

HYGIENE AND SANITATION PRACTICES OF STREET FOOD VENDORS IN MABINAY: DISTRICT II ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS, NEGROS ORIENTAL, PHILIPPINES

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Abstract

Street foods are perceived to be prepared in unsanitary conditions by people not trained in proper food handling techniques. As nutrition is believed to play a great role in improving the mental capability of school children, this study investigated how sanitary and hygienic street foods are prepared before they were sold in elementary schools in Mabinay District II, Negros Oriental, Philippines and the impact it created on the nutritional status and academic achievement of the pupils. Findings show that majority of the food vendors prepared their street foods at home and acquired their cooking skills through trial and error or self-taught. They have garbage receptacles, yet garbage was not segregated and some unrefrigerated leftovers were reheated and sold the following day. Insufficient water supply resulted in the vendors' unsanitary method of washing their utensils as well as their stalls, and most vendors have no aprons, observed minimal personal hygiene without covering their hair and cleaning their fingernails. Most of them talked while serving allowing saliva to spread and usually blew air into the plastics in packing the food. The study revealed that significant relationship occurred between the vendors' personal hygiene and sanitation to their educational attainment, method of garbage disposal, serving of food, packaging and storing of food implying highly educated vendors were more hygienic. No direct link was established between pupils' nutritional status and academic achievement to vendors' hygiene and sanitary practices because most of pupil's food intake come from the foods their parents prepared at home. It is recommended that school children be continuously informed as to the risks of eating street foods and strict food safety measures be implemented among food vendors surrounding the schools to safeguard the health and well-being of the pupils.

Keywords: Street food, Food vendors, Hygiene and sanitation practices