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## Research Article

### Exploring the Selling Skills of Tiangge Market Vendors in Guagua, Pampanga: A Phenomenological Study

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#### ABSTRACT

In the Philippine market, the tiangge sector continues to manifest strong growth despite setting lower prices for their products. This qualitative phenomenological research examined the selling skills of 12 tiangge vendors in Guagua, Pampanga, exploring their lived experiences and business strategies. Employing a semi-structured, open-ended interview guide and thematic analysis, the study gathered in-depth insights into the vendors' experiences and selling practices. The findings indicated that these vendors mostly exhibited skills in bargaining, relationship-building, communication, integrity, problem-solving, referrals, adaptability, and positive thinking. However, issues in their selling skills include low income, rental expenses, weather conditions, the threat of e-commerce, unpleasant customers, and work-related burnout. The vendors' resilience in hurdling these challenges was attributed to coping strategies including spiritual and family motivations, opportunity recognition, the suki (loyal customer) system with price flexibility, and product diversification aligned with market trends.

**Keywords:** *Tiangge Vendors, Selling Skills, Market*

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#### Introduction

In the current economic climate, Filipino consumers seek cost-effective, affordable products. The practice of "tawad" or haggling has been a significant part of Filipino consumer culture in informal markets. The retail industry is experiencing a significant trend called "tiangge" or bazaar market shopping, which offers lower prices, bargaining opportunities, and second-hand items. Filipino consumers are

adopting more discerning shopping habits, often looking for discounts and making price comparisons before purchasing (Cosep, 2019). 92% plan their purchases in advance, prioritizing basic necessities and allocating time for finding the best deals, according to a study by Sugcang (2019).

Relative to that, the tiangge market in Guagua, Pampanga is thriving with vendors selling a variety of items at low prices. This has led to

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intense competition, with vendors aiming to attract more buyers. Moreover, vendors often struggle to compete with their neighbors, as they frequently sell similar products (Serrato et. al., 2020). Retail outlets selling the same items tend to serve the same market, which can simultaneously provide competitive advantages and increase competition (Omanyala, 2018).

Thus, this study investigated the selling skills of tiangge market vendors in Guagua, Pampanga, focusing on their strategies to out-sell competitors. Despite the focus on bargain and flea market economies, little research has explored the strategies employed by these vendors to gain an edge over their competitors. This research aimed to identify the selling skills of tiangge vendors, obstacles they faced, and coping strategies they used to manage these challenges.

### **Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study are beneficial to the following:

*For Tiangge Market Vendors:* This study will help tiangge market vendors become more knowledgeable and aware of the selling skills they are using and which skills they lack. As a result, they can apply the insights from this research to improve their daily business operations.

*For the Consumers:* This research will provide consumers with an understanding of the challenges and experiences faced by tiangge market vendors in their business activities. It aims to educate consumers about the complexities of tiangge operations, which may lead to better customer relationships and increased support for local vendors.

*For the Local Government Unit (LGU):* The discoveries from this study will aid the LGU in better understanding and supporting the marketing initiatives of tiangge vendors in Guagua, Pampanga. It will also inform the LGU's policies and programs to ensure that vendors have a conducive environment in which to operate.

*For the Future Researchers:* This study will serve as a reference and guide for future researchers interested in examining the selling skills of market vendors or similar topics. It will contribute to the growing body of knowledge in

this area, providing valuable insights for further studies.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study utilizes the Buying Formula Theory, developed by E.K. Strong in the early 1900s, to understand consumer behavior and develop effective advertising strategies. This buyer-oriented theory focuses on the customer's perspective in the buyer-seller relationship, emphasizing the role of the salesperson in understanding buyer needs and problems. The theory is chosen because it encompasses the selling skills necessary to market products and illustrates the steps consumers take when making purchasing decisions.

Furthermore, this also aims to address cognitive processes that influence the decision to make a purchase. The concept is based on the premise that a need or problem prompts the buying decision, and the solution to this need may be found in a product, service, or a combination of both, provided by the producer or seller, capturing the purchaser's interest in acquiring a solution. The theory helps researchers better understand customer behavior and build effective advertising campaigns that influence consumers at each stage of the purchasing process.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This research aimed to explore the selling skills of tiangge market vendors in Guagua, Pampanga. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What selling skills do the participants typically possess?
2. What issues and challenges do vendors encounter with regard to their selling skills?
3. What coping strategies do vendors use to overcome these challenges?
4. What emerging framework can be developed based on the study's findings?

### **Scope and Delimitation**

This study focused on exploring the selling skills of tiangge market vendors in Guagua, Pampanga. The research primarily aimed to examine the various selling skills of these vendors, the challenges they face, and how they cope with those challenges. The study used a

qualitative phenomenological approach, employing thematic analysis to interpret the data.

The study participants were limited to those who met the following criteria: (1) must be a tiangge market vendor, (2) either male or female, (3) must have been a tiangge vendor for at least two years, (4) sell either dry or wet goods in the local/public market, and (5) operate their stalls in Guagua, Pampanga. A total of 12 participants were interviewed.

The researchers only included vendors who met the specified criteria, and those who did not meet the criteria were excluded from the study. The study was conducted over the period from February to November 2024.

### Research Design

Qualitative research is a method used to investigate real-world challenges, focusing on understanding people's experiences and perspectives through social institutions and human behavior (Tenny et al., 2022). This study used a qualitative research approach to gather insights from participants' lived experiences, aiming to make them visible to the public.

Phenomenological research, on the other hand, describes the essence of a phenomenon from the perspective of individuals who have experienced it. This approach is valuable for delved-in understanding of thoughts, feelings, and experiences of the audience, helping to de-

velop new theories about behavior in controlled situations (Neubauer et al., 2019). Thus, the researchers used the phenomenological qualitative analysis framework to study the lived experiences of tiangge market vendors in various social contexts, aiming to gain a better understanding of their subjective experiences.

### Participants of the Study

This study focused on tiangge market vendors in Guagua, Pampanga, using purposive sampling as the primary data source. The researchers selected 12 participants based on specific criteria, such as being tiangge market vendors, being male or female, having been vendors for at least two years, selling products in the local/public market, and operating their stalls in Guagua, Pampanga.

Purposive sampling, a judgmental sampling technique, falls under the category of non-probability sampling and is best suited for exploratory studies. According to Nikolopoulou (2023), purposive sampling allows researchers to focus on specific areas of interest and collect in-depth information, making it suitable for this study. The study was conducted on a limited number of participants, as not everyone is a vendor in the tiangge market. This method allows for a more manageable and effective study, as it allows for in-depth information collection and focus on specific areas of interest.

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Profile of Tiangge vendors in Guagua, Pampanga

Participant	Sex	Age	Years of Being a Tiangge Vendor
P1	Male	34	8 years
P2	Female	36	4 years
P3	Female	45	20 years
P4	Female	57	6 years
P5	Female	30	8 years
P6	Male	33	5 years
P7	Female	68	3 years
P8	Female	46	14 years
P9	Female	44	2 years
P10	Female	38	5 years
P11	Male	40	14 years
P12	Male	50	20 years

The demographic profile of the participants, including sex, age, and years as a tiangge vendor, shows that over half are women with a

range of 30-70 years, placing them between young-aged adults to old-aged adults. The years of experience, ranging from two to

twenty years, reflects the participants' varying levels of expertise, which can significantly impact their sales strategies and business plans.

### **Research Instrument**

The study utilized a semi-structured interview approach, combining elements of both structured and unstructured interviews, to gather comprehensive data on tiangge vendors. The interviews were conducted face-to-face, allowing for open-ended discussions and facilitating in-depth research.

Meanwhile, the semi-structured questionnaire included five main parts, each featuring follow-up questions. The first section covered the demographic profiles of the participants, including their name, age, and experience as a tiangge vendor. The second section focused on the selling skills of the participants, asking about their strategies and competitive edge. The third section explored the challenges and issues faced by vendors in relation to their selling skills, while the fourth section explored the coping strategies they use. The final section sought insights into the framework that could be developed based on the study's findings. This method allows for flexibility and spontaneity, making it an effective method for qualitative research.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

Before conducting the face-to-face interviews, the researchers developed and validated the semi-structured questionnaire. Once the interview guide was finalized and validated, the necessary documents were submitted, and permission was sought from the General Information's Office in the Municipality of Guagua to interview 12 tiangge vendors.

Upon receiving approval, the researchers distributed informed consent forms to the participants. These forms indicated the participants' acceptance of the interview and included statements emphasizing that any information collected would be used solely for research purposes. The researchers also assured participants that their privacy and confidentiality would be fully protected. As highlighted by Thourani (2022), informed consent is a critical aspect of research ethics, ensuring that participants voluntarily agree to participate with a full

understanding of the research's purpose and the risks involved. Conducting research without obtaining informed consent would be unethical and a violation of human rights.

After receiving the necessary approvals and consent, the researchers proceeded with photo-voice documentation and conducted semi-structured, one-on-one interviews. Photo-voice is a participatory technique often used in qualitative research where participants use photography and stories to convey their experiences and issues (Nykiforuk et al., 2016). This method, along with the interview guide, allowed the researchers to gather firsthand accounts from tiangge vendors, offering a comprehensive understanding of their experiences. The interviews aimed to capture both verbal responses and visual depictions to enrich the study's findings.

Also, a sequence of questions from the interview guide were used to delve into relevant themes during the conversation. Such detours from the instructions were intended to learn about the tiangge market vendors' firsthand experiences. Furthermore, the study's results have included components based on photo interpretation and a semi-structured one-on-one interview, resulting in a complete understanding.

### **Data Analysis**

This study utilized thematic analysis within the framework of qualitative descriptive design to identify, analyze, and interpret patterns in qualitative data. The process is reflective and active, with researchers playing a significant role in interpreting the data from their perspectives. Coding is essential for identifying patterns and organizing data into themes. The researchers used both inductive and deductive approaches in thematic analysis. Inductive thematic analysis is a data-driven approach that allows themes to emerge naturally from the dataset, free from pre-existing theories or frameworks.

On the other hand, deductive thematic analysis starts with a predetermined set of codes based on existing knowledge or theory and looks for evidence in the data that supports these codes (Villegas, 2022).

### Ethical Consideration

The importance of ethical considerations in research cannot be overstated. Research ethics provide principles to ensure moral conduct, guide researchers in using funds responsibly, and prevent research misconduct. These guidelines hold researchers accountable for conducting studies that respect human rights, avoid harm, and maintain the credibility of the results. Ethical considerations ensure that research outcomes are trustworthy and valid (Mazumdar, 2022).

For this study, the researchers adhered to Republic Act No. 10173, also known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (DPA), which protects personal data collected in government and private sector information systems. Before starting the interviews, the researchers obtained the participants' consent and thoroughly explained the study's goals and objectives. Participants were also asked for permission to record the interviews to ensure that all responses were

accurately captured. Additionally, the researchers ensured that all participants fully understood the study's purpose and benefits before consenting to participate. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

To protect the participants' privacy, their personal information was kept confidential throughout the study. All names were anonymized to prevent any link to the collected data, and all sensitive information was handled in accordance with ethical guidelines. Upon the completion of the study, all photos, voice recordings, and informed consent documents were deleted or destroyed to protect the participants' privacy, as stipulated by the Data Privacy Act. This ensured that all data collected during the research process remained strictly confidential and were used only for academic purposes.

### Results and Discussions

#### *SOP1: What selling skills do the participants typically possess?*

Table 2. Selling Skills

Participants	Key Points	Code		Theme
P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P7, P9, P12	Offering discounts and adjusting the prices to close deals with customers	Product Discounts	Budget-Friendly Pricing	Bargaining Skills
P3, P5, P6, P10	Forming positive relationship with customers	Customer Relations	Building Trust	Relationship-Building Skills
P2, P4, P6, P8, P9, P11	Talking to customers to encourage them to buy	Social Interaction		Communication Skills
P6, P10,	Being honest to customers	Honesty		Integrity Skills
P1, P6, P8	Accepting defective products and resolving issues with customers	Problem Resolution		Problem-Solving Skills
P7, P8, P9	Giving customers suggestions where to buy	Referring Sellers	Other	Referral Skills
P4, P7, P8	Offering new and trendy products Adding product variations	New Product Offerings	Wide Product Range	Adaptability Skills
P8, P11	Showing enthusiastic personality to customers	Optimism		Positive-Thinking Skills

In response to the first question, eight key themes emerged regarding the selling skills participants possess. These include bargaining

skills, relationship-building skills, communication skills, integrity skills, problem-solving skills, referral skills, adaptability skills, and positive-thinking skills.

Each of these skills played a role in shaping the vendors' approach to selling in the tiangge market. Some of them possess bargaining skills, in which participants in this category addressed their strategies for satisfying customer demands, such as assessing their financial capability and offering discounts. Fuchs (2020) emphasized the importance of price discounts in customer decision-making, stating that offering a discount is one of the easiest ways to develop immediate consumer interest in a business. Another important skill that emerged was relationship-building; participants discussed the significance of treating customers properly and adapting to their behaviors in order to develop long-term relationship. As pointed out by Adams (2023), building an excellent working relationship with customers is critical to a business's long-term success. A strong connection based on trust and communication makes customers feel more comfortable and connected to the business, which can lead to increased customer retention and repeat purchases.

The third skill is the communication skills in which participants dealt with sales techniques highlighting the significance of engaging customers, presenting products, and providing excellent customer service to gain a competitive advantage. As highlighted by Khan (2024), a key part of persuasion is effective communication. Salespeople must clearly, simply, and convincingly communicate the benefits and value of their product. Meanwhile, integrity skills refer to the ability to be honest and truthful about the products they sell in the market. Integrity serves as the foundation of trust between a business and its customers and is essential for developing long-term customer relationships (Mock, 2023). In addition, problem-solving skill is a skill which they use specifically when selling their items by offering guarantees and solutions. According to Kaplan (2023), problem-solving skills involve the ability to identify problems, brainstorm and analyze solutions, and implement the best options. Referrals are one of the best ways to boost sales; hence the sixth skill is referral skills. As Cheng (2023) noted, referrals are a vital part of sales because they provide a continuous flow of new leads and potential customers. Regarding the participants, this particular skill relies on their

capacity to suggest additional vendors to the customers.

Adaptability skills come afterwards, this selling skill dimension focuses on the capacity to adapt and change according to the always shifting market. It's more vital than ever to stay informed on market trends and developments in the fast-paced, constantly-evolving business setting of today. As Thomas (2023) emphasized, one of the most crucial reasons for staying informed about industry trends and technological advancements is that it helps you stay ahead of the competition. Furthermore, the ability to think positively was the final selling skill. Participants in this category show that their approach to customer service is to keep a positive attitude in order to boost sales. Williams (2019) explained that smiling reflects the business and reinforces the business's promise to the customer. It helps shape the customer's first impression, which directly signals the business's commitment to providing a suitable product or service.

### **Participants' Supporting Statements**

**P1:** *"Pag may discount lagi 'yung customer. Kasi sa atin, sa atin ngayon 'yung sampong piso na madidiscout mo, twenty pesos na madidiscout mo. Malaking bagay na 'yon. Talagang sa'yo babalik. magiging suki na talaga."* (When customers have discounts always. Because for us, a ten-peso or a twenty-peso that you'll get from a discount, that's already a big help. They will come back to you, they will become your frequent customers)

**P10 and P6:** *"Kausapin mo lang nang maayos 'yung customer mo, siyempre 'pag makulit talaga. Tsaka maging friendly ka sa customer mo."* (Talk to your customers nicely, even if they are persistent. And be friendly to your customers). *"Ah, salestalk. Una na yun. tsaka, maganda 'yung pakitungo sa customer. 'Yung pinaka-especial."* (Ah, salestalk. That's first. Then, having a good treatment to your customers. The most special)

**P2:** *"Marami kasi na ang binabalik-balikan talaga nila ay 'yung pag-i-entertain mo sa kanila. Kailangan ma-sales talk talaga. Kailangan talaga may babalikan sila. Alam mo 'yung pupunta silang masaya? Ta's lalabas silang*

gano'n, masaya." (Many of our buyers are coming back because of the way we treat them. You really need to do sales talk. They really need to come back for a reason. You know they feel happy going here? Then, they are still happy going out).

**P6:** "Unang-una, dapat tapat ka sa suki mo. Pangalawa, dapat 'yung ibibigay mong item, 'yung sigurado ka na maganda siya." (First and foremost, you should be honest to your frequent customers. Secondly, you should make sure that you give items to them that are superior in quality).

**P8:** "Isa pa lang ano diyan pagkahalimbawa, meron damage, papalitan ko 'yun. Wala na kaming usapan na 'di pwedeng palitan eh'. Hindi, hindi gano'n. Basta't 'pag may damage siya papalitan ko." (One more thing, just like for example, the product has damage, I will replace it. We don't have any agreement that 'it's cannot be replaced anymore'. No, it's not like that. As long as it has damage, I will replace it).

**P7:** "Kung wala naman 'yung mga items na binibili sa'kin, tinuturo ko kung saan sila bibili

non. Kahit na, kung tutuusin mo dapat nga 'wag mo ituturo kung saan sila bibili 'di ba. Kase pag nakabili sila du'n, 'di na sila pupunta dito sa'kin. Pero 'yun nga, kung meron ako dito, dito nalang sila bibili." (If the items they will be buying are not available in my store, I will point out where they can buy those items. Even if, in fact, you shouldn't point where they can buy their desired items right? Because if they will be able to purchase in that store, they will not come in my own store anymore. But if I have those items, they will buy here instead).

**P4:** "Kung minsan mamimili sila mga bago. 'Yung mga bago 'di ba 'yung uso ngayon 'yung sinasabi ko, 'yung uso ngayon. Mamimili sila, kung ano 'yung uso gano'n." (Sometimes, they will buy new items. Those items that are trendy, right, I am saying to them buy items that are in-demand nowadays. They will buy on what items are trending, like that).

**P11:** "Lagi tayong nakangiti." (We should always smile). Atsaka palabiro sa mga customer" (And just being mischievous with customer).

## **SOP2: What issues and challenges do vendors encounter with regard to their selling skills?**

Table 3. Issues and Challenges of the Vendors

Participants	Key Points	Code	Theme
<b>P5, P6, P7, P9, P11, P12</b>	Unstable sales which affects the business	No Customers Low Sales	Low Income
<b>P1, P3, P4, P5, P12</b>	Paying for rent	Lease Payments	Rental Expense
<b>P4, P6, P11, P12</b>	Facing climatic changes	Environmental Phenomena	Weather Conditions
<b>P1, P2, P7, P9, P10, P11, P12</b>	Battling against online businesses	Online Selling	Threat of E-Commerce
<b>P4, P8</b>	Having to encounter grumpy and short-tempered customers	Customers' Negative Attitude	Unpleasant Customers
<b>P1, P10, P12</b>	Overcoming physical exhaustion and health problems	Fatigue Stress Sickness	Work Burnout

In this statement of the problem, the participants identified the issues and challenges they commonly encounter as vendors in the tiangge market. Six themes emerged from the information gathered: low income, rental expenses, weather conditions, the threat of e-commerce, unpleasant customers, and work burnout.

Most of the participants experienced low income due to unstable sales that affects the growth of the business venture. According to Houston (2023), when sales are poor or non-existent, cash flow is severely limited, leading to various problems, such as the inability to pay bills, rent, or purchase merchandise. Another challenge that the participants encountered

was rental expenses; in this case, the participants struggle with their rental costs and only have enough money to cover other recurring expenses. To discuss further, Barton (2023) pointed out that as rents rise, sellers increase their prices to cover the costs, which makes them less competitive and limits their growth.

On the contrary, there are unforeseeable events such as weather phenomena that include heat waves, severe rains, winds, and other extreme weathers. These natural forces can pose serious risks to businesses by affecting sales percentages and causing damage their products. According to Bertand and Parnau-deau (2017), unexpected and unusual weather events pose serious risks, especially for businesses that understand how typical weather patterns affect their bottom line. Other than that, the rise of the internet business venture has had the greatest impact on the participants. Customers' preferences have shifted dramatically as a result of its convenience and success, making it more difficult for vendors to maintain a competitive edge. Luna (2022) explained that e-commerce companies have expanded rapidly in recent years, providing customers with the convenience of shopping from the comfort of their homes.

However, some situations are inevitable, such as dealing with a customer who possesses hostile attitudes. Encountering negative attitudes in a market situation is inescapable because a customer's behavior changes and they may have high expectations for the amount of satisfaction given. Rude customers can negatively impact employee satisfaction, retention, brand reputation, and financial success. Personal preferences, societal norms, social influences, and psychological motivations all play a role in this complex decision-making process (Kondrenko, 2024). Similarly, work burnout is inevitable; being human entails having constraints in so much ways. According to Yanna et al., (2023), work burnout is a major cause of declining work quality and operational efficiency, which can lead to increased costs, reduced revenues, and a drop in the overall economic performance of businesses. Excessive stress can induce low motivation and illness, resulting in decreased work quality and efficiency.

#### **Participants' Supporting Statements**

**P7:** *"Naistress ka 'pag walang benta kagaya ngayon anong oras na wala pa'kong benta naman. 'Yan 'yung pinagkastress naming lahat, 'pag wala pang benta." (You get stressed when there are no sales, like today; what time already? That's what we all stress about when there are no sales)*

**P3, P4, and P5:** *"Siyempre naisip namin 'yung bayad, kuryente, tsaka 'yung pwesto. Siyempre inisip mo magbabayad ka naman na monthly. (Naturally, we thought about the payment, electricity, and leasing. Certainly, you considered the monthly cost). 'Sa renta, kung minsan inuutang muna namin, inuutang muna namin 'yung renta." (With rent, sometimes we owe first, we owe the rent first). "Hmm, number one 'yung rent. Kasi doon talaga halos napupunta lahat eh." (Hmm, rent is number one. Because that's where almost everything goes).*

**P6 and P12:** *"Pangalawa, 'pag ganito, bumabagyo. Minsan pinapasukan ako dito ng tubig." (Secondly, when it's like this, when it storms. Sometimes flood enters here). "Tulad ngayon tag-ulan, walang benta, walang tao." (Like right now, its rainy season, there are no sales, there are no buyers).*

**P11:** *"Sa panahon natin ngayon ang pinaka unang-una, number one na pinaka-apektado sa'min kumbaga humina yung paninda namin dahil sa shopping online, online shopping. Unang-una online selling pinakamasakit sa'min kasi sa online selling bukod sa mababa, hindi mo na kailangan puntahan kasi dadalhin sa'yo e, kakatukin ka e. Sobrang apektado ako sa online selling." (Nowadays, the number one that affected us the most, is that our profit becomes low because of the shopping online, online shopping. First and foremost, online selling affects us, because from the low price it offers, aside from the low price, you don't have to go where it is ordered but instead, it will be brought or delivered to you just by a knocking on the door. Online selling has affected me so much).*

**P8:** *"Yung isa ano...mataas na opisyal pala ng bayan. Ta's ang ginawa niya binalibag niya yung i-stock ko. Siyempre, parang na-ano ako sarili ko. Ta's 'kilala mo ba ako', 'di mo ba'ko kilala.'" (There is one that, because he is one of the high officials of the town. And then what that person did is that, to throw away my stocks. Of*



course, I was taken aback. And then he asked me, "Do you know me?" "You didn't know me?").

**P1 and P10:** "Ah ano lang stress lang ng ano konti lang naman. Normal na sa tao 'yung may problema." (Oh, it's just a little bit of stress. It's normal for people to have problems). "Mahirap

din 'pag may sakit ka, gano'n lang may sakit ka, kailangan mo pa din magtinda kasi para sa pamilya mo. Mga pagod, stress." (It is also tough when you are sick, but you still need to face your duty because you need to provide for your family. You get tired and stressed).

### **SOP 3: What coping strategies do vendors use to overcome these challenges?**

Table 4. Coping Strategies of the Vendors

Participants	Key Points	Code	Theme
<b>P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12</b>	Having continuous faith and belief in God. Also, instilling patience and perseverance for family's well-being	Prayers and Trust in God Family and Child's Future Patience and Perseverance	Spiritual and Family Motivations
<b>P1, P6, P11</b>	Finding other ways and being resourceful in life	Seeking Opportunity	Opportunity Recognition
<b>P2, P3, P4, P5, P12</b>	Lowering prices to have loyal customers	Suki Flexible Pricing	Suki System and Price Flexibility
<b>P4, P5, P6</b>	Acquiring trendy products and expanding product offerings	Product Adaptation Product Trends	Product Diversification and Trends

In the statement of the problem, the participants revealed the coping strategies they employ to overcome their struggles and challenges as tiangge vendors. From the data gathered, four key themes eventually emerged: spiritual and family motivations, opportunity recognition, the suki (loyal customer) system with price flexibility, and product diversification aligned with market trends.

Tiangge vendors demonstrate remarkable resilience and adaptability in their business practices. Their perseverance and patience, deeply rooted in faith, and these tiangge vendors are primarily motivated by the fundamental need to secure their families' financial well-being. According to Miley (2024), praying for business direction helps align its vision with God's will, rather than solely relying on personal understanding. Similarly, Rashid (2023) emphasized that fundamental survival needs, such as food, water, shelter, and security, are fundamental for continued existence.

Aside from this, tiangge vendors actively seek and capitalize on other opportunities, exhibiting resourcefulness in diversifying income streams and mitigating financial risks. According to Tiyon (2023), resourcefulness is

an essential trait for business owners aiming to succeed in a competitive business environment. In connection with the previous statement, Viter (2023) emphasized that being resourceful is an invaluable skill that can be learned and applied in both personal and professional settings.

Furthermore, tiangge vendors foster strong customer relationships ("suki") and employ flexible pricing to attract and retain clientele. According to Dolan (2016), in a commercial context, suki relationships—market-exchange partnerships—may unfold between two individuals who agree to become regular customer and supplier. In addition, flexible pricing is a strategy in which businesses adjust their prices aligned with customer demand, market competition, and other factors (Kosno, 2022).

Finally, they strategically manage their product offerings through diversification, balancing a wide variety of goods with trendy, in-demand items to remain competitive and responsive to evolving consumer preferences. These combined strategies highlight their proactive approach to navigating challenges and ensuring long-term business success. In the words of Williams (2024), he justified that

diversification is essential because it allows businesses to spread risk across multiple areas, minimizing reliance on a single market or product. This strategy can lead to increased revenue sources and improved long-term viability. As well as that, keeping up with trends requires an inventive mindset, a strategic approach to adaptability, and a deep understanding of market dynamics (Miller, 2023)

### Participants' Supporting Statements

**P1, P2, and P3:** "Simple lang, kailangan manalangin lang palagi. Kasi si Lord naman lagi 'yung kasama natin sa bawat problema na darating." (It's simple: just pray all the time. Since the Lord is constantly with us in our problems). "Yung ano, 'wag ka lang mapagod na-ano mag-start ulet. 'Yung 'wag ka lang susuko gan'yan." (Ah, you know, just don't get tired of starting over; don't give up). "Siyempre may anak kami nag-aaral, nagbabayad kami ng bahay, ito 'yan gan'yan. Mga bata oo, mga bina-bayaran nila 'yan. Kasi kung hindi ka maghanapbuhay, paano makapag-aral 'yung anak mo." (Of course, we have children attending school; we also pay for the house, among other things. The children, yes, we have to cover their needs. If you do not find a source of income, how can your children continue their education?).

**P6 and P11:** "Ano, dumi-diskarte eh. Min-san, nag-oonline na lang, nag-popost sa ano. sa Marketplace" (Just being resourceful. Sometimes, I make use of online or I am posting my

products in the Marketplace). "Nakipag-sapalaran sa kahit papaano, kami man, kaming lahat kami dito tinitiiis namin talaga 'yon." (Venturing in some ways, even us, all of us here are enduring that).

**P3 and P4:** "Kunwari example suki ko taga-Bacolor nag-order siya ng black shoes para sa anak niya. Nung namili ako, kinuha ko siya sabi niya, pag ano bibili ako ulit sa'yo. Kaya doon kami nag-ano ng suki namin." (For example, I have a regular customer from Bacolor who ordered black shoes for her child. When I went shopping, I bought them for her, and she said, 'When I buy again, I'll buy from you.' That's how we build relationships with our regular customers). "Siyempre 'pag may bibili, tatawad siya, bigyan namin ng discount gano'n." (Of course, when someone buys, they'll haggle, and we give them a discount). "Oo nagbibigay din ng ano, discount." (Yes, we also give discounts).

**P6 and P4:** "Yung sa akin kasi sari-sari, parang halo-halo na eh. Para maraming choices 'yung customer, para makabenta kasi marami silang choice." (Mine has already variation of products. So that customer will have a lot of choices, to be able to sell also because they have many options to choose from). "Mamimili sila, kung ano 'yung uso gano'n. 'Yung mga bago 'di ba 'yung uso ngayon 'yung sinasabi ko, 'yung uso ngayon." (They will buy on what items are trending, like that. Those items that are trendy, right, I am saying to them buy items that are in-demand nowadays).

### SOP 4: What emerging framework can be developed based on the study's findings?

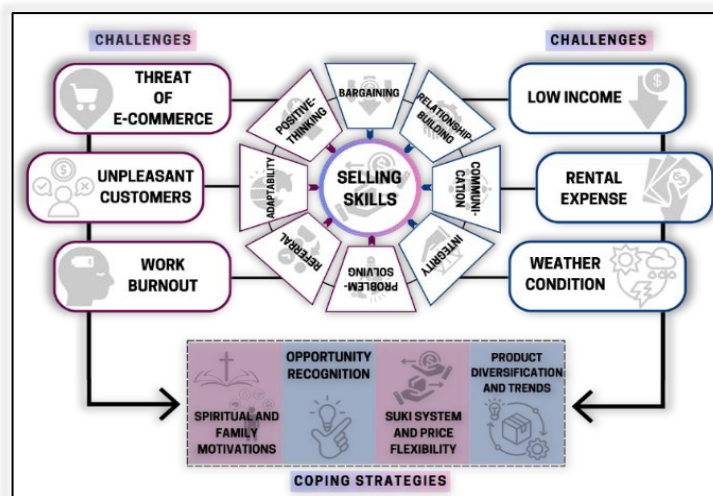


Figure 1: Emerging Framework

The figure above illustrates the emerging framework of this study. Based on the analysis of the participants' responses, a framework for the selling skills of tiangge vendors, their challenges, and coping strategies has emerged and been established.

The selling skills function as internal forces, surrounding and impacting the livelihood and day-to-day business operations of the tiangge vendors. These emerging skills—such as bargaining, relationship-building, communication, integrity, problem-solving, referrals, adaptability, and positive thinking—are essential for vendors to effectively manage their business ventures. These skills serve as guiding internal forces, reflecting the continuous cyclical process that vendors undergo to develop competence and ultimately improve their quality of life.

On the other hand, challenges such as low income, rental expenses, weather conditions, the threat of e-commerce, unpleasant customers, and work burnout exist as external forces, countering the internal efforts of the tiangge vendors. These challenges represent various external pressures that negatively affect the well-being of the sellers and the overall success of their business. However, with the support of coping strategies—including spiritual and family motivations, opportunity recognition, suki system and price flexibility, and product diversification and trends—positioned beneath the selling skills, vendors are able to stay grounded, maintaining a sense of courage and determination. These coping mechanisms enable tiangge vendors to remain resilient and persistent in their chosen business landscape. As a result, they can overcome challenges while retaining their competitiveness and the will to move forward.

## Conclusions

Based on the results and findings of the aforementioned study, the following conclusions are hereby drawn:

1. The skills possessed by tiangge vendors determine the various techniques they use to attract customers and ensure their satisfaction. Some vendors have bargaining skills, allowing them to offer discounts or adjust prices based on customer preferences. In a

market setting, building relationships with customers is critical to earning their trust and encouraging them to patronize the products being offered. Additionally, strong communication and referral skills enable vendors to engage with customers, address their complaints, and resolve any issues. Honesty and transparency are also essential for helping customers purchase the items they want. Since customers are the lifeline of a business—particularly in a market setting, where transactions are direct—tiangge vendors must be adaptive to changing trends to capture their attention. Even in unpleasant interactions, maintaining a positive attitude can shift customers' perspectives.

2. Challenges are a natural phenomenon for individuals, especially those involved in a market setting. Tiangge vendors face such challenges due to natural forces or environmental shifts. There are uncontrollable factors that can negatively impact their business, such as weather conditions like rain and floods, which are unpredictable natural events. Additionally, frequent issues such as low sales and the rise of e-commerce can adversely affect their income, leaving it insufficient to cover other expenses. Similarly, limited income makes it difficult for them to cover rent expenses. Negative interactions with customers and burnout are also inevitable, as being human involves flaws—whether they stem from personal limitations or external factors that influence their attitude or behavior.
3. Coping methods for tiangge vendors include spiritual and family motivations, opportunity recognition, suki system and price flexibility and product diversification and trends, which reinforce their selling skills despite the challenges they face. Unwavering faith and a devoted mindset, recognizing their family's needs, and having patience and perseverance motivates them to keep moving forward, regardless of the obstacles they encounter. Additionally, having a limited income drives them to seek alternative ways to cover their expenses, whether for family or other purposes. Moreso, their strategy to offer

discounts and adjust their prices help these vendors believe they will succeed. And in the face of challenges, their way through expanding their products and keep-up with the trends foster sustainability and competitiveness in a constantly changing business landscape.

## Recommendations

Further recommendations include:

1. Providing training programs is essential for tiangge vendors. Programs that focus on effective selling methods, efficient resource allocation, and customer relationship management are key elements to consider in expanding these vendors' skills and knowledge in their businesses. This support can be offered through sales training sessions, workshops, and information-sharing discussions, where tiangge vendors can learn new skills relevant to their environment. In turn, this would help them gain awareness and knowledge, enhancing their market competitiveness, increasing revenue, and improving financial stability. Furthermore, it would strengthen the relationship between sellers and buyers, build a loyal customer base, increase brand recognition, and ultimately support business growth.
2. Educational programs for launching online stores may be necessary for tiangge vendors, who view internet businesses as a threat to their livelihood. These programs aim to provide vendors with the opportunity to start an online business that complements their physical storefronts. Since e-commerce transforms how businesses reach customers, the goal of this program is to help vendors adapt to using the internet as part of their selling process. Selling products online is an effective strategy for tiangge vendors in today's market environment. Additionally, promotional campaign awareness can be highly beneficial for tiangge vendors. Such campaigns can promote their market, increase visibility, and potentially boost customer sales. Promotional efforts can also educate the public about the products and services offered by tiangge vendors. By creating and
- implementing awareness campaigns through various channels, such as social media, local media, and physical signage, tiangge vendors can reach a broader audience and attract more customers. Furthermore, awareness campaigns can enhance social influence, foster cooperation, and garner support within the market.
3. Collaboration and cooperation with the local government unit (LGU) to provide support and fair-trade programs for tiangge vendors can help sustain their businesses by ensuring a constant source of income. Various local government support programs can assist vendors, especially those seeking to develop their businesses to meet their families' needs, which keeps them motivated in the market. By collaborating with government organizations, these initiatives can expand opportunities for vendors. Partnerships with other groups or government entities may lead to funding, personnel training, increased market access, and the provision of necessary equipment and infrastructure upgrades. This collaboration aims to gather essential information while demonstrating a commitment to mutual growth and empowerment. As a result, these programs can inspire and motivate tiangge vendors, fueling their passion and dedication to continue moving forward despite the challenges they face or may encounter in the future.
4. Future researchers can further explore the use of technology by tiangge market vendors. Furthermore, they may consider maximizing the benefits of emerging technologies, such as mobile devices, to develop a mobile app specifically for tiangge vendors. Such an app could simplify and enhance transactions by eliminating the need for customers to visit a store in person, making it more convenient for both sellers and buyers with just the press of an icon. Future studies could also examine the potential benefits of tiangge vendors forming a community to foster communication with customers. Moreover, researchers could investigate the role of cooperatives and how they may benefit the businesses of tiangge vendors. By exploring different and unique

innovations, future researchers can assist tiangge market vendors in gaining greater visibility and encourage more people to support their stores.

5. Future recommendations based on this study could focus on geographic accessibility, diverse marketing strategies, and effective resource utilization to identify the various factors that influence vendors' business performance and success. Additionally, future studies can delve deeper into the budget management practices of these vendors, as their monthly expenses are a primary concern. Moreso, future studies can investigate the competitive landscape, market environment, and product demand among tiangge vendors, exploring how these elements affect their business endeavors while preserving traditional values. Meanwhile, it is recommended to involve more participants in future interviews to increase reliability and gain a deeper understanding of the lives of various vendors. Furthermore, this study suggests focusing on different market industries, not just the tiangge market, which have existed and thrived in the public market for many years. Lastly, future studies could aim to increase market visibility and public exposure to encourage more people to purchase from these informal market sectors.

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This research goes beyond a mere academic endeavor; it stands as a testament to the resilience and vision of the tiangge vendors. By shedding light on their ambivalent life experiences, the researchers hope for a brighter future that

illuminates their unique sales approaches and fosters greater opportunities for a more sustainable and progressive trajectory in the sales industry.

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