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5

ABSTRACT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>ABSTRACT</u>	i
<u>TABLE OF CONTENTS</u>	ii
<u>LIST OF FIGURES</u>	iii
<u>LIST OF APPENDICES</u>	iv
<u>INTRODUCTION</u>	1
<u>CHAPTER ONE</u>	2
<u>CHAPTER TWO</u>	3
<u>CHAPTER THREE</u>	4
<u>CONCLUSION</u>	5
<u>WORKS CITED</u>	6
<u>APPENDIX A</u>	a

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ABSTRACT

The demand for street food has increased as a result of urbanization, which has resulted in an increase in the number of street food vendors. For citizens of a country, the business provides revenue, employment, and food. It can also provide a strong economy for the citizens.

Considering the valuable contribution street food vending has on the urban dwellers and the economy, this study aimed at understanding how street food vending is form of livelihood to the vendors in Trinidad. This study was conducted in South, Trinidad and data was gathered from 15 respondents using structured questionnaires and observation. The main findings reveal that most of the vendors entered the street food business because a small capital is required to start and it generates a substantial income. It has been concluded that members who are actively contributing an income to themselves, as well as the country, is a valuable asset to the livelihood and welfare of the household. Street food vendors are an integral part of the economy in Trinidad, offering easy accessibility to various goods in public places. These vendors sell items such as juices, punches, gyros, finger foods, burgers, etc. Permanent business premises for vendors would provide a permanent address which would increase the eligibility of obtaining loans from financial institutions. The study advocate for provisions to be made by the government for suitable business education to street food vendors, as well as design affordable and permanent structures for street food vending to operate effectively and efficiently.

Keyword: street food, urbanization, livelihood, income, South Trinidad

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Framework of the study	1
1.2 Parameters	2
1.3 Rationale	3
1.4 General Objectives	3
1.4.1 Specific Objectives	3
CHAPTER TWO	4
METHODOLOGY	4
2.1 Introduction of methods	4
2.2 Study area	4
2.3 Method of data collection	5
2.3.1 Questionnaires	5
2.3.2 Observation	5
2.3.3 Validity and Reliability	6
CHAPTER THREE	7
LITERATURE REVIEW	7

CHAPTER FOUR	14
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	14
4.1 Introduction of Findings	14
4.2 Socio-economic Characteristics of Street Food Vending	14
4.2.1 Lack of Education	14
4.2.2 Age	15
4.2.3 Sex	16
4.2.4 Marital Status	17
4.3 Factors driving people to venture in the street food business	18
4.3.1 Require small revenue to start business	18
4.3.2 Experience and skills	19
4.3.3 The profit earned from conducting food vending	19
4.3.4 The extent street food vendor's income support	19
CONCLUSION	21
BIBLIOGRAPHY	22
APPENDICES	25

LIST OF IMAGES

Image 1: The street vending strip in San-Fernando, “the cross”

4

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: The level of education of street food vendors	15
Table 2: The extent to which street food vendors support the household	20

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: The marital status of street food vendors

18

LIST OF APPENDICES

7.1 Questionnaire guide	25
7.2 Questionnaire for respondents	26

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Framework of the study

Street food vending is a worldwide phenomenon as well as a prevalent and distinctive aspect of the informal sector. The Food and Agricultural Organization defines street food as ready to eat food and beverages prepared and/or sold by vendors, especially in streets and other public places (FAO 2013). In Trinidad, street food vending has become a rapidly growing and popular business. It contributes to the socio-economic role in terms of creating a form of livelihood, providing food at an affordable cost to both tourists and locals and showcasing the rich cultural diversity through food.

In Trinidad, with a plethora of ethnic groups, the street food options exhibits the melting pot, and as a result, greatly varies. The main ethnicities are Africans, East Indians, Chinese, Europeans, and Indigenous people. From hot and tasty doubles, pholourie and aloo pies which can be found in Debe, to bake and shark on Maracas beach, flavorful corn soup, burgers and gyros on Ariapita Avenue, are just a few of the street foods that can be found throughout Trinidad. According to (Muzaffar et al., 2009), street foods provide a source of nourishment to the majority of persons mainly in the low-income group in developing countries.

Street food vendors are part of the self-employed group of small entrepreneurs who are not reliant on the government or any institutional organization to obtain a livelihood. Their business progresses through their own strengths as well as from the support of close networks like family members and associates. As a result, these economic ventures of the street food

vendors have not only created a form of livelihood to vendors and their family members, but also reduce the difficulty of becoming an economic and social burden to the state.

In Trinidad, the demand for street food is constantly increasing. The demand for street foods in developing countries can be ascribed to urbanization and the need of these populations for food and employment (Draper 1996, 1). Street food vending provide employment to educated, uneducated, skilled and unskilled workers of different sex and age (Mathaulula et al.,2016; Mwangi et al., 2002).

Many people in Trinidad decided to venture into the street food business because of the many advantages. Some of these advantages are: Little start-up costs is required, there are no overhead expenses, a form of livelihood, the gain of exposure and experience and the control of workload. In some areas, it is estimated that the average earnings of street vendors surpass the wage of skilled workers who belong to the formal sectors (Nattrass 1987). This study is focused on examining street food vending activities as a form of livelihood for vendors in Trinidad and can contribute to national development with proper policies.

1.2 Parameters

This study focused on Trinidad and was further scaled down to the southern region of the country. This was done due to the close proximity and easy accessibility to the street food vendors in both the country and region. Examining vendors of Tobago, or additional regions of Trinidad would have been difficult due to time constraint of conducting this research.

1.3 Rationale

The street food vending business is labeled as a form of livelihood for numerous citizens, however, not much is known on the extent in which the income of street food vendors fulfill the requirement of the household. This study will bridge the gap by analyzing the degree street food vending supports the vendors' household. This study is to enlighten citizens, government officials and stakeholders of the significant role the street food vending play on households, which has a direct effect on the national economy in Trinidad.

1.4 General Objective

The main objective of this study is to understand how street food vending is a form of livelihood in Trinidad.

1.4.1 Specific objectives

In order to achieve the general objective, the following specific objectives are examined:

- To examine the factors that influence street food vendors to venture in to this business
- To assess the degree in which the income earned through street food vending supports the household of the vendor
- To assess the effect the socio-economic elements of street food vendors to their livelihood

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction of methods

This chapter outlines specifically how the research is designed and carried out. It further explains the study area, the method of data collection, the validity and reliability of the data

2.2 Study Area

This study was conducted in the southern region of Trinidad. The selection of the city of San Fernando was based on the fact that it is densely populated and has popular food strips, such as “the cross”, a popular street vending strip on Cross Crossing, San Fernando. (See image 1). It is a home to a number of significant businesses and organizations which attracts numerous vendors since food is high in demand in this area. The targets of this research were both women and men who conduct street food vending in South, Trinidad.



Image 1: The street food vending strip in San-Fernando, “the cross” Source: (Webb, 2021)

2.3 The Method of Data Collection

This study is quantitative as well as qualitative. It was carried out using both primary and secondary data. Primary data was gathered through questionnaires, comprising both open and close ended questions. Secondary sources of data were gathered from books, journals, the internet and research work. The social survey method was also used in this research, where information was collected from the vendors through observation. The study was conducted on different types of street food vendors in South, Trinidad.

2.3.1 Questionnaire

A well-structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data, which comprised both open-ended and closed-ended questions. Questionnaires were used to acquire data on the socio-economic characteristics of street food vendors, the revenue earned from street food vending and the degree to which this revenue earned support's the vendor's household. Writing up of the questionnaire was mainly done by the researcher due to the respondent mostly having to serve the customers during the discussion. This method was chosen to reduce bias and was effective since the same questions had to be answered by all the respondents.

2.3.2 Observation

In this study, the information on the street food vendor's gender, the structure, as well as the facility were gathered through observation. This particular method was appropriate because it aided in discovering what persons do and helps the researcher have a better understanding of the integration of the business activities (Saunders 2009; Ally 2005).

2. 3.3 Validity and Reliability

The extent to which results are consistent over time is referred to as reliability. (Creswell 2012) contends that reliability means that results from an instrument are consistent and stable. Validity dictates whether the technique used by a researcher has measures what was actually intended. Data should be accurately gathered and interpreted by the researcher, to ensure the conclusion is correctly reflected and present the work that was studied (Yin, 2011). Instruments for the data collection were pre- tested by using five street food vendors on Ciperio Street, San Fernando. Alternations and corrections were made to the instruments based on experience that was acquired during the pre-testing. Respondents requested anonymity which was assured before the questions were asked.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW

Street food vending is a thriving and well-established business, particularly in developing countries. (Adhakari, 2011) establishes a shortage of employment from the informal sector of the economy as the reason for many persons to get involved in the street food vending business. He further states that rural residents own small plots of land for the purpose of agricultural production as a result of the increases number of dependents in the household and they are forced to relocate to the city and start food vending. (Winter2017) addressed a number of factors that compelled people to engage in street food vending as a form of livelihood in China. Many vendors were able to venture in to the street food vending business due to the loss of jobs, being retired pensioners and a struggle to find employment. While the cost of living in China is less expensive than that of Trinidad, many residents of China are attracted to the low capital that is required to startup this business.

(Rutahindurwa, 2013) conducted a study which discovers a pull and push elements of street food vending. A few of these pull elements include a desire to be independent, a fulfilling and improved financial status, becoming your own boss and the ability to balance work and family life. The push elements include the discontent with salaried jobs, divorce and the death of a spouse. (Zobida and Mutabaki,2012) associate the expansion of the government's failure to create jobs. Furthermore, the country's economic and political changes have a significant effect on the people's lives.

In Trinidad, many persons have been laid off from their jobs which provided a main source of income in their household e.g: Petrotrin. In the year 2018, Petrortin's refinery was shut down by the government and ceased operations resulting in unemployment of the workers. Approximately 3,400 of the permanent workers received an exit payment whereas the temporary employees received an ex gratia payment. The decision by the government came with significant controversy. The social ramifications were of major concern and alarming to many. For an already tumultuous economy, the closure of a significant part of our largest industry leaves citizens anxious about the future. As a result, many have turned to the informal sector in order to be able to still provide for their families and themselves. The urban informal sector was described to encompass all economic activities that are not formally regulated and which function outside of the state's and institution's incentive systems. Formal sector enterprises, on the other hand, are characterized as businesses that receive protection, assistance and official recognition.

According to (ILO, 2002), over 90% of the workforce consists of the informal economy. The percentage of workers that are enthralled in the informal economy in Ghana is 90%, 72% in Kenya and 53% in South Africa (Carr, et al, 2000). Consequently, the informal sector's share of the urban force, particularly in street food vending is increasing varies from 30% to 70%, having the average value of 50% (Chen, et al 2005).

Street food vending provides revenue and additional benefits associated with this particular business. (Etzold, 2009) suggests that the street food vending business has a high financial turnover and it is significant in comparison to the salaries of manufacturing employees and day laborers. He further discussed the importance and role of street food vending, its form of livelihood and the effects of their use of public space on the government and urban planning.

They did a survey on street food vendors and found that street food vending in Dhaka is an illegal incursion of public space caused by the city's space constraint, which causes traffic congestion and impedes urban planning. According to poll done, 52% of the respondents eat various types of street food on a regular basis, while 23% claim to never consume any type of street food. According to the survey, public places are an important location to conduct street food vending. Hospitals, the market place, university campuses and close to businesses, are important locations for the street food vendors to create informal marketing. In South Trinidad, several street food vendors located their business along a strip popularly known as "The cross", which is situated around business places, groceries and schools. As such, these vendors can easily generate an influx of money due to their chosen location. (Marras and Ag Bendeck, 2016) indicated that a street food vendor's average earnings are five times greater than the minimum wage earned by public sector employees.

A study was conducted by (Husain et al. (2015) entitled 'Assessment of the Socio-economic Aspects of Street Vendors in Dhaka City: Evidence from Bangladesh where concentration is placed on the street food vendors' financial access, levels of income, the level of their education, working hours and the effect social capital has on their life. They noted that factors such as poverty, lack of education, a large family and relocation from rural areas are some of the main factors for venturing in to the street food business. They also stressed on the importance of the street vendor's social capital, which is regarded as the friendships, relationships, community and the persons these vendors interact with in their daily sales. The majority of the vendor's buyers are regular customers which include university students, businessmen, cab drivers, people who reside in the local areas and day workers. The social capital plays a major key role in generating additional income. The street food vending business

can also be affected from lack of sufficient funds, ineffective managerial expertise and issues with transportation. These vendors can also become subjected to harassment by official such as the police and can fall privy to arrest and bribes. The study proposes that government regulations and actions aimed towards street food vendors will help to alleviate their concerns to a certain extent.

(Akharuzzaman and Atushi, 2010) demonstrated in their study that street food vending is one of the greater means of informal employment for the poor despite the issues it may cause in urban areas such as creating garbage in the street and crowding pavements. The street food vending community will therefore anticipate public management systems to be put in place.

(Suraiya and Noor, 2012) carried out a study where they displayed an analysis of the street food vendors' income services and employment in the city of Dhaka. They discovered that a considerable section of the population in Dhaka earns money through the informal sector of street vending. These street food vendors provide profound services for the inhabitants of the city at a reasonable price. The further examined the socio economic situation off the street food vendors of the city. The study also reveals that mobile street food vendors play a vital role in terms of social recognition. Their economic situation in Dhaka city will improve with proper aid from the government and education.

A study undertaken by (Andringa and Kies, 1989), revealed that the income in which is generated by the vendor can range from up to ten times the minimum wage and are frequently similar to that of employees of the formal sector. The vendors and their families are dependent on the income and profits earned through street food vending. The study goes on to state that while some of the vendors rely solely on street food vending as their main occupation, others

venture in to the occupation when a chance to earn extra income presents itself. A research done by (Tillerman, 2002) indicated that persons who ventured in to the street food business are able to acquire a substantial amount of income at the end of the month which is used to manage household expenses. Furthermore, healthy and nutritious meals are provided to their family members, including the leftovers which bridge the gap since food accounts for a big portion of home expenses. Various literature from different countries imply that street food vending supports household in different ways like being able to pay for health fees, school fees, rent, personal necessities, etc. (Muffazar et al, 2009), indicated that in Bangladesh, street food vendors spend about 50% of their earning on food, 15% on living accommodations and the remaining 35% on additional payments such as travelling, clothing, health and leisure. His study suggests that through the street food vending industry, vendors have the opportunity to earn an income supports their daily means of living.

There are certain socio-economic factors which impacts street food vending, such as gender, age and education. According to several studies, women are now dominating the street food vending business. They have capitalized on their skills and talents and taken their craft out to the streets via mobile stalls and fixed sheds. A study done by (Milanzi ,2011) highlighted the reasons for the dominance of women in the street food vending industry. He stated that women often venture in to this business because of the low income required to start the business, some are single parents who are trying to provide for their children, their lack education in the formal sector, causing their chances of employment in the formal sector to be scaled down and their competence in cooking.

(Magemeha, 2014) explained that age is a factor that impacts street food vending. His studies show that the average age of vendors in the street food business range between 21-49

years. He further indicated that in most African countries, many persons start vending from a young age due to the responsibility they have to provide for themselves and their families. Because little capital is required to start a street food vending business, younger persons are easily able to raise an income for their dependent family members. In South Trinidad, it is observed that many young persons established their own street food business. Their business venture began from their home and due to its success, transgressed to public spaces like mobile food carts.

Studies conducted shows that there are a high percentage of vendors with primary education. According to (Mwangi et al., 2001; Milanzi, 2011; Magehema, 2014; Njaya, 2014), persons who lack proper education are unable to obtain formal employment since they lack the knowledge, expertise and necessary skills. As a result, this prompts people to choose an occupation that requires basic skills and knowledge. Many street food vendors however, understand the benefit of having a business experience and often seek guidance from persons with said experience.

(Stutter, 2027) did a study explaining that the business environment chosen by some of the vendors to conduct their trade can either increase or reduce their expenses. He states that many of the food vendors conduct their business from their kitchen at home and therefore are not required to pay a monthly fee to a building owner. Some of these vendors also seek assistance from their family members to prepare and serve the food, without having to hire outsiders.

Despite the socio-economic factors that impacts street food vending, there are also many challenges that these vendors encounter. (Cohen et al, 2002) explains that these informal street food vendors don't have proper representation and lack a good legal standing with officials. He

states that the fears most of these vendors have are being permanently removed from the streets by officers or having their goods confiscated. As such, these vendors encounter several issues while trying to maintain a form of livelihood which restricts their chance of earning a steady income and decrease poverty. Street food vendors would be able to invest more money in to their business if they received financial assistance from financial firms. This assistance would further allow vendors who operate from their home, to rent spaces in primary location in their town or city. Countries must develop certain laws and rules for the street vending business in order to ensure legal protection while these vendors manage their business.

(Nkululeko et al, 2014) explained that vendors in Indian are legally protected through the street vendors act. This is an act from the government of India to safeguard the rights of the vendors in public areas. It also protects the vendors from being hassled from officers. Since street food vending is considered a worldwide phenomenon and tend to improve the livelihood of many persons, an act should be passed in each country to protect to ensure the security and protection of the vendors. Additionally, systems should be put in place by the government such as training programs and social awareness, to ensure the safety and comfort of the vendors. Through proper support, NGOs and street food vendors can voice their issues and concerns to the government about the breaches of their rights.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction of findings

This chapter presents both the findings and discussion of the survey that was conducted in South Trinidad where 15 street food vendors were surveyed. Discussed are the socio-economic characteristics of the street food vendors and secondly, the factors driving people to venture in to the street food business. The third discussion examines how street food vending is a form of livelihood and contributes to the well-being of the vendor's household. The main objective of the study was to understand how street food vending provides a form of livelihood for vendors and their household.

4.2 Socio-Economic Characteristics of Street food Vendors

This aspect of the study examines the characteristics of the street food vendors such as the level of education, age, sex and marital status.

4.2.1 Level of Education

In the survey that was conducted on the vendors, their level of education varied from primary education to tertiary level schooling. Many of the vendors dominating the street food vending business with little to no formal education, indicates that just basic skills are needed to venture in to this business. It also suggests that the street food vending business provides a

chance to persons who lack an education and are therefore unable to obtain employment in the formal sector. From the total 15 respondents, 13.3% received only primary level education, 66.6% received secondary education, while 20% advanced to tertiary level. (See table 1). Women were found to be more educated than some of the male respondents. (Muzzafar et al 2009) indicated that the food vendors in Bangladesh believe that both experience and skills and more important when conducting food vending business than a formal education. This result can be compared to the study done by (Mathaulula et al, 2016) in which the findings showed that approximately 71% of the vendors obtained a secondary level education. Due to the high unemployment rate in Trinidad, persons who obtained a tertiary level education and were unable to obtain a government job, sought refuge in the street food vending industry.

Parameter	Frequency (%)
Primary school	13.3%
Secondary school	66.6%
Tertiary	20%

Table 1: The level of education of street food vendors (number-15)

4.2.2 Age

In South Trinidad, the respondents who were interviewed on the popular food strip called “The cross,” were generally characterized by adults and youths who are the main providers for the livelihood of their families. The findings showed that the respondents were between the age bracket of 18-49 years. The age period of 18-30 is a time where many of the individuals are trying to take up a responsibility and create a form of livelihood for not only themselves, but for their siblings and parents. Their families, particularly their children and parents who are

unemployed, rely on them to provide certain needs such as school fees, utility bills, clothing and other basic necessities. (Uwatije, 2021) pointed out that both adults and young individuals solely have the responsibility to provide a livelihood for their families and street food vending is a popular and secure venture for this to be done. The results of this finding however, differ to the study done by (Winter, 2017), whose study suggested that the main persons involved in the street food vendors are elders who are now retired and decided to partake in the street food vending business.

4.2.3 Sex

According to the survey conducted, the findings indicate that more women than men dominate the street food vending business. Of the 15 respondents, 73% were women, while 26% were men. The conclusion that can be drawn from this finding is that more women in society decided to branch off from being the traditional housewife and become the breadwinner, as well as contribute to the welfare of their household. They have decided to venture into a popular and productive business like street food vending which generates a substantial income. In this study conducted, it was observed that a few of the women were taking care of their children while attending to the customers. Some of their children even assisted their mothers with the preparation and distribution of dishes. This may be due to that fact that at an early age, women are taught to cook and serve, making it easier for them to venture in to the food vending industry in comparison to men. This observation supports the claim made by (Otoo et al 2011) that women specialize in a business that appeals to their domestic abilities. In conducting research, other reports done by (Assan and Chambers), however indicated that in Delhi India, women were domestic workers, while men dominated the street food vending business. The reason for this

may be difference in cultures and the variances in religious obligation for each culture respectively.

4.2.4 Marital status

From the survey administered, 27% of the respondents were single, 53.3% married, 6.7% widowed and 13.3% divorced (See Figure 1) In this study, the dominance of the married street vendors indicates that the street food vending business give the opportunity for these vendors to provide for their dependent family members in terms of food, clothing, health care and school fees. An additional indication is that it may be cheaper for a married couple to conduct a street food vending business than it is for an unmarried or single person. This is evident when some of these vendors seek the assistance of family members to assist with the operation of the business. These vendors use their family members as cheap labor to perform tasks such as serving, cooking and cleaning. However, they or may not receive a salary for their services. The results of this study upholds to the study done by (Magemeha 2014) who stated that the majority of the street food vendors residing in Tanzania were married.

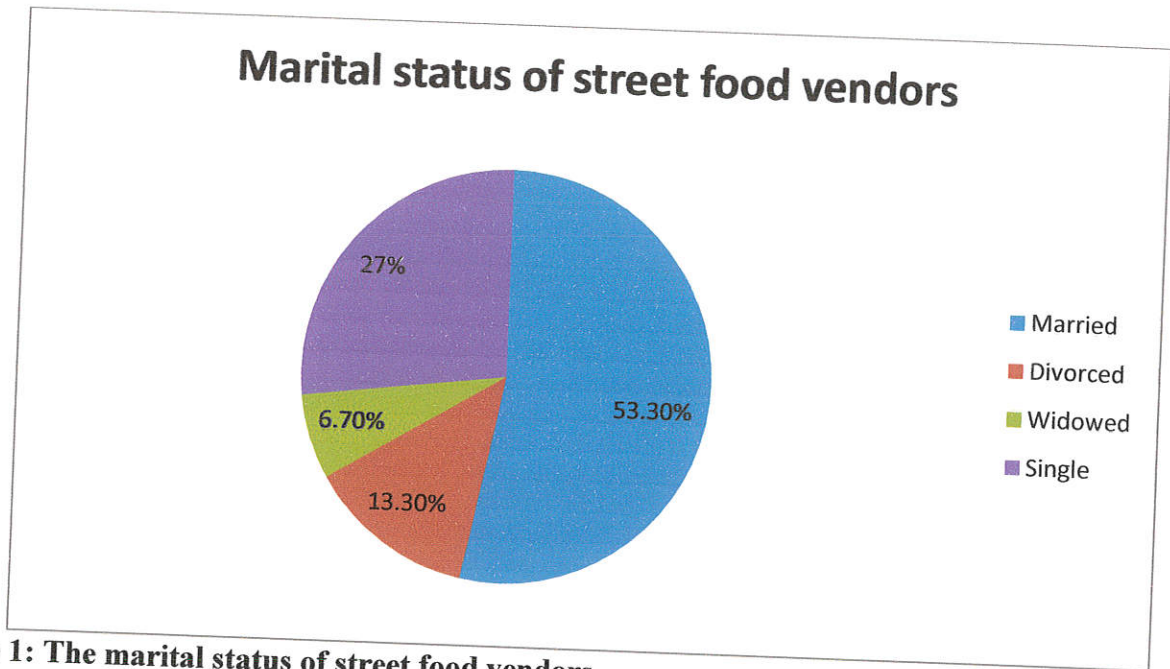


Figure 1: The marital status of street food vendors

4.3 Factors driving people to venture in to the street food business

The first objective of this study was to examine the factors that influence street food vendors to venture in to this business. Based on the literature review, some of the main factors are: It requires small revenue to start the business, experience and skills, the profit earned from conducting food vending and the extent in which the income earned through street food vending supports the vendor's household.

4.3.1 Requires small revenue to start the business

50% of the respondents indicated that they ventured in to the street food business because it requires little capital to start the business. For many of the vendors, the main investments were cooking apparatus and mobile carts since they operate their business in a free, open space. Some

of the vendor's expenses are also less since some of the food preparations are conducted at their home. The results of this finding indicate that there is a chance for both the uneducated and educated to venture in to this business, with little output of capital, and provide for the livelihood of their families.

4.3.2 Experience and skills

The findings of the study indicated that many of the street food vendors ventured in to this business because of their prior knowledge of cooking. The female vendors indicated that were thought at a young age to prepared different meals for their family. This Knowledge allowed them to easily gravitate towards the street vending business and it was an easy transition for them.

4.3.3 The profit earned from conducting food vending

Street food vending gives people, especially the poor, an opportunity to make an income and a profit. The findings suggest that many of the urban dwellers gravitate towards street food vending as it is an easy and cost effective business allowing them to earn and income to pay bills and provide for their family. It suggests that the income earned through this business help to improve the vendor's lives. The results from the respondents indicated that approximately one third of them made the decision to undertake this business as it generates a high income. Furthermore, a few of the respondents disclosed that through the street food business, they were able to make certain investments such as, land, house and car purchases.

4.3.4 The extent in which street food vendor's income supports their household

Street food vendors who use the income earned from their street food business to provide for their families and household are as indicated: 47% use their income to pay for school fees for their children, 86.6% of the vendors buy food for themselves and their families, 13.3% use their earnings to pay their electricity bill while 40% pay rent. Some of the vendors spend the majority of their income to pay electricity bills and rent and maintain the household requirements. 33% do not use their income to pay for rent while 3% do not use their income for food. (See figure 4). These vendors were asked to specify their reason for this and they indicated that they owned their own homes which do not require them to pay rent. Others explained that they sometimes use the leftover meals from their business to feed themselves and their families, and therefore do not spend extra money on purchasing much food.

Parameter	School	Food	Electricity bill	Rent
Yes	47%	86.6%	80%	40%
Occasionally	26.6%	27.2%	13.3%	15%
No	10%	3%	6.6%	33%

Table 2: The extent to which street food vending supports the household

5. CONCLUSION

Urbanization has caused a demand for street food and as such, the number of street food vendors has increased. Street food vending is significant in society as it provides employment, generates income, easily accessible, and supplies delicious food to the urban dwellers. Furthermore, it generates income to persons who belong to supply chain such as farmers, transporters and storekeepers. Efforts have been made by the government to support the street vending industry by improving the regulations. The literature done indicates that the street food vending business is a form of livelihood for many households by providing them with an income and employment. The purpose of the study was to recognize the role and significance street food vending has on the vendor's household and well-being in Trinidad. The main objectives of the study were to examine the factors that influence street food vendors to venture in to this business, assess the degree in which the income earned through street food vending supports the household of the vendor and to assess the effect the socio-economic elements of street food vendors to their livelihood.

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7. APPENDICES

7.1 Questionnaire Guide

Dear respondent,

This survey examines “An Analysis of street food vending: A form of livelihood in Trinidad”.

You are kindly asked to answer all questions truthfully. Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary.

7.2 Questionnaire for respondents

1. Do you use the income generated from street food vending to support our household?
Yes/ No.....
2. What is your gender?
Male/ Female?
3. How old are you?.....
4. What is your marital status?
a)Single b)Married c)Divorced d)Widowed
5. Is the money earned through conducting street food vending your main means of income?
Yes/ No
6. Indicate the number of formal education.....
7. What made you get in to the food vending business?
 - 1) Require a low cost to start business
 - 2) The income generated
 - 3) Skill and Experience
 - 4) An additional business venture
8. How long have you been conducting this business?.....
9. What was your source of income for your street food business?
 - a) Loan
 - b) Assistance from family?
 - c) Your savings
10. Do you have any employees? If so, how many?.....

11. How do you get your produce and raw materials and goods?.....

12. Is the income earned from your food vending business used to facilitate these household expenses?

parameter	School	Food	Electricity bill	Rent
Yes				
Occasionally				
No				

13. Is there any other person/s who contributes financially to your household?.....