Assessing the role of curio trading in shaping livelihoods, economic and ecological dimensions in Tshwane, South Africa

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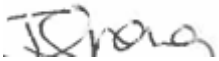
SIGNATURE:  **DATE:** 2026/02/28

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Abstract

Informal trading in Africa contributes to social and economic development by reducing poverty through the creation of income-generating opportunities. Crucially, it enables poor and vulnerable people to make a living. One aspect of informal trading is curio trading. Informal curio trading has additional impacts, including ecological impacts and cultural heritage preservation. In Tshwane, as in most of South Africa's urban centres, products such as fast food and second-hand clothes are sold on the streets. But unlike most South African cities, Tshwane also has a significant informal curio trade. In Tshwane, curios are sold at the Tshwane Central, Marabastad and Pretoria Zoo. An overview of the informal sector, particularly informal tourism, was documented. Significantly, the study sought to explore and assess the impact of curio trading on traders' livelihoods, as well as the sector's economic and ecological impacts in Tshwane. Thus, to achieve the aim and objectives, the study employed a qualitative research design. Data for the study was gathered through face-to-face interviews using a list of interview questions. The questions were organised into sections based on the aims and objectives of the study. Data collection continued until saturation was achieved. Additionally, the interviews were transcribed and categorised under specific themes for analysis.

This study adopted a holistic approach incorporating livelihoods, economic, ecological and cultural aspects to investigate the dynamics of informal curio trading in Tshwane city. The analysis is based on the findings from unstructured interviews with informal curio traders in Tshwane City. The study indicates that informal curio trading in Tshwane is demographically diverse, benefiting both local citizens and migrant traders in terms of sustainable development. More importantly, the informal traders are found to be educated, with women predominantly as opposed to men. The findings suggest that informal curio trading supports livelihoods and economic development. Apart from this, the findings shows that informal curio sector in Tshwane offers job opportunities and as thus enhance local economic development. This sector also contributes to the value chains of urban informal tourism. Furthermore, it plays a vital role in ecological and environmental stability. Despite this, the findings suggest that the informal curio trading requires governance reinforcement regarding its long-term environmental sustainability.

Additionally, the findings shows that curio trades contribute to cultural preservation. This shows that the curio trading sector in Tshwane city strive to enhance the continuation of cultural identity across generation. The study concludes that informal curio traders view curio trades as their primary source of income, contributing to local economies and advancing sustainable

livelihoods. Additionally, the sector is rooted on cultural preservations, attracting tourist to recognize various South African cultural identity. Considering the findings, the study therefore contributes to the literature by providing insights into the role of informal curio trading through the approach of the triple bottom line of sustainable development. This study provides spatial perspectives on how urban informalities shape vulnerable communities within African cities which is overlooked within the informal curio sector, therefore this assist in filling up the gap in the literature.

Keywords: Informal sector, Informal tourism, Sustainability, Curio trading.

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List of acronyms

CBD	Central Business District
CoT	City of Tshwane
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIBUS	Gauteng Informal Business Upliftment Strategy
ILO	International Labour Organization
LED	Local Economic Development
NIBUS	National Informal Business Upliftment Strategy
NZG	National Zoological Gardens of South Africa
PERO	Provincial Economic Review and Outlook
PIBA	Pretoria Informal Business Association
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAITA	South African Informal Traders' Alliance
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
SANTRA	South African National Traders Retail Alliance
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SMME's	Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
STATS SA	Statistics South Africa
WBG	World Bank Group
WIEGO	Women in Informal Employment Globalising and Organising

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The informal sector is a vital component of the economic fabric of many sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries (Etim & Daramola, 2020). Additionally, the informal sector in developing countries plays an important role in the livelihoods of urban households by providing employment and income for many individuals (Aniley, 2025). The sustainability of informal sector is embedded in social networks, geographical economic viability and traders' spatial proximity (Dube *et al*., 2026). The informal sector refers to the economic activities run by individuals without formal contractual arrangements (Etim & Daramola, 2020). Mostly, the informal sector, which encompasses Small, Medium, and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) such as informal street vendors, serves as a crucial means of survival for unprivileged people (Mahadea & Zogli, 2018). The rate of employment in the informal sector is reported to be 19,5% in the fourth quarter of 2024. This underlines the significant role of employment opportunities outside the formal sector (StatsSA, 2024). Owing to a lack of employment opportunities, many individuals turn to informal trading. It has become pivotal for the survival of many (Khumalo *et al.*, 2019).

Informal trading involves the exchange of goods, products and services, usually between two individuals, to generate income without a formal licence to trade (Khumalo, 2015). Informal trading is often simply referred to as street trading (Mokolane, 2023). Conversely, informal trading is a generic term for any small business operating outside the formal economy's restrictions (Agyemang & Schoeman, 2022). Importantly, informal trading has increased in scale over time as the South African economic growth has slowed (Ah Goo & De Wit, 2015; Ntuli, 2020). Evidently, the growth of informal trading in South Africa, with the number of non-VAT-registered businesses, has increased over a decade from 1.5 million in 2013 to 1.9 million in 2023 (StatsSA, 2024). This is especially true for individuals with no or limited education, as they often have extremely hard access to formal work (Legodi & Kanjere, 2015; Matli & Ngoepe, 2021). In urban context, informal trading contributes to poverty reduction and SDG due to the role it plays in the provision of food and income to millions of people (Farag, 2025). Despite its contribution to poverty alleviation, street trading can sometimes lead to complex environmental externalities that jeopardize long term sustainability of urban spaces (Aniedo *et al*., 2025).

One of the biggest challenges globally is the eradication of poverty, as stated in the first of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), aiming to eradicate poverty in all its forms everywhere by 2030 (Hossain, 2019). Similarly, to ensure that people meet their basic needs, the world needs to come up with measures to reduce poverty (Ayoo, 2022). This could be achieved by supporting informal tourism subsectors, such as the informal craft and curio industry (Truong, 2018). Significantly, in Africa, the informal craft sector plays an important role in tourism-related business activities (Eseagwu, 2023). In the case of curios, their sale has the potential to uplift people by reducing poverty and providing employment opportunities (Zhou, 2017). In addition, most of the curio items, especially beadwork, have traditional significance and purpose. As a result, the sector supports traditional cultural practices.

Several studies emphasised that the contribution of this tourism subsector and its sustainability to livelihoods depend on numerous factors, such as efficient resource utilisation, the transfer of skills across generations, and the development of marketing skills (Harris, 2014; Elbaz & Abou-Shouk, 2016; DeMotts, 2017). In South Africa, the informal sector plays a crucial role in supporting livelihoods yet is frequently overlooked (Thwala *et al.*, 2023). Likewise, the informal curio trading as part of the informal tourism sector has been largely unrecognised in African academic research. As a result, not enough is known regarding the curio trading. Thus, this study sought to explore the extent of this sector and its contribution to traders' livelihoods, as well as the associated economic and ecological impacts.

1.2 Research key concepts

Informal sector – The concept of the informal sector was introduced by the anthropologist Keith Hart in 1973 (Dell'Anno, 2022). In his research, the concept was used to describe workers who worked outside the formal market. Hart defined the informal sector concept as self-employed individuals. The informal sector represents a crucial component of the economy in many developing countries. It plays a vital role in job creation, production, and income generation (Onwo & Ohazulike, 2021). Globally, the economy of the nation lies on both formal and informal economy. Sadly, the definition of informal economy is still unclear and vague. This is because the sector represents the contradictory reflection of both negative and positive aspects. The concept informal economy was established from the term 'informal sector' which originated from ILO employment advisory mission in 1972. This viewed that the informality is not restricted to a sector but serves as an alternative way of conducting

economic activities (Luque, 2022). The informal sector is established when the formal sector is unable to cater the unemployed individual in particular graduate, to the labour market (Hadhek & Hedhli, 2025). This has acted as a drive in the increase of small and medium businesses especially woodcarving in rural and urban areas (Mikolo, 2007). This shows that informal economy play an important role in poverty reduction and job creation regardless of its instability income and low productivity (Osinubi & Simatele, 2025). In this study, the concept of the informal sector refers to business activities that are both legal and illegal, operating outside the formal economy; however, they affect socio-economic development.

Informal tourism – Informal tourism is defined as business activities linked to tourists and the tourism industry, often not recognised by tourism organisations (Slocum *et al.*, 2011). These businesses include souvenir traders, self-employed tour guides, drivers and guest house owners operating outside the formal economy (Jiyane *et al.*, 2012). For this study, informal tourism business activities refer to curio trading. Curio trading has a significant role in the tourism industry. For example, curio traders sell handcrafted goods and provide services to tourists, enriching their experience and thus promoting culture and heritage (Ruhanen & Whitford, 2018). Despite this, curio trading as an aspect of informal tourism business activity contributes to employment creation (Çakmak *et al.*, 2019). As a result, it forms part of promoting sustainable development. In this study, curio trading refers to the trading of handcrafted or artefact objects and/or goods, such as wood carvings, art pieces, sculptures, clay pots, beadwork, and African textiles. These goods and objects are referred to as curios as they serve as mementoes.

Sustainability –. Sustainability refers to the balancing of three interconnected pillars, namely, the economy, environment and social (Purvis & Robinson, 2019). It is a holistic approach to achieve sustainable development. The term sustainability was formally introduced in the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future report. In that report, the term was defined as the fulfilment of present needs while preserving needs for future generations (Ruzek, 2014). This study investigated the potential impacts of all three pillars of sustainability on the informal trading of curios in urban areas.

1.3 Research statement

One of the main concerns in South Africa is poverty and the rate of unemployment (Tshofuti, 2016). However, informal curio trading plays an important role in employment creation (Jokia *et al.*, 2021). Despite the informality of this industry, it has been viewed as a vital strategy for

developing the livelihoods of many (Abisuga-Oyekunle *et al.*, 2020). Although there is a substantial amount of published literature on informal trading in South Africa, one understudied sector is curio trading (Zhou, 2017; Bonner, 2024). Additionally, information on the livelihoods of the curio traders is lacking (Khuzwayo, 2016). Furthermore, the long-term sustainability of this sector remains uncertain, despite its notable role in contributing to livelihoods and local economic development. Moreover, regulatory policy to support this sector is lacking. As a result, it negatively affects both traders and the environment (Sultana *et al.*, 2022).

1.4 Aim of the study

To address the issues and gaps mentioned, this study aimed to explore and assess the impact of curio trading on traders' livelihoods, as well as the sector's economic and ecological impacts in Tshwane.

1.5 Research questions

This study intended to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the key characteristics and profiles of curio traders operating in Tshwane, including their backgrounds, motivations, and trade practices?
2. What are the perceived economic implications of curio trading on livelihoods and economic development in Tshwane?
3. What are the ecological impacts of curio trading on resource use and environmental sustainability in Tshwane?
4. How do curio trading activities influence the cultural identity and tourism dynamics of Tshwane?

1.6 Significance of the study

According to Khumalo (2015), one aspect of the informal sector that is overlooked is curio trading, although the sector plays a significant role in both socio-economic development and environmental impacts. In addition, Abisuga-Oyekunle and Muchie (2020) highlighted this sector's cultural significance. Hence, Oyekunle and Sirarayi (2018) emphasised that this sector has been a daily aspect of economic and social development in countries such as South Africa. However, the sector receives less attention from most governmental policymakers (Abisuga-Oyekunle & Muchie, 2020). It is therefore required to develop and advance this

sector to reflect its significance on sustainable development (Abisuga-Oyekunle & Fillis, 2017). Thus, this study sought to explore the extent to which this sector contributes to socio-economic development, as is mainly practised in developing countries. The contribution of informal traders is often overlooked by policymakers (Bradley, 2022). In this case, the findings of this study will contribute to policy recommendations for governing and supporting informal trading in urban areas. Additionally, it will provide guidance on informal trading initiatives within the context of local economic development. Moreover, the study will contribute to the existing literature by providing insight into the role of informal curio trading in sustainable development.

Importantly, curio trading, as an aspect of informal economic activity, contributes to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Sultana *et al.*, 2022). Similarly, it is recognised by the South African Government as a contributor to sustainable development and economic development (Oyekunle & Sirarayi, 2018). In addition, curio trading is viewed as a key driver of sustainability issues (Väänänen, 2020). For example, in general, informal trading aligns with SDG 1 (No poverty), as traders can afford necessities through income generation. Furthermore, SDG 2 (Zero hunger) can be achieved as traders can escape hunger through business earnings. Additionally, SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth) is relevant, as informal business provides employment for traders who find it difficult to get formal jobs, thereby enhancing local economies. This goal underlines the improvement of decent work and sustainable economic growth (Sultana *et al.*, 2022).

Curio trading has been widely recognised as the crucial contributor to sustainable livelihoods in the 21st century (Abisuga-Oyekunle & Muchie, 2020). This shows that curio trading has the potential to sustain livelihoods underlines its significance to the SDG agenda. However, discussion of progress toward achieving these goals is scarce, and the 2030 deadline is approaching. Considering that, this study will contextualise this unique aspect of informal business within the broader framework of the SDG agenda. In addition, the study will promote the role of informal trading towards achieving the SDGs.

1.7 Chapter outline

- Chapter 1 unpacks the study's background, including the research statement, aim of the study, and research questions. The significance of the study is also highlighted in this chapter.

- Chapter 2 presents a comprehensive overview of the informal sector. Furthermore, the literature review on urban informal tourism and its impact on sustainable livelihoods and local economic growth.
- Chapter 3 provides background on the study site and present the research design and approach employed. Additionally, the data collection and sampling process is provided in detail. Lastly, credibility and trustworthiness, as well as the ethical procedures followed is covered in this chapter.
- Chapter 4 presents and discusses the study's findings.
- Chapter 5 summarises the study's findings, formulates conclusions, and offers recommendations for future research.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the study's background. The research statement and the study's aim were highlighted. Importantly, the significance of the informal sector on socio-economic impacts and sustainable development was emphasised. Additionally, issues and gaps regarding the study were addressed. The next chapter presents a review of relevant literature to enhance the theoretical understanding and provide an insight into the study.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The curio sector in South Africa offers significant benefits, though it encounters some challenges (Chikanda & Tawodzera, 2017). Thus, the literature will provide an overview of the South African curio sector. It will highlight how tourism plays an important role in the economy, particularly in the agriculture and manufacturing industries, and, more importantly, in the craft sector, such as woodcarving, fine art, and curios (Meyer & Meyer, 2015). The literature on the cultural significance of curio trading will also be reviewed. Together with the review of literature, this chapter highlights theories that underpin urban informalities and the operation of informal economies through social and natural capital.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Sustainable livelihood framework (SLF) is an approach of providing the perspective on the variety of capital on sustaining livelihoods particularly in the context of informal economy (Natarajan *et al*., 2022). Additionally, to establish the factors that develop the livelihoods opportunities and how those factors connect to each other (Serrat, 2017). The dynamics of capital in informal economies can provide insights on policy making. Majority of people utilise SLF to look on the social capital, natural capital and financial capital to find a way of making means of survival. This provides information on the aspects that form resilience and sustainable livelihoods (Shang & Wang, 2021). Significantly, livelihoods turn to be sustainable when they can survive and regain from shocks (Steiler & Nyirenda, 2021). SLF is classified according to categories of livelihoods approach (such as natural, human, social, physical and financial capital) from which people rely on for the purpose of sustainability especially in terms of shocks (Quandt *et al*., 2017).

The sustainable development is divided into three pillars: economic, environmental and social sustainability (Thathongkham & Sonsuphap, 2023). Ultimately, the sustainable livelihood framework put people at the centre of planning which is driven by various livelihoods resources such as human capital, natural capital, financial capital, social capital, and physical capital (Natarajan *et al*., 2022). Considering this, the theoretical framework for this study lies on social capital theory, which highlights the resources and benefits that people acquire through social interaction and trust in the informal economy. Additionally, the theoretical framework of this study lies on natural capital and urban informality theories. Natural capital

focuses on the natural benefits that allows economic activity and healthy lives to people (Bateman & Mace, 2020). Whilst urban informalities focus on how people turn existing formal cities into informality to facilitate their everyday lives. Theoretical framework is an approach that underscores theories for the existence of research problem. It provides guidance for researchers to interpret the research findings and develop conclusions (Hiebert *et al*., 2022).

2.2.1 Social capital theory

The perspective of sustainable livelihoods capital on informal trading makes the informal sector noticeable (Rizwana *et al*., 2025). Mostly, informal economy relies on strong social networks to thrive. Social network emphasises the structure and quality of the relationships with a network (Senik *et al*., 2022). Usually, individuals with connection tend to have better access to opportunities and resources (Crowley & Barlow, 2022). This is specifically appropriate for migrant informal traders, as they count on networks for capital and accessing markets (Gumede & Moyo, 2023). Naicker *et al*., (2026) posit that the connections through network such as trust, information and support enable the continuous flow of resources. Social network highlights the structures that shape access to resources. Thus, informal traders need social capital to access financial and social support. This shows the significant role of informal economy on sustainable livelihoods through social capital without the support from the formal institutions.

Several studies indicate that social capital is divided into tripartite dimensions namely: structural, relational and cognitive social capital (Bond *et al*., 2008; Muniady *et al*., 2015). The structural dimension describes the connection and closure level amongst social networks members. The relational dimension describes power of social relationships while the cognitive describes values, norms and belief that are shared amongst social networks. All these dimensions correlate to the informal business performance in the perspective of informal traders' social network, sharing similar values and beliefs amongst each other (Akintimehin *et al*., 2019). Significantly social capital has positive impacts on the society as a whole (Tsounis & Xanthopoulou, 2024). For example, social capital may develop the productivity of an organisation either in the informal or formal sector (Hasan *et al*., 2020). Additionally, social capital contributes to financial development and resilience (Liu *et al*., 2022).

2.2.2 Natural capital theory

Currently the society face many challenges which are referred to as 21st central challenges, that are connected to either variation, declining or development of values (Laki, 2025). One of these challenges is to advance socio-economic and governance systems that are meant for poverty elimination and as well as accomplishing sustainable development. Thus, to meet this challenge, incorporation of natural capital is required into decision making (Guerry *et al*., 2015). Natural capital is a factor of urban livelihoods. Thus, it refers to the natural resources that are essential for livelihood (Nasution *et al*., 2026). These are the resources that turn intangible goods such as biodiversity into detachable goods which are used for the purpose of production such as land and trees (Beck *et al*., 2014). Natural capital represents the world's ecological system and its natural entities which are vital for sustaining livelihoods and economic activity. These incorporate renewable and non-renewable natural resources (Vamsi, 2020). The concept of natural capital underscores the significance of sustaining ecosystem to ensure that they keep on providing the important services which are key aspects for economic stability (Barbier, 2019). Globally, vulnerable individual relies on natural capital for livelihoods and employment (Meraj *et al*., 2021).

The environmental management literature highlights that people must protect natural environment and its surroundings. Several studies indicates that natural capital is a capital that everyone has access to, as thus this view remains controversial (Lauermann, 2013; Francis *et al*., 2013; Padgham *et al*., (2015). Hence, the principles on the management of natural resources are very important (Nugraha, 2023). Globally people have improved economies through the use of natural resources. This highlights that natural resources enhance social lives. Despite that natural resource improve the economy, in future can cause ecological crisis when the production is less than how they are used (Ahmad *et al*., 2023). Literature shows that natural capital is vulnerable. This is because of the natural disasters such as floods and fires (Bateman & Mace, 2020). Natural capital is the most important asset of the world, it reinforces all economic activities (Barbier, 2019). Economies that depend on nature utilise the natural capital methods to have a better knowledge on the reliance of economic activities on natural resources. Currently, the progress regarding the incorporation of natural capital with economic decision making is taking longer. As a result, there is limited information regarding the progress especially in developing countries (Bass & Greenfield, 2022). All economic activities depend on natural capital to produce raw materials from either wood or land (Döhring *et al*., 2023).

2.2.3 Urban informality theory

In Global South, urban informality is seen as one of the most permanent features of cities (Banks *et al*.,2020). Informality contributes significantly to urban life especially in the Global South. (Amoah, 2024). The concept of informality begun in the 70s to have an explicit understanding of people migrating from rural areas to urban areas in search of employment. The concept was then applied in the framework of informal economy (Hawkins, 2020). The urban informal economy plays important role in creating job opportunities and reducing poverty (Huang *et al*., 2020). The urban informal economy incorporates those businesses that are not included in the formal economy and mostly are owned by individuals who are not registered under tax (Amoah, 2024). As thus, selling on street is crucial for urban-based livelihoods, especially due to lack jobs in the formal sector (Tanyanyiwa, 2023).

Despite, the significant contribution of urban informality on sustainable livelihoods, is often overlooked by policy makers, urban planners. This is because informality is viewed as a destruction to urban space (Finn & Cobbinah, 2023). Literature indicates that urban informality should be viewed as critical analysis for interactions of all socioeconomic and political spatial domain (Banks *et al*., 2020). The control of space within urban area is very important for the operation for informal business activities (Skinner, 2018). In the context of street trading Chen and Carré (2020) posit that each trader must have their own spatial arrangement and control. Spatial system must be recognised according to legal framework that control and manage public spaces (Roever & Skinner, 2016).

Although urban informality is seen as illegality from the regulation's viewpoints, it is convenient for the poor as they can acquire basic needs (Stark and Teppo, 2022). Furthermore, millions of people especially in developing countries migrate from rural areas to urban areas to secure better lives. This influx has led to informal opportunities including street trading within the cities (Huang *et al*., 2019). Urban planners and policymakers should understand the struggle of people and how urban informality operates thoroughly then plan urban agglomerations accordingly (Stark & Teppo, 2022). In addition, cities must acknowledge the demand of public space by street traders and allow informal livelihoods in accordance with SDG (Sepadi & Nkosi, 2023). Altogether, these perspectives on urban informality provide a concrete understanding of informality as a dynamic element of urban system (Banks *et al*., 2020). Given the theoretical framework, the following section provides the reviews of literature on informal trading.

2.3 Literature Review

Alongside the emphasise that underscore the perspective of informal economic theories, the following section highlights literature review pertaining to the study

2.3.1 Conceptualisation of informal trading

Informal trading involves the sale of legal goods and services in public spaces, such as streets, markets, or sidewalks, that are not formally designated for commercial use. This can include activities such as street vending, market stalls, or hawking, where individuals sell goods or services to passers-by (Bénit-Gbaffou, 2016). Although this sector has been underrated, it has been proven to be one of the key sectors contributing to employment opportunities for those struggling to get formal employment (Zogli *et al.,* 2021). Hence, Sultana *et al.* (2022) suggested that informal trade should be given more attention. The rate of income from the informal business is increasing (StatsSA, 2022). In addition, this sector contributes to poverty reduction (StatsSA, 2022). Fourie (2018) discovered that in South Africa, this sector contributed approximately 3.6% to poverty reduction and 3.1% to household earnings. Although the informal sector is the smallest in South Africa, it still accounts for a significant share of total employment, up to 20%. Additionally, contributing 5.1% to the country's Gross Domestic Product GDP (StatsSA, 2019; Rogan & Skinner, 2017). Furthermore, the growth rate of informal trading has a direct positive impact on employment levels (Dlomo & Rogerson, 2020).

Many people in sub-Saharan Africa depend on informal businesses for many reasons (Masonganye, 2010; Misati, 2010; Valodia, 2013). Globally, six (6) workers out of ten (10) and four (4) enterprises out of five (5) operate in the informal sector (Canton, 2021). About 2 billion workers operate in the informal sector, which represents 6 out of 10 workers worldwide and 5 out of 10 when the agricultural sector is excluded. However, this was recorded in 2019, preceding the COVID-19 outbreak (ILO, 2023). Importantly, informal trading has been declared the only sector with viable earnings for society worldwide (Delechat & Medina, 2020). In addition, it has been confirmed that earning income from informal businesses is a means of survival, especially in those countries without unemployment insurance (Thwala *et al.*, 2023). According to Tshuma and Jari (2013), those without education dominate this sector.

2.3.2 Overview of informal trading in South Africa

In South Africa, informal trading is the smallest sector among informal activities, such as manufacturing and mining (Thwala *et al.*, 2023). However, the sector has a significant impact on employment creation and poverty reduction (StatsSA, 2022). This business activity supports many poor people in South Africa (Thwala, 2022). Significantly, 2.5 million people in South Africa are involved in the informal sector (Fourie, 2018). Although this sector has often been undervalued and underrated, it has been proven to provide income-generating opportunities for those struggling to get formal employment (Zogli *et al.*, 2021). Thus, the sector contributes to poverty reduction (Stats SA, 2022). Indeed, Fourie (2018) discovered that in South Africa, this sector contributes approximately 3.6% to poverty reduction and 3.1% to households' earnings. Makaluza and Burger (2018) highlight that 73% of the informal businesses are survivalist enterprises. This implies that mostly they operate on a hand-to-mouth basis, generating earnings only to cover daily needs.

The approach to regulating the informal sector varies across Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries. Whilst other governments have faced difficulties in implementing support for informal business to improve livelihoods, some governments have managed to implement measures to support and regulate informal business (Simwanza, 2025). Indeed, in South Africa government developed a policy framework to uplift informal businesses in both townships and cities (Rogerson, 2016). For example, programs such as the National Informal Business Upliftment Strategy (NIBUS) are implemented to financially assist and develop business skills and to improve access to resources and infrastructure (Dayaram, 2021). However, Fourie (2018) stated that, in light of the formulation of economic policy and laws, attention to this sector is largely absent. Hence, Sultana *et al.* (2022) proposed that since informal trading has a significant impact on economic development, it should be given attention in policy formulation and development.

South Africa has restricted laws and practices which impede people from working in the informal sector (Skinner, 2018). Rogerson (2000) further proclaimed that marginalised people were evacuated from economic hubs to the outskirts of the CBD. This approach is to place marginalised communities close to basic resources and services whilst advancing access to the CBD (Ntuntwana, 2024). Furthermore, in South Africa, workers in the informal sector not only face challenges in generating income but also face policies such as Informal Trading By-laws that limit or prohibit informal trading in certain areas. Thus, such policies suppress their means of sustaining their families. Unlike formal-sector workers, who are protected by

regulatory and compliance laws that are specifically designed to protect them. For example, formal workers have guaranteed salaries while workers in the informal sector have unstable earnings (Mathebula, 2022). However, as Mathibela (2018) argues, the government sees the potential of informal business activities to improve the township economy. Hence, the author concludes that this demonstrates a positive motivation to implement policies to improve the living conditions of informal traders and associated local communities.

Thwala *et al.* (2023) argue that several laws and regulations have been endorsed to support the informal sector at both the national and provincial levels. Additionally, policies concerning informal trading have been established at the provincial level. In the Gauteng framework, a guide to regulate and support informal business has been implemented. However, each municipality has its own by-laws to govern informal trading. Such by-laws consist of guidelines that allow public space and infrastructure for informal trading (South African Local Government Association (SALGA), 2020). For example, in Gauteng, through the Gauteng Informal Business Upliftment Strategy (GIBUS), the provincial government has, through financial and non-financial means, been assisting and supporting township informal businesses (Propeller, 2018). In addition, the Informal Sector Framework was introduced in 2014 in the Western Cape. Furthermore, the sector was examined by the Western Cape Provincial Economic Review and Outlook (PERO) (2006) with a specific focus on employment growth. The outcome indicated that the sector appeared to be standing still in terms of employment growth. As a result, the sector's impact on the provincial economy remained marginal (Struwig *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, the policy governing the informal economy in KwaZulu-Natal was developed by the provincial Department of Economic Development and Tourism, with the primary aim of promoting local economic growth (DEDT, 2010). The policy is to financially support informal traders to develop the provincial economic growth (Nxumalo, 2025).

2.3.3 Overview of informal trading in Tshwane

In South Africa, informal trading is common in urban environments, providing opportunities for unemployed people to earn income by starting small businesses. In addition, the growth of small-business activities is increasing in inner-city environments (Nkrumah-Abebrese & Schachtebeck, 2017). Importantly, Tshwane is one of the cities in South Africa where many people migrate from rural areas to seek formal jobs. However, due to the scarcity of formal employment, they primarily practice this type of business activity. Tshwane, neighbourhoods

such as Marabastad, Hatfield, Sunnyside and Arcadia have large numbers of informal street vendors. Informal trading in Tshwane plays a crucial role in the informal economy. Additionally, informal trading can sustain people from underprivileged communities (Mudau & Kona, 2021). Many of these informal traders on the streets of Tshwane sell fast food, vegetables, snacks, sweets and cold drinks. Apart from those traders selling food, curios are also sold informally. Specifically, curio sellers are found in Tshwane CBD, Marabastad, as well as the National Zoological Gardens, locally known as the Pretoria Zoo entrance.

2.3.4 Informal trading impacts on livelihoods development

The informal trading provides opportunities for sustainable development if managed effectively. Sustainable development is defined as an approach to economic growth that meets the needs of the present without compromising the needs of future generations (Elsawy & Youssef, 2023). A common approach for sustainable development is through economic development, social development and environmental protection (Ruzek, 2014). Kollmair and Gamper (2002) state that a holistic approach to sustainable development is essential to ensure that all development boundaries are fully incorporated. Significantly, the informal economy has been highlighted as a contributor to sustainable development. Despite the sector not having a guarantee of long-term economic efficiency and welfare, it has the potential to satisfy social needs (Sultana *et al.*, 2022). Thwala *et al.* (2023) emphasised that livelihood development strategies depend on informal markets. Factors such as socioeconomic, socio-demographic, and socio-environmental are key drivers of the informal economy, according to the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA, 2017). These factors include a decline in economic growth and a reduction in national GDP, high unemployment and poverty levels, and limited access to education (Etim & Daramola, 2020).

2.3.5 Socioeconomic impacts of informal trading

Globally, more than two (2) billion people depend on informal businesses (International Labour Organisation (ILO), 2018). Similarly, Muriithi (2021) notes that recent literature confirms that the informal sector has a notable contribution to the world's economy. The informal sector contributed 70% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in sub-Saharan African countries such as Togo, Niger and Benin. Thus, the informal sector contributes massively to employment and provides an important source of income to many people. Furthermore, informal trading has a vital role in addressing issues such as high unemployment

and poverty rates in rural and urban areas (Mudau & Kona, 2021). Significantly, informal traders are often regarded as the backbone of many developing countries, owing to their role in economic development (Mabhanda & Dzingirai, 2024). They potentially play a key role in Local Economic Development (LED) (Manola & Koufadakis, 2020). Additionally, they enhance food security by selling food, fresh fruit and vegetables on the street at lower prices to those who cannot afford to buy in supermarkets (Alfers *et al.*, 2021).

2.3.6 Environmental impacts associated with informal trading activities

The informal economy has a significant environmental impact, such as pollution, resource depletion, and health risks (Sultana *et al.*, 2022). Environmental impacts of the business activities in this study refer to the potential effects of business operations on the environment. Several studies indicate that, in developing countries, informal business activities are regarded as an important aspect to explore in environmental quality assessment (Elgin & Oztunali, 2014; Medina & Schneider, 2019; Benkraiem *et al.*, 2019; Huang *et al.*, 2020). For example, some informal businesses may cause littering (via improper waste management), air pollution (via open fires), especially from fast-food sellers, deforestation and land degradation (via agricultural logging practices). Therefore, these impacts require a holistic approach to maintain economic development stability while protecting the environment (Mezentseva *et al.*, 2024). Bento *et al.* (2018) suggest that an approach such as updating policies on environmental impacts from informal economy activities should be adopted. Thus, applying this approach will help mitigate the environmental impacts of informal business activities while improving livelihoods.

2.3.7 Informal tourism in urban areas

Statistics show that in 2019, one (1) in four (4) jobs was created from informal tourism. In addition, it contributes approximately 10.4% of global GDP. Therefore, informal tourism is viewed as another aspect that creates job opportunities. Additionally, it develops economic growth, particularly in developing countries (Rajani & Boluk, 2022). Furthermore, the tourism value chain provides employment opportunities for local entrepreneurs (Crush *et al.*, 2015). Informal tourism refers to businesses in the tourism sector that are neither supported nor recognised by tourism institutions at local, regional, and national levels (Rogerson, 2018). Similarly, informal tourism is defined as tourism activities operating outside formal regulations and offering various services by the local communities (Rogerson & Rogerson,

2021). In Africa, informal tourism is extensive, encompassing activities ranging from individual stalls to organised craft markets (Makoni & Rogerson, 2024). Many people are drawn to informal tourism due to limited job opportunities. Additionally, the informal tourism business has improved the livelihoods of many people (Makandwa, 2021).

The informal tourism sector offers a variety of business activities (Çakmak *et al.*, 2018). This sector mostly involves highly intensive labour (Onwe, 2013). Several studies have confirmed that informal food trading is part of creative and food tourism (Etim & Daramola, 2020; Nickanor *et al.*, 2021). This is because food tourism mostly represents the experience and stories of local communities through food (Park *et al.*, 2023). Curio trading is a type of tourism activity that plays an important role in the informal economy. Furthermore, Mlotshwa (2020) stated that street trading in crafts is an important economic activity for many African entrepreneurs struggling to support their families. Sadly, curio trading is an undervalued tourism activity. Visser (2017) stated that the potential of informal tourism activities has not been given much attention in South Africa.

Trading in curios is the fastest-growing business, driven by its significant social and economic impacts (Zhou, 2017). Several studies indicate that informal curio trade is the key component of the informal economy, expanding in the context of socio-economic and sustainable development (Viljoen, 2005; Benson, 2014; Zhou, 2017). Furthermore, the curio sector empowers both men and women (Gaylard, 2004). Several studies indicate that the curio sector is financially viable as individuals can generate income due to a lack of formal employment (Limkriengkrai, 2010; Zhou, 2017; Mkenda & Aikaeli, 2019). Due to the high unemployment rate, local people engage themselves in the curio sector as it is an easy craft business (Odhiambo, 2018). Despite the informal trading activities lacking governmental support, it remains a vibrant sector that promotes job growth (Thwala *et al.*, 2023).

The curio sector is an important aspect of economic, social and cultural development. Indeed, Nyawo and Mubangizi (2015) noted that this sector is linked to economic policy due to its contribution to poverty alleviation. However, Rogerson and Rogerson (2011) argue that, in terms of economic growth, the sector has limited policy options. Furthermore, according to Abisuga-Oyekunle and Fillis (2017), it aligns with social policy by addressing issues such as youth unemployment and employment creation. Moreover, the sector connects with cultural policy due to its significance and the engagement of cultural heritage participation activities in African communities (Abisuga-Oyekunle *et al.*, 2020). Abisuga-Oyekunle and Muchie

(2021) argue that the handicraft sector has been ignored by governmental policymakers. Despite a lack of support from government policymakers, the informal trade in curios has improved the livelihoods of many local communities (Rogerson & Sithole, 2001).

In South Africa, the curio trading started during the apartheid era. However, they were sold only in suburban markets and along tourist routes (Van Eeden, 2011). In South Africa, curio traders at national parks have a major part in economic contribution (Strickland-Munro *et al.*, 2010). Thus, curio trading plays a significant role in creating job opportunities and generating income in Southern African countries (Saarinen, 2016). Furthermore, there is a huge difference regarding the number of informal traders engaged in arts and crafts products across major cities in South Africa. For example, Cape Town has the largest number of informal curio traders with 32%. Although most of these sellers are foreigners (Van Eeden, 2011). This could be why South Africa is viewed as an economic hub in Africa (Sidzatane, 2011). Several studies have confirmed that Zimbabweans are involved in curio-selling activities, such as wirework and beadwork, in Cape Town (Kalitanyi & Visser, 2014; Northcote & Dodson, 2015). In Johannesburg, 13% of informal traders, compared to eThekwini at 11% and Tshwane, the smallest at 6% (Van Eeden, 2011).

Furthermore, Fourie *et al.* (2024) conducted a study on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on informal traders in Cape Town CBD who were providing services to the tourist market. Findings from the study showed that informal traders experienced some difficulties selling their products to tourists. Moreover, tourism activities attracted many crafters in Soweto. Additionally, they are found along Vilakazi Street selling their crafts informally outside the main tourist attraction (De Run, 2012). Similarly, Moagi *et al.* (2021) conducted a study on the business challenges faced by craft sellers in Soweto. Moagi *et al.* (2021) found that the lack of capital and government support, as well as non-compliance with legislation, were the major challenges. However, it is argued that there are some NGO's, such as The Pretoria Informal Business Association (PIBA), the Green Point Traders Association in Cape Town, the Cape Town Deck Traders Association, StreetNet, the South African National Traders Retail Alliance (SANTRA), Kliptown Hawkers Association and the South African Informal Traders' Alliance (SAITA) that assist street craft traders to fight such challenges (Moagi *et al.*, 2021).

PIBA was officially established in March 1996. The traffic officer responsible for street trading in Tshwane Central was influential in establishing this association, due to a crisis in

controlling the trading site (Lund & Skinner, 1999). Additionally, the SANTRA association was established to seek government attention during decision-making. This trade organisation was founded in 2005. It has about 5000 memberships in Gauteng. Whilst SAITA is the national voice of the voiceless informal traders in all 9 provinces of South Africa. Their mandate is to ensure that when all policies and laws are adopted, they are taken into consideration to protect informal traders' rights. This associate was founded in 2006. It represents both licensed and unlicensed street traders (Bénit-Gbaffou, 2014).

2.3.8 The cultural significance of curio trading in South Africa

Traditional crafts have a fundamental feature of reflecting the culture of a particular ethnic group (Li *et al.*, 2019). Conceptually, curio trading plays an important role and has significant cultural and historical impacts on ecotourism and cultural tourism (Saarinen, 2016). Cultural tourism is a concept that involves the overall cultural heritage to uplift and promote the preservation of national and sub-regional identities (Okharedia, 2020). Cultural tourism refers to tourism in which visitors intend to learn, experience, and discover more about a particular country's cultural products (Grandcourt, 2020). In addition, cultural tourism allows visitors to gain valuable insights into cultural diversity. Cultural tourism has vital role in showcasing the uniqueness of a country's traditional heritage and cultural diversity to the entire world (Eseagwu, 2023). It is mostly associated with craft items, which are sold to tourists or any other visitor as mementoes (Saarinen, 2016). Crafts trading is a form of cultural tourism that depicts native and indigenous cultures and traditions (Hume, 2013).

In South Africa, cultural tourism is actively advancing due to its ability to promote local economic growth and job creation. This is because of its large collection of cultural products, such as art galleries, curio shops, informal arts traders, and crafts and curio traders, all of which are sold in the country (Mohale *et al.*, 2020). Informal curio traders selling locally crafted goods provide an authentic connection between tourists and South African culture (Rogerson, 2018; Saayman *et al.*, 2020). Tourists purchase a variety of curio products such as jewellery, clothing, carvings, and paintings as mementoes (Ezra & Duffy, 2022).

Informal trading, which appears to be limited to food and souvenir vendors, plays a crucial role in informal tourism, yet it is often overlooked (Makoni & Mearns, 2025a). Similarly, curio trading as an aspect of informal tourism is often undervalued. Hence, there is little information on the livelihoods of curio traders. Subsequently, long-term sustainability will remain uncertain due to less attention to regulatory policy supporting curio trading. The above

perspective is highlighted by Abisuga *et al.* (2023), emphasising that this sector still receives insufficient support from the government and non-government institutions. The study further highlighted that curio traders require support to sustain their livelihoods. Considering these gaps, more academic research is required. Therefore, this study is grounded in the gaps in curio trading that are often overlooked despite their contribution to the informal economy and cultural preservation.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter provided a general overview of South African informal trade. Informal trading in Tshwane was highlighted. In addition, the impacts on livelihoods and the sector's socio-economic impacts were discussed in detail. Most importantly, a comprehensive review of informal tourism, particularly curio trading, was documented. Significantly, culture was inspired as the fourth dimension of sustainability (Sabatini, 2019). Thus, informal tourism is perceived as part of South African cultural identity, providing tourists with the knowledge and experience of local cultural practices (Visser, 2017). Thus, the review also looked at the cultural significance of curio trading in South Africa.

CHAPTER THREE: THE TSHWANE CASE STUDY, RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological approach adopted to achieve the study's objective. The chapter begins by providing context on the research study area, Tshwane City, particularly emphasising the importance of its tourism. Amid this discourse, the chapter unpacks the role of the informal sector, particularly the context of curio trading activities within the city's spaces. The chapter continues to describe the methodological approaches employed to achieve the study objectives. This includes the study paradigm and design, as well as the survey population and sampling techniques. Most importantly, the study outlines the data processes, clearly articulating the data collection processes and analysis.

3.2 History and background to the city of Tshwane

The City of Tshwane (CoT), formerly known as Pretoria, became the capital city of the newly born republic after Prime Minister Verwoerd removed South Africa from the Commonwealth in 1961 (Corten & Van Dun, 2010). Additionally, CoT was renamed by the Executive Mayor of Tshwane in (Gauteng), Mr Kgosientso Ramokgopa, during the Gauteng reconfiguration process (Moloto, 2022). Pretoria was named in honour of the leader of the Voortrekker, Andries Wilhelmus Jacobus Pretorius. The city was established in 1855 on the Elandspoort farm (Rankin & Schneider, 2020). Furthermore, the CoT occupies approximately 6,298 km^2 (Dube, 2021). Additionally, it is the second-wealthiest municipality in South Africa, in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, after Johannesburg (Moloto *et al.*, 2022). The CoT documents a history of natural and cultural heritage, including early prehistoric settlements, the Apartheid era, and the subsequent democratic dispensation (Rwelamila, 2022). Moreover, the city has several educational institutions, including Tshwane University of Technology, the University of Pretoria, and the world-renowned open distance learning university, the University of South Africa (UNISA) (Molamo, 2021).

3.3 Tshwane as a Tourism Destination

CoT provides opportunities for entertainment and leisure, including tourist activities such as shopping, food and adventure tourism, which underscore its distinctiveness as a capital city (Corten & Van Dun, 2010; Henning, 2022). Tourists visiting Tshwane are estimated to be 2

million per annum (Nengovhela, 2020). The history and position of CoT as South Africa's administrative capital contribute significantly to urban tourism development (Henning, 2022). It is believed that the tourism sector in CoT contributes to job creation, skills development, and entrepreneurship (Dhlomo, 2017).

The historical significance of CoT makes the city an emerging, distinctive tourist destination with a range of attractions (Henning, 2022). The Voortrekker Monument, Union Buildings, Ditsong National Museum of Natural History and Freedom Park are listed as landmark tourist attractions (Thomas *et al.*, 2023). Significantly, the Paul Kruger house and Church Square are now tourist attractions. The Voortrekker Monument is a monolithic museum characterised by features and design that reflect the apartheid era (Rankin & Schneider, 2020). This monument honours many Voortrekkers who left Cape Colony between 1834 and 1854. Currently, in a year, at least 200,000 people visit this monument, compared to other heritage sites across the CoT. Significantly, the monument is listed among the top 10 cultural attractions in South Africa (Steenkamp, 2023).

Furthermore, Sir Herbert Baker designed the Union Buildings, which were completed in 1913. The main purpose of the Union buildings was to house the entire South African public service and its inception. Presently, it houses the office of the South African President (Mabin, 2019). Also, the Ditsong Museum of Natural History (formerly the Transvaal Museum) is situated in the Tshwane CBD, between Paul Kruger Street and Visagie Street. The museum was established to preserve the objects of historical interest and to reflect the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek. The main purpose of this museum is to conserve South African heritage resources (Grobler, 2006). Moreover, The Freedom Park 'Isivavane' is referred to as a rock. It is found on the south-eastern slope of Freedom Park. This rock reflects South African cultural identity and holds spiritual significance for many people. Approximately 50 000 to 90 000 people visit this park in a year (Thomas *et al.*, 2023).

The government formalised and incorporated the informal sector into the mainstream economy during the democratic evolution in Tshwane. Despite the historic landmarks attracting tourists, they also provide valuable insights into the city's dynamic, vibrant environment for informal tourism activities (Mokolane, 2023). Significantly, CoT endorsed the Municipal International Strategy to boost and profile the city as an investment and tourist destination. Hence, the population of the CoT has substantially expanded (Molepo, 2018). Due to the potential job opportunities in Tshwane, people migrate from different provinces

and foreign countries in search of better jobs; although they often fail to secure them, they opt for informal trading (Moloto, 2022). Informal trading in the CoT ranges from car wash, fast food and curios.

3.3.1 Informal Tourism in the City of Tshwane

Factors that contribute to economic development in the tourism sector include job opportunities and income generation, especially from Small, Micro and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMMEs) (Acha-Anyi, 2015). The CoT has numerous individuals engaged in the informal sector. Unemployment is amongst other developmental challenges in the CoT (Chatindiara, 2019). Neighbourhoods such as Hatfield, Sunnyside, Arcadia and Marabastad are highly populated due to the presence of many informal street traders. That underscores the significance of informal trading to the informal economy, given its role in job creation and in improving the lives of underprivileged people (Mudau & Kona, 2021).

Tshwane was chosen for this study because, like many urban centres across African cities, it has become an attraction for migrants seeking better job opportunities. Significantly, factors such as finding a better life play a crucial role in the decision to migrate to a city (Renkin, 2017). However, due to a lack of formal jobs, they turn to informal trading as a means of survival. Furthermore, the city has both formal and informal businesses, ranging from wholesalers and fresh produce markets to street vendors (Molamo, 2021). Apart from those informal businesses, such as street vendors selling food, washing cars, and selling curios, are also sold informally in the Tshwane Central Business District (CBD). Curio traders are mostly located on the sidewalks of Church Street. Moreover, informal curio traders are also found in the streets around Marabastad commercial centre. Additionally, at the Pretoria Zoo's main entrance, there is a small curio market with about 10 stalls occupied by informal traders, selling curios to both visitors and locals. (See Figure 3.1).

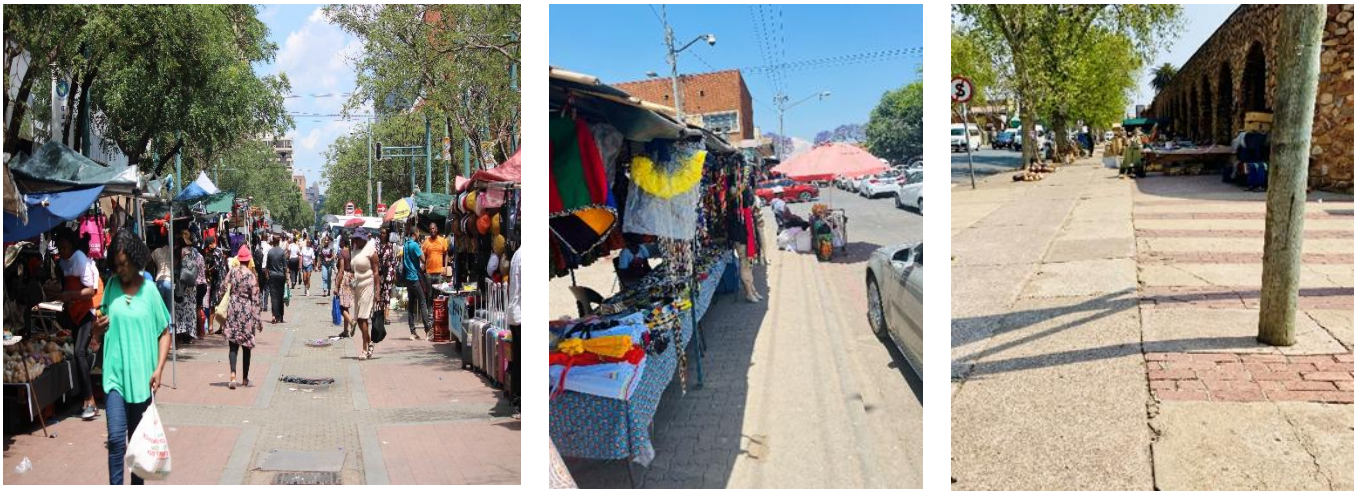


Figure 3.1: Curio trading spots across Tshwane Central, Marabastad, and Pretoria Zoo.

Source: Author.

3.3.2 Tshwane Case Study

The City of Tshwane (CoT) is the administrative capital of South Africa. Additionally, it is a diplomatic hub of the country (Nemakhavhani *et al.*, 2024). Thus, the administrative status of this city offers opportunities to expand its tourism development (Dhlomo, 2017). The city is the biggest metropolitan municipality in the Gauteng province (Modiba, 2021). StatsSA (2022) estimates the population of Tshwane at approximately 4 million. Significantly, CoT plays a crucial role in shaping Gauteeng's socio-economic profile. Many people run informal businesses in areas such as Tshwane CBD and Marabastad. This underscores the vibrancy of the informal sector, making the city a centre of economic activity (Mathebula, 2020). This research was carried out at three specific sites in Tshwane that sell curios: Tshwane Central, Marabastad, and the Pretoria Zoo (see Figure 3.2).

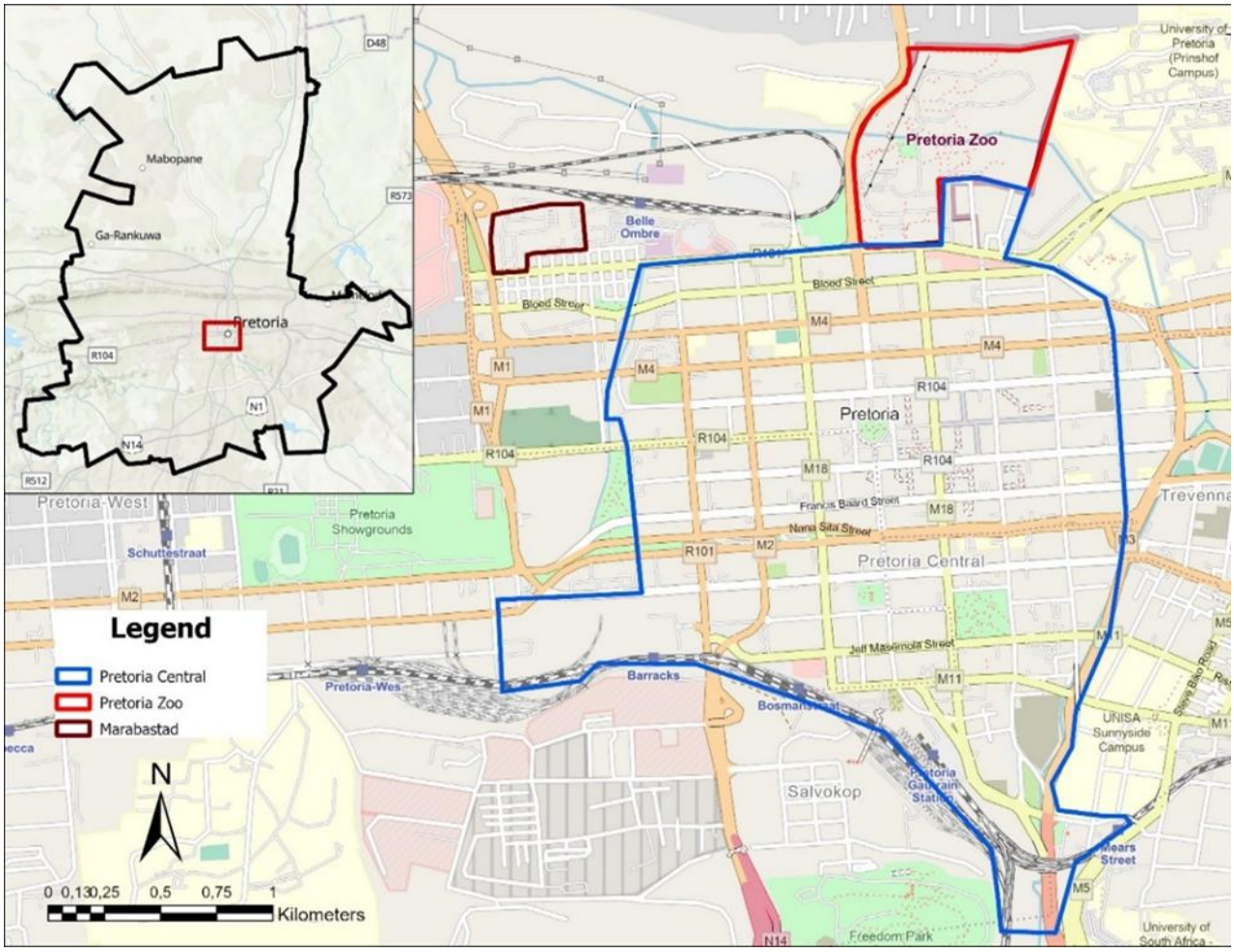


Figure 3.2: City of Tshwane map indicating three study sites

Source: Author

Figure 3.2 above illustrates the study area, Tshwane City. It indicates the location of the three selected study sites. Tshwane Central is the central business district of the City of Tshwane (CoT). It is surrounded by the suburbs of Sunnyside, Marabastad, and Arcadia (Le Roux, 2013). Most of the informal businesses in Tshwane Central are located between Paul Kruger Street and Church Square [at WF Nkomo Street - previously Church Street]. Church Square [formerly known as Market Square] was the heart of Tshwane (Clarke & de Villiers, 2015). Historically, it was where the first church was built. Furthermore, the area was intended as a commercial and social centre (van der Vyver, 2021). Paul Kruger Street was named after the president of the Transvaal Republic, Paul Kruger (Pienaar, 2006). Importantly, the Paul Kruger house and Church Square are now tourist attractions.

Marabastad is a business area in Belle Ombre station along Boom Street, located on the western side of the Tshwane CBD. In 1888, black workers and job seekers settled in the area.

The area was named after Chief Constable and interpreter Jeremia Maraba. It borders along the Apies River in the north, Skinner Street and Steenhoven Spruit in the west and east respectively, and De Korte Street in the south (Christie, 2010). Marabastad is a poorly developed commercial area (Whitcomb, 2010). Many people sell goods in Marabastad. Additionally, it serves as a hub for people from different areas around Tshwane, due to its accessibility to the taxi rank and bus station (Mokoena *et al.*, 2023). Most informal businesses done in this area are street vendors selling fast food, snacks, sweets and curios. Evidently, formal businesses in Marabastad are mostly owned by Indians, while informal businesses are owned by different black ethnic groups (Whitcomb, 2010).

Pretoria Zoo, which is also known as the National Zoological Gardens of South Africa (NZG), was established in 1899. The Zoo was officially given the national Zoo status in 1916. It is a national, and the largest, Zoo in the country, occupying about 85 hectares, and is the only inland Zoo that houses marine fish species. It is recognised as a research institute facility (Henning, 2022). The Zoo is located at 232 Boom Street in the CBD of Tshwane. Pretoria Zoo is categorised under 'urban attraction', as its main function is education, conservation and recreation (Hermann & Du Plessis, 2014). People see the Zoo as a place for relaxation and entertainment (Kruger & Viljoen, 2023). Annually, Pretoria Zoo is visited by approximately 600 000 people, including both local visitors and tourists, and has been rated as one of the best Zoos in the world by a well-known tourist site (NZG, n.d).

Tshwane Central and Marabastad are commercial areas in the City of Tshwane. Pretoria Zoo is also one of Tshwane's tourism attractions. Despite Pretoria Zoo being one of the tourist attractions in the CoT, it attracts informal traders who need to make a living in the city. This is because visitors can access the traders at the zoo. Many people are found in these areas selling a variety of goods informally on the street. Importantly, curios are amongst the variety of goods sold in these areas. Thus, Tshwane Central, Marabastad and Pretoria Zoo were found to be significant due to the large number of curio traders in these areas. As a result, this will help obtain relevant data to achieve the study's main aim.

3.4 Research paradigm, approach and design

A research paradigm is a philosophical framework that guides the research (Ulz, 2023). Usually, a research paradigm is based on two methods: positivism and interpretivism, which guide the methodology employed in the research. (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020). Thus, the positivist paradigm is generally used in quantitative research, whilst interpretivism is used in

qualitative research (Ikram & Kenayathulla, 2022). Interpretivism focuses on social interaction to understand individuals' beliefs (Nickerson, 2022). Thus, the research paradigm that guided this study is interpretivism. This is because the research is based on interaction with the participants to understand their lived experience.

3.4.1 Philosophical stance of the thesis (Research paradigm)

The research paradigm used in this study and related research domains are presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: The research paradigm applied in this research study.

Paradigm	Ontology (Nature of reality)	Epistemology (How we know what we know)	Methodology	Typical Methods	Purpose of Research
Interpretivism	Multiple realities, socially constructed	Knowledge is subjective and context-dependent	Inductive, understanding lived experiences	Interviews, focus groups, and ethnography	To understand the meaning and human experience

Source: Researcher's own construct

Cresswell and Poth (2016) note that not all paradigms may be suitable for individual researchers; researchers identify the paradigm that suitably informs their research. A Paradigm guides the theories and methodologies to be utilised in research (Yong *et al.*, 2021). Ultimately, researchers employ different paradigms depending on the purpose of the research and their position within it (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022). Thus, once the research paradigm has been determined, an appropriate research plan can be implemented. Hence, understanding the paradigm when conducting research is important, as it provides guidelines for the research process, data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Turin *et al.*, 2024). This study, therefore, adopted an interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivism, also known as the interpretivist approach, is a method in which researchers interpret the study's main components. This implies that interpretivism incorporates a human interest into a study. Additionally, case study design and interview methods are utilised to collect data (Ryan, 2018). It is believed that interpretivism is based on subjective and socially constructed knowledge (Rehman & Alharthi). It provides the understanding and interpretation of people (Costa *et al.*, 2023).

Interpretivism allows the researcher to examine the sense of understanding human behaviour, interaction and society, often through qualitative methods (Pulla & Carter, 2018). Based on the framework of this research, interpretivist was relevant paradigm. This paradigm provided

the researcher an opportunity to explore and understand the lived experience and coping strategies of the informal traders through in-depth interviews. This emphasised the nature of reality, allowing participants' views to inform insights into the socio-economic and ecological sustainability of informal curio trading. Significantly, with this paradigm, researchers can explore and imagine themselves from the participants' perspective to ensure meaningful text when analysing data (Pervin & Mokhtar, 2022). Qualitative research is usually inductive as the researcher explores the significance and insights of a particular circumstance (Moloto, 2022). Therefore, the inductive approach was relevant to this study, as the researcher aimed to explore the informal trading of curios in Tshwane city. Subsequently, the approach is discussed in the next section.

3.4.2 Inductive research approach

Considering the paradigms, researchers should examine which approach is appropriate for their research (Ulz, 2023). In research, the approach usually depends on the methods used to collect, analyse and interpret the data. An inductive approach starts with data collection appropriate to the study, and thereafter, theory is developed.

Therefore, the inductive approach was deemed appropriate for this study, as the researcher began by collecting data to develop a theory. One of the main reasons to use an inductive approach is to reduce raw qualitative data and briefly summarise it into themes and categories (Morgan, 2023). This will ensure that the connections between the evaluation of the research objectives and the summary of the results extracted from raw data are clear (Williamson, 2018). Likewise, for this study, the researcher transcribed the interviews, analysed and interpreted them in a thematic pattern.

Table 3.2 presents the research approach that was used in this research study.

Table 3.2: Research approach used in this study

Approach	Key Features	Process	When to Use
Inductive	No predefined hypotheses- Starts with data collection- Aims to develop a theory from observations	Data → Patterns → Theory	When exploring a new phenomenon or topic with little existing theory

Source: Researcher's own construct

Following the interpretivist paradigm, the inductive approach was deemed relevant to this study given the paucity of academic studies on this research topic. An inductive approach is significantly useful when information regarding a particular phenomenon is overlooked (Woo

et al., 2017). This study sought to explore the operational practices and interactions of curio traders, as well as the sustainability of their businesses, to develop theoretical insights into the socio-economic significance and ecological aspects, based on the findings. Hence, the study adopted this approach, which is commonly used for qualitative research. This approach was employed due to the limited literature on this research study. An inductive approach is a method in which theories are developed from closely observed data (Azungah, 2018). It starts with research questions and aims and objectives to be achieved during the research process, then proceeds with data collection to develop new theories. Based on an inductive approach, this study adopted a qualitative research design, specifically a case study design, which is discussed in the section that follows.

3.4.3 Qualitative research design

Research design provides a framework for data collection and analysis (Muuka, 2019). Thus, this study utilised a qualitative research design guided through inductive approach. Qualitative research design is a method for collecting information and insights from respondents through interviews (Selepe, 2017). It is typically used to explore and gain a comprehensive understanding of a particular group or issue (Creswell, 2014). This is significant for research into informal trading (De Villiers, 2022). This method was deemed appropriate as the focus of this study was on the lived experience of curio traders selling informally at Tshwane Central, Marabastad and Pretoria Zoo. Additionally, Bazen *et al.,* (2021) emphasised that in qualitative research design, the researcher interacts closely with participants to understand their real opinions and feelings.

Qualitative design can be characterised as a case study, depending on the various methods and approaches to data collection (De Villiers, 2022). Thus, this study, conducted as a case study, explored and assessed the impact of curio trading on traders' livelihoods, as well as the economic and ecological impacts on the sector in Tshwane. A case study is a method that seeks to gain insight into the dynamics occurring in a single location. Usually, a case study uses interviews, questionnaires, and observations as techniques to collect data (Kalla & Metaxas, 2024). Case studies provide an opportunity to gain a deep understanding of participants' real-life situations. Therefore, Tshwane Central, Marabastad and Pretoria Zoo were selected as case study sites in Tshwane to obtain in-depth information regarding the socio-economic and ecological impacts associated with curio trading. In addition, these selected case study sites were chosen to provide a broader perspective on the role of curio

trading in sustainable development, which could be significant for local economic development. Usually, this type of design addresses 'how' and 'why' questions by exploring a particular issue (Dul & Hak, 2008). This is normally done through interviews, interactions, field notes, observation and transcriptions (Hancock *et al*., 2021).

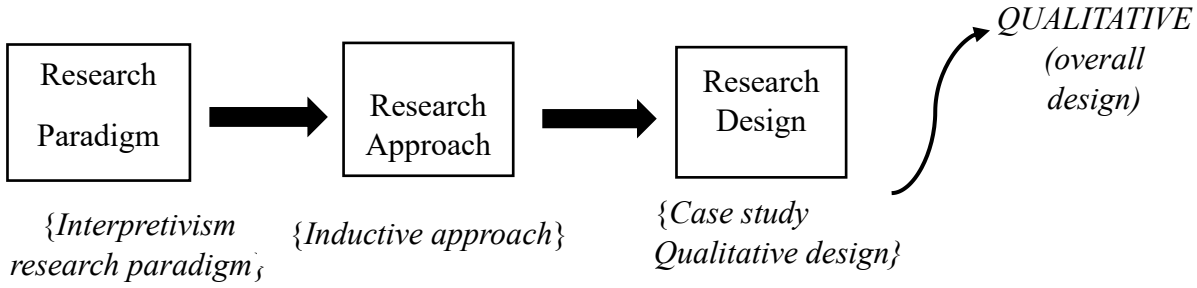


Figure 3.3: Research paradigm, approach and design for the current study.
Source: Researcher's own construct.

The research paradigm, approach, and design illustrated in Figure 3.2 above complement each other. The interpretivist paradigm is applied when the researcher seeks to understand participants' lived experiences through engagement. Similarly, an inductive approach is employed to learn and understand a particular phenomenon. Thus, to obtain an insightful perspective on this research study, a case study design was appropriate. This is because case study design is most often used to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of interest (Coombs, 2022). In addition, the case study design incorporates elements that link the research's conceptual framework to the final conclusions. Of which those conceptual thoughts start with the research statement to identify insufficient knowledge about a particular issue or phenomenon (Schoch, 2020). This complementary inductive approach is particularly valuable when information about a particular phenomenon is underrepresented (Woo *et al.*, 2017).

3.5 Sample and sampling procedures

The success of any research study relies on the relevance of the sampling method. Thus, proper selection techniques are of great significance to the credibility and generalisation of research findings (Ahmed, 2024). Two sampling methods can be used in research: probability and non-probability sampling. In probability sampling, the sample is selected from the entire population. Additionally, the sample is selected so that every member of the population has

an equal chance of being selected. Meanwhile, in non-probability sampling, not every individual has an equal chance of participating in the study (Saunders *et al.*, 2016). Considering the above, non-probability sampling was appropriate, since the focus of this study was specifically on informal curio traders.

Frequently, the method of sampling depends on the context of the study (Ngcuthushe,2017). Given the nature of the study, purposive sampling was employed to select the participants. Purposive sampling involves the researcher's expertise in selecting a sample that is more relevant and valuable to the study's purpose (Tajik *et al.*, 2024). Thus, instead of selecting all informal traders in Tshwane, the researcher specifically sampled informal curio traders in three areas in Tshwane: Tshwane Central, Marabastad and Pretoria Zoo. Data was collected in these areas until data saturation was reached to ensure a quality outcome. Data saturation refers to a point in research where more information has been collected than is needed to draw a conclusion (Khatooni *et al.*, 2024). This was to ensure that relevant participants are selected for the study. Significantly, these traders were purposively selected for their experience, which closely reflects the phenomenon under exploration, thereby achieving the study's main aims and objectives.

3.6 Data Collection

The survey instrument used in this study consisted of open-ended questions. The face-to-face interview method was used to collect information from curio traders at Tshwane Central, Marabastad and Pretoria Zoo. An interview is a method of verbal exchange between two people to gather data that provides a deeper understanding of the story behind a participant’s narratives (Monday, 2020). The main aim of the study was explained to the traders before the interviews were conducted. Consent was sought for their interviews. During interviews, the researcher took notes for the participants’ responses. A mobile phone was also used for recording interviews. This was used as a supplementary research instrument to ensure that any information missed during the researcher's note-taking was accurately captured for data analysis. This study employed both primary and secondary data to acquire comprehensive information and understanding of curio trading in Tshwane.

3.6.1 Secondary Data

Regarding secondary data, the researcher reviewed literature from Google Scholar and government reports relevant to the study in the literature review. Literature study is about

theoretical perspectives and other sources related to the values, culture, and norms prevailing in the social context under investigation (Irwin, 2013). Reviewing the literature on secondary data was essential for identifying existing gaps and issues, which informed the direction and focus of primary data collection. This enabled the researcher to formulate research questions about the phenomenon under investigation.

3.6.2 Primary Data

Before formulating the research instrument for gathering primary data, the researcher visited all study sites and used observation to acquire a thorough understanding of the nature of curio trading, the products on sale, and the overall study sites. The researcher also took photos in support of the observation method. The primary data was gathered through interviews using open-ended questions. Primary data is a type of information that is directly acquired from first hand source (Ajayi, 2017). The advantage of collecting primary data is that it enables the researcher to gather information relevant to the study's main aim.

- ***Survey instrument design***

  A list of open-ended questions was compiled. In addition, questions were compiled based on gaps identified during secondary data collection and on the observation method used. Questions were designed to obtain information on curio traders and their business profiles, traders' livelihoods, the economic and ecological dimensions and the impacts on tourism dynamics and cultural preservation. The questions were divided into four sections. The first section was to gather information on products on sale, customer engagement, and traders' mobility patterns. The second section was to gather information on the motive behind starting a curio business, as well as on the sustainability of curio trading for traders' livelihoods. The third section is to gather information on ecological consideration such as waste management practices and sourcing of products on sale. Last section to gather information on the cultural significance of curio trading and tourism impacts. Importantly, the questions were designed to answer the research questions and the aim of the study outlined in Chapter 1.

- ***Pilot survey***

  Prior to conducting the interviews, a survey instrument was drafted and piloted with three participants, who formed part of the sample. Piloting the study was crucial for assessing the clarity and construction of the interview questions, the depth of participants' responses, their willingness to participate, and their openness and honesty in responding. Additionally, it assisted in determining whether enough information would be collected. Lastly, to estimate the time required to conduct each interview and to identify possible challenges.

- ***Data collection phase (Interviews)***

  The researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with participants to gather in-depth information on the significance of curio trading for socio-economic development, ecological dynamics, and tourism. Data was collected through unstructured interviews with 63 informal curio traders. The researcher interviewed participants at the Pretoria Zoo curio market, located along Boom Street and Church Street in Tshwane Central. Furthermore, across different streets in Marabastad, traders are dispersed in the various streets surrounding the central hub. The face-to-face interview method allowed the researcher to provide more clarity and elaboration on the questions that were unclear to the participants. Subsequently, the face-to-face interview method allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions to the participants. This enabled the researcher to delve deeply into the participants' lived experience. In essence, the researcher gained insight into the lived experience of curio traders through the narratives they shared about their business. Although the interview questions were in English, the researcher conducted the interviews in the participants' preferred language. Thus, Tswana was the dominant language, and English was used primarily by non-South African traders. The interviews were transcribed in preparation for data analysis. Fieldwork for this study was conducted from July 2025 to October 2025.

3.7 Data processing and analysis

Data processing is the process of converting raw data into a meaningful, presentable format (Algemili, 2016). Subsequently, raw data from the interviews in this study were transcribed in detail and then imported into Microsoft Excel to clean the data. This was to ensure the accuracy of data analysis. Additionally, data were classified under specific themes. Themes

are vital components of qualitative data analysis (De Villiers, 2022). Thus, thematic analysis was applied to analyse data. It was found relevant because it provides a systematic, detailed approach that can be interpreted and communicated to others easily and clearly (Nowell *et al.*, 2017). Coding is a method of classifying data using terms based on the researcher's interpretation (Mills & Birks, 2014). Thematic analysis refers to the interpretation of recurring issues, patterns, causal connections and reactions developed within qualitative research (Creswell & Báez, 2020). Descriptive analysis was utilised to analyse the demographic and business profile of the traders. Significant data was presented in the form of frequencies, percentages, and graphical and tabular formats guided by the relevant analysis techniques.

3.8 Credibility and trustworthiness

The most important aspect influencing the firmness of qualitative research is trustworthiness (Eryilmaz, 2022). Thus, trustworthiness encompasses four aspects: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, to generalise the study results (Prinsloo & Wilson, 2017). Credibility is simply the correspondence between participants' beliefs and the researcher's reconstruction and representation of them. This will determine the consistency and reliability of the study findings. To ensure reliability, uniform interview questions were used across all study sites.

This was to avoid possible biases during data analysis. The dependability emphasises the logic applied to the research process. Thus, the study's dependability can be ensured through external reviews (Junjie & Yingxin, 2022). For this study, literature was reviewed to enhance the study's dependability. In addition, confirmability refers to the method used to provide evidence supporting the interpretation of the research results. Whilst transferability is the extent to which the results can be applied from one research study to other case studies (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The first three interviews from each study site were transcribed and sent to the supervisor to examine the depth and the relevance of the participants' responses. Transcribing the interviews provided evidence for the study's findings. This ensured that the results can be used in other case studies.

3.9 Limitations of the study

This research was limited to three areas selling curios informally in Tshwane. Furthermore, the study was limited to small group of participants that included only 63 informal curio traders. Thus, the findings of the study cannot be generalised for broader perspectives.

Language barrier appeared as another limitation to the study, across all study areas. This was due to traders participating from diverse nationalities and ethnic groups. However, interviews were conducted in English especially for non-South Africans. Despite various ethnic groups amongst South Africans, Tswana was used to conduct the interviews for South African citizens. Due to busy foot traffic along the areas, noise from the vehicles and music from the shops especially in Marabastad made it difficult with conducting the interviews and more especially during peak hours. However, the researcher ensured that the questions are clearly understood, to enable the participants to provide meaningful responses. Another limitation in conducting the interviews was frequent interruption of customers, which made the interviews long.

3.10 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations involve a method applied to identify the ethics of the research study. Ethics are considered moral values and rules that differentiate the correctness and incorrectness of codes of conduct (Stevenson, 2010). Before data collection, the researcher obtained permission from the City of Tshwane. The researcher submitted the permission letter along with the ethics application to the UNISA ethics committee under the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences (CAES). The Ethics clearance certificate was therefore issued (see appendix D). Ethical principles were followed when conducting the interviews. Each participant was informed about the purpose, risks and benefits of the study. Beforehand, the participants were provided with the consent form to sign, acknowledging that they were informed about the main purpose of the research study. They were also informed that participation in the study was voluntary and that they could discontinue the interview at any time. Permission to record the interview was requested before it began. Participants were assured that all the information they provided would be kept confidential.

3.11 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter described the interpretive paradigm employed in this study, which was grounded in a qualitative research design and guided by an inductive approach. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to collect data. Thus, only curio traders were selected to have their standpoints towards accomplishing the aim of the study. In addition, data were collected using open-ended interviews. Importantly, the collection and analysis of data were guided by aspects of trustworthiness. The data analysis technique was

discussed, highlighting how the study's findings will be analysed and interpreted. As a result, the study's credibility and trustworthiness were highlighted. The chapter concludes with ethical considerations that were followed during the research process. The next chapter discusses the findings from the research study.

CHAPTER FOUR: TSHWANE AS A HUB FOR CURIO TRADING DYNAMICS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of findings based on data obtained during fieldwork conducted according to the research approaches and methodology discussed in the preceding chapter, Chapter Three. The study targeted informal curio traders operating in three locations of Tshwane city: Tshwane Central, Marabastad and Pretoria Zoo. The discussions presented in this chapter are based on the views and experiences of (n =63) curio traders who were interviewed. The surveys conducted for this study were designed to answer the four research questions presented earlier in Chapter One. These were stated as,

- What are the key characteristics and profiles of curio traders operating in Tshwane, including their backgrounds, motivations, and trade practices?
- What are the perceived economic implications of curio trading on livelihoods and economic development in Tshwane?
- What are the ecological impacts of curio trading on resource use and environmental sustainability in Tshwane?
- How do curio trading activities influence the cultural identity and tourism dynamics of Tshwane?

During the interviews, each participant shared their experiences and views on the impact of their operations in the city. To ensure that the study complied with the ethical considerations and research guidelines of the institution, clarity and anonymity in reporting the findings were maintained through coding each participant as CT1[1] to CT63. This coding system enabled the convenient capturing of data from participants' responses to the interview questions. This data was organised into key themes of the study and presented in this chapter.

This chapter is thus organised into five parts of material, based on the identified themes. The first section presents the profile and characteristics of the research participants, particularly indicating their demographics and the number of years that they have been in the business of curio trading. The chapter then shifts focus to present findings on the business organisation, trading strategies, and mobility patterns of the interviewed curio traders. Following this is the presentation of the curio trading contribution to the socioeconomic and livelihoods

[1] Where 'CT' stands for Curio Trader, and the number corresponds to their unique participant number.

dimensions. The fourth section presents results regarding the ecological and environmental impacts of curio trading. The last part of this chapter presents the results regarding the cultural and tourism dynamics of curio trading.

4.2 Theme One: Demographics and characteristics of curio traders operating in Tshwane

The spatial distribution of the curio traders across the three selected study sites immediately shows crucial insights into the structure of the city's informal economy. Figure 1 presents the findings regarding the distribution of the (n=63) study participants across the three study sites.

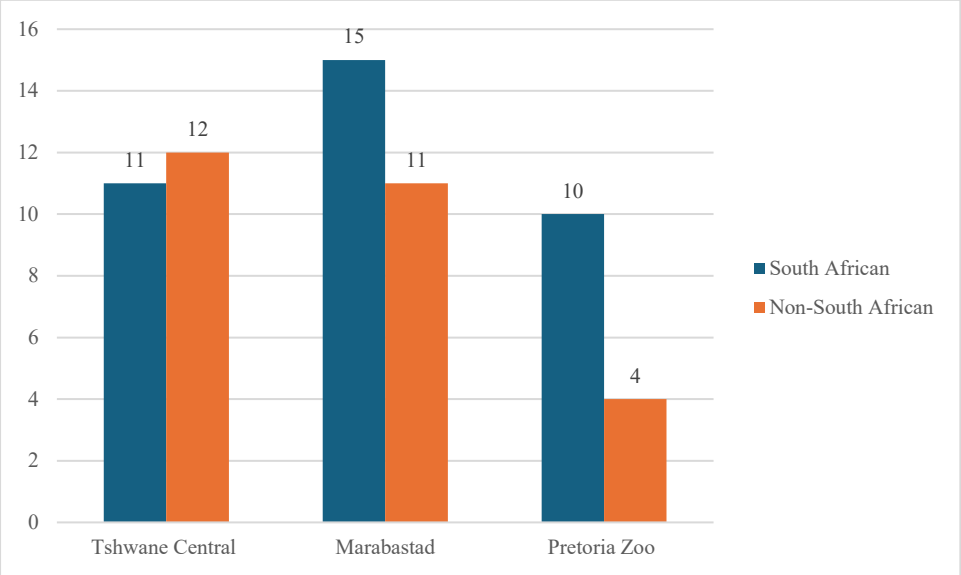


Figure 4.1: The number of participants from three study sites (n=63)

The differences in the number of participants across the three research sites were influenced by the sampling technique used in the study (explained in the preceding chapter, Chapter Three), which was guided by the principle of data saturation. Marabastad recorded the highest number of participants (n=26), followed by Tshwane Central (n=23), then Pretoria Zoo (n=14). This spatial distribution also reveals crucial patterns of nationality within the informal sector. The results show nuanced spatial patterns. In Tshwane Central, there were 12 non-South Africans and 11 South Africans, indicating near-equal representation, with a slight dominance of non-South African traders. In Marabastad, the South African traders were 15, compared with 11 non-South African traders, reflecting a modest dominance of local traders

at this market. Pretoria Zoo also recorded a dominance of South African traders (10) over non-South African traders (4).

In Marabastad and Tshwane Central, the results show that locals and migrants have space in the informal markets, where they can coexist and tap into diverse customer networks, despite the slight dominance of South African traders and non-South African traders, respectively, in both sites. In contrast, Pretoria Zoo was found to have stronger dominance by South African traders than by non-South Africans. Conversely, Pretoria Zoo was recorded as having a stronger dominance by South African traders, suggesting that local traders are equally positioned to leverage tourism-driven markets.

The key difference in these three sites is that nationality is closely associated with the spatial and economic sense of each trading node- while both South African and non-South African traders are focused more on long-established urban markets, the South African traders also tend to strategically target tourism-oriented spaces. This finding also showed that the informal curio economy in major African cities is shaped not only by the number of traders but also by the dynamics of nationality, spatial location, and market orientation. These dynamics demonstrate the major cities' dual role as surviving spaces for locals and regional economic centres. Further, these patterns of nationality and spatial distribution provide the basis for understanding the distribution of curio traders in Tshwane and similar destinations across Africa. The analysis now shifts focus to the specific demographics of the current study's participants, which are displayed in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Personal characteristics of the study participants

Country of origin	**Total (n=63)**	**Total (n=63, in %)**
South Africa	36	57
Non-South Africa	27	43
Non-South African Participants	**Total (n=27, in %)**	
Zimbabwe	52	
Malawi	22	
Mozambique	11	
Tanzania	7	
Cameroon	4	
Lesotho	4	
Demographic profile	**South African participants**	**Non-South African participants**
	Total (n=36, in %)	**Total (n=27, in %)**
Gender		
Female	78	67
Male	22	33
Age		
20-29 years old	11	7
30-39 years old	22	56
40-49 years old	22	37
50-59 years old	25	
60-69 years old	14	
70-79 years old	6	
Level of education		
No formal education		
Some primary school education	6	
Primary school completed	11	18
Some secondary school education	25	7
Secondary school completed	30	26
Some form of tertiary education	3	4
Diploma or Certificate		4
Undergraduate degree completed	25	41
Postgraduate degree completed		
Number of years in business		
1-3 years	8	30
4-6 years	20	41
7-10 years	25	11
Over 10 years	47	18

4.2.1 Country of origin

Regarding the study participants' composition, South African traders constituted 57% of the sample, compared to 43% for non-South Africans (see Table 4.1). This shows a minimal difference in representation between the two groups. This portrays South Africa as an economic hub for informal trade practices and a livelihood hub for non-South African nationalities. Fourie *et al*. (2024) concur that South Africa is considered economically strong on the African continent.

The findings regarding the country of origin provide a comparative distinction between South African and non-South African curio traders operating in Tshwane city spaces, while they also reveal the city's role as a regional centre for informal tourism. With South African traders constituting the majority of the study participants, this suggests that they dominate the locally rooted participants, indicating a constant dependence on curio trading as a local source of livelihood (Makoni & Mearns, 2025a). This result also reflects a high level of dependence on curio trading as a livelihood strategy amid constrained formal labour markets. The presence of South African traders, therefore, shows the integration of curio trading into local economic survival and the significance of this sector in sustaining household income (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2025).

With regards to the non-South African participants, the results reveal that curio trading in Tshwane is dominated by traders from the Southern African region, especially from Zimbabwe, Malawi and Mozambique (Table 4.1). A similar study positions Harare at the centre of cross-border trade in the informal sector (ICBT), with most visiting traders originating from Southern Africa (Makoni, 2024). This result shows that Tshwane is also an African major city, an attractive destination for economic survival, where many people in the region seeking economic survival may escape to and find refuge in the informal sector. Various factors are attributed to South Africa's attractiveness in this regard, such as high tourist flows, highly conducive urban centres- such as Tshwane- for the informal economy, access to markets and strong consumer purchasing power. Besides traders from the Southern African region, there was also a noticeable presence of traders from other regions of Africa- Cameroon and Tanzania, which suggests an emerging growth of migration pathways and increased recognition of South Africa as a centre of informality beyond its immediate region.

This comparison is significant in this study because it demonstrates that curio trading is a key informal activity functioning within both local and transnational livelihood systems (Makoni & Mearns, 2025b). The study observes that for South African traders, curio trading is a long-term livelihood strategy, especially for socioeconomic survival, while for non-South African traders this sector largely acts as a mobility- and migration-driven strategy aimed at immediate survival, income generation, entrepreneurial opportunities and remittances. The differences in these dynamics raise implications for understanding the roles curio trading plays, from economic significance to the ecological dimensions of resource sourcing that extend beyond national borders, as well as the circulation of both cultural and tourism products within the informal sectors and across country borders. Overall, the country-of-origin results demonstrate the role of curio trading as a platform through which economic activities, livelihoods, cultural identity, and ecological dimensions are shaped within the informal tourism economy of a major African city.

4.2.2 Gender

Due to traders participating from diverse nationalities, the data on the age profile were grouped into two categories: South African and Non-South African. For South African participants, the findings show that the sector is dominated by women, with women participants accounting for 78%. A similar result was obtained for non-South African participants, where the women (67%) constituted the majority. This is because of fewer barriers to entry than the formal sector. As a result, women find the informal sector more accessible for income generation. According to the literature, women's economic participation in informal trade plays an important role in achieving the SDGs in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) (Bicaba *et al*., 2017; Tchamyou, 2017).

The results show a higher dominance of women than of men in the informal sector. This aligns with other studies highlighting the predominance of women in the informal sector as compared to men. Canton (2021) indicates that the majority of traders in the informal tourism economy are women. Similarly, Abisuga-Oyekunle and Fillis (2017) highlight that small curio businesses, such as selling beads, textiles, and fashion accessories, are dominated by women. Overall, the findings provide insights into the gender dynamics of both South African and non-South African traders in the informal curio trade in Tshwane. The findings also show that women rely more on informal curio trading than men do in Tshwane.

Women dominate the informal sector across Southern African countries, including Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, and Zambia (UNCTAD, 2021). The findings of women's predominance in this current study highlight women's empowerment role within the informal sector. This is due to the easy access to economic opportunities in this sector. Economically, women's empowerment is the key to achieving sustainable development (Meyiwa, 2012; National Development Plan, 2030). Although recent research shows an increase in men in the informal sector in the SADC and West Africa regions since the COVID-19 pandemic (Mergesa, 2020; Makoni & Tichaawa, 2021).

4.2.3 Age

The majority (25%) of South African participants were in the 50-59-year-old age group, while the 30-39-year-old age group (56%) dominated among non-SA participants. This result underscores that informality is largely practised by the elderly population in South Africa, while a younger, non-SA population dominates the sector. This age distribution implies that, for South Africans, participation in the informal sector is driven by long-term structural exclusion from formal employment and, to an extent, limited late-career prospects, resulting in informality being a survival sector for older adults. Regarding the dominance of a younger non-South African population in the informal sector, this implies that the sector is functioning as an entry point into the urban livelihood, allowing for non-South Africans to secure finances, support households and adapt quickly to the local dynamics in an economy where formal entry is characterised by many complexities associated with immigration.

These results are important because they highlight different patterns within the curio trading sector, showing how age determines participation motives, livelihood dependence, and different modes of participation. In the case of South African traders, the dominance of older age groups participating in the sector shows that the sector is seen as a long-term survival strategy, whereas for non-South Africans, this sector is a survival opportunity, more adaptive and livelihood-oriented. These dynamics provide critical insights into the economic contributions of the curio trading and the sustainability of the curio traders' livelihoods.

The findings show a slight difference in the representation of the 20-29 age group between South African and non-South African participants, with the former accounting for 11% and the latter 7%. The results demonstrate comparable participation in informal curio trading among young adults, regardless of nationality. The participants in this age group have either completed primary or secondary school. This aligns with findings that individuals with lower

educational attainment are more likely to participate in the informal sector in Africa (Murozvi *et al*., 2022). According to the ILO Quarterly Labour Force Survey 2024, 47% of youth in South Africa are employed in the informal sector (ILO, 2024; WBG, 2024). The results show the economic vulnerability of this age group due to lack of employment. These findings highlight that informal trading is more likely to be the entry point for individuals with lower educational levels seeking to improve their livelihoods.

In addition, the presence of the younger population within this age group demonstrates broader patterns of youth unemployment and the need for economic relief (Ngyah-Etchutambe *et al*., 2022). Current literature on the informal sector indicates that the high levels of unemployment and poverty, particularly in developing countries, often drive young people to seek alternative livelihood strategies, especially in the informal sector (Ologunoye *et al*., 2025). Therefore, participation in the informal sector indicates limited formal employment opportunities for younger people and reflects the complex structural nature of youth unemployment across the African continent.

For the age group of 40-49 years old, the majority were non-South African (37%) as compared to (22%) South African. These were traders with formal qualifications. These findings indicate that many graduates find themselves in informal trade due to difficulties in securing formal jobs. In the first quarter of 2021, about 151 200 graduates with at least a degree were unemployed in South Africa (StatSA, 2021). In South Africa, adult informal employment constitutes 34.1% according to the Quarterly Labour Force Survey 2024 (ILO, 2024; WBG, 2024). This finding highlights informal trading as one aspect that plays a vital role in employment creation.

4.2.4 Level of education

Many participants with stronger academic backgrounds were non-South Africans (41%), holding undergraduate degrees, compared with South Africans (25%). Some participants with Diplomas are only non-South Africans (4%). Those with college certificates reflect both non-South African (4%) and South African (3%). The study found that most non-South Africans have a stronger academic background than South African participants. The results further show that South Africans have a higher proportion of participants at the secondary and primary educational levels, while non-South Africans have a higher proportion of participants with Diplomas and undergraduate degrees. This finding shows that non-South African informal curio traders are more academic than South African informal curio traders. Literature

shows that foreign informal traders have higher levels of academic attainment than South African traders (Khumalo, 2015).

In addition, the dominance of non-South Africans with formal qualifications indicates a lack of formal job opportunities in their respective countries of origin, while South African city spaces offer more opportunities for them to earn a living. This finding is similar for South African participants with formal qualifications and still shows limited formal job opportunities in the country. The results show a lack of formal jobs in both South Africa and other African countries. Other research findings show that non-South Africans come to South Africa with the intention of securing formal employment, but they face difficulties because priority is given to South Africans over foreigners. As a result, these non-South Africans turn to informal trading as a form of employment (Khumalo, 2015).

Looking at participants with matric and primary education, the majority were South Africans compared to non-South Africans. Overall, the findings on limited formal job opportunities in both South Africa and other African countries indicate weak economic growth, and therefore, these countries will remain underdeveloped. Comparing the findings on the overall level of education amongst South Africans and non-South Africans, it shows that curio traders in Tshwane City possess some form of educational background. The findings highlight that curio traders in Tshwane city are literate. This reflects that informal tourism business activities attract people with higher educational attainment (Makoni, 2024).

4.2.5 Number of years in business

The majority of participants who had been in curio trading for more than 10 years were South Africans (47%), while the majority of non-South Africans (41%) had been in the business for 4-6 years. South Africans who have been selling for over 10 years were aged 50 and above and mostly started their businesses in their early twenties. The results also indicate that curio trading has long served as a major source of income for them, given the number of years they have been involved in informal trading. This aligns with findings that this industry adds value through its contribution to income generation (Abisuga-Oyekunle & Fillis, 2017). Thus, this sector is viewed as a long-term economic strategy by many, as reflected in the number of years many have in this business.

For non-South African traders with 4-6 years in the curio business, this shows the desperation of participants in their adulthood, striving to sustain their livelihoods due to a lack of formal

employment opportunities. This finding aligns with South African participants who have been operating a business for 4-6 years. Across both South African and non-South African participants, have been selling for 7-10 years and 1-3 years, respectively. Several studies indicate a surge in the influx of African migrants into different provinces across South Africa in the past 10 years (Chinomona & Maziriri, 2015; Asoba & Tengeh, 2016; Ngota *et al.*, 2018). Overall, the results indicate the stability of informal curio trading in sustaining the livelihoods of the traders in Tshwane, considering the years they have been involved in informal trading. This aligns with findings indicating that business stability is determined by the number of years a business has operated (Muriithi, 2008). The findings of this research study revealed that non-South African traders were in the country for over 4 years, with some staying for over 10 years. This shows the sustainability of informal trading on the livelihoods of non-South African traders.

4.2.6 Products sold by curio traders operating in Tshwane

Table 4.2 illustrates a variety of products sold by both South African and non-South African curio traders in Tshwane city.

Table 4.2: Main curio products sold by curio traders in Tshwane informal markets

Products	South African participants Total (n=36, in %)	Non-South African participants Total (n=27, in %)
Beadwork	58	30
Traditional attire	31	18
African print attire, bags, pouches	11	15
Woven products, e.g. baskets, bags, mats, placemats and coasters	39	30
Wooden and metal sculptures, e.g. carved animals, bowls, mortars, walking sticks	8	15
Calabash bowls	5	
Grass brooms	17	4
Artwork e.g. paintings	5	18
Drums	5	11
Beaded shoes and animal skin shoes	3	15
Seashells	5	
Clay pots, earthenware vases and bowls	11	4
Decorative souvenirs, e.g. wires keyholders	3	18
Recycled artwork, e.g. metal, paper and plastic animals	5	

Despite the variety of products sold at Tshwane Central, Marabastad, and Pretoria Zoo, beadwork is the most popular product among South Africans (58%). Followed by woven products (39%), South Africans, whereas for non-South Africans, both beadwork (30%) and woven products (30%) are sold in equal proportion. Other products that are most often sold are traditional attire (31%) for South Africans, whereas for non-South Africans, traditional attire (18%) and artwork (18%) are sold in equal proportions. The least sold products for South African participants are beaded and animal-skin shoes (3%) and decorative souvenirs (3%), both in equal proportion, while for non-South African participants are grass brooms (4%) and clay pots, earthenware vases and bowls (4%).

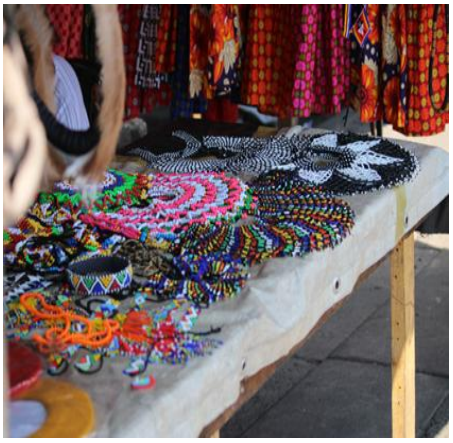
The beadwork ranged from traditional beaded accessories such as bangles, head and neck pieces, earrings, beaded bags, coasters, beaded Zulu hats, and Ndebele decorative dolls. The traditional attire sold included that of the Zulus, Xhosas, Pedis, and Ndebeles. It was discovered in this finding that beadwork is mostly sold because it is simple to make, and most participants were taught the skill of making beadwork by their parents at a young age, "*Our parents used to say we must learn and make beadwork so that they can sell them and make money to buy us some Christmas clothes*" (CT7); "*Beadwork is easy to make, and I learnt this by myself. I bought beadwork that was already done, unstitched it and redo it by following the same pattern and that is how I learnt*" (CT28). Literature shows that many women in rural areas produce their own artwork and craft for the tourists who can afford to buy them (Karuaihe *et al*., 2015). This reflects that selling beadwork does not require any special skill, as anyone can make it without formal skills.

Another finding regarding the most sold products among both South African and non-South African consumers is that they are in demand. Following the question of why traders chose to offer specifically the products on sale some responses covered "*I decided to try traditional attire because at least tradition is mostly bought, and our tradition is broad*" (CT2); "*It is mostly in demand this side, plus there are student society at TUT that demand these types of attires*" (CT21); "*They sell out quick and people outside our tribes like to wear them*" (CT22). This finding indicates that participants are motivated by market demand for the product to maintain their lives. This finding aligns with evidence indicating that curio products, including beadwork, weaving, woodwork, crochet, knitting, and sewing, are viewed as an uplifting strategy in both formal and informal industries, which has led people to start selling them to the public (Petersen, 2023).

Figure 4.2 illustrates the products sold in each study area. The products range from beadwork items to wooden and wire products. Traders display the products at the tables to attract customers.



(a) Tshwane Central



(b) Marabastad



(c) Pretoria Zoo

Figure 4.2: Variety of curio products sold in Pretoria informal markets.
Source: Author.

Table 4.3 reflects curio products sold from each study area. The intention was to reflect on how these products shape nature and the economic characteristics of each study area.

Table 4.3: Main curio products sold from each study area.

Products	Tshwane Central	Marabastad	Pretoria Zoo
	Total (n=23, in %)	Total (n=26, in %)	Total (n=14, in %)
Beadwork	39	53	50
Traditional attire	13	46	
African print attire, bags, pouches	26	19	
Woven products, e.g. baskets, bags, mats, placemats and coasters	13	34	50
Wooden and metal sculptures, e.g. carved animals, bowls, mortars, walking sticks		15	21
Clay pots			28
Artwork e.g. Paintings		19	21
Decorative souvenirs, e.g. wires keyholders	14		

The findings highlighted in Table 4.3 show a variety of products sold across the study areas. The study found that Tshwane Central traders sell more daily-based products, such as beadwork like beaded woven bags, wooden and beaded earrings, African print bags and pouches, and decorative souvenirs, which sell quickly. Marabastad sells beadwork, traditional and African-based products such as African print attire and woven mats. The study further discovered that traders at Pretoria Zoo sell more tourist-oriented curios, such as crafts

including wooden and metal sculptures, walking sticks, drums, woven products, including mats, baskets, coasters, artwork such as paintings, and beadwork. These products highlight that traders are influenced by product demand and customers' needs in each study area, which shapes the economic structure of these areas.

4.2.7 Comparative Analysis of the demographics of curio traders in the three selected research areas

The analysis of curio traders across the three sites shows distinct patterns in spatial distribution, traders' nationalities, demographics, and trading strategies that shape the sector's role in livelihoods, tourism, and cultural dynamics. Rather than operating as isolated characteristics, the demographics of the traders, such as gender, age, education, and years in operation, interplay with the location to produce various forms of interaction within the city's informal curio economy. The research sites reflect the distinct socio-economic configurations integrated within urban and tourism contexts. The nationality of the traders was observed in the findings as a factor aligned with spatial opportunity. For example, in sites found to have a more concentrated number of South African traders, such as the Pretoria Zoo, the demographic characteristic reflects stability: older traders with more years of experience in the business anchor the space, reflecting solid supplier ties, repeat customers and conservative selling strategies. Also, in this area, the profiles are characterised by experience rather than formal education, while the trade characteristics align with the routine urban fabric rather than tourism circles.

Conversely, the existence of non-South African traders at both Tshwane Central and Marabastad aligns with the younger age groups with comparatively higher education levels. This reflects adaptive and opportunity-based strategies. In addition, these traders position themselves in high-foot-traffic zones [Marabastad and Tshwane Central] where they can adjust curio prices dynamically, diversify their products, and actively engage with tourists, demonstrating entrepreneurial responsiveness tied to mobility status. Also, in Marabastad, the area exhibits a hybrid configuration, with a relatively balanced distribution of nationalities among traders. This shows a convergence of strategies in which experienced South African traders coexist with younger, educated non-South Africans, offering competitive yet complementary curio products. In this space, gendered participation, especially the dominance of female traders, interacts with nationality and experience to shape trading strategies and customer interactions.

Female traders, particularly those who have more years of experience, were found to stabilise market continuity, while non-South African traders bring about product diversification and display aesthetics. This dynamic illustrates how demographics shape curio trading within each spatial context.

Further, education mediates these dynamics. Despite the higher education levels amongst a majority of non-Sotho African traders not translating into access to formal employment, they inform negotiation and calculated skills, strategic market positioning, viable business management, and excellent customer engagement. The coexistence of these demographic dynamics across the research sites underscores that the informal curio economy caters to both the survivalists and entrepreneurial logics. Depending on how the personal profiles align with spatial-economic opportunity structures.

Overall, this comparative analysis demonstrates Tshwane's differentiated informal curio economy across spatial and demographic lines. It also shows that localised and experience-based stability characterise South African-dominated markets, while mobility-driven and adaptability characterise non-South African-dominated markets. The dynamics of age, gender, education levels, and experience, as well as nationality and trade location, explain variations in trading strategies, customer engagement, and livelihood orientation. The findings therefore show that trader profiles are inseparable from market access and spatial-economic positioning, and that these dynamics ultimately affect how cultural products circulate within both tourism and urban economies. Having established how the demographic profiles intersect with spatial distribution and nationality in Tshwane's informal curio economy, the analysis now shifts focus from who the traders are to how they organise and sustain their business within these differentiated places.

4.3 Theme Two: Business organisation, trading strategies and mobility patterns

This section presents the findings on how participants organise their business, including their location strategies, customer engagement and mobility patterns. Additionally, their method of storing their goods.

4.3.1 Location strategies and customer engagement

Various reasons were provided regarding the choice of location to operate in Tshwane. One of the main reasons for the location section was the opportunities for higher income afforded by access to markets. For example, a trader operating in Tshwane Central noted that "*I found*

this place as a place where I can make a living from, a place where I will be able to feed my children because it is a busy place. I come every day, Monday to Sunday" (CT23). A similar response was given, "*It is because there are customers. Aren't they saying when you sell, you have to market, like you must check where there are customers, so even with me, I found this place as a place where I will have more customers.*" (CT28) and "*The city centre is the best place for my business because many people pass through here. I operate daily*." (CT59). Figure 4.3 shows Church Street in Tshwane Central, where informal traders sell a variety of products. Amongst them, informal curio sellers are also found on this street.



Figure 4.3: View of Church Street where informal curio traders are located.
Source: Author.

Participants were also found to favor the places they selected to do business because of the busy foot traffic along those areas, "*I do business here because this is one of the busiest places in Tshwane and I am here every day apart from the days I choose to take a break or go home*" (CT37); "*Marabastad has been a trading centre for many years and people know they can find curios here. I work here almost every day*" (CT49); "*Marabastad is the best place for me because many people come here. My business is an everyday business*" (CT63). Figure 4.4 below shows where curio traders operate their business in Marabastad.



Figure 4.4: Marabastad curio market station.
Source: Author.

Other reasons for choice of location, the participants found it as a hotspot for customers as many people pass through when visiting the Zoo, "*I see this place as the place where there are lot of customers, is too busy, plus there is zoo here, when the tourist come to see the big five at the zoo at least, they pass by to us to see what we have here. I come from Tuesday to Saturday*" (CT7); "*Because of the customers always coming to the Zoo and they always pass by us to see what we have*" (CT20), and "*I work here because of the Zoo. The Zoo attracts many tourists and school groups who like to buy souvenirs. I normally work here on weekends and public holidays*" (CT50). Figure 4.5 Shows the stalls where the Pretoria Zoo curio sellers operate.



Figure 4.5: Pretoria Zoo curio market.

Source: Author

Currently, informal trading in South African cities continues to shape livelihoods amid high unemployment (Broadway, 2017). This view is reflected in the findings, which reveal that the informal sector positively contributes to securing the livelihoods of traders and their relatives. (Thwala *et al*., 2023). Informal tourism is considered pivotal to employment creation and sustainable economic growth, especially in the developing world (Fourie *et al*., 2024). Overall, the results show that traders view Tshwane Central, Marabastad, and Pretoria Zoo as strategic locations for sustaining their livelihoods through the sale of curios. This is because traders know that Tshwane Central and Marabastad serve as primary shopping destinations for many people.

Additionally, Pretoria Zoo serves as a tourist destination. In Africa, this reflects that the major cities across the continent are increasingly dominated by the informal sector, which is taking over the original formal business and administrative activities in these areas (Makoni *et al*., 2023). Several studies indicate that this sector is thriving in urban central business districts (CBDs). Thus, it transforms the social, economic and environmental landscapes of urban cities (Moyo & Gumbo, 2021; Moagi *et al*., 2021; Hill *et al*., 2022). As a result, this will enable traders to attract more customers, helping them maintain and improve their livelihoods. Several studies indicate that although urban cities are hubs for formal economic activities, it is now undeniable that the informal economy is becoming a permanent feature in most African cities (Matamanda *et al*., 2020; Dube & Gumbo, 2022; Simatele & Bolarinwa, 2025). Central Business Districts enhance the value of the urban economy through informal markets, driven by higher customer traffic and better access to services (Dube & Gumbo, 2025). The findings of this current study reveal that urban centres are the most reliable customer base for livelihood sustainability and economic development through informal trading.

In terms of customer engagement the findings show that the participants are not only selling to the walk-in customers, but they also fulfil customer orders as part of their business daily operation, "*Yes, we do work with orders, like most customers come here and we find the product that they want, they will check my products, and they will say I want this one and if they want many they place orders*" (CT3); "*Yes, especially clay pot and this painted hats. If someone wants to decorate at a wedding, they come and place an order*" (CT4); "*I have customers. But there is a process for doing that, there is a procedure to follow. They must give me their specs after I assess their specs, then I must give you a quotation, and if you are happy*

with the quotation and I'm expecting 50 % deposit, then I make that, and when I'm done, you bring the rest." (CT5); "*Yes, they call and send me what they want. They pay a deposit after placing an order and after I tell them I am done with their products, so that they can come collect their items"* (CT10). The findings regarding paying deposits indicate the trust relationship between traders and customers. Additionally, to avoid the risk of cancellation and production loss for traders. This highlights that traders protect themselves against potential losses by requiring a deposit before processing orders. This finding presents a less-discussed dimension of the informal sector in city centres: its dynamics with social capital and social entrepreneurship. It can, therefore, be argued that the sector not only generates income but also creates opportunities for traders to build social capital through networks, relationships, and repeated interactions with customers and other traders. These interactions foster elements of social entrepreneurship, where business activities are embedded within community relationships and mutual support systems. Such social embeddedness can enhance business sustainability and improve livelihoods. Meanwhile, other studies have established that social capital is crucial for sustaining economic activities and ensuring a business's longevity (Handoyo, 2013; Pontoh, 2010).

It was also discovered that traders export internationally to customers whom they met when they visited the country as tourists, "*I deliver as far as Giyani, Venda. Even Brazil, Dubai, I have customers from Dubai and Nigeria. They call me to place orders. I got these customers during the September holidays when they came here to buy for their families*" (CT13). Beadwork emerged as the most-sold product based on customer orders. This finding shows that beadwork is the most competitive product within informal curio trading. The nature of customer orders indicates that beadwork is the most significant product for tourism-driven economic activity. To extend understanding of this theme, the findings provide further insights into the traders' mobility patterns.

The study found that curio traders work throughout the seven days of the week, taking breaks only when they are required, "*I am from Winterveld. I travel Monday to Friday, and I knock off at 17:00*" (CT9); "*I stay at Soshanguve. And I come every day. Monday to Saturday. Sunday I only come when too busy like is in September*" (CT13); "*I stay in Mabopane. I come Monday to Saturday*" (CT27). This indicates that participants travel from the townships of the City of Tshwane. The findings further shows that the participants travel almost daily using public transport, "*I stay in Soshanguve, and I travel daily. I use a taxi to come here, and I sell the whole day*" (CT1); "*I travel by taxi every day, because I don't have a car. I stay in*

Mamelodi" (CT4); "*I travel from Hammanskraal by taxi, every day. I don't use a bus*" (CT7); "*Every day I come here. I take 6:00 bus and I knock off at 17:00. I travel from KwaMhlanga*" (CT11). These findings demonstrate that informal curio trading is a daily economic activity, given traders' travel commitments to operate their businesses. In addition, form part of employment and entrepreneurship opportunities. This aligns with the study by Abisuga-Oyekunle and Fillis (2017), which highlights that this sector plays a vital role in creating employment opportunities.

In terms of storing goods, the study found that participants at Pretoria Zoo are provided with stalls to store their products; "*We put them in these stalls, and we pay the Zoo. We pay R240 per year*" (CT16); "*They stay here in the stalls. At least the Zoo built this for us*" (CT17). This is because the property belongs to Pretoria Zoo. Participants at Pretoria Zoo reported paying rent to occupy the provided stalls. The rent is paid either monthly or once off annual payment. The study also found that participants in Tshwane Central and Marabastad are renting some salons and Indian shops for storage, "*I put them in a storeroom, and I pay R250 monthly*" (CT8); "*I rent a storeroom around here in town. The storeroom is a just at the salon's shops*" (CT22); "*I leave them here. I pack them and someone will come and take them to put them in the storeroom*" (CT24); "*We rent a storage at some Indian shop around here*" (CT29). It was discovered that participants pay monthly for storage. These findings indicate financial implications for their business: they need to generate income to sustain their lives, and at the same time, cover the costs of storing their products. It also shows that the City of Tshwane does not provide them with shelter for storing their products. This finding exposes an urban infrastructural failure within the municipality in its support for informal traders. This aligns with the literature showing that informal traders lack government infrastructure support (Manzana, 2019).

Comparing strategic locations and mobility patterns across participants in all three study sites, traders chose trading areas based on their preferred market demand. All traders in all three selected study areas fulfil customer orders as part of their daily business operations. All traders use the same method: customers pay deposits before orders are processed. In terms of shelter, only traders at the Pretoria Zoo have a place to store their goods, while traders at Tshwane Central and Marabastad do not. However, they have alternative Indian shops and salons that they use as storage. The analysis now shifts focus to the production and supply side of curio trading.

4.3.2 Supply and production practices

The study participants were asked to explain the sourcing and production processes for the curio products on sale. Regarding beadwork, the study found that many participants make their own beadwork items: "*I buy loose beads at Marabastad shops. They always have stock at those shops*" (CT6); "*I make beadwork. I buy loose beads at Marabastad shops*" (CT18). A similar response was given "*I buy loose beads at Marabastad then from there I start making beadwork*" (CT19); "*For the beadwork items I am making them myself, I buy loose beads here at the shops and from there I will start making them*" (CT23); "*For beadwork, I buy loose beads here in Marabastad. There are some shops selling loose beads*." (CT27). The results show that some traders rely on their skills to maintain their livelihoods. Their creative skills are considered an important aspect of sustaining their livelihoods in informal trade. "*This is my own artwork. It is just a talent. I buy paints, brushes and boards, which are called Masonite boards, at an art shop in Hatfield. They sell art stuff. Students from the University of Pretoria mostly buy there, so they always have paints*" (CT4); "*As I have explained, they are self-made. I make them myself, and I get wood from the forest. The grass brooms and woven mats, my wife gets them from kwaNdebele, she just goes to the forest to get grass to make the brooms and mats*" (CT4). The results show that traders possess artisanal skills, as they can produce handcrafted products such as beadwork, paintings, carved works, and woven goods. Research shows that beadwork is not taught in schools but is passed down from generation to generation, especially in culturally rooted communities (Fakoyede & Otulaja, 2020).

The finding indicates that some curio products such as woven products, grass broom, and some wooden products such as walking sticks, carved bowls, are sourced from suppliers, "*Grass broom and woven mats as well as clay pots we buy from some Swaziland women. They come every month. This is because we cannot make them"* (CT6); "*Woven basket, clay pots, they bring us from Swaziland. They come every month. If I want many I call before they come so they bring me more*" (CT7); "*The woven mats, I buy them from a lady from Swaziland. The lady comes here to sell to us; she just comes every month to sell things to us. So, I just check what I want to buy and buy it. I buy traditional attire from a supplier in Durban. I call the supplier and pay a deposit, and they send my order via a bus.*" (CT12); "*I used to get some of the drum in Mozambique but long time ago and I stopped because of the difficulties when they are supposed to cross the border, they want papers from that side and this side to show, papers to show that the animal skin used on this drum have been processed just so that it will not cause problems for government like maybe it has some insects that might kill something. So,*

because of that, I now order drums from the supplier in Ghana. Wooden bowls, those are from Zimbabwe, they bring us here, and we buy." (CT17). Literature shows that raw materials such as grass have been manufactured into curio products that can be sold at the tourist markets (Nyawo & Mubangizi, 2015).

The findings indicate that Tshwane curio traders rely on cross-border traders to source products they cannot produce or source locally. The study discovered that these products are sourced by traders from neighbouring countries such as Swaziland, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. This indicates that these neighbouring countries play a significant role in supplying informal traders in the country. In addition, this highlights that these neighbours contribute to the economic development of informal trading in South Africa, given the suppliers' monthly visits. Figure 4.6 is a photograph captured during the fieldwork, presenting some of the products sourced from neighbouring countries, sold by curio traders in the study site areas.



(a) Pretoria Zoo (b) Marabastad

Figure 4.6: Illustration of a variety of woven products sold by Tshwane curio traders.
Source: Author

Besides importing goods from across the borders, some goods were found to be sourced from within the country, "*There are some beadworks that I cannot make, and I source them from Durban. I call them and they send them via bus. And I collect them at Bosman bus station*" (CT13); "*I buy all my beadwork products in Durban. I buy them in a place, sort of a market, in Durban. I use a bus to go there. I usually go there with other traders. We call to tell them we are coming because they must make them first*" (CT8). A similar response, "*Traditional*

attire, and some beadwork items, I stock them from Durban. I go by bus. With traditional attire, I send them the full cash first and the sizes so they can sew them for me. When they are done, they call me. I go there by bus" (CT23); "*For traditional attire, I have people who sew for me, in Durban.*" (CT27). These findings highlight that traders source specific products from other local cities to supplement their production. This highlights that, apart from the products that curio traders in Tshwane can produce, they seek to broaden their marketing strategy to attract more customers by sourcing more products from within and across the country's borders. This highlights that informal curio trading contributes to local economies by sourcing products from local suppliers. Literature shows that informal traders in areas such as Cape Town reinvest into local economy by sourcing raw materials to produce their goods (De Villers, 2022).

4.3.3 Business entry, knowledge, and experience

The study findings show that the informal sector within city spaces provides opportunities for both citizens and non-citizens to participate in economic activities for survival. Makoni and Mearns (2025a) earlier contend that individuals operating in the informal sector, regardless of nationality, find economic and survival refuge there in ways not accessible to them in the formal sector. Beyond the minimal numerical differences, the findings show that both groups [South African and non-South African participants] were similarly engaged in curio trading, mainly as a means of survival and livelihood enhancement. The findings are similar to existing scholarship on migrant traders in South Africa. Limited educational opportunities, sustaining livelihoods, high unemployment rates, and political and social instability back home are among the reasons cited for migrant traders' motives to enter the informal sector in South Africa (Zuma, 2021; Nyathi, Makoni & Mearns, 2025b; Rogerson, 2025).

Though varied, motives to enter the curio trading business were largely attributed to survival and employment seeking reasons, "*Since I dropped out at the university during my first year because I needed money to support my children and since my mother was no longer coming here to sell because of old age, I then decided to take over so that I can support my children*" (CT1); "*Is something that I have learnt to do growing up but beside that there are no jobs. I have been applying. You can't even tell if your CV is wrong or if you are wrong. You will find that you have all the requirements they want, but they don't call. Maybe many of us have the same skills they want*" (CT7); "*It is because I was not working. If I get a job after 3 weeks, they chase me. I don't know why*" (CT12). The informal economy serves as an important entry

point for providing employment opportunities for many unemployed individuals in South Africa (Asmal *et al*., 2024). The findings highlight unemployment as a major factor that triggers entry into curio trading, "*I was not working. And I said let me start something maybe I will have something to buy bread*" (CT14); "*Is because I was not working*" (CT21); "*I saw money and I am just pushing since I am not employed*" (CT22); "*I decided to start this business because that was my only means for getting money, I could not find a job*" (CT31); "*I needed employment and could not get it*" (CT42). The findings also show that due to lack of formal employment, traders opt for informal trading to earn income to sustain their livelihoods. Other studies confirm that informal trading is a source of income for retirees and young individuals struggling to secure formal employment (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2019). Masonganye (2012) also highlights that informal trading plays an important role in providing employment, specifically for unemployed individuals.

The study found that the traders opted for informal curio trading due to their skills in making certain curios, such as beadwork, paintings, wooden and metal carvings, and recycled-material artwork. Traders reported that they had developed these skills from their parents at a young age, "*My grandmother used to sew. Yes, I learnt about this business from my grandmother*" (CT2) and "*Our grandparents started this business*" (CT16); "*My grandmother started the business, then my mother took over, then I followed, after my mother passed away*" (CT19); "*Because since growing up my mother used to do this business, so we grew up knowing how to do beadwork, so after completing matric, there were no jobs, so I then decided to come with her and help her. So, over time, I decided to have my own stock and stall. No, she passed away now*" (CT10); "*The business started as a family business, started by my mother. I took over because I can survive from it*" (CT1). To better understand the dynamics of this study, the analysis now moves to the next theme, which examines livelihoods and economic dimensions.

4.4 Theme Three: Livelihood contributions and economic dimensions

The data obtained for these aspects were highly significant in understanding and elucidating the perceived economic implications of curio trading for livelihoods and economic development. This section presents the livelihoods and economic impacts. This analysis aims to explore how curio trading contributes to traders' well-being in terms of social and economic sustainability.

4.4.1 Number of dependents

To understand the contributions to livelihoods, participants were asked to indicate the number of dependents in their household. This was to assess the household responsibilities and how traders cope. The data obtained is presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.4: Dependents of curio traders.

Dependents	South African participants Total (n=36, in %)	Non-South African participants Total (n=27, in %)
0-1	21	67
2-3	62	33
4-5	4	
6 and above	12	

The results show that South African traders typically have 2 to 3 dependents, while non-South African traders have 0 to 1. In addition, the South African traders were reported to have more than 4 dependents, consisting of both immediate and extended family members. "*Yes, I have dependents, but those are my grandchildren; they are 5*" (CT16). A similar response was given: "*Yes, they are 3 and 5 grandchildren*" CT20; "*I have 4 children and 2 grandchildren*" (CT23); "*I have 1 daughter, and she is not working and 2 grandchildren. Please help her find a job. I can pay transport to school for my grandchildren*" (CT28). These findings provide insight into the business sustainability of traders' lives. This shows that traders can maintain themselves and those who depend on them with business earnings. Compared with South Africans, non-South Africans have fewer dependents. Besides, South African traders are noted to have more direct dependents than non-South African traders; the latter shoulder transnational financial responsibilities through regular remittances. *"I only have one child back home whom I take care of. But I am always sending money because things are tough in Zimbabwe and sometimes I bail out my friends or relatives who may be needing financial assistance"* (CT12); *"I do sometimes send money to my grandparents back home even though they don't ask for it, they always appreciate it because things are not going well"* (CT24); *"I don't have many dependents, and I know back home they don't ask me for money because they fear they may be putting a burden on me, but I know they need the money so I send them when I have enough anyway"* (CT25).

This finding suggests that, although they are different, the economic pressures on both South African and non-South African traders are broadly similar. For the South African traders, the financial burden is largely household-based and multi-generational. For the non-South African traders, it was observed that their financial responsibilities are mainly transnational and informal, integrated in familial and social networks across borders. As a result, this study notes that business sustainability in this context must be understood within broader socio-economic contexts, given that traders' income supports both individual livelihoods and extended, geographically dispersed networks.

4.4.2 Income patterns

Business revenues accumulated from curio trading are presented in Table 4.4 below to understand the economic dimensions of this sector.

Table 4.5: Comparison of daily incomes during busy days vs non-busy days

	Busy days			No-busy days	
	South African participants	Non-South African participants		South African participants	Non-South African participants
Income	**Total (n=36, in %)**	**Total (n=27, in %)**	**Income**	**Total (n=36, in %)**	**Total (n=27, in %)**
ZAR500-ZAR600	11	4	ZAR0-ZAR50	25	22
ZAR700-ZAR800	6	11	ZAR100-ZAR200	53	56
ZAR900-R1900	22	18	ZAR300-ZAR400	14	11
ZAR2000-ZAR3500	53	52	ZAR500-ZAR600	5	11
ZAR4000 above	8	15	ZAR2000-ZAR3500	3	

At the time of data collection, the average exchange rate was approximately 1 United States Dollar (USD) to R18.50 (ZAR). Monetary amounts are reported in South African Rand, and conversions can be made using this reference point. Table 4.4 illustrates daily income on busy versus non-busy days. The study found that on busy days, most traders, both South Africans (53%) and non-South Africans (52%), earn more than ZAR2000 daily. Compared with non-busy days, both South African (53%) and non-South African (56%) traders reported revenues below ZAR200. The study found that only South African (3%) traders earn R2000-R3000 on non-busy days, although it is only for certain individual products costing R2000 or more, "*Depending on items, because for instance I have R3500 item here also R6500 of which is very rare to get a client for it*" (CT5).

It was discovered that curio trading is seasonal, resulting in days when the business is very slow and others when sales move very fast. This aligns with the study conducted by Asoba

and Patricia (2021), which finds that woodcraft and bead businesses are seasonal, limiting their development. The findings of this study show that from September to December is when sales move quickly, "*And usually is seasonal, sometimes, like during wedding times, they buy, they use this walking stick, calabash for traditional wedding*" (CT17); "*In September you can even make up to R10000 and in December it is too busy*" (CT13). A similar responses provided, "*It depends on seasons, maybe R1000 during summer*" (CT21), "*With our business is very busy during heritage so on busy days uh you can make R10,000*" (CT25); "*Sometimes I can get something like R5000 especially in September or December holidays*" (CT57), "*But in summer it can be over R3000*" (CT45). This indicates that traders generate more earnings because customers buy curio products for heritage celebrations and traditional weddings, which mostly take place in September and December.

The study also discovered that from January to the winter months, the business is very slow, "*Ah, you see January can be very quiet, sometimes we can come for 2 weeks without selling anything. We just come and go home, but yes, maybe R50 or R100 and that could only be from one customer buying one item*" (CT6); "*So, January is quiet because people buy stationery*" (CT13); "*The business is affected by seasonal sales because sometimes I don't sell everyday especially during winter*" (CT24); "*And also business is seasonal, you see now in winter there is no business*" (CT10); "*It's really not certain I tell you like winter times are very low so even a R400 will be a lot to get per day but in summer it can be over 3000*" (CT45); "*Even a R40 you get, it can be that bad especially in winter*" (CT46). The result in this regard indicates that informal curio trading is unstable in terms of revenues, depending on the season where the products on sale are in demand.

The findings show that curio trading is a significant income-generating activity for both South African and non-South African traders. This income is noted to help support household survival, provide financial injections to extended families, and facilitate cross-border financial flows. In addition, it was observed that this sector injects liquidity into the local informal markets during the peak times and helps sustain consumption at the household level, especially in the face of formal employment scarcity. For non-South African traders, remittance practices extend this economic impact beyond South African borders, linking the South African informal economy to regional livelihoods and solidifying transnational economic interdependence. Despite this, when the reported income is examined against national poverty benchmarks, the picture becomes more complex. When using the South African upper-bound poverty line (UBPL), individuals who consistently earn below this

threshold fall within or near poverty status once they have met the business expenses and household commitments (ILO, 2026).

The South African UBPL is a national poverty threshold that indicates the minimum income required to afford basic necessities for survival. According to the StatsSA (2025) report on national poverty lines, the UPBL is ZAR 2 846 per person per month. Therefore, individuals who cannot meet this threshold are considered poor. The findings of this study show that most curio traders consistently fall below this threshold, especially during off-peak periods, indicating that they fall within or near the poverty level. Besides the peak-season earnings temporarily lifting the traders' poverty threshold, factors such as income volatility and unpredictability exacerbate their vulnerability and long-term financial security. This implies that while the traders may not be chronically poor in absolute terms, they remain economically vulnerable and at high risk of falling below the poverty line due to fluctuations in their businesses.

From a developmental perspective, the findings regarding the traders' income demonstrate that curio traders are economically active, yet they remain structurally insecure micro-entrepreneurs. Consequently, despite their significant contribution to the local economy and household survival, the limited income stability, savings opportunities, and formal social protection strategies further intensify the economic woes faced by these traders. This raises implications for policy and economic support, both of which are considered core dimensions for strengthening the informal sector's resilience and poverty-reduction potential.

4.4.3 Key household and secondary expenditure

Table 4.5 provides the primary and secondary expenditure to strengthen the analysis of the livelihood and economic dimensions. The data obtained indicates that traders spend business earnings to cover basic household needs.

Table 4.6: Primary and secondary expenditures.

	Key expenditure		Secondary expenditure		
Key expenditure	**South African participants**	**Non-South African participants**	**Secondary expenditure**	**South African participants**	**Non-South African participants**
	Total (n=36, in %)	**Total (n=27, in %)**		**Total (n=36, in %)**	**Total (n=27, in %)**
Groceries	100	100	Insurance policies	29	
School fees	17	33	Stokvel saving contribution	4	
Rent	21	17	Clubbing	13	
Water	8		Shopping	21	17

Electricity	38		Travelling	33	
School transportation	8		Leisure activity	25	17
School uniform	4		Mobile phone expenses	21	33
School stationery	8				
Child allowance	8				

In terms of expenses, the study found that participants spend business money on key household expenditures, such as groceries, school fees, rent, water, electricity, school transportation, school uniforms, school stationery, and child allowances. The findings indicate that all participants, both South African and non-South African (100%) afford to buy groceries. This study found that only South African participants can afford to pay for water and electricity. This could be due to non-South African participants leaving as tenants, as thus their rental covers water and electricity, which are paid directly to their landlords. Additional household expenditures incurred only by South African participants include school transportation, uniforms, stationery, and child support. This could be due to non-South Africans sending money home as their children reside in their country of origin. This view is supported by findings that migrant traders from African countries in South Africa often sent remittances to their families back home (Fourie *et al*., 2024).

Beyond the key expenditures, the findings discovered that South African curio traders can cover other main expenses: "*My 21-year-old I pay short courses for her. My firstborn is 30. He was studying at Wits and with the money from business, I supported him*" (CT2); "*I have a child at UNISA, her mother passed away. She is my granddaughter. She graduated last year, but is now furthering her studies. I paid R 4000 in school fees this year, which was for registration. Now I must pay a small amount monthly. Last month I paid R1500. The modules she took cost R10000. I don't know how much it will cost next year. This year, NSFAS didn't take her because they say she is furthering her studies. She is doing a degree now. She has a Diploma, so NSFAS say they have paid for her three-year Diploma, now they can't pay for her degree*" (CT8). A similar response was given: "I have a daughter studying at UNISA now, NSFAS is busy giving us problems, now I'm stressed*, I have to step in*" CT5. This finding reflects that, although there are some seasonal challenges, curio traders can make long-term plans based on daily business income during peak season.

Regarding secondary expenditures, the study found that only South Africans afford to pay insurance premiums (29%), stokvel savings contributions (4%) and clubbing (13%). For non-South Africans, the study found that they can only spend on shopping, leisure activities, and mobile phones for secondary expenditures. This finding indicates that non-South Africans

prioritise only the basics, as they also save and send money to their families back home. For South Africans, this finding shows that they can secure insurance coverage for business income. Overall, the key and secondary expenditure findings reflect informal curio business as the key driver of socio-economic sustainability for residents. Literature confirms that curio trading improved the economic and social status of many people in developing countries (Benson, 2014).

The findings demonstrate that traders earn enough money from the business to cover household needs. Despite the business' seasonality, which shows that traders can still meet basic needs. These views that curio trading serves as a primary source of income to both South African and non-South African traders. In addition, this highlights an important role that curio trading plays in the informal economy in urban cities. In turn, the findings indicate that urban cities shape the livelihoods and economic dimensions of residents and non-South Africans through informal trading practices.

4.4.4 The benefits of curio trading

The findings show that curio traders can live within their standard based on the views provided by the participants. The findings indicate that curio trading provides financial stability benefits. Following up on the question about which participants were asked to list the benefits of the business, the study found that participants identified a variety of benefits throughout the interviews. All participants mentioned a variety of benefits, including financial stability. The findings show that other participants can cover long-term expenses with business earnings. "There *are so many benefits. I bought the house with business money. Yes, it was a bond, and it is paid off now. I even paid for my children's university. Unfortunately, God took 2 of them, and I am left with one. She is staying at her house. I am staying alone*" (CT18); "*I bought furniture, the house I built with business money*" (CT16); "*I can list them, I can buy what I want, I bought a venture, my children went to private schools, I have built a house*" (CT13). Beyond covering day-to-day necessities, traders also reported the long-term expenses they can cover.

Despite covering household long term expenses, the findings show that the participants can also afford to cover day-to-day needs, "*I can buy things that we need, yeah, I can buy anything I want to buy. I can be able to plan like anyone who goes to work every day. " I can make my budget, like, if I say this month I want to buy this chair or table, I can do that" (CT9); "I can repair my car if it breaks down" (CT17); "I can buy things like food" (CT17). My children*

can bathe and be clean, and maybe other things like repairing door locks and handles at home" (CT23).

These findings highlight that informal curio traders in Tshwane not only contribute to the traders' livelihoods by covering day-to-day necessities but also by covering long-term essential expenses such as home bonds and building houses. This reveals that informal curio trading provides more than just survival but also contributes to a level of sustainability that enables traders to make long-term commitments. However, this could mean that curio trading is the only aspect of their employment. Thus, this shows a meaningful contribution of curio trading to livelihoods development and local economic development. Curio trading is an important economic activity for individuals in Africa who are desperate to maintain their families (Saasen *et al*., 2018). More benefits identified in the findings include social networking.

Social Networks in informal economic activities are often used to regulate the market (Meso, 2017). Another benefit of curio trading that the study discovered is the enhancement of networking opportunities. The findings show that interacting with customers provides traders with opportunities for social connection, "*the benefits are to make money and friends*" (CT21); "*I get to meet different people every day, I network*" (CT22); *"I'm not only doing that to take your money. I'm also doing that to sell my image, because when they buy, they admire it and share my numbers. I know where they are going, they are going to make an impact, then out of 10 maybe 4 or five, some even if it doesn't happen at the same time, but they do come*" (CT5); "*Because customers buy and after buying, they refer other people to come buy these*" (CT20). The results show that through networking, traders can get business opportunities such as customer referrals. Social networks create opportunities for traders to have more revenue (Çakmak *et al*., 2019). This highlights that curio trading is not only a factor for traders' livelihood development but also a platform for building and growing their businesses. In contrast, non-South Africans do not benefit from the social network because they are in a foreign country and are limited to it. As a result, this limits their ability to get referrals that would help them grow their businesses. Although traders highlighted the benefits of curio trading, it also has notable challenges. Such challenges are presented in the next section.

4.4.5 Challenges associated with the business

Despite that, curio trading offers livelihoods and economic benefits, curio traders still encounter some challenges. The challenges identified during the participants' lived experience

were categorised into eight groups: shelter, quietness of business, customers, theft, law enforcement, competition, lack of support, and access to trading space, and are presented in Table 4.6 below.

Table 4.7: The challenges encountered by traders

Challenges	South African participants Total (n=36, in %)	Non-South African participants Total (n=27, in %)
Shelter	75	100
Quietness of business	54	17
Customers	17	
Theft	13	
Law enforcement	13	17
Competition	8	
Lack of support	4	
Access to trading space		17

Most of the participants identified shelter as the main issue, South African (75%) and non-South African (100%), "*Yeah, there are so many challenges that we face here, especially when it's rainy season. You see, it is an open space. Normally rainy season it affects our business or even this winter when it's very cold people they will not come, there will be no customers, like people are afraid of cold, so there will be less customers*" (CT3); "*Rain gives us problems; we don't have shelter*" (CT8); "*Rain affect business, we don't have anything to cover, our stock gets wet, and they will have some mold and smell and people end up not buying. And we lose*" (CT11). Similar responses were given, "*During the rainy season and winter, there is no business. But we just came, even though it is difficult. And when it rains, our staff get wet. Since the municipality promised us tents, where are they now? We are still waiting*" (CT13); "*Weather conditions, that is the biggest challenge. You see now the sun is out and hot, these things lose colour because they are always exposed to the sun and when it rains, they get wet. Yeah, that is the biggest challenge of being on the street*" (CT9); "*Shelter, but I made a plan by putting the shade over here so that my stock does not get wet when it rains, even for the sun*" (CT18).

The finding indicates that Tshwane curio traders lack adequate shelter to operate their businesses effectively. However, they improvise by using temporary tents and gazebos to operate their businesses. The study discovered that, due to improper shelter, the quality of the products is affected, as they change colour from exposure to the sun and from getting wet during rainy days. This highlights the lack of support from the municipality for informal traders. Research studies reveal that informal curio traders face challenges, including poor

working conditions and limited government support (Basera *et al*., 2022). As a result, traders' products are easily damaged by weather conditions (Brown *et al*., 2017).



(a) Marabastad (b)Tshwane Central

Figure 4.7: An illustration of a curio trader's station without shelter.
Source: Author.

Another challenge identified was quietness of business, reported by majority South African (54%) as compared to non-South African (17%), "*Business sometimes can be slow. It can be quiet as if we don't exist, even the zoo can be quiet. Business can be slow*" (CT7); "*Sometimes the business is very quiet. And it will be difficult to raise money for transport*" (CT11); "*Sometimes there is no business. It can even get to the month end without sales*" (CT15); "*Sometimes we can spend the whole month without selling anything. Like the past few months, it was quiet. You come here and go back home without cent*" (CT16); "*The dry season where we can go for two months without selling*" (CT29). This finding shows that the quietness of the business, which is due to low footfall, affects the daily income.

Only South Africans (17%) reported issues regarding customers and theft. "*Clients, they would return what they have ordered and maybe say they are not correct, they are not the way they wanted them, even if they will tell me this is what I want, and we will agree, but they will still return. And they like to negotiate prices, and I just end up satisfying them, but I always make sure that I don't go way too far from what I want to gain*" (CT1); "*And some customers*

are clever they will see that they are no longer in good condition they will negotiate price, and you will just give them, well is better than nothing" (CT11); "*Clients, they return things after they bought them and say someone said I must return them. And at that time, you have sold. They can buy today and return the same day, or they can buy today and return tomorrow*". (CT14). Informal trading is perceived as less respectable than formal economic activity (Peimani & Kamalipour, 2022). This study discovered that customers can sometimes be arrogant towards the traders, "*Yes, customers are very arrogant, but you have to be patient*" (CT17); "*Sometimes we get fake money. sometime customers send money and reverse it later. Yes, that time they took what they wanted. No, they don't even have that fear. People are heartless*" (CT20).

The study also discovered that traders have issues with theft, "*People passing here they steal from us, you will just see your things missing. But there is nothing I can do because I don't see who is stealing*" (CT1); "*People are stealing our products at night. You will find your things missing in the morning. No, they don't break this gate. They get inside the stalls using the door at the back*" (CT4). The study found that theft prompts traders to join associations to secure protection from thieves. As such, one participant highlighted that "*Thieves give us a hard time; however, we have an association that protects us*" (CT22).

Mostly, local government views informal trading as law-breaking economic activity dealing with unlawful goods; hence, they do harsh inspections, such as confiscation of goods or paying penalties (Skinner, 2016). This study found that law enforcement is challenging, with both South Africans (13%) and non-South Africans (17%) reporting it. These findings show that traders have challenges with law enforcement officials, "*Yes, we do have challenges uh like for instance now, because we have permits, uh, they come after six months so that we pay and now like for instance when it's not heritage the business is not doing well but then still, they will want their money after six months. Yes, we pay twice in a year, so they don't care if we have sold or we didn't sell, so when they come, they want their money because they gave us permits to allow us to sell here*" (CT25). This highlights that enforcement officials have limited concern about whether traders renew their permits, even when they experience low cash flow due to the business's quietness. Although the enforcement officials do not do regular inspections, the findings highlight their occasional inspection as a harassment specifically to non-South African traders, "*Then also the police they harass us even if we have our papers and our passport and permit, they will still take us to the police station*" (CT26); "*Sometimes metro police because since we have permit, even last time we paid for the permit, because*

they say we must have permits. They come maybe occasionally to check if we have permits" (CT27); "*Metro police when they are taking our staff we are selling*" (CT28).

Competition (8%) and lack of support (4%) were amongst other issues identified in this study, reported by only South African participants, "*Foreigners compete with us because they focus on the rand. Cause they don't mind selling something for R90.00 while you are selling it at R100.00. They want quick money, and that makes it difficult for us South Africans because we want commission. We take our children to school, and they want food. They just do things in the darkness. They don't care. They just do things for the sake of doing it. That is why we say foreigners must go home because, truly speaking, they make things difficult for us South Africans. Back then, the business was better before foreigners came to our country, and now competition is too much*". Literature shows that informal traders face challenges due to a lack of government financial support (Connor & Charway, 2020). It was discovered in this study that traders lack support from the government "*Why is the government not giving us money to start a business? Yes, even if there is support, even if there is money, you know how our government operates. You will just hear other people saying they once gave me this much. But what can we say*" (CT2). The study found that traders compete amongst each other, "*Dealing with competition, if you give a customer a price, they will say it is expensive, I am going to buy there because it is cheaper there. But what can we say?*" (CT8).

The study found that only non-South Africans (17%) experience challenges regarding access to trading space. "*For me to start selling here, I had to pay so that this space would be mine. We don't pay rent like Indians. I paid. It was once off payment, though. So even I, when I am tired of selling and want to go back to Zimbabwe, I will sell this space to someone else*" (CT12); "*We share this space the three of us, even though each of us has got her own stock, so the only thing that we do is that we share the space*." (CT26). This finding shows the desperation of non-South African traders, who opt for unlawful regulation of connections simply to survive through informal trade. However, this finding of unlawful regulation does not appear to be corruption but rather as a survival strategy for traders in the context of informal trading. In contrast, South African traders do not have challenges with accessing trading space. This is because of their citizenship status, which does not limit them from applying for and getting permits to sell on the street. Despite the challenges identified under the livelihoods and economic theme, it is very important to build an analysis on ecological and environmental dimensions. This is because this sector not only features socio-economic impacts but also provides ecological and environmental impacts.

4.5 Theme Four: Ecological and environmental dimensions

This section provides an insight into the dynamics of informal livelihoods and the ecological practices, especially concerning waste management, material use, and regulatory engagement. The findings revealed complex adaptive strategies that these traders adopt to sustain their businesses amid insufficient infrastructure and minimal municipal support.

4.5.1 Materials used and sustainability of sourcing

Curios are environmentally friendly because they rely on natural materials (Lin & Lin, 2022). The findings of this study show that curio traders in Tshwane primarily depend on natural and locally available materials to produce the goods they sell. These materials include beads, grass, fabrics, wood and clay, animal skin, and wires. These materials represent both the accessibility of resources and cultural craft traditions within their environment: "*My products are made of beads, grass, and fabric"* (CT1); *"It depends on the things that you are making. It's not like we use the same fabric on everything"* (CT3). The study found that traders also resort to recycled or reused materials in their artefacts, though this practice is not widespread: *"Wires, cans that I make small bicycles and guitars"* (CT5); *"Yes, you see the sun hat, I take the old ones and use the materials to make earrings"* (CT9).

These practices demonstrate creativity and resourcefulness in re-purposing waste into marketable products. The findings of Zambara (2016) align with this, the study proved that crafters can produce various products such as wires and metal sculptures, flowers and musical instrument using recycling materials. Despite this, some of the research participants indicated that they do not use recycled materials in their production, with remarks such as *"No"* (CT1) and *"What are those? No, I don't have"* (CT14), suggesting that recycling is not a common practice amongst the informal operators. Overall, the material choices traders opt for underscore the ecological potential of informal livelihoods, while also demonstrating the limited extent of systematic recycling integration. This corresponds the findings indicating that informal traders use natural resources for craft development to reduce climate change impacts while also enhancing livelihoods development (Nzama, 2021).

4.5.2 Waste generation and handling

The study found that, typical of informal traders, curio traders generate different amounts of waste depending on their type of operations. Some of the waste generated by curio traders

includes sawdust, small bead pieces, fabric off-cuts, and craft-related residues. Although informal trading contributes to employment creation and poverty reduction, it is linked with inadequate infrastructure that include poor waste management practices (Ezeudu *et al*., 2021). Unstable and improper regulation on street trading put strain on local resources and impedes effective of city planning (Hardoy *et al*., 2021); Viljoen *et al*., 2012).

This, study found that the way curio traders manage waste reflects their adaptive strategies in response to limited waste management infrastructure and municipal support within urban spaces. *"When I cut the fabric for my customers, I collect the residue at the end of the day and take it home to burn it"* (CT1). Similarly, another trader indicated that *"Threads that remain from the cuttings I collect and leave with it at home. I either burn it or give my kid to play with"* (CT7). The study also discovered that some traders repurpose craft waste for other important uses, which is evident that there is a sense of ingenuity and resourcefulness amongst some curio traders: *"Wood waste, which is called sawdust, makes good compost, so I always collect it and give it to my neighbour who has a garden"* (CT5). However, the findings of the current study shows that informal curio traders adapted for proper waste management regardless of lack of support from the municipality in terms of waste management infrastructure.

The practice of using craft waste for other crucial purposes demonstrates how informal traders can make a direct contribution to sustainability through creative use. Nonetheless, not all craft waste is managed systematically. The study discovered that some traders clean and store the waste and rely on municipal waste collection services. In the same process, the study found a high rate of theft of waste disposal bins located around their environment. *"There used to be a bin here where we used to dump our waste, but the Nyaope[2] boys took it. So, we clean for ourselves and put our waste in plastic bags and put them in a place where the municipal workers will collect"* (CT4). A similar response was given: *"We don't have any waste disposal bins around. I don't know why the municipality does not provide us with such"* (CT17). Waste generation amongst the curio traders is an unavoidable byproduct of informal production. The strategies that traders adopt, such as burning, reusing, self-cleaning, and informal collection,

[2] Nyaope is a relatively new drug which until recently was not classified as illegal. It is widely used by many young and poor people in predominantly Black townships and users can be easily identified as they usually assemble in open spaces such as parks and taxi ranks and have formed a community through which they support one another in the habit (Mokwena, 2015:137).

demonstrate great resilience and adaptive responses to ecological constraints in the urban informal economy.

4.5.3 Waste management practices and institutional support

One of the recurring concerns among the study participants is the inconsistent access to waste disposal and management infrastructure offered by the municipality. While some of the traders highlighted the presence of municipal bins and related infrastructure, some lamented over their absence or theft: *"Yes, there are some big bins from the municipality"* (CT1), and a similar response was given: *"Yes, those big bins"* (CT2). This finding highlight that infrastructure is not reliable, especially due to limited security around their trading areas, leading to theft, *"We used to have them. Nyaope boys stole them all. We had one here, another one was there… the one next to the Zoo gate is the only one that was not stolen because there is security there"* (CT5). This lack of adequate waste disposal equipment often forces the traders to improvise with different waste management mechanisms: *"You see why I take the residue home to burn"* (CT7). Others noted that the available bins are not enough, which leads them to improvise: *"Yes, but they are not even enough because people dump their waste on the ground. So, we end up doing what we can to keep the place clean"* (CT9).

For most traders, the scarcity of waste disposal infrastructure creates an additional unwanted burden of having to carry waste home or to collect it in makeshift containers for municipal workers to collect later. One of the participants observed, *"We don't even have refuse bags. The municipality used to give us. Now we have to buy refuse bags to put waste"* (CT13). These findings show the vulnerability of informal traders to urban infrastructural neglect. Skinner (2016) also indicates that many informal traders believe they are being excluded by the local government from accessing basic urban infrastructure, which makes them vulnerable. In addition, the findings of Masuku and Nzewi (2021) show that the municipality is far from achieving its objectives on infrastructural support for the development of the informal economy.

Literature shows that views on urban informal traders and governance system to improper waste management, paint informal economy sector as an environmental hazard (Sepadi & Nkosi, 2023). This provides reasons why urban informal traders are regarded as critical destructions to the environment (Meso, 2017). However, this is critical as there is no business

that can operate and thrive without proper land. Thus, traders require land for business operation (Muchuweni-Chiumira, 2019). According, to Grangxabe *et al*., (2024) there are different method of waste management disposal method across various areas in SSA due to challenges of waste management method. As a result, street traders opt for informal waste disposal. The study found that municipal inconsistencies, together with the theft of bins, undermine efforts to ensure proper waste management and maintain cleanliness in areas where informal traders operate. Despite this, the traders' persistence in keeping their trading spaces clean, despite the infrastructural challenges they mentioned, demonstrates adaptive resilience within informal economies.

4.5.4 Use of recycled materials

The findings also show the extent to which curio traders incorporate recycled or repurposed materials into their craft production. There was a demonstration of pride in the use of local waste and natural resources to make products more creative, affordable, and sustainable, *"We make use of waste such as cans, wire, and plastics. You can make different things… we make cars, bicycles, animals, and flowers using wire and tin"* (CT2); *"Yes, some things I use are from waste. I use tins, wire, and plastic to create artwork"* (CT3). In addition, recycling was often seen as a marker of ingenuity, not only as a cost-effective strategy: "*Yes, I make flowers and animals using tins and wires from waste"* (CT6). Literature indicate that craft manufactures have been using recycled materials, and in contrast, recycled materials is very advantageous because it utilises less energy than to produce goods from raw materials (Tung, 2012). The study discovered that tourists value such products: *"My products are made of wire and recycled cans…tourists like them because they are unique"* (CT9). Despite this, it was discovered that the use of recycled material was not universal. Some of the materials used were wood, beads, and imported materials, none of which were recycled. *"My products are not made from waste. I use beads and wood"* (CT5); *"I buy my materials from the shops"* (CT10). These findings show that while recycling material is common practice amongst curio traders, it is not used across the board. The analysis of the ecological and environmental dimensions shows that curio traders can operate their business without damaging the environment. Therefore, curio trading can be viewed as an environmentally sustainable business. Several studies shows that crafters reduce their dependence on environmentally harmful activities such as logging as thus uses non-timber forest products without destroying the ecosystem, ensuring that their craft does not contribute to environmental degradation

(Coelho, 2016; Stahl *et al*., 2026). The analysis now shifts to the cultural and tourism significance of curio business to explore and assess the influence of curio trading on the preservation of traditional culture.

4.6 Theme Five: Cultural and tourism dynamics

This section presents the findings based on traders' participation in tourism events and their views on the role of curio trading in preserving cultural identity. There are insights into how their products reflect and integrate cultural identity. Participants were asked their views on the cultural and tourism significance of curio trading. The intention of this question is to assess how curio trading activities influence the cultural identity and tourism dynamics. In South Africa, the trade in cultural curios is very important, as it helps develop knowledge of curios at both international and local levels (Abisuga Oyekunle & Sirayi, 2018).

4.6.1 Participation in tourism events

The findings show that South African and non-South African curio traders participate in tourism activities. "*Yes, I went to an airshow for Airforce Museum in Valhalla in May. You pay for a stall to sell. Even if they do their events, like if there is a sports competition from other provinces, I sometimes go even if they didn't invite me. I just take my stock and go there to sell, because that's where you get big sales" (CT9); "Yes, at Centurion." You will see them advertising on their page, yes, Facebook page. Then you call them and request to rent a stall because they rent stalls. Just people hosting these events, and they usually do this during heritage time because the events are for heritag*e" (CT10). Similar responses were given, "*Yes, in Centurion and Batho Pele Office. Those people come and fetch us. Yes, with their transport, and we don't pay anything. They just take us there to sell*" (CT16); "*Yes, an event that was hosted in Soshanguve last year, and I managed to sell 4 attires*" (CT21); "*Yes, last time I went to attend at some place, I was invited by this other company, I had forgotten their name. We took our stuff there. Yes, we went there to sell our stuff, so these people, uh, they just came here and invited us to uplift us. They were just trying to improve our business and support it, hey. They came to fetch us for free, we didn't pay any transport, so they were just trying to support us for heritage events*" (CT25).

This finding shows that curio traders are recognised by cultural heritage event organisers, who invite them and provide transport to attend the events. This highlights the vital role of curio trading in enhancing the authenticity of cultural heritage activities. These findings align with

those of Stevens (2007), who highlighted that this sector contributes to the growth of heritage. The results also shows that the heritage event organisers play a role in uplifting the curio sector in Tshwane. Overall, this highlights a promotional initiative to attract tourists while embracing local cultural identity. According to Vaníčková and Szczepańska-Woszczyna (2020) marketing strategies create an influx of tourists as thus should not be seen only as a business activity to sustain livelihoods. Several studies shows that the promotion of tourism serves as a marketing promotion to attract visitors to a particular tourist destination such as city and heritage site (Sianipar, 2019; Kęprowska, 2021; Moza & Olimpia, 2022).

The study also found that participation into the tourism events by the participants is not common across the board, "*I used to but not anymore"* (CT4); "*Not anymore. But I used to attend but long time ago. I don't even remember because they would come fetch us here*." (CT19); "*No, because if I go there, no one will look after my stock and stand for me while I am away to go attend these kinds of events*" (CT27). These results shows that although traders have explained their reasons, they would participate in tourism events should they have alternative person to continue with business operation in their absence. This highlight that traders have interest to participate in these events, however they are unable to do so because of the operational restrictions. Overall, the findings on the perceptions of curio trades on tourism aligns with the findings of Dana *et al*., (2022) indicating that art and craft sales contribute not only to the society but also to tourism development. To provide more information about the cultural significance of curio trades, the reflection of curio trades on cultural identity is further examined.

4.6.2 Cultural heritage reflected and integration of cultural identity in production

Curios represent culture through local craftsmanship (Nyawo & Mubangizi, 2015). Findings in this study show that curio products reflect cultural identity by incorporating patterns and design of a particular tribal culture, "*What I have they represent all cultures. I am not selective, I sell products for all cultures*" (CT10); "*I have items for all cultures. Yes, I don't do one culture; you see, this one is for Xhosas; I have Zulus and Tsongas. But for Tsongas, I prefer to sell 'Xibelani', which I don't do often because they are very expensive. I make them only if there is an order"* (CT11); "*All these products represent all cultures. Like I have for the Tsonga, Xhosa, Pedis, and Zulu cultures. And even Nigerians and Ugandans buy them*" (CT13); "*Here I sell different South African tribes, which makes it hard for me to say there is a specific culture here*" (CT20). These findings show that curio products incorporate traditions

from diverse South African tribes. Overall, these findings highlight the reflection of diverse South African tribal cultural identity within curio products. This corresponds with the finding showing that beadwork reflects various African tribes and their cultural practices (Meyiwa *et al*., 2024).

The study found that some curio products, such as artwork (paintings), reflect the lived realities of township life. "*I see what is happening in townships every day. What is happening in townships is what you see every day, and that is where I get my inspiration, and I try to reflect that in my art. Yes, you get to understand township life. If you look at my paintings, you will understand what is happening in townships*" (CT4). Paintings are a type of visual art that expresses thoughts and emotions through visual means (Iwasaki, 2022). The study found that paintings can express the everyday realities of the township experiences (see figure 4.8). This aligns with the findings, which show that the artefacts sold by black women informal traders in East London reflect the lived experiences of their respective communities (Meyiwa *et al*., 2024).

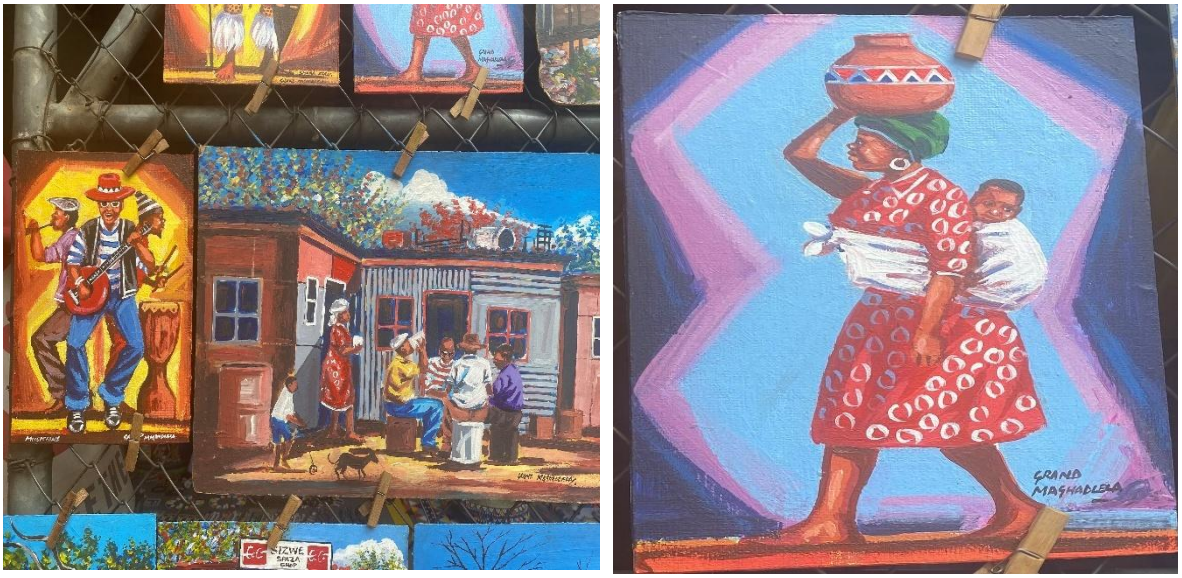


Figure 4.8: Pretoria Zoo Artwork products expressing the township's lived experiences.
Source: Author.

In South Africa, colours on curio products play a crucial role in the symbolic meaning of traditional culture (Petersen, 2023). Regarding the integration of cultural identity in products, the findings shows that colour combination method is applied to integrate cultural identity in the products, "*Like for instance I am Pedi, so I mix colours that reflect Sepedi culture. For example, colours for Sepedi are blue, yellow, pink so I mix those colours*" (CT1); "*I combine colours according to Ndebele culture for instance Ndebele colours is blue, red, yellow, white,*

green, black" (CT2). A similar response was given: *"Colours, like the colours you can see. Like we have got black and white, and these are for Xhosas, then these other colours, the coloured ones, orange, blue and white. You know, when you mix blue turquoise and this navy blue and orange, I have got Xhosa. And Sepedi, you know that when you mix pink and other colours like pink, you know that I'm making Sepedi, yeah*" (CT3). These findings highlight that the method of colour integration on curio products views the colour pattern and design as a strategy for expressing cultural identity (see figure 4.9). The photograph depicts clay pots with Ndebele designs and patterns, beaded Ndebele dolls, and a variety of beadwork items reflecting South African tribal cultures.



Figure 4.9: Curio products incorporate a variety of South African tribal culture designs and patterns.
Source: Author

4.6.3 Perception of curio trading in cultural preservation

This section presents the findings on the significance of curio trading on the preservation of culture. The trades and skills for producing curios were taught and passed down from generation to generation to preserve cultural identity and heritage (Petersen, 2023). Throughout the engagement with the participants, the study found that curio trading is not just an informal business to develop socio-economic impact but also an aspect of informal tourism that plays a role in preservation of cultural identity towards local citizens, "*Yes, when we sell these, we show and teach our children about our culture and in that way, it will continue to pass from generation to generation*" (CT1); "*Yes, we are selling these to ensure that our children don't forget our culture. Children should not forget their culture 'Mvelaphi' so we are passing this to our children, so they don't forget our culture*" (CT2). A similar response

was given: "*Yes, because our children will grow up knowing our culture. When they come here with their parents, they ask which one is for Zulus. So, our culture will be carried to the future generation*" (CT13). Literature indicate that hand-woven textiles symbolise African cultural heritage of the past as well as cultural identity (Lemi, 2024). Artefact is deeply rooted in many cultures. This is regarded as Africanity, it reflects the conceptualisation authenticity in the context of Western view of the African textile (Sylvanus, 2007). Overall, these findings highlight that these culturally symbolic artefacts preserve a memory of the past to the next generation.

Literature shows that traditional curios express the communal nature of African society and its people (Petersen, 2023). This view is reflected in the current study, as the results show that selling curios contributes to the recognition and preservation of Africanness. "*So I feel like by using or selling these products, I encourage us Africans to be us, to use our products because these things were made here in Africa by African resources. You understand, so I am trying to promote Africanness. But this doesn't discriminate against anyone, but if you are an African, you can wear this regardless of your culture, whether you are Zulu or if you are an African, you can wear this" (CT9); "Most of the products are just African. They accommodate everyone as long as you are an African. Whether you are from East Africa, as long as you are a black man, you can use these things. Even Chinese people like them, especially the calabash bowl. They use them for wine and water*" (CT17).

The findings also show curio products sold at Tshwane are diverse, in such a way that can accommodate everyone, "*I don't know if selling this assists in preserving cultural identity because I don't know my culture as a Zimbabwean, but Zimbabweans buy them and wear them in Zimbabwe when they do weddings*" (CT12). It was discovered in this study that people from other African countries also buy these curios sold in Tshwane, "*Yes, Yoh! not to mention customers from Nigeria, there are so many. Yes, customers from Nigeria call me. I got these customers during the September holidays when they came here to buy for their families. Yes, they were here as tourists*" (CT13). This finding shows that Curio products can be used by anyone in Africa. In addition, it reflects that curio products are rooted in African traditions as they accommodate diverse cultural identities. In Ghana people use beads to express and embrace culture during traditional ceremonies such as rituals, birth of a child, marriage. This indicates cultural heritage preservation (Asoba & Patricia, 2021). Products such as woven baskets play a significant role in African cultures (Petersen, 2023).

These findings demonstrate that curio trading is not only for survival but also for preserving cultural identity. Curio trading is a unique, informal business activity built on the passing down of knowledge and skills from one generation to another (Petersen, 2023). According to Babalola (2022) traditional beads across West African countries reflect the vibrant nature of cultural exchange and indigenous adaptation. These artefact serves as a channel of expressing and connecting spiritual and ritual practices (Song & Fadairo, 2023). This implies that through curio trading, people will be able to understand, know, learn and explore other traditional cultures. Such learning and exploration of diverse cultural identities are indicators of the integration of African society. This type of knowledge transfer is an expression of knowing and acknowledging each other as Africans.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter presents the findings and analysis in response to the research questions. The findings were based on the data collected through interviews. In addition, the researcher collected data from 63 curio traders in Tshwane city. The study found that informal curio trading in Tshwane is dominated by women rather than men. The study's findings also show that informal curio trading in Tshwane contributes to job creation and improves traders' livelihoods. Despite insufficient infrastructure, minimal municipal support, and inconsistent access to waste disposal services, traders still adapt to sustain their businesses while maintaining their operational environment. In addition, the findings show that Tshwane curio traders sell curios not only to sustain their livelihoods but also to embrace their cultural identity. With this research chapter of the current study providing an analysis of the findings on the dynamics of curio trading in Tshwane, the focus shifts to the study's overall conclusions, implications, and recommendations. This is presented in the last chapter of the thesis, Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE: SYNTHESIS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter synthesises the empirical findings by providing an integrated interpretation of the dynamics of curio trading within Tshwane's informal tourism economy. Building on the analytical discourse provided in the preceding chapter, Chapter Four now shifts focus to provide interpretive closure by showing how the evidence substantively responds to each research question. The chapter embeds the demographic, economic, ecological, and cultural dimensions assessed in the study, showing how they, together, help answer the research questions and contribute to the conversation on sustainable urban development. This chapter is, thus, divided into four parts of material. The first section presents the study's conclusions in relation to the research questions. This is followed by a discussion of the study's implications and original contribution to knowledge. The third section presents the study's recommendations. Lastly, the final section presents the research limitations and future research direction.

5.2 Conclusions based on research questions

This section is to distil the key arguments that emerged from empirical analysis, as well as to determine the insights provided by the findings regarding the role of curio trading in Tshwane. The conclusions presented here therefore articulate the broader meaning of the findings, clearly showing the patterns that define the curio sector, and position the study's overall standpoint regarding the socioeconomic, cultural, and ecological relevance of the curio trading sector within the urban informal economy.

5.2.1 Conclusions based on research question one: What are the key characteristics and profiles of curio traders operating in Tshwane, including their backgrounds, motivations, and trade practices?

In response to this research question, the study found that not only South African citizens but also non-South Africans from other parts of the continent, particularly from Southern, Eastern, and Central Africa, participate in curio trading in Tshwane. The findings further show that most traders engaged in informal curio trading are between the ages of 50 and 59 years old in South Africa and 30 to 39 years old among non-South Africans, with women dominating over men. The findings of this study confirm that most traders are educated. The study found that

unemployment and poverty are the major push factors that led traders into the informal curio business. Regarding the two groups, many South African traders have been in curio trading for more than 10 years. In contrast, many non-South African traders have been in curio trading for about 4 to 6 years.

Synthesising these findings, the study concludes that the curio trading sector in Tshwane is demographically diverse and structurally inclusive, operating as both a long-term livelihood activity and adaptive economic strategy for both South Africans and non-South Africans. The demographic dynamics reveal different livelihood strategies for South African and non-South African traders, with older South Africans demonstrating embedded survival-based participation, while younger non-South African traders show more mobility-based, opportunity-driven engagement. The predominance of women in this sector further positions the curio trading sector as a gendered livelihood activity, contributing to women's economic significance in the informal tourism economy. Altogether, these characteristics are evident: curio trading is neither accidental nor a chance-taking activity, but rather a structured, informal enterprise shaped by socioeconomic necessities, migration dynamics, and urban opportunity structures.

5.2.2 Conclusion based on research question two: What are the perceived economic implications of curio trading on livelihoods and economic development in Tshwane?

The study findings in response to this research question show that informal curio trading serves as an employment generator, providing income to sustain the livelihoods and economic development of both South African and non-South African curio traders in Tshwane. Thus, this study confirms that informal curio trading contributes to the livelihood and economic development of residents and migrants. Beyond the income-generating opportunities this sector offers, the study concludes that curio trading functions as a micro-enterprise ecosystem that supports household survival, boosts employment, enhances local economic circulation, and contributes to the value chains of urban tourism. Because of the domestic and international supplier networks, tourists' spending patterns, and the distribution of cultural products, this sector was observed to make indirect positive contributions to the economic development of a Major African city. This study argues that, in addition to being largely informal, underregulated, and unaccounted for, the sector remains a crucial mechanism for poverty alleviation and livelihood resilience, particularly in major African cities that are the focus of both domestic and international migration in pursuit of economic relief. Therefore,

the study positions curio trading as a critical yet ignored activity in urban economic development in Tshwane and comparable destinations.

5.2.3 Conclusions based on research question three: What are the ecological impacts of curio trading on resource use and environmental sustainability in Tshwane?

Based on this research question, the study confirms that curio trade in Tshwane is environmentally friendly as the products on sale are made of natural resources. In addition, recycled materials are used to produce some curios on sale. While the study found that some curio waste is repurposed, this suggests that these traders use environmentally friendly methods to keep the environment clean. This confirms that curio trading contributes to long-term ecological stability. Further, the study concludes that the ecological contribution of curio-trading lies in its low-carbon production practices, its reuse of materials, and its limited industrial processing. Nonetheless, the study argues that sustainability remains a determinant of responsible natural resource sourcing and of supportive regulatory frameworks. Beyond the traders demonstrating environmentally conscious practices such as waste repurposing, long-term ecological stability demands policy integration to ensure sustainable material sourcing and support for urban waste management. Overall, the findings show that curio trading, despite having ecological potential, it still requires environmental governance to augment its sustainable impact.

5.2.4. Conclusions based on research question four: How do curio trading activities influence the cultural identity and tourism dynamics of Tshwane?

In response to this research question, the findings show that the informal curio trading sector plays a significant role in preserving cultural identity among traders. Regarding this, the study found that traders sell curios to ensure the recognition of African cultural identity. Additionally, to ensure that African traditional culture is passed from the current generation to future generations. The study, therefore, concludes that curio trading operates as both an economic activity and as a cultural preservation custodian within the urban tourism spaces. Because they produce and sell culturally symbolic artefacts, curio traders actively participate in the transmission of African heritage to both domestic and international tourists. This shows that curio traders are informal African cultural ambassadors within the urban tourism economy. The findings interpret that the curio trading sector solidifies Tshwane city's cultural tourism identity while simultaneously reinforcing intergenerational cultural progression.

5.3 Study implications and original contribution to knowledge

This section consolidates the broader academic and practical significance of the study by showing how the findings extend beyond the study area, Tshwane, and contribute to the informal economy, tourism development, and the sustainable development discourse across major African cities. This section, therefore, presents the theoretical, methodological, practical, socio-economic, and tourism-development implications of the study's conclusions.

5.3.1 Theoretical Implications

Theoretically, the study has contributed new knowledge, particularly by providing insights into the dynamics of curio trading in a major African city, using Tshwane as a case study. The results provide the demographic dynamics, livelihoods, and economic, environmental, and cultural contributions of the curio sector, which are still lacking in the literature. Due to the diverse nationalities identified in this study, it contributes to the discourse on the nature and impacts of tourism entrepreneurship by migrants and South African citizens in the South African economy.

The study advances theoretical discourse through integrating informal economy theory, sustainable development frameworks and tourism entrepreneurship perspectives into a unified analytical lens. By providing a holistic, sustainable development approach that includes livelihoods, economic, cultural, and environmental dynamics, this study shows how informal tourism operators contribute to the triple bottom line. This integrative approach also strengthens academic insights into informal tourism entrepreneurship in African cities and helps address the existing contextual gap in the literature on urban Africa’s tourism.

5.3.2 Methodological Implications

The current study was conducted with a sample of informal traders who sell curios in three selected areas of Tshwane City: Tshwane Central, Marabastad, and Pretoria Zoo. Informal economic activities, including curio trading, are mainly practised in these areas. Thus, these areas were found to be relevant for answering the research questions. Collecting information from three study sites provided more insight into the lived experience of curio traders. By doing so, it confirmed the credibility to ensure the reliability of the study findings. This research study was grounded on a qualitative design using multiple case studies to explore and assess the contribution of curio trading to sustainable development. This method is highly significant for other researchers to adopt because it enables the researcher to engage with

participants, connecting the phenomena under study to the real world in which they occur. Methodologically, the qualitative case study design was relevant in enabling a depth exploration of the trader's lived experiences, which could not be achieved by a quantitative approach. In addition, the use of multiple research areas strengthened comparative analysis and enhanced analytical depth. Because of this, the study shows the value of area-based qualitative inquiry in unpacking complex informal economic systems.

5.3.3 Practical Implications

Considering the operational challenges discovered in the study, it is evident that these traders are neglected and lack policy and developmental support. Although their business activities are viewed as a strategy for the traders to escape poverty and unemployment. The curio markets in Tshwane city are conveniently accessible to anyone. This is because they are located on busy streets in the city's commercial hubs and tourist zones. The study discovered that tourism event organisers recognise curio traders in Tshwane. This implies that their art and craft work is recognised locally. It is therefore recommended that they provide additional support through workshops to help traders improve their business skills. The findings, therefore, underscore the need for structured municipal engagement with informal curio traders. The study shows that neglecting this sector limits its growth potential and its contribution to economic growth and tourism vibrancy.

5.3.4 Socio-Economic and Tourism Development Implications

Informal trading of curios in urban cities is a solution to sustainable development. This is because it provides job opportunities for unemployed individuals and helps eradicate poverty. Additionally, it uplifts the status of informal tourism in urban cities. At a broader developmental level, this study confirms that the informal curio trading sector contributes to sustainable urban development goals by promoting employment, women's empowerment, supporting migrant integration, enriching cultural tourism experiences, and alleviating poverty.

5.3.5 Original Contribution to Knowledge

Beyond the informal curio-trading sector, which is a significant component of South Africa's informal tourism economy, literature on the industry remains scarce. Existing literature highlights that the informal sector currently attracts minimal academic attention, particularly

in developing countries, resulting in a limited understanding of its socioeconomic and ecological significance (Timothy & Teye, 2005; Makoni, 2023; Makoni & Mearns, 2025a; Rogerson & Rogerson, 2025). Besides the existence of scholarships in the informal sector, the informal curio trading sector remains scarcely documented. The sector is largely positioned as a peripheral element of tourism activities and a marginal livelihood strategy. This study, therefore, contributes to the literature by reconceptualising informal curio trading in Tshwane. This is done through a comprehensive sustainable development lens that integrates economic viability, social sustainability, ecological considerations, cultural preservations and tourism value-chain dimensions.

In addition, previous studies on the subject provide isolated dimensions of the informal sector, such as the socioeconomic, environmental or cultural elements. This study, however, shows that the informal curio trading sector functions at the centre of cultural commodification, livelihood resilience, and urban tourism flows, directly affecting the economic and ecological dimensions. By providing an empirical analysis of how demographic profiles, business organisation, and mobility patterns impact sustainability, the study offers granular insights into how space, nationality, tourism dynamics, and governance structures interplay to shape varied trading experiences within African urban space. This spatially comparative perspective constitutes a significant contribution, given the limited scholarship that has provided curio trading narratives within a single area and isolated elements.

Conceptually, the study aids the discourse around informal economy theory, migrant entrepreneurship in urban Africa, social capital and the informal sector in Africa, tourism-led economic development, sustainable urban livelihoods, and the informal sector and African policy development. By foregrounding the lived experiences of curio traders and situating their activities within conversations on sustainable development, the study bridges the tourism literature and urban informality scholarship, two domains often discussed separately. Therefore, the study advances a theoretical understanding of how informal tourism economies function as adaptive, spatially strategic and networked systems. Overall, this study contributes to knowledge by reframing informal curio trading in South Africa's major urban centres and similar destinations as a contributor to sustainable development, with socioeconomic, cultural, ecological, and tourism significance, thereby addressing a crucial empirical and conceptual gap in the literature.

5.4 Recommendation of the study

This study's findings show that the informal curio-trading sector in major African cities constitutes a viable yet structurally constrained component of the urban tourism economy. Considering the empirical evidence and implications raised by this study, recommendations are proposed in this section to enhance sustainability, inclusivity, and long-term sectoral development. This section details what needs to be done based on policy, practical and managerial capacity building, skills development and recommendations for future research.

5.4.1 Policy and governance recommendations

The findings indicating a lack of shelters, adaptive strategies for waste management, and limited urban infrastructure, along with a lack of regulatory policy, show that urban infrastructure fails to support informal businesses within the City of Tshwane. Regulatory policy plays an important role in shaping the operating environment of informal traders and in developing their potential contributions to sustainable development (Moyo & Gumbo, 2021). It is therefore recommended that informal trading should be included in municipal policy frameworks. In addition, these policies should be tailored to the realities and needs of informal traders. Curio trading contributes to the development of informal tourism in urban cities; therefore, the municipality and government should support this sector.

There should be the development of a differentiated regulatory governance framework that can cater to the distinct operational characteristics of diverse informal markets found in city spaces. The study found distinct operational traits across the three study sites, making a uniform regulatory framework for the informal economy less effective, as it may not apply in other areas. These recommended governance frameworks should consider three key elements: (1) recognising tourism-based trading spaces such as the Pretoria Zoo as specialised informal economic zones, (2) tailoring operation permit allocation systems to special realities, and (3) establishing transparent registration and operational regulations that minimise trader precarity. This study argues that a differentiated governance and policy design approach would be beneficial for reducing tension between traders and municipal authorities while enhancing compliance and stability.

5.4.2 Integration of informal curio traders into urban tourism strategy

As the study has shown, through empirical findings that curio traders function as integrated actors within the tourism value chain, it is recommended that the City of Tshwane formally

integrate informal curio trading into its municipal tourism development frameworks. This integration process should consider including the traders in overall tourism marketing campaigns, participation in tourism stakeholder initiatives and platforms and representations in local economic development (LED) structures. This recommendation is deemed relevant to strengthening traders' legitimacy and integrating informal-sector development into broader city development and marketing initiatives. The study demonstrated that curio traders strategically position themselves in high-tourism areas, reflecting functional linkages to tourism flows. Tourism plans and strategies should explicitly recognise informal curio trading as part of tourism's core assets, not as peripheral street activities. Such an integration directly addresses the study's research question about the sector's contribution to tourism dynamics and strengthens the study's argument that curio trading is part of the structured urban tourism economy.

5.4.3 Context-specific spatial planning and infrastructure support

The spatial comparative analysis of the three study sites revealed significant disparities among trading nodes in infrastructure, demographic dimensions, and market orientation. Therefore, the study recommends that spatial planning become context-based rather than uniform. For example, high-tourism traffic trading areas need aesthetic infrastructure, signage and weather-resistant trading stalls to help improve visitor experiences. Within the busy spaces of the inner city, there is a need for secure storage and sanitation services to improve the health and safety dimensions of the sector. This recommendation is informed by the study's conclusion that location influences business viability and sustainability outcomes. By aligning infrastructure provision with the unique characteristics of each trading area, the municipality will support both economic viability and trader dignity while reinforcing the study's sustainable development framework.

5.4.4 Strengthening livelihood sustainability through enterprise development

The study found that traders depend on adaptive survival strategies amid vulnerable realities such as financial woes, health and safety difficulties and policy and regulatory exclusion. Therefore, it is recommended that structured enterprise development programs be introduced to solidify long-term livelihood sustainability. In this case, initiatives such as business mentorship, financial management training, and digital marketing orientation would help improve traders' business resilience and reduce income volatility. While the traders showed

entrepreneurial skills, the study also found limited institutional support. Therefore, providing access to microfinance schemes and savings cooperatives would help stabilise these traders' operations. This recommendation aligns with the study's livelihood sustainability lens and reinforces its contribution to the informal economy scholarship by moving beyond survivalist discussions towards enterprise development pathways.

5.4.5 Promotion of environmentally responsible production and sourcing

The study's ecological dimension revealed minimal formal guidance on sustainable material sourcing in the informal curio trading sector. Therefore, it is recommended that to ensure long-term environmental sustainability, environmental awareness programs be introduced in line with environmental agencies and curio producers and traders. These programs should include environmental education, responsible use of natural resources, environmental management practices, use of alternative, eco-friendly materials, and responsible use of resources, amongst others. This recommendation directly addresses the research question on the ecological dimensions and strengthens the study's comprehensive sustainable development approach.

5.4.6 Institutional support and trader representation mechanisms

The study recommends that the traders' associations be formally supported and strengthened to facilitate liaison platforms between traders and municipal authorities. The study argues that structured representation enhances negotiation capacity and reduces regulatory conflict. This will also help address governance ambiguity and trader vulnerability. Therefore, a strengthened institutional voice can contribute to policy responsiveness and reinforce the study's broader implication that informal traders should be recognised and acknowledged as legitimate urban economic actors.

5.4.7 Regulatory and inclusive licensing frameworks for non-South African traders

The study noted a significant presence of non-South African traders operating across the three study sites. While these traders play a vital role in product diversification, cross-border supply networks, and local economic development, it was observed that there is regulatory ambiguity regarding licensing procedures and documentation requirements. Therefore, the study recommends that the municipal authorities, in collaboration with the immigration and small enterprise departments, design a clear, accessible and transparent licensing framework that specifically addresses the participation of documented foreign nationals in informal trade. This framework should clarify the eligibility criteria and acceptable business operation

procedures to reduce uncertainty and vulnerability to selective enforcement. In addition, clarifying regulatory processes would help protect compliant traders from exploitation, reduce informal gatekeeping, and enhance consistency in governance. This will help ensure that non-South African traders are included in the policy and regulatory frameworks that govern informal activity operations within urban spaces.

5.5 Research limitations and future research directions

The research study was limited to three areas in Tshwane City that sell curios. The study was limited to understanding the dynamics of informal curio trading. The analysis was based on the data collected from only 63 curio traders. Therefore, future research should expand this to other major cities in South Africa. In terms of numbers, future research would benefit from gathering more views to gain a broader perspective on the lived experience of curio traders. Importantly, this research study applied a holistic approach that includes livelihoods, economic, ecological and cultural & tourism dimensions in the exploration of informal curio trading dynamics within the City of Tshwane. The triple bottom line approach stipulates that the correlation of social, economic and environmental factors serves as a guideline for a sustainable tourism development initiative framework (Zaharia & Zaharia, 2021). Thus, following the recommendations of this study, further research is required to investigate this sector using the same approach.

5.6 Concluding remarks

This study set off from the notion that the informal curio trading sector plays a vital role in moving the urban economy and sustaining the livelihoods of both locals and migrant traders. The empirical analysis proved that this sector is far more than a peripheral street activity within an African city space context. It is, rather, a spatially embedded, socio-cultural, economic and ecological meaningful activity of the cities' economy. This study has demonstrated that traders operate through calculated locational decisions, adaptive mobility strategies and integrated regional supply networks that link local livelihoods to broader African circulation economies. The study revealed that space, nationality and tourism flow significantly shape traders' experiences and economic outcomes. The study challenges the narratives that position curio traders as simply survivalists and views these traders and their activities as strategic micro-entrepreneurs who operate within structured yet unaccounted systems.

The study, therefore, demonstrates that sustainable urban development, especially in major African cities, cannot be separated from the informal economic activities. This, the recognition of curio traders as legitimate stakeholders within the urban tourism experiences and economic development, is both a developmental adjustment and a policy adjustment advocated by this study. Ultimately, this study contributes to original empirical research and conceptual insights that solidifies literature on informal tourism economies in South Africa. By reframing informal curio trading as a structured, adaptive, and sustainable urban economic activity, this study provides enduring value to academia, policymakers, governments, and the inclusive urban development discourse.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Informed consent form

Title: Assessing the Role of Curio Trading in Shaping Livelihoods, Economic and Ecological Dimensions in Tshwane, South Africa.

My name is Kgoori Irene Swana. I am a Masters student in Environmental Management at the University of South Africa (UNISA). I am under the supervision of Dr Logistic Makoni and Prof Kevin Mearns as my co-supervisor who is a staff member at UNISA. The research forms part of my degree.

Introduction

The primary aim of the research is to explore and assess the impact of curio trading on the livelihoods of traders, along with the economic and ecological impacts concerning the sector in Tshwane.

Invitation to participate: This is an invitation to you to participate in the study.

What is involved in the study?

Your involvement in the study would be that of being a participant in an in-depth, semi structured interview. The process will not be a long one and should take a maximum time of 25 minutes.

Risks

While nothing in life is risk free, there are, for all intents and purposes, no risks involved in participation.

Benefits

You may find participation beneficial as your responses will contribute to policy recommendations aimed at better supporting businesses like yours and integrating them into the city's formal planning and development processes.

Participation is voluntary

The refusal to participate will have no penalty or loss of benefits to which the participant is otherwise entitled, and that the participant may discontinue participation at any time without penalty loss of benefits to which they are otherwise entitled.

Reimbursements: There are no reimbursements.

Confidentiality

All personal information will be kept confidential and there will be no personal ramifications of any results found. Results will be captured in a manner that will ensure confidentiality.

Contact details of researcher

Please contact me directly on 076 0297 233.

For further information, you can contact my supervisor Dr L Makoni logism@unisa.ac.za / 011 670 9883

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

Title: Assessing the Role of Curio Trading in Shaping Livelihoods, Economic and Ecological Dimensions in Tshwane, South Africa

I confirm that I have been informed about the above study by Kgoori Irene Swana.

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the of my responses or to fill in the provided questionnaire

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname…… (please print)

Participant Signature……..Date……

Researcher's Name & Surname……(please print)

Researcher's signature……..Date……

Appendix B: Questionnaire survey

College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences (CAES)
Informal Curio traders' questionnaire

You are kindly requested to participate in this study that is being done as a partial requirement for a MSc at the University of South Africa. The information you provide will be used for academic purposes only, and remains strictly confidential, and your personal details will remain strictly protected.

SURVEY No: _____ DATE: ____/____/____ TIME: _____
PLACE_____

SECTION A: TRADER PROFILE AND BUSINESS STRUCTURE

1. Where are you from?

1	South Africa (name city)	
2	No-South African (name country)	

2. What is your gender?
3. How old are you?
4. What is your highest educational qualification? (Please tick only one where applicable below)

1	No formal education	
2	Some primary school education	
3	Primary school completed	
4	Some secondary school education	
5	Secondary school completed	
6	Some form of tertiary education	
7	Diploma or Certificate	
8	Undergraduate degree completed	
9	Postgraduate degree completed	

5. Please list the products you are selling.

_____
_____
_____
_____

6. How many years have you doing this business?

_____
___

7. Your location Strategies and Customer Engagement

7.1. Why did you choose to sell your products here specifically? Also indicate how often you come here

_____
_____
_____

7.2. If you sell your products elsewhere besides here, please also indicate where (and how often) and state your reasons

7.3. Please indicate if you have customers who place orders from you, explain the process including the type of customers.

8. Understanding the Supply and Production Practices of your products

8.1. How do you usually source the curio products that you sell? *(Please describe who you buy them from, where you get them, and how the sourcing process works.)*

8.2. If you make the curio products yourself, can you describe the entire process? *(Where do you get the raw materials? How are the products made, and what steps are involved from start to finish?)*

8.3. Why do you choose to sell these particular curio products? *(Is it because of demand, cultural significance, profit margin, personal interest, or any other reason? Please explain.)*

9. How did you learn about this business?

10. Please state why did you decide to do this business.

11. What is your position in this business? (Please tick only ONE that is applicable)

1	It is my full-time business (self-employed)	
2	It is my part-time business (self-employed)	
3	I work for someone full-time (employed)	
4	I work for someone part-time (employed)	
5	I am just helping a friend/family member	
6	I only do it when I have money and time	
7	Other (please specify)	

12. Your mobility patterns

12.1. Besides your place of origin indicated in question 1, please state whether you reside in Tshwane or travel to this city specifically for this business

12.2 If you travel for this business, please indicate how often do you travel here, and how long do you normally stay?

12.3 If you travel for this business, where do you normally stay?

12.4 Briefly describe how you transport your goods to and from here?

_____
_____
_____
_____

____12.5 Where do you store your products?

_____
_____
_____
_____

SECTION B: LIVELIHOODS AND ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS

13. 1. How many dependants do you have? (total number of all those who depend on you and your business for survival)

_____

13.2. What are the benefits of this business to you and those that depend on you ? List them

_____
_____
_____
_____

14. What are the challenges you face in this business? List them and how do you address these challenges

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

_____15. Do you depend only on the income from this business or do you have other financial support (such as second job, social grant, support from family member etc)

_____
_____
_____
_____

16. How much equivalent to South African Rands, do you make on:

16.1. On your busy days_____
16.2. On your less busy days_____

17. Please provide a list of your monthly household, and other important personal or family, expenses you cover from the income you make in this business (for example, groceries, school fees, rent etc)

_____
_____

_____

18. Please provide a list of less important expenses you cover from the income you get from this business. (for example, travelling, clubbing, shopping etc)

_____
_____
_____
_____

SECTION C: ECOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS

19. What are your products made of?

_____
_____
_____

20. Are there any waste generated or unwanted materials when making any of your products. If yes, please list and state how you dispose or manage them.

_____
_____
_____

21. Are there any designated bins for disposing litter generated here?

_____
____

22. Is there anyone responsible for cleaning and or removal of litter around your business area? (e.g. municipality, service provider)

_____
____

23. Is there any governing regulation you follow for waste management around here?

_____
____

24. Do you use any recycled materials on your products? If yes, please list them.

_____
_____
_____

SECTION D: IMPACT ON TOURISM DYNAMICS AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

25. Have you ever participated in any of the local tourism events to sell or showcase your products? Explain further

_____
_____
_____

26. How does the product on sale reflects the local cultural heritage?

_____

_____

_____

27. How do you incorporate cultural identity on your products?

_____

_____

_____

28.Do you think curio trading plays a role in the preservation of cultural identity? If yes, how?

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION IN COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

Appendix C: Declaration on the Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools

I, Kgoori Irene Swana, with student number 57642109, declare that I used artificial intelligence tools, including Microsoft 365 Copilot and ChatGPT, in an ethical and responsible way during the completion of this Master's dissertation. These tools were used to support language editing, improve clarity, and assist with sentence and idea structuring.

All research design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and arguments are my own original work. AI tools were not used to generate data, results, or original scholarly content.

All sources were evaluated, cited, and referenced in line with academic integrity requirements.

This dissertation complies with the ethical and academic standards of the University of South Africa.

Signed: 

Date: 2026/02/28

Appendix D: Editing Report

THESIS TITLE: ASSESSING THE ROLE OF CURIO TRADING IN SHAPING LIVELIHOODS, ECONOMIC AND ECOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS IN TSHWANE, SOUTH AFRICA

THESIS AUTHOR: **KGOORI IRENE SWANA** (57642109)

I confirm that I have read and edited the research project whose details are captured above. The editing process entailed:

- reading the draft thesis and in the process;
- cleaning up on grammar by focusing on aspects such as punctuation, tense consistency, word choice, paragraph length, expressions, repetition, omissions, word choice, and any other infelicities as part of the overall proofreading of the thesis;
- simplifying sentences where necessary and suggesting the author do the same where the editor was not sure of the overall meaning;
- ensuring the cohesion and coherence of the draft and its overall readability;
- following up on technical aspects of the thesis, which include pagination, numbering, alignments, font size, spacing, block quotations and justification to enhance the aesthetic outlook and improve the idea and argument presentations;
- following up on the reference list and helping to identify omissions and repetitions. Inconsistencies noted were also drawn to the attention of the author for rectification; and
- Tracked changes, made comments and suggestions advising the candidate on improving her work and citing areas that needed some attention. She can accept or reject the suggestions/comments made.

In summary, this was a process of correction, condensation, organisation, and other modifications meant to produce quality, correct, consistent, accurate and complete work. All changes and comments were tracked to allow the author to use her discretion on what to accept and/or reject in the final product, which remains her work.

Editor Credentials

Tsiidzai Matsika (*PhD English; MA English; BA Hons. English*), a Lecturer in the Department of Languages, Literature and Culture of the University of Zimbabwe, is a freelance editor and a member of the board of the Faculty of Arts Language Consultancy of the University of Zimbabwe (FALCONS-UZ).

Tsiidzai Matsika (PhD, MA, BA Hons.)

+263 772 659 209/ tsiidzaim@yahoo.co.uk Office 229, Old Arts Building

Appendix E: Ethical Approval Letter

UNISA university of south afr

College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences_Health REC

NHREC Registration # : REC-170616-051 Ref #: 2024/CAES_HREC/5929
Name: Ms Kgoori

Date: 28/01/2025

Dear: Ms Kgoori Irene Swana

Decision: Ethics Approval from 23/01/2025 to 31/01/2028

Researcher: Ms Kgoori Irene Swana
57642109@mylife.unisa.ac.za 0760297233

Supervisor: Professor Tracey McKay mckaytjm@unisa.ac.za

A supply-side investigation into the curio markets of Pretoria Zoo, Marabastad, and Pretoria Central in Tshwane

Qualification: MSc Environmental Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences_Health REC for the above mentioned research study. Ethics approval is granted for three years, **subject to submission of yearly progress reports.**

Failure to submit the progress report will lead to withdrawal of the ethics clearance until the report is submitted.

Due date for progress report: 31 January 2026

The **low risk application** was **reviewed** by College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences_Health REC on 23 January 2025 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.

2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences_Health REC.

3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.

4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.

5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.

6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.

7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date (31 January 2026). Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal, for Ethics Research Committee approval.

Additional Conditions

1. Disclosure of data to third parties is prohibited without explicit consent from Unisa.
2. De-identified data must be safely stored on password protected PCs.
3. Care should be taken by the researcher when publishing the results to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the university.
4. Adherence to the National Statement on Ethical Research and Publication practices, principle 7 referring to Social awareness, must be ensured: "Researchers and institutions must be sensitive to the potential impact of their research on society, marginal groups or individuals, and must consider these when weighing the benefits of the research against any harmful effects, with a view to minimising or avoiding the latter where possible." Unisa will not be liable for any failure to comply with this principle.

Note

The reference number 2024/CAES_HREC/5929 should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Kind regards,



Dr MD Matlala
Chair of College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences_Health REC
E-mail: matlamd1@unisa.ac.za



Prof NO Mapholi
Executive Dean / By delegation from the Executive Dean of College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences_Health REC
E-mail: maphon@unisa.ac.za