



Food safety knowledge and hygiene practices among street vendors

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Abstract

This descriptive-correlational study aimed to investigate the relationship between food safety knowledge and hygiene practices among street vendors. There were 150 respondents of street vendors in Barangay Tibal-og, Santo Tomas Davao del Norte who were chosen through universal sampling. This study used two adopted questionnaires. Mean, Pearson r, and standard deviation were used as statistical tools. The findings of the study showed that food safety knowledge in terms of transmission of food-borne diseases, personal and health hygiene, cross-contamination, and temperature control is much observed. Hygiene practices of street vendors are much evident. The results of this study showed that the food safety knowledge of street vendors has a great influence on hygiene practices. It implies that the knowledge of food safety leads to good hygienic practices, as vendors who understand the importance of food safety are more likely to take measures to ensure their personal and food hygiene is also up to standard. Therefore, it was hoped that this study could influence street vendors to prioritize and adopt good hygiene practices in the hope of achieving several positive outcomes, including increased sales and a positive reputation among customers. By emphasizing the importance of hygiene, the study hoped to create awareness among vendors about the impact it can have on their businesses. Also, this study recommends that customers be urged to patronize businesses that place a high priority on cleanliness and safety.

Keywords: *food safety knowledge, hygiene practices, street vendors, barangay tibal-og, descriptive-correlational*

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Introduction

Street food becomes a common business and a significant component of many people's daily meals. Street vendors may offer a wide range of food options, often reflecting the food culture of the region. Street food vending is a popular and informal way of earning a livelihood for many people around the world, particularly in low-income countries where formal employment opportunities may be limited. However, the results of the study carried out in Kenya reveal that while the majority of respondents wore gloves and aprons, some failed to adhere to hygienic food handling processes, which increased the risk of contamination. The majority of survey participants reportedly got recognized guidance and instruction in food handling methods, which may have affected how they viewed hygiene (Obinda et al., 2021).

In the Philippines, a study conducted in Eastern Visayas, revealed that while the majority of food handlers had some knowledge of food safety, had taken multiple food safety training courses, and had a tertiary education, these characteristics did not always translate to good attitudes and practices in food hygiene (Pascual et al., 2019). In July 2022, a severe diarrhea outbreak hit Toril district near Davao City, affecting 217 people with six fatalities. *Vibrio cholera* was identified as the cause, attributed to contaminated food. Dr. Ashley Lopez, City Health Department's acting director, highlighted contaminated food as the likely transmission source, supported by a 60 percent positive rate in patient rectal swabs. The outbreak was linked to specific food sources, including a food cart on Rasay Street and the district's public market. Despite the outbreak's impact, the situation had improved within a month (Mindanao Times, 2022).

The research aims to discover knowledge and behavior gaps that could result in food contamination and possible health hazards for consumers by examining the hygiene practices of street vendors. The results could guide policy suggestions, training programs, and interventions that are specifically designed to raise hygiene standards and ensure community members can consume street food safely.

Methodology

The study utilized a quantitative descriptive-correlational method of research to collect data. The goal of the descriptive study was to precisely and methodically describe a

population, circumstance, or phenomenon. It can respond to inquiries about what, where, when, and how, but not why. To explore one or more variables, a descriptive research design might employ a wide range of research techniques (McCombes, 2022). A correlational study design looked at correlations between variables without the researcher modifying or controlling any of them. A correlation showed the intensity and/or direction of the association between two or more variables (Bhandari, 2022).

A universal sampling technique was used to ensure representation and minimize bias. Universal sampling was a probability sampling technique that aimed to reduce bias and increased sample representatives (Huang & Lin, 2019). There are 150 street vendors in Barangay Tibal-og are being selected as respondents of this study. The study used two (2) adapted survey questionnaires consisting of Likert scale questions to assess participants' knowledge of food safety knowledge and their hygiene practices. Researchers frequently modify existing questionnaires to better suit the goal of their study because creating new questionnaires would take too much time and money (De Sousa et al., 2017). The researchers personally administered the research questionnaire to the respondents on site.

Statistical treatment of data like mean and Pearson r. were employed to explore the relationship between food safety knowledge and hygiene practices, quantifying the strength and direction of this relationship. The research outcomes were then presented using tables and statistical measures to provide a clear and comprehensive understanding of how food safety knowledge correlated with the hygiene practices of street vendors in Barangay Tibal-og.

The study obtained necessary permissions from relevant authorities and followed ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects. Informed consent was obtained from each participant, ensuring their willingness to take part. Confidentiality of participants' responses was maintained, and data was anonymized during analysis to protect their privacy. Additionally, efforts were made to minimize any potential discomfort or harm to participants during the data collection process.

Findings

The level of food safety knowledge had an overall mean of 4.89 with a descriptive equivalent of very high. It obtained an overall standard deviation of 0.32, indicating that the

food safety knowledge of street vendors was much observed. This means that when vendors understand the risks associated with foodborne illness and the importance of maintaining hygiene practices, they are more likely to take the necessary precautions to prevent contamination of their food. Similarly, the level of hygiene practices had an overall mean of 4.91 with a descriptive equivalent of very high. It obtained an overall standard deviation of 0.31, suggesting that the hygiene practices of street vendors were much evident. High levels of hygiene practices can help to build trust and confidence among consumers, which can lead to increased sales and better business for the vendors. Consumers are more likely to purchase food from vendors who have a reputation for cleanliness and safety. Ensuring that street vendors adhered to high levels of hygiene practices is critical for both public health and the success of their businesses. Governments and health authorities provide support and education to vendors to help maintain these standards. The relationship between food safety knowledge and hygiene practices showed a positive correlation with a p-value of 0.000, which is lower than the significance level of 0.05. This result indicates the rejection of the null hypothesis. Moreover, the r-value of 0.677, the degree of two variables had a strong positive correlation.

Conclusion

This study concludes that street vendors in Barangay Tibal-og exhibit a very high level of food safety knowledge and hygiene practices, with a significant positive relationship observed between these factors. Enhanced food safety knowledge positively influences vendors' hygiene practices, fostering contamination prevention. High levels of hygiene practices build consumer trust, potentially boosting sales. Local Government Units are recommended to educate vendors on food safety, consumers should support hygienic vendors, and vendors' knowledge on foodborne diseases and hygiene must remain high for public health.

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