



Email: chigwenyaaver@gmail.com

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Abstract:

Background

Urban Informality had been fast growing to be an integral part of cities economies, especially in the cities of the global South. Urban informality is becoming the new form of urbanisation as this phenomenon is proving to be a dominant and permanent feature in contemporary cities. However the planning systems in many cities has not been transforming so as to integrate urban informality in their planning and management systems. Hence urban informality has been left out in the planning and management of cities. The exclusion of urban Informality has resulted in them living in life threatening environments. Urban informality has proved to be an important source of livelihood to many urban dwellers and in most cities especially in the global South, it has been contributing to economic development as it has been significantly contributing to Gross Domestic Product of countries and creation of employment. The study examined the effects of excluding urban informality in the city's planning and management systems, both on the cityscape and on urban informality. The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To find out the the extent of urban informality in the city of Masvingo
2. To examine the integration of urban informality in the planning of city of Masvingo
3. To assess the effects of excluding urban informality in the management of the city
4. To recommend the best way forward for city and urban informality in the city of Masvingo.

Design/Methods

The research utilised a mixed methods approach to data collection, where both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. The questionnaire collected quantitative data from systematically sampled practitioners in the informal sector of the city of Masvingo. The semi-structured interviews collected qualitative data. These where done with keys stakeholders in the city. These were purposely selected among the leaders of planning organisations in the city of Masvingo. The leaders of several departments in the city were selected. Field observations also were done to compliment the interviews. Pictures of workspace used by urban Informality were taken to show the working environments of urban Informality. Data collected from quantitative methods was analysed using SPSS a computer package that can analyse data to form tables, cross-tabulations, graphs and chats. Qualitative data was analysed using thematic area analysis, where data was classified into themes so as to give a narrative.

The study established that urban informality in the city of Masvingo is multi-varied as it included various activities which include manufacturers of various items including building materials and household goods, others were into repairs, service delivery and street vendors.

Urban informality is the main economic activity in the city of Masvingo as it had taken over most of the city space. They are the main occupiers of the city space as it is estimated that it is occupying between 80 and 90% of city space. However the planning system in the city does not recognize urban informality as a legal space user hence they are not planning for its integration. Urban informality remains in provided by the city's planning system. The city still uses old statutes that criminalise activities of urban informality. As a result of this exclusion urban informality is found working in hazardous environments where there is no water, no refuse collection and overcrowded spaces. These environments are not good for them.

The planning system in the city of Masvingo deprive the people in the informal sector of their right to the city. Urban informality is not allowed space in the city centre as the city is keeping strict surveillance to weed out all activities of urban informality. This behaviour does not auger well for a just and inclusive city. Contemporary cities needs to be inclusive by allowing all city inhabitants a chance participate in city development. There is need for every city inhabitants to enjoy urban life by allowing them to appropriate city space so that they can access and use it for their livelihoods. Contemporary urban planning requires a shift on the way cities are planned because the urbanisation of poverty demands cities to business unusual. They should be innovative so as to solve social problems that currently bedevil cities.

The key limitations of the study was that the study was done in one city, it could be better if it was done in two or three cities in the global South so as to see how other Cities have treated urban informality in cities of the global South. A more in-depth study on the economic contribution of urban informality can help to show the importance of urban informality to city economy.

Urban informality is a reality in cities of global South which calls for its integration in the economies of cities. Cities can no longer be resilient and sustainable if the development of urban informality is not integrated in the main stream economy. Planning systems need to change the way they treat urban informality to try and integrate it for sustainable and inclusive cities. The urban informality had the right to the city, hence they should be included in provisioning systems of the city such water, sewer and waste management. The inclusion of urban informality will result in inclusive and sustainable cities.