

Perceptions of entrepreneurs on the Use of Nationwide Business Licensing in Agricultural Products

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ABSTRACT

The current study investigates the effectiveness of adopting a single business license in Tanzania to simplify regulatory processes, strengthen consumer protection, reduce corruption, and promote an ethical and equitable business environment for agricultural products. The analysis focuses on four key areas: mitigating challenges associated with complex regulations, bolstering consumer protection, reducing corruption practices, and promoting an ethical and equitable business environment. Utilizing a cross-sectional study design, data were collected from entrepreneurs across multiple regions, including Sumbawanga, Tanga, Mbeya, Njombe and Ruvuma. A sample of 800 was analyzed using Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA). The results indicate that the adoption of a single license has significant positive effects on reducing regulatory complexity, enhancing consumer protection, and curbing corruption. However, it does not significantly promote an ethical and equitable business environment. These findings underscore the critical role of streamlined licensing in fostering economic efficiency and consumer trust while highlighting the need for additional measures to address ethical business practices comprehensively. Policymakers should refine business registration and licensing processes to enhance efficiency, reduce administrative burdens, and promote entrepreneurial growth. Additionally, strengthening consumer protection measures and digitalizing licensing systems will improve compliance, boost consumer confidence, and reduce corruption.

Keywords: Business Licensing, Regulatory Compliance, Consumer Protection, Corruption Reduction, Ethical Business Practices

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Business licensing plays an important role in regulating economic activities across different regions, such as legal compliance, consumer protection, government revenue, market order and fair competition (Bank, 2018). The term "business license" denotes the official authorization or endorsement stipulated by a nation or other governmental entity as a prerequisite for a business to initiate its operations. Varied categories of business licenses and permits are issued by federal, state, and local administrations, addressing a broad spectrum of commercial endeavours. Business licensing helps governments ensure that businesses operate within the legal framework of their country or region (La Porta et al., 2017). Licensing ensures businesses meet specific standards to protect consumers from fraud, unsafe products, or substandard services (Thomas et al., 2022). Unfortunately, there are no universal rules to turn to, as license and permit requirements vary at the municipality, district, and even country level (Lopez, 2024). In Tanzania, myriad challenges plague business licensing, particularly impacting small-scale entrepreneurs. These hurdles encompass complicated regulations, corruption issues, burdensome taxation, financial constraints, and a lack of awareness regarding the registration process (Jilibulima, 2020). Analogous challenges hampering business activities in Tanzania extend to bureaucratic complexities, corruption, and underdeveloped infrastructures (Authority, 2021).

The nation's operational framework necessitates businesses to navigate a complicated route (Mashenene & Rumanyika, 2014). Entrepreneurs must first register their business with the Business Registrations and Licensing Agency (BRELA), then secure an additional business license from the relevant regional or city council corresponding to the business's physical location. This procedural complexity poses a difficulty for enterprises transporting perishable or non-perishable goods to regions where the business lacks registration (Shaaban, 2022). Consequently, to address this concern and facilitate borderless business operations, Tanzania has initiated a transformative strategy allowing businesses to function under a single license in agricultural products (Estmann, 2023). This strategic shift prompts exploring stakeholders' perceptions regarding adopting a nationwide business licensing system.

The protracted business registration processes have inadvertently catalyzed corruption within many nations, as the challenges stemming from these processes create an environment conducive to corrupt practices (Ghossein & Rana, 2022). As Alm et al. (2016) study highlighted, in a society characterized by heightened corruption, the potential for tax evasion can intensify as corrupt individuals seek to augment their earnings through illicit payments. African countries are grappling with inefficiencies in business licensing and registration, characterized by sluggish procedures (Bawole & Langnel, 2023). Enterprises aspiring to initiate business ventures

encounter a costly and time-intensive journey during the registration process (Hallward-Driemeier et al., 2015). The presence of bureaucratic hurdles in acquiring licenses or registering businesses is an open invitation to corruption (Manbait et al, 2022).

However, studies are scarce that comprehensively explore stakeholders' perceptions when navigating intricate licensing procedures (Okumah & Yeboah, 2020). By delving into stakeholders' perceptions as discussed in the OECD, (2018) report, this study aims to dig up insights to guide policy formulation and decision-making, ultimately fostering an environment conducive to economic growth, streamlined operations, and equitable opportunities. In the study context, perceptions towards the proposed single license usage broadly impact complex regulations, consumer protection, corruption reduction, an ethical and equitable environment, and overall business environment improvement (World Economic Forum 2020). The study aims to gather and analyze these perceptions to better understand stakeholders' viewpoints and inform decision-making and policy formulation by fulfilling the following aims. Challenges associated with complex regulations

As highlighted by OECD (2018) on the role of policy changes in simplifying business regulations, this study examines stakeholders' perceptions of implementing a nationwide business licensing system as a potential solution to address challenges arising from complex regulatory frameworks. Using insights from the World Economic Forum (2020), which analyzed how business regulations impact consumer trust and market conditions, this study explores whether stakeholders perceive a unified licensing approach as a means to enhance consumer protection and build confidence through improved product and service quality in the marketplace. Links corruption levels with business regulations (Transparency International, 2020). The current study explores whether the stakeholders perceive that implementing a single national business licensing could positively influence the reduction of corruption practices. Finally, building on the African Development Bank's (2018) exploration of the role of business regulations in promoting fairness and ethics, this study explores whether stakeholders perceive implementing a single national business licensing system as a catalyst for fostering an ethical and equitable business environment. The study holds importance in its capacity to influence the development of enhanced, transparent, and streamlined business regulations, thereby creating an atmosphere conducive to fostering economic expansion, diminishing corruption, and ensuring fair and balanced business prospects within the region.

1.1 Business license landscape

Business licensing assumes a multifaceted and central role in shaping economic operations, fostering responsibility, and advancing the welfare of enterprises and consumers (Runde, 2021). Integral facets of business licensing, including regulation and control, function as regulatory mechanisms that oversee and manage diverse economic activities (Viscusi et al., 2018). This, in turn, upholds order, thwarts illicit practices, and safeguards public interests. Several instances

have been noted across Africa, such as business fronting contravening regulations established to foster a robust and thriving economy (Warikandwa et al., 2017). Legal compliance is a crucial facet of business licensing, and adhering to these legal requisites is paramount to ensuring businesses function within the framework of the law (Nieuwenhuizen, 2019). Therefore, the presence of excessive bureaucratic hurdles concerning adherence to business-associated laws has the potential to impact committed companies significantly. Moreover, licensing frequently encompasses quality evaluations, adherence to safety benchmarks, and regulations for consumer protection. This assumes a pivotal role in assuring consumers that the products and services they acquire meet specific quality and safety standards, consequently nurturing confidence in the market (Arindrajaya et al., 2022). Instances have surfaced wherein companies having sole registration in Tanzania manipulated consumers and engaged in fraudulent activities, leading to financial losses (John, 2019). Streamlining the licensing procedures can effectively address and prevent such cases, enhancing the system's ability to safeguard against such deceptive practices. Another aspect of licensing is transparency and accountability. Transparency and accountability necessitate that businesses furnish precise details about their operations, cultivating a sense of responsibility and acting as a deterrent against fraudulent behaviours (Warren et al., 2014).

1.2 Global trend

Nationwide business licensing has been implemented in many countries. For example, Singapore integrated a national single license called “licensee”, which mandates businesses to apply for and manage multiple licenses (Teo et al., 2010). The United Arab Emirates (UAE) unveiled the "National Economic Register" portal, serving as a centralized hub for business registration and licensing across the diverse emirates (Bashir Ahmed, 2022). The primary goal of this system is to simplify the process of establishing businesses and minimize administrative obstacles. Also, the "One Stop Center" initiative by the Rwandan government aims to furnish businesses with a sole license, permitting operations throughout the entire country. This endeavour is a component of Rwanda's endeavours to enhance the business landscape and facilitate the initiation and management of enterprises. Furthermore, the government has introduced the "Business Registration Service" (BRS) initiative to establish a consolidated business registration process in Kenya. This endeavour simplifies the procedures for registering and obtaining licenses, enhancing entrepreneurs' efficiency in setting up and overseeing their businesses nationwide (Devas et al., 2001). The same practice has been observed in Ghana; business owners can digitally enroll their enterprises and utilize diverse services from regulatory agencies using this system. This technology-driven method simplifies the administrative procedures needed to commence and oversee businesses, thus fostering a more effective and unified business atmosphere throughout the nation. The existing body of literature lacks studies demonstrating the significance of implementing a single business license nationwide. This notable gap catalyses the current research, which aims to delve into the perceptions of business individuals regarding this very matter.

1.3 Hypotheses

Stakeholders widely recognise that implementing and enacting a nationwide business licensing system holds significant promise in generating favourable results when tackling the intricate challenges arising from complex regulatory frameworks (Kleiner, 2015). Given the complicated nature of regulatory frameworks governing business establishments, the complexities within this landscape have emerged as a significant source of challenges encountered by businesses across developing nations (White, 2017). Stakeholders are inclined to view a nationwide business licensing system as a promising mechanism to mitigate the hurdles that can hinder business growth and development due to the convoluted nature of regulatory compliance. Allowing single license usage nationwide helps business processes become more efficient, reducing bureaucratic red tape and minimizing delays (Soans et al., 2016). This discussion proposed the following hypothesis:

H1. The adoption of a single license positively reduces challenges associated with complex regulations.

A harmonised licensing framework can engender more standardised and rigorous requirements that businesses must meet to obtain licenses. Stakeholders believe that a unified licensing approach, by imposing consistent quality and safety standards, can result in products and services that are more reliable, safe, and compliant (Ćirić et al., 2014). A unified licensing system enables more effective monitoring and enforcement of regulations, thereby minimizing the likelihood of substandard or unsafe products entering the market (Hossain, 2024). The increased attentiveness, combined with the imposition of stringent licensing prerequisites, contributes to elevating consumer trust and belief in the legitimacy and quality of businesses operating within the marketplace (Czinkota et al., 2014). Therefore, a unified licensing approach aligns business incentives with consumer interests, and that leads to the following hypothesis:

H2. The adoption of a single license has a positive effect on consumer protection.

By establishing transparent and standardised procedures for obtaining licenses, the system minimises the discretionary power often wielded by regulatory officials. This, in turn, reduces the potential for corrupt practices, such as bribery or favouritism, which can flourish in environments characterized by ambiguous and convoluted licensing processes. As it is known, companies face a variety of corruption risks that may be in large part due to the nature of their business activities (OECD, 2020). Stakeholders envisage that a nationwide licensing system can operate as a deterrent against corruption by enhancing transparency and accountability (Moffat et al., 2016). As the system aims to create a well-defined and publicly accessible framework for license acquisition, it makes a level playing field for businesses, reducing the need for illicit means to secure licenses. Moreover, the digitalization and centralization of the licensing process

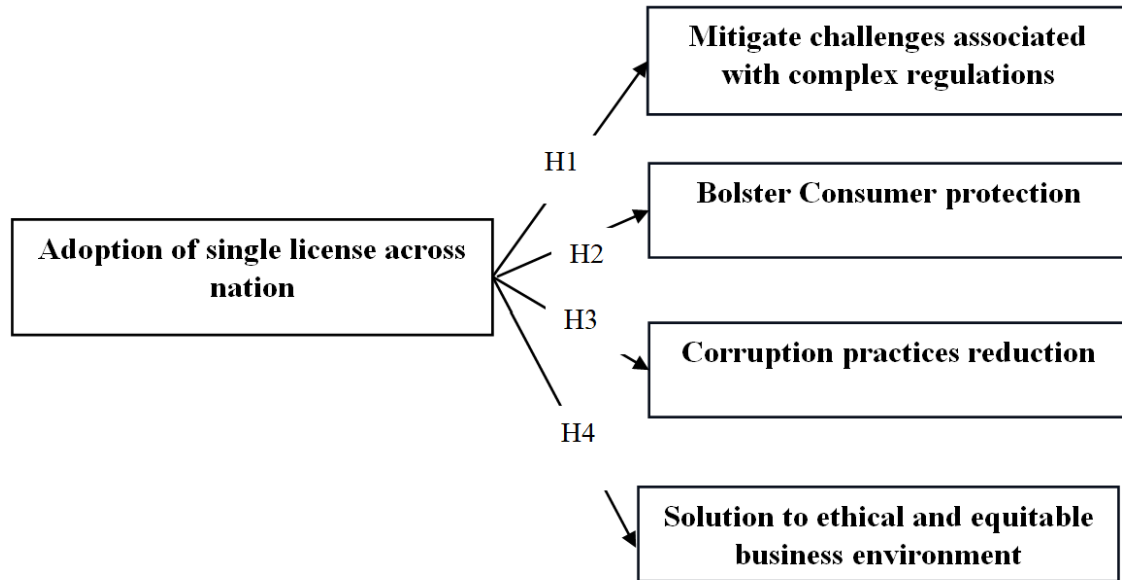
can leave a traceable digital trail (Selamat et al., 2013), making it more difficult for corrupt actors to manipulate the system discreetly. This information triggers the following hypothesis:

H3. The adoption of a single license has a positive effect on the reduction of corruption practices.

By offering a structured and standardised framework for acquiring licenses, the system is anticipated to diminish the disparities and ambiguities that often lead to unequal treatment or unfair advantages (Bennett et al., 2013; Stanfill et al., 2016). Stakeholders perceive that a unified licensing system can contribute to an environment where businesses are held to consistent ethical standards (Friedberg et al., 2004). As this system is designed to operate under clear rules and regulations, it reduces the latitude for businesses to engage in unethical behaviours that might have otherwise been facilitated by loosely defined or inconsistently applied licensing requirements. This information led to the following hypothesis:

H4. Adopting a single license positively affects an ethical and equitable business environment.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for the study.



Source: Author

2.0 METHODS

The material and methods section covers the research design, detailing the approach and structure used to conduct the study and the population and sampling methods that define the scope and selection of participants. It also describes the instruments utilized for data collection, outlining how information was gathered and measured to ensure reliability and validity. Furthermore, the section explains the statistical methods applied to analyze the data, ensuring data interpretation accuracy. Finally, ethical considerations are addressed to uphold integrity, confidentiality, and respect for all participants throughout the research process.

2.1 Research design

The study design used is cross-sectional, which allows a researcher to obtain information at the specific time data is collected. A cross-sectional study design was chosen because it will enable researchers to collect and analyze data at a particular time, making it suitable for examining relationships between variables without requiring long-term observation. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), cross-sectional designs are widely used in social sciences and business research as they provide a snapshot of a population, enabling researchers to efficiently identify patterns, trends, and associations.

2.2 Population and sampling

Due to the nature of this study, which requires data from agriculture-related entrepreneurs from Sumbawanga, Tanga, Mbeya, Njombe, and Ruvuma regions in Tanzania, the study focused on areas with the highest concentration of entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector. Data were sourced from the Tanzania National Bureau of Statistics and the Business Registration and Licensing Agency. The population consisted of entrepreneurs who had been in business for over three years (Castles, 1997). The entrepreneurs who operate in the agriculture sector are primarily engaged in transporting various food crops such as maize, rice, beans, potatoes, and bananas to the Dar es Salaam market.

Stratified random sampling was used to ensure the representation of at least 200 entrepreneurs from each region. The survey period lasted three months. A general rule of thumb for data analysis is to have at least 20 observations per independent variable group to satisfy the requirements of MANOVA (Multivariate Analysis of Variance). Initially, we distributed 350 questionnaires in each selected region, totaling 1,750. We collected at least 58% of the distributed questionnaires from each region. After data cleaning, we retained a valid response rate of 57% per region, resulting in a final sample of 200 valid responses from each region. Eight hundred (800) entrepreneurs met the criteria, and their data were cleaned and deemed appropriate for analysis.

2.3 Instruments

The study employed a questionnaire as the data collection tool. Training university students, compensated for their efforts in Sumbawanga, Tanga, Mbeya, Njombe, and Ruvuma regions, collected data. The questionnaires were distributed to entrepreneurs, who were given a period to complete them. The completed questionnaires were then collected after the designated time frame. The survey instrument was initially developed in English, then translated into Swahili, and back-translated into English. Tanzania employs Swahili and English as official languages; however, Swahili is predominantly used among entrepreneurs. To ensure conceptual and linguistic equivalence between the two versions, an independent scholar re-translated the Swahili version of the questionnaire into English. This process resulted in the identification and correction of minor errors. A questionnaire was chosen as the primary data collection tool due to its efficiency in gathering standardized responses from a large sample, ensuring consistency and comparability of data (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). Questionnaires allow researchers to collect quantitative data in a structured manner, making it easier to analyze relationships between variables while minimizing interviewer bias (Bryman, 2016).

2.4 Method of analysis

The analysis involved statistical methods, with MANOVA applied to test the hypotheses. The assumptions of MANOVA were verified to ensure that the results accurately addressed the proposed hypotheses. Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) was chosen as the primary

statistical method for hypothesis testing due to its ability to simultaneously analyze multiple dependent variables while accounting for potential correlations. This approach ensures a more comprehensive understanding of the effects of independent variables on various outcomes, reducing the risk of inflated Type I error that could arise from conducting separate ANOVAs (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

2.5 Ethical consideration

Adhering to ethical standards in research. As outlined in the study by Bjärsholm et al. (2018), the researchers communicated the research objectives, ensured the confidentiality of the participants' information, and sought ethical approval from the relevant department at Mzumbe University to ensure that ethical standards were met.

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 Demographics of the respondents

The demographic analysis of the survey respondents, as displayed in Table 1, reveals a notable gender disparity, with a higher representation of male entrepreneurs (62.5%) than female entrepreneurs (37.5%). Beans (31.88%) and maize (28.75%) are the most common specialized crops among respondents, followed by cassava (13.75%). Most respondents (95.75%) have formal education, suggesting that most entrepreneurs in this study have a foundational academic background, which may influence their understanding and perception of business licensing procedures. However, the entrepreneurs involved in this study were those capable of transporting their produce to the significant market in Dar es Salaam, with the specific crops delivered outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographics of Respondents

Variables	Frequency	%
Gender		
Male	500	62.50
Female	300	37.50
Total	800	100.00
Specialized Crops		
Rice	89	11.13
Maize	230	28.75
Beans	255	31.88
Potatoes	48	6.00
Bananas	68	8.50
Cassava	110	13.75
Total	800	100.00
Education		
Formal education	766	95.75
Non-Formal Education	34	4.25
Total	800	100

Source: Author

3.2 Descriptive statistics

Table 2 indicates mean and standard deviation results based on the variables of interest. Respondents generally agree that the business licensing system helps simplify regulatory compliance, as noted in the high mean score (4.2). However, the standard deviation (0.8) shows some variation in responses, meaning not all stakeholders share the same level of agreement. Based on the Enhancement of Consumer Trust, stakeholders perceive that business licensing improves consumer trust, though with a slightly lower level of agreement (mean = 3.8). The higher standard deviation (0.9) suggests more diverse opinions, indicating that some respondents may not be fully convinced of this benefit. Regarding Reduction in Corruption Opportunities, a mean score of 4.5 suggests that respondents strongly believe that business licensing reduces corruption opportunities. The low standard deviation (0.6) indicates a high consensus among

stakeholders. Lastly, business licensing contributes to fairness in business practices (mean = 4.1). The relatively low standard deviation (0.7) suggests that most respondents share this view.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Reduce the complexity of regulatory compliance	4.2	0.8
Enhance consumer trust	3.8	0.9
Reduce opportunities for corruption	4.5	0.6
Promote fairness in business practices	4.1	0.7

Source: Author

3.3 Box’s Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices

The study checks the assumption that the covariance matrices of the dependent variables should be equal across the groups defined by the independent variable. If the test is significant ($p < 0.05$), it suggests that this assumption has been violated, and the robustness of the MANOVA results might be affected (Pituch et al., 2015). The present study’s results show insignificant results ($p > 0.05$), therefore, not satisfying the assumption as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices

Box's M	F	df1	df2	Sig.
15.472	1.256	20	5242.1	0.203

Source: Author

3.4 Multivariate Test

The study did a multivariate test, including various multivariate test statistics (Pillai's Trace, Wilks' Lambda, Hotelling's Trace, Roy's Largest Root) that test whether significant differences exist between the groups on the combined dependent variables. A significant result ($p < 0.05$) indicates that the groups differ on the combination of dependent variables (Ntumi, 2021). Our study's results show a significant multivariate effect of the independent variable (Adoption of single license across the nation) on the dependent variables (Mitigate Challenges, Bolster Consumer Protection, Reduce Corruption Practices, and Promote Ethical Business Environment) as indicated in Table 4.

Table 4. Multivariate test

Effect	Test	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig
Adoption of single licenses across the nation	Pillai's Trace	0.123	5.432	4	795	0.02
	Wilks' Lambda	0.783	2.356	4	795	0.02
	Hotelling's Trace	0.265	2.367	4	795	0.02
	Roy's Largest Root	0.265	5.69	4	795	0.00

Source: Author

3.5 Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances

The study used Levene's test to test the assumption of equal error variances for each dependent variable, and non-significant results indicate that this assumption is met. In the present study, the p-values for each test are 0.05, indicating that the variances are equal across groups for each dependent variable(Dugard et al., 2022). Thus, the assumption of homogeneity of variances is met for all dependent variables, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances

Dependent Variable	F	df1	df2	Sig.
Mitigation of Challenges	2.345	1	798	0.126
Consumer Protection	1.789	1	798	0.422
Reduction in Corruption	3.456	1	798	0.063
Ethical and Equitable Business Environment	0.678	1	798	0.411

Source: Author

3.6 Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (Univariate Tests)

Also, The Tests of Between-Subjects Effects indicate that Adoption Status (Should not be adopted, should be adopted) significantly affects three out of four dependent variables: Mitigate Challenges, Bolster Consumer Protection, and Reduce Corruption Practices. However, the impact of promoting an Ethical Business Environment is not statistically significant. This means that adopting a single license significantly influences the challenges associated with complex regulations, consumer protection, and corruption practices. Still, its influence on promoting an ethical business environment is not statistically significant. The results are indicated in Table 6.

Table 6: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (Univariate Tests)

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Adoption of a single business license	Mitigate Challenges	45.678	1	45.678	12.345	0.001
	Bolster Consumer Protection	30.456	1	30.456	9.876	0.002
	Reduce Corruption Practices	25.678	1	25.678	7.123	0.008
	Promote an Ethical Business Environment	10.345	1	10.345	3.567	0.059
	Mitigate Challenges	2945.678	798	3.692		
	Bolster Consumer Protection	2445.678	798	3.066		
	Reduce Corruption Practices	2895.678	798	3.629		
	Promote an Ethical Business Environment	2905.678	798	3.641		

Source: Author

4.0 DISCUSSION

This study reinforces our understanding that adopting a single license across the nation significantly mitigates regulatory challenges, bolsters consumer protection, and reduces

corruption practices through its main results. However, it does not have a statistically significant impact on promoting an ethical and equitable business environment. Therefore, H1, H2, and H3 have been accepted, while H4 has been rejected.

The study found that adopting a single business license significantly reduces regulatory complexity, aligning with the findings of the World Bank (2019), which highlighted the positive impact of regulatory streamlining in mitigating business challenges. Simplifying the licensing process allows businesses to operate more efficiently, ensuring compliance while minimizing the bureaucratic burdens that often hinder entrepreneurial activities. By reducing administrative delays, excessive costs, and regulatory uncertainty, a single licensing system creates a more predictable and accessible business environment (World Economic Forum 2020). The finding also aligns with Nieuwenhuizen (2019), who emphasized that regulatory environments, complex legislation, and compliance requirements are key barriers to business start-ups and growth. Excessive regulatory constraints can discourage entrepreneurship, limit market participation, and slow economic expansion. Therefore, implementing regulatory reforms that streamline licensing saves entrepreneurs valuable time and resources and fosters a business-friendly ecosystem that promotes innovation, market competitiveness, and long-term sustainability (Rognstad et al., 2024).

Moreover, licensing frequently includes quality evaluations, adherence to safety benchmarks, and regulations for consumer protection. This is essential in assuring consumers that the products and services they acquire meet specific standards of quality and safety, thereby nurturing confidence in the market (Arindrajaya & Koos, 2022). The result suggested a positive effect of a single license on bolstering consumer protection, as shown in a study by Arindrajaya & Koos (2022). This study concluded in its results that regulations for consumer protection are essential in assuring consumers that the products and services they acquire meet specific standards of quality and safety. By consolidating licenses, the regulatory framework can more effectively oversee and enforce consumer protection laws, ensuring businesses adhere to required standards and reducing the likelihood of deceptive practices (Tavuyanago, 2019). Therefore, consolidating licensing systems within regulatory frameworks enhances consumer protection by streamlining oversight and enforcement mechanisms. As highlighted by previous studies and the current study results, a unified regulatory approach ensures that businesses adhere to required standards, thereby minimizing deceptive practices and fostering a more transparent marketplace. Regulatory consolidation ultimately benefits consumers and businesses by simplifying compliance processes and strengthening enforcement, creating a fair and trustworthy economic environment.

Last, a study demonstrated the significant reduction in corruption practices by adopting a single license, highlighting the importance of a streamlined and transparent licensing system. The result partially aligns with Prado (2023), which suggests that overlapping legal mechanisms and

streamlined processes can serve as strategies to combat corruption. This also aligns with a study by Warren et al. (2014), which discussed how accountability and transparency cultivate a sense of responsibility and act as a deterrent against fraudulent behaviours.

Therefore, adopting a single license promotes accountability and reduces opportunities for bribery and unethical practices in obtaining permits, contributing to a fairer and more transparent business environment. Transparency and accountability, fundamental aspects of business licensing, require businesses to furnish precise details about their operations.

Implications and Future Studies

The demonstrated reduction in regulatory complexity emphasizes the need for policymakers to continue refining the business registration and licensing processes. By restructuring bureaucratic procedures, enhance business efficiency, reduce administrative burdens, and encourage entrepreneurial growth.

To strengthen consumer protection, since the adoption of a single license positively influences it, regulatory bodies should integrate comprehensive quality and safety assessments within the licensing framework. This will further enhance consumer confidence and ensure businesses comply with industry standards.

Finally, the observed decline in corruption highlights the importance of transparent and efficient licensing systems. Therefore, authorities should strengthen digitalization efforts, introduce automated approval processes, and minimize human discretion in licensing decisions to sustain and amplify these anti-corruption effects.

Despite this study's success, certain limitations exist. The study covered a limited number of locations; therefore, to generalize the findings and obtain more robust insights, future research should encompass a broader geographical scope. This study focused exclusively on entrepreneurs dealing with food crops, excluding those involved in cash crops such as coffee, cotton, cashew nuts, tobacco, tea, and sisal. As a result, future studies should also explore these entrepreneurs to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research objectives.

5.0 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, adopting a single license across the nation mitigates regulatory challenges, bolsters consumer protection, and reduces corruption practices. These findings underscore the multifaceted role of business licensing in regulating and controlling economic activities, safeguarding public interests, and enhancing market confidence. Continuing efforts to simplify and streamline the licensing procedures can further reduce regulatory complexity and bureaucratic hurdles, ensuring businesses can operate efficiently and within the legal framework.

Moreover, strengthen the enforcement of consumer protection laws through regular evaluations and adherence to quality and safety benchmarks. This will ensure that the benefits of the single license system translate into real improvements in product and service standards.

Additionally, engage with various stakeholders, including businesses, consumers, and regulatory bodies, to gather feedback and insights. This collaborative approach can help refine the licensing system and effectively address emerging challenges, implement measures to increase transparency and accountability in business operations. This includes requiring businesses to provide detailed and accurate information about their activities, which can help deter fraudulent behaviors and reduce corruption.

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