

The Nexus between the Establishment of an Enabling Environment and Local Economic Development in the City of Harare

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Abstract: The ways in which local governments advance and put into operation their policies on the establishment of a conducive environment for businesses to thrive and flourish has great effect and impact on the development of an area. The main actor in Local Economic Development (LED) is local government and it should support the establishment of a conducive and enabling environment that is developmental and facilitates local businesses to grow and succeed. There should be mutual symbiotic relationships between communities, business and local government for Local Economic Development to take place. The study examined the nexus between the establishment of a conducive and enabling environment and local economic development in the City of Harare. Results from this study should assist local authorities in their quest to provide the best for citizens in terms of service delivery and good governance. The study's major goal was to see if the creation of an enabling environment could help people succeed. The study's major goal was to examine the notion that creating an enabling environment leads to local economic development. The study focused on business operators in Machipisa, Mbare Musika and the Central Business District of Harare. The perceptions of these operators and business owners were investigated. A total of 65 business operators were interviewed in the three areas using a structured questionnaire based on Enabling Developmental Environment Scale (EDES). Statistical analysis of data was done through Statistical Package for Social Sciences using descriptive analysis. The results revealed that there is a strong positive correlation (correlation coefficient above 0) between an enabling environment and economic growth. This implies that the more the local governments invest in creating an enabling environment the more economic development is achieved.

Keywords: Local development, Enabling Environment, Local Economic Development, Service Delivery, Good Governance

I. INTRODUCTION

Economies at local levels are shaped by processes and policies such as urbanization, migration, national and global trade and production systems. These dynamisms produce risks and opportunities in local areas, necessitating action through the central government's and local governments' implementation of programs and plans aimed at both national and local development.

Strategies for Local Economic Development (LED) are hence planning responses aimed at addressing opportunities and difficulties in ways that benefit local inhabitants. (Masuku, Jili, & Selepe, 2016, Wekwete, 2014). One of the key roles of

local governments is ensuring that a business environment that is conducive to development is established. According to Leigh and Blakely (2013), LED is a calculated and planned intervention approach by local government towards the endorsement of sustainable development within the local economy. Reddy (2016) describes LED as a fundamental response to modern-day trends such as globalisation, accelerated decentralisation and economic adjustments within communities. In all this, the efficient service delivery and the creation of a conducive environment is important.

Through good governance and transparent administration and management, local government, as the level of government closest to the people, can foster this atmosphere (Meyer & Meyer, 2016). Despite extensive research having studied the dynamics and characteristics of Local Economic Development (Wekwete, 2014; Mandisvika 2015; Simba, Nyandoro, Munyoro, & Chimhande 2015; Kline & Moretti 2016; UCLGA, 2016; Musavengane, 2018), less research has examined the role of the establishment of a conducive and enabling environment in Local Economic Development. Past research has focussed mainly on LED, consequently there is an incomplete picture on what is being done by local authorities to promote the thriving and sustainability of local businesses. In light of this, the goal of this study was to determine the relationship between local economic development and the creation of a favorable and enabling environment for enterprises to prosper. The study's major goal was to see if the creation of an enabling environment resulted in Local Economic Development. Specifically the research was driven by three objectives

1. To access Local Economic Development in the City of Harare
2. To explore the perceptions of businesses on the establishment of an enabling environment by the City of Harare.
3. To determine the link between LEDs and the creation of an enabling environment.

To investigate these research questions, a survey was conducted in three areas of the City of Harare where there are high concentrations of businesses; these are Mbare Musika, Machipisa and the Central Business District (CBD). The survey was carried out in April 2021 and a questionnaire which was adapted from the Enabling Developmental

Environment Scale (EDES) which was developed by Meyer and Keyser (2017) was used. Data collection was done using the SoGoSurvey, an online survey (www.sogosurvey.com). The results show that there is a strong positive correlation (correlation coefficient above 0) between an enabling environment and economic growth. This implies that the more the local governments invest in creating an enabling environment is the more economic development is achieved

Structurally this paper unfolds first with the review of literature, followed by methodology used in conducting the study. The outcomes or findings are then presented and before concluding, recommendations are given.

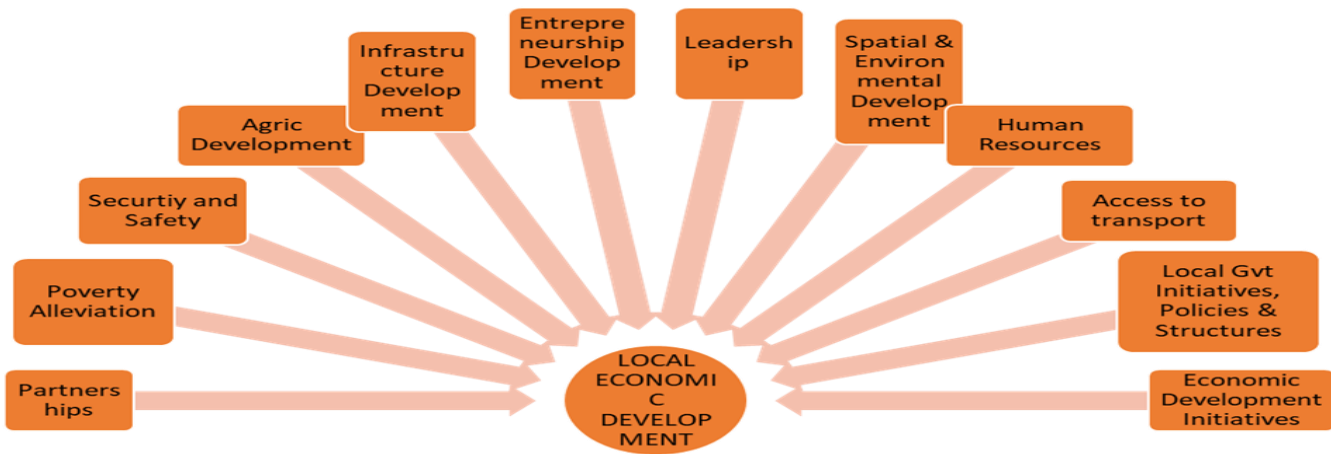
II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The new development trend in local government is enabling environment (CCC, 2012). According to EDA (2018), local governments have the influence on business operators’

decisions to invest and create employment. Further to this, local governments have the power and mandate to foster and support more private investment and also to improve the local business environment (EDA, 2018). An enabling environment, according to McKague and Siddiquee (2014) is best defined in the local government context as all of local government- motivated macro-level

The United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO, 2008) put forward various factors that are contributory to the establishment of a conducive environment which include an education system that is well functioning, bureaucracy in adequate levels and a road infrastructure that is well maintained (UNIDO, 2008). Meyer (2014) identified twelve influencing factors that have an impact on the creation of a favorable climate for economic development in local communities. These are depicted in Figure 1:

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Economic development Initiatives: According to Oduro-Ofori (2011) these are projects, programmes and policies which range from capacity development to infrastructure and these cut across different sectors in the local economy. Local economic development initiatives offer unified and participatory approaches attached to social dialogue and these produce wide-ranging localized responses to aid the informal economy business operators and employees. In order to attain high economic growth there is need to create new businesses (Hofisi, Mbeba, Maredza, & Choga, 2013).

Formation of partnerships: McQuaid (2013) posits that partnerships encompass cooperation and acting or working together. In public policy it is described as the cooperation in the private or public sector between organisations, institutions and people for mutual benefit (Nkomo, 2017).

Infrastructure Development: Dearth of basic infrastructure is a hindrance to Local Economic Development (Leigh & Blakely, 2013). Dube (2019) and Gaal and Afrah (2017) view infrastructure as the key catalyst of the alleviation of poverty

and it serves as a driver of development. To improve competitiveness and achieve higher economic growth it is critical for local governments to have infrastructure development (Dangra, 2016).

Entrepreneurship Development: Contemporarily, entrepreneurship is fundamental for a region or areas competitiveness, its development and its management of policies (Dallago & Tortia, 2019). Topxhiu (2012) propels this further by stating that “policy makers and academics agree that entrepreneurship is critical for the development and well-being of a society. Entrepreneurs create jobs. They drive and shape innovation, speeding up structural changes in the economy.”

Security and safety: Business and citizens want to feel safe and have protection from injury, danger or risk (Oxford Dictionary, 2021). Local governments and local authority’s management are responsible for the delivery of security and safety in their areas and communities (PWC, 2019). At the heart of any locality’s prosperity lies security and safety.

Poverty alleviation and social development initiatives: According to Singh and Chudasama (2020), poverty alleviation and development projects are primarily aimed at reducing poverty among the vulnerable and impoverished in communities using a variety of community-driven and participatory techniques.

Agricultural Development Actions: The thrust towards sustainable agriculture in local governments builds more engaged and active communities thereby leading to a community's economic development (Sharpa, Jackson-Smith, & Smith, 2011; Gentry, 2013)

Spatial and environmental development: Spatial planning enacts a key role in the provision of a long-term framework for the coordination of policies and development across sectors (Turkoglu, et al., 2012; Stead, 2021). It also assists in the promotion of investment and economic growth while promoting the efficient and optimal use of resources and policies that protect the environment (UN, 2008).

Effective Local Leadership: As Shilangu (2019) posits, the absence of effective leadership in local government has been a major setback for Local Economic Development. Development oriented and effective leadership is required for the success of development projects that are driven locally (Khambule, 2018)

Human Resources Development: There is a strong link between human resources development and Local Economic Development (Saleh, Surya, Ahmad, & Manda, 2020). King and Osei (2018) concur that good human resources is the bedrock of well managed economies and this is evidenced by good governance, equity, safety nets for the under privileged, the sick and the poor, enough jobs, prosperity and health and education infrastructure that is highly developed.

Access to transport and opportunities: An efficient transport network and transport system provides social and economic opportunities that have positive multiplier effects like additional investments, improved accessibility and increased employment (Rodrigue & Notteboom, 2020). A good transport infrastructure provides customers and producers access to markets leading to economic growth (Closs & Bolumole, 2015; Quium, 2019)

Local Government Initiatives, Policies, Capacity and Structures: A local government should provide an appropriate structure for good governance and management of local economic development (UCLG, 2014), which will encourage development integration. Institutional capacity is a prerequisite of good governance and this should incorporate a streamlined and compact institution (WEF, 2011) and political stability is required for the achievement of economic growth and the reduction of poverty (Konig, Da Silva, & Mhlanga, 2013).

III. METHODOLOGY

Research design

The study was quantitative in nature because it dealt with the quantification and analysis of variables in order to achieve results. The study used the post-positivism paradigm, which is a deterministic philosophy that maintains that causes most likely determine outcomes or effects (Creswell, 2014). In order to respond to the research questions, numerical data was used (Apuke, 2017). Primary data was used in the study.

Sampling Procedure

According to Sileyew (2019), sampling is the study of a relatively small number of respondents drawn from a larger group in order to establish generalizations about the entire population based on the sample. (Collins, 2011; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The sampling procedure that was used in the study was non-probability sampling, specifically focussing on purposive sampling. In this regard the researcher purposively distributed 65 questionnaires to business operators in Machipisa, Mbare and the Central Business District of Harare. These areas were chosen because of the high concentrations of business operators. In order to observe the COVID-19 protocols, the survey was online, questionnaire links were sent to respondents via email and WhatsApp platform to the targeted business operators. The snowballing sampling techniques was also employed with the assistance of other business operators that had been consulted before.

Data Collection: The questionnaire consisted of 18 questions, 10 of which were measured on a 10-point Likert scale, a scale that is best used for measuring values, knowledge, attitudes, perceptions and behavioral changes (Joshi, Kale, & Pal, 2015)

Ethical Considerations

The questionnaire included a cover note which clearly explained the purpose of the research. Issues of anonymity and confidentiality were also explained and also that results will only be reported in the aggregate

IV. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Table I: Service Delivery Perception

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very poor	19	29.2	29.2	29.2
	Poor	26	40.0	40.0	69.2
	Average	20	30.8	30.8	100.0
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS Primary data

Table 1 above depicts the responses relating to the perception of the respondents regarding the provision of basic services to the three selected municipal areas. Service delivery variables that were considered include water and sewer provision, good quality roads and refuse collection. 29.2% and 40% shows a very poor and poor service delivery perception respectively

bringing it to a total cumulative percentage of 69.2 % representing an unfavorable perception with regards to service delivery. This implies that none of the municipal areas in consideration is doing significant efforts with regards to service delivery. The table does a good job in demonstrating how effective governance, service delivery, and the establishment of an enabling environment propel economic growth. Poor service delivery in this case is resulting in poor business performances in the selected areas hence poor economic development. This is concurring to Shilangu (2019) who argues that the absence of effective leadership and the provision of enabling factors hinders economic development. In a nutshell, it is possible to acknowledge that the creation of an enabling environment and the provision of services leads to economic development in the three municipal areas of Machipisa, Mbare, and the CBD.

Table II: Municipal Area Distribution

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Machipisa	20	30.8	30.8	30.8
	Mbare Musika	17	26.2	26.2	56.9
	CBD	28	43.1	43.1	100.0
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS Data

Table II is showing the municipal area distribution by the number of participants per each selected municipal area. This information was further used in explaining table 3 below. Of

the 65 total respondents, 30.8% represents Machipisa, 26.2% representing Mbare and 43.1% representing the CBD.

Table III: Descriptive statistics for public service delivery perceptions

Public services	Mean Value			Result Best Performing Municipality
	Machipisa N=20	Mbare N=17	CBD N=28	
Availability of water	2.34	2.0	3.42	CBD
Planning and zoning	2.04	1.96	2.46	CBD
Quality roads	1.90	1.04	3.4	CBD
Transport accessibility	2.22	2.12	3.56	CBD
Refuse collection	2.4	2.3	3.48	CBD

Source: SPSS Data

Table 3 above shows statistics for public service delivery for the 3 municipal areas that were considered. For the purpose of this analysis, variables such as the availability of water, planning & zoning, quality of roads, transport accessibility and refuse collection were considered. The CBD is having an overall better performance in terms of service delivery as compared to Machipisa and Mbare. However, none of the three municipal areas is above the desirable performance benchmark that promotes economic development. There is need for improvement in all areas regarding service delivery in Machipisa, Mbare and The CBD to achieve economic growth.

Table IV: Perceptions on Creating an Enabling Environment using a 10-point scale

Factor	Very Poor (1-2)		Poor (3-4)		Average (5-6)		Good (7-10)	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Safe environment for business	21	32.3	34	52.3	8	12.3	2	3
Strong and quality public participation	26	40	28	43.1	10	15.3	1	1.5
Agricultural development	27	41.5	28	43	9	13.8	1	1.5
Rates and taxes support entrepreneurship	25	38.5	36	55.4	2	3	2	3
Labour regulations support employment creation	24	36.9	30	46.2	9	13.9	2	3.1
Well-developed infrastructure	35	53.8	24	36.9	4	6.2	2	3
Spatial & environmental development	31	47.7	26	40	5	7.7	3	4.6
Social development & poverty alleviation	28	43.1	26	40	7	10.7	4	6.1
Stable leadership that articulates policies	28	43.1	33	50.8	3	4.6	1	1.5
Local governance structures, policies, capacity and initiatives	29	44.6	26	40	9	13.8	1	1.5

f- Frequency of the respondents

%-Percentage of respondents

Source: SPSS Data

Table 4 above is showing a collective perception for the 3 selected municipal areas with regards to creating an enabling environment making use of the factors included in the table.

Perception on Safe environment for business

The respondents were asked on whether the city council ensures strong and high-quality public participation. As depicted in table 4 above, 32.3% showed a very poor

perception, 52.3% a poor perception and only 3% showing a good perception. A cumulative percentage of 84.6% (32.3 + 52.3) representing very poor and poor perception respectively makes it clear that close to nothing is being done in relation to the creation of safe environment for business.

Strong and quality public participation

According to Meyer (2016), public participation is of paramount importance in creating an enabling environment and fostering economic growth. Public participation is a necessary and desired part of community development and should be included in the process of any policy formulation and policy making (Prabakaran, 2011). It encompasses the participation of all stakeholders including business persons, the government, prospective investors and policymakers in establishing a conducive environment for business operators in a bid to achieve economic development. As shown in the table above, a cumulative percentage of 68% (40% + 28%) for very poor and poor perceptions respectively that is far above the cumulative total for an average and good perception shows that the municipalities for Machipisa, Mbare and the CBD are performing dismally with regards to public participation there by hindering economic development.

Agricultural development

Nwachukwu (2013) defines agricultural development as “a multi-sectional activity that support and promote positive change in rural and urban areas”. As a result, agriculture is regarded as a critical engine of economic growth (FAO, 2020). In the incumbent survey, the respondents were asked on their perceptions on whether there is agricultural development in the City of Harare. A cumulative percentage of 84.3% (41.3%+43%) for a very poor perception and a poor perception respectively shows that the city of Harare is not putting much thrust on agricultural development. Only less efforts are being put in place with regards to agricultural development in spite of the fact that Agriculture is one of the highest ranked economic drivers in Zimbabwe. According to Sharpa, Jackson & Smith (2011); the thrust towards sustainable agriculture in local governments builds more engaged and active communities leading to a community’s economic development.

Rates and taxes supporting entrepreneurship

Taxes and rates levied by the government have a symbiotic relationship with economic development (Oden, 2021). Charging of very high rates and taxes cripples small businesses there by hindering their growth (Awal & Hassan, 2019). In table 4 above, the majority of respondents have a negative perception on whether the rates and taxes are supporting economic growth. Only a cumulative percentage of 6% (3%+3%) shows an average and good perception respectively as compared to the resounding 94% for a negative perception. This implies that the government must put a thrust in timeously revising its rates and taxes so as to create an enabling environment for business operations hence, economic growth.

Labour regulations support employment creation

With regards to labour regulations supporting employment creation, a worrisome cumulative percentage of 17% (13.9%+3.1%) representing an average and good perception shows that the municipalities of Machipisa, Mbare and Harare CBD are not doing justice in marrying labour regulations and economic development. Much efforts need to be put in place in nurturing labour regulations so that a conducive and enabling environment is created. This can be done through timeously revising the national labour Act and any other relating Acts.

Well-developed infrastructure

Sifile (2015) asserts that old, dilapidated and poor infrastructure weighs down local governments with repairs. The majority of sewerage systems and road networks in Zimbabwe's largest towns, including as Harare, Mutare, and Gweru, were built in the 1980s and 1990s and are now begging for maintenance from cash-strapped local governments (Dewa, Dziva, & Mukwashi, 2014). The respondents were asked on their perception with regards to infrastructure development. A plethora of responses indicated that no significant efforts are being put in place by the City of Harare in creating well developed infrastructure. In the table, 58.8% showed a very poor perception, 36.9% showed a poor perception bringing it to a total negative perception of 95.7% that is an unacceptable percentage in as much as economic development is concerned. This in line with the views of Leigh & Blakely (2013) who argued that death of infrastructure is a hindrance to Local Economic development.

The trend is just the same (that is being negative) for all the remaining indicators which include Spatial & environmental development, social development & poverty alleviation, Stable leadership that articulates policies and Local governance structures, policies, capacity and initiatives.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The study's overall goal was to examine business owners' and operators' perspectives on the creation of an enabling environment and local economic development in Harare. Now that all of the responses to the enabling environment have been explored, it is clear that the city of Harare still has a lot of work to do in terms of providing an enabling environment for the elements listed above. The results of the statistics show that quality service delivery and good governance are pivotal in the establishment of an enabling environment, when the business environment is conducive, business growth is evidenced.

There is a strong positive correlation (correlation coefficient above 0) between an enabling environment and economic growth. This implies that the more the local

governments invest in creating an enabling environment is the more economic development is achieved.

The study puts forward the following recommendations:

1. There is need for the City of Harare to have a Local Economic Development Strategic Plan
2. The City of Harare should establish a Spatial Development Framework that will integrate the Department of Housing and the City Planning Department
3. Establishment and strengthening of partnerships between local government, business operators and the local communities should be done
4. There is need for the City to improve employment opportunities and improve the capability for business growth in both informal and formal sectors
5. The Government should have political stability and effective leadership to propel economic development
6. There is need by the City of Harare to prioritize economic development.

The study that was carried out is beneficial to local governments across the world and not just Zimbabwe to make an assessment of their service delivery in relation to the creation of a conducive environment for economic development. Further studies can be conducted making a comparison of various local governments, both urban and rural.

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