



within the Informal Sector in Ethiopian Urban Areas: An Action Research Perspective

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Abstract

The informal sector in Ethiopian urban areas is a significant yet understudied component of the country's socio-economic landscape. This sector comprises small-scale enterprises and self-employed individuals who operate outside formal regulatory frameworks, often facing challenges related to access to resources, legal protection, and psychological support. An action research approach was employed to conduct interviews, focus groups, and surveys among informal sector workers across different cities in Ethiopia. Data collection methods included semi-structured interviews and structured questionnaires designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative insights. Findings indicate that informal sector workers experience higher levels of stress related to financial instability compared to formal sector counterparts ($P < 0.05$). Themes emerged around the importance of social support networks and community engagement in managing work-related pressures. The study highlights the critical need for targeted psychological interventions tailored to the specific needs of informal sector workers, particularly focusing on building resilience through community-based initiatives. Recommendations include the development of a comprehensive mental health support system that integrates with existing social welfare programmes and leverages community resources. Additionally, training programmes should be developed for informal sector employers and managers to better understand and support their workforce's psychological needs.

Keywords: *Sub-Saharan, urbanization, qualitative, ethnographic, participatory*

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