of their policing uniforms and authority. Some female vendors also testified that some unscrupulous male officers also resort to sex-extortion whereby they insist for sexual benefits from desperate female vendors who would not have complied with City Council Bye-Laws. One female vendor made the testimony indicated below;

My son in-law, survival of vendors is now difficult. It now depends on one's ability to bribe or establish friendships with top guys in order to operate without eviction and confiscation of goods. I myself used to be a frequent victim of confiscation of goods by Municipal Police. The fate ended when one day I happened to cry desperately in front of one male Municipal Police Officer whom I informed that I am a widow with three young kids and I have nothing to offer them if I stop vending. The officer obviously felt very bad. He was also stunned by my beauty. I managed to redeem my goods that he was almost going to confiscate. He apologised and truthfully, he further insisted that he was willing to comfort me in my difficult circumstances. In short, he then dated me and up to now we still date. That is how I have

managed to operate without any further hassles my dear.

The above submission is indicative that sex-extortion is now another form of corruption that is now prevalent in vending. It is now being utilised as an alternative for protection by desperate vendors.

According to study findings from Gulf Complex, the costs and requirements for registration and compliance are very high and cannot be easily met by ordinary vendors. The proper channel takes long for a vending licence to be granted. However, due to clientelism, some vendors are easily granted vending licences due to the political support and loyalty that they tirelessly render to the ruling political party. Due to an exponential rate of unemployment in the country, many young men and women are resorting to vending as the last corridor with economic hopes that now however as in accord with vendors' sentiments seem to be bleak. Due to high competition of individuals who now want to be registered as vendors, clientelism has become a terrible requirement for the young men and women who seek to be registered as vendors. Vendors reported that at times, their political records are scrutinised before they are properly granted licences and they have to prove evidence of political support and loyalty to the ruling political party by producing ZANU PF membership cards. This form of corruption which is known as clientelism is defined by Gerring and Thacker (2004) as the exchange of goods and services for political support, often involving an implicit or explicit quid-pro-quo. In other words, clientelism is a political system at the heart of which is an asymmetric relationship between groups of political actors described as patrons and clients and political parties. Those who render ceaseless political support and loyalty to the ruling political party easily buy their way out in establishing vending enterprises.

Corruption was also indicated to become so rife that engaging in vending while exercising virtues has become hard going. The process is now infiltrated with a lot of nepotism to such an extent that vendors who are new in the city always find it difficult to start up operations. Goudie and Stasavage (2004) define nepotism as a form of corruption that pertains to the practice among those coupled with power and influence as they favour friends and relatives in giving those jobs and also exempting them from meeting certain compliance costs. Information solicited from vendors and Municipal Police Officers indicate that authorities in Harare City Council may easily process vending documents for their relatives. Those vendors who are related to certain authorities working at Harare City Council are exempted from payment of tax and as the revenue officers ask for bribes from vendors, such vendors are exempted from meeting bribery costs

upon disclosure that they are related to certain authorities in the local government authority.

Nepotism is also common among suppliers of certain goods and services as they offer goods and services to those customers whom they readily know especially when the goods are in scarcity. New vendors often face challenges as they fail to obtain goods and services from suppliers. This is common among suppliers of perishable goods and services such as bananas as they prefer to provide more orders to retail vendors whom they are already linked to.

Reasons behind corruption in vending

There is a plethora of reasons that fuel corruption in vending. These reasons explained in this section are according to participants' sentiments. Both scholarly and primary research evidence indicate that the perforation of corruption in vending is due weak institutions in Zimbabwe. The major institution in Zimbabwe that is responsible for combating, investigating and exposing cases of corruption in both the public and the private sectors as in terms of Section 225 (a-h) of the country's constitution is the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC). The institution is also entitled to carrying public awareness on corruption so that every individual in the country desists from corruption. It also has to advocate for the arrest of those individuals who are found responsible for corruption.

However, as submitted by participants, the presence of corruption in vending is a clear proof that cases of corruption are not being investigated and exposed. Vendors testified that they had never witnessed any awareness campaigns being carried out by the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission. In fact, out of the twenty vendors who were interviewed, all of them reported that they knew not anything known as the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission. One vendor who was interviewed while trying to explain the reasons behind corruption in vending bluntly pointed out that the Zimbabwe-Anti-Corruption Commission has become a moribund vertical corpse whose dismal failure and horrendous incompetency to curb corruption in government has bred and multiplied corruption at grassroots activities like vending. This is because Revenue Officers from Harare City Council and Zimbabwe Republic Police take a corruption cue from corrupt and unscrupulous politicians in government. Due to the fact that unscrupulous politicians are benefiting from corruption as they ruthlessly use their political power to utilise much of the available scarce resources, those with less authority at the bottom of the pyramid are left with no option except using authority within their reach to engage in corruption

with vendors so that they also benefit from corruption the way politicians do. This sentiment is supported by the Institutional Theory. According to the Institutional Theory, strong, efficient and accountable institutions in an economy promote good governance, social justice, democracy and transparency (Makumbe, 2011). This means that if institutions such as the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission are characterised by docility, lack of transparency and corruption, poor governance becomes prevalent. When a country is riddled with poor governance, corruption prevails in most socio-economic sectors such as vending.

According to Manor (1991), bad governance is mismanagement of public resources or affairs. A bad governance system is featured by arbitrary policy making, unaccountable bureaucracies, unjust legal systems and civil society that is unengaged in public life and rife corruption (Moyo, 2011). Vendors and Revenue Officers submitted that corruption has become endemic in vending due to the fact that there is preoccupation with addressing political problems at the top while forgetting that public life also needs to be managed. Bad governance is also such that vendors are viewed as a source of political support during election periods. Vendors are left operating unprocedurally during these times enabling and promoting corruption in vending. As a result, corruption takes place in vending since everyone does what seems right in their own eyes due to bad governance. In other words, study findings indicate that bad governance has innovated a dominant instinct of lack of transparency in vendors and other people as the government no longer manages public affairs to promote transparency.

In addition, interviewed vendors informed the study that corruption in vending is also fuelled by policy inconsistencies. The government may at any time through the Ministry of Local Government make a declaration that vending in Harare's Central Business District has been illegalised. As a result, many vendors after such a declaration by the government are evicted from all vending sites in the city. However, according to information solicited from participants, there are a few vendors who remain operating despite a declaration from the government and these vendors would be taking advantage of their political back up. Other vendors after realising that there are remnant pockets of vendors who remain behind even after such a declaration, they also begin to pack at Gulf Complex and other vending sites. Policy inconsistencies have bred corruption in that individuals who want to join the vending business for the first time will not go through the required proper channels of registering with Harare City Council since they have the perception that the government might change policy

at any time and evict the vendors including those who are registered.

Apart from the above determinant of corruption in vending, some participants also blame the application process and the registration process for vending in Harare as costly. The process takes long and when the entire documentation is finally done, registered vendors are supposed to pay a monthly compliance fee which the vendors simply rated as very high. The other requirement for registered vendors is that after they have been allocated vending space, they should always operate at that place. The City Council does not require mobility. Due to such restrictions, a lot of vendors find it cheaper to bribe some individual authorities so that they are granted vending space without registration. When there is stiff competition on the market, the vendors easily move to other vending sites where there is limited competition. Some vendors just find an open space and they start selling their commodities without even approaching any Harare City Council office. As Municipal Police move around maintaining order around vending sites and as they meet unregistered and non-compliant vendors, they are given kickbacks by those unregistered vendors who could not comply with City Council requirements. Some vendors would also give the unscrupulous Municipal Police Officers fruits which they would be selling as a way of maintaining rapport with the authorities.

The research also established that some vendors sell illegal products whose sale cannot be approved for vending by Harare City Council due to their illegality. Such products include stolen cell phones and cell phone accessories, marijuana and toxic alcoholic materials such as cocaine. Vendors who sell them often do so from their vehicles. Zimbabwe Republic Police often sacrifice the laws of the land as they prefer to receive bribes from vendors who sell such illegal products. Six vendors insisted that they often offer marijuana to police officers who assist in maintaining order and sanity in the city so that they can continue selling their marijuana without arrest or eviction. Therefore, the sale of illegal goods on its own is a cause of corruption in Harare.

Constitutionally, corruption is illegal in Zimbabwe. The establishment of the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission as in terms of Section 255 of the Constitution which should investigate and expose corruption in both public and private sectors shows that corruption is illegal. However, many vendors are ignorant of their rights and hence they are always willing to comply with unconstitutional and illegal requirements from corrupt authorities at the expense of offering compliance to constitutional requirements of paying compliance fees to Harare City Council instead of offering bribes. Due to

ignorance of the laws of the land which defy corruption, vendors cherish corruption as a survival strategy in business.

Effects of corruption on vending

Basing on the evidence obtained from the study, the effects of corruption on vending are based on the typology of corruption. Mkpoyen, et al (2014) states that in a heavily regulated economy, one can find two distinct types of corruption which are expansive corruption and restrictive corruption. According to Mbaku (1996), expansive corruption involves activities that improve competitiveness and flexibility of the market. For instance, the payment of bribes to Municipal Police Officers is an expansive type of corruption which helps mitigate the restrictive aspects of high compliance costs.

Restrictive corruption on the other hand limits opportunities for productive and socially beneficial exchange (Mbaku, 1996). Restrictive corruption comprises public sector which involves illegal appropriation of public goods for private use such as the abuse of authority by Municipal Police Officers and at times Zimbabwe Republic Police.

Participants concurred that corruption can be beneficial in certain instances where there is need to relax the bureaucratic red tape at Harare City Council. This implies that in such a scenario, corruption falls within the category of a typology of corruption known as expansive corruption. This is in tandem with Nye (1961)'s postulation that corruption reduces the channels of bureaucracy in a bureaucratic system. This means that because of corruption, vendors do not follow the proper channels of registration with Harare City Council that take a long time before a vending licence is approved. Papers will not take time while moving from office to office for approval but all the channels are reduced due to the fact that authorities would have been bribed and they process operating licences faster.

Besides, corruption was praised for promoting easy access to goods and services for some vendors. Vendors who usually have better connections with suppliers easily obtain goods and services at the expense of vendors who are new in the business. Suppliers of certain products would provide supply of goods to those vendors whom they already know especially when the goods are in scarcity.

To some vendors, corruption is beneficial as vendors would not be meeting expenses in the form of paying compliance fees to the City Council. Instead of paying \$ 130 per month to Harare City Council, vendors would pay an amount like \$ 15 for the whole month in the condition that they are well connected with individual Revenue Officers.

Compliance costs are also reduced since vendors who engage in corruption have chances of flexing their market. Some vendors who might use their political privileges or those who have close relatives in Harare City Council offices do not pay any tax to the council. To them, it is beneficial since they do not incur any costs in paying tax. This means that they easily move to a site where there is less competition whenever they are faced with stiff competition. Registered vendors are often impeded by rigidities even when they are threatened by stiff competition. They have to remain at their designated vending sites.

Despite having certain advantages to both vendors and the officers, corruption is also replete with a plethora of negative effects on vendors' socio-economic wellbeing. Chief among them is reduced income and profits. Corruption poses negative effects purporting to reduced income levels among vendors. Since corruption on average takes place daily in vending, vendors would be left with a paltry income that cannot sustain them and their families. Corruption facilitates vendors to be able to continue operating but they operate at a break-even point. The little profits that vendors attain are the ones that they use in payment of bribes.

Besides, corruption has become a major impediment towards business growth in vending. Vendors expressed that they wish to incentivise themselves towards formalisation and extension of their vending enterprises. However, due to the fact that they are always operating at a break-even point, they cannot sponsor themselves towards formalisation and business growth since they give away their profits to the police.

It was also established during the study that vendors who fail to bribe police officers when they seek legal protection from them fail to secure legal protection from the police. Typical examples that were cited by interviewed vendors involved cases such as incidences when vendors have their goods stolen or they are threatened by other vendors. When they report to the police, the officer might first of all require a bribe before he writes a docket and making further investigations. One vendor is quoted saying;

I once had my cell phones that I was selling stolen and when I reported the case to the police, the officer who attended my case told me that he was having other commitments and that he could only pursue an investigation on the stolen mobiles after being given US\$ 15 for buying a drink. Since I was financially exhausted, an investigation could not be made since I had failed to bribe the officer.

The statement by that vendor is a clear indication that corruption has become a socio-economic vagary

that promotes socio-economic desperation in vending.

As another negativity of corruption, it is only corrupt vendors who are always able to meet bribery requirements from suppliers that are able to access goods for sale. In times of shortages from suppliers, vendors who are not well connected despite having capital are not able to order goods for resale since nepotism becomes more routine.

Corruption stimulates great degree of peril in vending through increased competition. According to Acemoglu and Verdier (2000), competition is facilitated through corruption in that more business competitors can be enabled to join the industry through cronyism, payment of kickbacks and bribery to authorities. This is a practical scenario at Gulf Complex since due to corruption, many more vendors join the vending site. Harare City Council's requirement is that only a few vendors should operate at Gulf Complex. However, because of corruption, no one at Harare City Council is making it an assurance that only the stipulated number of vendors operate at Gulf Complex. It is even a source of incentives to Zimbabwe Republic Police and Revenue Officers from Harare City Council for unregistered vendors to operate there. Despite all that, corruption has become such a pernicious handicap to registered vendors who now face stiff competition from unregistered and unlicensed vendors who operate at Gulf Complex. Increased competition from unregistered and unlicensed vendors has a negative bearing on profitability as vending income gets reduced for licenced vendors.

In addition, vendors blamed corruption as a source of household conflicts. This is because since income is reduced as vendors meet the burden of the cost of corruption, vendors end up failing to generate enough income to support their families. As a result, household income is reduced. Due to the fact that household income is reduced, family conflicts occur as one partner suspects the other partner who is a vendor of misusing the income generated from vending. According to the vendors, family conflicts occur as partners suspect each other of misusing income generated from vending through unorthodox means like promiscuity.

The study also learnt that development of mistrust between employers and employees is also common. This is common for vendors that are employed by other vendors to assist in manning vending stalls. The individual who buys the goods from suppliers is also the one who is responsible for paying compliance fees to the City Council. The employee who is the vendor selling the products and is paid a commission by the employee often finds himself in a predicament since he has to strike a balance between corruption costs and the employer's

income. Employers usually hold the belief that their vendors manipulate them through certain means of chicanery. Often, misunderstandings take place and some vendors resultantly get laid off from their employment which would be the only source of income in a paralysed economy.

It was also further indicated that Revenue Officers from City Council have a tendency of attaching debts to vendors who fail to meet corruption costs. Some vendors become attached to debts as unmet costs of corruption persist to accumulate. As bribery debts keep accumulating, the heavily indebted vendors get stressed and depressed. As an outcome, the psychosocial wellbeing of the vendors gets negatively affected and ultimately lead to reduced individual and family morale.

As further indicated during the study, corruption has become an extra burden that increases investment costs. According to Acs and Varga (2005), investment is capital under placement with the expectation of deriving income and profit from its use. Corruption negatively affects vending for it increases the costs of investment. Apart from the costs and uncertainty of doing business in vending, vendors are faced with an extra burden associated with investment insecurity. By investment insecurity, it means that vendors who have not cleared bribery costs have no security for their vending commodities on the market as they risk having their commodities taken away. Therefore, vendors have to make it an assurance that supplementary resources are devoted towards bribery management. Given the condition that there is no extra cost of investment brought about through corruption, more resources could be reinvested towards business expansion.

Some vendors pointed corruption to be a source of promiscuity. As vendors tarry to make ends meet in the city where almost all avenues have to be exploited through thick and thin, female vendors were said to be usual victims who fall prey to some unscrupulous officers whose slogan for those who fail to offer kickbacks is "a thigh for a pass." Due to the fact that some female vendors have to provide maximum protection to their sole source of income, they end up providing sexual benefits to some male officers.

Policy Recommendations

Given the study's findings, it is recommended that in order to eradicate corruption and the effects that it has not only on vending but also on economic growth, there is need to strengthen the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC) so that it is allowed to operate as in terms of its constitutional establishment. There is need for civil society in Zimbabwe to lobby efforts through the advocacy

coalition framework in order to ensure that the government is not hindering any efforts by ZACC to investigate cases of corruption in both the public and private sector. As per submissions from key informants, corruption can best be combated at all levels in Zimbabwe including vending when ZACC is made an independent board whose membership comprises apolitical commissioners. Commissioners who occupy the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission have to fill in the posts through normal job application procedures as is the case in filling in any job vacancies in both the public and private sector. Otherwise, potential candidates who apply to be ZACC commissioners may have to go for interviews before a parliamentary committee that recommends the eligibility of potential commissioners after job interviews. As a way of ensuring effectiveness of ZACC, background checks should be carried out for successful candidates so that only candidates who are recruited as commissioners can add towards effectiveness and strength of ZACC by ensuring that all the commissioners given jobs are truly apolitical. Besides, there is also need to devote adequate and necessary resources for ZACC to carry out its duties sufficiently as far as raising anticorruption messages at all levels is concerned.

Besides, given the fact that corruption is originating from bad governance in Zimbabwe, there is therefore need for the government to embark on good governance in terms of improving management of public affairs so that corruption at grassroots levels is curbed. For this to be achieved, there is need for civil society in Zimbabwe to advocate for good governance. Civil society should take arms of the government such as the Zimbabwe Republic Police to task for investigating cases of corruption in public affairs. Good governance may also be best promoted when corruption becomes a serious criminal offence that is followed by serious legal charges.

As a way of combating corruption at all levels including vending, there may also be need to embark on awareness raising by both state and non-state actors in Zimbabwe. It could be argued that awareness raising may best be attained by punishing

all corrupt individuals in government, public sectors and the private sectors. Those who are found guilty of corruption should be imprisoned. If corruption receives the punishment of imprisonment, awareness on the tragic consequences associated with corruption is raised. Behaviourists would in that case argue that behaviour change will be attained as people fear to engage in corruption as a result of fear of the agony of imprisonment.

There is also need to reduce compliance costs for vending operations since most vendors engage in corruption as a way of avoiding compliance costs which they perceive add to the costs of doing business.

Since Zimbabwe readily has an institution established to investigate, arrest and expose corrupt elements in both the private and public sector, there is also need to establish an anticorruption policy that guides the way ZACC has to operate. An anticorruption policy would assist in shaping the trajectory towards combating corruption at a national level through availing various projects and programmes meant to raise awareness on corruption.

Conclusion

Despite having a few positive effects on vending, corruption has a number of effects on vending operations in Zimbabwe. The effects that corruption has on vending have an indirect implication on economic growth since through corruption, the growth of vending operations that would finally stimulate the expansion of Small to Medium Enterprises in Zimbabwe is impeded. Such an impediment may also have an indirect implication on maintaining and expanding the high level of unemployment in Zimbabwe. Therefore, corruption in vending operations is not only disastrous to vending but it is also a threat to national growth and development. Due to the negative effects of corruption not only in vending but to other sectors as a whole, there is need to come up with strategies of combating corruption as illustrated in the paper's discussion.

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