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The Dilemma of Female Street Vendors in Indonesia: Can Local Regulations Empower Women in the Informal Sector?

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Abstract: Female street vendors play an important role in sustaining household livelihoods in the informal sector, but their economic activities remain closely connected to regulatory, social, and gender-related vulnerabilities. This study aims to analyze the dilemmas faced by female street vendors in Indonesia and examine how local regulations can contribute to their empowerment. The study employed a qualitative approach supported by descriptive analysis and comparative policy analysis. Primary data were obtained through interviews with 200 female street vendors in Bogor Regency, West Java, and were analyzed thematically by identifying recurring issues and organizing them into broader themes. The respondents were characterized by age, marital status, and duration of trading activity, while the regulatory analysis examined national and local provisions concerning trading locations, business legalization, data collection, guidance, empowerment, and enforcement. The findings identify five major issues: legal uncertainty and regulatory vulnerability, limited access to economic resources, social stigma and gender norms, health and safety risks, and the double burden of domestic and economic responsibilities. Survey evidence indicates that respondents did not generally perceive registration, licensing, information provision, or harsh treatment by officials as widespread problems. Nevertheless, gaps remain between formal regulatory provisions and the livelihood realities of female street vendors. The study concludes that local regulations have greater potential to empower women when they combine spatial management with legal certainty, livelihood security, access to resources, and gender-responsive social support.

Keywords: Local Regulations, Female Street Vendors, Informal Sector, Economic Empowerment, Gender Perspective.

INTRODUCTION

The informal sector plays an important role in providing employment and income opportunities, particularly for vulnerable groups in developing countries. The concept of the informal sector was introduced globally by the International Labour Organization (ILO) through the World Employment Programme in 1972. It generally refers to economic activities characterized by ease of entry in terms of skills, capital, and organization; family-based enterprises; small-scale operations; simple production technologies; and relatively limited

government regulation (Hackenberg, 2013; International Labour Organization, 2018). The term “informal” also refers broadly to activities operating outside established formal systems or structures (Echols & Shadily, 2010). Hart (1973) similarly described the informal sector as an unorganized segment of the labor force, while Sethuraman (1981) emphasized its role as a source of employment and income generation for individuals constrained by capital and skills.

Street vending constitutes an important component of the informal sector. Street vendors generally operate small-scale businesses with limited capital and without permanent business premises, providing goods and services to consumers in strategically located public spaces (Bhowmik, 2007; Bromley, 2000). For many vulnerable and marginalized communities, street vending is not merely an economic activity but an essential livelihood strategy. Its relatively low entry barriers allow individuals with limited financial resources, formal education, or access to formal employment to generate income. Consequently, the informal street vending sector has become closely associated with urban poverty, employment creation, and household survival in developing countries (Adhikari, 2017).

The economic significance of small and micro-enterprises is particularly evident in Indonesia. According to data cited from Kadin Indonesia (2023), Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) contributed 61.91% of Indonesia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), while employing approximately 119.7 million people, equivalent to 97.22% of the national labor force. These figures demonstrate the substantial contribution of small-scale economic activities to employment absorption, income generation, poverty reduction, and the distribution of economic development in Indonesia (Hamzah & Agustien, 2019; Sofyan Munawar et al., 2015; Utama, 2019). Within this context, street vendors represent an important group of informal economic actors whose activities contribute directly to household livelihoods and local economies.

Women play a particularly important role in informal economic activities and street vending. Studies indicate that women constitute a substantial proportion of street vendors in many countries, particularly in the Global South, where their participation may range from 30% to 90% depending on the national and local context. Women are involved not only in selling products but also in preparing goods, managing businesses, and supporting family-run enterprises (Arif, 2023). However, women's participation in informal work does not necessarily translate into equal economic empowerment. Gender inequality can persist through differences in economic opportunities, social expectations, and access to resources (Akbar, 2022). Research has also demonstrated that gender differences in preferences are associated with broader processes of economic development and gender equality (Falk & Hermle, 2018). From an institutional perspective, gender inequality is also closely connected with governance and poverty, indicating that formal institutions and governance arrangements can influence women's socio-economic opportunities (Workneh, 2020).

Women's decision to enter street vending is also frequently associated with economic necessity. In developing countries, street vending may provide a relatively accessible means of generating income with limited initial capital. This is particularly important for women who face unemployment, inadequate household income, widowhood, single parenthood, or other economic pressures. Research by Nayak et al. (2023) demonstrates that women entrepreneurs are often motivated more strongly by necessity or push factors than by pull factors such as personal passion or business opportunity. At the same time, women entrepreneurs continue to encounter barriers related to access to finance, gender equality, and social and cultural obligations.

These challenges become more complex when women's economic activities intersect with urban governance and local regulatory systems. In Indonesia, street vending is regulated at the national level through Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 125 of 2012 concerning the Coordination of Arrangement and Empowerment of Street Vendors. At

the local level, various regional governments have adopted regulations governing the location, licensing, registration, development, and supervision of street vendors. Examples include Bogor City Local Regulation Number 11 of 2019 concerning the Arrangement and Empowerment of Street Vendors, DKI Jakarta Governor Regulation Number 10 of 2015 concerning the Arrangement and Empowerment of Street Vendors, and regulations governing street vendors in Bogor Regency. These regulations generally seek to establish orderly trading locations, regulate business activities, facilitate licensing, provide guidance, and maintain public order and urban aesthetics.

Although such regulations formally recognize street vendors as economic actors, their effectiveness as instruments of women's empowerment depends on how they are implemented and how well they respond to the specific circumstances of female vendors. Existing regulations provide mechanisms concerning spatial arrangements, permitted trading locations, business registration, data collection, guidance, and enforcement. These provisions can contribute to regulatory certainty and public-space management, but they do not automatically guarantee that female street vendors will experience greater economic security or empowerment. The effectiveness of regulation therefore needs to be assessed not only in terms of formal provisions but also in relation to the accessibility of those provisions, their implementation, and their compatibility with women's livelihood needs.

This issue is particularly significant because some female street vendors continue to operate outside designated areas despite the existence of local regulations. Their choice of location may be influenced by proximity to customers and the need to secure sufficient daily income. Consequently, the interaction between formal regulation and livelihood strategies can create potential tensions concerning trading locations, legal recognition, and enforcement. At the same time, administrative procedures, access to resources, infrastructure, and knowledge of regulations may influence the extent to which vendors can formalize and develop their businesses.

The challenges faced by female street vendors are therefore multidimensional. From an economic perspective, they frequently experience limited access to finance, insufficient savings, inadequate business networks, restricted information, and gaps in entrepreneurial or managerial skills (Mwania, 2015; Nayak et al., 2023). From a social perspective, women may experience stigma and gender stereotypes that associate women primarily with domestic responsibilities rather than economic activities in public spaces. From a health and safety perspective, street-based work can expose vendors to dust, vehicle emissions, unsafe public environments, harassment, and inadequate sanitation. These conditions can become more difficult for women who bring their children to work because of the absence of affordable childcare facilities.

Another important dimension is the double burden experienced by female street vendors. Women's increasing participation in economic activities does not necessarily reduce their domestic responsibilities. Cultural expectations continue to position women as wives, mothers, caregivers, household managers, and contributors to family income. The concept of women's multiple roles has historically been reflected in the idea of *Panca Dharma Perempuan*, which emphasizes women's roles as companions to husbands, educators of the younger generation, household managers, economic earners, and members of community organizations (Rahayu, 2008). Consequently, female street vendors must simultaneously manage income-generating activities and domestic responsibilities, potentially resulting in physical exhaustion, psychological stress, and limited time for business development.

Women's empowerment provides an important conceptual perspective for understanding these challenges. Empowerment involves strengthening individuals' capabilities, resources, agency, and opportunities so that they can achieve greater independence and participate meaningfully in social and economic life (Miniarni et al., 2017). Women's empowerment

encompasses access to education, health services, economic opportunities, resources, and legal rights. Institutions are particularly important because formal rules, policies, laws, and regulations shape the opportunities and constraints experienced by individuals. Local regulations therefore have the potential not only to control informal economic activities but also to create institutional conditions that support women's economic agency and livelihood security.

Women's participation in informal employment can contribute to household welfare and economic empowerment by increasing income and strengthening women's bargaining position within households (Ngono, 2021; Rodriguez, 2022). However, economic participation alone does not guarantee empowerment. Women's agency may remain constrained when access to resources, decision-making authority, legal protection, and social support is limited. Kabeer (1999) conceptualizes empowerment through the interconnected dimensions of resources, agency, and achievements, suggesting that meaningful empowerment requires more than simply providing women with opportunities to earn income. In the context of female street vendors, this perspective implies that local regulations should be evaluated not only according to their ability to organize public spaces but also according to their capacity to provide women with secure access to livelihoods, resources, protection, and opportunities for sustainable economic development.

Against this background, a critical question emerges concerning whether local regulations in Indonesia function primarily as instruments of control and spatial order or whether they can also become instruments of empowerment for women in the informal sector. The existence of regulations does not automatically guarantee protection or empowerment if their implementation remains gender-blind and focuses predominantly on public order and urban aesthetics. A gender-responsive regulatory approach is therefore necessary to recognize the specific circumstances of female street vendors, including their economic vulnerability, domestic responsibilities, access to capital, legal status, health and safety, and need for social protection.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the dilemmas faced by female street vendors in Indonesia and examine the extent to which local regulations can contribute to their empowerment in the informal sector. The study focuses on the intersection between local spatial governance and the socio-economic realities of female street vendors, with particular attention to legal protection, access to economic resources, social recognition, health and safety, and the double burden of domestic and economic responsibilities. The central research question is: What are the primary dilemmas faced by female street vendors, and how can local regulations serve as instruments for empowering women in the informal sector?

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach supported by descriptive analysis and comparative policy analysis to examine the intersection between local spatial governance and the socio-economic realities of female street vendors in Indonesia. The study focused on the dilemmas experienced by female street vendors and examined whether local regulations provide mechanisms that support their economic empowerment.

Participants and Sampling

The primary empirical data were obtained from 200 female street vendors in Bogor Regency, West Java, Indonesia. The respondents were women actively engaged in street-food vending activities. The study focused on female vendors because their participation in the informal sector is closely associated with household economic responsibilities and the need to secure independent sources of income.

The respondents were characterized according to age, marital status, duration of trading activity, education, daily business capital, and daily income. In terms of age, 30 respondents (15%) were aged 21–30 years, 40 respondents (20%) were aged 31–40 years, 68 respondents (34%) were aged 41–50 years, and 62 respondents (31%) were over 50 years old. No respondent was below 20 years of age. Thus, the largest group consisted of women aged 41–50 years.

Regarding marital status, 178 respondents (89%) were married, 12 (6%) were single, and 10 (5%) were widowed. The predominance of married respondents indicates that most participants combined income-generating activities with household and family responsibilities.

The duration of trading activity also varied among the respondents. Eleven respondents (5%) had been engaged in street vending for less than one year, 86 (43%) had been trading for one to three years, 45 (23%) had been trading for four to six years, and 58 (29%) had been trading for more than six years.

The respondents entered street vending under different socio-economic circumstances. The interview findings indicate that their involvement was associated with the death of a spouse, retirement, layoffs, illness or old age, the responsibility of supporting a family as a widow, and insufficient household income from the husband. The respondents also expressed a desire to remain economically independent rather than become unemployed or dependent on government assistance.

Sampling was conducted purposively by selecting women who were directly engaged in street-food vending and were able to provide information relevant to the research objectives. The selection emphasized respondents whose experiences reflected the socio-economic and regulatory conditions examined in the study.

Data Collection and Analysis

The primary data were obtained through interviews with the 200 female street vendors. The interviews explored the circumstances underlying women's participation in street vending, their economic conditions, experiences in operating their businesses, interactions with regulatory authorities, access to business resources, and household responsibilities.

The interview findings were analyzed thematically. First, the interview material was reviewed to identify statements and information relevant to the research objectives. Second, recurring issues were grouped into initial codes. Third, related codes were organized into broader themes. Fourth, the resulting themes were interpreted in relation to the regulatory provisions governing street vendors.

The analysis identified five major themes: legal uncertainty and regulatory vulnerability, limited access to economic resources, social stigma and gender norms, health and safety risks, and the double burden of domestic and economic responsibilities. These themes were subsequently compared with the relevant regulatory provisions to assess whether local regulations primarily emphasize public order and spatial control or also provide mechanisms for economic empowerment.

Descriptive analysis was used to summarize the characteristics of the 200 respondents, including age, marital status, duration of trading activity, education, business capital, and daily income. For example, 108 respondents (54%) had completed senior high school, 65 (32.5%) had completed junior high school, 16 (8%) had higher education, 10 (5%) had elementary education, and 1 respondent (0.5%) had no formal schooling.

The comparative policy analysis examined the regulatory frameworks applicable to street vendors in Indonesia, particularly the national and local regulations relevant to the study. The analysis considered provisions concerning designated trading locations, registration and legalization, data collection, guidance and empowerment, and regulatory enforcement. The empirical findings from the interviews were then compared with these regulatory provisions to

identify gaps between formal regulatory objectives and the socio-economic realities experienced by female street vendors.

Policy and Regulatory Analysis

The study examined Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 125 of 2012 concerning the Coordination of Arrangement and Empowerment of Street Vendors. At the local level, the analysis considered DKI Jakarta Governor Regulation Number 10 of 2015 concerning the Arrangement and Empowerment of Street Vendors, Bogor City Local Regulation Number 11 of 2019 concerning the Arrangement and Empowerment of Street Vendors, and the relevant regulation governing street vendors in Bogor Regency.

The regulations were examined comparatively in terms of the provision of designated trading locations, business legalization, data collection, guidance and empowerment, spatial management, and enforcement. This analysis was used to assess whether local regulatory frameworks provide opportunities for women to obtain more secure livelihoods or predominantly function as mechanisms for controlling the use of public space.

Analytical Framework

The interpretation of women's empowerment was informed by the concept of empowerment as a process of developing women's capabilities, knowledge, social status, economic opportunities, and legal rights (Miniarni et al., 2017). The analysis also drew on Kabeer (1999) framework, which conceptualizes empowerment through the interconnected dimensions of resources, agency, and achievements.

These concepts were used to interpret whether local regulations provide women with meaningful access to economic resources, secure working spaces, legal protection, social recognition, and opportunities to strengthen their economic agency. Accordingly, the study connected the experiences of the 200 female street vendors with the regulatory provisions and the conceptual dimensions of women's empowerment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Legal Uncertainty and Regulatory Vulnerability

The findings indicate that regulatory issues remain an important dimension of the challenges experienced by female street vendors, although the respondents did not generally perceive registration and licensing procedures as highly burdensome. The survey results show that 61% of respondents disagreed with the statement that the procedure for registering a street-vending business was bureaucratic and confusing, while 30% expressed a neutral response and only 9% agreed. Similarly, 47% disagreed that business licensing was highly complex and time-consuming, 38% were neutral, and 15% agreed. These findings suggest that the regulatory difficulties experienced by female street vendors should not be characterized simply as a general perception of excessive bureaucracy. Rather, the issue concerns the accessibility, clarity, and practical implementation of regulatory arrangements in the context of women's informal livelihoods.

The interview findings further illustrate that women's participation in street vending is closely related to their household economic circumstances. The respondents reported entering street vending for various reasons, including the death of a spouse, retirement, layoffs, illness or advanced age, responsibility for supporting a family as a widow, and insufficient household income. They also expressed a desire to remain economically independent rather than remain unemployed or dependent on government assistance. These findings indicate that street vending functions as a practical livelihood strategy for women facing household economic pressures and seeking to maintain economic self-reliance.

The choice of trading location is also closely related to the need to secure sufficient daily income. The interview evidence indicates that women may prefer locations with greater customer access because such locations are perceived as more economically viable, particularly when vendors have limited capital and few formal employment opportunities. This finding helps explain why some vendors continue to operate in locations that are not formally designated for street vending. Their location choices should therefore be understood not simply as unwillingness to comply with regulation, but also in relation to the economic necessity of maintaining customer access and household income.

The findings concerning regulatory interaction are also more nuanced than a simple characterization of widespread administrative or enforcement problems. Regarding the provision of relevant information on business registration and licensing, 59% of respondents disagreed that the information provided was inadequate, 34% were neutral, and 7% agreed. Similarly, 57% disagreed that women were insufficiently represented in bodies involved in policy-making, while 33% were neutral and 10% agreed. The survey also indicates that harsh treatment by officials was not perceived as a widespread experience among the respondents. Sixty-five percent disagreed with the statement that female street vendors experienced harsh treatment by officials, 30% were neutral, and only 5% agreed. These findings suggest that regulatory vulnerability should be understood more broadly in terms of the interaction between formal regulatory requirements, livelihood needs, access to information, and the security of women's economic activities rather than solely in terms of aggressive enforcement.

This situation nonetheless creates tension between livelihood needs and regulatory requirements. Where vendors operate outside designated locations, they may remain exposed to warnings, relocation, confiscation of merchandise, or other forms of regulatory intervention. The broader tension between street vendors and urban authorities has also been discussed in the literature, particularly where municipal regulation determines who can legitimately use public space for economic activities (Austin, 1994). Regulatory processes involving registration, licensing, fees, and administrative requirements can further shape the relationship between vendors and local authorities (Milgram, 2011).

From an empowerment perspective, legal recognition remains important because it can provide greater certainty and security for women whose livelihoods depend on street vending. The findings indicate, however, that empowerment-oriented regulation should not be reduced to the simplification of registration alone. It should also include clear information, predictable access to appropriate trading spaces, fair administrative procedures, and meaningful consideration of the livelihood needs of female vendors.

The findings therefore point to a more nuanced understanding of regulatory vulnerability. Female street vendors do not uniformly perceive registration, licensing, information provision, or interactions with officials as major obstacles. Instead, the central challenge lies in ensuring that formal regulatory arrangements remain accessible and responsive to the economic circumstances of women who depend on street vending for household livelihood. Local regulations can therefore function as instruments of empowerment when they combine spatial management with mechanisms that support legal certainty, livelihood security, and women's economic agency.

Limited Access to Economic Resources

Limited access to economic resources represents another significant challenge for female street vendors. Previous research has identified limited financial accessibility, high interest rates, insufficient savings, weak professional networks, limited access to information, and gaps in entrepreneurial and managerial skills as important constraints for women entrepreneurs (Mwania, 2015). Similar challenges are evident among female street vendors, who frequently operate with limited capital and face difficulties in obtaining training and reliable market

information. Entrepreneurial behavior and business management are also important factors in the sustainability of micro and small enterprises, including small-scale businesses operating in local communities (Nursiah & Kusnadi, 2015).

Ramasamy (2018) further identified financial difficulties, inadequate social security protection, inventory spoilage, and violations associated with public spaces as challenges faced by women working in the informal sector. At the same time, government support and favorable environmental conditions can contribute positively to women's business success (Gupta & Mirchandani, 2018). Nayak et al. (2023) similarly emphasized financing barriers, gender equality issues, and socio-cultural obligations as continuing challenges for women entrepreneurs.

These findings suggest that regulatory empowerment should extend beyond the provision of legal status. Local governments can contribute to women's economic empowerment by facilitating access to capital, business training, information, and appropriate trading spaces. Without such support, formal recognition alone may have limited effects on the capacity of female vendors to sustain and develop their businesses.

Social Stigma and Gender Norms

Female street vendors also face social stigma associated with their participation in public economic activities. The findings identify several sources of stigma, including gender stereotypes, perceptions of low economic status, social norms concerning women's domestic roles, safety concerns, and assumptions about women's education and skills.

Gender stereotypes may portray street vending as an inappropriate or low-status occupation for women, particularly where social expectations continue to emphasize women's roles within the household. Female vendors therefore face the challenge of participating in economic activities while simultaneously negotiating social and cultural expectations. Nayak et al. (2023) found that women entrepreneurs are frequently motivated by necessity rather than purely by personal desire or passion, reinforcing the perception that women's entrepreneurship is primarily a response to economic hardship.

Social stigma is also connected to legal vulnerability. Female vendors operating in public spaces may experience harassment, eviction, or asset confiscation when their activities are not formally recognized (Arif, 2023). Consequently, improving women's economic position requires not only economic assistance but also greater social and institutional recognition of street vending as a legitimate livelihood activity.

Health and Safety Risks

Health and safety constitute another important dimension of the dilemma faced by female street vendors. Working on sidewalks and other public spaces can expose vendors to dust, vehicle exhaust, and unsafe working environments, creating potential health risks, including respiratory problems. Research on women street food vendors also highlights the importance of operational conditions and the working environment in understanding the challenges faced by women engaged in street-based food businesses (Mahopo et al., 2022). The absence of adequate safety infrastructure also creates additional challenges for women who bring their children to work because childcare support is often unavailable.

The findings indicate that the physical environment in which female vendors operate is closely connected to the effectiveness of local regulatory policies. Regulations that focus primarily on spatial order without providing adequate sanitation, rest areas, safety measures, and other basic infrastructure may fail to address the actual working conditions of female vendors.

Local government intervention can therefore contribute to empowerment by ensuring that designated vending areas provide appropriate infrastructure. The provision of sanitation

facilities, rest areas, and measures to reduce harassment and street-level violence can improve both the safety and sustainability of women's participation in the informal economy.

Double Burden of Domestic and Economic Responsibilities

The findings further reveal that female street vendors experience a double burden arising from the simultaneous demands of income-generating activities and domestic responsibilities. Women continue to perform roles as wives, mothers, household managers, and economic contributors. The concept of *Panca Dharma Perempuan* reflects these multiple expectations, including women's roles as companions to husbands, educators of the younger generation, household managers, economic earners, and members of community organizations (Rahayu, 2008).

Women's participation in street vending therefore does not necessarily eliminate traditional domestic responsibilities. Instead, economic activity is added to existing household obligations. Managing both vending activities and domestic responsibilities can lead to physical exhaustion and stress, particularly when family support and adequate social infrastructure are limited.

This finding is important for evaluating local regulations from a gender perspective. A regulation that treats all street vendors identically may appear gender-neutral but may not be gender-responsive. Female vendors may require specific supporting infrastructure, such as accessible sanitation facilities, rest areas, and childcare facilities, to enable them to participate safely and sustainably in economic activities.

Local Regulations and the Empowerment of Female Street Vendors

The analysis of local regulations shows that several regions in Indonesia have established regulatory frameworks addressing the arrangement and empowerment of street vendors. These include DKI Jakarta Governor Regulation Number 10 of 2015, Bogor City Local Regulation Number 11 of 2019, and regulations concerning street vendors in Bogor Regency. The regulations address matters such as designated trading zones, business licensing, training, guidance, and regulatory compliance.

Bogor City Local Regulation Number 11 of 2019, for example, provides for permanent and temporary locations for street vendors and requires location planning to consider public interest, social, cultural, aesthetic, economic, security, order, health, and environmental sanitation factors. It also regulates business registration, data collection, local fees, and sanctions for violations. These provisions indicate that street vendors are formally recognized within the local regulatory framework.

Similarly, DKI Jakarta Governor Regulation Number 10 of 2015 seeks to establish urban order, comfort, and aesthetics while providing business opportunities in permitted locations. It also includes spatial arrangements, empowerment, and partnerships between street vendors and the business sector through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs. In Bogor Regency, regulations address permitted trading locations, business permits, and guidance and empowerment through training, support, and legal compliance counseling.

Despite these provisions, implementation gaps remain. Many female street vendors continue to operate in non-designated areas, particularly in suburban settings, creating recurring conflicts concerning public order. This indicates a gap between formal regulatory provisions and the socio-economic realities of female vendors. The existence of designated spaces and licensing mechanisms does not automatically ensure empowerment when those mechanisms are difficult to access or do not correspond to vendors' livelihood needs.

Toward Gender-Responsive Local Regulations

The findings indicate that local regulations can contribute to women's empowerment when they move beyond enforcement and incorporate measures addressing the specific vulnerabilities of female street vendors. Five areas are particularly relevant: legal protection, access to resources, social and economic recognition, health and safety, and administrative accessibility.

First, simplified licensing and legal recognition can strengthen operational security and reduce the risk of arbitrary enforcement, confiscation, and harassment. Second, access to capital, skills development, market information, and designated trading spaces can improve women's business capacity. Third, recognition of female vendors as contributors to the local economy can help reduce social stigma and strengthen their social position.

Fourth, health and safety provisions should be incorporated into vending-space planning. Food safety and hygiene standards, together with infrastructure such as sanitation and rest facilities, can improve working conditions. Finally, administrative procedures should be simplified because complex bureaucratic requirements may discourage vendors from obtaining legal status. These measures are particularly important because gender-blind policies may overlook the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women in the informal sector.

The findings therefore suggest that local regulations should not be understood solely as instruments for controlling public space. They can also function as institutional mechanisms for women's empowerment when they provide secure access to livelihoods, legal protection, economic resources, and social support. This interpretation is consistent with the concept of empowerment as the development of women's capabilities, opportunities, and rights Miniarni et al. (2017), as well as Kabeer's (1999) emphasis on resources, agency, and achievements as interconnected dimensions of empowerment.

Overall, the evidence indicates that the main limitation of existing local regulations is not necessarily the absence of regulatory provisions, but the predominance of a regulatory orientation toward public order, spatial control, and administrative compliance. A gender-responsive regulatory approach also requires greater consideration of women's representation and interests in institutional decision-making. Evidence on gender quotas demonstrates that institutional arrangements designed to improve women's representation can influence the composition and functioning of decision-making structures (Besley et al., 2017). In the context of street-vending regulation, this perspective reinforces the importance of ensuring that women's experiences and needs are considered in the formulation and implementation of local policies.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study concludes that local regulations in Indonesia provide a formal framework for organizing and regulating street-vending activities, but their potential to empower female street vendors depends on how effectively these regulations respond to the socio-economic realities of women working in the informal sector. Based on interviews with 200 female street vendors in Bogor Regency and the comparative analysis of relevant regulatory provisions, five major dimensions characterize the challenges experienced by the respondents: legal and regulatory vulnerability, limited access to economic resources, social stigma and gender norms, health and safety concerns, and the double burden of domestic and economic responsibilities. At the same time, the survey findings show that respondents did not generally perceive registration procedures, licensing complexity, information provision, or harsh treatment by officials as widespread problems. This indicates that the issue is not simply the existence of regulation or administrative procedures, but the extent to which regulatory arrangements are accessible, responsive, and compatible with women's livelihood needs. The study therefore concludes that

local regulations can function more effectively as instruments of women's empowerment when spatial management is accompanied by legal certainty, livelihood security, access to economic resources, appropriate infrastructure, and gender-responsive social support.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, the analysis focuses on selected local regulatory frameworks and the experiences of female street vendors presented in the study, so the findings should not be generalized to all regions or all informal-sector workers in Indonesia. Second, the study focuses primarily on the relationship between local regulations and the socio-economic conditions of female street vendors, while other institutional, economic, social, and cultural factors may also influence women's empowerment. Third, the qualitative and descriptive-comparative approach provides an understanding of the dilemmas and regulatory conditions identified in the study but does not measure the long-term effects of local regulations on the economic outcomes of female street vendors. The findings should therefore be interpreted within the scope and context of the present study.

Recommendations

Future research should expand the analysis to a broader range of regions and local regulatory frameworks in Indonesia to provide a more comprehensive comparison of policies affecting female street vendors. Further studies could also incorporate additional empirical information concerning women's access to finance, social protection, business development, childcare, health and safety, and legal services. Longitudinal research could be conducted to examine how changes in local regulations affect the livelihoods and economic empowerment of female street vendors over time. From a policy perspective, local governments should consider gender-responsive approaches in regulating street vending by providing secure and strategic trading spaces, accessible legal recognition and licensing, opportunities for financial and entrepreneurial support, adequate sanitation and safety infrastructure, and social support facilities that address the specific needs of female vendors.

Author Contributions

Budi Sulistyo: conceptualization, research design, data collection, data analysis, and manuscript preparation. Budi Hermana: development of the theoretical framework, data interpretation, manuscript review, and scholarly revision. Mohammad Abdul Mukhyi: research supervision, interpretation of findings, critical review, and final approval of the manuscript. All authors contributed to the revision of the manuscript and approved the final version for publication.

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