

INTEGRATING STREET VENDORS AS ECONOMIC INFLUENCERS IN THE PLANNING OF METROPOLITAN CITIES - LESSONS FROM THE STUDY OF STREET VENDORS IN LAHORE, PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The street vendors act as economic influencer in metropolitan cities because of their presence especially low income can bid routine items at low price. Street vendors not only fulfil the financial needs of their families, provide supplies to various formal enterprises, create jobs for co-workers, generate revenue through penalties and indirect taxes and reduce unemployment. This research paper highlights the contribution of street vendors in the economic state of an urban dweller by quantifying the number of dependents which rely on the vendor for their well-being and satisfaction level of the vendors regarding aspects like, attitude of regulatory authority and business safety also determines major challenges in their business and the economic factors that pushed them in informal sector. Lamentably there is insufficient research done in this area and this research gap has motivated researchers to grab the attention of local policymakers towards this significant aspect of an urban economy.

Keywords: Street Vendors; Local Economic Influencer; Business Safety for Vendors; Planning for Local Economic Development

INTRODUCTION

Pakistan informal sector is estimated around 73% of non-agriculture job and this percentage majorly include daily wage, petty trading i.e. street vending to rickshaw drivers to shoe shiner (Budlender, 2009). Thus, the major percentage of urban economy based on jobs like street vending, but this sector is most neglected in policies. The workers in informal economy specially street vendors concerned about two negative factors i.e. value chain dynamics and government policies (Dias, Melanie, 2016). Beside this negative factors yet, large portion of urban population in developing world is living from informal sector and mostly this informality is in form of street vending (Davis, 2004). Since, growing population needs jobs and this demand fulfilled by informal sector and easiest way is street vending. Having a glance on city like Lahore is the second largest city of Pakistan

accommodating population of 11,126,285 (PBS, 2017). Current population is approximately double of that represented by Census 1998 i.e., 6,318,745 which depicts that Lahore population has been increased by 59.65 percent in just 19 years' period (DCR, 1998).

There are no absolute or estimated figures available in Pakistan for street vendors. This lack of estimation of exact numbers of street vendors is due to negligence and limited work done in this subject (Mitullah, 2003). The Informal Economy Monitoring Study (IEMS) revealed the contribution of street vendors in the economy of a big city. The study's analysis shows that street vendors fulfil the financial need of their families, provide supplies to various formal enterprises, create jobs for helpers and co-workers, generate revenue through penalties and indirect taxes (Roever and Skinner, 2016a).

This is also in debate that Street vendors should not be forced to exit markets or streets with the only objective of making streets beautiful and appealing (Xue, et. al., 2015). They can also become the element of beautification of streets and city eventually. Developed countries have realized the importance of this statement and now they are taking steps towards legalizing street vendors. They knew the significance of street vending business, which attracts tourists through promoting local cuisine and handcrafted gifts.

Another research on informal sector in Pakistan focused on enhancing urban fabric by balancing street vendors (an important aspect of informal sector) and right of citizens to appreciate public sense of the built-up area. The street vendors are often allowed to use a public space by paying some sort of bribes to the police or city administration (Khan, 2012). Further, this informal sector provide range of services to lower income groups from education, health, transport, employment, recreation & entertainment and employment at quite reasonable price and yet contribution of informal sector specially street vending are not recognized at any governmental level (Hasan, 2002). With the above discussion, this research paper is envisioned to look into how street vendors act as an economic influencer in Pakistan as this aspect is missing and help policy makers to understand issues and benefits of street vendors in developing country like Pakistan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Academic interest of street vending developed due to major involvement of poor in informal economy in urban areas and it also attached with rural urban linkages that provide opportunity for growth of attached rural areas (Xue and Huang, 2015). Street vending is an entry level job as one can easily start its own work with minimum initial investment and this characteristic makes it important sector in urban economy (Mahadevia et al., 2013). In Asian, African and Latin American countries street vending is increasing at tremendous rate due to low economic growth rate (Bromley, 2000). Similarly, street vending is emerging gradually in the big city like Lahore, perception regarding street vendors is changing as one group is in favor of this phenomenon while other only considers it as nuisance for society.

Street vendors are considered as entrepreneurs of poor which start up their set up with comparatively low cost (Haque, 2017, Suraiya, 2012). Having a look at Asian countries, street vending in Bangladesh considered as illegal trading and street vendors face harassment from local authorities though they are contributing to economy of big city like

Dhaka as 90,000 are engaged in this activity (Bhowmik, 2005). Whereas, in Sri Lanka street vending is at ease as it is not considered as illegal whereas street vendors can pay daily tax to Municipal council (Bhowmik, 2005). Whereas, India is the home to more than 10 million street vendors not only responsible for earning for their families and dependents but also providing cheap and affordable things to low- income group of the country (Kishwar, 2005). Indian street vendors were under threat from police and municipal council as only less 10% were working legally means has license (Anjaria, 2006). To protect the rights of street vendors, their association in Mumbai filed a case in high court and later it regulated their identity (Anjaria, 2006). In response, parliament passed an Act called the street vendors (protection of livelihood and regulation of street vending) act, 2014 and according to this law street vendors will be registered and issued license. A study showed that this act is a mere piece of paper, as it is opposed by competent authorities in many states of India in way of implementation, thus true spirit of Act has not been attained in most parts of the country (Narang and Goyal, 2017). Apart from these limitations, this Act has achieved some character in distinguishing somehow the significance and distinctive function of vendors in the economy of the country (Neti and Guha, 2017).

Urban informal sector got greater share in Indian economy due to urban crisis led by lack of inadequate infrastructure and no policy for growth management and attached individuals seen as problem creator but they are result of weak policies and lack of initiatives (Roy, 2009). In India, these street vendors are seen through two lenses i.e. necessity driven activity in which vendors are compelled to choose as only option whereas other side is neo-liberal perspective and vendors are heroes reducing burden of government and boosting economic development (Williams and Gurtoo, 2012, Kapoor, 2007, (GOI), 2004). It has been witnessed that shift from socialist and populist regime to liberal economic policies that are lucre proposed by World Bank in Global South led to a decrease in jobs in formal sector and even educated individual those who belong to middle income groups are pushed to marginal urban poor status (Bayat et al., 2004). The urban informal sector absorbed these new marginal urban poor and thus street vending is not only considered for traditional poor rather educated, well skilled and people with greater status are dragged into this sector (Anjaria, 2006).

China street vending is not totally illegal and some municipalities designated places for vendors but and is selectively tolerated by authorities (Xue and Huang, 2015).

Street vending is a solution to unfavorable conditions of employment e.g. low wages, rural poverty and it helped to achieve autonomy and flexibility in earning of low income group (Huang et al., 2018). After some time, street vendors get expertise and are able to earn capital to transform their temporary structure into permanent and legal structure thus, entering the formal economy and attaining upward mobility. The success story of Daymond John (the founder and of FUBU) revealed that initially he was a street vendor but by expansion of his business, he became a millionaire (Richards, 2018).

In USA street vending is friendly as compared to Asian countries. New York is home to more than 20,000 street vendors, can be the best example of efficiently accommodating street vendor (Project, 2018). The street vendors must have a general street vendor license to sell products in a public space. The movement of allowing more street vendors was seriously opposed by developers and other stakeholders in the New York city which considered them not more than a parasite. Many street vendors are paying around \$25000 for 2 years permit time period in black market (Bromley, 2000). This shows that a city like

New York is also facing some sort of problems in dealing with the street vendors in a sustainable manner. While looking at African countries, majority of the street vendors are uneducated and are not fortunate enough to get job in formal sector, so they end up in informal employment. Owing to the fact that nearly 25 % of South Africa's population comes under unemployment category, street vending becomes the best option for them to feed their families (Petros, 2009). In Durban, third most populous city of South Africa, authorities are on their way in providing licenses to the street vendors but there are many hurdles and hindrances for vendors to feel secure and work freely. Even if they have permits, street vendors are still harassed by local police almost every week (Xolo, 2018). In the country like Zimbabwe, where there is much increase in rate of poverty and unemployment, informal economy plays its part in providing employment to a large proportion of population (Njaya, 2014). But policies as a whole are leading to the doubtful future of the informal sector especially the entrepreneurs like street vendors. Policy makers are not considering them as a significant element of the contemporary policies (Rogerson, 2016).

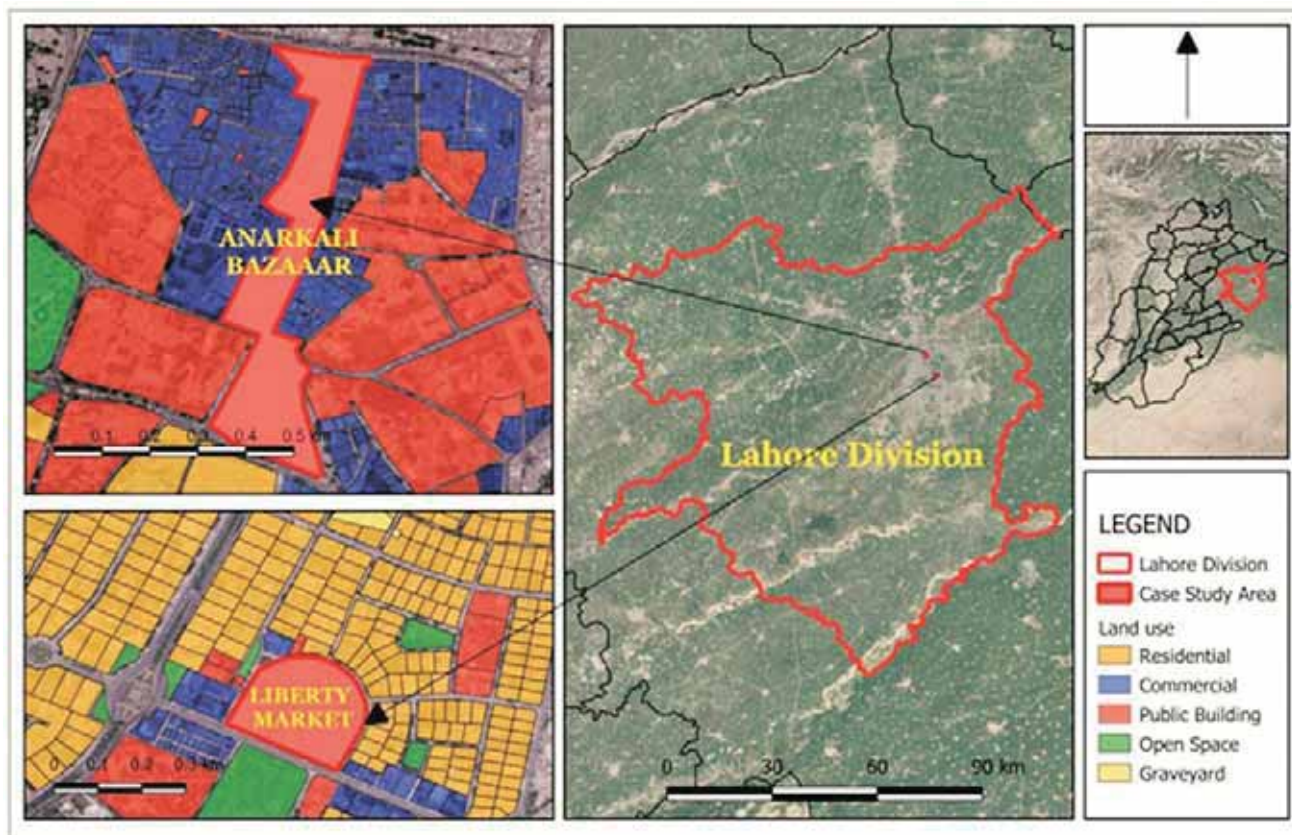


Figure-1: Location of Study Area.

Though, street vending is a sector that plays an important role in urban economy but over a three-year time frame, there were more than 50 instances of huge eviction operations of road vendors in urban communities worldwide (Roever and Skinner, 2016b). Looking at literature from Asian, African, and USA Street vending is seen as illegal business. Street vendors are facing issues of forceful eviction, bribes, absence of facilities, for example, toilets, electricity, so on and so forth. The situation is similar in Pakistan since Apex court of Pakistan ordered to rehabilitate markets and remove permanent and temporary structure of street vendors in Karachi, city of Pakistan. This leading towards loss of livelihood of large number of families. Therefore, this study is focused on street vendors, though from informal sector, but other side is they are economic influencers and reduce the burden of government toward unemployment at the same time contributing in economic development.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A precise questionnaire was designed to conduct semi-structured interviews of street vendors and determine the factors resulting in the development of street vending and assessing the socio-economic state of street vendors.

Street Vendors can be found in almost every street of Pakistan from high to low income localities. To study this aspect a mega city i.e. Lahore in Pakistan is selected. This city has population of 11.12 million and street vendors can be seen in almost every locality but in commercial areas, they have groups and working for longer periods that is why commercial areas were surveyed to gather primary data. Anarkali bazaar is selected as the case study area because it is largest of all unplanned bazaars of Lahore and estimated commercial area is 26 Acre. On the other hand, Liberty market is one of the well-known and largest planned markets of Lahore. It is situated in Gulberg town and estimated area is 17 Acre and 4 Kanal. The reason behind selecting these commercial areas was to capture street vendors from the largest planned and unplanned commercial areas of Lahore. In liberty market, the street vendors are considered as encroachers and also deal as encroachment by the Enforcement Cell of Lahore Development Authority (said one of the officials of Lahore Development Authority (LDA)) as well as in Anarkali where street vendors were going through forceful eviction by Metropolitan Corporation of Lahore (MCL) in April 2019 to make space for on-street motorcycle parking (source: interviewed street vendors, 2019).

The sample size for Anarkali bazaar determined as 154 out of 251 population (observed during the reconnaissance survey) with 5 % of margin of error using Slovin's formula. Respectively, eighty vendors were to be surveyed out of 100 approximate population in Liberty Market to generalize the findings to the whole population of street vendors in the case study area.

The response rate in case of Anarkali Bazaar was 55 percent and in Liberty Market, it was 59 percent. As vendors do not want to talk due to fear of eviction in their mind as they thought authorities were collecting data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio- Economic Factors

Majority of street vendors have household size ranging between 4 and 6 and a greater number of dependents and only 13 percent of street vendors have household size of less than 3. Level of education is a dominant factor which propels the street vendor to enter in street vending business. 38 percent of street vendors who participated in the survey were illiterate and only seven percent went to college for higher secondary education. House ownership status is a determining factor to evaluate the economic prosperity of a household. Approximately 62 percent vendors were found living in rented dwelling units and cannot afford to have their own houses. Daily earning is the most important socio-economic factor. Maximum vendors i.e. 42.7 percent were earning up to Rs. 4000 (26 USD) on daily basis. Forty four percent were making money between range of Rs.1000 (6.5 USD) to Rs. 3000 (20 USD) every day and 5.3 percent were those who were earning less than Rs.1000 (6.5 USD) each day. Street vendors were asked that how many earning members are in their households to know about the rate of households' dependency on them. It was observed that 52 percent street vendors are sole earning members of their

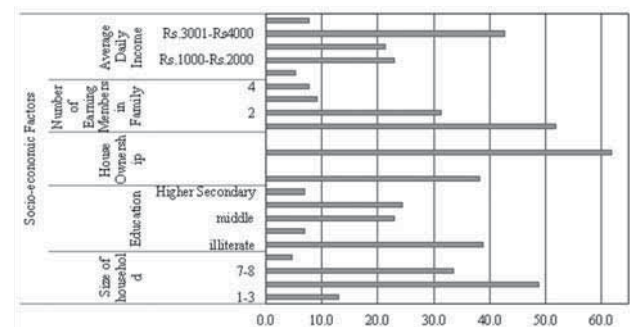


Figure-2: Socio-Economic Status of the Interviewed Street Vendor.
Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table-1: Number of Children Getting Support by the Street Vendors in the Case Study Area.

N = 131	Frequency	Percentage
1	36	27.5
2	40	30.5
3	15	11.5
N/A	40	30.5

families which expresses their importance in the economic status of their household (see figure 2).

Pushing Factors in the Street Vending Business

Availability and non-availability of job in the formal sector is an important push factor which increases the number in street vending business. It can be illustrated in figure 2 that approx. 50 percent street vendors were in this business because of non-availability of any job in the formal sector. Twenty-one percent were those who have done jobs before, but they were no longer doing that job because of some reasons. Rest of the 24 percent were doing jobs before getting into street vending, but they were not satisfied with the nature of the job and the salary offered.

Most of the formal businesses and earning sources required huge investment and loan from banks while street vendors cannot avail such loans from financial institutions and there hardly exists any incentive or financing program which facilitates them to arrange for the capital. As a result, they are attracted towards this informal street vending business because of low start-up/capital cost (Haque, 2017, Suraiya, 2012). Approx. thirty percent respondents recorded that they have invested principle cost of more than Rs.0.2 million (1316 USD). Twenty-seven percent were those who were required with the capital cost ranging between Rs.0.15 (1000 USD) and Rs. 0.2 million (1316 USD) to stay in this business. 27 percent street vendors who spent between Rs. 50000 (330 USD) to Rs 0.10 million (1000 USD) to buy goods and kiosk.

In most of the metropolitan cities of developing and developed countries, greater numbers of street vendors have migrated from rural areas or nearby small towns and cities. Once they entered the city, they realized that because of their less competency they cannot enter formal sector consequently, they are pushed towards street vending business. Nearly, 37% of surveyed street vendors were originally from cities other than Lahore.

Contribution Towards Society

Street vendors are the remarkable addition to the urban fabric which offer a great contribution to any country's economy. But this contribution is looked down upon and neglected (Suraiya, 2012). Field survey showed that twenty-nine percent of street vendors have employed helpers for assisting them in completing certain daily functions. This shows that besides generating revenue for themselves, they are also responsible for a reasonable number of people's economic survival. These employees are also getting experience in the business of street vending and there greater possibility that they will start their own informal business in future by either saving from the earnings from this job or getting capital from one of the capital sources mentioned in figure 2.

Street vendors are thought as an important part of the society because they are responsible to feed a family of large size. Almost seventy percent of the surveyed street vendors send their children to school whereas 30.5 percent were those who were not sending any of their children to school (Table 1).

Challenges Faced by the Street Vendors in the Market Area

Whether we talk about developing countries or developed countries, street vendors are facing some sort of challenges in both but may be different in nature. To point out major problems, street vendors were asked to state the type of challenges they were facing in the case study areas.

Majority of the street vendors, i.e. 67 percent were of the view that harassment in form of restrictions by the controlling authorities is the major challenge which they are facing in their market area. Whereas, 35 vendors responded that they see "no legitimacy" a main reason behind street vendors' backwardness in Lahore City. While 16 percent street vendors

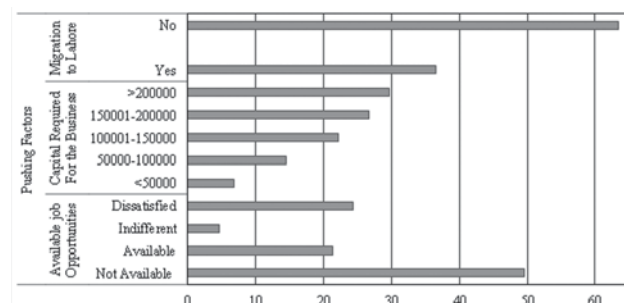


Figure-3: Pushing Factors in the Street Vending Business.
Source: Field Survey, 2020.

Table-2: Cronbach's Alpha Reliability, Results Summary.

Number of Cases	20
Percent	100.0
Cronbach's Alpha	.701
Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	.708
Number of Items	11

claimed low profits to be the main challenge for them in the market area where permanent shop owners were making high profits.

The vendors which responded that they were facing some sort of harassment in the case study area were asked to further classify the type to make clear understanding. Twenty-one percent were dealing with harassment in form of penalties charged by local authority i.e. Municipal Corporation of Lahore (MCL) and collection of bribes by security guards in Liberty Market (Source: interviewed street vendors).

Eviction is the major form of harassment by local authority on the street vendors and it was confirmed by twenty percent of the respondents. While twenty-four interviewed vendors claimed that the authorities not only evicted them but also charged them for using temporary market area. 24 percent vendors openly expressed that authority officials are involved in taking bribes from them. Maximum vendors of around 35% responded that they have been evicted on nearly daily basis.

Level of Satisfaction

The satisfaction of street vendor is an important factor in visualizing their chances of survival in this street vending business. A set of questions were asked to detect their satisfaction level regarding different aspects. These questions included satisfaction of the vendors regarding business safety, no. of buyers per day, the attitude of buyers, the attitude of the concerned regulatory authority towards them and daily earning. The scale of the above stated variables was kept 5-point Likert scale with options ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Majority of the street vendors i.e. 50.4% said that they are dissatisfied with the business safety in their area. This is mainly because of the challenges they are facing as mentioned in figure 4. 45.8 percent vendors were satisfied with the number of buyers to whom they are providing services every day.

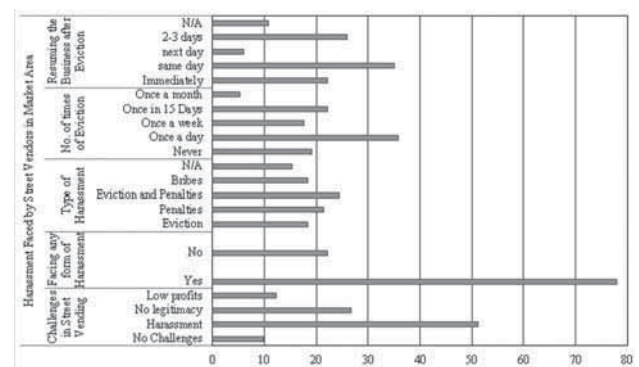


Figure-4: Harassment Faced by Street Vendors in the Market Area.
Source: Field Survey, 2020.

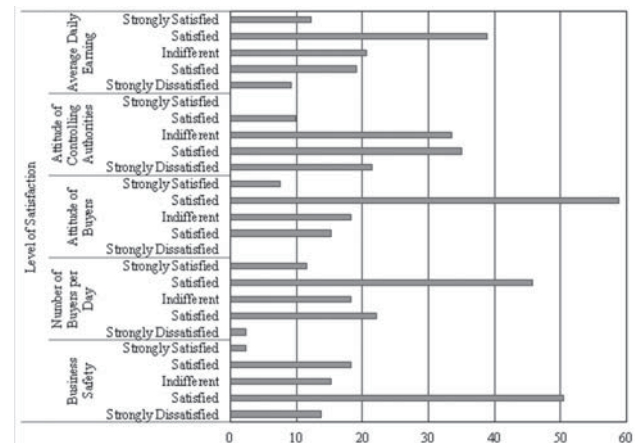


Figure-5: Satisfaction Level of Street Vendors.
Source: Field Survey, 2020.

Controlling Authorities are playing a crucial role in determining the satisfaction of street vendors in the respective case study area. It seems from the above chart that maximum i.e. approx. 35% street vendors who voluntarily participated in the survey, were dissatisfied with the attitude of regulatory authority which is MCL in case of Anarkali Bazaar and LDA in Liberty Market. Another study in Karachi reported that street vendor operating without any facilitation from the municipal agencies rather paying them portion of their daily income and suggested urban informality need policy support to solve issue of unemployment (Ahmed et al., 2020).

Street vendors are mostly contented people and it was confirmed by talking to them and inquiring about their satisfaction level of the daily earning. Around 39 percent recorded that they are satisfied with their daily profits. These are mostly those vendors which earn more than Rs. 3000 (20 USD) on daily basis. The people placed in the last category were making less than Rs. 1000 (6.7 USD) each day and were not able to maintain the balance between their

expenditures and earnings. These street vendors are not only earning for themselves but they employed others e.g. street sweeper to clean and lift waste and also pay security guards for protection of their merchandise and this aspect enhance significance of street vending in urban areas (Hasan, et. al., 2008).

Reliability Analysis

Reliability test was done in SPSS using 11 variables and 20 cases which generated results as shown in Table-2.

In general, 20 cases were considered enough to conduct this analysis in SPSS to assess that to what extent the questionnaire is reliable and internally consistence. Table 2 shows that the Cronbach's Alpha value is greater than 0.7, thus the research instrument is acceptable and reliable.

Ho = There is no significant prediction/change in business safety by attitude of controlling authority, earning satisfaction, attitude of buyers, average daily income and level of education of the street vendor in the market area.

H1 = Significant prediction/change is observed in business safety by attitude of controlling authority, earning satisfaction, attitude of buyers, average daily income and level of education of the street vendor in the market area.

The value of Chi-Square is less than 0.05 and is significant. So, the null hypothesis; Ho can be rejected based on this result, which in fact accepts the experimental hypothesis, which proposes that the business safety of a street vendor of the concerned case study area is predicted by attitude of controlling authority, earning satisfaction, attitude of buyers, average daily income and level of education of the street vendor in the market area. Further the value of Phi and Cramer's V is 0.738 which is greater than 0.25 and shows strong association between independent and dependent variables.

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was used to predict the significance of relationship between the variables as shown in Figure 6. A path diagram was drawn in AMOS.

Average Daily Earning has a positive significant effect on Earning Satisfaction because the P value is less than 0.001. Higher the daily income leads to greater satisfaction of earning to the street vendors. Whereas Attitude of Buyers

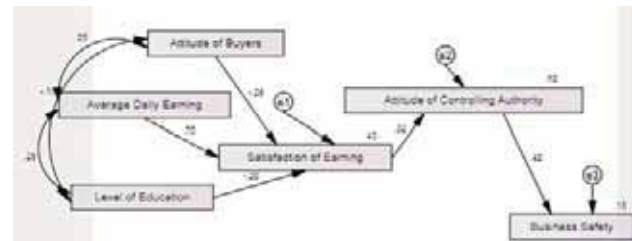


Figure-6: Path Diagram.

on Earning Satisfaction is significant and negative. So, Attitude of Buyers has a negative significant effect on Earning Satisfaction. Buyers negotiate more on prices while purchasing same goods as compared to buying same from shops which reduce the profit margin of vendors and take more time to deal a single customer. Education Level of vendors has negative significant effect on Earning Satisfaction, higher the level of education less will be the earning satisfaction. Because of non-availability of jobs in formal sector some educated people have to enter into the business of street vending and have low earning satisfaction as compared to the jobs in formal sector. Satisfaction of Daily Earning has a positive significant effect on Attitude of Controlling Authority likewise Attitude of Controlling Authority has a positive significant effect on Business Safety. Higher the daily earning satisfaction of the street vendors has strong influence on the controlling authorities to accommodate street vendors in the planning of metropolitan cities which increases the business safety of street vending.

The economic and social factors which motivates the street vendor to enter the street vending business apparently came out to be limited available start-up capital, traditional finance source, no job availability or dissatisfaction with the previous job, age factor and low education level. In most of the cases they are sole earning member and have large number of dependent family members (ranging from 4 to 9). It was also determined, based on the evidence, that 81 percent of interviewed vendors have size of their household in this range and nearly half of the street vendors interviewed were the sole earning members of their families. Forty four percent of the street vendors working in the case study market area are making money between range of Rs.1000 (6.7 USD) - Rs. 3000 (20 USD) every day and most of this earning proportion is spent to fulfil daily expenditures including buying saleable products and paying rent for their houses as approx. 62 percent of them are living in rented houses. Majority of the vendors which were paying rent have migrated from other cities. Around 36% of the street vendors in the case study areas have been migrated from remote or comparatively less developed areas. Survey from the vendors

revealed that nearly half of them were originally from northern part of Pakistan.

CONCLUSIONS

Street vendors are playing an important role in fulfilling the need of a large number of population as well as responsible for sustaining the employment need of illiterate population. The Labour Force Survey 2008-09 reported that around 73.3 percent of jobs in Pakistan other than agricultural activities are involved in informal sector and most of these jobs are occupied by street vendors in big city like Lahore.

Based upon the results/evidence it can be inferred that street vendors are responsible for the economic need of relatively large number of families in the metropolitan city like Lahore. Street vending informal business is expanding tremendously and certain policies are required to sustain in order to make them (street vendors) part of the urban fabric rather considering them as a nuisance as the attitude of the

controlling authorities has significant positive effect on the business safety of street vending.

Strengths of the street vendor; motivation to do something on their own and knowledge of customer psyche are pushing them forward while their weaknesses and threats; insufficient technical skills to enter formal economy, not enough finance to expand their business and continuous fear of eviction are pulling them backwards at the same time. Street vendors in the case study areas are contributing towards the society through various means for instance, 69.5% surveyed vendors were making sure to send their children to school and 29% of them were the employer of one or more helpers working at their stalls, which further clarifies that they are not only earning for themselves but also fulfilling the economic needs of other households as well. Street vending provides an opportunity to employ many unskilled labours in the metropolitan cities to fulfil their economic and social needs including affordability of housing and other amenities of life.

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