

## **Effects of the Informal Street Food Vendors on the Nyeri Town Publics**

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### **Abstract**

Nyeri town boasts of informal street food vendors found almost in every street, offering products ranging from indigenous to trendy cuisines. During evening hours, the informal street food operators compete for the street space with the town publics. The design and the size of the town's major streets have not been reviewed to accommodate the increasing informal street food vendors and the growing urban community. This study investigated the effects of the informal street food vendors' location, products, operating time and *modus operandi* on the urban community in Nyeri town. The researchers combined the Neo-Marxist theory-positing that the

informal sector expands as urbanization increases, and the Neo-liberal theory –arguing that entrepreneurs pursue informal sectors in order to operate outside the official business frameworks to explore the subject of the study. Using the cross-sectional survey design, the study adopted the enumeration and convenience sampling techniques to select vendors and consumers respectively that responded to questionnaire administered face-to-face. The qualitative data was analyzed using the thematic content analysis, and the output transformed into quantitative data to give percentages and frequencies. The informal street ventures inconvenienced street users especially during rush hours. The food related wastes and a cocktail of food aroma made the street ambiance less attractive. The equipment used on the streets and the unsecured fire points posed a great risk to the public. The study concludes that the informal street foods ventures provide employment that sustains livelihoods. The informal street businesses facilitate the flow of resources, and promote the mainstream economies like agriculture, retail and food manufacturing, thus contributing to wealth creation in the county. Study recommend benchmarking to explore ways to change the perception that the informal street foods are unsafe, unhealthy and the ventures make the street look unattractive. In countries like Thailand in the city of Phuket, informal street foods are conducted in an organized manner.

**Keywords:** Informal Street Foods, Vendors, Consumers.