

Entrepreneur Satisfaction and Challenges in the Machinga Complex Project in Dodoma City, Tanzania

Mpfubhusa Fitina Laurent
World Vision Kakono, P.O Box 154, Kigoma, Tanzania
Email: mpfubhusa@gmail.com

Benard Mushi
Dodoma Municipal Council, 1249, Dodoma, Tanzania
Email: bennienuro1256@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigates the importance of small business entrepreneur satisfaction in ensuring the success of the Machinga Complex project. Despite the increasing implementation of development projects, there is limited understanding of the factors that influence small entrepreneurs' satisfaction with these projects. The study addresses this gap by examining the factors that impact the satisfaction of small business entrepreneurs, specifically within the Machinga Complex in Dodoma City. A cross-sectional research design was utilized, with a sample size of 150 respondents obtained through a probability sampling method. Descriptive and probit regression analyses were employed, with the dependent variable measured on a dichotomous scale. The findings revealed that age, income level, participation in project consultation and initiation, education level, and project accessibility were statistically significant factors influencing entrepreneur satisfaction. The study also analyzed various challenges faced by these entrepreneurs at Machinga Complex. The results showed that competition from informal sectors, lack of loan accessibility, and insufficient infrastructure were the main challenges affecting the entrepreneurs. In conclusion, the study advocates for several policy recommendations, including the need to facilitate training programs specifically for Machinga entrepreneurs. It also emphasizes the importance of improving public participation in future projects and enhancing infrastructure quality to foster greater satisfaction among entrepreneurs. These efforts should be coordinated by both the government and the private sector.

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1. Introduction

Entrepreneur satisfaction has been identified as an important factor in project success. Since a guarantee of the success of projects is the acquisition of customer satisfaction with the service offered (Liguori, Muldoon, Ogundana, Lee & Wilson, 2024; Kitole & Sesabo, 2024). Generally, Government and private organizations worldwide need to execute several projects simultaneously to react to market changes and mainly to build a platform for many small business entrepreneurs to conduct their economic activities (Liguori et al., 2024). Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) have been playing a critical role in the global economy's growth with a constant contribution to the economy through generating a significant number of jobs offering creative processes, promoting technological advancement, organizational innovation, income generation and economic competitiveness (Utouh & Kitole, 2024; Ismail, 2022).

Small (often informal) business dominates the economic life of most developing countries (Cameron, 2023). The small business sector has also been seen as a Hub in generating income for most urban dwellers with no formal paid employment, where comprehensive support for small businesses should consistently be implemented through the initiation of various projects (Mpfubhusa, 2024). Therefore, small businesses served as convenience shops primarily for the lower income groups, attracting a sizeable portion of household expenditure in less developed areas (Cameron, 2023). Since the 1980s, small business owners and entrepreneurs have been receiving greater recognition as drivers of economic growth, (Ribeiro-Soriano, 2017). In today's world small businesses, and particularly new ones, are seen more than ever as a vehicle for entrepreneurship, contributing not just to employment, and social and political stability, but also to innovative and competitive power (Faraj, 2024).

Over the past years, Tanzania has embarked on an ambitious and long process of economic, social and political reforms to improve the business environment, increase economic growth and reduce poverty (Ismail, 2022). In Tanzania, entry into small business entrepreneurship is usually not seen as a problem, one can start a small business at any time and in any place (Katundu & Gabagambi, 2016). Expanding the small business entrepreneurs' sector for that purpose the government has put in efforts to establish various projects which help in economic development, such as the Machinga Complex Market located at Dodoma city.

Despite, all the efforts taken by the government to introduce the number of projects to boost the economic and social livelihood of small business owners (Machinga) in Dodoma, the number of small business entrepreneurs decreased to 3,529. The main reason is the low satisfaction of these entrepreneurs regarding the project. Most small business owners associate low satisfaction with the complex because the low number of buyers (which reduces sales), adequate participation during the initiation and implementation process, and inaccessibility to reach the customers.

Therefore, this study bridges the gap of knowledge existing by examining the factors influencing small business entrepreneur's satisfaction on the Machinga complex project, in Dodoma city. Therefore the general objective of this study is to examine the factors influencing small business entrepreneur's satisfaction with the Machinga complex project, in Dodoma city and also the study will identify challenges facing Small Business Entrepreneurs in the Machinga Complex project, Dodoma city. Since the study was conducted in Dodoma City where the Machinga complex Market project is located. The unit of analysis for the study was the small business entrepreneurs who conduct their business activities at Machinga complex Market in Dodoma city.

2. Empirical review

The satisfaction of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) regarding the construction of their business buildings has been an area of growing interest in both academic and policy discussions. Studies show that the quality of business infrastructure directly impacts the operational efficiency and satisfaction of SMEs. According to Matsongoni and Mutambara (2021), the construction of well-designed and well-maintained business spaces is crucial for improving the performance and satisfaction of SMEs. The study highlighted that the availability of modern, accessible, and affordable infrastructure is vital for the growth of SMEs, especially in urban settings where competition and customer expectations are high. Similarly, Pacholek, Sady and Wozniak (2023) found that the quality of the physical environment, including the construction of business buildings, significantly influenced the satisfaction levels of SMEs in Ghana, with businesses located in well-constructed, secure, and accessible buildings reporting higher levels of satisfaction.

Several studies emphasize the role of infrastructure in fostering a conducive environment for business growth. According to Ribeiro-Soriano (2017), SMEs in Kenya reported higher satisfaction levels when the construction of their business buildings included essential amenities such as electricity, water, and adequate security. The study concluded that the provision of basic services in well-constructed buildings not only improved business operations but also contributed to higher entrepreneurial satisfaction. In contrast, poor infrastructure, such as inadequate roads, limited access to utilities, and lack of proper waste management, was cited as a significant barrier to business growth and satisfaction. Similarly, in a study by Thakur (2021), small business owners in Bangladesh expressed dissatisfaction with their business premises due to the lack of proper infrastructure, which hindered their ability to meet customer expectations and maintain competitiveness.

In addition to physical infrastructure, the involvement of SMEs in the planning and consultation process during the construction of their business buildings has been identified as a key determinant of satisfaction. A study by Etuonu et al. (2024) found that SMEs that were involved in the early stages of construction projects, particularly in consultation and decision-making processes, reported higher satisfaction levels. The study highlighted the importance of participation, as it allowed entrepreneurs to tailor the building to their specific business needs, which ultimately resulted in improved operational outcomes. Furthermore, Layson and Nankai (2015) observed that when SMEs had a say in the design and construction phases, they felt more invested in the success of the project and were more likely to experience satisfaction with the end result.

Another factor influencing satisfaction is the cost of construction and financing options available to SMEs. Aluko (2020) identified that high construction costs and limited access to affordable financing options were significant barriers to SME satisfaction in Nigeria. Entrepreneurs expressed dissatisfaction when the cost of constructing their business buildings exceeded their budget or when they struggled to secure loans or favorable credit terms. Similarly, Gumel (2017) found that SMEs in Nigeria faced challenges in accessing affordable loans for building construction, which negatively impacted their satisfaction with both the construction process and the final outcome. This suggests that affordable financing and support for construction projects are critical to enhancing SME satisfaction.

Finally, the security and safety of business premises are key determinants of satisfaction. Mpfubhusa (2024) and Dvoulety et al. (2024) emphasized that SMEs place a high value on the safety of their business buildings. Entrepreneurs reported dissatisfaction when their premises were vulnerable to theft, vandalism, or damage, which not only affected their operational

continuity but also led to higher insurance costs. In contrast, business owners who operated in secure environments with adequate security measures—such as surveillance systems and police patrols—expressed greater satisfaction with their premises. This aligns with findings from other studies that suggested safety and security as major factors contributing to overall satisfaction with business infrastructure.

Through these empirical studies, it is evident that the construction of business buildings significantly influences SME satisfaction. Factors such as infrastructure quality, participation in the construction process, affordability, and security all play crucial roles in determining whether entrepreneurs are satisfied with their business premises. Understanding these factors can guide policy and project implementation to improve SME satisfaction with construction projects.

3. Theoretical underpinnings

This study draws upon Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory of Motivation, developed by American psychologist Frederick Herzberg in the late 1950s (Mitsakis & Galanakis, 2021). The theory suggests that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are influenced by two distinct sets of factors: motivators and hygiene factors. Motivators are factors that lead to higher satisfaction and are intrinsic to the job, such as achievement, recognition, and opportunities for growth. On the other hand, hygiene factors are extrinsic elements that prevent dissatisfaction but do not necessarily result in positive satisfaction, such as working conditions, salary, and job security.

Herzberg's theory is particularly useful for understanding small business entrepreneur satisfaction in the context of the Machinga Complex project because it helps differentiate between factors that actively promote satisfaction (motivators) and those that merely prevent dissatisfaction (hygiene factors). In this study, the motivators could include aspects like business opportunities, improved infrastructure, and the entrepreneur's ability to engage in the decision-making process within the project. These factors have the potential to foster growth, innovation, and a sense of achievement among entrepreneurs, directly influencing their level of satisfaction with the project.

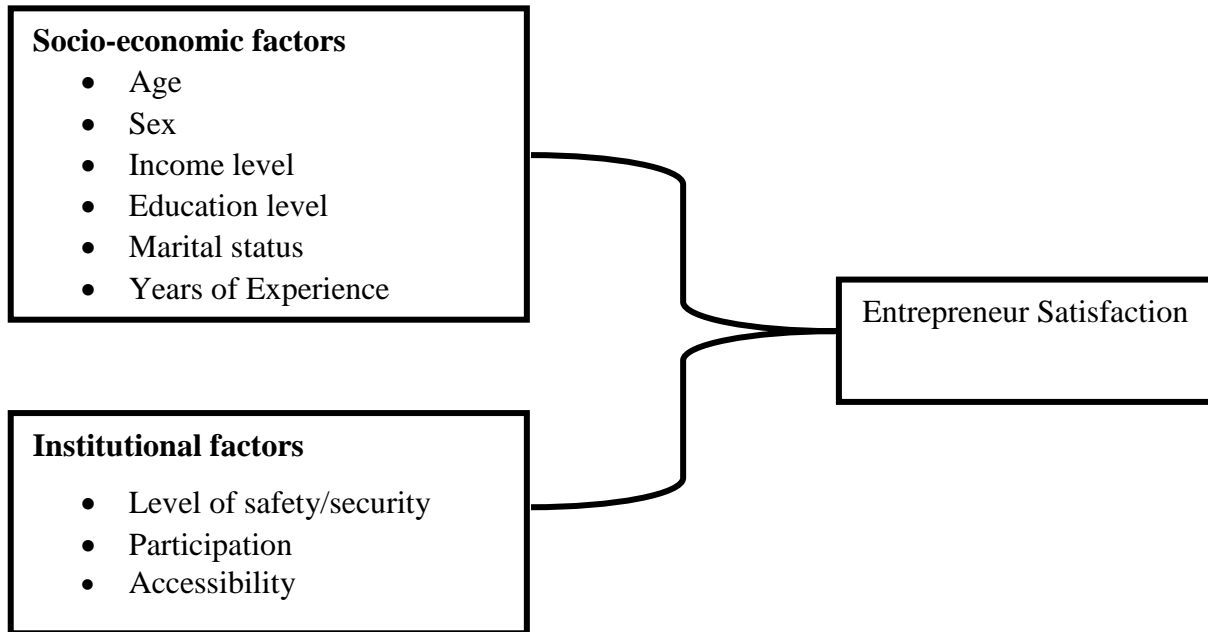
Meanwhile, the hygiene factors in this context would include elements like access to basic utilities (e.g., electricity, water), security within the market, and the general physical condition of the complex. While these factors may not directly lead to high satisfaction, their absence or inadequacy can create significant dissatisfaction, potentially leading to low performance or even the closure of businesses. For instance, if there is inadequate security or poor infrastructure, it could lead to frustration and dissatisfaction among the small business entrepreneurs.

The application of Herzberg's theory in this study provides a clear framework to analyze how the Machinga Complex's design and operational aspects influence the satisfaction levels of entrepreneurs. By distinguishing between motivators and hygiene factors, the study can identify which aspects of the project need improvement to reduce dissatisfaction and which ones should be enhanced to foster greater satisfaction. This can guide both policymakers and project developers in implementing changes that could significantly improve the overall satisfaction and performance of small business entrepreneurs operating in the complex.

However, there are limitations to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory that should be acknowledged in this study. One limitation is that the theory assumes all individuals will respond similarly to the same factors, but satisfaction is subjective and can vary widely across different people, cultures, and contexts. The theory also does not account for external influences such as

economic conditions or personal life circumstances, which may also play a significant role in shaping entrepreneur satisfaction. These limitations suggest that while the theory provides useful insights, the findings of this study should be considered within the context of other influencing factors that may not be directly addressed by the theory itself. Therefore, Figure 1 explain the mechanism on how entrepreneurs can derive their satisfaction on the Machinga complex project.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Source: Authors’ design (2024)

4. Methodology

The study was conducted in Dodoma City, located in the central region of Tanzania. Dodoma is situated 453 kilometers west of Dar es Salaam, 441 kilometers south of Arusha, and 259 kilometers north of Iringa via Mtera. The research specifically focused on Machinga Complex Market, located at Majengo Ward on Bahi Road. This market spans over 16,060 square meters and supports between 3,000 and 5,000 small business entrepreneurs, generating an estimated annual profit of 1.2 billion Tanzanian shillings.

A cross-sectional research design was employed, chosen for its suitability in assessing the widespread presence of small business entrepreneurs at a single point in time. The unit of analysis for the study consisted of small business owners at Machinga Complex Market. To obtain a representative sample, the study used a probability sampling technique, specifically simple random sampling, which ensured each entrepreneur had an equal chance of being selected. The sample size was calculated using the formula by Yamane (1967), with a margin of error set at 0.08, resulting in a sample size of 150 respondents. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire to gather information from the selected entrepreneurs.

4.1 Probit Model

This study employed a probit model to estimate the satisfaction of SMEs with the Machinga Complex project in Dodoma. The choice of the probit model was driven by its strength in modeling binary outcomes (Dimoso & Andrew, 2021; Kitole & Genda, 2024), where the dependent variable—entrepreneur satisfaction—is treated as a latent variable categorized into two outcomes: satisfied or not satisfied with the project. The independent variables regressed

against the dependent variable include age, sex, marital status, education level, income level, family size, experience, accessibility, participation, and the level of safety/security. These factors were chosen to assess their influence on the overall satisfaction of small business entrepreneurs with the project.

The specification of the probit model is as follows:

$$y_i^* = \beta_j' + \mu_i \text{ where } \mu_i \sim (0, \delta^2)$$

y_i^* is the dependent variable, which assumes unobservable status, β represents the independent variables, j represents the coefficient of the independent variables and μ_i represents error term with standard normal distribution. Since, y_i^* is unobservable, what we observe is y_i , which takes the two values as described under.

When $y_i^* > 0$, $y_i = 1$ if entrepreneur is satisfied.

When $y_i^* < 0$, $y_i = 0$ if entrepreneur is not satisfied.

Because the probability that the entrepreneur is satisfied with the project is greater than zero ($y_i^* > 0$)

$$\text{Prob}(y=1) = \text{prob}(y_i^* > 0)$$

Or less than or equal to zero ($y_i^* < 0$)

$$\text{Prob}(y=0) = \text{prob}(y_i^* < 0)$$

The likelihood of an entrepreneur to be satisfied is here in presented by unobservable factors through dependent variables as follows.

Entrepreneurs satisfaction = 1 if satisfied $y_i^* > 0$

0 if not satisfied $y_i^* < 0$

If $y_i^* = 0$, then $y=1$ implying that entrepreneur satisfied

Therefore, the probability that entrepreneur is satisfied assumes that the probability density function of e_i assumed being $f(\mu_i)$ which results to creation of a new parameter.

$$\text{prob}(y_i = 1[x]) = \int_{-\alpha}^{x\beta} f(\mu_i) du = f(xi\beta)$$

$$\text{prob}(y_i = 1[x]) = 2\pi^{-\frac{1}{2}} \exp(-\beta xi)^{2/2}$$

Now based on the variable used on this study the probit model is therefore presented as,

$$y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_i + \beta_2 T_i + \mu_i$$

Since probit model is significantly addressed well under the Marginal effect which, mainly helps in the appropriate interpretation of the factors influencing small business entrepreneur satisfaction in Machinga complex project, Dodoma city. Therefore, the marginal effect of the same is obtained through the following equation:

$$\frac{dy}{dx} = \beta_i \Phi(\beta_1 + \beta_n)$$

5. Results and discussion

5.1 Descriptive analysis

Descriptive analysis was performed to provide a general description of the study sample and to analyze individual characteristics of small business entrepreneurs found in the Machinga Complex project, Dodoma city.

Table 1: Description of continuous variables

Variable	Satisfied (N=83)		Not Satisfied (N=67)		Total (N=150)	
	Mean	Std. dev	Mean	Std. dev	Mean	Std. dev
Age	37.55	13.38479	30.4	11.78219	34.36	13.14569
Entrepreneur Experience	1.1686	1.644053	1.37	1.323858	1.26	1.508054
Income Level	137894	207618.2	67440.3	63408.94	106424.7	163518.8

Source: Authors' design (2024)

Results from Table 1 describe that the Average age of the respondents (Entrepreneurs) in the study area was 34.36 and a standard deviation of 13.14569, whereas the mean age for entrepreneurs satisfied with the project was found to be 37.55 with a standard deviation of 13.38479 while the average age for respondent with no satisfaction was 30.4 with a standard deviation of 11.78219.

From Table 1, the results describe that the average years of entrepreneur experience from the study sample was 1.26 and a standard deviation of 1.508054, were as the mean experience for entrepreneurs satisfied with the project was 1.1686 with a standard deviation of 1.644053 while the average entrepreneur experience for respondents with no satisfaction in the project was 1.37 with a standard deviation of 1.323858.

The results from Table 1 depict that the average income level for the respondents in the study area was 106424.7 Tshs with a standard deviation of 163518.8, were the average income level for respondents satisfied with the project was 137894 with a standard deviation of 207618.2 on the other hand the average income level for entrepreneurs not satisfied with Machinga complex project was 67440.3 with a standard deviation of 63408.94.

Table 2: Description of categorical variable

Variable	Categories	Satisfied (N=83)		Not satisfied(N=67)		Total (N=150)	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Level of security	Good	55	66.2	42	62.7	97	64.7
	Moderate	11	13.3	9	13.4	20	13.3
	Bad	17	20.5	16	23.9	33	22
Accessibility to the Project	No	29	35	42	62.7	71	47.3
	Yes	54	65	25	37.3	79	52.7
Participation	Yes	61	74	23	34.3	84	56
	No	22	26	44	65.7	66	44

Source: Authors' design (2024)

Results from Table 2 shows that 83 respondents were satisfied with the Machinga complex project. Also, study shows that 67 respondents were not satisfied with Machinga complex project, which implies majority of the sample selected were satisfied with the project.

Findings from Table 2 depict that entrepreneur satisfied with the complex 55 of the respondents perceived that the security level was Good, 11 respondents perceived a moderate security level and 17 respondents perceived a bad security level. On the other hand, entrepreneurs with no satisfaction 42 respondents perceived good security level, 9 respondents perceived moderate and 16 respondents perceived a bad security level on the Machinga complex project.

On the Accessibility of the project, the findings from Table 2 show that entrepreneurs satisfied with the project 54 respondents agreed that the project is easily accessible and 29 respondents among the satisfied entrepreneurs rejected that the project is not easily accessible. While

entrepreneurs with no satisfaction of the project, 25 respondents agreed that the project was easily accessible and 42 respondents rejected that the project was not easily accessible. This shows that majority of the respondents agreed that the project was easily accessible, this implied to both the satisfied and unsatisfied entrepreneurs.

Study findings from Table 2, show that entrepreneurs who were satisfied with the project and also participated during consultation and initiation of the project were 61 respondents, those who didn't participate but still satisfied with the project were 22 respondents. While entrepreneurs without satisfaction on the project and participated on the consultation phase where 23 respondents, those unsatisfied and did not participate on consultation were 44 respondents. Which highlight that majority of satisfied entrepreneurs participated on project consultation to enhance their satisfaction.

5.2 Factors influencing small business entrepreneurs satisfactions on Machinga complex project.

The findings in Table 3 indicate that age, income level, participation (as a dummy variable), accessibility (as a dummy variable), and education level (with dummies for primary, secondary, and tertiary education) are all statistically significant factors that influence small business entrepreneurs' satisfaction with the Machinga Complex project in Dodoma City.

Table 3: Probit model regression on factors for Entrepreneur satisfaction on Machinga Complex Project

Entrepreneur Satisfaction	Probit	Marginal effects
Age	0.0284245** (0.0108868)	0.0110562** (0.00421)
Income level	0.8280621*** (0.2114053)	0.3220899*** (0.08191)
Entrepreneur Experience	-0.0320605 (0.0790409)	-0.0124705 (0.03073)
Male	0.1106801 (0.2843208)	0.0431004 (0.11083)
Single	0.0387511 (0.2886088)	0.015079 (0.11236)
Education Level		
Primary level	0.8324308** (0.3228135)	0.3014463** (0.10501)
Secondary level	1.088731*** (0.3341066)	0.3717989*** (0.09445)
Tertiary level	1.008415* (0.5312054)	0.3231379** (0.12213)
Participation in project consultation	1.72947*** (0.5120725)	0.6093351*** (0.14132)
Access to project	-1.03026* (0.5387617)	-0.3822283** (0.1817)
Security Level		
Good	0.2668962 (0.3107846)	0.1043533 (0.12166)
Moderate	0.2332542 (0.4364573)	0.0884928 (0.16043)
Model strength	Number of observations	= 150
	LR chi2(14)	= 70.68
	Prob > chi2	= 0.0000
	Pseudo R2	= 0.3427
	Log likelihood	= -67.779196

*Standard errors in parenthesis*** $P < 0.01$, ** $P < 0.05$, * $P < 0.1$*

The findings from Table 3 indicate that age has a positive relationship with entrepreneur satisfaction and is statistically significant at the 5% level, with a p-value of 0.009. This suggests that for every one-year increase in the entrepreneur's age, the likelihood of satisfaction with the project increases by 1.1%, *ceteris paribus*. This result implies that older entrepreneurs may possess a clearer understanding of the overall project and its potential benefits. In support of this, Etuonu et al. (2024) found that younger visitors to hotel projects exhibited higher levels of satisfaction than older individuals. Age differences often relate to variations in demand, expectations, and preferences; younger visitors may place higher value on modern amenities and have greater expectations, while older individuals tend to prioritize comfort and accessibility.

Similarly, the study found that income level had a positive relationship with entrepreneur satisfaction and was statistically significant at the 1% level, with a p-value of 0.000. The findings imply that a one-unit increase in income level increases the likelihood of entrepreneur satisfaction by 32.2%. This indicates that higher income derived from the project leads to greater satisfaction, as income is a key factor influencing entrepreneurs' decisions to operate within the complex. Aluko (2020) also revealed a significant relationship between income earned and firm satisfaction in the study area. Additionally, Anusuya and Selvi (2022) found that higher income levels significantly enhance individual satisfaction. Therefore, these results align with the notion that increased income is a major driver of satisfaction for small business entrepreneurs.

Regarding entrepreneur experience, the results from Table 3 show a negative relationship with entrepreneur satisfaction, but it was statistically insignificant, with a p-value of 0.685. The findings suggest that a one-year increase in an entrepreneur's experience reduces the likelihood of satisfaction by 1.2%, *ceteris paribus*. This could imply that as entrepreneurs gain more experience, they may develop higher expectations for the project, such as demands for more innovative infrastructure, a larger customer base, additional resources, and improved services. If these demands are not met, the entrepreneur's satisfaction with the project may decrease.

In terms of gender, the study found that being male had a positive relationship with entrepreneur satisfaction, though it was statistically insignificant with a p-value of 0.697. This suggests that being male increases the likelihood of satisfaction by 4.3% compared to females. However, the effect is not significant, indicating that gender alone does not have a substantial influence on satisfaction. Instead, other individual factors or perceptions may contribute more to the overall satisfaction of male entrepreneurs.

The study also found that being single was positively correlated with entrepreneur satisfaction, though this relationship was statistically insignificant with a p-value of 0.893. The findings suggest that single entrepreneurs have a 1.5% higher likelihood of satisfaction compared to their married counterparts, *ceteris paribus*. However, this result is not statistically significant, implying that marital status may not play a critical role in determining satisfaction.

Education level showed a positive relationship with entrepreneur satisfaction in all categories, as reflected in Table 3. Entrepreneurs with primary, secondary, and tertiary education levels had statistically significant positive relationships with satisfaction at the 5%, 1%, and 5% levels, respectively. Specifically, an increase in entrepreneurs with primary education increased the likelihood of satisfaction by 30.1%, secondary education increased it by 37.2%, and tertiary

education increased it by 32.3%, when compared to those with no education. These findings are consistent with the studies of Dvoulety et al. (2024) and Anusuya and Selvi (2022), which suggest that higher formal education levels tend to enhance satisfaction. This indicates that education may contribute to a better understanding of the project and its benefits, leading to increased satisfaction among entrepreneurs.

Moreover, the study found that participation in project consultation and implementation had a significant positive relationship with entrepreneur satisfaction, with a p-value of 0.000, making it statistically significant at the 1% level. The results suggest that an increase in the number of entrepreneurs participating in the consultation and implementation of the project increases the likelihood of satisfaction by 60.9%. This finding aligns with Layson (2015), who highlighted that increased participation in community engagement activities tends to boost satisfaction. Entrepreneurs who are involved in the decision-making process and implementation of the project may feel more invested and satisfied with the outcomes.

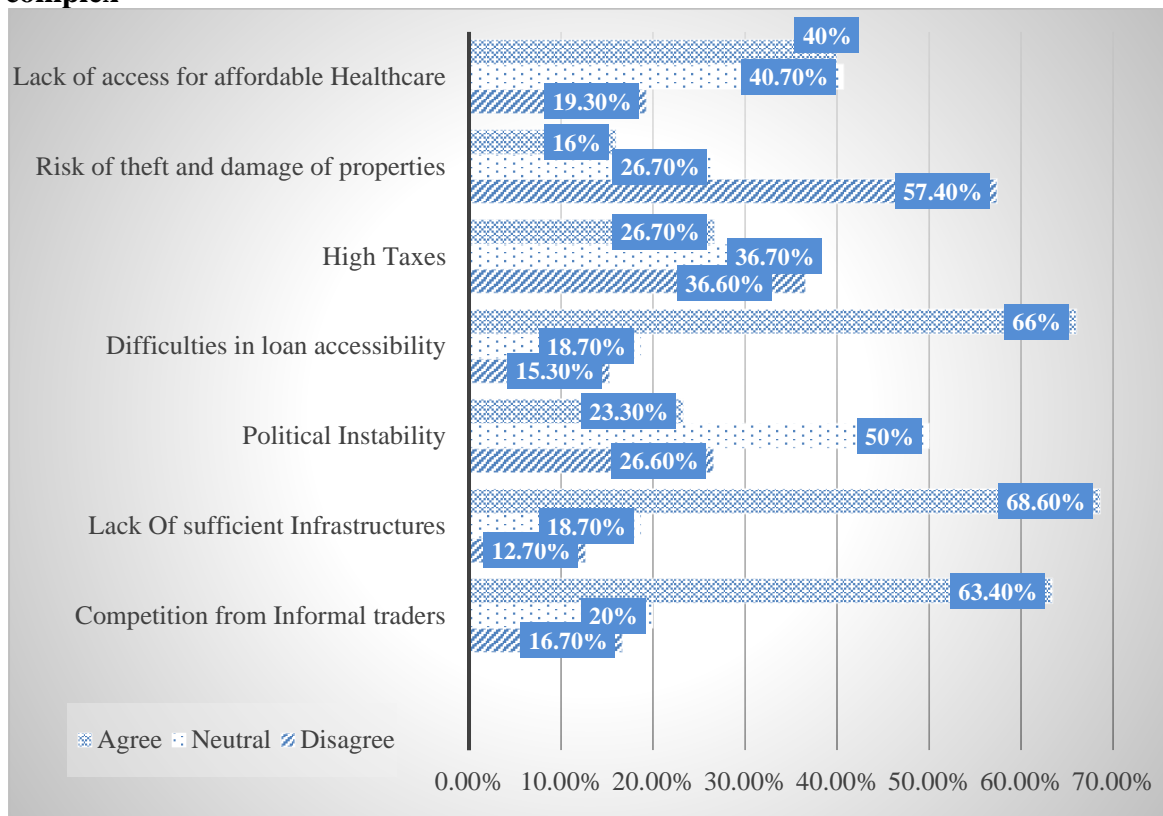
On the other hand, the study revealed that project accessibility had a negative relationship with entrepreneur satisfaction, though it was statistically significant at the 5% level, with a p-value of 0.035. The findings imply that an increase in the number of entrepreneurs with access to the project reduces the likelihood of satisfaction by 38.2% compared to those without access. This result suggests that accessibility issues may create dissatisfaction, possibly due to logistical challenges or inequities in resource distribution. These findings are consistent with those of Mpfubhusa (2024), Dvoulety et al. (2024), and Aluko (2020), who noted that accessibility plays a crucial role in determining stakeholder satisfaction in various projects.

5.3 Challenges facing Small Business Entrepreneurs in Machinga Complex project

Results from Figure 2 indicate that competition from informal traders is perceived as a significant challenge by entrepreneurs in the Machinga Complex. Specifically, 63.4% of respondents agreed that there is intense competition from traders who are not registered in the complex, which creates an unfair competitive environment. These informal traders are not subject to the same tax obligations as the formal traders, leading to an uneven playing field. In contrast, 20% of respondents expressed neutrality on the issue, while 16.7% disagreed with the notion of informal competition being a challenge. These findings align with Thakur (2021), who examined the challenges faced by small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Bangladesh. His study found that competition from informal traders is one of the key barriers to the growth and operations of small businesses, as it discourages investment and innovation. This supports the argument that informal competition undermines the stability and profitability of formal businesses in the Machinga Complex.

Additionally, the study revealed that the lack of sufficient infrastructure in the Machinga Complex is another major issue, with 68.6% of entrepreneurs agreeing that the current infrastructure is inadequate. Only 18.7% of respondents were neutral, while 12.7% disagreed that infrastructure posed a challenge. These results suggest that the majority of entrepreneurs are dissatisfied with the existing infrastructure and believe that it requires significant refurbishment and reconstruction to meet their needs. This finding is consistent with Mutambara (2021), who identified limited infrastructure as a major challenge for small to medium enterprises in Zimbabwe. Mutambara's study indicated that insufficient infrastructure negatively impacts the performance of businesses, as inadequate facilities hinder operations and growth. Similarly, the entrepreneurs in the Machinga Complex view the lack of adequate infrastructure as a key factor limiting the success and development of their businesses.

Figure 2: Representing challenges facing small business entrepreneurs in Machinga complex



Source: Authors’ design (2024)

Figure 2 presents the findings related to the role of politics in the Machinga Complex project. According to the study, 23.3% of respondents agreed that politics constitutes a challenge within the project, while 50% of respondents remained neutral, and 26.6% disagreed with the notion that politics is a significant issue. These results suggest that while some entrepreneurs acknowledge the influence of politics on the project's success, the majority do not perceive it as a major hindrance. This finding is consistent with Thakur (2021), who identified political disturbances as a major challenge for small businesses in Bangladesh. Thakur's study revealed that political interference often disrupts business operations, leading to uncertainty and instability, which can ultimately undermine the growth and sustainability of small enterprises. In the context of Machinga Complex, it seems that the perception of political challenges is mixed, with many entrepreneurs remaining neutral or unaware of its direct impact.

Access to loans is another critical issue for entrepreneurs, as it plays a vital role in enabling business growth and investment. In the Machinga Complex, 66% of respondents indicated that they face challenges in accessing loans. This suggests that a majority of small business owners in the area struggle to obtain the financial resources necessary for expanding their businesses. In contrast, 18.7% of respondents remained neutral, and 15.3% disagreed that loan access is a problem. These findings are consistent with the study by Gumel (2017), which highlighted that a lack of access to adequate funding is one of the primary challenges faced by small business entrepreneurs in Nigeria. Entrepreneurs in the Machinga Complex, like those in other regions, may be hindered by the lack of collateral required by financial institutions, making it difficult to secure loans for business expansion. Thakur (2021) also noted that the difficulty in obtaining

loans is a significant barrier to the growth of small businesses, as access to capital is essential for both day-to-day operations and long-term investment.

Taxes are another challenge highlighted in the study, with 26.7% of respondents agreeing that the taxes charged in the Machinga Complex are excessively high, thus creating a financial burden for some entrepreneurs. However, 36.7% of respondents were neutral on this issue, and 36.6% disagreed, suggesting that the tax rates are not a major concern for most entrepreneurs in the market. These results imply that while taxes are perceived as a problem by some, a significant portion of the respondents does not view them as a significant obstacle to their businesses. Similarly, Gumel (2017) found that small business owners often face financial difficulties, not only due to limited access to loans but also because of the high taxes imposed on their operations. However, in the case of Machinga Complex, it appears that taxes, although a concern for some, do not represent the most pressing challenge for the majority of entrepreneurs.

The study also explored the issue of theft and property damage in the Machinga Complex Market. Only 16% of respondents agreed that theft and damage to property are risks in the market, while 26.7% were neutral, and 57.4% disagreed. This suggests that the majority of entrepreneurs do not perceive theft and property damage as significant concerns. The relatively low proportion of respondents who view theft as a risk indicates that security measures in place at the Machinga Complex may be adequate. This finding contrasts with the study by Gumel (2017), which highlighted security risks as a significant challenge for small businesses in Nigeria. Despite the importance of safety, the respondents in Machinga Complex seem to feel secure in their operating environment, which could be attributed to adequate preventive measures in place.

Health care access emerged as another significant challenge in the Machinga Complex. According to the study, 40% of respondents agreed that they lack access to affordable healthcare services, which may hinder their ability to perform business activities effectively. This issue resonates with findings from Thakur (2021), who noted that access to healthcare is a major challenge for small and medium enterprises in Bangladesh. Thakur's study revealed that many entrepreneurs in Bangladesh faced health-related difficulties, which affected their productivity and overall business development. Similarly, the lack of accessible healthcare in Machinga Complex could be limiting the potential of entrepreneurs, as their health is integral to their ability to manage and grow their businesses effectively.

6. Conclusion

The study revealed that the majority of small business entrepreneurs in the Machinga Complex are male, single, and typically have no formal education. Most respondents fall within a productive age range, and those who reported higher levels of satisfaction had income levels above the country's GDP per capita. The findings indicate that demographic factors such as age, income, education level, and participation in project consultation significantly influence entrepreneurial satisfaction. Key challenges identified by the entrepreneur's included competition from informal traders, insufficient infrastructure, lack of access to loans, political instability, high taxes, risks of theft and property damage, and inadequate access to healthcare services. These challenges collectively hinder the growth and satisfaction of entrepreneurs in the Machinga Complex.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that both the government and private sector introduce financial support initiatives, such as low-interest loans, targeting entrepreneurs with

lower income levels. This would help provide the necessary capital for business expansion and investment, thereby increasing entrepreneurs' satisfaction and profitability. Additionally, the government should invest in training and educational programs focused on business management and financial literacy, particularly for entrepreneurs who lack formal education, as these programs would enhance their ability to manage and grow their businesses effectively.

To address the challenges identified, the government should also create initiatives aimed at empowering women entrepreneurs, such as mentorship programs, which would not only improve satisfaction levels among female entrepreneurs but also encourage more women to engage in entrepreneurial activities. Furthermore, ensuring that entrepreneurs are involved in decision-making processes and establishing forums for feedback on development projects would allow their concerns to be heard and addressed. Finally, specific zones could be created within the Machinga Complex to minimize competition with informal traders, and healthcare facilities should be established nearby, with affordable health insurance options for entrepreneurs and their employees. Strengthening security measures, including the installation of surveillance cameras and increasing security personnel, along with encouraging insurance policies to cover theft and property damage, would also contribute to a safer and more supportive environment for entrepreneurs.

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