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## **SOCIO-ECONOMIC LIFE, FINANCIAL CAPABILITIES, AND SANITATION PRACTICES OF AMBULANT BUKO JUICE VENDORS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Cities and urban places are the perfect picturesque view for good and stable life on the perspective of the rural people who wants to migrate and dwell with the cities and urban lifestyle. However, the in-demand opportunities of jobs offered by the cities may not suited for the lacking qualities people which may lead into not a perfect view. Thus, their breaking point is they involved into informal jobs and street vending to survive. Street vending provides employment to people who were unable to apply to formal jobs because most of the companies need high educated degree and competency. Buko juice vending is considered one of the important informal activities to the street vendors of Tuguegarao City, Cagayan, Philippines because it is easy to generate income, sustain their basic and daily needs, and it is suited to the weather condition of the place. This study aimed to determine the socio-economic, financial capabilities, and sanitation practices of the buko juice vendors. Twenty buko juice vendors were involved in the study through descriptive survey and interview. Result revealed that buko juice vending is an important economic activity of the vendors because it is the only means to sustain their basic needs. Moreover, the result showed that most of the respondents depend into this business because there were no other sources of income to sustain the needs of the family. In terms of their sanitation practices, buko juice vendors follow the proper decorum on preparing the product because they consider the health of the customer.

**Keywords:** *Socio-economic Status, Financial Capabilities, Sanitation Practices, Buko Juice Vendors, Street Vending*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The progress and development of a certain nation can be seen if most of the citizens have their own stable jobs (Grant, 2012). This shows that urbanization takes place but due to prosperity, the qualifications to apply a certain work need more competent, skilled, knowledgeable and proficient in a certain field. Consequently, some people engage in an informal economy or underground economy (Elgin & Uyvatt, 2012).

The Street Vendors Act (2014) defined street vendor as a person who engaged in vending of articles, goods, wares, food items or merchandise of everyday use or offering services to the general public, in a street, lane, side walk, footpath, pavement, public park or any other public place or private area, from a temporary built up structure or by moving from place to place. Street vendors provide an easy access to a wide range of goods and it shows that between 2 to 24 percent make up the informal sector in urban areas of Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Roever, 2014). Informal economy provides work to unemployed, incompetent, and unskilled worker to provide and sustain their basic and daily needs. Low level of educational attainment cannot guarantee an applicant for the placement in formal jobs since educational attainment is one of the most influential factor (Mitullah, 2014). The growing numbers of informal sector is one of the manifestation that some people depend on what they generate into this business to sustain their basic and daily needs. People from their local environment tend to migrate in cities to seek for job opportunities, however, informal jobs is the only way for unskilled and low educational attainment to employ themselves. Thus, this study will emphasize the effect of informal economy specifically buko juice vending to the socio economic life and the financial capabilities of the vendors.

Buko juice (coconut water) vending is one of the famous informal economies that can be seen in sidewalks, pedestrian, and even in schools and near the business stalls. Buko juice vending is an informal itinerant business which vendors move from one place to another to look for customers. The Philippines as an agricultural country produces tons of crops like rice, corn, sugarcane, coconut, and other agricultural products. The Philippine Coconut Authority (2013) said that Philippine is the second top producer of coconut in the world. It produces 15.207 billion nuts/year averages in every 44 nuts/tree/year average. Some Filipinos used the coconut fruit in street vending as their source of income. Buko juice vending is one of the primordial informal activities in Tuguegarao City, Cagayan, Philippines primarily because of its hot climate. However, generally, food being sold and offer by the street vendors are not that of clean compared to other formal economies. Hence, the proper sanitation would be included in this study in order to know the perception of the customers regarding the sanitation practices of buko juice vendors and for the vendors would assess themselves.

Meanwhile, the fluctuation of street vendors in urban areas particularly in the public pedestrian may cause traffic congestion and add burden to the time management of the people. Moreover, the beauty and cleanliness of city will be affected due to the informal economies flocking along the sidewalks. In her address, Senator Santiago (2009) specified that a good city is one with great sidewalks. She emphasized the presence of the S.B. No. 1757 bill or the "Clear Sidewalks Act of 2009" which is to ensure that

sidewalks are free from unauthorized commercial or personal use to facilitate the smooth passage of persons and to clear obstructions to vehicular flow.

Tuguegarao City is dubbed as "Center of Excellence in Education, Commerce, Trade and Culture in Northeast Philippines" and the "Economic Center of Region 02" (Tuguegarao, 2014). Many people migrate to the city hoping to earn more money to sustain their living. However, one of the observable effects of migration in the city is the increasing number of street vending particularly buko juice vending. Therefore, this paper aimed to determine the socio- economic status, financial capabilities, and sanitation practices of the buko juice vendors in Tuguegarao, City.

This research is a significant endeavor in determining the financial capabilities, socio- economic status, and sanitation practices of buko juice vendors. The findings accumulated by this study provided significant benefits to the City government of Tuguegarao, Department of Labor and Employment, and to the Department of Agriculture to give possible actions, assistance, and support to the socioeconomic life and financial problems of buko juice vendors. Moreover, this research provided additional information to the sanitation practices of the buko juice vendors that promoted awareness on the consumers' health.

### Research Objectives

This study was conducted with the following objectives: (a) to identify the demographic profile of the respondents; (b) to identify the business profile of the respondents; (c) to identify the monthly priority budgets of the respondents; (d) to identify the common problems and issues of the respondents with regard to the buko juice vending; and (e) to determine the sanitation practices with regard to buko juice vending as assessed by the vendors and their customers.

### METHODS

This study employed mixed method of research. The respondents who were involved in this study were the 20 buko juice vendors and 100 buko juice customers in the city of Tuguegarao, Cagayan. To determine the numbers of buko juice vendors, snowball sampling was utilized. Ethical consideration was employed by the researchers to secure the confidentiality of the accumulated answers and information given by the respondents and to avoid exploitation of private information.

This study utilized a questionnaire with three parts which was patterned from the study Tindowen (2015). However, the researchers made modifications in order to suit to the need of the respondents. The first part

consisted of the personal and demographic profile of the respondents which includes the following variables: age, sex, and civil status, and present address, place of origin, educational attainment, and number of dependents. The second part of the questionnaire included the business profile of the respondents such as number of years in buko juice vending, other sources of income, length of time of daily buko juice vending, amount of capital used in buko juice vending, sources of capital used in buko juice vending, number of persons who help in buko juice vending, and daily profits and monthly earnings of the respondents. The third part of the questionnaire comprised of the expenditures of the buko juice vendors in their business. Meanwhile, a separate questionnaire which was patterned from Buted and Ylagan (2014) was utilized to determine the sanitary satisfaction of the buko juice customers. Moreover, the researchers conducted interview in order to gather information about the financial capabilities, problems with regard buko juice vending and reasons of the respondents in engaging buko juice vending.

## RESULTS

Table 1. Personal and Demographic Profile of the Respondents

PROFILE VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
<b>Age</b>		
20 and below	4	20.00
21-40	10	50.00
41-60	6	30.00
61 and above	0	0
<b>AVERAGE AGE</b>	<b>33</b>	
<b>Civil Status</b>		
Single	8	40.00
Married	12	60.00
Widow/Widower	0	0
<b>Present Address</b>		
Tanza, Tuguegarao City	1	5.00
Ugac Norte, Tuguegarao City	1	5.00
Caritan Sur, Tuguegarao City	7	35.00
Enrile, Cagayan Province	1	5.00
Bagumbayan, Tuguegarao City	1	5.00
Iguig, Cagayan Province	3	15.00
Carig Sur, Tuguegarao City	2	10.00
Carig Norte, Tuguegarao City	1	5.00
Annanun, Tuguegarao City	1	5.00
Isabela Province	2	10.00

<b>Place of Origin</b>		
Tuguegarao City, Cagayan Province	4	20.00
Enrile, Cagayan Province	1	5.00
Tuao, Cagayan Province	1	5.00
Gattaran, Cagayan Province	1	5.00
Iguig, Cagayan Province	3	15.00
Isabela Province	3	15.00
Pangasinan Province	7	35.00
<b>Educational Attainment</b>		
None	1	5.00
Elementary Undergraduate	3	15.00
Elementary Graduate	2	10.00
High School Undergraduate	6	30.00
High School Graduate	7	35.00
College Graduate	1	5.00
<b>Number of Dependents</b>		
0	2	10.00
1- 3	10	50.00
4- 6	5	25.00
7- above	3	15.00
<b>AVERAGE NUMBER OF DEPENDENTS</b>	<b>3</b>	

Table 1 presents the demographic and personal background of the respondents. As reflected in the table, majority of the respondents have age ranging from 21- 40 with a mean age of 33 years old. Most of them are married with an average of 3 dependents. Most of the respondents reside on Caritan Sur, Tuguegarao City, Philippines. It is also important to note that the majority of the place of origin of the respondent came from the province of Pangasinan located in the Ilocos Region. This indicates that some of the respondents are migrants and choose Tuguegarao City as the place where they conduct buko juice vending. Lastly, most of the respondents are high school graduate.

Table 2. Business Profile of the Respondents

<b>PROFILE VARIABLES</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
<b>Number of Years in Sidewalk Vending</b>		
1-5	7	35.00
6-10	4	20.00
11-15	4	20.00
16-20	2	10.00
21-25	3	15.00
<b>AVERAGE NUMBER OF YEARS</b>	<b>11</b>	

<b>Others Sources of Income</b>		
Yes	7	35.00
No	13	65.00
<b>Length of Time of Daily Sidewalk Vending</b>		
1-3 Hours	0	0
4-6 Hours	4	20.00
7-9 Hours	8	40.00
10 and above	8	40.00
<b>AVERAGE LENGTH</b>	<b>8</b>	
<b>Amount of Capital</b>		
Below 1000	9	45.00
1001-2000	9	45.00
2001-3000	0	0
3001-4000	0	0
4001-5000	1	5.00
Above 5000	1	5.00
<b>AVERAGE AMOUNT OF CAPITAL</b>	<b>1,530.00</b>	
<b>Sources of Capital</b>		
Borrowings	8	40.00
Personal Savings	12	60.00
<b>Number of Persons Helping in the Business</b>		
None	12	60.00
One	1	5.00
Two	2	10.00
Three	4	20.00
Four	0	0
Five	1	5.00
<b>Daily Profits of the Respondent</b>		
Less than 100	0	0
101- 501	14	70.00
501- 1000	3	15.00
More than 1000	3	15.00
<b>AVERAGE DAILY PROFIT</b>	<b>560.00</b>	
<b>Monthly Earning of the Respondents</b>		
Less than 3000	4	20.00
3001- 6000	9	45.00
6001- 9000	1	5.00
9001- 12000	2	10.00
12001 and above	4	20.00

Table 2 shows the business profile of the respondents. As seen in the results, the average number of years that the respondents are engage in to this kind of business is 11 years. Majority of the respondents engage in buko juice vending don't have any other sources of income.

In addition, buko juice vendors spend at least 4 hours in vending. Meanwhile, capital used by respondents for this business is at most 2,000.00 with an average 1, 530.00. On the other hand, majority of the respondents accumulate their capital through personal savings. Also, majority of the respondents have daily profit ranging from 101- 500. The average monthly income of the respondents ranged from 3,000 to 6,000.

Table 3. Monthly Priority Budget of the Respondents

Expenditures	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Food	20	100.00	1
Fuel, Light, and Water	18	90.00	2
Education of Children	16	80.00	3
Clothing	14	70.00	4
Medical Care	13	65.00	5
House Rentals	12	60.00	6
Alcoholic Beverages	8	40.00	7
Transportation and Communication	7	35.00	8
House Maintenance	5	25.00	9.5
Personal Care (Perfume and Jewelry)	5	25.00	9.5
Cigarettes	4	20.00	11
Recreation	3	15.00	12

Table 3 shows the monthly priority budget of the respondents. The result revealed that the buko juice vendors prioritized food, fuel, light, water, and education of the children and the least prioritized are their personal wants such as recreation and cigarettes.

Table 4. Common Problems of the Respondents with Regard to Buko Juice Vending

Common Problems	Frequency	Percentage
Space and Place for Vending	5	25.00
Weather	13	65.00
Lack of Capital	1	5.00
Pollution	1	85.00
Many Competitors	2	10.00

Table 4 shows the common problems of the respondents as regards buko juice vending. Majority of respondents said the weather has a great impact on their business and the least common problem is lack of capital and pollution.

Table 5. Sanitation Practices of Buko Juice Vendors

Sanitation Practices	Consumers		Vendors	
	Weighted Mean	Qualitative Description	Weighted Mean	Qualitative Description
The working area is clean.	3.36	Moderately Agree	4.35	Strongly Agree
The materials used are clean.	3.37	Moderately Agree	4.15	Agree
The use of hairnets and gloves.	2.56	Disagree	1.80	Strongly Disagree
Areas are generally clean and orderly.	3.20	Moderately Agree	4.10	Agree
Availability of clean trash containers.	3.51	Agree	4.10	Agree
All containers have tight fitting covers.	3.45	Agree	4.45	Strongly Agree
Maintaining the cleanliness of buko juice container and making sure it's free from dirt.	3.46	Agree	4.45	Strongly Agree
All disposable plastic cups are clean.	3.93	Agree	4.70	Strongly Agree
The water used is purified.	3.11	Moderately Agree	3.15	Moderately Agree
The personal hygiene of the vendors is observed.	3.36	Moderately Agree	4.05	Agree
<b>Average Mean</b>	<b>3.331</b>	<b>Moderately Agree</b>	<b>3.94</b>	<b>Agree</b>

The table shows the sanitation practices of buko juice vendors as assessed by the themselves and their customers. As observed in the table, the vendors moderately agreed with the sanitation practices while the customers agreed with the sanitation practices. The buko juice vendors have a strong agreement that they practice the following sanitation practices: (1) the working area is clean; (2) the proper use of hairnets and gloves are well practiced; (3) all containers have tight fitting covers; (4) the cleanliness of buko juice container and making sure it is free from dirt is maintained; and (5) all disposable plastic cups are clean.

The customers on the other hand, are in agreement on the following sanitation practices of buko juice vendors: (1) availability of clean trash; (2) all

containers have tight fitting covers; (3) the cleanliness of buko juice container and making sure it is free from dirt is maintained; and (4) all disposable plastic cups are clean.

## DISCUSSION

This study aimed to determine the socio- economic life, financial capabilities, and sanitation practices of buko juice vendors. In terms of personal and demographic profile of the respondents, majority of the vendors have age ranging 21- 40 with a mean age 33 years old. At this age people were left behind because of the age problem. Most of companies resort to the younger employees because they work more efficient. It is important to note that there were no vendors aged 61- above. According to the result of the interview, the vendors need to be patient and physically fit because they were exposed under the heat of the sun and to air pollution. Also there are buko juice vendors who are minors. Two out of four respondents are below 18 which in the result of the interview, this kind of business can sustain their needs and help their parents. .

In terms of civil status, most of the respondents are married with an average of dependents whom they rely on the income generated by the respondents. Majority of them reside in Caritan Sur, Tuguegarao City. Since, Caritan Sur is near the city proper of Tuguegarao, they can easily prepare and find place where they sell their products. On the other hand, the results also show that most of the respondents originally came from the rural areas in Pangasinan and Cagayan provinces excluding Tuguegarao City. The result confirms the study of Bhowmik (2005) and Husain, Yasmin & Islam (2015) that people migrated in urban areas because of the opportunity to generate income and to be employed. The result of the interview further revealed that those who came from Pangasinan exemplified that the major reason of their migration is to generate more income through buko juice vending and to look for a better living. Moreover, the result of the interview revealed that they have relatives in the city and they said to them to put up buko juice business though most of the vendors already have experience in buko juice vending.

Furthermore, most of the respondents are high school graduates. This implies that the buko juice vendors are unskilled to look for formal jobs. Thus, it is difficult for them to look for formal and decent jobs since most of the companies require higher educational degrees and competencies. This affirms the study of Timalisina (2011) that rural migrant having low educational level and skills are force to involve themselves in the informal economy for their scanty of livelihood. Based on the result of the interview, buko juice vendors resorted in this business since this is the only means to survive and to earn for living. This affirms the study of Elgin and Oyvat (2012) that people

engaged in the informal economy because they can't look for a formal job to sustain their living.

In terms of the business profile of the respondents, vendors are involved in buko juice vending for 11 years already. Result of interview specified that this kind of business is very popular to Tuguegarao because of its warm climate. Also, this business helps them for survival and such sustaining their basic and daily needs and in the education of their children. Further, the result shows that there are some vendors who are already engaged in buko juice vending for almost 25 years. Meanwhile, it is important to note that majority of the respondents don't have any companion in selling buko juice. Result of the interview revealed that majority of the respondents said that their children are still young and most of them spend their time in studying while others are not already in the care of their parents.

In terms of other sources of income of the vendors, most of them don't have any other sources of income. Result of the interview revealed that, only a little number of them have other sources of income namely tricycle driving, construction, and managing sari- sari store. This shows that majority of the respondents depend on buko juice vending. This claim is supported by the study of Adhikari (2011) that street vending sector is an important sector that provides employment and income to the poor people in urban sector. In addition, buko juice vendors spend an average of 8 hours in vending. In the result of the interview, most of the vendors wake up early at around 5 o' clock in the morning to prepare all the things they needed and they start around 9: 00 in the morning. This affirms the study of Asiedu & Agyei- Mensah (2008) that street vendors work for very long hours to sell their products. The result shows that majority of the respondents spend a lot of hours until all their products are sold.

Meanwhile, the amount capital used by respondents started from two thousand pesos since this kind of vending is a small scale business. This suggests that anyone can start this kind of business without higher amount of capital. On the other hand, majority of the respondents accumulated their capital through personal savings. This affirms the study of Husain, Yasmin & Islam (2015) that personal saving is the single most important in financing their vending business. Moreover, the daily profits of the respondents range from PHP101- 500. This shows that since the capital of the respondents is small, they also gain a little amount in return. Most of the respondents said that their daily income is just enough to sustain their daily living such as paying of food, fuel, and light, education of the children, and house rental. In addition, the average monthly income of the respondents is from PHP3, 000.00 to 6,000.00. National Economic and Development Authority (2009) said that the family of 5 has the income generation of 7, 768. 80 monthly they can get out of poverty. However, the result shows that the monthly income of the vendors did not meet the NEDA's average income. This means that

majority of the respondents are experiencing poverty. In the result of the interview, majority of the respondents said that they cannot save money because after selling, they need to spend their income to buy for their daily needs. Also, it is important to note that 4 out of 20 vendors' monthly income start from 12,001 and above. It was revealed in the interview that they were selling buko juice for many years and most of their customers were loyal to them and most of them know where to put their business like near the central business district and schools.

The result also revealed that the buko juice vendors prioritized food, fuel, light, water, and education of the children. This shows that the buko juice vendors allocate their monthly income in the basic and daily needs to survive. Moreover, they also budget their income in clothing and medical care. In the interview, the respondents save money for medical care for the future if ever there are accident and sickness. However, it is also important to note that some buko juice vendors budget their money in alcoholic beverages. In the interview, some of the respondents said that they take alcohol or liquors to relieve their tired and it is one way to have time to their selves. In addition, most of the respondents are male and it is in the nature of man to take alcohol as a way of their recreation activity. It is also revealed in the result that half of the respondents budget their income in house rental. Since, majority of the respondents don't have permanent house in the city, they have to pay for their monthly rental fee. Lastly, the least priority of the respondents are their personal wants such as recreation and cigarettes. Majority of the respondent said that they don't have time in recreation activities since they have small income and they need to work hard just to sustain the basic and daily need of the family.

Furthermore, majority of the respondents said that the weather has a great impact on their business. Result of the interview revealed that 13 out of 20 said that if it is rainy season, their income is affected. However, because majority of the respondents depend on this business they need to continue vending because this is the only means to sustain their daily needs. Also, it is important to note that 5% of the respondents said that they have a problem in capital. Since it is one of the least problems, the interview revealed that most of the vendors just borrow the buko fruits and if it was sold they will return the cost of the buko fruit.

In terms of their sanitation practice, the result shows that vendors usually buy plastic cups in the sari-sari store because they know that it is clean and free from dirt. However, they consider this to avoid any issue to them regarding the cleanliness of the cups. Also, most of the items were honestly answered by the vendors with strong agreement. The vendors said that safety and being careful in making buko juice is one of their considerations in order for them to avoid any issues like food poisoning that led to the danger of their customers. The vendors also stressed that after

selling, the containers they used were washed every night and they wiped in with clean garments. The utensils and equipment they used were clean because after making buko juice they have to wash it thoroughly. Also, the vendors observed personal hygiene. In the interview, they said that being pleasant and clean is one of the factors to consider first because customers will not buy to them if they smell unpleasant. It is important to note that the lowest item being assessed by the respondents is the using of hairnets and gloves. Since buko juice is an informal economy and most of the vendors have a little knowledge about sanitation practice, washing of hands is enough to be considered clean.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study found out that buko juice vending is an important informal economic activity to the buko juice vendors since it is the only means to sustain their basic and daily needs. Vendors rely into this kind of business because it is easy to operate and they can put it up with a small capital. However, majority of them rely to the income they generate in this business because they don't have any other sources of income. In sanitation practices, vendors are observing proper decorum in practicing sanitation to avoid danger to the customers' health. However, using of hairnet and gloves as germ protections are not properly implemented to them since they regard washing of hands is considerably enough. The results of the study would cater to the proper implementation of food safety and sanitation of other street vendors.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The city government unit through its City Health Office should forcedly implement proper sanitation and hygiene practices as a basic rule and regulation to avoid health related issues especially to street vendors and to their customers.

Buko juice vendors can create a cooperative organization to have a financial support in their business since they only have one resource hub.

A further study should be conducted to explore more about this kind of business and practices of buko juice vendors and this would be a medium or reference to study other informal activities.

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