

**AN ASSESSMENT OF COPING STRATEGIES IN THE MARKETING
OF PRODUCE BY STREET VENDORS: VHEMBE DISTRICT,
SOUTH AFRICA**

BY

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ABSTRACT

Unemployment is one of the most pressing socio-economic challenges in South Africa, and this drives people to start up their own informal businesses as a strategy to counter the failures of the formal economy to provide employment. The majority of self-employed people in the informal economy are the street vendors. The numbers of the street traders are difficult to enumerate as they fluctuate seasonally due to the availability of commodities being sold. Street vending is considered illegal in many countries and this poses serious challenges to the street traders as they are trying to create employment and earn a living for themselves. This study therefore wanted to determine the coping and surviving strategies adopted by the street vendors in their quest to generate essential poverty-reduction livelihoods and at the same time circumvent negative sentiments from the authorities. Information on how these traders cope and survive was therefore, collected. The study was conducted in the four major trading points of the Vhembe District Municipality. A sample of 132 street vendors was selected using a systematic random sampling technique. Primary data was collected through questionnaires administered to the street vendors and through face to face interviews. The collected data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics, and qualitative analysis. Ethical clearance was sought from the University Ethics committee, the Vendors' association and the respondents themselves.

The study uncovered that the majority of the vendors are able to generate income that enables them to live above the national poverty line, and that the major challenge that they face is harsh environmental conditions. This study therefore recommends that the laws governing street vending be relaxed so as to allow most people to engage in vending activities and alleviate poverty.

KEY WORDS: street vending, livelihoods, coping strategies, poverty line