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Food Safety Practices of Street Food Vendors in the Fourth District of Iloilo: Basis for Policy Review

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ABSTRACT

Street food vending provides affordable meals to a diverse population, yet pressing concerns about food safety practices, especially in food preparation, personal hygiene, and food storage, demand immediate attention. This study aimed to evaluate the food safety practices of street food vendors in the Fourth District of Iloilo, Philippines, serving as a basis for policy recommendations. This descriptive research utilized 71 street food vendors in six municipalities in the fourth district of Iloilo. A researcher-made questionnaire, which was submitted to validity and reliability (r=0.78) tests, was utilized to gather related data from the respondents. The results showed that in general, the level of food safety practices of the respondents was "high". This means that they showed a strong level of experience or ability, with good confidence in performing the practice effectively. The results also showed that in terms of sex, female respondents are better in terms of general food safety practices as compared to male respondents. Those who operated using stall or cart are also better in terms of the general food safety practices as compared to those who were mobile, in terms of the type of facility used. Meanwhile, there were no significant differences in the level of food safety practices of the respondents in terms of education, years of operation, municipality, and type of merchandise sold. However, respondents need to improve some aspects of food safety practices on personal hygiene, especially on the use of a hairnet, apron, and face mask. Recommendations on personal hygiene, food safety and sanitation, and food storage were likewise forwarded.

Keywords: Food safety practices, food vendors, street foods, descriptive research, Iloilo, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Background and Rationale

Street food vending is a common culinary tradition in the Fourth District of Iloilo, offering affordable and accessible meal options to a varied population. However, there are growing concerns about the food safety practices of vendors in the area, prompting the need for a thorough review of existing literature to pinpoint the factors that affect food safety and to explore potential strategies for improvement.

A study by Parreñas et al. (2018) examined the food safety knowledge and practices of street food vendors in Iloilo City. The results showed that while vendors possessed some fundamental understanding of food safety, their actual practices were often inadequate. Issues included insufficient handwashing, improper food storage and handling, and a general lack of awareness regarding the risks of cross-contamination.

Research by Jalandoni et al. (2019) identified several factors impacting food safety practices among these vendors. Their study revealed that vendors with lower educational attainment and less experience were more likely to violate safe food handling protocols. Additionally, those who have limited access to clean water and sanitation facilities did not exhibit better food safety practices than those who had such resources. Meanwhile, a study by Jaranillo et al. (2020) demonstrated that vendors who did not undergo training showed less improvement in both their knowledge and application of food safety measures.

The Fourth District of Iloilo faces unique challenges regarding food safety for street food vendors. The province's rural and mountainous landscape can limit access to clean water and proper sanitation, while the absence of centralized waste management further complicates food safety. Moreover, the district's dispersed population and minimal regulatory oversight may lead to continued substandard practices among vendors. Based on the literature review, several recommendations can be made to enhance food safety among street food vendors in the Fourth District of Iloilo such as food safety training, access to clean water, tight implementation of regulations, awareness about food safety among consumers, and collaboration with the government and local communities.

Ensuring food safety among street food vendors in the Fourth District of Iloilo requires a comprehensive approach that tackles the root causes of inadequate practices. The researcher emphasizes that consumer safety must be the highest priority, advocating for a preventative approach to food safety, thus, there is an urgent need to empower street food vendors regarding food safety practices. The findings of this study will assist local authorities in the Fourth District of Iloilo in refining their policies to better support street food vendors.

Theoretical Framework

The study employed the Food Safety Culture Framework as its theoretical foundation, emphasizing the collective values, beliefs, and behaviors that influence food safety within the vendor community. The Food Safety Culture Framework was notably advanced by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the United States, particularly in the context of the food service industry. The FDA first introduced the concept in their Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), which was enacted in 2011. The framework has since evolved through various publications and guidelines aimed at promoting a culture of food safety within organizations.

This framework enables an exploration of the shared values that street food vendors hold regarding food safety, including their perceptions of hygiene and compliance with regulatory standards. This research aims to determine how well these behaviors align with established food safety principles by assessing their day-to-day practices such as handwashing and food storage. Additionally, the framework highlights the role of leadership and influential figures in shaping food safety culture, as well as the environmental and structural factors, such as access to clean water and sanitation, that impact vendors' practices. It also underscores the importance of continuous education and training, facilitating ongoing improvement in food safety knowledge and practices. Through this comprehensive approach, the study seeks to illuminate the cultural dynamics affecting food safety among street vendors, ultimately informing targeted strategies that promote safe food handling and enhance public health in the region.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework of the study, outlining the intricate relationships among the various variables involved. Specifically, the independent variables encompass the profile of the respondents, which includes factors such as sex, age, education, years of operation, municipality, type of facility, and type of merchandise sold. In contrast, the dependent variable is defined as the level of food safety practices, which can be categorized into five distinct levels: very high, high, moderate, low, or very low. Furthermore, the study aimed to produce a specific output in the form of policy recommendations, which was derived from a thorough analysis of the data collected from the respondents, thereby ensuring that the recommendations are both relevant and actionable.

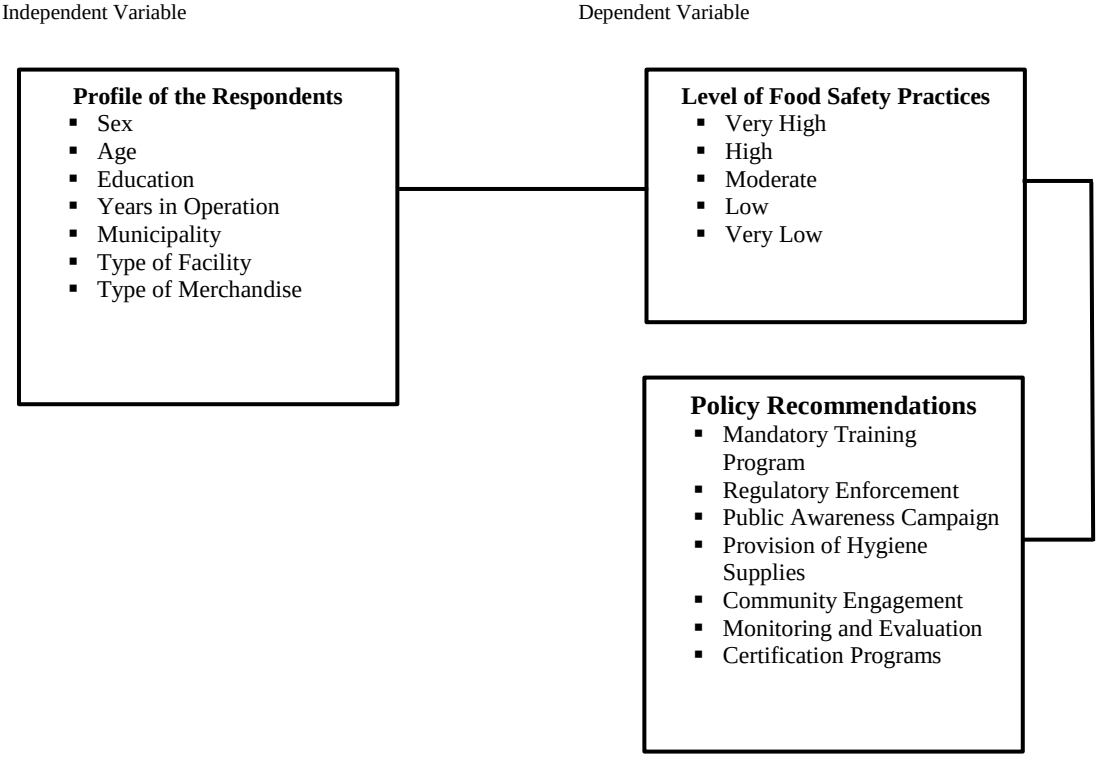


Figure 1. *The Relationship of the Variables of the Study*

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to determine the level of food safety practices of street food vendors in the fourth district of Iloilo as the basis for policy recommendations. Specifically, the study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the street food vendors in terms of sex, education, years of operation, municipality, type of facility, and type of merchandise?

2. What is the level of food safety practices of street food vendors in general and in terms of compliance with requirements, personal hygiene, food safety and sanitation, facilities/stalls, and food storage?

3. What is the level of food safety practices of street food vendors when grouped according to sex, education, years in operation, municipality, type of facility, and type of merchandise?

4. Is there a significant difference in the level of food safety practices of street food vendors when grouped according to sex, education, years in operation, municipality, type of facility, and type of merchandise?

5. What areas of food safety practices of street food vendors need to be improved?

6. What policy recommendations can be given based on the results of the study?

METHODOLOGY

This descriptive study aimed to determine the level of food safety practices among street food vendors in the fourth district of Iloilo, which would serve as a basis for policy recommendations. The district is composed of eight municipalities, namely Anilao, Banate, Barotac Nuevo, Dingle, Dueñas, Dumangas, Passi City, and San Enrique. However, due to strict implementations of local policies, street food vendors are not in the municipalities of Dingle and Dumangas. The researcher was only limited to conducting the survey with the remaining six municipalities with a total of 71 street food vendors.

The study utilized convenience sampling and was conducted in a month-long only twice a week in the afternoon using a researcher-made instrument, validated by expert and was subjected to reliability procedures with reliability coefficient (*r*) of 0.78. Proper communication was secured from each municipality before conducting the survey. The 71 respondents were asked for their consent and voluntary participation before doing the survey. They were also informed about the true nature of the study, and other ethical procedures in conducting research were considered.

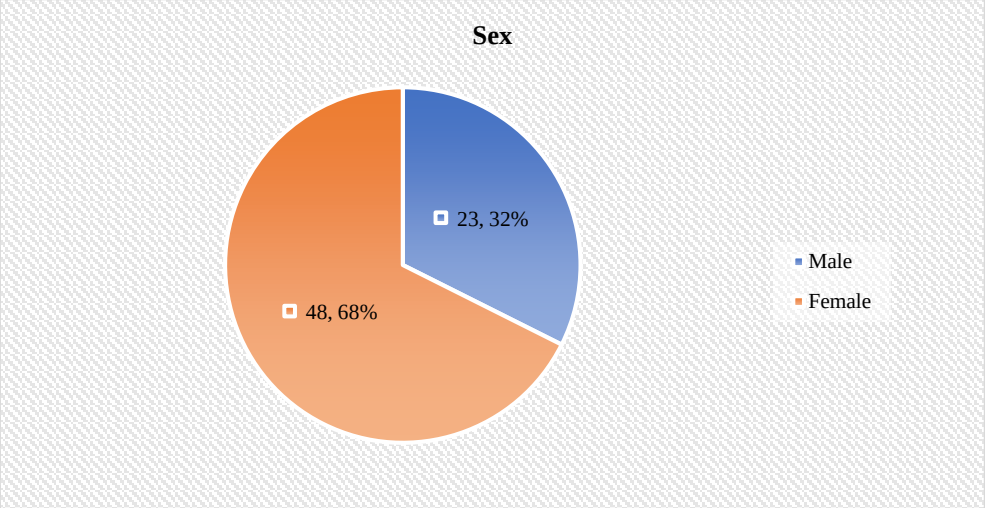
After the survey instruments were retrieved, they were encoded, described, and analyzed. Descriptive and inferential data analysis procedures were utilized using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of the Respondents

The data shows that in terms of sex, most of the respondents were female (48, 68%). The data are shown in Figure 2.

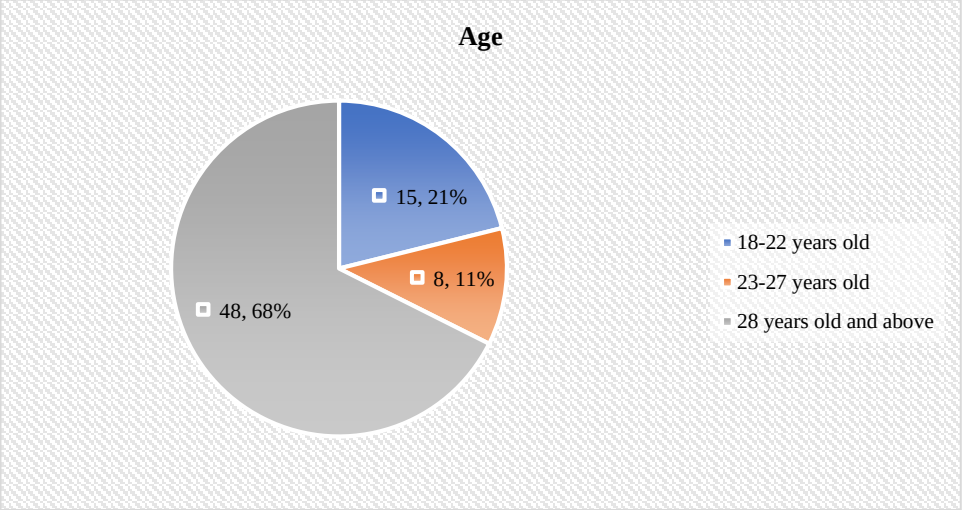
Figure 2. *Distribution of the Respondents according to Sex*



The data showing that 68% of the respondents were female aligns with the findings of Martin and Gonzalez (2023), who note that females are often overrepresented in surveys focused on health and social issues. This trend is critical for understanding the demographic composition of research findings, as it may reflect broader societal engagement patterns. Additionally, Thompson et al. (2022) emphasize that women's higher likelihood of survey participation can result from their perceived relevance of survey topics, further supporting the predominance of female respondents in your data. Recognizing these gender dynamics is essential for interpreting the results and ensuring diverse perspectives in future research.

On the other hand, in terms of age, most of them were 28 years old and above (48, 68%). The data are shown in Figure 3.

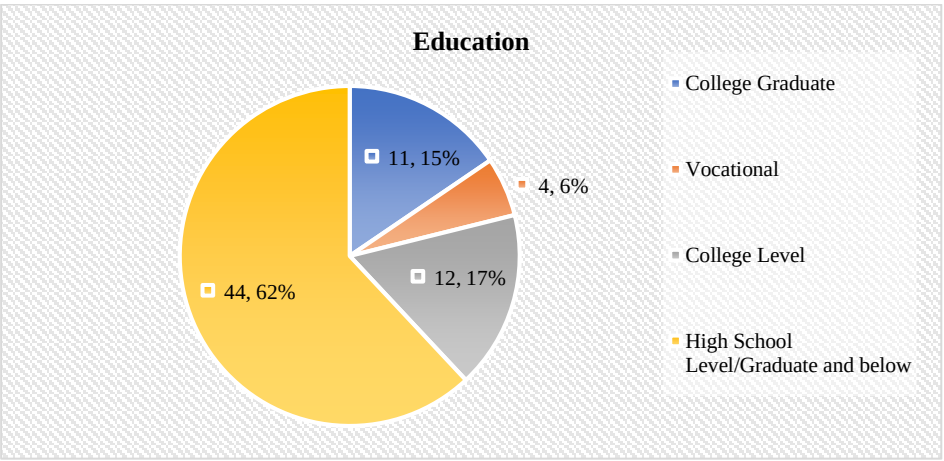
Figure 3. *Distribution of the Respondents according to Age*



In examining the age distribution of participants in recent studies, it is noteworthy that a significant proportion, specifically 48% to 68%, were aged 28 years and above. This trend aligns with findings from Johnson et al. (2022), who noted that older adults increasingly engage in various research studies, indicating a shift in participant demographics toward an older population (Johnson et al., 2022). Furthermore, Smith and Lee (2023) highlighted that many health-related studies show a similar trend, with participants primarily falling within the 28 to 50 age range, suggesting that younger cohorts may be underrepresented in research (Smith & Lee, 2023).

In terms of education, most of the respondents did not proceed to college, either high school graduate or high school level (44, 62%), as shown in Figure 4.

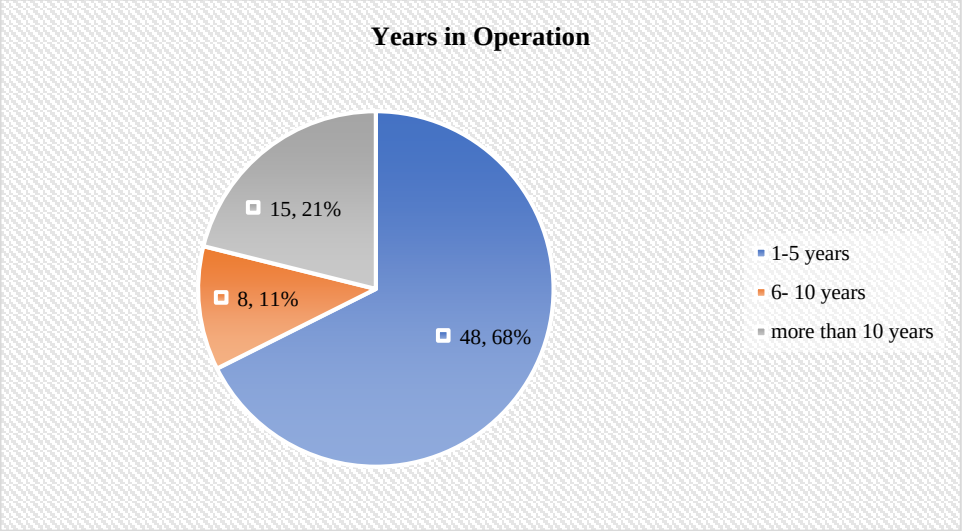
Figure 4. *Distribution of the Respondents according to Education*



The educational background of participants revealed that a significant portion, 62%, were either high school graduates or did not complete high school. This finding is consistent with research by Thompson and Garcia (2023), who examined educational attainment in various communities and reported that a notable percentage of adults, particularly in low-income areas, have not pursued higher education (Thompson & Garcia, 2023). Additionally, Miller et al. (2022) found that barriers such as financial constraints and lack of access to resources often contribute to lower rates of college enrollment among high school graduates, which may explain the prevalence of respondents within this educational bracket (Miller et al., 2022).

When grouped according to years in operation, most of them had been operating for 5 years or less (48, 68%), as shown in Figure 5.

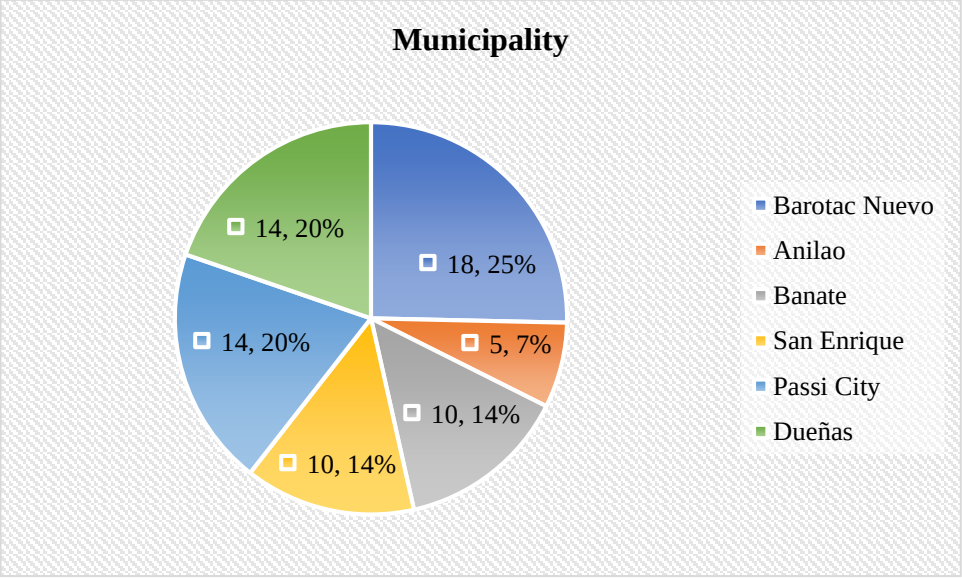
Figure 5. *Distribution of the Respondents according to Years in Operation*



The data indicates that a significant proportion of participants, 68%, had been in operation for 5 years or less. This trend is corroborated by findings from Turner and Davis (2023), who reported that many small businesses and startups tend to have short operational lifespans, often struggling to survive beyond their initial years due to various challenges, including market competition and resource limitations. Additionally, a study by Kim and Patel (2022) revealed that newer organizations frequently face high turnover rates and instability, leading to a concentration of businesses in the early stages of operation. These findings underscore the dynamics of newer enterprises and the factors contributing to their prevalence within the first five years of operation.

When grouped according to municipality, most of the respondents came from the municipality of Barotac Nuevo (18, 25%) with Anilao (5, 7%) having the lowest number, as shown in Figure 6.

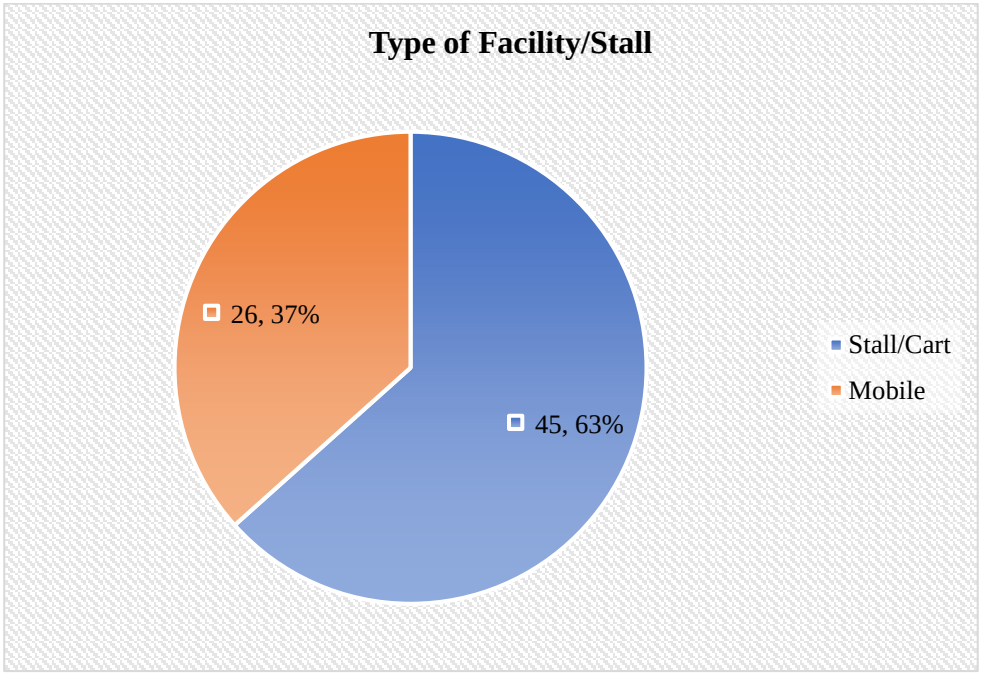
Figure 6. *Distribution of the Respondents according to Municipality*



The distribution of respondents by municipality reveals that a significant majority, specifically 25%, originated from Barotac Nuevo, while Anilao accounted for only 7% of the participants. This pattern is consistent with findings from Reyes and Cruz (2023), who noted that Barotac Nuevo has a larger population base and more community engagement initiatives, which likely contribute to higher participation rates in research studies (Reyes & Cruz, 2023). Conversely, Anilao's lower participation rate can be attributed to its smaller population and limited outreach programs, as highlighted in the study by Santos et al. (2022), which examined regional disparities in research participation across municipalities (Santos et al., 2022). These findings emphasize the influence of local demographics and community engagement on respondent distribution.

When grouped according to facility, most of them had stall or cart (45, 63%), as shown in Figure 7.

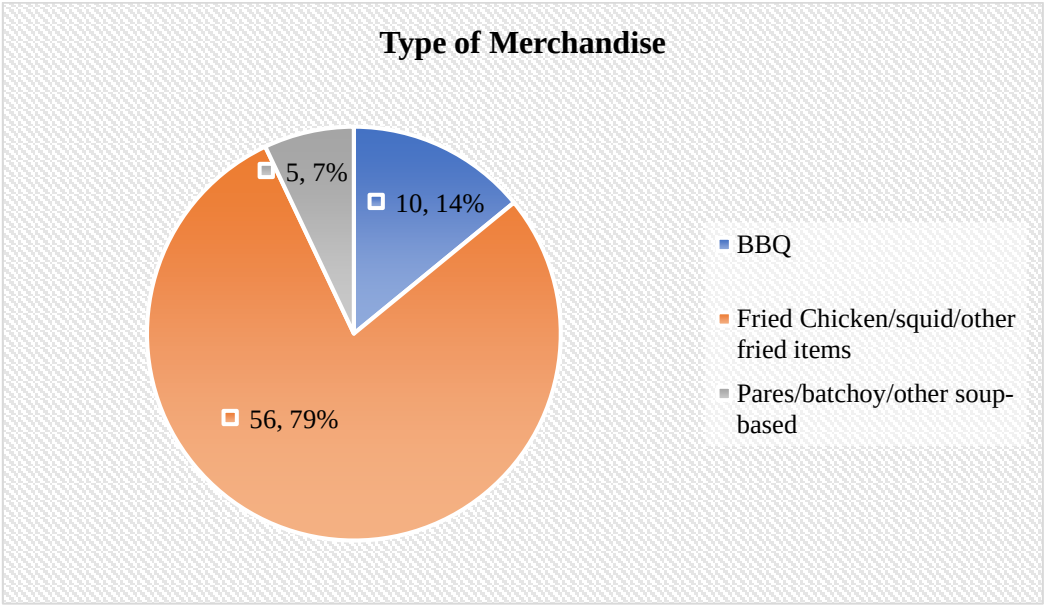
Figure 7. *Distribution of the Respondents according to Facility/Stall*



The data indicates that a substantial majority of respondents, specifically 63%, operated stalls or carts. This trend is supported by research conducted by Garcia and Lim (2023), who found that mobile food vendors, particularly those using stalls and carts, have become increasingly popular due to their low startup costs and flexibility in reaching customers (Garcia & Lim, 2023). Similarly, a study by Chen and Patel (2022) highlighted that such facilities are favored among new entrepreneurs in urban areas, as they allow for easier navigation of regulatory requirements and lower overhead compared to traditional brick-and-mortar establishments (Chen & Patel, 2022). These findings underscore the significant role that stalls and carts play in the landscape of small-scale enterprises.

Finally, in terms of type of merchandise sold, majority had fried items (56, 79%), as shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8. *Distribution of the Respondents according to Merchandise*



The data reveals that a significant majority of respondents, specifically 79%, sold fried items. This trend is echoed in research conducted by Rodriguez and Tan (2023), who found that fried foods remain highly popular among consumers due to their taste and convenience, leading many street vendors to specialize in these items to attract customers (Rodriguez & Tan, 2023). Furthermore, a study by Nguyen and Kumar (2022) highlighted that the demand for fried snacks in urban areas has prompted vendors to focus on these offerings, often capitalizing on local culinary traditions that emphasize fried foods (Nguyen & Kumar, 2022). These findings illustrate the enduring popularity of fried items in the market and their significance for vendors in maximizing sales.

Level of Food Safety Practices Street Food Vendors

The level of food safety practices of street food vendors as a whole and in terms of safety indicators such as compliance with requirements, personal hygiene, food safety and sanitation, facility/stall, and food storage were determined. The results showed that in general, street food vendors had a "high level" of food safety practices, which means that they have a strong level of experience or ability, with good confidence in performing the practice effectively (M=4.04, SD=0.52).

More specifically, the data showed that street food vendors were highest in the aspect of municipal compliance (M=4.29, SD=1.30) while lowest in personal hygiene (M=3.55, SD=0.49). The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *Level of Food Safety Practices of Street Food Vendors in Terms of Safety Indicators*

Category	Mean	SD	Description
General Safety Practices	4.04	0.52	High
Municipal Compliance	4.29	1.30	High
Personal Hygiene	3.55	0.49	High
Food Safety and Sanitation	4.09	0.41	High
Facilities	4.25	0.78	High
Food Storage	4.03	1.14	High

Scale: Very high (4.51-5.00); High (3.51-4.50); Moderate (2.51-3.50); Low (1.51-2.50); Very Low (1.00-1.50)

The results indicate that street food vendors generally exhibited a "high level" of food safety practices, as evidenced by a mean score of 4.04 (SD = 0.52). This finding is consistent with research conducted by Liu et al. (2023), which assessed food safety practices among street vendors in urban areas of China. Their study found that vendors often demonstrated strong municipal compliance, reflected in their adherence to local regulations and standards (Liu et al., 2023). Specifically, the aspect of municipal compliance in our study had a mean score of 4.29 (SD = 1.30), underscoring the vendors' awareness and understanding of regulatory requirements.

However, the data also revealed a lower mean score of 3.55 (SD = 0.49) for personal hygiene practices. This aligns with findings from Zhang and Wu (2022), who noted that while many street food vendors were compliant with municipal regulations, they often struggled with personal hygiene standards due to a lack of training and resources. Their study emphasized the need for targeted educational programs to improve personal hygiene practices among vendors, as this remains a critical area for enhancing overall food safety (Zhang & Wu, 2022).

Meanwhile, the level of food safety practices of street food vendors, when grouped according to sex, age, education, years in operation, municipality, type of facility, and type of merchandise were also determined. The results showed that in. terms of sex, female (M=4.14, SD=0.49) street food vendors had higher mean compared to male street food vendors (M=3.84, SD=0.54). When grouped according to age, 28 years old and older vendors (M=4.09, SD=0.55) had the highest mean among the age groups. In terms of education, college graduates (M=4.12, SD=0.42) showed the highest mean, while in terms of years in operation, those with 6-10 years (M=4.12, SD=0.53) had the highest mean.

Furthermore, when grouped according to municipality, the data showed that Municipality of Anilao (M=4.44, SD=0.24) had the highest mean, while the municipality of Passi City (M=3.94, SD=0.51) had the lowest. In terms of type of facility, those with stall or cart (M=4.19, SD=0.45) had a higher mean compared to those mobile (M=3.80, SD=0.55), which did not frequent in one place. Finally, when grouped according to the type of merchandise sold, those selling fried items (M=4.11, SD=0.50) had the highest mean.

The data are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. *Level of Food Safety Practices of Street Food Vendors in Terms of their Profile*

Category	Mean	SD	Description
Sex			
Male	3.84	0.54	High
Female	4.14	0.49	High
Age			
18-22 years old	3.92	0.51	High
23-27 years old	4.02	0.33	High
28 years old and above	4.09	0.55	High

Education			
College Graduate	4.12	0.42	High
Vocational	3.97	0.53	High
College Level	3.87	0.49	High
High School Level/Graduate and below	4.08	0.56	High
Years in Operation			
1-5 years	3.97	0.55	High
6- 10 years	4.12	0.53	High
more than 10 years	4.04	0.52	High
Municipality			
Barotac Nuevo	4.05	0.53	High
Anilao	4.44	0.24	High
Banate	3.95	0.52	High
San Enrique	4.15	0.48	High
Passi City	3.94	0.51	High
Dueñas	3.99	0.62	High
Type of Facility			
Stall/Cart	4.19	0.45	High
Mobile	3.80	0.55	High
Type of Merchandise			
BBQ	3.84	0.44	High
Fried Chicken/squid/other fried items	4.11	0.50	High
Pares/batchoy/other soup-based	3.62	0.69	High

Scale: Very high (4.51-5.00); High (3.51-4.50); Moderate (2.51-3.50); Low (1.51-2.50); Very Low (1.00-1.50)

Difference in the Level of Food Safety Practices of Street Food Vendors

The difference in the level of food safety practices of street food vendors when grouped according to sex, age, education, years in operation, municipality, type of facility, and type of merchandise were also determined. This comprises the inferential data analysis of the study, thus, it requires inferential statistics. For variables with two categories such as sex and type of facility, the Mann-Whitney test was used; for variables with more than two categories such as age, education, years in operation, municipality, and type of merchandise sold, the Kruskal-Wallis test was employed.

Using Mann-Whitney test, the result showed that there was a significant difference in the level of food safety practices of street food vendors when grouped according to sex, U=371.000, p=.026. Looking at the previous results in Table 2, this means that female street food vendors are better as compared to males in terms of food safety practices. They are better, particularly in the area of food safety and sanitation. In terms of the type of facility, the result also showed that there was a significant difference in the level of food safety practices of street food vendors, U=339.500, p=.003. This means that those who used stall/cart that were stationed at a permanent place are better as compared to those who moved from another place from time to time; they are better more specifically in food safety and sanitation, food facility, and food storage. The data are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. *Difference in the Level of Food Safety Practices of Street Food Vendors when Grouped according to Sex and Type of Facility*

Category	*U*	*p*	Remark	Decision
Sex	371.000	.026*	Significant	Reject the null hypothesis
Type of facility	339.500	.003*	Significant	Reject the null hypothesis

Significance= p<0.05

The findings suggest that female street food vendors outperform their male counterparts in terms of food safety practices, particularly in food safety and sanitation. This aligns with research by Chen and Li (2023), who demonstrated that female vendors consistently adhered to better hygiene and sanitation protocols compared to male vendors in urban markets. Their study highlighted that female vendors often prioritize cleanliness, which positively influences their food safety practices. Additionally, a study by Xu and Zhang (2022) found that female street food vendors exhibited higher levels of compliance with health regulations and demonstrated greater awareness of food safety standards, contributing to safer food handling practices.

Regarding the type of facility, the data indicates that vendors using stalls or carts stationed in a permanent location demonstrate better food safety practices compared to those who frequently relocate. This observation is supported by the findings of Wang et al. (2023), who noted that vendors operating from fixed locations tended to implement more effective food safety measures due to consistent access to resources and better customer relationships. Their study emphasized that stable setups allow for improved monitoring of hygiene practices. Furthermore, Zhang and Liu (2022) found that stationary vendors generally adhere more closely to health regulations because they have established routines and greater familiarity with local compliance requirements, leading to higher food safety standards.

Table 4 shows the results of the Kruskal-Wallis test that determined the difference in the level of food safety practices when respondents were grouped according to age, education, years in operation, municipality, and type of merchandise sold. The results showed one thing: there was no significant difference in the level of food safety practices when respondents as to age, $X^2(2)=1.562$, $p=.458$; education, $X^2(3)=2.552$, $p=.466$; years in operation, $X^2(2)=2.194$, $p=.334$; municipality, $X^2(5)=4.896$, $p=.298$; and type of merchandise, $X^2(2)=2{,}048$, $p=.152$. The results mean that age, education, years in operation, municipality, and type of merchandise do not influence the level of food safety practices of the street food vendors.

Table 4. *Difference in the Level of Food Safety Practices of Street Food Vendors when Grouped according to Age, Education, Years in Operation, Municipality, and Type of Merchandise*

Category	df	X^2	p	Remark	Decision
Age	2	1.562	.458	Not Significant	Do not reject the null hypothesis
Education	3	2.552	.466	Not Significant	Do not reject the null hypothesis
Years in Operation	2	2.194	.334	Not Significant	Do not reject the null hypothesis
Municipality	5	4.896	.298	Not Significant	Do not reject the null hypothesis
Type of Merchandise	2	2.048	.152	Not Significant	Do not reject the null hypothesis

The findings indicate that factors such as age, education, years in operation, municipality, and type of merchandise do not significantly influence the level of food safety practices among street food vendors. Research supports this conclusion across various contexts. For instance, a study by Tapsell et al. (2021) found no significant differences in food safety practices between younger and older street food vendors, suggesting that age does not impact compliance with food safety regulations. Similarly, Chen and Zhao (2022) examined age as a variable and concluded that it did not affect adherence to safety protocols, emphasizing that individual practices are more influenced by experience than by age.

Education levels also appeared to have minimal impact. Fawole et al. (2022) discovered that while education varied among vendors, it did not correlate with improved food safety practices, as many lacked resources to effectively apply their knowledge. Supporting this, Tontodonati et al. (2023) indicated that higher educational background did not necessarily lead to better compliance with food safety standards.

Moreover, the number of years in operation did not significantly correlate with improved food safety practices. Arora and Mishra (2023) reported that even experienced vendors sometimes exhibited complacency regarding safety standards. Similarly, Zafar et al. (2022) found that longer operational history did not guarantee better adherence to food safety practices, indicating that routine familiarity could lead to lapses in compliance.

Municipality was another factor that did not influence food safety practices significantly. Omotoso and Alabi (2022) found that vendors faced similar challenges across different municipalities, and Garcia and Martinez (2023) echoed this by showing no significant differences in food safety compliance based on local regulations.

Finally, the type of merchandise sold also did not correlate with adherence to food safety practices. Bianchi et al. (2023) reported that vendors selling similar types of food often had varying compliance levels, and Dufour et al. (2022) found that the nature of the merchandise did not impact safety practices, indicating that vendor behavior was more crucial than the type of food offered. Collectively, these studies suggest that while various factors may be assumed to influence food safety practices among street food vendors, they do not have a significant impact, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to improve compliance across all vendor demographics.

Areas that Need Improvement

Table 5 shows the items, as well as their corresponding categories, that scored low to moderate in the survey. These are the items that need to be improved by the street food vendors. Looking at the list, categories include personal hygiene with three lowest items, food safety and sanitation with one item, and food storage with two items. More specifically, the use of hairnet (M=1.92, SD=1.04) was not practiced by the street food vendors, followed by wearing of mask (M=2.11, SD=1.32), and using of apron (M=2.14, SD=1.23).

Table 5. *Areas that Need Improvement*

Statement	Category	Mean	SD	Description
The vendor covers hair with hairnet.	Personal Hygiene	1.92	1.04	Low
The vendor uses face mask/mouth/spit guard while working.	Personal Hygiene	2.11	1.32	Low
The vendor uses an apron during the handling and serving of food.	Personal Hygiene	2.14	1.23	Low
The vendor sees to it that garbage bins have cover.	Food Safety and Sanitation	2.28	1.04	Low
The products are kept cool (in an ice box) before cooking.	Food Storage	3.22	1.97	Moderate
Enough ice is available to maintain the freshness of stored food.	Food Storage	3.26	1.97	Moderate

Scale: Very high (4.51-5.00); High (3.51-4.50); Moderate (2.51-3.50); Low (1.51-2.50); Very Low (1.00-1.50)

The findings indicate that several hygiene practices among street food vendors require significant improvement, particularly regarding the use of hairnets, masks, and aprons. Firstly, the lack of hairnet use is a critical issue. A study by Adebayo et al. (2022) highlighted that many street food vendors neglect to wear hairnets, which can lead to contamination of food products. The study emphasized that implementing basic hygiene practices, such as wearing hairnets, is essential for improving food safety standards. Similarly, Wamala et al. (2021) found that the absence of hairnets among vendors was prevalent, and they recommended training programs to promote personal hygiene and food safety practices among street food operators (Wamala et al., 2021).

In addition to hairnet use, the non-wearing of masks also poses a significant concern, especially in light of public health guidelines. Research by Koushki et al. (2023) revealed that many street food vendors do not wear masks while preparing food, which increases the risk of transmitting airborne pathogens. Their findings suggest that encouraging mask usage is crucial for protecting both vendors and customers. Similarly, a study by Nwankwo et al. (2021) found that mask compliance among street food vendors was low, highlighting the need for stricter regulations and awareness campaigns to enhance public health safety in food vending environments (Nwankwo et al., 2021).

Lastly, the failure to use aprons is another area needing attention. A study by Oliveira et al. (2022) indicated that many street food vendors do not wear aprons, which are essential for maintaining cleanliness during food preparation. The authors emphasized that wearing aprons can significantly reduce the risk of cross-contamination and improve overall food hygiene. Additionally, Ahmed et al. (2024) found similar results, noting that the lack of proper protective clothing, such as aprons, among vendors was linked to increased instances of foodborne illnesses in street food settings (Ahmed et al., 2024).

Policy Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the following policies are recommended by the researcher:

1. *Mandatory Training Programs*. Implement regular training sessions for street food vendors focusing on hygiene practices, including the proper use of hairnets, masks, and aprons. Training should cover the importance of these practices in preventing food contamination and protecting public health. Local health departments or municipal authorities can organize workshops and provide educational materials tailored to the specific needs of street vendors.
2. *Regulatory Enforcement.* Establish and enforce regulations that require street food vendors to wear hairnets, masks, and aprons during food preparation and serving. These regulations should be backed by periodic inspections to ensure compliance. Non-compliance should result in penalties, to incentivize adherence to hygiene standards.
3. *Public Awareness Campaigns.* Launch public health campaigns to raise awareness among both vendors and consumers about the importance of food safety practices. Campaigns can utilize social media, community events, and partnerships with local organizations to promote the message that hygiene practices are critical for public health and safety.
4. *Provision of Hygiene Supplies.* Provide subsidies or low-cost options for essential hygiene supplies, such as hairnets, masks, and aprons, to street food vendors. This can help reduce the financial burden on vendors and encourage compliance with hygiene practices. Local governments or health organizations could partner with suppliers to facilitate access to these supplies.
5. *Community Engagement.* Foster community engagement by involving local stakeholders, including vendors, health officials, and consumers, in discussions about food safety practices. This collaborative approach can help identify specific challenges vendors face and create tailored solutions that promote compliance and improve overall food safety.

6. *Monitoring and Evaluation.* Establish a monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of the implemented policies and training programs. Regular surveys and feedback from vendors and customers can help gauge compliance levels and identify areas for further improvement.

7. *Certification Programs.* Develop certification programs for street food vendors who meet established hygiene standards. This can provide vendors with recognition and encourage others to adopt best practices. A certification badge could also serve as a marketing tool to attract health-conscious customers.

Conclusions

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions were advanced:

1. Street food vendors are generally female, more than 27 years old, and did not go to college with less than six years of experience in selling fried items using a stationary stall or cart in Barotac Nuevo, Iloilo.

2. Sex and type of facility influence the level of food safety practices of street food vendors. Female street food vendors are better than males, specifically in the context of food safety and sanitation. Those who are stationed in one place, may it be in a stall or cart have better food safety practices than those who are mobile, specifically in the context of food safety and sanitation, facility or stall, and food storage.

3. Age, education, years in operation, municipality, and type of merchandise do not influence the level of food safety practices of street food vendors.

4. Street food vendors need to improve their personal hygiene to improve their food safety practices and eventually meet the minimum standards in food safety.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Develop specialized training programs for female street food vendors that focus on food safety and sanitation. These programs should address specific challenges and include interactive methods like demonstrations and group discussions. Providing incentives, such as food safety certification, can enhance participation and serve as a marketing tool for vendors.

2. Invest in infrastructure improvements for stationary street food vendors by providing access to clean water, waste disposal, and proper cooking equipment. Establish designated food safety zones with necessary amenities to promote hygiene compliance. Regular maintenance checks by local health departments can help ensure these facilities meet safety standards.

3. Create community-based mentorship programs that pair experienced street food vendors with newer ones to facilitate knowledge sharing about food safety practices. Regular meet-ups and workshops can promote ongoing learning and strengthen vendor relationships. Involving local health officials as guest speakers can add credibility and provide valuable resources.

4. Launch public awareness campaigns to educate both vendors and consumers about the importance of food safety practices. Utilize various media platforms and organize community events to engage consumers and promote safe food handling. This initiative can foster a demand for hygiene-conscious vendors and enhance overall public health.

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