

A Narrative of the Hardships and Triumphs of Koronadal City Public Market Vendors

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Abstract

This study aimed to understand the hardships and triumphs of Koronadal City public market vendors. The researcher used phenomenological research design as a method of research. The pieces of evidence were gathered and conducted last January 2023, from the five (5) experienced market vendors inside the Koronadal City public market at Koronadal City, South Cotabato. The results of the study revealed that the hardships and triumphs of the market vendors depends on the environment that they are working in, the policies implemented towards them, their available resources, the people that they get to interact with as well as their self-determination and inspiration. The research highlights that most of the reasons why market vendors engage in market vending is to sustain their personal and family's needs, their struggles are mostly caused by their environment and the situation that they are in and their triumphs are mostly because of their determination and commitment as well as their inspiration with their family. This study offers the knowledge that can be used as a basis in formulating appropriate policies and programs to enhance the welfare and to strengthen the socio-economic conditions of these market vendors. Social workers can also use this as a basis for future clients and use the data gathered as a guide to clients that are experiencing the same problem. Hence, this can also be a great venue for social workers to advocate for these underrepresented sectors of our society and create a good working environment and appropriate programs and services for them.

Keywords: *Hardships, Public Market Vendors, Social Work, Triumphs.*

INTRODUCTION

Public market vendors or classified as under the informal sector of the economy are small independent business owners that sells various products ranging from meat, vegetables, native products, raw materials, and other essential goods and services that are needed by people residing inside a particular community. The informal sectors of the economy are mostly one of the sectors that are usually overlooked by many people and are not acknowledged as successful in their emerging businesses. However, apart from their lived experiences, they are also one of the main contributors of employment and economic balance that helps in maintaining economic stability. Followed by the successes and failures they experienced while managing their business in a period of time. Even up to this day, we only know very little about the experiences of these experienced individuals and we have yet more to know and acknowledge about them (Nasucion, 2021).

One of the key points of the triumphs of market vendors is that they know their target market. They know what are the needs of the consumers and they deliver these needs resulting to a successful business. In contrast to this, some small-established business

owners mostly engage in creating a concrete business plan and marketing strategy before they engage in putting up a small business but some say that the very key to a successful business is good customer service, humility, and connection with people which in our country we would refer to as “Tawad” or bargaining with the consumers to fit their budget range (Root, 2020).

However, not every time things are as smooth as it seems. Existing hardships can also occur in one's life as proprietors, hardships are a normal experience to exist in business enterprises. There are approximately 20% chances of failure in all types of businesses most especially small enterprises and it can increase depending on situational factors that the business is in. Some reasons of failures include a mismatch in terms of the needs of the consumers or lack of consumer investigation, failures in a marketing plan, too little financing, bad location or geographical area and underestimated expansion of business. Several of which any of these factors may negatively impact small businesses especially those under the informal sector who don't have any stable brandings and this can affect not only their lives as proprietors but also their personal lives as individuals (Deane, 2022).

The Germanwatch global climate risk index of 2020 has shown that in 2018, the Philippines ranked second among the world's most vulnerable countries to strong extreme weather events. In March 2016, the City of Koronadal was placed under the state of calamity due to severe drought. This phenomenon severely affected the food supply and livelihood of local communities where livelihood sources mainly street and market vendors that rely on suppliers of raw materials and other goods were mainly dependent on weather conditions. This phenomenon did not only affect the people's way of living but triggered different underlying struggles in their market revenues (Dizon, 2020).

Thus, this issue concerning public market vendors caught the interest of the researcher to conduct a study in Koronadal City Public Market to a number of stall owners through identifying their stories of success and failures while managing their small-enterprise business. These problems motivated the researcher to conduct this study because as future social workers, we can help future business starters to be aware of the pros and cons in starting their own businesses that would lessen the chances of people having trouble with their social functioning. Also, we can help give highlights to the lived experiences of these individuals by acknowledging their experiences in maintaining their success and coping up with failures and taking the risk of putting up a small-enterprise business.

METHODS

Research Design

The researcher utilized the structure of phenomenological research. The phenomenological method focuses on understanding the phenomena that have touched an individual. This method emphasizes the details and identifies a phenomenon as it is viewed by a person in a given circumstance. It can also be used to research the behaviors that a group of people have in common. Its goal is to obtain the most uncontaminated data possible. Sometimes researchers record personal notes about what they learn from the subjects. This increases the data's trustworthiness and enables researchers to filter out these influences to create objective narratives (Nakayama, 2013).

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in Koronadal City, specifically inside the Koronadal City Public Market. This specific location was selected mainly because it is

located within the city proper which is accessible and much more convenient for the researcher. At the same time, respondents are obtained and they are small-business owners inside Koronadal City Public Market. The participants of the study were intentionally chosen considering the population of public market vendors. Specifically, this place has a sufficient number of public market vendors that matches the qualifications to determine the hardships and triumphs of Koronadal City public market vendors.

The Koronadal City Public Market was located at 9506 Koronadal Proper. The Koronadal City Public Market according to the administrators has about 745 active stall owners excluding those informal settlers outside the market. The place is surrounded by different economic establishments mainly a mixture of formal and informal sectors. Also, it was under the Department of Trade and Industry. Currently, being handled by the Koronadal City Public Market Administrators.

Koronadal City, the capital of south Cotabato that is rich in raw materials and resources that are being benefitted by different municipalities inside South Cotabato. It is also a good venue for business opportunity which shows as the city itself has a mixture of formal and informal businesses that keeps the city going. Koronadal is linked by a concrete national highway road from General Santos City in the east and Cotabato City in the west. The town was known as the crowned city of the south, its public market is situated in the heart of the town and ideally signified

Role of the Researcher

This study provided the researcher, who was a prospective social worker, with the opportunity to improve his skills and knowledge. In the social work profession, we do not only aim to enhance and bring back the social functioning of every individual, groups, and communities but we also aim to perform strength-based practices to bring out the possible strengths of our clients and use these strengths as a resource for it to be developed and enhanced. With these factors, the role of the researcher in this study is to be an enabler, by determining the hardships experienced by the public market vendors as well as the triumphs that they achieved and ways of coping up with those emerging hardships, we would get a glimpse of the participant's strengths as public market vendors and by this way, we can give them different ideas and perspectives that would help contribute in developing their strengths by

providing useful information about other vendor's lived experiences about their hardships and triumphs while managing their small-business. Similarly, social workers act as the voices of those who cannot speak for themselves such as underrecognized sectors in our society. One of the indirect roles of the researcher in this study is documentation and social criticism, by knowing the hardships and triumphs of these market vendors, we do not only get a glimpse of the factors that disrupts their way of living, we also obtain ideas on what are lacking or the lapses which regards to the policies and regulations that are being imposed for their overall welfare. With this, as a social critique, the researcher can help inform the administration about the deficiencies in their policies and hopefully bring out desirable change for the welfare of their constituents.

Research Participants

Participants were picked according to predetermined criteria. There were six prerequisites to take part in this research. Participants should be within South Cotabato, should be at least twenty (20) years as public market vendor, has experienced hardships in their small businesses, has achieved a triumph while overcoming those hardships, surpassed the problem and willing to express themselves to share their experiences about their hardships and triumphs in managing their small business. Then the researcher asked them a few information about themselves.

Janice, a 41 years old mother that has been selling vegetables, herbs and seasonings in the Koronadal city public market for more than 20 years. She is a mother of 3 and all of her children are still in school. She experienced different hardships while maintaining her small business inside the public market but she had to keep on going to provide for her children's academic needs. she is one of the longest selling vendors in the market and she is now a stable vendor living a normal life with her family assisting her in selling their products.

Evelyn grace, a 48 years old mother that has been a beautician in a mini parlor for almost 25 years inside the Koronadal city public market. She is a mother of 2 and a single parent. She experienced her struggles inside the public market when her husband left her for another woman and she had no choice but to single-handedly run her business and her family. She is currently a well-known beautician in their area not because of the period of time that she was a beautician but because of her talent and good people skills.

Venus, she is a 50 years old mother that has been selling different types of products inside the public market for more than 45 years. She is a mother of 5 and all of her children are still studying. She started to sell vegetables with her mother at a very young age and they have shifted from different businesses during those long periods of times such as clothes, fruits, bread and pastries and etc. she has witnessed and experienced different hardships over the course of 45 years and now she is known as one of the first settlers to start a business in the public market and one of the longest and most resilient vendors of all time.

Inday, a 50 years old mother and a beautician inside the public market for more than 35 years. She is a mother of 3 and a single parent. She is single-handedly doing her best to provide for her children's personal and academic needs. she experienced different hardships especially on the rents of their stalls and also a lot of contributing factors to those hardships. Right now, she is one of the acting mothers of their area and she is known to be humble and good with communicating with people. Probably the reason why she is respected by other beauticians in their area.

Riza, a 54 years old mother that has been selling vegetables in the public market for more than 40 years. She is a mother of 2 and they are both still studying. Along with her husband, they have experienced different hardships in selling their products but they managed to rise above those hardships and lead their family to have a stable life. Right now, they are still selling vegetables in the market and they are known for being approachable and kind towards other public market stall owners.

Research Instrument

This study utilized interview guide in the exploration of the Hardships and Triumphs of Koronadal City Public Market Vendors. Guide questions were drafted to extract the triumphs in the businesses of public market vendors as well as struggles experienced by public market vendors while managing their business. The interview questionnaire guide was the tool used by the interviewer as a guide and the researcher will observe, and take note. The contents of the interview guide are questions pertaining to the triumphs in the businesses of public market vendors as well as hardships experienced by public market vendors as well as the implications that can be drawn from the study.

Data Collection

The data and information were collected through the use of interview. An interview which composed of five questions mainly formulated to ask what are the Hardships and Triumphs of Koronadal City Public Market Vendors. Firstly, the researcher with the agreement of the participants, set a specific date to conduct the interview. At the same day, the researcher built rapport towards the participants to make sure that the conversation harmonizes and the participant would feel comfortable in sharing his/her experiences towards the researcher, the researcher requested whether he may record the interview using a voice recorder, then prepared a letter such as Permission Letter for the instructor, Informed consent for the respondents, as well as permission letter addressed to the public market administrators to conduct the interview with the participants. Secondly, the researcher gave a permission to his instructor to conduct an interview to his selected participants and to ask an approval on it.

Third, as soon as the letter was approved, the researcher photocopied and secured an original copy for himself that would serve as his reference in conducting the study. Fourth, the researcher was given a letter informed consent where it will inform the participants about the interview and explain that they would be sharing their experiences on the hardships and triumphs of managing their business. It was followed by the "Participants Consent Form," which comprised the participants' and researcher's agreement for the conduct of the interview and transcription of the data collected. After that, the researcher will then conduct a face-to-face interview with the participants and would be taking pictures, videos and process recordings that would serve as a medium in data gathering and documentation. Lastly, the researcher will analyze the data that has been gathered.

Trustworthiness

Data was obtained through an informative interview with the participants giving consideration and mutual agreement to the convenient schedules of both the participants and the researcher. Interviews was done one-on-one through face-to-face with the interviewer and the five (5) participants establishing a harmonious conversation and rapport. Interviews was recorded using a cellphone and also manually by the researcher.

The interview is conducted according to the standard interview procedures, the researcher first

introduced the mechanics and procedures of the interview towards the participants for them to better understand the flow of the interview. They are then introduced to the presented problems, ethical issues and questions that are significant in the study. The following is presented to the identified participants: Informed Consent Form, Participant's Agreement Form, and the Interview Protocol for the Participants.

Before the interview, the elements and substance of the interview questionnaire was addressed and during the actual interview with respect to the ethical considerations, the researcher asked for the accounts of participant's experiences on the hardships and triumphs that they have experienced while managing their small business.

Their lived experiences are divided into information about what are the triumphs in the businesses of public market vendors, hardships experienced by public market vendors as well as the implications that can be drawn from the study. For emphasis and clarification, follow-up questions were asked.

The researcher also kept a thorough track of the exit interview data, which includes the precise date, the start and finish times, and the respondents' names. This was done for the purpose of accuracy and to keep track about the whole duration of the interview with the participants.

Data Analysis

The researcher used a Narrative analysis that involves the detailed reformulation and definition of the information shared and narrated by the participants based on their individual experiences pertaining to the questions asked by the researcher. The main purpose/idea in narrative analysis is to comprehensively and detailly explain the first-hand stories presented by individuals in numerous contexts and supported their different experiences.

Following the interviews, the acquired data was then transcribed. The researcher presented the transcribed data to the participants and were asked to validate to confirm if the information gathered and transcribed by the researcher is accurate. Berelson invented this technique. This technique allows the researcher to have a better understanding of the participant's lived experiences with the hardships and triumphs that they have experienced. The transcripts of the interviews were coded. The lines of noteworthy remarks were identified as a result of this.

A process of transcribing data such as the coding system is then used in analyzing the data gathered and validated by the participants of the study. The themes were linked to the major findings of the study. The findings were linked to multiple perspectives and specific evidence. A detailed discussion of interconnecting themes was given. Interpretation of meaning derived from the study. Interviews were conducted with the participants to verify themes. (Goldney RD, 2011)

Ethical Considerations

The ethical guidelines were put into place for the research period. With respect to the dignity and freedom of the respondents, the respondents have the right to withdraw from the survey as well as withdrawing data that was already provided during the duration of the data collecting process. As a student under the social work profession with respect to the principles of confidentiality, all information of the client which includes hiding verifiable name and limiting the access to the result of the questionnaire and study. The researcher always made sure to ask the participant if he/she is comfortable with the questions being asked also considering that the questions do not offend nor disregard the participant's culture and beliefs as an individual. Information that is being shared is always consulted and asked permission to the participant, and that the research did not affect their sentiments. All information gathered and recorded from them was acknowledged and reported appropriately. Rest assured that the researcher would take his time in formulating a non-judgmental basis of questionnaires, taking consideration to the philosophy of social work that every human being has worth and dignity and the safety of respondents will always be the top priority.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the reasons of experienced public market vendors on what pushes them to engage in market vending.

1.2 Augmenting Financial Source	— No source of income
	— Alternative source of income
1.2 Resource Utilization	— Available resources in their environment
1.3 Social Influence	— Influenced by

	neighbors
	— Observed from peers and developed interest
1.4 Sustaining Basic Necessities	— Provide basic needs of the family
	— Support children's education
1.5 Self-motivation	— Self-driven by experience in life
	— Self-interest and passion
1.6 Financial Distress	— Financial struggles
1.7 Family Inheritance	— Inherited From Generations Of Family

Public Market vending has been existing throughout the years, it is an alternative way of earning money and is classified under the informal sector in the business world. It has helped uplift the lives of many people under the poverty line and one of the main factors that affects the decisions of people to engage in market vending is their socio-economic condition. Most of the market vendors have low socio-economic status which triggered different struggles in life. This however, caused low educational level and lack of adequate skill to get better employment. Another factor is the barrier imposed towards women and the youth in formal work settings which causes a hindrance in the capacity of a person to work in high paying jobs (Jebat, 2015).

Because of their socio-economic status, people especially those under the poverty line need to find a way to sustain their basic necessities. Since they lack the qualifications to work for good paying jobs, most of them look for alternatives for them to get a stable source of income and market vending for most people consider it as a better option to low-wage employment and to supplement the income they get from the formal employment (low-wage earners), but the others are engaged in it due to acute poverty (Jebat, 2015).

1.1 Augmenting Financial Source

Most of the people who engage in market vending are considered as families that have low income or no income at all, they need to find a stable source of income for them to provide for the basic needs of their

family and themselves but they have to adhere on what are their skills and qualifications in order for them to find a source of income that can fit their capabilities. One participant stated that this is the only thing that they know how to do and if they don't do this, they don't have any source of income.

1.2 Resource Utilization

Some market vendors are skilled with handicrafts and producing raw materials to be sold in the market. One participant stated that they have been planting fruits and vegetables in their area and they gather their harvest and sell them in their stalls. They utilize their available resources and uses them as their source of income for them to sustain their basic needs.

1.3 Social Influence

The environment of people can also play a big role in influencing one's interest in engaging in market vending. There are instances where people notice the potential for income of a certain activity and they also get influenced by it and also engage in them. One participant stated that they didn't really know anything about market vending, they only saw their neighbors selling inside the public market and they said that the income was quite good and this is one of the reasons why they engaged in market vending.

There are also instances where people can get influenced by the people around them when they were young. One participant stated that she would often come with her mother inside the public market and sell various products to people when she was young. This resulted into her developing the interest in market vending and made this her source of income until she grew up.

1.4 Sustaining Basic Necessities

Basic needs are a necessity in order for a person to have a standard way of living. A person must work and look for a sufficient source of income for them to provide for their necessities such as food, water, shelter, health care, education and etc. that is needed for their family's day-to-day living. One participant stated that one of the main reasons why she engaged in market vending is for her to provide food for her family every day and to support her children's education.

One participant also expressed that she engaged in market vending for her to also sustain the needs of her children and pay for the basic needs inside their household such as bills (e.g., electric bill, water bill and etc.) and food for everyday living.

1.5 Self-Motivation

One factor that also pushes a person to engage in market vending is their passion and skills. A person may possess skills in business management and other skills that can be used to offer services to people which can develop their interest in engaging in market vending. One participant stated that ever since she was young, she had a passion in being a beautician and she got used to it until she got older and offered her services inside the public market.

1.6 Financial Distress

Many people especially under the informal sector usually engaged in market vending because of their struggles financially. Most of these vendors has no source of income and their primary goal is to uplift themselves from their current situation. One participant stated that she engaged in market vending because of their financial situation. She added that the only way for them to uplift themselves from it is to look for ways to sell their products because they are poor.

1.7 A Family Inheritance

Since the market vendors has been engaging in market vending for a long time, there are instances where they already grew up selling their products inside the public market with their parents and until such time the small business was passed down from generation to generation. One participant stated that ever since the public market has started, her parents has already been a vendor in that specific area until such time it was developed and she learned the ways and eventually passed down to her.

Another participant also shared a similar situation as historically, her family overcame three fire crises inside the public market and until now she is still engaging in market vending. She stated that her family overcame many struggles such as getting burned down from the past three times, and until such time her mother asked her if she wanted to take over the business which she agreed and still managing until now.

A similar experience was also shared by another participant in which she stated that she was only doing market vending with her mom until such time she inherited the business and she also got married and formed a family with someone she met inside the market and was also a stall owner in the area.

Table 2. Shows the struggles that public market vendors have encountered while market vending.

2.1 Environmental Factor	– Unstable Weather Conditions
2.2 Economic Reasons	– Rapid Price Increase from Suppliers
	– Customer's Diverse Personalities
	– Unstable Shifts of Consumer Demands
	– Seasonal Shifts of Consumer's Purchasing Power
	– Holiday and Peak Seasons
	– Difficulty in selling Products
	– Expensive Prices of Rent
2.3 Governmental Regulation	– Unethical Rules and Sanctions of the Administration
2.4 Existing Loans and Debts	– Due Dates of Loans and Debts
	– Difficulty in Demanding for Payments of Debts
	– Can't Earn because of Multiple Debts
	– Vendor's Multiple Loans and Debts
2.5 Crime Engagement	– Engage in Unlawful acts Because of Financial Difficulties
2.6 Personal Assets Sale	– Selling of Assets Inherited from Their Ancestors
2.7 Social Reasons	– Discouraged By Family
	– Diverse Personalities of Other Vendors
	– Gossips and Defamation of Other Vendors
2.8 Career Decisions	– Confused of Which Opportunities to Grab

Public market vending is type of work that considers environmental factors as a big hindrance towards their success. Public market vendor's success varies on their environment such as the people around them, natural occurrences, resources available, the people they get to engage and also the people that they live with. In managing small businesses such as those market vendors, failures are the things that can be caused by these different factors. These factors include tenuous property rights and harassment from civic authorities that hinders them from doing business smoothly to subsistence living and earning that becomes a pressure in their day to day living and some more other factors that leads to their failure (Wongtada, 2013).

With these factors affecting the lives of market vendors leading to their failures, some market vendors defined failure in different forms, it may be associated with interest rates (where failure was defined as bankruptcy) and the rate of unemployment (where failure was defined as discontinuance of ownership).

Failures can be defined in many forms and it depends on the factors and circumstances that the person is in and is experiencing (Watson, 1998).

2.1 Environmental Factor

One of the struggles that the public market vendors stated are environmental factors, environmental factors are natural occurrences that cannot be avoided by anyone. Mostly, environmental factors that are being experienced by market vendors are heavy rain, extreme heat and aggressive winds that does not only affects the number of consumers that are going inside the public market, but also affects their business itself physically (e.g., decrease shelf life of products, damage properties, rotten goods and etc.) one participant stated that heavy rains are one of their biggest enemies especially this rainy season. Because of continuous rain, there are lesser people who are going to the market and buying their products.

A similar situation also was stated by another participant. One participant stated that if there is heavy

rain, no one really goes to the market and buys their products.

2.2 Economic Reasons

Economic reasons are also one of the biggest contributors to the struggles of public market vendors. Basically, market vendors need to adjust to their environment especially in dealing with people that they get to encounter every day. From prices of suppliers, diverse personalities of customers to adjusting to certain shifts in consumer demands and continuous holiday seasons that imposes barriers towards market vendor's businesses, these are some of the economic factors that are struggles experienced by these market vendors while maintaining a successful business. One participant stated that when suppliers increase their prices, they mostly struggle to cope up with selling them. When suppliers increase prices, the supplies do not only get more expensive but vegetables that are being supplied also decreases and because vegetables are the most sellable products, sometimes, they get shortages and difficulty in looking for other suppliers.

Similarly, another participant expressed her experiences in difficulty of selling their products. One participant stated that when they supply one box of vegetables, it really depends on the season on whether or not their products would be sold out, there are really times where business is slow and their products would just rot but there are also times where business is good and they would sell all of their products.

Market vending also requires good communication skills as people gets to engage with people. One participant stated that one of her struggles really is dealing with the different personalities of customers. She stated that there are really customers who are nice, entitled, rich, poor, and etc. depending on the day and the season and the hardest task is to get along with them

The same participant also stated that when a customer is being rude, it is like the customer brings a negative effect on her business which caused her business to slow down for a few days which triggers her struggles but afterwards, there are also times where it comes back to normal and it really depends on the customer

Other than adjusting to the attitudes of the customers, one struggle that a participant has encountered is the unstable shift of consumer demands. One participant stated that there are times where customers would want a specific product depending on

the season and they would have a hard time coping up with their demands when their profit is not enough to supply several varieties of products.

She also stated that the season plays a big role in consumer's purchasing power especially times where people are not going out of their houses such as holidays and other resting seasons.

Similarly, another participant also states the same thing, one participant stated that there are really seasons where business is good and bad.

Rent also is a big economic factor that affects the business of market vendors. Since sales are really not that big when they are selling their products, they are having trouble with their rent that is unreasonably expensive. One participant stated that there are stalls that only pays a small amount of rent but theirs is too big.

2.3 Governmental Regulation

The government plays a big role in regulating the market vendors and ensuring the welfare of each and every one of its members but one misconduct of the government in managing their constituents can cause a domino effect and can affect especially those who has not much power. One participant stated that when she was young, her mother would just sell their products on the sidewalks and back then, the government didn't allow that and they can basically do anything that they want to those illegal vendors. Sometimes, they would throw away the products or their products would get ran by motorcycles if ever they get caught.

2.4 Existing Loans and Debts

Loans and debts are normal when it comes to investing in businesses. Some market vendors engage in loans or borrow money from lenders to start their business. Unfortunately, some vendors could not contain themselves and would end up with multiple debts. One participant stated that no one really gets any investment in business when they don't borrow money. But she struggles when she has to pay these debts and her profit is not even enough to sustain their everyday needs.

She also expressed that she cannot earn because of these debts that she has to pay. She stated that in order for her to even have furniture and other materials in their house, she has to loan or borrow money to buy them or get them on installment and she basically lives a life circulated by debts.

Similarly, some participants have also experienced and observed those experiences stated by

other participants about loans and debts. One participant stated that one of the main reasons that market vendors fail in business is because of millions of loans and debts and this becomes one of the main struggles of these market vendors.

“...Ay oo diri ya palautang diri.. wala sang tao di ya nga wala utang diri sa palengke...” (Inday: P4 I 50-51)

(Oh yes! In here everyone is full of debts. There is no people here that has no debts inside the public market.

But although debt payers are having trouble repaying their debts, there are also lenders who are experiencing difficulties because their money are not being returned on time and they can't cycle their money and profit from it. One participant stated that she would often supply people vegetables to be paid in installment but when you start asking for payments, they don't pay until such time they just let it go.

2.5 Crime Engagement

Because of the difficulties in life such as multiple debts, financial struggles and financial issues and other environmental factors that affect the financial stability of the market vendors or factors that hinders them to provide for the basic necessities of their families, some of them unfortunately engage in illegal activities such as selling illegal products to people under the table just so they can have sufficient income for their everyday needs. One participant stated that because of how hard life was, she started to sell drugs to people and was imprisoned for years when she got caught.

2.6 Personal Assets Sale

Since market vendors mostly are stuck with multiple debts, there are instances where they cannot find anymore alternatives to pay their daily dues and they have to work with what's left with them such as their personal assets. (e.g., house lots, farm lots, vehicles, furniture, livestock and etc.) one participant shared that they sold their house and was forced to move to a far area just to pay their debts.

2.7 Social Reasons

Other than the different customers that they get to deal with every day, one of the factors that causes struggles to these market vendors are also with the people around them. When you are inside a community of people that is diverse, we can't really avoid conflicts between differences and actions of misconduct. One participant stated that there are really people inside the market that would create issues even if you did nothing wrong. There are people who even if you show something nice, they'll still disrespect you and that is why it is called “palengke” because gossips are everywhere and this contributes to the struggles of selling their products.

2.8 Career Decisions

Because of the struggles while engaging in market vending, there are instances where vendors are having dilemmas on whether or not they should stick to market vending or pursue other passions. One participant stated that she would sometimes have second thoughts if she would still continue market vending because she also has a lot of opportunities outside the market.

Table 3. Shows how those struggles affect the personal lives of public market vendors.

3.1 Budget Difficulty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Difficulty in Budgeting for Needs – Triggers Financial Difficulties
3.2 Personal Dilemmas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Influences Mood in Business Management – Clashes with Personal Problems – Triggers Health Issues – Does Not Let Problems Interfere with Personal Lives
3.3 Environmental Turbulence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Unstable Businesses Environment

Public market vendors take on multiple aspects of their lives, they have to maintain balance between their business and family lives and there are instances where they can lack or fail to fill in the gaps needed to maintain balance in their various social roles. Research

shows that being entrepreneurs had a negative impact on their roles in family life while having a positive impact on their roles in social, economic, and individual life. Entrepreneur's role frequently conflicted with other roles in the family, most notably

those of housewife, mother, and wife. According to research, physical exhaustion, high expectations from family members, and a lack of market demand are the main causes of stress related to work and family obligations (Ufuk, 2001).

3.1 Budget Difficulty

Because of the emerging problems and struggles while managing their small business inside the public market, there are instances where their personal budget to provide for their everyday needs are affected. Vendors usually sort out or plan out budget to be spent for a specific period of time and when there are problems in business, how they manage their budgetary needs in their personal lives are also disrupted. One participant stated that it really ruins their budget because everything is usually planned out from electric bills, water bills, insurance and educational support for children.

Another participant similarly had the same experience as she expressed that sometimes, when there are problems in their business, it affects them personally in terms of financial stability. One participant stated that she loses interest as she doesn't know how to pay her debts when there are problems emerging in her small business.

In contrast to the situation of other participants, another participant also agrees that it also affects their budget personally, one participant stated that if there are disruption in their business, they don't have anything to buy their basic necessities such as food and educational sustenance.

3.2 Personal Dilemmas

An entrepreneur's life can be divided into different aspects, they might have to prioritize business and sometimes might prioritize family and personal wellness. There are instances when difficulties trigger in one's business. It can cause personal dilemmas that can lead to difficult choices and confusion in a person's lives especially adhering to their own personal ethics as working professionals against their values as human being. One participant shared that sometimes, because of the problems in their business, it causes misfortune and they don't know how to react.

Though there are personal dilemmas in work ethics and personal values, there are also instances where they also have personal problems in life such as mood shifts, and other personal problems that clashes

with their business problems. One participant stated that there are instances where customers would show attitude to her and she would get hurt because she's also going through something, she also has her own personal problems.

Similarly, the same situation was expressed by another participant as she expressed that when problems arise in her business, she also gets pissed off especially when she has nothing to pay for her debts. She stated that she would sometimes get pissed when she didn't get any profit and she can't pay for her debts and her husband will act like he has no money, they would sometimes argue.

Fortunately, there are instances where market vendors get to understand situations and maintain balance between their different social roles, there are market vendors who doesn't let their business problems interfere with their personal lives. One participant stated that once problems are being experienced in the house or in her business, she doesn't let it clash together as it would cause misfortune.

Another participant expressed the same thing as she stated that her personal problems are her personal problems, it has nothing to do with how she runs her business that's why she doesn't let it interfere with how she manages her business.

Similarly, another participant expressed the same thing as she stated that whatever problems that she might encounter inside her home or vice-versa, she does not let it interfere with one another.

3.3 Environmental Turbulence

Business environment plays a big role in managing one's business smoothly. Their environment plays a big role in developing a healthy work setting. And if their business environment is unstable, it doesn't only affect their business but also their personal lives. One participant expressed that because of the authority back then, their business environment became unstable and they cannot sell their products properly. One participant stated that back then, it was illegal to sell at sidewalks and when they see guards roaming around, they would hide and remove their products from the street. She expressed that it's really different when you have a stable business environment.

Table 4. Shows how did the public market vendors rise and achieve triumph

4.1 Paradigm Shift	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Looking For Other Source of Income – Sufficient Source of Income
4.2 Trusting the Divine Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Faith in the Supreme Being
4.3 Family Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Children and Family Motivation – Motivated by Children's Situation – Keep on Going Despite of Difficulty for the Family – Provides the Needs of the Family
4.4 Self-Determination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Self-motivated by Change – Work Hard to Provide for Personal Needs – Not Minding the Problem and Maintaining Good Image
4.5 Acclimatization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Just Go with the Flow of Life

In recent studies, research shows that small businesses are often having trouble maintaining their business for approximately 10 years. Most of the small business under the informal sector that attempts to do long-term business usually ends up encountering multiple problems such as discontinuance of ownership and/or bankruptcy. Research shows that towards different small business in the United States that withstand 10 years in operations, 3 major factors are needed to be considered. (a) great customer service, (b) building relationships, and (c) finding your passion. All of which are essential factors that can be used to maintain stable business operations for small businesses (Ufuk, 2001).

4.1 Paradigm Shift

Rising above struggles is not an easy task, market vendors usually need to strategically think of ways to reduce their problems and analyze appropriate actions to be taken to address their struggles in managing their business. Paradigm shift is one of the strategies that market vendors engage in for them to rise above their struggles and address their everyday needs and problems that arises. Paradigm shift in this study is defined as when a person shifts their current situation into a more favorable one or recognizing the benefits that one's actions are gaining and constantly developing these actions to uplift their socio-economic conditions. One participant stated that if business is slow inside the market, they look for other sources of income such as sari-sari store and other part-time business opportunities they can think of to sustain their needs.

Another participant expressed that she chose to stay in the parlor instead of her work in the past because income is quite sufficient inside the market compared to others. She stated that she would earn more sufficiently inside the market that's why she continued her job.

4.2 Trusting the Divine Plan

Problems in business are things that cannot be avoided, there are struggles that are indeed will test market vendor's resiliency in managing these situations and one of their defense mechanisms is trusting the supreme being. Spiritual strength plays a big role in enhancing the determination of these market vendors. Trusting the supreme being and trusting the divine plan is an effective factor that motivates and pushes them to keep going despite those struggles. One participant stated that she recognizes that the supreme being has his own plans, sometimes you get blessings and sometimes you get none but she recognizes that not all the time you will get misfortune, there are also times that you will get so many blessings and you just have to trust the supreme being.

Other participants also expressed that whenever they are having struggles, they just pray and trust the supreme being. One participant stated that she trusts the divine plan because he is the only one, we call when we can't solve our problems.

One participant also expressed the same experience, she stated that if she has problems in life, just pray because prayer is the number one defense mechanism that she uses to uplift herself from problems.

Similarly, another participant also expressed the same thing, she stated that she just prays for her problems and let God take control of her life. She even goes to church every Sunday and she uses prayer to strengthen her and motivate her to keep on going. And she sees that it is effective as God heals her illnesses and keeps her body strong.

4.3 Family Motivation

All of the participants have their own families, their families are the ones who serves as their backbone and motivation to keep going in life. One of the main factors that pushes them to rise above those struggles is that they know that they have families to feed, they need to fight for them to survive and also, they aim to support their child until they grow up and secure a better future for them. One participant stated that she never surrenders because she always reminds her children that whatever happens, she will be right there and they should focus on her studies. She also expressed that her tiring day will immediately be ok when she sees her children and that serves as her motivation to keep going.

One participant also expressed the same thing as she also stated that she is doing this so that her children can finish her studies.

Family really serves as the main motivation for these market vendors, they would withstand anything just to provide the needs of their families. One participant expressed that one of her motivations is for her to provide the needs of her family because her family needs her.

4.4 Self-Determination

Despite their struggles, other than getting motivated by their family and the supreme being, they usually try to uplift themselves. Recognizing that they have personal needs, changing themselves for the better

and pushing themselves to become the best versions of themselves even when times gets hard. They enhance their self-determination and uses this to be resilient and withstand any challenges that may come in their lives. Believing in themselves is an essential factor for them to keep going. Constantly reminding themselves about their priorities and responsibilities are a huge factor to become resilient in dealing with different problems in their lives. One participant shared that she purposely changed herself, moved away from bad habits and focused on herself to maintain a good life.

She also states that she uses herself and their personal needs as motivation to keep on going. She stated that if she just puts in mind that they need food and even if she doesn't have any savings, she still pushes herself to work hard.

Another participant also expressed that despite all of the problems that has come in her life, she just keeps on doing the things that she does best and just not minding the problem. She just maintains a good image and keeps on being nice to the customers and she states that it is effective as problems slips right away.

4.5 Acclimatization

These market vendors experience varieties of problems that does not only affects their business lives but also affects their personal lives. Other than using their family and their family's situation and even themselves as motivation to keep on going, they sometimes try to go with the flow and live with the problem instead of dealing with them. One participant stated that she just takes it easy on herself and she doesn't acknowledge the problem. Because if you acknowledge it, you will just become problematic.

Table 5. Shows what are the lessons that the public market vendors learned from their experience that they can impart to others

5.1 Seeing the Monetary Value	— The Value of Earning Money for the Future
5.2 Steadfast and Immovable	— Work Hard and Endure Life Struggles
	— Keep on Fighting and Never Surrender in Life
	— Keep on Trying Despite Those Struggles
	— Staying Motivated in Life
5.3 Respect Differences	— The Value of Respecting and Socializing with Others

5.4 Resiliency in Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Don't give up on Life and Keep on Fighting – Life is Seasonal – Know What to do and Not to Do in Life
5.5 Keeping the Faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Trusting the Supreme Being

Not all business remains successful, there will be times where certain businesses will fail because of the lack of experience, the resources that you have or not going according through as planned. Research showed from business owners who have shut down their business is that business goes smoothly the second time because they use their experience as lessons to identify what are the dos and don'ts in managing a business. Lessons are essential aspects of a person's life as they serve as the basis if a person decides to keep on going in life (Stokes, 2002).

5.1 Seeing the Monetary Value

Lessons are an essential factor that we can acquire from the experiences of these public market vendors. Money is one of the most important things that people work for in order for them to sustain their everyday needs and that is why we have to see the importance of earning for our future. One participant stated that, one lesson that people can get from her is seeing the importance of money. You really have to earn because not all the time you will be uplifted in life, not all the time you will have that stable job and you have to earn and have insurance when you grow old.

5.2 Steadfast and Immovable

The public market vendors are undoubtedly a force to be reckoned with, they are strong and determined to keep up on life despite their struggles. One of the lessons that they stated that can be learned from their experience and staying committed and withstand all of the problems. Being steadfast and immovable to overcome all of the odds that may come in your life. Because if you are committed to what you are doing, you will overcome and survive all of the challenges that will come into your life. One participant expressed that you always need to work hard and endure everything that will come into your life. They use their life as a motivation because they were not born rich, they're just poor and they need to get through those challenges in life.

Staying positive in life is also one of the lessons that can be learned from their experience. Being optimistic means that your giving good meaning to whatever challenges you may face in life. One

participant stated that even if she doesn't have customers today, she just doesn't lose hope and looks forward to the other days that she will have customers. Another participant stated that one of the lessons that can be obtained from her experience is just to keep on fighting and not minding the negativities around you. she stated that you just have to keep on going because if you acknowledge problems you might end up crazy.

Another participant expressed the same thought as she stated that she can become a good example for others and become an inspiration because she didn't give up on everything that she has been through in life and she just tried and tried and never gave up.

5.3 Respect Differences

Socializing and getting along with the people around you are one of the important qualities that a public market vendor should acquire in order to have a harmonious business life inside the market. One of the lessons that can be acquired from their experience is to respect the differences. Respect differences of the people around you such as your customers, administrators and also your co-stall owners. Living harmoniously and respecting each other is an essential factor as these people are human beings just like you who tries to make a living. One participant stated that one of the lessons that you can learn from her experience is that she never stepped on other people's dignity. She respected everyone and she didn't say anything bad to her fellow stall owners inside the market because when times get rough, you only have your fellow market vendors to back you up and help you in life. Don't mind those people who does bad things to you, the important thing is you know how to get along with people and that is the secret to a successful life.

Another participant also stated the same thought, she believes that one of the best lessons that people can gain from her experience is that you need to be nice to your co-stall owners. Even if they betray you, just give them the best version of yourself.

5.4 Resiliency in Life

Being strong and resilient in life is one of the secret ingredients why these market vendors are at the

peak of their success up to these days. Being able to boost your self-determination and withstanding all obstacles in life are one of the lessons that people can obtain from the experiences of these market vendors. One of the participants stated that when people read his story, he hopes that they'll use it to become stronger in life and hope that her life will not be a reflection of their lives because her life was not easy, it's ok if you can handle it but whatever happens just do not surrender in life.

Another participant stated the same thought as she expressed that the lesson that people can get from her is to always stay strong and never give up on life. Whatever your life situation is, no matter how poor your life might get, just try and try.

One participant also added that one of the lessons that can be learned from her experience is that you need to know what's right or wrong in life. You need to know what are the dos and don'ts and you need to surround yourself with the good circle.

5.5 Keeping the Faith

Faith and spiritual strength are one of the key ingredients on why these market vendors remain resilient and determined to get through their problems in life. By trusting the supreme being, you will not be feeling alone and you might feel a sense of guidance towards everything that you do in life. One of the lessons that people might get in the story of these vendors is to always keep your faith in the supreme being, one participant stated that, whenever people does badly towards you, never think about revenge, just carry on with your life and just pray to him and that's it.

CONCLUSION

Implications for Practice

This phenomenological study investigated the hardships and triumphs of public market vendors in Koronadal city. The findings can serve as a basis for making policies and programs that would enhance the socio-economic conditions of market vendors and also to strengthen the welfare by using these findings as basis in identifying the needs and programs in response to these needs of public market vendors in Koronadal city as well as using the findings as basis for future clients within the business field to absorb or do the same defense mechanisms and strategies that these market vendors did to rise above their struggles.

Considering the results and the processes that this study had gone through, it implied that:

The implications of this study could serve as a basis for policymaking for the enhancement of the socio-economic conditions and to strengthen the welfare of public market vendors. As stated in some articles, social workers advocate on behalf of individuals, groups and communities to increase their access to basic resources such as housing, food, health care and everything that basically disrupts their social functioning and adjustment to their environment. In policy-making, social worker's advocacy seeks to change frameworks that impact groups of people. They advocate on behalf of people from underserved, underrepresented, and marginalized groups, addressing policies that impact their lives and well-being. (Tulane, 2021) additionally, the public market vendor's success and triumphs are mainly based on their available resources and the environment that they are in. (e.g., policies implemented for them, the people around them, the environment that they are living in as well as their existing resources that they can utilize) these market vendors are considered as underrepresented and mostly unrecognized of their efforts to uplift their own socio-economic conditions despite the complete lack of proper regulations, policies and programs to address their concerns and enhance their welfare.

The main reason why public market vendors engage in market vending is mainly because of their eagerness to sustain the needs of their families and because of their available resources that they utilize for alternative source of income. Their struggles are mostly caused by the environment that they are in most especially the people that they get to interact with and the policies implemented for them. moreover, the aspect that gets affected by these struggles are mostly financial and budget for their family's needs but they use these as motivation to rise up above those struggles and endure obstacles that they may encounter. Generally, the overall experience of the market vendors for those long periods of time definitely impacted them and left a lesson in their minds. Hence, they think that it depends on the people on how they will perceive their experiences in life but they state that no matter what happens just never give up on life – as mentioned in the results. The findings will serve as a basis for formulating policies and programs for the public market vendors in Koronadal city by identifying their struggles, we can use them to address their needs and

implement appropriate programs and services that will enhance their socio-economic conditions and strengthen their welfare.

Implications for Future Research

This phenomenological study investigated the hardships and triumphs of public market vendors in Koronadal city public market. With the findings and the results that was drawn out from analyzing the data gathered, there can be more theories that can be formulated by the future researchers, the findings will also serve as an opportunity for future researchers to understand and relate other related issues involving market vendors. More research is in fact necessary to define, redefine and further elaborate findings for future and more learnings. Considering the result and the processes that this study went through, it implied that:

First, the study offers the knowledge that can be used as basis for policy formulation and enhancement of existing policies and programs to enhance the socio-economic conditions of market vendors and to enhance their welfare. Social worker's role in policy formulation is to advocate or change the framework of certain existing policies and programs and to be the voices of those marginalized, underrepresented and underserved sectors of the society such as the market vendors. The findings can be used as a basis to see what are there to change in the existing policies and to formulate other policies that would better enhance their way of living. Hence, this study can be beneficial for social workers as for future clients, they can use this as a basis/ medium to identify what are the things that they should do and not do based on the formulated findings about the hardships and triumphs of market vendors.

Second, this study can be a great venue for the public market administration to better understand the situation of their constituents and use this as a basis to create a better working environment and better policies to enhance the welfare and organize a harmonious relationship between other vendors and the administration.

Third, this study can be a great venue for the consumers to understand the situation of these market vendors. By this research we can help build a better understanding between the vendors and consumers and by understanding the situations of these vendors, consumers might have a deeper understanding about the hardships and triumphs of market vendors and this

can create better understanding between sellers and consumers.

fourth, this study can serve as a basis for future business starters to know what are there to do, what are not to do, what are the defense mechanisms that they should respond to certain struggles and problems that may come and lessons that they may bring towards their business journey.

Lastly, further research can elaborate point, providing information about what are the main causes of the struggles of market vendors and what motivates them to overcome those struggles and reach their triumphs. This way, future social workers can not only use this as a basis for enhancement of the well-being of future clients with the same problem but also social welfare agencies, market administration and the government in general may have an idea about the circulating problems and would be used as a basis to formulate better policies to enhance the welfare of these market vendors.

Concluding Remarks

This research realized that behind those smiles that we see when market vendors face their customers and the years that they spent inside the public market, there are struggles that we do not know that they endure for their family and their purpose. It is evident to say that the environment of a person plays a vital part in every aspect of their lives especially when you are managing a business. Resources and the norms that you live with plays a big role in the surfacing of struggles of market vendors and the environment also plays a big role in overcoming those struggles. With all of those years of people buying inside the public market, there are few to no recognition of these public market vendors and there is no venue for them to highlight their stories. If given opportunities such as these types of studies, we cannot only give a venue for them to express their experiences and impart lessons to others but they can also make a big impact and inspire people especially those who are starting their business. With the lessons that we have drawn out from the findings, their stories can serve as a catalyst for people to be more determined in life and commit to what they want to achieve. And if we give a chance for these market vendors to have better access to programs and services and also formulate programs and services that would make their lives much easier, less market vendors would encounter struggles hence, despite those struggles, these market vendors deserve recognition

and a venue for them to be recognized because what they have been through is not easy and their story deserves to be heard.

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