

The Rise of Night Market in Polangui, Albay: An Advantage to SMEs

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Abstract

Night market is one of the exciting trends in Polangui's food system. It showcases the local culture and promotes the local food of the town. It also acts as an alternative for small medium business owners to sell their goods daily. It is considered as business incubators for the aspiring entrepreneurs since it only needs a small amount of capital to the start the business. There are five variables studied namely: vendor's profile and characteristics, customers profile and characteristics, level of support from the Local Government Units (LGUs), competition among vendors, and the type of products and their prices. This paper identifies the advantages of the night market to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the town of Polangui. This research could also help to encourage other local business owners to use this as a platform to be successful in the business. It could be a great advantage to the vendors if they will join the night market in order for the locals and other people coming from neighborhood municipalities to taste the type of food and services that they offer and it may provide a benchmark for future studies. This exploratory study described the prospect of the night markets in the business environment and also explore the main intention to highlight the advantages of the night market activities to SMEs as the researcher adopted qualitative research approach. Overall results revealed that there are five contributing factors that benefit the entrepreneurs in the rise of night markets in Polangui, Albay that may help in attracting more customers to visit the night markets regularly namely: income generation, gaining confidence among the vendors, gain additional knowledge/skills through seminars, training's attended and workshops helping LGU promote tourism and collect taxes, and overall economic growth.

Keywords: Night Market, SMEs, Polangui, Locals, Vendors

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1 INTRODUCTION

One of the reasons for the emerging development of late-night markets in urban areas is the economic pressures that often lead the low-income group to live in poverty. In the Philippines, the involvement of locals in the business has changed over time. The selling of goods is no longer restricted to those physical shops only. Today, online selling using different social media platforms became popular during the pandemic, even after the post-COVID-19 era. Some may prefer to join night markets as it requires a small investment to start the business, and the prices of the products are very affordable to anyone. This might be an ideal setting for all start-ups.

According to Ishak et al. (2012), the night market is a small business that operates during the evening and consists of various low-priced products and cooked food. Night markets are known

for strolling while eating and tasting different specialties from different local vendors. They are a popular food destination among tourists in Southeast Asia (Catedral, 2018). Night markets are everywhere, within the Philippines or maybe around the world. Night market, also known as 'Pasar Malam' for Malaysians, is a traditional institution popular with young and old alike (Song et al., 2020). Thailand is also home to the world's biggest and most famous night markets. According to the article (Cindy, 2022), many tourists want to visit Chatuchak Weekend Market in Bangkok, Thailand, for authentic local food. But some just wanted to experience what the most diverse weekend night market is all about. If you love locally handcrafted items, some works of art, and types of clothing, Chiang Mai will get you covered. Tourists also find it interesting to go to Central Market in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, because of the variety of local crafts and souvenirs from different ethnic groups.

Everyone can see it in every part of their country, villages or towns. In the Philippines, while there are numerous restaurants and hip and instagrammable cafes during the daytime, people are always looking forward to going to night markets, especially the Tutuban Market in Manila, which has almost everything- from toys, clothes, jewelry, fabric and more. Taytay Tiangge in Taytay Rizal who is also known as the Garments Capital of the Philippines and ready to wear clothes in retail or wholesale. If someone loves to buy and wear thrift clothes while eating Filipino and Korean foods, then Baguio City Market is the place to be. Like the other night markets in the Philippines, Baclaran Night Market also offers to experience the authentic life of local Filipinos- a street market area with tents and open stalls. Filipinos also love going to this place, looking for the lowest prices and bargaining (Ramirez, 2022).

In Polangui Albay, they have also called the Polangui Night Market, offering various products such as Balot, Kwek Kwek, Sisig, Takoyaki, and many more (Mendez, 2023). For the coffee lovers out there, you can check LaView Café and Café Magayon. They are open daily from three 'o'clock in the afternoon until nine in the evening. However, it still depends upon the Local Government Unit (LGU) Polangui to authorize the night markets in the area. Local vendors need to get a permit first from the respective LGU. With the concept of an open space marketplace, they are allowed to set up stalls, tents, tables, and other necessary equipment to prepare their products and display their food. The LGU may allow them to have a maximum of four stalls. The number of stalls could range from 20-40, depending on the size. The products offered for sale include street foods, fish, meat, dairy products, coffee, milk tea, fruit shakes, and cocktails. In every business, knowing your target market is the most important thing to do (Salim, 2023).

Thus, a trip to night markets, especially in Polangui Albay, can be educational yet satisfying as it fills stomachs and brains with learning and food. Night markets can also be considered tourist attractions to draw domestic and foreign tourists since they could provide a glimpse into the way of life of the Polangueños and their culture. It is increasingly becoming a preferred choice for customer attraction because it is usually well-located near a residential area. At the same time, they experience a more relaxed and friendly environment. Most people experience hectic schedules nowadays, but with the help of night markets, they can easily buy their food even after working hours. If someone supports small businesses, they are also helping those vendors to earn a living by pursuing their passions and creating more job opportunities that may help and benefit their communities. Therefore, this concept is beneficial to the customers as well as to the Small and Medium Businesses. Based on the above discussion, this study identifies the advantages of night markets to SMEs in Polangui, Albay (Mendez, 2023).

It is found that there is a gap in information related to small and medium local business owners' experiences. The rise of night markets is usually linked with their sales performance through the help of their customers. Therefore, this research is regarded as useful to those who want to start up a business with limited capital and identify the advantages of night markets in Polangui for their business. The findings documented in this research can be used as a reference for the Local Government Units to plan a specific mechanism to assist the night market sellers in a specific town.

2 METHODS

2.1 Research Design

Survey research is defined as “the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions” (Check & Schutt, 2011). An exploratory survey was used to determine the benefits of night markets to small and medium vendors in Polangui, Albay through field research, which includes informant interviews such as Polangui Market Office and a research-made questionnaire as the major instrument of the study. The research design was adapted to identify the night market vendors’ characteristics, to identify the vendors, why they started their business, and how they sustain their business in the night market (Ponto, 2015).

2.2 Respondents

The subject of this research is the population of all Polangueños who are potential night market customers. According to the updated projected mid-year population for the Philippines based on the updated projected mid-year population for the Philippines based on the 2015 POPCEN result, Polangui, Albay has 44 barangays with a projected 96, 169 population in 2022. According to the Market Office, which has the authority to oversee the activities and related concerns in Polangui Night Market, there were fifty-six (56) vendors when the research was conducted. The researcher used a simple random sampling technique to select thirty-eight (38) vendors and twenty-five (25) potential customers, which were considered representative of the total population for the whole period.

For the vendors as shown in Table 1, five (5) were selling burgers, ten (10) were selling fried chicken, three (3) were selling barbecue, twelve (12) were food vending, two (2) peanut stands, one (1) kanto kanin, one (1) were selling coffee, one (1) were selling refreshments and three (3) were selling siomai. Those twenty-five (25) potential customers were grouped into 4 (four) categories as shown in Table 2: children 10 years old and below (3%), adult male (8%), adult female (4%), and teenagers (10%).

Table 1. Commodity Types

Commodity Type	Vendors
Burgers	5
Kakanin	1
Peanut	2
Food Vending	12
Chicharon/Toasted Bread	1
Chicken/Calamares	10
Siomai	3
De Luna’s Gotohan	3
Kanto Kanin	1
Barbeque Stand	3
Jana’s Lumpiang Sariwa	1
Ulam	1
Ying Gotohan Balot/Sari-Sari	1
Plan B Milktea	1
Coffee	1
Takoyaki	3
Siomai/French Fries	3
Refreshments	1
Potato Twist	1
Pares	1
Sires	1

Table 2. Group of Customers at Polangui Night Market

No.	Percent	Customer Groups
1	3%	Children: 10 years and below
2	8%	Adult Male
3	4%	Adult Female
4	10%	Teenagers

The data collection was carried out once each night, with a total of 3 hours for each period. The top three customers in the night market are mostly from Polangui, and the rest are from neighboring municipalities like Oas and Libon, Albay.

2.3 Research Instrument

Two survey questionnaires were prepared; one was administered to the vendors that benefited the night market, and the other was conducted on the customers (Almaden & Veloso, 2017). The vendor's questionnaire was designed in English, Filipino, and Bicolano dialects to communicate with their customers easily and vice versa. The questionnaire includes questions regarding the socio-demographics of the vendors in the Polangui night market (gender, educational attainment, age, marital status); selling activities (vendor's business duration, vendor's colleague or workers; income: vendor's other work (either current or previous), business capital and estimated earning; products, suppliers and transportation; vendor's vehicle, supplier's location, vendor's challenges; customers, reasons why customers buy their products; suggestion for improvement; vendor's opinion; vendor's daily life.

The questionnaires were developed based on the studies and literature of notable entrepreneurs, including Lee & Pearce (2020), Ishak, et al. (2012), and Song et al. (2020). To check the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, the researcher have adopted the assessment of Carmines and Zeller, (2005). Both experiences are five-point Likert-type scales, ranging from "strongly disagree" (=1) to "strongly agree" (=5).

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

The Polangui Market Office, vendors in the Night Market, and some of the customers were consulted by the researcher regarding the study's conduct. After the permission was granted, the researcher secured consent before the interview. It was explained that the respondents were given autonomy to participate and answer the questionnaire and can cancel their participation if they decided to. It was also guaranteed that the respondents' data and responses were treated with confidentiality and were subjected to the provisions iterated in the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act 10173), overseen by the National Privacy Commission. This act ensures the protection of personal data and privacy of individuals. Compliance with this act is a crucial aspect of the research to safeguard the privacy and rights of the respondents.

2.5 Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed the data collected from the targeted respondents with the help of Microsoft Excel. As the result of the analysis of the interviews, the researcher has found five main advantages to entrepreneurs since the rise of night markets in Polangui, Albay.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Profile of Polangui Night Market

The study sample has 38 vendors and 25 potential customers. About 63% of customers are from Polangui Albay; the rest are from Oas Albay and Libon Albay. The sample has 12% children, 32%

male, 16 female, and 40% considered teens. About 40.3% are married, and 59.7% are single. Most respondents are between the ages of 16-30 and 31-50. The education level of respondents has the most distribution in the university or college level and graduate education. Table 3 shows the list of stalls at Polangui night market, with their respective commodities type and status.

Table 3. List of Stall at Polangui Night Market

Stall Number	Commodity Type	Status
1	Burger Stand	No Sanitary Permit
2	Burger Stand	Complete Requirements
3	Burger Stand	Complete Requirements
4	Angie's Kakanin	Complete Requirements
5	Peanut Stand	Complete Requirements
6	Food Vending	Complete Requirements
7	Food Vending/Sari- Sari	Complete Requirements
8	Chicharon/ Toasted Bread	Complete Requirements
9	Chicken/Calamares	Complete Requirements
10	Fried Chicken/Kwekwek	Outdated Requirements (2021)
11	Siomai	Outdated Requirements (2021)
12	Fried Chicken/Kwekwek	Complete Requirements
13	Fried Chicken/Kwekwek	Complete Requirements
14	Krystal Fried Chicken	No Sanitary Permit
15	Liam Fried Chicken	No Sanitary Permit
16	Food Vending	Complete Requirements
17	De Luna's Gotohan	Complete Requirements
18	De Luna's Gotohan	Complete Requirements
19	Kanto Kanin	Complete Requirements
20	Kanto Kanin	Complete Requirements
21	Barbeque Stand	Complete Requirements
22	Food Vending	Complete Requirements
23	Barbeque Stand	Complete Requirements
24	Barbeque Stand	Complete Requirements
25	Jana's Lumpiang Sariwa	Complete Requirements
26	Food Vending	No Sanitary Permit
27	Ulam	Incomplete Requirements
28	Food Vending	Complete Requirements
29	Food Vending	Complete Requirements
30	Teri Fresh and Fried Chicken	Complete Requirements
31	Food Vending	No Mayors Permit Receipt
32	Ying Gotohan	Complete Requirements
33	Ying Gotohan	Complete Requirements
34	Balot/ Sari-Sari	Complete Requirements
35	Plan B Milktea	Complete Requirements
36	La View	No Requirements
37	La View	No Requirements
38	Yakitatche	No Requirements
39	Puginoyaki	Complete Requirements
40	Siomai/French Fries	Complete Requirements
41	Burger Stand	Complete Requirements
42	Refreshments	Complete Requirements
43	Potato Twist	Complete Requirements

44	Manoy Siomai	Complete Requirements
45	Food Vending/Sari- Sari	Complete Requirements
46	Burger Stand	No Requirements
47	Food Vending	Complete Requirements
48	Food Vending/ Buko Juice	Complete Requirements
49	Food Vending/ Buko Juice	Complete Requirements
50	Pares	Complete Requirements
51	Peanut Stand	Complete Requirements
52	Two Sister Samalamig and Organic Penoy	Complete Requirements
53	Chicken/Calamares	Complete Requirements
54	Chicken/Kwek Kwek	Complete Requirements
55	Fried Chicken	Complete Requirements
56	Garibee Grilled Chicken	Complete Requirements

3.2 Advantage of Night Market to SMEs in Polangui Albay

The night market has become one of the most popular destinations among locals offering a wide range of food while experiencing the authenticity of the place. It has benefited kids to adults, single to married people, housewives to working professionals, and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) or entrepreneurs. Following are five advantages of night markets to SMEs in Polangui Albay.

- **Income Generation to SMEs.** Many entrepreneurs establish a business on a night market because it only requires little capital and time compared to other types of businesses. Some entrepreneurs work full-time while having these businesses on the side, meaning you don't have to worry about running zero. This kind of experience can be rewarding personally and financially. While others, having a stall in the night market is their main source of income, providing their family's basic needs and paying school fees for their children. In starting their own business, their only financial resource is their savings or their income from work (Hassan & Ahmad, 2016).
- **Gain Confidence among the vendors.** According to Tilaki et al. (2021), night markets became a community-based space wherein local vendors could showcase their talents and passion for cooking and sell them on the streets. People would love them because of their affordability and ready-to-eat food. It helped those vendors gain confidence in themselves. Because of the rise in food delivery services, like Foodpanda and Atud, people would still go to night markets because they want to experience the vibe and the culture of the place that feels like home.
- **Vendors gain additional knowledge/ skills (seminars, webinars, training).** Upskilling is very important in our daily lives, not just for educators but most especially for entrepreneurs (Elli, 2016). This is where you need to put additional effort into mastering skills needed for personal growth and expanding your capabilities. Business owners need training and development, especially on waste disposal, to gain additional knowledge, expand their network, improve productivity, and earn more profit, resulting in a boost in his/her morale (Li et al., 2021). They can usually take advantage of the internet as most of the seminars are conducted online. They just need to register and listen attentively.
- **Helps LGU promote tourism and collect taxes.** Tourism doesn't only promote colorful, instagrammable tourist destinations (Li et al., 2021). Night markets may also be considered one of many attractions in a town/ municipality like Polangui. Aside from offering a wide variety but different kinds of products, it also helps Local Government Units (LGUs) boost the area's tourism and economic standing. SMEs also help in creating jobs.

- **Overall economic growth.** Enhancing and patronizing small businesses and night markets promotes economic growth through revenue and job generation. They also help drive innovations by making their businesses competitive through innovating different marketing strategies and allowing themselves to make continuous improvements daily (Ishak et al., 2012). In addition, Polangueños local culture and tradition may also be promoted through night markets to draw domestic and foreign tourists.

The "Polangui Night Market Arch Signage" shown in Figure 1 refers to a prominent and decorative structure installed at the entrance or gateway of the Polangui night market area. This arch signage serves as a visual marker that not only demarcates the entrance to the night market but also functions as an artistic and functional element to enhance the overall ambiance and experience of the market. This serves as a multifaceted architectural and artistic feature that not only signifies the entrance to the night market but also contributes to the market's identity, safety, information dissemination, and visual appeal. Its design and implementation require a careful balance between aesthetics, functionality, and cultural relevance to make it a memorable and meaningful part of the night market experience.

Figure 1. Polangui night market arch signage



The Polangui Night Market, with its vibrant atmosphere, offers a captivating culinary journey showcasing the diverse flavors of Filipino cuisine (Figure 2). The bustling ambiance of the Polangui Night Market is not just a feast for the senses but also a culinary journey that encapsulates the rich and diverse flavors of Filipino cuisine. Amidst the vibrant stalls and the mingling aromas, a tantalizing variety of foods awaits, each offering a unique taste experience. The first stop on this gastronomic voyage might be the mouthwatering chicken and chicken skin. This local delight tantalizes the taste buds with its contrasting textures – the succulent tenderness of the chicken meat, encased in the crispiness of a flavorful batter. A sprinkle of seasoning and a dip into a tangy sauce elevate this simple dish to a true culinary delight (Mendez, 2023). Moving on, the Kwek-kwek or orange squid balls beckon with their vibrant hue and enticing aroma. Bursting with the flavors of the sea, these bite-sized treats offer a tantalizing combination of tender squid and a hint of zestiness. Served skewered, they are not just a culinary delight but also an Instagram-worthy snack that captures the spirit of local street food culture (Ramirez, 2022).

Figure 2. Variety of Polangui Night Market Foods



For those seeking a heartier option, the renowned beef pares emerges as a standout choice. This beloved Filipino braised beef stew, often accompanied by a generous serving of garlic fried rice and a comforting bowl of clear soup, delivers a satisfying blend of savory and rich flavors. The tender beef practically melts in your mouth, creating a harmonious dance of tastes and textures. Seafood enthusiasts will find their cravings satisfied by the crisp and succulent calamares. These deep-fried rings of squid offer a delightful contrast between the crunchy exterior and the tender interior. Paired with a dipping sauce or a squeeze of lemon, calamares become a delightful seafood indulgence that captures the essence of coastal culinary traditions. No Filipino culinary exploration would be complete without pansit bato. This noodle dish showcases a regional twist, offering a unique texture and flavor profile. With its satisfying chewiness and well-balanced seasoning, pansit bato serves as a nod to local noodle heritage (Ramirez, 2022).

In summary, the Polangui Night Market is a microcosm of the Philippines' rich culinary heritage (Mendez, 2023). It invites visitors to journey through a spectrum of flavors, from the crispy delights of kwek-kwek and orange squid balls to the comforting embrace of beef pares, the ocean's offerings in calamares, and the tradition-tinged pansit bato. The array of Polangui Night Market foods isn't just a menu; it's an experience that bridges culture, tradition, and taste into an unforgettable culinary adventure.

Last but not least, shown in Figure 3 is the entrance to the Market Operations Office, the central node in charge of the effective administration, rigorous control, and shrewd oversight of the thriving Polangui Night Market. Within these images lies a visual narrative that provides insight into the inner workings of this bustling operation. As a central command center, the Market Operations Office orchestrates the various facets of the night market, ensuring a harmonious convergence of vendors, visitors, and the overall dynamic environment. These photographs offer a glimpse into the meticulous coordination and dedication that contribute to the smooth functioning of this iconic night market.

Figure 3. Market Operation Office



For those aspiring vendors who aspire to become part of this bustling night market, several essential business requirements must be met. These prerequisites encompass a Barangay Business Clearance, a Sanitary Permit, a Cedula, and a Mayors Permit (accompanied by its corresponding receipt).

4 CONCLUSIONS

Night markets reflect local culture and the desire to meet the demands of its locals on leisure, food, and consumption. There are many studies about night markets in general around the world. However, there is no research found about the advantages of night markets to the local communities in Polangui Albay, to be specific. To name few factors why Polangui Night Market is a continuous progress and success is because of its ambiance, the delicious food that is clean and safe to eat, and the community that promotes good relationships with one another. It also generates jobs and income for the locals. Vendors can freely and creatively showcase their love and passion for cooking through the initiative from LGU Polangui to have a night market in the municipality. The Local Government also promotes tourism by showcasing a well-balanced combination of local crafts and souvenirs. Polangui Night Market offers everything, everywhere, all at once.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study's findings underscore the importance of delving deeper into specific avenues that have emerged, necessitating further research subsequent to the conclusion of this study. Moreover, it is crucial to acknowledge the intrinsic diversity among night markets across various countries, with their respective economies exhibiting distinctive traits that warrant comprehensive investigation. For a comprehensive understanding, entrepreneurs must discern the nuances of their target market, a pivotal step that empowers them to cultivate innovation within the products they offer. By embracing innovation, entrepreneurs can effectively establish a distinctive edge within the market, elevating their competitiveness and positioning themselves favorably amidst a dynamic landscape.

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