

# Vulnerability and Resilience Among Senior Citizen Street Vendors in the City of Koronadal, Philippines Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic

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## Abstract

With the changes in the environment, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, it was perceived that senior citizen street vendors are considered one of the vulnerable groups who are affected by the unexpected social change. This study examined the vulnerability and resilience among senior citizen street vendors through a qualitative descriptive research method, and conducted an in-depth interview with five participants who were qualified for the criteria that were set by the researchers. The study was conducted in the City of Koronadal. The researchers examined the data extracted from the participants through a thematic analysis of their experiences of vulnerability, resilience, challenges, and coping mechanisms. Based on the study, it was found out that senior citizen street vendors experienced overarching challenges because of their vulnerability to the loss of their income and to economic risks, which were crucial to their livelihood and survival, but with innate resilience, namely their persistence, adaptability, flexibility, and will to survive, they could continue street vending amidst the pandemic. These vendors also faced challenges in terms of the social exclusion of older persons, and the unsustainability of the livelihoods that they encountered, but they were able to lessen the effects of these challenges through employing coping mechanisms such as acceptance and open-mindedness. A conceptual model that would visualize the vulnerability, resilience, challenges, and coping mechanisms was created to present the realities of the senior citizen street vendor in the City of Koronadal.

**Keywords:** Vulnerability; Resilience; Senior Citizen Street Vendor; COVID-19 Pandemic; Challenges.

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## **1. Introduction**

Old age is part of the reality of human life. It is the stage of declining in terms of biological features such as hearing loss and logical thinking. Author [1] stated that body parts are working less efficiently due to age and the most affected is the brain, which she termed as cognitive aging where adults are not able to think efficiently. These factors affect the daily social activities of elderly people where it affects their adaptation to the constant changes in the society especially to those elders that are still involved in livelihoods and are still bread winners to their families. In the context of senior citizen street vendors, it may affect the way that the vendors cognitively respond to the changes, as they need to become critical on the way they plan out the adaptation methods that they need to employ in their day-to-day life, while doing their daily activities as vendors. And having poor brain performance and functioning as individuals could hugely influence their inability to adapt to the constant changes that are happening.

This cognitive functioning, has a huge bearing on the importance in acquiring a sustainable livelihood in this contemporary times as one of the essentials in the survival of human life. Author [2] purported that livelihood is described as the means of being able to make a living out of utilizing resources in the environment, it requires capabilities and activities that would enable individuals to earn a living. And it is more crucial when biological features decline and are compromised. As these street vendors need to physically perform their street vending activities under various constraints in the environment without absolute assurance of safety against the hazards of the usual environment where they perform their street vending activities. They may face extreme heat, rain, wind, congested spaces and many other constraints that demand their physical wellness as individuals.

An estimate of around 2.5 billion people in the globe work in the informal economy[3], and in the developing Asian countries 50% of the urban labor force was in the said informal work, and the most visible form of livelihood is street vending [4]. Street trade offers a viable livelihood, but earnings are low and risks are high for several vendors. Surviving as a street vendor requires a certain amount of skill. Competition among vendors for space within the streets and access to customers is crucial in many cities. And vendors must be ready to negotiate effectively with wholesalers and customers.

Street vendors have always faced troublesome regulations and punitive measures by authorities, including confiscation of products and arrests but the imposition of local and national lockdowns to contain the spread of COVID-19 is threatening not just the livelihoods but the very survival of informal vendors and their families in some places. In the Philippines, these senior citizen street vendors 'ages sixty (60) years old and above were prohibited to go outside the neighborhood during the pre-pandemic stage and as a result, it made those senior citizen street vendors unable to continue their livelihood.

Based on the study conducted in Guwahati City, India, street vendors struggled and were hugely affected by lockdowns and restrictions brought by the pandemic. Vendors were forced to stop their businesses and some had increased their debts just to sustain the daily necessities of their family, and those who considered street vending as their full-time livelihood were the ones who struggled the most as their livelihood was hampered but for some vendors who opted to continue, then, they did some adjustments to the vending protocols to effectively run the

business. Despite the various problems persistent with the street vending activity, most of the street vendors had shown their positive outlook to continue as a street vendor and successfully run their livelihood with an expectation that authorities that regulated the street vending activity would provide financial support and extend their contribution towards building the capabilities of the street vendors.

In the City of Koronadal, its local government unit has been considering the sentiments of sectors that could be heavily affected by another total lockdown, among them tricycle drivers, street vendors and other micro-scale traders, and local workers. Yet in response to the recommendations from various sectors, immediate implementation of firmer control measures to contain the further spread of the disease was suggested by the local medical community. But its local chief executive has been emphasizing a measure of compromise, short of a (total) lockdown, to balance the need to keep the city's economy running even as they continue to address the pandemic.

This study identified the group of senior citizen street vendors, as the researchers found out that they were one of the significant groups that directly deal with the phenomenon of survival through the help of livelihood while battling it out with the adversities caused by the pandemic and were able to endure the challenges of surviving as they were in a stage of aging process while being in the middle of pandemic.

The researchers defined the vulnerability and resilience of senior citizen street vendors in this time of pandemic and gained insights from the descriptions of the vendors who experienced it themselves despite being biologically compromised individuals. Desirably, humanity believes that empowerment and inclusiveness in the community is a critical instrument for achieving economic and social progress which benefits a community's overall holistic development as declared in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development.

During this obvious social transition that has occurred in the world, some community-governing organizations have been highly passionate about providing basic assistance and services to the ordinary people of the community, because they are deemed to be at risk if they are not assisted and the Philippines as a member country of the United Nations has its mandates to apply all the seventeen (17) Sustainable Development Goals on its stakeholders to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all as they recognized that in order to end poverty and deprivations, there is a need to address social injustices with the help of these (SDG) strategies which applies the principle of inclusiveness on the approach in uplifting humanity, but these aspirations would only be possible if there is a clear and concrete data that will unravel the raw conditions and lived experiences of the vulnerable groups, mainly the senior citizen street vendors, that would help various institutions to have a clear visualization of the problems that exist in the society.

### ***1.1. Statement of the Problem***

This study aimed to describe the experiences of senior citizen street vendors on their vulnerability and resilience amidst the pandemic. It also describes their challenges and coping mechanisms in street vending. From the findings, a conceptual model is formulated to describe the vulnerability and resilience of senior citizen street vendors amidst the pandemic.

## ***1.2 Related Literatures***

This section shows the related articles and studies that the researchers used logically to express the idea of this study. It also conveys the ideas and knowledge that have been established on the topics that were used in the study.

### ***Old Age Stage of Life***

With time, most brain processes become less efficient. Things tend to work a little slower and less productive, although older folks may typically compensate for this by drawing on their experience. Older persons can also benefit from cognitive aging by being more optimistic and emotionally resilient individuals [1]. Aging affects various processes and social adaptation of individuals as the body tends to decline in some areas. But according to the author, elders may have positive benefits from this process of ageing as they develop their mental fortitude and they broaden their views on their day-to-day lives.

Elders who are continuing their livelihoods during the pandemic have been struggling to adapt to the new strategies specifically on their own activities which in turn affects their productivity and income during the Covid-19 pandemic. This scenario is typically imminent for the group of senior citizen street vendors around the world.

### ***Livelihood***

Livelihood is generally defined as a job or other source of income that gives money to people for them to be able to sustain and afford to provide the basic needs that they need for their everyday life. In a study of Hazard Mitigation in Emergency Management, it is defined as a method and means of making a living in the world. It said that livelihood consist of capabilities, assets and activities that are required for living [2]. On this study it was proven that the main purpose of livelihood is to sustain the survival of individuals and families, and it is a necessity for all people in order to live.

Under livelihood are the two classifications of sectors. These are the formal and informal sectors in livelihood. According to author [5], formal sectors are the jobs with specific working hours and have regular wages and that the workers' job is assured, and systematic. It also has organized contracts to work where they could either be employed by the government, state or a private business establishment. While informal sectors or unorganized sectors are usually self-employed individuals working in the public. They usually do not have regular working hours and wages that will assure them of their survival with their families. These groups of workforce are also exempted from paying the taxes, and the most noticeable form of work under the informal sector is the street vending activity.

### ***Street Vending***

Street vending refers to the installation or use of any box, stall, stand, barrow, or stationary vehicle inside the road reserve, other than a "roadside stall" or "mobile vending vehicle" specified above, for the purpose of selling

products or pursuing any business, calling, or job. It is one of the most visible occupations in the informal economy. They are part of urban economies around the world offering easy access to a wide range of affordable goods and services in public places. They sell a variety of goods and they also offer their services to their customers [7].

The street vendors usually use a cart or a small stall that they can easily move. Street vendors could be stationary that occupy a space in public places in the streets or in private places. They could be mobile and move from one place to another to where most of the people are.

### ***Street Vending Amidst COVID 19 Pandemic Globally***

Author [8] quoted that before the COVID 19 situation, the street vendors created an augmented market environment whereby different necessities were available in an affordable and convenient manner. The livelihoods of these street vendors were stabilized to a great extent and a regular source of income was being availed properly. The sudden outbreak of the pandemic situation which took the whole world into its grasp also harmed the lives of the street vendors and so most of them who used to have a regular source of income faced discontinuation from earning their livelihood. Based on this study of Deka, street vending industry was much efficient and productive as it was giving convenience to both the vendors and their customers as they have very affordable goods which was beneficial on the end of the customers and was also augmenting the flow of income to the vendors.

### ***Local Pandemic Response***

The Philippine government's handling of the pandemic was problematic. Lockdown is useful if it buys a country time to strengthen health systems and test-trace-treat systems. These are the building blocks of more efficient containment of the disease. However, if a country fails to strengthen these systems, then it squanders the time that lockdown affords it. This seems to be the case for the Philippines, which made global headlines for implementing one of the world's longest community quarantines during the pandemic, yet failed to flatten its COVID-19 curve.

The Philippines is again headed for another strict lockdown and it is still trying to graduate to a more efficient containment strategy amidst rising concerns over the delta variant which has spread across Southeast Asia. It seems stuck with on-again, off-again lockdowns, which are severely damaging to the economy, and will likely create negative expectations for future COVID-19 surges [9].

### ***Street Vending in Local setting***

The effect of COVID 19 in Street vending in the Philippines had been a struggle. Due to the lockdowns that the LGU had implemented the different Protocols that should be followed by everyone had been a hindrance to the Street vendors. A Secretary General of Metro Manila Vendor's Association (MMVA), an organization of street vendors, Flora Assidao-Santos said that the Vendors were prohibited from selling in the streets, depriving them from their main source of income. Because they are daily wage earners, street vendors don't have enough

savings to sustain them in being locked down in their own houses due to quarantine restrictions. Assidao-Santos quoted “The street vendors and their Families went hungry” [10].

In Quezon City with the highest population in the National Capital Region (NCR), Assidao-Santos together with the MMVA negotiated with the local government to allow vendors to sell. But getting on the street had only solved one problem. With most of the population mandated to isolate themselves at home, income had been drastically reduced. Additionally, the suspension of public transport meant having to walk for hours every day to and from their houses to their selling area. He also reported that some of them need to walk nearly 23 km from the peripheral towns of Manila, while pushing their cart, which is tiring but most of them persisted, some also tried to hitchhike even if it is dangerous [11].

### ***Vulnerability***

Vulnerability refers to the quality of being vulnerable (being able to be easily hurt, influenced or attacked) or something that is vulnerable [12]. One of the most vulnerable groups that are mostly seen are the senior citizens, especially in these times wherein the corona virus disease is still widespread. “The COVID-19 pandemic is causing untold fear and suffering for older people across the world.” as stated by the secretary-general of the United Nations, Antonio Guterres. The senior citizens, especially those who work in the informal economy, specifically street vending, are the most vulnerable to the disease because they are facing strangers in their everyday lives.

Vulnerability is the state of being susceptible to the hazardous impacts brought by social, economic and environmental factors [13]. Being vulnerable makes people and communities or groups become limited in coping with the hazardous social and economic conditions that surrounds them.

By adding vulnerability in our understanding of disaster, we recognize that disaster risk is a reflection of people's and socioeconomic assets' vulnerability to loss and damage, not only the severity of the danger or the number of people or assets exposed. Vulnerability (and exposure) levels help to explain why some non-severe dangers can have catastrophic consequences and consequences while others do not. People's vulnerability is frequently the most important aspect in defining their risk in the setting of extended risk.

Some groups are more vulnerable to damage, loss, and suffering than others in the face of various hazards, and some individuals (within these groups) are more vulnerable than others. Sensitive people have the most difficult time reorganizing their livelihoods after a disaster, making them more vulnerable to the effects of subsequent natural hazards. As a result, in order to lessen disaster risk, we must reduce vulnerability [13].

Being vulnerable to the disease is not the only thing that the senior citizen face, they also face age based discrimination. Negative stereotypes of older people in the US had a harmful impact on older people's memory, balance and even how long they lived for. Some people assume that when you are old, you become useless to the society and some families abandon their parents when they are old because they are another burden to carry. Negative concepts about old age that was made by people out of their stereotypes influenced the perception of

the majority that being on the older stage of life makes us unproductive and we are of a burden to be dealt with by our families. Over all it makes the senior citizen's welfare more vulnerable to neglect and being unattended.

### ***Resilience***

As defined by author [14] resilience gives people the psychological strength to cope with stress and hardship. It is the mental reservoir of strength that people are able to call on in times of need to carry them through without falling apart. With a longer experience in life the senior citizens have built resilience in their life. During this time of pandemic other senior citizens are doing well because of their built up resilience. Carpenter (2020), a professor of psychological and brain science at Washington University in St. Louis, stated that there are some older adults who are doing quite well during the pandemic and have actually expanded their social networks and activities.

Resilience is the ability of individuals that are enduring and recovering from difficulties, struggles and challenges in life. Author [15] defined vulnerability as the degree to which a system, or part of it, may react adversely during the occurrence of a hazardous event. This concept of vulnerability implies a measure of risk associated with the physical, social and economic aspects and implications resulting from the system's ability to cope with the resulting event. Resilience has been around for a very long time and can be traced back to literary pieces such as stories and myths but it was later on studied by various fields of study and they define resilience as the ability to surmount great obstacles in the course of life.

In the study of [16] entitled Risk and resilience in family well-being during COVID- 19 pandemic, it showed that the pandemic had posed adverse threats to the well-being of the children and families due to challenges such as social disruptions and financial instability that could be simply defined as lack of income and anxiety among children, despite of these threats children and their family showed resilience and able to cope with the sudden change on their environment by enhancing their family support system and relationship as they overcome the threats of anxiety and insufficiency of material needs that would affect children it was an act of resilience that affirms to the systems theory on the families.

New research calls attention to this little-remarked-upon resilience as well as significant challenges for older adults as the pandemic stretches on. It shows that many senior citizens have changed behaviors reaching out to family and friends, pursuing hobbies, exercising, and participating in faith communities as they strive to stay safe from the coronavirus.

### ***Challenges***

Since the start of the pandemic people have faced a lot of challenges- the lockdowns, economic problems, anxiety, depression and the virus itself, the informal economy especially the street vendors faced a lot of challenges, especially the elder ones. But even with the challenge that they face they must make a living against all odds because they have a family that needs to feed.

Challenges refer to the day to day struggles that are being dealt with by the senior citizen street vendors in the

City of Koronadal amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, which vary from the street vending challenges up to the financial sustainability that they need to address and the personal challenges that they face as senior citizen street vendors.

### ***Coping mechanism***

Coping mechanisms can be defined as emotions, thoughts, and behaviors that assist to reduce the psychological stress undergone by individuals and promote mental wellbeing, which allows individuals to adjust to the complexities of life. Each person faces disappointments, failures, loss of someone and trauma. Everyone faces different difficult situations and everyone must come up with effective ways to deal and bounce back from these situations. Elderly tend to cope with stressing situations, mainly with answers focused on the problem, promoting a reality centralized approach. It is evident on this study that elderly people have that attributes that they are more lenient in solving the stresses, tensions or problems that they experienced. It is because of their long period of experience being exposed to such strenuous situations.

In this time of pandemic, the elderly are the most vulnerable group. The pandemic also exposes the older people to countless life challenges including disrupted plans, frustration and boredom, separation from family and friends, irregular access to supplies such as food, medication, and financial strain. In the study of author [17], *Coping during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Qualitative study of older adults across the United States*, they found out that the strategies used by the older persons to cope up with their stress were exercising and going outdoors, modifying routines, following public health guidelines, adjusting attitudes, and staying socially connected. Some coping strategies were health-limiting while most strategies encouraged self-improvement, positive adjustment, and wellness. This shows how adaptive and willing to change does the senior citizens just to ease their situation or to rather minimize the effects of the tensions that they experience from their everyday lives.

### ***Vulnerability to Loss of Income***

Loss of income refers to the situation in which a person's source of money for expenses or lifestyle, such as salary from a job or income from a business, is terminated which will cause a negative domino effect on the socio-economic aspect of that person and his or her subordinates.

As stated by author [18] the risks of sudden loss of income or access to social support have consequences which are difficult to estimate and it constitutes a challenge in identifying all those who might become vulnerable. Certainly, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, vulnerable groups are not only elderly people, those with ill health and comorbidities, or homeless or under housed people, but also people from a gradient of socioeconomic groups that might struggle to cope financially, mentally, or physically with the crisis. Hence, vulnerability to the loss of income does not only limited to senior citizens or street vendors but also with other groups who has constraints such as bodily impaired, mentally unstable, and other real life constrained individuals.

The survey found that 24 percent of respondents lost a job or income due to COVID-19. Most of these job or



income losses were due to being furloughed or experiencing reduced work hours. From the latter survey of determining the impacts of pandemic to the people, it showed that 24 percent of the respondents affirmed that they were experiencing the loss of the usual income that they could get from their livelihoods. These individuals who lost their incomes during pandemic, were all commonly affected by the restrictions on their mobility as vendors that is why because of limited market hours which they could utilize in selling or displaying their goods they loss some part of their usual amount of income.

In the study of author [19], it was found out that families living on a low income can bring multiple stresses such as food and fuel poverty, debt, dispossession, and restricted social opportunities that has effects on the family relationships, harming parents' physical and mental health, and contributing to feelings of stigma, isolation, and exclusion for the whole family.

### ***Economic Risk***

Economic risk means risk related to the economy in which the business operates [20]. The world experienced a financial crisis when COVID-19 spread across the world and resulted in the closing of different businesses. The economies across the world went down since people stayed at home to isolate themselves. The situation of the economy changed drastically. The economic situation in the Philippines was also in a bad shape since the factories and different business establishments were put on hold to prevent the spread of the disease.

Author [9]] notes that the Philippine economy appeared to be more vulnerable to virus outbreaks. It is based on people's movement, tourism, services, and cash transfer development, all vulnerable to pandemic-induced lockdowns and a loss of consumer trust. Street vending livelihood depends on the people and tourists to buy their goods and avail their services, but it was put to a halt because of the lockdowns and it resulted in a weak market.

Economic factors, such as income, education, employment, and social support can significantly affect how well and how long we live. These factors affect our ability to make healthy choices, afford medical care and housing, manage stress, and ensure our holistic welfare as individuals [21].

### ***Innate Persistence***

Persistence is the quality that allows someone to continue doing something or trying to do something even though it is difficult or opposed by other people [22]. Human persistence is an innate behavior provided by nature and groomed by nurture. Through the years our persistence has been developed by nurture. Persistence is something every individual is born with. Older persons that have more experience with life, have built up and developed their persistence through the years.

### ***Innate Awareness***

Resilient people are aware of situations, their own emotional reactions, and the behavior of those around them. By remaining aware, they can maintain control of a situation and think of new ways to tackle problems [23]

Awareness is the ability to concentrate on oneself and how one's behaviors, ideas, and emotions connect with their internal standards or do not. They can objectively analyze themselves, control their emotions, connect their actions with their ideals, and accurately grasp how others see them if they are extremely self-aware [24]. When people are aware of their own abilities they know what their skills and limitations are. When they evaluate themselves, they might consider if they are thinking, feeling, and doing as they "should" or according to their standards and beliefs. This is referred to as comparing against their correctness standards [25].

### **Innate Flexibility**

Author [26] described that flexibility is being open to other people's goals and ideas, as well as being prepared to be trained and challenged to improve. When the pandemic came the senior citizen street vendors were open to changes, they followed the health guidelines imposed by the government so that they could continue to sell and offer their services. In a blog by author [27], it suggested that people must be willing to adapt and open to the things that happen in their lives and we should believe that good ideas come from anywhere.

As stated by author [28] that people often use the word flexibility to describe the ability to adjust to changes in your life without creating stress or drama. Being flexible in life means that one can change his or her plans and adapt to new situations easily. These qualities can be associated with the overall resilient personality of the vendors in this study.

### ***Unsustainability of Livelihood***

When the pandemic hit the world, businesses were directly affected by the consequences of the pandemic, considering that people stayed at home to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 disease. The informal sector, specifically the street vending, faced complex challenges when the pandemic hit. Street vending as nature suggests they are self-employed and do not have specific time to sell their goods and services, the income that they earn each day will depend on the customers that they serve. The year 2020 was detrimental to many small business owners who found themselves unable to serve local and global customers as sales and marketing shifted to rely more heavily on the digital space [29].

Those street vendors who are young at age can still turn their business online but what about the senior citizens who are computer illiterate? They already struggled to earn enough income before the pandemic and now online business is now the trend. Author [30] noted that previously they didn't provide delivery services, supermarket retailers have turned to the innovative idea of curbside delivery. Instead of requiring someone to enter a busy store and risk COVID-19 exposure, an employee might acquire all of your needed things and deliver them to your car.

On the other hand sustainable livelihood is the adequate flow of cash and food to meet basic needs where there is a maintenance of resource productivity on a long-term basis [31]. Based from the statement of the author, consistent flow of income is the ideal state which we call sustainable livelihood and other than that could be termed as unsustainability if the flow of income while doing livelihood is being hampered.

### ***Social Exclusion of Older Persons***

Social exclusion is a process of an individual being alienated from the mainstream of the society caused by unable to reach the expectations or demand of the society from the figure of an individual social exclusion is commonly used to refer to the process that leads to a breakdown of the relationship between society and the individual. People commonly think that the older people are weak, dependent and vulnerable. People exclude them from getting jobs or benefits, and lessen communication from family, this happens because of stereotyping. Social exclusion is a dynamic process, which prevents access to different elements of the social, economic, political or cultural components of everyday life and is usually contrasted with static concepts of poverty. Exclusion is seen as a product of discrimination, the liberal state's lack of enforcement or inappropriate enforcement of rights, barriers to movement or exchange between spheres, and market failures. Exclusion is seen as a product of discrimination, the liberal state's lack of enforcement or inappropriate enforcement of rights, barriers to movement or exchange between spheres, and market failures. Social exclusion of older persons is a complex process that involves the lack of denial of resources, rights, goods and services as people age, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people across the varied and multiple domains of society. It affects both the quality of life of older individuals and the equity and cohesion of an aging society as a whole. Social exclusion of older persons is a complex process that involves the lacking or denial of resources, rights, goods and services as people age, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people across the varied and multiple domains of society. It affects both the quality of life of older individuals and the equity and cohesion of an ageing society as a whole. On the other hand in this study we refer to the exclusion experienced by the older persons specifically the senior citizen street vendors. As author [32] explained that elder neglect may cause the person to feel scared, depressed, or anxious about their future and own welfare, if these would be left untreated the person may develop serious health and emotional problems.

### ***Acceptance***

Acceptance is when an individual accepts the realities of life, weakness, strength, failures and success. The person must accept what cannot be humanly changed in order to advance in life projects. When people are aware of both their strengths and their weaknesses, it is easier to face any situation since they know what their capabilities are. The senior citizen street vendors have accepted their fate when the pandemic came. With different problems that they have faced, they accepted it and overcame it. When they accept their fate they move forward and strive hard to achieve their goal.

### ***Open-mindedness***

Being open-minded is generally considered a positive quality. It is a necessary ability in order to think critically and rationally [33]. Being an open minded person is a way of staying flexible to life's challenges, is the foundation of a growth mind-set, and is a quality that makes for good partners in romance, friendship, and business [34]. Open mindedness involves being receptive to a wide variety of ideas, arguments, and information. It is a necessary ability in order to think critically and rationally [35]. The senior citizen street vendors were

open minded considering that they have lived and faced challenges in their life. And being an open-minded person helped them overcome their problems and challenges. By changing their perspectives, and directing it toward positive change and coping.

### ***Vulnerability and Resilience of Senior Citizen Street Vendors in the City of Koronadal amidst COVID-19 Pandemic***

Based from the study conducted by Hutba et al., (2022) by interviewing five senior citizen street vendors, the student researchers found out that the senior citizen street vendors in the City of Koronadal are vulnerable to the loss of income and to economic risks that causes the possible deterioration of their life experiences as vendors and as family members, as their street vending livelihood which serves as their main source of income to sustain their family survival faces difficulties due to the existence of the global pandemic as they cannot keep up anymore with the rising financial demands that they faced. But these vendors, despite the vulnerabilities they faced, were able to persist, adapt, and flexibly adjust to these situations that they experienced as they possessed these unique innate resilient traits that were developed through their long time experiences as street vendors. These senior citizen street vendors are battling varied challenges in their daily life during the pandemic, especially the challenge of unsustainability of their livelihood, and the social exclusion that they experienced as biologically older individuals. But they were able to cope up with these realities that they experienced by employing some coping mechanisms such as acceptance of their realities, and situations and by keeping an open mind to every situation and scenarios that they are being dragged into by this pandemic situation.

#### ***On the Methodology of this Study***

This study applied the descriptive qualitative method. Descriptive qualitative research aims to describe a phenomenon and its characteristics. It also answers the questions, what, where, when, and how, but not why questions. Descriptive qualitative method focuses on description, rather than examining relationships or associations, it is classified as a descriptive study. A descriptive study attempts systematically to describe a situation, problem, phenomenon, service or program, or provides information about the living conditions of a community, or describes attitudes towards an issue. This method often involves collecting data from different sources to gain a deeper understanding of individual participants, which includes their opinion, attitudes, and their perspectives. The researchers applied a generic qualitative technique in analyzing the data that had been gathered. Author [36] stated that qualitative analysis uses subjective judgment to analyze an entity's value or prospects based on non-quantifiable information, through coding the transcribed data and looking for significant statements by creating it into categories with formulated meanings and come up with themes that would help to create a description of the information gathered by the researchers.

#### ***1.3. Significance of the Study***

The study that had been undertaken by the researchers gave a credible description of the vulnerability and resilience of the senior citizen street vendors living amidst the Covid-19 pandemic in the City of Koronadal.

Benefitting the study are the various sectors as follows:

### **Community**

The public would be aware of the realities of the vendors enduring the pandemic to survive, the public would have a better understanding and description of the vendors in interacting and aiding the street vendors in their pursuit of survival.

### **Policy Makers**

Policymakers in the government and similar persons in the community would be able to create and amend existing policies, restrictions, and alike to become more effective and avoid their policies being labeled as anti-poor approaches. And to have an input in their strategies to become comprehensively acceptable for all the stakeholders in the environment.

### **Social Service Providers**

Social service providers in various socio-civic agencies, specifically in the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) would benefit from this study as there would be additional information and accurate knowledge as to what and how are their clients perceive and describe the realities of the situations that they experience which would enable the providers and planners to create an improved versions of suitable and sustainable social services designed particularly for these group of people, the street vendors.

### **Future Researchers**

The data that would be presented would give them more information to use in their related study which can help and guide them to work with their research paper easier because there will be credible and comprehensive information that can be made available for them.

### **Social Work Student Researchers**

The researchers as future social workers working with the community, the finding of this study would help them widen their perspective in the realities when dealing with these kinds of sectors in the society it would help them become effective in their chosen field of profession.

### **Vendor's Family**

The family members of the vendors will be able to achieve a secure state of living as the breadwinners of their family would be productive and able to perform their roles in the family.

### **Street Vendors**

The findings of the study would help the vendors become conscious of their present common experiences and adverse conditions that might enable them to initiate collective efforts in dealing with their aspirations and concerns. That would help them effectively perform their roles as vendors and breadwinners.

#### ***1.4. Scope and Limitation of the Study***

This study was about the lived experiences of senior citizen street vendors in terms of their vulnerability and resilience amidst the pandemic. The study aimed at describing the realities of the street vendors only within the scope of the City of Koronadal. These are senior citizens that had been offering or selling goods and services before and during the pandemic, who have immediate families that were dependent on them as their breadwinners. The setting that was chosen by the researchers was the City of Koronadal, specifically in the downtown area where the City public market is located, and where most of the vendors displayed their livelihoods and perform their daily economic activities in the City. The data gathering had commenced in the second semester of the school year 2021-2022. During the data gathering process, there are certain constraints which may have affected this study such as the loud noise within the surroundings, the nature of the vendors being in a hurry, and the customers that are passing by or who are buying goods from the participants during the data gathering interview. In addition, there is also a bit of barriers in communicating with the vendors as they are physically impaired specifically with the hearing problems that they possessed.

#### ***1.5. Definition of Terms***

**Challenges in Street Vending** are the scenarios that are dealt with by the participants which contribute to their struggles in their day-to-day life experiences as individuals and at the same time as senior citizen vendors.

**Conceptual Model** is a visual framework that is formulated through the results of this study. That contains the descriptions of the vulnerability and resilience of the senior citizen street vendors amidst the pandemic.

**Coping Mechanism** refers to the strategies that have been employed by the senior citizen street vendors for them to recover from the challenges or struggles that they have encountered, brought upon by the pandemic and their old age.

**COVID-19** is also known as coronavirus disease. It is a recent highly infectious disease that caused the global pandemic and affects the mobility of people difficulty. In this study, it negatively affects the senior citizen street vendors in terms of their livelihood and mobility.

**Experiences** refer to day-to-day street vending activities of the senior citizen street vendors in the downtown area of the City of Koronadal.

**Resilience** it is the ability of the vendors to endure challenges and adapt to the changes brought by significant hindrances in their environment.

**Senior Citizen** is a person who is in the old age stage of life aged 60 years old and above. In this study, it refers to the street vendors who are still working despite the threats of the pandemic.

**Street Vending** is a small-scale economic activity where goods and services are being sold or offered on the streets. The senior citizens who are involved in this are the participants of the study.

**Street Vendors** is a sub-group of the informal sector that sell goods and services to the public that are commonly found in the busy streets of the city. They are senior citizens who are usually seen with a mobile stall that they could easily move.

**Vulnerability** refers to the realities and adverse effects of the pandemic situation on the participants who are street vendors, which makes them susceptible to further degradation of their life experiences.

## **2. Research Methodology**

This section expounds on how the study has been conducted. It presents comprehensively the research design, research setting, research participants, research instrument, and the data gathering procedure, and the data analysis that were utilized and performed by the researchers.

### **2.1. Research Design**

This study used a qualitative descriptive research design because it was aimed at describing the vulnerability and resilience among senior citizen street vendors and gaining insights from their street vending experiences while being vulnerable and resilient amidst the COVID 19 pandemic. It was best suited for this topic as it gave deep understanding of the daily experiences of the participants, and that it gave exact descriptions of the vulnerability and resilience as being lived through by the senior citizen street vendors.

The study was conducted in the City of Koronadal, and the participants involved were senior citizen street vendors who were able to survive from the pre pandemic to the pandemic situation who were invited by the researchers to an individual, in-depth interview through the help of a formulated interview guide questions that were translated in Hiligaynon language. The data gathered from the participants were analyzed through a thematic analysis that have helped the researchers to come up with the findings of this study. The methods used, enabled the study to gain accurate description of the experiences on the vulnerability and resilience among senior citizen street vendors amidst the pandemic.

### **2.2. Research Setting**

The setting of the study is located in the market area of Koronadal City, Philippines specifically in Barangay. General Paulino Santos (GPS), City of Koronadal, Province of South Cotabato. The researchers chose this particular setting because it is where the City public market is situated and around the public market is where most of the street vending and other economic activities are done by the locals. To be particular, it was a strategic location for the data gathering procedure because it is the town center, where most of socio-economic trades of people are undertaken.

### **2.3. Participants of the Study**

The research participants that were chosen are composed of senior citizen street vendors in the City of Koronadal who are ranging from 60 years old and above with an immediate family that are dependent to them as

their breadwinners, and at least have ten (10) years of street vending experience prior to the meeting with the researchers, and are tax paying vendors that are selling any kind of goods and offering repair services, within the vicinity of the City of Koronadal. The youngest participant was a sixty (60) years old grandmother, followed by a sixty four (64) years old who was also a grandmother, and two, seventy four (74) years old, male and female grandparents, and lastly, an eighty four (84) years old grandmother who was also the oldest participant.

The researchers identified five (5) vendors who were qualified for the study, a short background of each of the participants are included below:

***Vendor A:***

Vendor A is a 74 years old, male, street vendor, who offers watch repair services located in the streets outside of the Koronadal City public market. He started to learn watch repair since he was in grade school, he learned how to repair a watch through his father. He has five children who are dependent to him and his livelihood but earlier this year on January 1, 2022 his third child died of cancer. Due to the death of his third child he was left with a huge debt amounting to one-million five hundred thousand pesos (1.5 million). His child was treated in St. Luke Hospital in Manila who also died there in a short period of time. Vendor A is presently struggling to gain funds in paying his monthly dues to the hospital but he reinforced it through seeking monetary assistance to different local political figures, but it was still inadequate. Because of this he strive to continue his livelihood even though he is old and has diabetes which sometimes troubled his physical mobility.

***Vendor B:***

Vendor B is a 64 years old, female, street vendor, she sells vegetables in the side lines inside the public market, she has no permanent stall or location to display the vegetables that she sells. Before the COVID 19 started she sells outside the public market, near a prominent drug store. They call themselves “Laray”. Laray refers to those vendors who sell their goods in the sidewalk and they have only limited time to sell there because the government will confiscate the goods that they are selling. Vendor B has three children, and all of them have their own families. Her two grandchildren sometimes help her sell her goods in the public market. She also stated that when the classes started, her grandchildren needed cell phone for their online class and she was the one who bought their cell phone through a credit.

***Vendor C:***

Vendor C is an 81 years old, female, street vendor who sells vegetables inside the public market she stayed as a street vendor for more than 40 years and she also said she was also a laray. They were transferred to sell inside the public market late last year because their livelihood was affected by the lockdowns. She is being convince by her daughters to stop selling goods, but she said she doesn’t want to be a burden to her children because her children also has a family to support so she continued selling despite her old age. Vendor C is also a religious person, she said she always pray when she wakes up and before she goes to bed.

***Vendor D:***



Vendor D is 60 years old, female, street vendor, who sells vegetables inside the public market and she has been as street vendor for nearly 32 years. Street vending was her livelihood since her children was small. Her husband died when their children was still small which forced her to strive hard to earn money for her three children. For her, street vending help her raise her children when her husband died, she became the mother and father of her family. When the lockdown started she didn't have enough income to buy food and they relied on relief goods that was given by the government.

***Vendor E:***

Vendor E is a 74 years old, female, street vendor that sells vegetables inside the public market and was also a laray before COVID 19 started. She has been a street vendor for more than 20 years. Vendor E has been living with her husband and their only child who are both physically impaired. Vendor E stated that she is the only able bodied person in her family because her husband is not physically able and sometimes would pee on his shorts and her child cannot walk properly anymore, because of arthritis. She said that she is performing the role of the mother and father to their family because she is the only one who supports her family, she is the breadwinner of their family. Despite her age and she continued selling because her family depends on her, she also said that even though she is sick she would still continue to sell because if not her family will get hungry.

***2.4. Research Instrument***

The researchers formulated a set of interview guide questions that had been used in gathering the data from the participants, which enabled the participants to speak out the vulnerabilities they have experienced and describe what acts of resilience they have made as street vendors living amidst the COVID 19 pandemic. The guide questions had been comprehensively assessed by the thesis adviser and have been consulted to the members of the research panel. The interview was recorded in a mobile phone recorder. The questions provided descriptions as to what are the vulnerabilities and how resilient are the senior citizen street vendors in the City of Koronadal in this time of pandemic.

The interview guide questions that was formulated were a set open-ended questions that let the participants tell their stories of realities of being vulnerable during the pandemic, by asking them to describe the conditions they were exposed to, and asking them to distinguish the difference of living from the normal to the new normal setting, and in terms of their resilience, they were asked how did they live through the pandemic situation and as to how they perceived themselves while enduring and continuing as senior citizen street vendors, and also be asked about the means or alternatives that they have employed to endure and overcome those vulnerabilities and challenges as street vendors amidst pandemic, in this way of questioning it showed what are the acts of resilience they have done in dealing with their challenges and vulnerabilities.

***2.5. Data Collection Procedure***

The researchers chose the participants by personally identifying them in the area and applied a referral system in choosing the succeeding participants of the study, because there are no sufficient data that will show the exact population of street vendors in City of Koronadal. Participants that were chosen have reached all the criteria that

was set by this study, and in the data collection process the researchers engaged with the vendors and asked questions and confirmed that they have reached the criteria, and before the interview was conducted the participants gave their full consent and they are fully knowledgeable about the study that have taken place in relation to them.

Prior to the interview, the participants were also informed that the face to face interview will be recorded, and the interview was done in Hiligaynon language, therefore the researcher had translated the actual guide questions written in English language to the dialect used in the setting of the study, for the convenience of the chosen participants. After the researchers successfully gathered the substantial information that are needed, the recorded conversation with every participant has been transcribed by the researchers and was subjected for the analysis of the data which was done by the researchers themselves and was guided by the advisers.

## **2.6. Data Analysis**

In the data analysis process, the researchers applied the thematic analysis procedure wherein the transcribed interview was read comprehensively by the researchers and encoded the significant statements that were relevant to the question and the statements were coded and given meaning and was created into concepts and when concepts are made, these concept were categorized and served as a basis for the themes that were created. And lastly, it was internalized by the researchers and served as the basis of the structured description or interpretation of the data that was gathered.

## **2.7. Ethical Consideration**

The researchers followed an interview protocol before conducting the interview, by interacting with them and letting them know the intentions of the researchers. Researchers asked permission to the participants as regards their consent to participate in a face to face interview. The participants' identity were kept privately and that their responses were only be used for the research and academic purposes.

## **3. Results**

### ***Vulnerability and Resilience among Senior Citizen Street Vendors***

This study examined the experiences of senior citizen street vendors in terms of their vulnerability and resilience, by using thematic analysis in analyzing the significant statements gathered from the transcripts of each participant, through an in-depth interview that was conducted. In this section the results are presented and discussed. It is divided into four parts consisting of a table for the results of the analysis of their statements that contains the experiences of the vendors in terms of their vulnerability, second part is the presentation of the vendor's experiences in terms of their resilience, third, is the analysis of the challenges that they had experienced in street vending, and last is the vendor's coping strategies, that were applied to the challenges that they have encountered.

On this study, the researchers identified the significant statements from the transcribed data, based from the in-

depth interview that was conducted, the significant statements were given meaning and are categorized based on their concepts, and these categorized concepts were then created into themes in response to the statement of the problems in this study. In the discussion, only the concepts were included on the table and the themes that would represent the categorized concepts. On the discussion, the themes are briefly and concisely discussed and to add clear context to the themes, the concepts that belongs to respective themes were also discussed, in support of the themes above them.

### **3.1. Data Analysis Presentation**

**Table 1:** Vulnerability.

<b>Concepts</b>	<b>Themes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decrease of income in street vending.</li> <li>• Street vending livelihood experienced a weak market</li> <li>• Socio-economic disruptions due to restrictions</li> <li>• Street vending as a necessity, to sustain the survival</li> <li>• Street Vending as the only livelihood known by the vendors which can give them viable income</li> <li>• Lack of alternative income generating livelihood</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Vulnerability to Loss of Income</b></li> <li>• <b>Economic Risks</b></li> </ul>

#### **Vulnerability to Loss of Income**

The senior citizen street vendors were susceptible to the drastic loss of the needed amount of income that they need for their day to day survival as individuals and as breadwinners of their family. The vendor cannot get sufficient income from their livelihood because the market for the product that they are selling had weakened as there was less population of consumers that would buy their product or avail the services that they offer, as they shared that it was due to the movement restrictions that were imposed by the government and from these movement restrictions is where they are limited in terms of selling or displaying the goods or services that they offer to the public. Hence, as a result they could not gain sufficient income that could sustain their needs compared to the pre pandemic scenario wherein they are free to roam around and sell their goods or services.

Below are the concepts that supports this theme;

#### **• Decreased of Income in Street Vending**

Based from the descriptions of the conditions that the vendors have experienced, they narrated how their income have decreased drastically from the onset of the pandemic, mainly they complain on how did the restrictions affected the population of their consumers and the opportunity for them to sell was also limited that is why their income decreased because of the pandemic.

It can be internalized on these following statements by the vendor;

*“Pigado gid. Pag-agi sang 2019 pigado gid, way gid income mayo lain sang una nga panahon. Karon pigado, halos hindi kana gani ka income mayo kay tungod nga pigado, tama ka pigado.”* (Vendor A)

Translation:

"When the year 2019 came in, it was really hard. There's no income, it was way better in the past. Right now, it was poor, and you almost cannot get a good income because it was hard, very hard." (Vendor A)

Vendor A gave emphasis on the difference of the year 2019 from the succeeding years after it, in terms of his struggle to gain sufficient income in the pandemic time.

*Na agyan namon subong daw ka kuraot gid, kay lain satong...wala pa pandemic daw ma arang arang gawa amon nga baligya pero sa subong nga abi nga nag abot ang mga pandemic daw gid...isa pa nag hina pagid ang amon pamalengke diri.”* (Vendor D)

Translation:

“What we have experienced was very unlikely, it was different when there was no pandemic. Our selling of goods was in a good state, but now that the pandemic has come...one thing! Our vending has weakened.” (Vendor D)

To Vendor D she described her experiences during the pandemic as an unlikely experience due to the weak flow of income in her street vending.

- **Street Vending Livelihood Experienced a Weak Market**

The street vending industry has been weakened by complex factors, such as the increase of competition, caused by limited consumers or buyers of the goods that they sell, because consumers were also restricted on their normal mobility, supplies are also sold in a high-cost by the suppliers and are sold by the vendors in a fairly low prices which in turn will all affect the insufficient financial gains of vendors and will caused them not able to meet their basic needs and financial demands as families and individuals.

Based on the significant statements narrated by the vendors, below shows their experiences with the weakening market of street vendors:

*“maayo man baklanay sadto, tapos nag balhin kami diri sa loob, ti syempre marami na kami dito.”* (Vendor C)

Translation:

"The buyers' demand before was good, after we were transferred inside the market, so obviously sellers are crowded here." (Vendor C)

For vendor C, she has a lot of buyers of her goods in the past but when they were moved inside the market due to regulations related to the pandemic they encountered extensive competition for their products.

*“Mas manami tana ang sang-una ya. Kay ngaa, daw maarang-arang pa atong sitwasyon sang amon nga pamaligya kay kis’a makapauli ako sa balay may madala pa ako nga tag 700, 600. Karon iya, kis’a maskin singko wala gid.” (Vendor E)*

Translation:

It was better in the past, you know why? The situation of our street vending was convincing, because I can go home with 700, 600 income. Now, I can’t even earn 5 pesos.” (Vendor E)

According to Vendor E, there was a time she could not even earn five pesos in contrast to what she could earn prior to the pandemic where she can go home with seven hundred to six hundred income.

### **Economic Risks**

Another theme that emerged from the analysis of the data in terms of vulnerability, talks about the economic risks of these senior citizen street vendors where they narrated the disturbing conditions that they experienced which were mostly caused by the economic changes which made them prone to unlikely conditions which had interconnections to their life experiences as elderly individuals living in the society.

The vendors faced challenges and struggles financially, from meeting their monthly bills, sustaining their daily needs, and paying the debts that they had prior to the pandemic, which was worsen because of their incapability of paying those financial demands which was mainly caused by the economic changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These vendors are vulnerable to risks of being easily hampered in terms of their economic status as they only rely on the street vending because it is the only livelihood that they know how to run. These senior citizen street vendors were also at risk because of their nature being old and that is why they were subjected to restrictions especially when there is a threat towards their health.

Below are the concepts that supports this theme;

- **Socio-economic Disruptions Due to Restrictions**

The vendors had experienced disruptions caused by the varied restrictions imposed by authorities on the social and economic aspect of their livelihood and mobility, which affects the productivity of their livelihood and as individuals who are interdependently reliant on different social institutions as human beings.

As one of the vendor stated:

*“Mahirap, nahirapan gid kami karun sa naay pandemic, ako sa akon lang mas hirap karun ang may pandemic sa kwan unang panahon, pareha sa akon senior damo awal ohh, hospital di ka basta basta ka sulod, diri sa palengke kung wala kami vaccine dili kami pa baligyaon.” (Vendor B)*

Translation:

"It's hard, we really struggled in this pandemic, for me, it's way harder in this pandemic than the past, Just like me, as a senior citizen I am restricted, we cannot easily access hospitals, here in the market, if you have no vaccine you cannot sell goods." (Vendor B)

Vendor B claimed that she struggled to access hospitals conveniently when there was a need for her to check up on her health, and her mobility in selling her goods in the market were hampered because she needed to follow certain rules such as being vaccinated.

- **Street Vending as a Necessity, to Sustain the Survival**

For people from middle to lower class like street vendors, understanding life as something that works is understood as a way to live. Not working means the street vendors will not survive. Becoming street vendors is the only option. It is the most viable way to sustain life. As they understand the constraints and inability to access jobs which require high requirements [37].

This would reflect on some of the statements of the vendors below:

*"Naga padayon gid kami sa pagbaligya tungod sa kapigaduhon bala nang, para nang mabuhi amon nga pamilya."* (Vendor D)

Translation:

"We continue to sell goods because of poverty, so that we can survive our families." (Vendor D)

On the statement of *Vendor D*, she explained and referred to all street vendors why they continue their street vending livelihood. She said that they continue their livelihood because of the poverty situation that they experience which endangers their survival as a family.

*"Kay kung hindi ako magbaligya mapatay kami sa gutom eh, hindi kami makakaon kay ako lang man ginasaligan sa amon panimalay kay ang bana ko mag 74 pa lang siya sa August 28 pero waay na..."* (Vendor E)

Translation:

"Because if I do not continue selling we will die because of hunger, we will not be able to eat, because my family only relies on me and my husband is only going to be 74 years old this August 28 but cannot be relied upon anymore. (Vendor E)

According to the vendor, she cannot stop street vending because she has a family that relies their survival on her and if she will not function as breadwinner they will all die because of hunger, therefore it is a necessity for her to continue selling in the streets.

- **Street Vending as the Only Livelihood Known by the Vendors which can Give them Viable Income**

The senior citizen street vendors perceived street vending as the only opportunity for them to acquire viable income in terms of their knowledge and the suitability of their capacity to run this type of livelihood. For them, it is the only resource that they know which can give them an easy and instant flow of money as they do not have knowledge on other types of opportunities for them.

This concept was affirmed through the following statements below:

*“Nang.. amo ini abi ni nga laray daw amo ni abi ko ang pangabuhian gid namon halin sang gagmay ang akon mga kabataan, asta napaikswela ko sila,” (Vendor D)*

Translation:

It is because this street vending was the only livelihood we were used to, even before when my children were still young, up until I have managed to send them to school.” (Vendor D)

Street vending is what the vendor was used to ever since her children were young, and it is what gave her the resources to sustain her children in getting education. Given her long experience with these livelihoods she sees it as the most viable resource that she had and it seemed that they were enclosed to the idea that it is the only opportunity for them.

*“Ti kay kung hindi ako magbaligya ma ano-- syempre kay ari ang kwarta, adlaw-adlaw maka uyat ka kwarta kag mabakal mo dayon kung ano pamaklon mo kung may ara ka inugbakal diri nga may benta ka na.” (Vendor E)*

Translation:

”If I stop selling, what are we supposed to do? Of course money is here, every day you can have money and you can instantly buy the things that you need, if you already have the income.”(Vendor E)

Through this statement of *Vendor E* it shows her lacking in terms of knowledge on other sustainable opportunities to gain income and street vending was her only option to put food on their table as breadwinner of her family.

- **Lack of Alternative Income Generating Livelihood**

The lacking of other income generating activities for senior citizen street vendors forced them to live with the risks that their present street vending livelihood provides to them, they are left with no other choices but to face the realities and insufficiencies of their incomes in a daily basis which affect their life experiences as individuals and families. Thereby, the role of diversification in reducing the intensity of poverty will promote a process of continuous adaptation for avoiding labor market failures and for attaining a better income distribution in rural

economies. As a conclusion, diverse alternatives income sources can make the difference between sustainable livelihoods and extreme poverty.

The concept of the lacking of alternative income generating livelihood to vendors is shown in the statements below:

*“Waay! Relo lang, way man ko sang uma, way man ko sang ano nga bagay, uma, wala ko uma.”* (Vendor A)

Translation:

None! Only the watch, I do not have a farm or anything, I don’t have a farm.” (Vendor A)

When the vendor was asked about his other options to gain income, he reiterated his situation having no other means of gaining income as he had no farms to be cultivated and watch repair was the only activity that he knew that could provide those insufficiency.

*“Sus kung may capital lang marami akong alam, modesta ako, beautician, nag aral ako nang auto diesel mechanic, nag video electronic ako, nag food preserve, damo ako gin tunan.”* (Vendor C)

Translation:

Oh! If there was just capital for it. I learned different skills, I am a tailor, a beautician as well I learned how to be an auto diesel mechanic, video electronics and I also studied food preservation.” (Vendor C)

According to the statement of the vendor, she had a wide variety of skills which she had learned but all of those were not realized in the actual because there was not enough funding and capital for her to fully incorporate the skills she had learned.

**Table 2:** Resilience.

Concepts	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Innate qualities of being persistent with Adversities</li> <li>Awareness of strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>Awareness of how to addressed situations</li> <li>Preparedness and Anticipation to possible risks</li> <li>Understanding of self-efficacy</li> <li>Flexible adaptation to changes</li> <li>Willingness to change habits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Innate Persistence</b></li> <li><b>Innate Awareness</b></li> <li><b>Innate Flexibility</b></li> </ul>



## **Innate Persistence**

Based from the thorough analysis of the researchers on the data that was gathered from the vendors, they identified the nature of the vendors as being persistent despite of any adversities that they encounter, this quality of being persistent lies beneath the character of the vendors as they developed such quality long ago, given the nature of their livelihood which is susceptible to complex problems and difficulty, as time goes by, this quality of being persistent or to continue in spite of difficulties has been developed deep within the vendors themselves.

In the present pandemic situation, when they were exposed to new problems and difficulties in their environment, their ability to continue despite struggles were still imminent from them, as this situation where they encountered problems and went through these problems was not new to them. They have pre-set qualities that helps them become persistent in the coming problems that they would encounter in their future as being persistent is not new to them because they have already showed these qualities in the past problems that they have experienced.

Below are the concepts that supports this theme;

- **Innate Qualities of Being Persistent with Adversities.**

It can be seen on the statements on one of the vendor below:

*“Gina agwanta ko nalang gid ang ka pit’os sang amon nga pagpangabuhi. Biskan may ginabatyag ka, sige baligya lang gihapon nga baligya amo na.”* (Vendor E)

Translation:

I just endure our struggle in living our lives. Even though I am sick, I still continue to sell goods.” (Vendor E)

*“Maka bulig ako sa mga apo ko...Para makabulig na eh, kayahun mo gid bisan nga nag ina ano lang, gina ano lang nga di lang gid kita mag sakit sakit, kinahanglan bangon gid eh nang kayahun gid bisan ma mal-am bisan kwan.”* (Vendor D)

Translation:

"I can extend help to my grandchildren... So that I can help, you need to endure it even if you just try your best not to acquire illness, there is a need to stand up and endure it even when we are old.” (Vendor D)

Based on the statement of the vendors, they have that mindset to continue what they have been doing, even if they encounter difficulties in doing those things.

This concept of them was developed long ago because of their experiences dealing with a variety of problems prior to the pandemic.

## **Innate Awareness**

The resiliency of the vendors can be associated with their awareness in terms of their personal capacities, external conditions that they experience, and the means on how to deal with the situations they encounter. This awareness was innate within these vendors, it was developed deep on their personalities because of the past experiences that they have faced through their long years of dealing with the similar situations of encountering constant challenges in life. Which made them fully aware and understands there capacities, qualities, and weaknesses. These factors helped the vendors to know what to do and how to do things in coping with their situations or problems.

Below are the concepts that supports this theme;

- **Awareness of strengths and weaknesses**

On the analysis of the conversation of the researchers with the vendors it shows that they are aware of their strengths and where they are lacking and what factors could weaken them as individuals and their families.

It can be seen on the statement of the vendor below:

*“Ang kaya ko lang ang mag negosyo, amo gid man nang siguro kwan ko, kay amo man pud ni ang talent ko ang gulay, prutas mao na.”* (Vendor B)

Translation:

My only capacity is to do business, maybe, that is my talent, just vegetables and fruits.” (Vendor B)

For Vendor B, she perceived doing business with fruits and vegetables as her talent and inclination.

- **Awareness of How to Addressed Situations**

The vendors were also resilient because of their ability to be aware of how to deal with disturbing conditions that they experienced. It made them creative in dealing with situations and to overcome them.

These abilities can be seen on the following statements below:

*“Para di gutomon pamilya mo eh, syempre tapos para nga malipay man pamilya mo kung may dala ka nga pagkaon...bantaon mo ang gina bakal mo tama tama lang sa inyo.”* (Vendor A)

Translation:

So that your family won't experience hunger, of course, they will get happy because you brought food for them... you should see to it that what you buy is just enough for all of you.” (Vendor A)

The vendor showed his awareness how to create adjustment in his budgeting and maintain the satisfaction of his family despite new constraints brought upon by the pandemic situation to his livelihood.

*“As usual lang din. Kadto ko diri sa palengke mag tinda bisan may, beses nga binabawal kami maka gwa, pag siling nga 15 days hindi kami pwde mag gwa...ti hindi mag gwa eh, di moh.. pag lipas na balik naman kami diri sa palengke.”* (Vendor C)

Translation:

“It is still, as usual. You will go here in the market and sell even though there are times that we are restricted to go out. When they say that we cannot go out for 15 days so be it, after that restriction we will go back again here in the marketplace.” (Vendor C)

Vendor C made her vending scheme creative and adjusted to the restrictions that were imposed in the market, for them to gain money and to address their situation where they did not have sufficient supplies in their home if there was no income that would go in.

- **Preparedness and Anticipation to Possible Risks**

Because of the innate awareness of the vendors brought by past experiences with problems, they had that preparedness and anticipation in them as they projected possible risk that would happen to them in the future that is why they created strategies that made them a little prepared from the anticipated risks that they perceived, especially on their health as they treated it as their foundation for their livelihood and survival.

These can be affirmed from the statements below:

*“Oo! Kaya mo na, kung hindi na makaya ka tiil mo pahuway ka, pero mintras nga kalakat ang tiil mo maskin akon, kompleto man sakit ko, paralyze, nang diabetic man ko, hindi na ko kalakat halin diri pakadto didto, dira lang ko kutob, di nako ka kita, diri lang ko kutob, pahuway huway ka naman bago mag lakat naman.”* (Vendor A)

Translation:

Yes! You can endure it, if your feet cannot bear it anymore you can rest, but if you can still walk,... because even me I have a lot of diseases, paralyzed, diabetic, I cannot even walk from here to there, my limit is just there!...you just take a rest before you walk again.” (Vendor A)

The vendor affirmed that he could still continue his livelihood despite the constraints present in his environment. And he was optimistic about the possible risks or threats to himself, especially in his body, where he suggested to get gradual rest before doing again what he was doing, for example, physical mobility like walking.

*“Biskan kis ’a may ginabatyang ako, sige lang gihapon baligya ah. Waay ko ga siling nga maangal ako nga hindi na ako magbaligya biskan may ginabatyang ako, sige lang gihapon...Ti kay hindi gani kami makakaon kung*

*hindi ako magbaligya kay ako lang gani isa gapangita.” (Vendor E)*

Translation:

Even though sometimes I have illness, I just continue selling, I do not complain and think if I should stop, even if there are constraints for me I still persist... Because we cannot eat if I won't sell goods because I am the only breadwinner.” (Vendor E)

Vendor E was aware and she anticipated the possibility of her family getting hungry if she would not continue her street vending despite her old age. That is why she still avoided getting hungry by persisting on her street vending livelihood.

- **Understanding of self-efficacy**

The experiences of the vendors in terms of their resiliency could also be described through their understanding of their self-efficacy. In the theory of Albert Bandura he describes self-efficacy as a person's belief in their ability to succeed in a particular situation.

The statements below show the understanding of the vendors of their self-efficacy:

*“Kaya man gid na nako kung sa akong lang, kaya ko gid karun bisan may pandemic kay kabalo gid ko mag adjust sa akong kaugalingon, kabalo ko sa akong buhaton, kaya ko na...Kaya ko gid kay ako ga amping gid ko kag wala ko nag gamit sang mga...nang medicina medicina, herbal lang gid akon gina ano...” (Vendor B)*

Translation:

I know I can endure it, I really can even if there is a pandemic because I know how to adjust to myself, I know what I should do, I can do it... I really can because I took care of myself well, I do not use medicines, and I just utilize herbal medicines, that's all I use.” (Vendor B)

The vendor showed her understanding of her self-efficacy as she knew that she could live through the pandemic and she knew that she was physically healthy because of her investment on her health since then.

*“Ay kami nga mga senior citizen, inang bisan ang gina ano namon bisan may edad na kami, inang gina ano lang gid nga kaya lang gihapon pagsik lang, good health tas maayo nga lawas.” (Vendor D)*

Translation:

Oh! We, the senior citizens, even if we were old, we know that we can still endure, and just be energetic, good health and a good body.” (Vendor D)

The vendor knew that she had the capacity to endure the pandemic situation as she had a good and healthy body which was her foundation in street vending.

## **Innate Flexibility**

From the data analyzed by the researchers they have identified the innate flexible character and qualities of the vendors, which was proved on their ability to adapt to situations and to create changes whenever there would be a need for a change in response to the dangers that threaten their survival and livelihood. When the participants were asked as to how they deal with the stressing situations they encountered during pandemic they shared that they just adjusted their daily routines, expenditures and strategies so that it would align with the real situations that they are experiencing.

Below are the concepts that supports this theme;

- **Flexible Adaptation to Changes**

The vendors flexibly adapted to the changes that influenced them either positively and negatively, they were used to create adaptive strategies constantly to respond to the changes in the nature of their work and their family life.

*“Adjust tanan, imbis mo gasto ka nalang, gasto kami sa una tig 500, 200 isa ka adlaw nang kaon kaon kung unsay ipalit, karun hindi na, mag bakal mi insakot lang gid mo.”* (Vendor B)

Translation:

Everything was adjusted, instead of spending 500, 200 pesos every day for any food that we desire, now it is different, when we spend we only spend just enough.” (Vendor B)

The vendor adjusted to the situation where there were constraints in their street vending activity that affected their financial aspect. In response, they adjusted their financial expenses and attitude of spending in the family as a response to the changes present in her livelihood.

- **Willingness to change habits**

The vendors showed willingness without due hesitations to change existing old habits that they were used to from the past. This willingness was part of their nature of being flexible individuals because they experienced similar situations where they needed to instantly change habits in response to a problem or changes in their environment.

The statement below narrates the concept of willingness from the vendors.

*“Makisama lang bah, makisama lang... amo nang adjustment natin.”* (Vendor C)

Translation:

Just get along with it, just get along... that is our adjustment.” (Vendor C)

*“Ti syempre adjust-on mo man kung paano eh kay para hindi ka man magutoman.”* (Vendor E)

Translation:

Of course you should adjust how it should be so that you won’t get hungry.” (Vendor E)

They showed willingness to get along with the changes and on their statements. It shows their practicality in responding to such changes in the environment they live in.

**Table 3:** Challenges.

Concepts	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty meeting financial demands</li> <li>• Conflict of protocols to the mobility of livelihood</li> <li>• Food insecurity due to scarcity of income</li> <li>• Lack of sustainable resources</li> <li>• Mental conflict tendencies</li> <li>• Faulty government’s aid distribution</li> <li>• Declining rate of consumers</li> <li>• Limited supply of vending products</li> <li>• Age based discrimination</li> <li>• Prone to neglect of family members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Unsustainability of Livelihood</b></li> <li>• <b>Social Exclusion of Older Persons</b></li> </ul>

### **Unsustainability of Livelihood**

The senior citizen street vendors encountered complex challenges on their street vending activity amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, mainly because of the unsustainable nature of their livelihoods which caused them to be more susceptible to hazardous conditions that could cause a dysfunction on their well-being as individuals and parents who were being depend to, by their family members as breadwinners. And on these contexts of senior citizen street vendors, there were discrepancies in achieving the state of having a sustainable livelihood in this time of pandemic because they could not have enough customers that would give them income and in return they could not afford the basic necessities that they need in order to survive.

The concepts of why street vending was an unsustainable livelihood were discussed below.

#### **• Difficulty Meeting Financial Demands**

The vendors faced difficulty in meeting their usual financial responsibilities when the pandemic started. Because of the economic constraints, they were exposed during the pandemic which affected their normal financial gains as street vendors.

*“Mas layo layo nak eh, kay sa una nak makatigum gid ako naa koy banko nak, maka kwan gid ako, gi pang hambog sa una, adlaw adlaw maka 500 ko makahulog ko sa akong bank sang 500 kay naga savings man ko adlaw adlaw, karun nak isa ka gatos nalang.”* (Vendor B)

Translation:

"It was far different, because, before I can save, and I have a bank account, I can say that I save 500 pesos every day, I can deposit 500 in the bank, because I really save every day, but in the present, I can only have 100 pesos in the bank." (Vendor B)

According to *Vendor B* she could save a good amount of money on her bank account before the pandemic but due to the constraints that she was exposed to in her street vending activity, she could no longer maintain the depositing amount that she has set for herself as a savings.

- **Conflict of Protocols to the Mobility of Livelihood**

The street vending livelihood was heavily affected by the protocols imposed by the authorities to the public, which in turn affected the productivity of the livelihood itself and the street vendors, as the family's breadwinners. The protocols had complications on the mobility of the street vending supplies and the mobility of the vendors as well.

According to a similar study conducted by [38] by far, the largest impact of the pandemic to the lives and livelihoods of people was a result of government-imposed curfews, lockdowns and travel restrictions, unsurprising in a population highly dependent on daily wage labor.

These complications can be observed on the statements of the vendors below:

*"Mag baligya kami diri sa Marbel hindi kami maka sulod tungod nga may mga ano dira sa highway... kisah naka agi kami diri... nga hindi kami ka sulod diri, gina, gin ano kami diri gina ano esprayhan bala diri haw ti mag siling na sila... Gina bawalan kami kinahanglan mag kwan kami diri mag face shield mag face mask, kag mag hugas sa kamot."* (Vendor D)

Translation:

When we try to sell here in Marbel, we cannot enter because there are roadblock in the highway... sometimes we experience... that we cannot enter here in the market, because they conduct sanitation sprays... So they will tell us that we are prohibited and we should use face shields and face masks and we should wash our hands." (Vendor D)

Vendor D has experienced not being able to sell her goods in the market whenever she tried to sell during this pandemic because of roadblocks and restrictions in the road which affected her productivity as street vendor because her income was hampered by these restrictions.

- **Food insecurity due to scarcity of income**

The vendors had challenges in ensuring food security among their families because of the insufficiency of the

income that they could get from street vending.

*“Hindi ko gd malimtan ang kalisod nga daw halos hindi ka na kis ’a wala ka sang ibakal sang bugas kung wala ka sang kwarta.”* (Vendor E)

Translation:

I cannot forget the struggle that sometimes you cannot even buy rice if you don’t have money.” (Vendor E)

The vendor narrated how hard her experience was, that sometimes she cannot even provide rice for her family because she does not have the money to buy it.

- **Lack of Sustainable Resources**

The vendors did not have sustainable means of resources to sustain their daily needs as individuals and as breadwinners, and it shows the unsustainability of the livelihood that they had especially in the times of challenging situations like the pandemic.

*“Nag hina gid ang pangabuhi-an... Ga utang-utang man gamay lang kay kung ma utang ka sang dako kag di ka kabayad ang gin-hulaman mo madasig mag warak-warak...”* (Vendor A)

Translation:

"The livelihood was weakened... We were borrowing money in small amounts because if you borrow a huge amount and you cannot pay, the lender would immediately be angry..." (Vendor A)

The vendor’s source of income, which is his livelihood, was really unproductive which caused him to borrow money in minimal amounts.

- **Mental Conflict Tendencies**

The vendors were prone to mental conflicts due to mental stresses that they experienced from the difficulties they encountered in their street vending activity. Financial loss has been profoundly linked to psychological distress and is considered a risk factor for mental health disorders, with long lasting effects. The disruption or even unpaid debts, stress of losing job, poverty, and inability to provide support to the family and food insecurity were only a few examples that portray the extremely harsh scenario regarding the financial impact secondary to this pandemic.

*“Amo na kay kung wala ka sang income ga rebelde ka, iban ga suicide sila, amo ni amo to, way normal lang kay kung i-butang mo ang isip mo sa problema mo, ma buang ka gid ka isip sa problema mo nga wala pa kaon kabataan mo asawa mo wala pa kakaon...”* (Vendor A)

Translation:



"It is because when you do not have income you became worried, some may opt to suicide. Because if you put too much on the problems, you will get crazy thinking of that problem, like, your child and wife haven't eaten..." (Vendor A)

According to the vendor's statement, some of the senior citizen street vendors were worrying too much about the problems that they faced in their everyday lives. This is why some may encounter mental conflicts which made them susceptible to dangers such as anxieties and suicidal concepts.

- **Faulty Government's Aid Distribution**

With the given unsustainability of the street vendor's livelihood which caused the insufficiencies of their supplies in terms of the basic needs which they need to survive. It was also worsened by the faulty government's aid distribution, which are perceived to be contingency resources for these vendors who were not able to meet their daily needs, because these aids that were being relied upon, were facing delays and strenuous process of delivery to its beneficiaries.

*"Ang na agyan sang senior citizen inang dugay ang, dugay ang ang release ang...ti hindi kami kabakal sang amon mga bulong mga vitamins namon hindi kami ka bakal..."* (Vendor D)

Translation:

What the senior citizen experienced was that there are delays on the release... that is why we cannot buy our medicines and vitamins that we need." (Vendor D)

The vendor experienced delays on the distribution of the financial aids that were intended for them coming from the government, which caused them to be unable to buy medicines and vitamins that they basically needed for their survival.

- **Declining Rate of Consumers**

The vendors complained about the declining productivity of their livelihood due to the lowering rate of consumers that buy their products. According to the recent study of author [39] COVID-19 crisis led to an enormous reduction in consumer visits. They estimated that the vast majority of this drop is due to individuals' voluntary decisions to disengage from commerce rather than government-imposed restrictions on activity. Basically, the consumer population decreased due to fears of having contact with the disease that could be present in crowded places like the street vending market places.

*"Ang dako nga pagbag'o, subong mahina gid ang baklanay mas nami pa tung sang-una kesa subong."* (Vendor E)

Translation:

The biggest change today is the weak market that we have, it was way better in the past.” (Vendor E)

According to the statement of the vendor, the significant change that took place on the street vending livelihood was the weak market where the consumer’s population drastically declined due to the fears of the virus.

- **Limited Supply of Vending Products**

The supply of vending products of the vendors were not well organized and did not have a proper or centralized source of supply. They were only relying on their personal strategies on acquiring street vending supplies, varying from what type of products they would sell or offer in the public.

It can be internalized based from the statement of the vendor below:

*“Ang dako ko gid sa una nga na agyan bala sa pag pandemic daw ka pigado sang sa pagmapaligya namon kay tungod sang mga daw hindi kami ka, anang naga deliver sa amon gulay daw ka, daw gina ano man sila, kalabanan didto sa tantangan... Budlayan sila mag sulod.”* (Vendor D)

Translation:

The biggest change that I have experienced in the pandemic, is that our street vending was challenging because those who deliver supplies to us, could not even pass by.” (Vendor D)

According to the vendor, their street vending was challenging in the time of pandemic because they needed to deal with the constraints of the supply that they needed in street vending because the mobility of their supplies was hampered because of varied constraints due to policies and restrictions.

### **Social Exclusion of Older Persons**

The other main challenge of senior citizen street vendors in street vending were the unfair treatment and their deteriorating quality of relationship with in the society, where in they were denied of opportunities in the market such as having opportunity to be enrolled in cash for work programs, and the relationship with their families became weak as they were unconsciously neglected by their younger family members. Stereotypes of the society towards them, makes their lives more difficult as they are perceived as weak, incapable, and impaired individuals who cannot become efficient on tasks that would be given to them. Hence, some livelihood programs coming from the government are usually not given to them.

- **Age Based Discrimination**

The vendors were challenged with the complex discriminatory perception towards their age. Some discriminated against them and denied them from opportunities being offered for the public simply because they were old. Age discrimination is when someone is treated differently, with an unreasonable or disproportionate impact, simply because of their age. Age discrimination can be direct, for example, denying older people access to healthcare simply because they are old [40].

It can be internalized on the statement below:

*“Ang kwaan gyud sa senior diri talaga nga kung hina hina ka lang tanawun hindi ka gid nila na buligan sa pag capital, kay ahh! Senior nana hindi nana tabangan ana.”* (Vendor B)

Translation:

"The concern of the senior citizens here is really when you look weak, they won't help you in your capital. Because they will say, "Ahh! That's senior already, that does not need help." (Vendor B)

According to the vendor, they were being discriminated against and not being given the same opportunities in the market which added to the burdens and struggles that they experienced every day.

- **Prone to Neglect of Family Members**

Based on the analysis of the researchers on the transcripts of the vendors they found out that another challenge for the vendors was the worry about their own welfare when they get old as they were more prone to situations where family members have possibilities to detach, neglect or forget about their welfare as elder family members.

These senior citizen vendors pointed out that younger family members were often overwhelmed by their new personal priorities which caused them as elders to be forgotten or not being prioritized by their relatives.

It can be affirmed in the statement of a vendor below:

*“Ti damo man tigulang pa diri nga naga tinda tinda, amo na ang mga rason...mabudlay mag hingi sa anak nga may mga pamilya ang iban...iba gani daw halos di gina asikaso nang mga anak.”* (Vendor C)

Translation:

There are still many elderly who sell here, that is their reason, it was hard to beg from the children who also have their own families, and some of them also are not merely being cared for by their own children. ” (Vendor C)

Based on the statement of the vendor, the senior citizens feared of getting dependent on their children as their own children already had their own families to prioritize with, and some of the elderly vendors were merely taken care of by their children, as they were prone to be neglected by their family members.

**Table 4:** Coping Mechanisms.

Concepts	Themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immediate problem-solving</li> <li>• Utilization of available external resources</li> <li>• Self-reliance</li> <li>• Utilizing government's support</li> <li>• Positive orientation on the benefits</li> <li>• Creating self-motivating perceptions</li> <li>• Conscientiousness</li> <li>• Solution-focused coping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Acceptance</b></li> <li>• <b>Open-mindedness</b></li> </ul>

### Acceptance

From the stories narrated by the senior citizen street vendors one of the coping mechanisms of the senior citizen street vendors was the acceptance. The vendors willingly accepted the realities of the situations that they were put in. That is why they opted to devise pragmatic solutions and strategies in response to the situations that they encountered. They had acknowledged that what happened was what it is and would not change. As explained by the author [41], when people reject their reality or do not accept what happened, their pain intensifies and gets bigger. The harder they work to escape it, the more stuck they become.

- **Immediate Problem Solving**

The vendors accepted that the things would not go back to how it used to be and in order for them to survive their current condition, they immediately planned on how they would solve their problem. This process of problem-solving is sometimes termed as “*heuristics*”; these are mental shortcuts that can facilitate problem-solving and probability judgments. These strategies are generalizations, or rules-of-thumb, reduce cognitive load, and can be effective for making immediate judgments, however, they often result in irrational or inaccurate conclusions [43].

Two statements below show on how they immediately solve their problem:

*“Maki bagay ka nalang, maki ano nalang kung ano tung, ma tabo karun nga palitan mhh...hina man gid siya kaayo, di indi, hindi ka gid mag ingon nga, ahh! Mangutang ko damo oh kay kumpira nako...”* (Vendor C)

Translation:

"You will just adapt to it, whatever changes that would happen. It seems that it has really weakened, so do not say that you will just opt to borrow money so that you can buy your stocks." (Vendor C)

For Vendor C, she just adapted to the changes and because she already accepted the situation. She just did not

opt to borrow money just to maintain what she was used to in terms of the quantity of her stocks.

*“Ang diskarte ko na mag baligya gagmay gagmay, makabakal lang kami sudan, bugas amo na na...”* (Vendor A)

Translation:

My strategy was just to sell in small portions enough to buy a side dish and rice, that's it.” (Vendor A)

According to Vendor A, she sold only a small portion of goods that would be enough to sustain their daily meals. It was her way of responding in the weakening conditions of the market, with few consumers, their goods would get rotten if they would display the volume amount of products on their stall, which would just harm their income and capital.

- **Utilization of Available External Resources**

The vendors utilized external help from their family and government. They accepted that pandemic gave them a hard time and struggled with their survival, when it happened. They utilized the help of their family and the government's aid to reinforce their survival as individuals and families.

*“Pamilya ko lang gihapon...Nang...kwarta o ano man mga material nga mga pangayo ko saila mahatag man nila, duha nga daan sila sa abroad ti syempre ma ngayo pud ko gagmay gagmay.”* (Vendor C)

Translation:

“It was still my family...Either money or any material that I will ask from them, they can provide it, because two of them are working abroad, so of course I try to ask a little from them.” (Vendor C)

Because of the complex struggles and challenges that the vendor encountered on her livelihood and also on her personal life, she utilized external help such as asking for monetary and material aid from her children.

*“Ara man atong iya sang gobyerno. Ara iya sang DSWD naka avail kami sang 15,000 sa inang livelihood... Livelihood assistance. Tapos naka avail man ako sa iya sang DOLE sang atung mga items nga tung mga para sa panghimo tinapay. Ginpangumpra ko man to tanan para sa akon nga mga baligya.”* (Vendor E)

Translation:

I have availed of the financial assistance in the amount of P15,000 from DSWD. The DOLE also provided assistance to me in the form of items used to make bread. I bought all the money I received in buying items which I am selling now.” (Vendor E)

In the statement of Vendor E, she disclosed that utilizing the services offered by the government that provides financial assistance. She used monetary help to increase the amount of her capital to buy stocks for her

livelihood. This was her strategy in coping with the economic challenges that she encountered.

- **Self-reliance**

As the researchers analyzed and read thoroughly the interview, the researchers found out that the vendors were confident with their own abilities. They showed reliance on their capacities. According to author [44] self-reliance is trusting your abilities to get through the challenges of life on the back of your own resourcefulness.

*“Maning kamot gid nga para nga maka ano gid nga magdako gid naga loan loan kami te amo na gina rolling rolling ko...”* (Vendor D)

Translation:

“Strive really hard that your income would be good, we often loan money to reinvigorate the flow of money.” (Vendor D)

The vendor accepted the realities and just relied on her ability to recover in the situation where she just strived hard to gain income and she applied strategies in gaining back the normal flow of her income by creating monetary loans.

- **Utilizing government’s support**

The vendors became resourceful by relying on government support when the pandemic hit the Philippines. The government aided them with financial and food assistance when the vendors could not leave their houses during the lockdown. The vendors thought of the pragmatic solutions on the challenging effects of the pandemic to their life experiences. That is why they relied on available government support.

*“Kung ma sunod yan, masunod amo gin na ang makabulig sa Pilipino may ara na sila nga programa nga ang mga matatanda mag pension nang buwan buwan basta malaki...”* (Vendor C)

Translation:

If that would be implemented, that would help the Filipino people. They have programs where the senior citizens will have a pension every month, in huge amounts.” (Vendor C)

Based on her statement, she had a concept in her mind that government monetary interventions would best help them in alleviating themselves from the disturbing conditions that they are experiencing.

### **Open Mindedness**

The open mindedness of the vendors helped them with their decision that they made when they were faced with problems caused by the pandemic. It made the vendors become optimistic about the situations and they could see hope for results in the future by thinking outside the box and applying strategies that would help them

overcome challenges.

- **Positive Orientation on the Benefits**

Having a positive orientation on the benefits through the vendors' way of thinking made them strive to continue selling because they thought that the things that they do would give them benefits and eventually solve the disturbing conditions they experienced.

*“Luya lawas mo kung sa balay ka, kung sa dalan, maka kadlaw ka sa kakilala mo, maka istorya-istorya ka, para nami, pag puli mo kay may income kana te maka bakal ka sudan, bugas amo lang na.”* (Vendor A)

Translation:

"Your body is weak if you just stay at home, if you are in the streets you can laugh with the people you meet, you can talk to them. When you get home you have an income so you can buy food to eat, that's all" (Vendor A)

Vendor A pointed out that his livelihood could give health benefits as he was socially interactive with people while doing street vending that would in turn enable him to provide food to eat on a daily basis, and will eventually address his challenges on family's survival.

*“Ang aton makabenta ta kinahanglanon ta sa balay ta para may inugbakal ta sang aton mga pagkaon man ah”* (Vendor E)

Translation:

"For me it is important to be able to sell and earn, to buy things we need at home so that we can buy food too" (Vendor E)

Level of confidence that can be seen among street vendors is impressive. They consider themselves successful not because they can earn much money, but because they are able to support their family and bring up their children. In this statement Vendor E continued to sell for her family, if she sells her goods, she can provide the basic needs and food for her family [45].

- **Creating Self-motivating Perceptions**

The vendors had self-motivating perceptions that helped them to continue to sell their services and goods. Creating these perceptions helped them with how they persisted with selling their goods despite constraints that they encountered during pandemic and even before the pandemic. Author [46] stated that meeting and managing goals can be difficult. Self-regulatory success often requires that people enact strategies to combat the challenges of goal pursuit. They identify additional processes that aids self-regulation: motivated visual perception and attention. They argue that, because vision is primary, trusted, flexible, and effortless, motivated visual perception maintains a unique ability to serve self-regulation.

*“Kasama na rin yung.... Pag tulong mo sa pamilya na makadagdag ka sang... gastusin sa panimalay, oh hindi kana pabigat sa ila isa na din ina...ang importante dira guided ang Lord... prayer pa rin ng Lord ang atung gagamitin” (Vendor C)*

Translation:

"Included there is to be able to help with the expenses in the house, so that you won't be a burden, that's another one. The important thing is that it is guided by the Lord, the payer of the Lord should be used." (Vendor C)

In the statement of Vendor C, she was motivated in the way that she could help in the household expenses, and that she was no longer a burden to her family, that is why she continued and persisted as a senior citizen street vendor.

*"Ay ang pag kay-o ko, subong ma pa kay-o isa, maabot iban ti mga apat o lima, amo na nga kusog ang income, salamat ako kay may income ako may tatlo apat ka tao o lima." (Vendor A)*

Translation:

"My watch will be repaired, there will be one customer, then next, about four or five will come, so that is why I can gain good income. I am thankful that I have an income, there are three, four or five customers." (Vendor A)

According to the vendor his motivation was the income that he could get from the watch repair service where despite the weak market, he could still earn good money to sustain their survival.

- **Conscientiousness**

Through an in-depth analysis of the conversation by the researchers with the vendor's transcripts, they have discovered that the vendors wanted to do their duty well in order to fulfil their roles as grandparents or parents. That is why they strived hard to fulfill such duties that they perceived as their responsibilities. Conscientiousness is believed to be related to an increase in stress management, stress tolerance, and the ability to avoid stress [47].

Individuals higher in conscientiousness personality used more Problem-Focused coping. This highlights the fact that Conscientiousness serves as a protective factor from stress, in part, through coping strategy selection, personality influences coping choice, and that it is the specific coping strategies used that determine the positive or negative outcomes when one is faced with a stressor [48].

*“Ako basta lang mag mayo lawas ko ma ubra gid ko yah, di ko gusto mag pahuway sa balay mo, kung isip isip pa ti syempre kami lang tatlo sa balay, ga mata ko alas dos ga moh, pag alas dos alas tres, na alas dos, alas tres duha ka oras nga trabaho ko sa balay pag ka alas kwatro malakat na ko di, basta pag halin ko sa balay limpyo para ang duha ka bata ma kaon nalang ma ligo sila amo lang na...balan mo kita daan nga mga ginakanan, talanawun kita sang mga bata ta sundon man na sang mga bata sa huli.”(Vendor D)*



Translation:

"To me as long as I am healthy, I will work, I don't want to rest at home. Think of it, we are three at home. I wake up at two a.m. and do household chores until three a.m. I leave home at four a.m. what matters is that the house is clean and the food is ready for the children. All they do is eat and take a bath. You know, we parents, we are the role models of our children, because at the end they will follow us." (Vendor D)

For Vendor D, she wanted to persevere in doing her role as mother and breadwinner responsibly, and that despite doing this hectic job and routines these would in turn benefit her someday as her children would follow what she has done and how she is doing the things responsibly.

*"Syempre ang akon nga kusog gid nga pagpaningkasog... Gapursige gid ko sa kaugalingon ko nga maka income gid ako sa adlaw-adlaw nga tanan."* (Vendor E)

Translation:

"Of course what matters to me is my will to work, I kept on working for myself so I can have an income everyday" (Vendor E)

The vendor's strong will to survive was important for her, and to do her tasks accordingly was her goal as a breadwinner who is being relied upon by her family.

- **Solution-Focused Coping**

The vendors mentally cope with and adapt to the challenging situation that helped them to overcome or ease the struggles that they experienced. Solution-focused coping is meant to help make changes through a better understanding of the problem. As explained by [49] this coping strategy is generally used by people when they believe they can make changes in the situation, such as a difficult fight, stress from a current job, or mending familial relationships. When healthy and functional coping strategies are used to solve the problems, people are more easily able to grow as people and live better lives.

*"Nakaya ko man akong sarili kay ngano, di man ako naga hangad nga mag datu gid ako nga mag kwan gid ako nak, ako lang noh, mayo lang lawas kakaon ko tatlo sa isa beses, maayo lawas akong mga apo, makahatag man ko sang gamay, bisan gamay lang nga ma kwan karun.. amo lang na gina hangad ko sa Ginoo."* (Vendor B)

Translation:

"I was able to do this, why? Because I do not aspire to be rich, what is important is that I have good health, I am able to eat three times a day, as long as my grandchildren are healthy and I could provide for their needs, these are the only things I ask from God." (Vendor B)

Based on the statement narrated by the vendor, she was able to endure the challenging situations that she

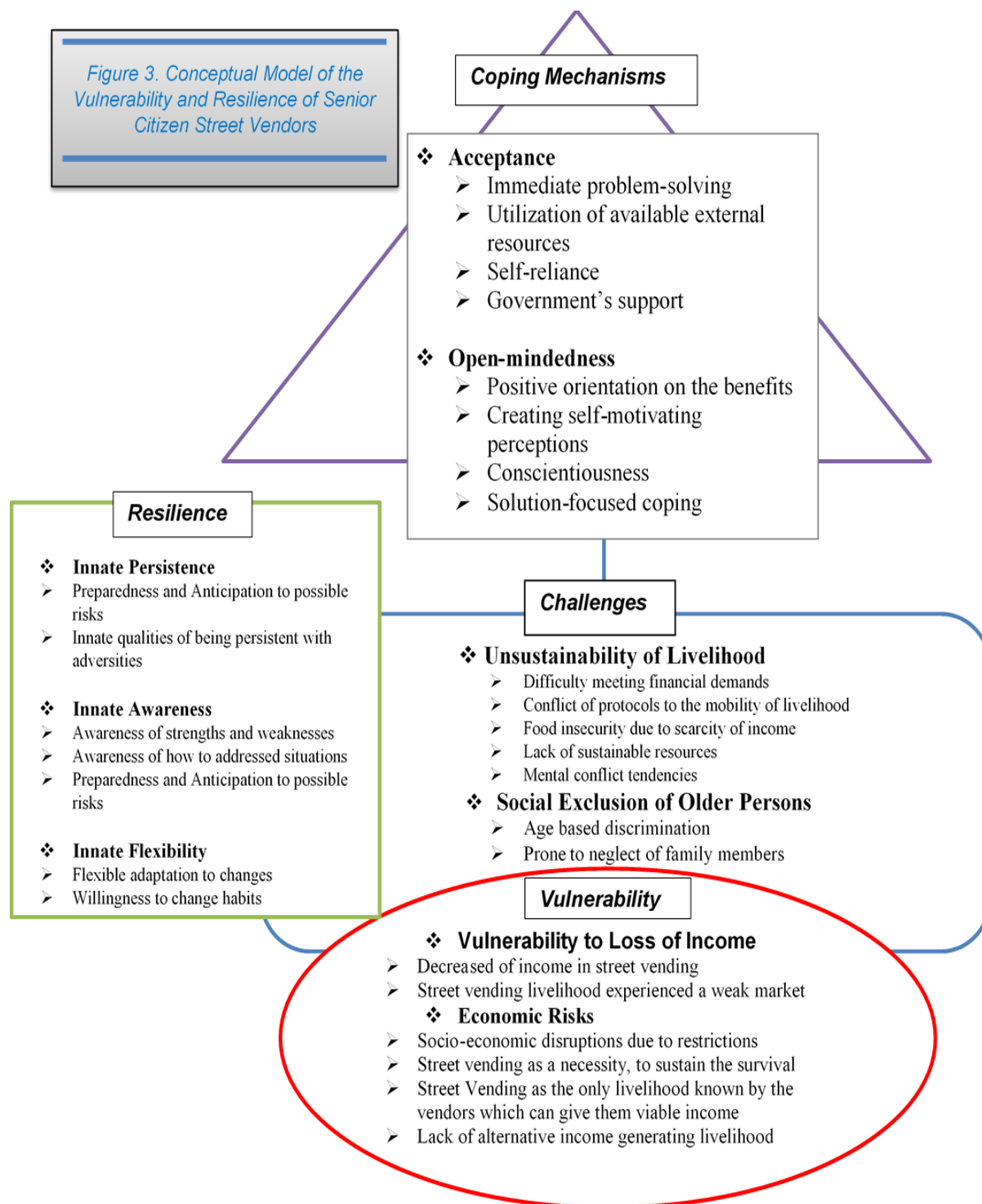
experienced because of the mental coping strategies that she employed wherein she did not aspire of things that were not her capacity to be achieved that is why she was still functioning well as a senior citizen street vendor.

*“Te kay kung butang mo problema mo, amo na edad mo ga dukoy dukoy kana, ay tigulang kana, pero bata pa edad mo, pero kung ang sarili mo pa sadyahun mo lang daw bata ka lang gihapon... Ang iban ya nga matamad, pa ngayo-ngayo lang asta nga mag tigulang lang sila ngayo-ngayo lang sila pero kun ikaw yah gusto pa mabuhi, mangabuhi ka gid miskan nga tigulang kana ga dukoy dukoy kana tinguha-an mo gid nga maka pangabuhi ka sang maayo.” (Vendor A)*

Translation:

"If you indulge yourself to the problem, you're still young but you will look old already, but if you make yourself happy you will look young. Other people are lazy and just beg until they are old, but if you want to live, you should live right even though you are old you should strive to have a good life." (Vendor A)

Vendor A wanted to avoid further deteriorations in his life, and physical wellness that is why he coped with the problems that he faced willingly to avoid further negative effects of such problems on her well-being.



**Figure 3:** Conceptual Model of the Vulnerability and Resilience of Senior Citizen Street Vendors.

The conceptual model depicting the vulnerability and resilience among senior citizen street vendors amidst COVID- 19 pandemic, was formed based on the thematic analysis that was done in this study. This conceptual model could be used as a guide in examining and looking at the exact and real experiences and situations that our senior citizen street vendors are encountering during this time of pandemic.

This model could be utilized by other researchers and scholars in examining the situations of the vulnerable group of senior citizen street vendors, it could also serve as basis for policy formulation and implementations of different socio-civic agencies that are concerned with this sector in the community.

The conceptual model portrays a typical street vendor's stall with different parts that affect or influence its function as a tool in street vending.

The triangular shaped figure portrays as the umbrella which serves as the coping mechanisms such as acceptance, and open-mindedness that helped the senior citizen street vendors and their livelihood to be protected from the external dangers on their environment and to be able to endure and continue their activity despite of the constraints they have experienced, the box, colored in green on the left, serves as the handle of the stall which is used by the senior citizen street vendors, it portrays the resilience of the vendors of how they continue to push and persevere with the situations they encounter despite of constraints in their livelihood it consist of their innate persistence, innate adaptability, and innate flexibility as individuals. The main table of the stall colored in blue shows the challenges that the street vendors are encountering and dealing with, this main table is where all of the heavy loads and challenges of the vendors emanate, specifically the unsustainability of their livelihood and the social exclusion of older people that they encounter. While the circular shape colored in red serves as the wheel, it is the determinants of their vulnerability to the present pandemic situations that they encounter on a daily basis.

It consists mainly of their vulnerability to the loss of income, and the economic risks, as they continue their street vending livelihood for their collective pursuit for survival. This conceptual model is termed by the researchers as the "*Stall of the Vulnerability and Resilience of Senior Citizen Street Vendors*".

## **4. Discussions**

### **4.1. Insights**

The complex factors that contribute to the vulnerability of senior citizen street vendors which are identified by the researchers on this study must be thoroughly examined and must be given a serious attention coming from the public, especially authorities and socio-civic agencies that are concerned in ensuring the absolute welfare of these vulnerable sectors of the society, to avoid further degradation on the life experiences of these individuals and to their families who were just collateral to these conditions which are affecting their well-being.

The vulnerability to the loss of income and economic risks that were experienced by the senior citizen street vendors are conditions that are not new to them, but according to the findings of the study, there is an unnoticed worsening process on these conditions, which may eventually lead to a more serious social problems in the future that can interrelatedly affect the society as a whole.

With the given innate resiliency, and established coping strategies that were employed by these individuals, It can be perceived that these individuals can be well cooperative in doing professional interventions that would protect them from further disruptions on their life experiences. With the available preventive measures that

could be applied by concerned agencies, it would not be hard in achieving a healthy state of living for these individuals who co-exist with our society, therefore, a perceived inclusive and cohesive community that we desire for our society would be best achieved, by taking advantage of these strengths that were discovered on this study in relation to senior citizen street vendors.

Having a good awareness, and knowledge of the different factors affecting the vulnerability of these senior citizen street vendors which were identified by the researchers in this study would help the public to develop and improve their interventions to these constraints in the environment of senior citizen street vendors. With the utilization of the resilient traits deep within these individuals, a desired state of well-being to these vulnerable sectors is perceived by the researchers.

The exact definitions of the vulnerability and resilience among senior citizen street vendors is crucial in nation building as it will help the people to have a substantial perspective on how to better deal and intervene on the welfare of informal economy workers, specifically the senior citizen street vendors.

With the absolute pursuit of these senior citizen street vendors in ensuring their survival, they have employed coping strategies and mechanisms to better adapt with the constant changing situations that they encounter, these mechanisms are partnered with their innate resiliency, as well experienced individuals, who have long been exposed to complex problems in their environment.

Therefore, despite overarching challenges and threats to their survival they were still able to persist and continue their livelihood as a response for their pursuit of survival. But such problems that persisted on the welfare of these individuals could only be thoroughly solved through personal interventions of the vendors themselves.

#### **4.2. Implications**

Based from the study that was conducted, the results may imply that there is a need to do the following:

1. Forming an organized group of senior citizen street vendors that would serve as forerunners in advocacy and networking activities for their needs such as, but not limited to, health insurance, promotion of psychosocial health and other needed benefits. With the supervision of social welfare agencies or the local government unit.
2. Reinforce, create or amend programs wherein the senior citizen street vendors could have contingency plans in case of future socio-economic disruption by having alternative livelihoods that can provide them with alternative income.
3. The researchers may present the findings of this study to the authorities, specifically in the “Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) Unit” under the agency of “Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) of the Philippines, for them to be able to re-examine and recalibrate the disbursement process of the financial aids and services that are being distributed.
4. Dole out services offered by governmental agencies must be strengthened and partnered with further livelihood education and training, with thorough follow-up assessments to ensure the sustainability of the dole outs.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Interview Guide Questions**

#### **SOP 1**

#### **Vulnerability**

1. How would you describe the conditions that you were exposed to in this time of pandemic?
2. How will you distinguish the new normal from the traditional setting?

3. Can you tell us about the reason why you still pursue your street vending in spite of old age?
4. Why did you stayed on street vending for too long?
5. Do you have other options in gaining income?

### **Resilience**

1. How did you live throughout the pandemic?
2. Why despite of the consequences brought upon by old age you were still able to sell goods?
3. How do you describe yourself being able to endure and live through the normal and new normal setting?
4. How did you adapt to the obvious changes?
5. What can you say about your capacities as a senior citizen street vendor?

### **SOP 2**

1. How is your experience living throughout the pandemic?
2. Can you tell us about your significant experiences?
3. How was the family life going despite of the new normal?
4. What problems do senior citizen street vendors specifically faced?
5. What major changes did you experience caused by the pandemic?

### **SOP 3**

1. How did you respond to the new setting brought by pandemic?
2. Why is it that you are still able to sell goods despite the pandemic?
3. What are your motivations to continue?
4. Is there any help from external sources? If yes, how effective is it?
5. What efforts can you suggest to address the concerns that you have experienced?
6. How do perceived yourself being able to go through these changes?