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PERSPECTIVES OF VENDORS IN DAVAO CITY ABOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ORDINANCE 0361 BANNING OF NON-BIODEGRADABLE PLASTIC BAGS

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ABSTRACT

The Davao City ordinance banning non-biodegradable containers has been implemented starting June 28, 2012. Ideally, this ordinance has noble purposes; however, its merits will only be realized if its corresponding provisions are conscientiously implemented. This study was conducted to explore the issues encountered by the vendors who are using non-biodegradable plastic bags in Davao City. This study is qualitative in nature. Eight purposively chosen vendors from Piapi, Agdao, and Bankerohan Public Markets were interviewed using structured questions. Findings disclosed that most of the interviewed vendors in Piapi and Bankerohan Public Market in Davao City were in favor of the ordinance as they believed that it could help lessen the problem on solid waste in Davao City. Others were not in favor with this ordinance because of the low quality and the relatively higher costs of biodegradable plastic bags which adversely affected their profit. In relation to urban flooding some said that it could be attributed to the lack of discipline and concern towards the environment of the residents and not because of the type of plastic bags we are using.

Keywords: Davao City Ordinance 0361, Banning Non-Biodegradable, plastic bags, vendors, Davao City, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Davao City has enforced the ban of all plastic and polystyrene which are widely used as food and beverage container. The ordinance ordered the ban of non-biodegradable containers in June 28, 2012 which was stated in Section 7, Article V of the City Ordinance 0361 series of 2010 of the Davao City Ecological Waste Management of 2009. Accordingly, vendors in Davao City shall sell or provide only recycled or recyclable bags, biodegradable plastic bags, reusable bags such as cloth bags, bags made of indigenous materials, such as buri, abaca, anahaw, bamboo and pineapple, or use corrugated boxes or cartons. They have also prohibited the use of plastic bags and polystyrene foam as a food and beverage containers (Colina, 2012).

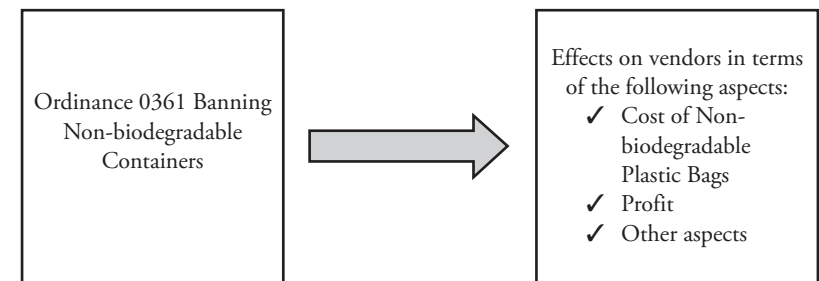
Pursuant to this city ordinance, Davao City wanted to minimize the pollution by prohibiting the use of non-biodegradable plastic. Vendors are required to use biodegradable plastic bags that decompose in three months when disposed in landfills. The banning of plastics may be very significant for the good of our environment. However, the vendors are apprehending on the effects of the ordinance towards their business operations, sales and profits. According to one article entitled “Plastic Ban Stifles Davao Vendors”, the vendors are struggling because they have to adjust to the whims of the cellophane traders for sometimes they run out of (biodegradable) plastic bags because it’s not easy to just buy for more. It was also stated there that these biodegradable plastic bags are more expensive than the non-biodegradable plastic bags. Two packs of 50 biodegradable cellophane bags, says Ronquillo, would cost her Php 64 while the non-biodegradable plastic only costs Php 20 per bag (Basa, 2012).

This study was conducted by the researchers to find out the issues encountered by the vendors who are using non-biodegradable plastic bags in Davao City. The researchers would like also to know the opinions and reactions of the vendors about the said ordinance, if they are in favor of this ordinance. Further, the researchers would like to ascertain if the vendors are still able to realize profits since the ordinance took effect.

Research Questions

This study would like to find out the perception of the vendors and traders of Davao City when Ordinance 0361, banning of non-biodegradable plastic bags, was implemented in the city. The study sought to answer the following questions: What are the reactions of the vendors in Davao City about the implementation of Ordinance 0361, banning of non-biodegradable packaging materials? What is the effect of the implementation of Ordinance 0361, banning of non-biodegradable plastic bags, to the vendors in terms of cost of biodegradable plastic bags, profit and other aspects.

Conceptual Paradigm



The paradigm illustrates the conceptual framework of the study and the effects related to the cost of biodegradable plastic bags, gross sales, and capital to some vendors in Davao City. It investigated the problems the vendors have encountered in their business operations when Ordinance 0361 was implemented. The respondents of the study were the vendors in Davao City, specifically in Piapi, Agdao, and Bankerohan Public Market.

METHOD

This study is qualitative in nature. Interviews were conducted to generate in-depth understanding on issues related to the cost of biodegradable plastic bags, gross sales, and level of profit when Ordinance 0361, banning of non-biodegradable packaging materials was implemented. The researchers opted to utilize the qualitative research because according to Cooper and Schindler (2008) this is an ideal approach to extract emotions and perceptions about a particular issue or experience.

The study was conducted in Davao City, particularly in Agdao, Piapi and Bankerohan Public Market. The City of Davao is one of the most important cities in the Philippines and the chief city of the island of Mindanao. It is located in the province of Davao Del Sur, situated in the southeast of Mindanao. It is also one of the Philippines' most progressive cities. Its international airport and seaports are among the busiest cargo hubs in the southern part of the Philippines. The city itself is about 2,444 square kilometers or 943.6 square miles and is the biggest city in the world.

Purposive sampling technique was used wherein the eight respondents included in the sample were chosen based on some criteria such as respondents are vendors and should be found either in Piapi, Agdao, and Bankerohan public markets. These vendors were the focus of this study because the researchers believed that they are the primary group who will be affected by Ordinance 0361.

Recorded interviews were transcribed, after which narrative of each interview was formulated. Names of the interviewees were coded to observe anonymity. Further, common themes were identified which served as the structure of the summary of findings as shown in the matrix under the Results and Discussions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Hope in Saving Mother Earth through Plastic Banning

Respondent A is a lady vendor of fruits in "Fruitasan Mo" at Bankerohan Public Market, Davao City. She is selling fruits like pomelo, durian, etc. She is also selling processed fruits like durian candies. She is 18 years old and still single. She has been working as a vendor for almost two years. According to her, Ordinance 0361 very reasonable for it is for the betterment of the city and the Davaoños. Daphne encountered some difficulties when this ordinance became effective in the city because her operating cost had increased since biodegradable plastic bags are more expensive than the non-biodegradable one. As a consequence, her business' sales were affected. She is also receiving complaints from some of her customers that biodegradable plastic bags are not durable. Mostly, the customers will ask to double the plastic bags to make it durable. She was able to recover the loss in the month of December since the price of plastic bags had decreased. Daphne said that she was hoping that this ordinance will really help Davao City in saving mother earth given that the vendors have sacrificed a lot just to comply with this ordinance.

Plastic Banning Affects Vendors' Sales

The vendors are the ones affected by the implementation of Ordinance 0361 for they have to adjust to using biodegradable plastic bags or Oxo biodegradable plastic bags from non-biodegradable plastic bags. According to Respondent B, a 20 year old male vendor in Bankerohan Public Market, this ordinance really have a direct effect on their sales for the costs of biodegradable (or Oxo biodegradable) plastic bags are more expensive than the non-biodegradable plastic bags. He said that they would spend 120 pesos per bundle unlike the non-biodegradable plastic bags which would only cost them 40 pesos per bundle. The vendors were compelled to follow the ordinance because the city government was doing inspection as to its adherence. "Kailangan jud namu siya sundon kay naa man gud multa ang masakpan." Respondent B said. He was disappointed with the ordinance for they incurred higher expenses resulting to deficits. "Mahal jud kayo ang supot (biodegradable plastic bags), nigamay nuon among ginansya," he

added. He was actually amenable with the ordinance because it is implemented to eradicate pollution and it is for the well being of the Davaoëños.

Vendors are in Favor on the Plastic Banning

Respondent C, a 42 year old lady meat vendor at the Piapi Public Market welcomed the ordinance without complaint even if biodegradable plastic bags are more expensive and not durable as the non-biodegradable one. She is in favor of the ordinance because it is of big help to the city in achieving a clean and green environment since non-biodegradable plastics bags are expected to decompose after 400 years. She is amenable to the ordinance for she knew that the city government implemented it to keep Davao City clean. This waste management tool can also help the city prevent flush floods and other calamities.

These plastics bags according to her are harmful to our environment when wittingly or unwittingly dumped into waterways, river channels, parks, beaches, streets, and canals; that would result to clogging of drainage. She asserted further that after the ordinance' implementation, her business was not affected because her income was still the same although she mentioned that the Oxo biodegradable plastic bags are more expensive.

Biodegradable Plastic Bags: Environmental Friendly

Non-biodegradable plastic bags have long been used by the vendors. Respondent D a 42 year old male fish vendor in the Piapi Public Market said that banning of non-biodegradable plastic bags forced him to switch to more expensive biodegradable plastic bags (or oxobiodegradable plastic bags). When he was informed about this new city ordinance he became worried for he does not know where to get a supply of biodegradable plastic bags that he will be using in his business operation. He also mentioned that some of his customers are bringing food containers (like Tupperware) for they don't trust the biodegradable plastic bags. His only concern on the biodegradable plastic bags is its durability for it cannot withstand the weight of some products unless it will be doubled, making it more costly.

He is in favor of the ordinance because for him this is very helpful to Davaoëños, for the city is currently experiencing calamities like flush floods. He also said that non-biodegradable plastic bags can affect our health. He mentioned that the implementation of Ordinance 0361 is for the best interest of the public in maintaining a healthy and safe environment. He is getting his supply of plastic bags in a store within the Piapi Public Market. He also said that his business operation is not affected by the ordinance even if biodegradable plastic bags are more expensive. His income is still the same.

Biodegradable Plastic Bags are Expensive

Abolishing the use of non-biodegradable plastic bags offers a beacon of hope for our environment that has long been suffering from pollution. Now, Davao City had implemented the banning of non-biodegradable plastic bags, the ordinance seeks to minimize plastic pollution in the city and reduce its expenditure in solid waste management disposal. As we look for our respondents in Agdao Public Martket, most of them are not willing to be interviewed, some of them are running, some are pretending to be busy, some also are afraid because according to one consumer, vendors are not following the ordinance. They are still using non-biodegradable plastic bags. According to respondent E, a 45 year old lady fish vendor in Agdao Public Market, she is not in favor with this ordinance because the biodegradable plastics bags are more expensive and it affects their sales, "Dili ko ganahan kay mahal kaayo ang bioplastic (biodegradable plastic bags), mabawasan among halin." She did not even disclose where is she getting their supply of plastic bags.

Plastic Banning: Creates an Impact in the Vendors Daily Income

As we asked respondent F who is a 48 year old meat vendor in Agdao Public market about her reaction in the implementation of ordinance 0361, she said that she was worried not only because she have to switch to another supplier of plastic bags and leave her "suki" behind. She also said that the costs of biodegradable plastic bags are more expensive. Because of this her sales is affected. "Of course, it might create an impact in our daily income if it will be pushed through," she

said. She, however, said that she was already aware of the upcoming ban because of the news. She is actually not in favor with this ordinance. “Dili jud unta ko musugot, pero unsaon man na? Wala na tay mabuhat kung kana ang gusto sa balaod,” she said in a statement. She admitted that she is not using biodegradable plastic bags. She giggled and laughed before she told us in a whispering way that they are not following the ordinance because she doesn’t want to increase their expenses or encounter some deficits. This respondent concealed her name for fear of being apprehended.

Costs of Plastic Bags are not their Concern

Respondent G, 35 years old lady fruit vendor for 9 years of Bankerohan Public Market, said that the ordinance is just okay because she knows that it is prohibited by law. She admitted that the ordinance had a direct effect on their sales because the new Oxo biodegradable plastic bags are more costly than what they usually used for their business for the past years. She gets her supply of plastic bags at a wholesaler inside the public market. She experienced inadequate numbers of plastic bags whenever she buys that’s why she recounts it to ensure that it has the right number of plastics in a pack. She also said that biodegradable plastic bags have offensive odor. Some customers complained because the plastic bags are easily damaged and they are always requesting to have them doubled. For her, the ordinance would help a lot in reducing the pollution that are caused by the non-biodegradable plastics.

According to Respondent H, 57 years old, a lady vendor of fruits at Bankerohan Public Market for 20 years Oxo biodegradable and non-biodegradable plastic bags are just the same in terms of prices, they only differ in quality since the new plastic bags are not that durable unlike the non-biodegradable. Her business is not greatly affected. At first the price of Oxo biodegradable plastics was very high but eventually the expenses incurred for the new plastics bags were off-set against the business sales. The business then for Sarah was doing great and the price for the new plastic bags had decreased. The ordinance is just okay for her since it is an ordinance that they need to obey. What’s important for her is to sell all her fruits and she doesn’t care anymore even if the oxo plastics are expensive and not durable.

Most of the interviewed vendors in Piapi and Bankerohan Public Market in Davao City are in favor of the ordinance because according to them, plastic banning can help our environment. The city government implemented this ordinance to keep Davao City clean and environmentally friendly. The ordinance is a helpful tool for the city’s prevention against flush floods and other calamities. The use of non-biodegradable plastic bags can affect our health. Passing of the ordinance and its implementation in Davao City can help us live in a safe place. Others are not in favor with this ordinance because of the low quality and the relatively higher costs of biodegradable plastic bags. Some said that non-biodegradable plastic bags are not the reason why we are experiencing urban flooding or other calamities. According to them it is the lack of discipline and concern towards the environment.

Some vendors are affected by this ordinance because biodegradable plastic bags are expensive and they were having deficits out of increased expenses. Most vendors in Agdao Public Market also are not following the ordinance because Oxo biodegradable plastic bags are too costly and not durable.

Presented in this matrix are the summarized responses of our respondents.

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CATEGORIES	POSITIVE	NEGATIVE
Reactions of the vendors about the implementation of ordinance 0361 banning of non-biodegradable plastic bags	Other vendors are okay with the ordinance for they know that the city government implemented this ordinance to keep Davao City clean and environmentally friendly in terms of waste management and also because this ordinance can help the city prevent flush floods and other calamities.	Some vendors are not too happy with the biodegradable plastic. They said it cost them a lot to buy one plastic. Before, if you buy fish or meat from the vendors, they would double the plastic. Now they would not do it, they said the biodegradable is more expensive. Some vendors are worried for they do not know where to get a supply of biodegradable plastic bags that they will be using in his business operation. Others are also disappointed because their sales are affected by the implementation of this ordinance. Their expenses have increased and they are facing deficit. Others are also complaining about the quality of these biodegradable plastic bags for these are not durable. The biodegradable plastic bags are so thin that they need to double it and these Oxo biodegradable plastic bags are more costly.
Effects of the implementation of the ordinance 0361 banning of non-biodegradable plastic bags to the vendors in Davao City	Some vendors are not affected by the ordinance except that their expenses have increased since biodegradable plastic bags are more expensive. Others are not affected by the ordinance; they have not encountered any effects in their sales except that their expenses have increased since biodegradable plastic bags are more expensive.	When non-biodegradable plastic bags were substituted into biodegradable plastic bags or Oxo biodegradable plastic bags, vendors would spend more, since these plastic bags are more expensive than the non-biodegradable plastic bags. Because of the costs of biodegradable plastic bags or Oxo biodegradable plastic bags, their sales were affected for their expenses have increased. Other vendors are not willing to follow the said ordinance because the prices of biodegradable plastic bags are more expensive.