



The determinant of the relationship between the knowledge on HIV/AIDs and safety measures taken by MSEs in Gikomba market, Nairobi, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Kenya is among the world's nations affected by HIV/AIDS with the virus claiming 600 people per day. The most endangered are the young people of the age bracket of 15-49 years who own/managers and employees of the Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs). The pandemic has negatively impacted on the successful management of MSEs in Kenya. This study was carried out to determine the relationship between the knowledge on HIV/Aids and safety measures taken by MSEs in Gikomba market, Nairobi, Kenya. AIDS was recognized in 1984 and by 1995, 73,179 HIV/AIDS deaths related cases had been reported in Kenya. Presently, it is estimated that about 2.2 million Kenyans are infected with HIV/AIDS, while 1.5 million have already died from the virus. However, this figure has gone down to 1.6 million. The sectoral impact of HIV/AIDS studies done so far has tended to lean on health, education, military, communications, information and agriculture. Little work has been done to investigate the effects of HIV/AIDS on MSEs' management despite its importance in the economic development and its contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Kenya. MSEs contribute 18% to the GDP in Kenya. The research was conducted using descriptive survey design to establish the relationship between the variables in the study of large group of individuals by studying a small group. The study used interview guide and questionnaires for data collection to achieve the desired objectives. The findings have showed that the deaths caused by either HIV/AIDS or its related immunodeficiency illnesses were common among the owners/ managers of MSEs at Gikomba market as attested by 80% on the entrepreneurs interviewed. The effects of HIV/AIDS on MSEs was found to be 93.3% of the about entrepreneurs interviewed. These effects were seen through loss of profits to meet expenses on HIV/AIDS ailments, contributions to medical bills, drug expenses, food supplements, absenteeism from work, psychological trauma, stigmatisation and deaths. The study also showed that 100% of

owners/managers of MSEs are very much aware of HIV/AIDS and its effects but failed to manage it through behaviour change. It was concluded that the effects of HIV/AIDS on MSEs in terms of increased costs of running their businesses was due to cost of medical bills, burial expenses, drugs and food supplements, reduced productivity and absenteeism from work. The knowledge and awareness of HIV/AIDS, influence decisions and measures taken by MSEs owners/managers to control, manage and plan for the future of their businesses. The study has recommended measures that can be taken to control and manage the HIV/AIDS among the MSEs to reduce the effects including continued effort on awareness campaign among MSEs, change of policy and approach towards combating HIV/AIDS and direct involvement of MSEs owners/managers and their employees in the campaign against HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Key words: HIV/AIDS pandemic, Management of micro and small enterprises (MSEs) Gikomba market, Nairobi, Kenya

INTRODUCTION

Background Of The Study

Africa disproportionately bears the burden of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Although only 11% of the world's population lives in Africa, roughly 67% of those living with HIV/AIDS are in Africa. (1, 2) In Africa, there were 22.4 million people living with HIV and 1.9 million new HIV infections in 2008. An estimated 14 million children in Africa have been orphaned as a result of HIV/AIDS. (2).

The importance of Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) has captured the attention of scholars, organizations and governments worldwide. This is because the sector contributes greatly towards the economic development of many countries in the world (ILO/UNDP, 1994). The MSEs servers as training grounds for entrepreneurial managers and providing access to markets for locally processed produce and materials. MSEs are key generators of local employment and enhance use of local and appropriate technologies to conserve scarce capital resources and thereby preventing rural-urban migration (Gibb, 1988).

The emergence of HIV/AIDS pandemic in the early 1980's to date, has threatened the contributions of MSEs to the development of the economy. The disease has seriously affected the performance and management of MSEs and large-scale enterprises worldwide (Smart Work, 2002). Those infected or affected are losing substantial income/earning for treatment and management of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, hence threatening their growth and success.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, about 22 million people are infected (GoK, 1999). However, this figure has gone down to 1.6 million. (UNAID, 2011). In Botswana the first HIV/AIDS case was reported in 1984 and since then the spread of the virus in the population has been explosive, starting in urban areas and rapidly expanding to rural areas. Botswana is one of the countries with the highest HIV infection rate in the world (UNAID/WHO, 2005, 2010, 2012).

It is estimated that the national adult HIV prevalence is 39% in Botswana compared to Zimbabwe (34%), Swaziland (33%), Lesotho (31%), Kenya (13%) Cameroon (12%), Nigeria (6%) and Senegal (1%). The adult prevalence rate for Sub-Saharan Africa is about 9% (UNAID/WHO, 2002). World Bank (1995, 2012) shows that in South Africa, 11% of their work force is sick with HIV, while 0.6% is sick with AIDS with 175,000 new Aids cases per annum. Thus the economic impact of the disease especially on business is undeniable. This negative impact of the pandemic on management of MSEs is great. It is thought that in countries greatly affected by the pandemic, increased costs due to absenteeism, funeral attendances, loss of skills, retraining and recruitment, healthcare and burial fees take substantial toll on businesses.

The economic losses, weakened workforce and the resulting instability have devastated many small businesses (Smart Work, 2002). Therefore, we opted to investigate the impact of the disease on MSEs' management in Kenya with view to provide long term solution to HIV/AIDS pandemic management.

In Kenya, the first HIV/AIDS case was observed in the mid-1980s; by 1995, 73,179 cases had been reported (GoK, 1997). The number of persons in Kenya infected with HIV/AIDS in 1997 was estimated to be 1.2 million and it was estimated to be 1.7 million in the year 2000. Presently, according to NACC and NASCOP (2012), it is estimated that 1.6 million Kenyans are infected with HIV/AIDS, while 1.5 million Kenyans have already died from HIV/AIDS (GoK, 1997). Currently the infection rate is decreasing by 26-49% (UNAID 2012).

In view of HIV/AIDS pandemic, Kenya government developed a sessional paper No. 4 of 1997 to provide a Policy Framework to guide all partners in the nation's response to the challenges of HIV/AIDS (GoK, 1997). In 1999, Mr. Moi the former president of Kenya declared AIDS a national disaster. Subsequently, the government mobilized additional resources and established a National AIDS Control Council to advocate, strengthen and co-ordinate the multi sectoral response to contain the spread of HIV and mitigate the impact of AIDS (GoK, 1997). No study has been done so far in response to this challenge in the MSE sector. This study was aimed at this goal.

The need for a policy framework was foreseen as a pre-requisite to effective leadership in efforts to combat this pandemic. HIV/AIDS prevention activities must be intensified in order to reduce the number of people getting new infections and reduce the impact of this scourge on the people of Kenya and their resources. Sessional paper No. 4 of 1987 on AIDS in Kenya, which provide guidance to all organizations and institutions involved in AIDS work in Kenya (GoK, 1997) provides avenue to tackling HIV/AIDS pandemic management strategy. The paper provides broad guidelines on how best to address critical issues on AIDS in Kenya over the next 15 years and beyond. The paper recommends further research and discussions with experts be done to bridge gaps where divergent views exist. This paper, intends to contribute towards HIV/AIDS management through assessing the impact of the pandemic on management of Micro and Small Enterprises in Kenya. The study is expected to enhance awareness on the impact of HIV/AIDS on MSEs owner/ managers, their employees including precautions to be taken to guard against and hence promoting entrepreneurship development

Objectives

The general purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of HIV/AIDS pandemic on management of micro and small enterprises in Kenya. . However, specific objectives of this study were to:

1. To establish the relationship between the knowledge on HIV/AIDS by MSEs in Gikomba, Nairobi Kenya.
2. Suggest and recommend policy measures towards HIV/AIDS prevention, control and management in MSEs in Gikomba, Nairobi Kenya.

The Significance of the Study

This study is of importance to owner managers of MSEs, prospective entrepreneurs, Non Governmental Organizations and Government Agencies working in a joint effort for HI/AIDS pandemic. Ministry of Education Science and Technology, Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs) that are directly involved in promotion and development of MSEs in Kenya will greatly benefit from these findings. It is hoped that the findings will enhance the training of MSEs managers and employees, by creating awareness of

the dangers of HIV/AIDS in running successful business, and enhancing policy measures towards HIV/AIDS prevention, control and management. In addition, the findings will provide information to scholars, researchers and students of entrepreneurship development in Kenya and others who would like to pursue further studies in this area.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study location and the study population are examined followed by sample size and the sampling technique was used. A questionnaire was developed and then piloted and verified for reliability and validity. This was followed by field data collection via the refined questionnaire. Gathered data in form of responses were entered in Excel spreadsheet and analysed and finally presented in bar charts and graphs.

Research Design

This study adopted mainly descriptive survey as the study dealt mainly with relationships between the variables, the testing of hypothesis and the drawing generalizations with universal validity as recommended by Saunders *et al* (2003). It was envisaged that there was a relationship between the health status of the entrepreneurs, employees and the successful management of their business as dictated by their health status.

Study Location

Field survey was carried out in Nairobi, Gikomba Market. Gikomba is in Nairobi, a capital city of Kenya and houses many micro and small enterprises and other commercial organizations including local and international organisations. It is one of the largest commercial centres in the country. Gikomba has a population of 1,163 people. 467 are males and 516 are females. This is as per the population census of 1999 (GoK, 1999) occupying approximately 10.97 square kilometres.

Study Population

The population studied in this research comprised 500 entrepreneurs in Gikomba market operating micro and small enterprises. However, it targeted the age group of 18-49 years operating MSEs at Gikomba since Kenya sessional Paper No. 4 of 1997 shows that majority of the HIV/AIDS infected fall between 15-49 years of age (GoK, 1997). It was observed that most of the MSEs owners managers and their employees were in this age bracket. The ethnic composition of Gikomba is made up of nearly all communities in Kenya. The majority are the Kikuyu, Luo, Luhya and Kamba. Gikomba according to 1999 census has a population of 1,163 people and 169 households occupying 0.1 square kilometres (GoK, 1999). It has a density population of 11,630 people with estimated 500 MSE businesses.

Field Survey

The businesses at Gikomba are basically divided into trade premises operating on permanent buildings and non-permanent structures. The types of business include clothing, agricultural crops including fruits, vegetables, meat, fish products and grains. These businesses are either licensed or non-licensed. This research targeted licensed business only. Majority of businesses are owned by age group of 18-49 years. The entrepreneurs in this place come from all over the country. Businesses of all trades are carried out in Gikomba. The sample of study reflected the national outlook and captured the relevant information for this research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This research findings, analysis and discussion were aimed to answer research questions on the relationship between the knowledge on HIV/AIDS by MSEs in Gikomba, Nairobi Kenya.

HIV/AIDs Awareness among MSEs at Gikomba

HIV/AIDs Awareness

The rate of awareness of HIV/AIDs among the MSEs owner managers is very high. Out of 60 interviewed entrepreneurs, 100 percent are aware of the existence of HIV/AIDs while none said is not aware of the HIV/AIDs. This shows that all the entrepreneurs interviewed are aware of the existence of HIV/AIDs. This could be because these are infected or affected by the disease. The awareness of HIV/AIDs among MSEs is not a big issue. Perhaps the change of attitude and behaviour is the issue. The knowledge of HIV/AIDs would enhance their decision making in taking the safety measures to guard themselves against contraction and/or better management of HIV/AIDs. The knowledge of HIV/AIDs will determine the types of measures or precaution they will take.

Source of information on HIV/AIDs

This section analyses the sources of information of HIV/AIDs at Gikomba markets. This is shown by table 1 below

Table 1: Sources of information on HIV/AIDs

	Frequency	Percent
Seminars	20	33.3
Public rallies	2	3.3
Both	38	63.3
Total	60	100

The entrepreneurs interviewed gave various sources of their information about HIV/AIDs. Table 1 shows that (38) 63.3 percent of the respondents said they got the information about HIV/AIDs from both seminars and public rallies. (20) 33.3 percent said they got this information from attending seminars only while only (2) 3.3 percent got information about HIV/AIDs from public rallies only. This shows that the owner managers of small and micro enterprises are very much informed about HIV/AIDs. This could also mean that the issue of the rate of infection is not on ignorance on the part of entrepreneurs of micro and small enterprises but perhaps the need for their change of attitudes towards HIV/AIDs.

Other sources of information on HIV/AIDs.

This section discusses other sources of information about HIV/AIDs by MSE owner managers at Gikomba market as is shown by table 2 below.

Table 2: Other sources of information on HIV/AIDs

Sources	Frequency	Percent
Media: Radio & TV	40	66.7
Pamphlets	6	10
Groups	4	6.7
Church	4	6.7
Hospital	6	10
Total	60	100

The respondent of this research gave other sources of information about HIV/AIDs besides the ones given in Table 2 above. In Table 2, the research establishes that (40) 66.7 percent of the respondents got their information from media especially from Radio and Television while (6) 10 percent got the information from Hospitals and Clinics and /or Voluntary Counselling and Testing Centres [VCTs]. The table shows that a total of 6.7 percent got the information about HIV/AIDs from their organized groups and churches respectively. This is because each one of

them had 6.7 percent. This research thus shows that Radio and Television are very effective tools of communication and thus can be used to campaign against HIV/AIDS not only to micro and small enterprises but also to all other sectors of the economy. This is perhaps because both Radio and Television are owned by majority of Kenyans and especially Radios which transcends the language barriers can be used effectively to communicate information about HIV/AIDS. For Television, it is effective perhaps because of dramatization and demonstration of the dangers of HIV/AIDS to their viewers.

The respondents who got the information through hospitals, clinics, and/or VCTs (mostly females) got the information during pre-natal inspection or during birth periods. Four mentioned VCTs. This shows that VCTs are not as yet popular among the micro and small enterprises owners and their employees. Perhaps they are not keen in visiting them to know their status.

Learnt lesson about HIV/AIDS from the various sources

Most entrepreneurs interviewed in this research gave various responses as to what they learnt from the HIV/AIDS awareness. Table 3 shows these responses.

Table 3: Lessons learnt

Lessons	Count	Percent
Management of HIV-AIDS	18	35
Prevention of infections	20	28
Advocacy	12	17
The disease is fatal	22	31
Total	72	100

Table 3 shows that the entrepreneurs interviewed learnt various lessons from their various sources of information (22) 31 percent said that, HIV/AIDS is a fatal disease (18) 35 percent learnt how to live with and manage HIV/AIDS and (20) 28 percent of the respondents said they learnt to take precautionary measures to prevent infection by HIV/AIDS. This means that information about HIV/AIDS is one of the key tools to fight against the pandemic and perhaps would need to be enhanced among the owners of micro and small enterprises to control and/or reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS among them.

Relationship between business environment and risks of HIV/AIDS infection

This section discusses the relationship between the business environment and risk of HIV/AIDS infection.

Table 4: HIV/AIDS Status

	Frequency	Percent
Yes-Danger of infection	36	60
Yes lack of customers	22	36.7
No	2	3.3
Total	60	100

Table 4 above shows that (36) 58.6 percent of the respondents said that the environment could be risky and dangerous in terms of infection. They said careless behaviour among the entrepreneurs and their employees can spread the infection rate. (22) 36.7 percent said, the environment could be risky in terms of contraction and loss of customers especially when they learnt about the positive status on HIV/AIDS of the owner managers. Only (2) 3.3 percent said they did not feel that there was any danger at all.

Importance of owner managers and the employees knowing about their status on HIV/AIDs

The need of knowing the HIV status of MSEs owner managers is one of the steps towards its management. This section analyses the necessity of MSEs owners at Gikomba and their employees of knowing their HIV status.

Table 5: HIV/AIDs Status

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	58	96.7
No	2	3.3
Total	60	100

Most of the respondents interviewed said that it was necessary for owner manager and their employees to know their status of HIV/AIDs. Table 5 above shows (58) 96.7 percent said yes it was important for them to know their HIV status while only (2) 3.3 percent of the respondents said that it was not important for the owner manager of small and micro enterprises and their employees to know about their HIV/AIDs status. This does not seem to tally with the small percentage that knew their HIV/AIDs status through VCTs indicating that things are easily said than done. This would mean majority of MSEs owners may want to know their HIV status but fear to go for counselling and testing.

Reasons for knowing of HIV/AIDs status

This section presents the analysis of data obtained from MSE entrepreneurs at Gikomba on reasons for them to know their HIV status. These reasons are shown by table 6.

Table 6: Reasons for knowing HIV/AIDs status

	Frequency	Percent
Will help the infected & affected in their ways of life style	30	50
Takes care of oneself	28	46.7
Give hope to those living with HIV-AIDs	2	3.3
Total	60	100

The entrepreneurs interviewed gave various reasons why it is important for them and their employees to know about their HIV/AIDs status. Table 6 shows that (30) 50 percent wanted to know their HIV/AIDs status to enable them to help the infected and affected especially on its management. (28) 46.7 percent said it was important as it would enable them to take care of themselves and / or take care of others who may be infected and affected. Only 3.3 percent said that their knowledge on their status of HIV/AIDs would not contribute anything to those living with HIV/AIDs.

Table 6 also shows that in all cases, it is important for micro and small enterprise managers and their employees to know about their HIV/AIDs status enable them plan ahead and contribute to data building which can then be used for designing policies and planning on strategies to fight against HIV/AIDs.

Death resulting from HIV/AIDs at Gikomba market.

All the interviewed MSE owner managers at Gikomba market indicated that they had known or heard of a case of death from HIV/AIDs among them. Infact (60) 100 percent of the respondents indicated that they have known or heard of cases of death from HIV/AIDs or

related ailments among themselves. None said had not known of any. This shows how much HIV/AIDS is prevalent among many small and micro enterprises. This would mean unless controlled, HIV/AIDS would negatively affect the running and management of micro and small enterprises not only through deaths of owner-managers but also reducing their capital investments and profits.

Summary of research findings

Background information of the Entrepreneurs

The purpose of this study aimed at investigating the impact of HIV/AIDS pandemic on running and management of Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) in Gikomba market in Nairobi, Kenya. The study on the relationship between the knowledge on HIV/AIDS and safety measures taken by MSEs in Gikomba market, Nairobi, Kenya, the extent to which the owner managers of MSEs at Gikomba knew about HIV/AIDS and the dangers associated with it as regards to the running and management of their businesses and safety measures they took to safeguard themselves and/or enable them to manage the HIV/AIDS. The study used structured interview guide and questionnaires in collecting data to achieve this objective. The researcher conducted the interview himself on sixty (60) respondents infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. These were selected purposively out of the estimated 500 licensed MSEs at Gikomba market in Nairobi. The researcher worked closely with National AIDS Control Council of Kenya and the Nairobi Provincial AIDS Control coordinator in identification of organizations and groups dealing with the infected or affected groups or persons operating MSEs businesses in Gikomba market. The data was collected, analyzed, interpreted and discussed. The following is the summary of the findings:

- (i) Small and micro enterprises are owned and managed by both men and women 67% and 33% respectively. Although the research at Gikomba shows that there are more men involved in MSEs than women, there is no gender discrimination in terms of ownership and management. This means the prevalence and impact of HIV/AIDS is felt by all sexes among MSEs without discrimination. The risk of its danger and the precautionary measures to guard against its contraction or its management is necessary for all, MSEs in the country.
- (ii) Greater number of micro and small entrepreneurs (75 percent) is in the age bracket of 29-40 years. Only a small percentage (25 percent) is either above the age bracket of 41-49 or below 29 years. All are within the age bracket of 0-49 which is the prime and most active in life. This is the age bracket within which the HIV/AIDS is most prevalent. Uncontrolled infection-by HIV/AIDS or lack of proper management of HIV/AIDS among this group of entrepreneurs has a devastating impact on the running and management of their businesses and by extension to the whole economy. The extent to which these entrepreneurs are knowledgeable about HIV/AIDS determines the safety measures they take to guard themselves against its contraction and/or its management. The MSEs owner managers and/or their employees know this very well (100% are aware).
- (iii) Most of the owner managers of micro and small enterprises are married, majority of whom (70 per cent) have between 2-4 children: This is a burden to both the affected and the infected entrepreneurs which in effect impact negatively to their businesses in the event of death as a result of HIV/AIDS. It is also a burden to the whole economy of a nation. The children may lack the proper care and supervision needed at this critical period in their lives. This results in tremendous strain on social economic systems to cope with such a large number of orphans both at the family level and community level. It reduces MSEs' growth.
- (iv) Majority of micro and small enterprises (88 percent) have attained primary education

and above. The entrepreneurs at higher levels of education- '0'-level and above, (46.7) percent are at a better position to access to and understand the information and awareness about HIV/AIDS which enhances their decisions in taking safety measures and/or management of HIV/AIDS.

- (v) The frequency of experience is highest at 5 and 8 years among the micro and small enterprises (43.3 percent). The loss of such manpower and womanpower so experienced in business through HIV/AIDS is not only a big blow to their businesses and immediate families but to the whole economy as such experiences cannot be easily replaced.
- (vi) The impact of HIV/AIDS on micro and small enterprises is felt across the major sectors in the business undertaking as the owners/manages and the employees are in all business sectors. Among the MSEs owner managers interviewed, there were trade (71.7 percent), manufacturing (13.3) percent and service (15) percent. The impact of HIV/AIDS is felt by these MSEs and indeed all business sectors if not checked. These impacts include the reduced productivity as a result of illness, 34 per cent, absenteeism from work, 5.4 per cent early retirement from business activities, and labour turnover. The other impact is the increased costs of running the business due to high medical bills, contributions to burial expenses, high cost of food, drugs, supplements and loss of lives.

Business Information

The study has found that:

- (i) Most of micro and small enterprises (96.7 percent) are owned through sole proprietorship with only a few in partnerships. Most businesses start at this level and eventually graduate to other levels of medium and large scale enterprises. The socio-economic impact of HIV/AIDS on these MSEs on their profits and savings can inhibit their survival and growth into medium and large scale employment opportunities.
- (ii) The start up capital of most of the micro and small enterprises come from either their own savings or from relatives and / or friends (69 percent). Only few MSE entrepreneurs 10 per cent of this group get loans from banks due to banks restrictions on lending to MSEs. This lending is complicated further by the prevalence of HIV/AIDS infections among the MSEs owner manager as banks and other financial institutions are not keen to lend money for business ventures in this sector.
- (iii) Most of the MSEs entrepreneurs 38.3 start their businesses with the initial capital of Kshs. 30,000/-. Out of this investment, they are able to generate more profits which eventually build up to enable them expand their businesses and meet other socio economic demands. HIV/AIDS is eating into their profits prompting them either to close down their businesses or remain in their start up stage.
- (iv) This research has revealed out that most of MSEs entrepreneurs 46.7 make profits in the class interval of Kshs. 21,000 – 25,000 per month which is between Kshs. 252,000 – 300,000 per year on average. If these profits are ploughed back into their businesses, they would enhance their growth and expansion. The expenses incurred in treatment and management of HIV/AIDS impacts negatively on their business growth.
- (v) Most MSEs (80 per cent) are manned and managed by their owner managers with 90 per cent employing within the cluster of 0-9 people and only 10 per cent employing between 10-18 persons. This concurs very well with what Maitha and Odiege found in their study of MSEs and job creation (Maitha and Odiege, 1997). They found MSEs as a

source of job creation and poverty alleviation. Thus they create job opportunities to many Kenyans and contribute to the Gross Domestic product of the country. HIV/AIDS would reduce this contribution drastically if not checked.

- (vi) The owner managers of MSEs run and manage their own businesses. The research has shown 80% per cent do not do any form of delegation neither have they trained assistances/relatives who may take over in the event of death or otherwise. The infection or affection by HIV/AIDS can have a devastating impact on running and management to these businesses. The effect of this on the nation is that the country will loose 18 percent of GDP contributed by this sector annually.
- (vii) Quite a good number of MSEs (70 percent) have been making profits in relation to the amount invested and in terms of expansion and number of employees added to their businesses. HIV/AIDS can bring this growth to nought if not controlled in this sector.

Some of the MSEs experience lack of growth in their businesses (33.3 percent). This is because of economic depression experienced in the country, discrimination due to their HIV/AIDS status, lack of enough capital for expansion and stiff competition that exists within the MSEs.

Thus stigmatization and discrimination due to HIV/AIDS infection is affecting the running and activities of MSEs leading to the loss of their customers and thus poor sales.

HIV/AIDS status and business

The researcher has found that:

- (i) One hundred percent of MSEs owners are aware of the HIV/AIDS and dangers associated with it. This knowledge has enhanced their decision making in taking the safety measures to guard themselves against contraction and/or better management of HIV/AIDS.
- (ii) The prevalence of HIV/AIDS within MSEs is not as a result of ignorance and lack of information on HIV/AIDS and its dangers. The research has revealed that all of them 100 per cent are aware and informed about it. But perhaps it is due to attitude to it and behavioural change among other factors. Careless behaviour and lack of change of attitude towards HIV/AIDS can be dangerous within the business environment as it can contribute towards the spread of HIV/AIDS among the MSEs entrepreneurs and their employees. Sixty per cent of the respondents concurred with this fact.

CONCLUSION

The impact of HIV/AIDS on small and Micro and Enterprises in Gikomba market in Nairobi is enormous. It is felt by them from high medical bills resulting from treatment of HIV/AIDS and/or related immunodeficiency sicknesses, high expenses on retrovirus drugs, expensive food supplements, loss of working of hours due to absenteeism from work to attend to hospitals and clinics, loss of customers leading to decrease in sales and profits and psychological trauma resulting from HIV/AIDS pandemic.

It can also be concluded that although the rate of awareness about HIV/AIDS is very high, there is still high prevalence of HIV/AIDS implying slow change of attitude towards it. However, their knowledge of HIV/AIDS enables the MSEs owner managers and their employees to take the preventive measures against HIV/AIDS and/or its management.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The research findings of this study have shown that although the HIV/AIDS awareness is 100% among the MSE respondents at Gikomba in Nairobi, the HIV/AIDS prevalence is high (86%). Thus there is urgent need for continued awareness campaign and training on management of HIV/AIDS among the MSEs sector throughout the country. This would reduce the prevalence of HIV/AIDS within MSEs in the country. It would also enhance the lives of MSE entrepreneurs living with HIV/AIDS or those affected.

The findings of this research have found out that the government has succeeded in bringing about the awareness of HIV/AIDS. Almost 100 percent of MSEs owner managers are aware about HIV/AIDS. However, the approach of the campaign should now change so that it is now geared towards attitude and behavioural change as opposed to just awareness. It should be spread to all parts of the country especially to rural areas where the campaign and advocacy has little been done.

The research results of this study has established that the extent of awareness and knowledge of HIV/AIDS among the MSEs enhance their decision making in taking the safety measures to guard themselves against contraction and/or better management of HIV/AIDS. However, there is need to enhance more training on management and home-based care of HIV/AIDS especially for those living with it, on better eating habits and other alternative medicines.

From this study, an observation is made that one of the hindrances of successful campaign against HIV/AIDS among MSEs is the change of attitude. Thus, there is a challenge to develop appropriate policy instruments for advocacy and target information, education and communication campaigns to promote significant behaviour change among the sexually active population. The interventions will need to address the non-sexual modes of transmission e.g. circumcision, tattooing, drug abuse and other culture related practices. Targeting is important as it will address the needs of specific groups in the population like MSE entrepreneurs.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

From the data collected, analysed, interpreted and discussed, the following is the summary of the findings:

The effects of HIV/AIDS on micro and small enterprises is felt across the major sectors in the business undertaking as the owners/manages and the employees are in all business sectors. Among the MSEs owner managers interviewed, there were trade (71.7 percent), manufacturing (13.3) percent and service (15) percent. The effects of HIV/AIDS are felt by these MSEs and indeed all business sectors if not checked. This effect includes reduced productivity as a result of illness, 34 per cent, absenteeism from work, 5.4 per cent early retirement from business activities, and labour turnover. The other impact is the increased costs of running the business due to high medical bills, contributions to burial expenses, high cost of food, drugs, supplements and loss of lives. Also stigmatisation and discrimination due to HIV/AIDS infection is affecting the running and activities of MSEs leading to the loss of their customers and thus poor sales.

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