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Assessing The Effects: A Qualitative Study on How Overpricing Perishable Goods Affects Consumers of Noveleta Cavite

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Abstract

This qualitative study analyzed the effects of overpricing of perishable goods on consumers in Noveleta, Cavite. The research investigated how rising prices, motivated by high demand, market practices, and supply shortages, affected households' access to necessary food items. Information was gathered through interviews with ten participants, inclusive both vendors and consumers, and was assessed to identify systematic themes such as adjusting food choices, negotiation, seasonal availability, coping strategies, product quality, and budgeting and limiting purchases. Results

revealed that overpricing significantly affected daily expenses, leading consumers to seek cheaper alternatives, adjust practices when cooking, and reduce quantities of ingredients, while vendors negotiated with buyers and adapted the pricing to uphold sales. Overall, the study emphasized the adaptive strategies and resilience of both consumers and vendors in responding to pressure within market, highlighting that significance of accessible perishable goods and fair pricing to ensure family well-being and food security.

Keywords: Perishable Goods, Consumers, Philippines

1. The Problem and its Background

Introduction

Perishable goods such as fresh fruits, vegetables, and poultry have a short shelf life, which often resulted in consumers perceive them as possible sources of food waste or risky purchases. Perishable goods play an important role in the everyday lives of families in Noveleta, Cavite. Routinely, families went to local markets to buy essential items such as vegetables, fish, and meat that are needed for daily living. However, problems arose when these essential goods were sold at unreasonable prices.

Overpricing perishable goods was not only about the increase in cost but also about how it affected the way consumers chose food, viewed their everyday situation, and managed their budget. Because of this, qualitative study aimed to explore how overpricing impacted consumers in Noveleta, Cavite, focused on an issue that was commonly experienced in the community.

Overpricing was a serious concern because it involves basic food items that people needed every day. When prices of fresh meat, vegetables, and dairy products continued to grow, families started to notice that their budget can no longer meet their needs, that what used to be enough for a week 's groceries may only last for just a few days.

As a result, families were forced to spend more of their income just to put food on their table. This situation created pressure, especially for families that had limited savings. Money should have been allocated for medical expenses, education, and utility bills and ended up being used to cover the increasing cost of food. Over time, this led to financial insecurity and stress among consumers. Furthermore, high prices also affected the quality of food consumed, showing that overpricing impacted consumers' well-being as much as their wallets.

Background of the Study

In recent years, the continuous rise in food prices has become a major concern worldwide. According to (Wallace, 2024), they show inflation had greatly increased the overall cost of living, including the prices of basic food. Several things that were connected contributed to this issue, such as climate change, rising fuel and energy costs, global conflicts, and supply chain disruptions. Extreme weather events like very dry periods, floods, and extreme hot days had damaged crops and reduced food supply, while higher fuel and energy prices had increased the cost of food production, processing, and transportation.

In addition, labor shortages and higher fertilizer costs further contributed to the increasing prices of food. As a result, food affordability has become a growing challenge, particularly for low-income households that spend a large portion of their income on food. Rising food prices greatly affected the daily lives of families around the world. Higher food costs are limited to the amount of money households can allocate to other essential needs such as education, healthcare, and housing. Poor and low-income families were the most affected, as they were often forced to buy smaller quantities of food or choose cheaper and lower-quality options. This situation might have led to poor nutrition and health problems, especially among children and the elderly.

In some cases, families were compelled to skip meals or cut spending on other necessities. According to IFPRI (2024), the continuous increase in food prices also caused stress, financial pressure, and long-term inequality, making it more difficult for low-income families to improve their living conditions. At the local level, the issue of rising food prices was evident in public and wet markets in the Philippines, particularly in the overpricing of perishable goods such as vegetables, fruits, meat, and fish. These goods were essential for daily household consumption, yet their increasing prices directly affected consumers' ability to meet their basic food needs. Previous studies had identified several factors that influenced consumer purchasing behavior, including family needs, shopping time, shopping goals, store location, promotions, and prices (Bonfrer, 2023). However, there was still limited understanding of how the overpricing of perishable goods specifically affected consumers' food purchasing decisions, budget management, and daily access to food. Therefore, this study aimed to address this research gap by focusing on the experiences of consumers in Noveleta. By examining how the overpricing of perishable goods affected households, this research sought to provide a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by local consumers. The findings of this study might serve as a basis for developing policies, programs, or interventions that can help improve food accessibility and affordability in the community.

Objectives

Main Objective

To examine the effects of highly priced perishable goods (vegetables, fish, and meat) on the budgeting practices, food consumption, purchasing behavior, and overall welfare of consumers in Noveleta, Cavite.

Specific Objective

1. To determine how rising prices of fresh foods affect spending priorities and household budgeting among families in the community.

2. To assess the impact of high perishable food prices on meal frequency, food sufficiency, and household food choices.
3. To identify the factors supporting the increase in prices of perishable goods in Noveleta markets, such as supply shortages, distribution issues, and inflation.
4. To suggest practical recommendations based on the results to help consumers address the issue and manage expenses of high perishable food prices.
5. To explore how the rising cost of perishable goods influences consumers' lifestyle adjustments, daily experiences, and emotional responses.

Statement of the Problem

This qualitative study aimed to investigate the effects of overpricing perishable goods on market goers in public and wet markets in Noveleta, Cavite. Perishable goods such as fruits, vegetables, meat, and fish were important for proper nutrition and daily meals. These goods were usually purchased by residents from public and wet markets, where prices could significantly affect how much food consumers were able to buy, especially for those with limited budgets.

In recent times, many consumers in Noveleta, Cavite had noticed that prices of perishable goods in local markets are increasing. This problem affected not only the consumer's trust in market vendors, but also their decision when buying food and only how much money consumers spend. For regular market goers, especially low-to-middle income families, basic foods with high prices may result in choosing lower-quality products, buying less food, or changing their usual shopping habits.

This study sought to understand the effects of overpricing by listening to the experiences, ways of coping with market goers in public and wet markets, and to the perspectives. The results of this study were important because they helped policymakers and local governments improve market monitoring and create fair pricing rules. The study also helped the local community and consumers better understand the problem of overpricing and supported honest and fair practices in local markets.

This study aimed to assess the impacts of overpricing perishable goods on consumers by exploring their perspectives, experiences, and coping strategies. Specifically, it sought to answer these following questions:

1. How do consumers perceive overpricing of perishable goods in local markets for Noveleta residents in Cavite?
2. What experiences have consumers had with the budget-friendly and quality of overpriced perishables?
3. How does overpricing impact consumer's purchasing budgeting and decisions when buying perishable goods?
4. What coping behaviors or strategies do consumers apply in response to overpricing?
5. How do consumers think overcharging will affect their trust in suppliers and in the local market system?

Hypotheses

The hypotheses that were tested in this study were as follows:

Null Hypothesis

Overpricing of perishable goods had no significant effect on consumers' access to buying behavior, emotional responses, trust in sellers, and daily needs in Noveleta, Cavite.

Alternative Hypothesis

Overpricing of perishable goods had a significant effect on consumers' access to buying behavior, emotional responses, trust in sellers, and daily needs in Noveleta, Cavite.

Theoretical Framework

This study was primarily established on the Food Environment Framework, supported by the Household Food Security Framework and Consumer Vulnerability Theory. Among the three, the Food Environment Framework acted as the main theoretical basis because it specifically explained how price structures, supply shortages, accessibility, and market conditions influenced consumers' decisions on food purchasing. The supporting theories further reinforced the study by explaining the economic and social consequences of overpricing at the household level. The Food Environment Framework explained how food availability, market systems, and prices shaped consumer access to nutritious food and their behavior (Turner *et al.*, 2021) [11]. According to this framework, the food environment was influenced by structural components such as disruptions, supply chain, transportation costs, demand pressure, and inflation. When supply was limited and demand stayed high, prices tended to increase, especially for perishable goods like vegetables, meat, fish, dairy products, and fruits. In the context of Noveleta, Cavite, possible seasonal fluctuations and distribution challenges may have contributed to price increases in local markets. This framework was chosen because it directly associated consumer purchasing decisions and access with pricing conditions. It supported the assumption of this study that overpricing was not only an individual issue but a result of wider market system conditions.

Furthermore, the Food Environment Framework supported the study's primary hypothesis that changes in the local market environment impacted consumer experiences. When perishable goods become expensive due to increased demand or supply constraints, consumers may have adjusted by switching to cheaper alternatives, prioritizing necessities, or reducing quantity. This framework guided the qualitative investigation by helping understand participants' experiences in relation to structural economic factors rather than purely personal choice. The second theoretical support was the Household Food Security Framework, which highlighted that food security existed when households.

Had stable physical and economic access to nutritious and sufficient food (Jones *et al.*, 2021) [6]. The framework identified price stability and affordability as major factors of food security. When perishable goods became expensive due to transportation costs, supply shortages, or demand surges, households may have struggled to maintain competent food consumption. This theory was selected because it directly related to the effect of overpricing on nutritional access and daily survival. In the context of Noveleta, Cavite, rising prices of perishable goods may have lessened households' capability to meet their daily food needs. Families may have shifted to less nutritious options, reduced meal portions, or prioritized other expenses such as school needs and utilities. The Household Food Security Framework supported the idea that overpricing threatened not only economic stability but also physical well-being. It also reinforced the importance of examining the lived experiences of consumers through qualitative data.

The third theory used in this study was the Consumer Vulnerability Theory (Baker *et al.*, 2022) [1]. This theory explained that consumers became vulnerable when external economic pressures limited their ability to make beneficial and free marketplace decisions. Vulnerability increased during unstable supply conditions, price volatility, and inflation. In situations where essential goods became overpriced, low-income households experienced greater difficulty adjusting compared to financially stable consumers. This theory was chosen because it explained the financial strain, coping strategies, and emotional stress that may have been experienced by consumers in Noveleta when perishable goods had unreasonable prices. In relation to this research, Consumer Vulnerability Theory helped explain how overpricing created an imbalance between consumer capacity and market forces. When demand pressure increases or supply decreases, sellers may have increased their prices. However, consumers with limited income could not easily absorb these increases. As a result, they may have experienced reduced food intake, financial trade-offs, or anxiety. This theory strengthened the study by supporting the idea that overpricing affected not only buying behavior but also social well-being and consumer welfare.

Overall, the Food Environment Framework served as the primary theoretical foundation of this study because it further explained how demand pressure, market structures, and supply shortages led to the increase in prices. The Household Food Security Framework and Consumer Vulnerability Theory functioned as supporting theories that explained the emotional, welfare, and social consequences of overpricing. Together, these theories provided a complete explanation of how structural market conditions influenced economic adjustment, household well-being, and behavior in Noveleta, Cavite. They supported the study's assumptions and guided the interpretation of qualitative results that overpricing of perishable goods had a multidimensional impact on consumers.

Scope and Delimitations

This study focuses on consumers living in Noveleta, Cavite, who frequently purchase perishable goods such as vegetables, fruits, meat, dairy products, and fish from public or local markets, shop vendors, and small stores. The participants are individuals aged 17 to 70 years old who are directly included in household food purchasing decisions. The study will be conducted within the timeframe of February 2026 to March 2026, during which data will be collected through semi-structured interviews. The research focuses on understanding consumers' perceptions and lives experiences regarding the increasing prices of perishable goods.

The scope of this study supports the research objectives by particularly examining observable aspects such as budgeting practices, purchasing behavior, food choices, and daily adjustments connected to rising prices of food. By concentrating on consumers within a single municipality, the study guarantees contextual consistency and depth in analyzing local market supply issues, demand pressures, and conditions affecting the perishable goods. Constraining the study to Noveleta, Cavite allows the researchers to closely assess localized market dynamics and economic considerations that directly influence consumers within the area.

This study is limited to consumers living in Noveleta, Cavite, and does not include individuals from other provinces or neighboring municipalities. Consumers outside Noveleta are excluded to keep a clear geographical focus and to ensure that results reflect the specific supply, economic, and market conditions and also to keep a clear geographical focus of the locality. Since supply chains, pricing conditions, and demand pressures may differ across different areas, including other locations may affect the focus and consistency of the analysis. The results are based purely on the responses, understanding, and honesty of the participants during the process of interviews.

Significance of the Study

The result of the study will be of great benefit to the following:

For consumers: The study is necessary for consumers in Noveleta Cavite, because it helps them understand how overpricing the perishable goods affects them. It shows how high prices of goods like vegetables, fruits, fish, and meat influence their daily needs and budget. This study may help consumers become fully aware when buying goods and understand that the problem is overpriced.

For shop owners and vendors: This study is important for the shop, store, and market vendors because it helps them see and identify how overpricing affects their customers. It can help them understand the experiences and feelings of their consumers when prices are too expensive or high. This study may also encourage fair pricing of perishable goods.

For researchers: This study is important for future researchers as it can serve as a guide for studies that are about overpriced and consumer experiences. The discovery of this research may help other researchers who also want to study pricing, consumers, and perishable goods in other locations.

For the community: This study is crucial for the community in Noveleta, Cavite because it gives information and analysis about the problem of overpricing perishable goods. It may help the community comprehend how pricing has an effect on our basic needs and daily life. The outcome of this study may also help create better awareness about fair prices.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are conceptually defined. Some are operationally defined for the researchers to have a better understanding of the relevance of these terms in the present study:

Consumer behavior: The decisions and actions people take when buying goods. It includes what items they choose, how frequently they buy them, and how much they spend.

Consumers: People who buy perishable goods for daily household use.

Emotional distress: Stress, worry, or frustration occurs when basic needs are hard to meet. High prices of perishable goods can cause anxiety and tension for customers in managing their daily food needs.

Financial resources: The available money of the customers for buying goods. Limited financial resources make it difficult to afford perishable goods when prices are high.

Household budgeting: How families plan and manage their money for daily needs, including food. When the cost of perishable goods increases, families may have to adjust their spending.

Overpricing: Selling goods at a price that is higher than what is fair or reasonable.

Perishable goods: Food items that rot quickly, such as vegetables, fruits, fish, and meat. These goods are essential for daily meals and proper nutrition.

Physiological effects: Changes in the body caused by stress or lack of proper nutrition. Experiencing high prices may lead to reduced food intake, which can affect health and energy levels.

Purchasing power: The ability of people to buy goods using their available money. When prices rise, their ability to buy enough perishable goods decreases.

Shopping frequency: How often consumers go to buy perishable goods.

2. Review of Related Literature

International

Sousa *et al.* (2025) ^[10] conducted a study on consumers' willingness to pay (WTP) for freshness in perishable goods utilizing observed preference data from a major Euphoria retailer. Their research found an important relationship between how much consumers were willing to pay for them and the remaining shelf life of perishable products, showing that consumers are less willing to pay higher prices as freshness decreases and that they value freshness. The study also distinguished that pricing strategies and markdown labels affect consumer purchasing decisions, which emphasizes how price perceptions influence buying behavior of consumers for perishable items. These discoveries contribute to the present research by signifying that consumer costing of perishable goods is influenced not just by price but also by freshness and perceived product quality—elements that form purchasing choices under different pricing conditions. Understanding how consumers evaluate prices in connection to freshness helps support the focus of this qualitative study on how overpricing affects consumers' welfare and purchasing behavior in Noveleta, Cavite. It shows that pricing techniques have real effects on consumer decisions and demand, reinforcing the need to examine not only the price levels but also how consumers interpret in everyday market situations.

Recent research by Hou *et al.* (2024) ^[4] explored inventory strategies and pricing for perishable goods. Also in competitive markets, focusing on how various pricing approaches work such as price commitment and dynamic pricing influence sellers' decisions and consumer purchasing behavior when goods have limited shelf life. In this study, consumers are established deliberately, timing their purchases to pay lower prices as a positive, which impacts how sellers manage inventory and adjust prices throughout the selling period. The results highlight that pricing decisions for perishable goods are not only a matter of setting lower or higher prices but are also shaped by consumer expectations about product availability and future price changes. This finding is important because it shows the changes in consumer reactions to price, including decisions to buy immediately or delays in purchasing. These insights contribute to the present research by assisting with the idea that pricing strategies for perishable goods influence consumer decision-making and behavior, which is central to this current research topic. Although the study by Hou *et al.* (2024) ^[4] focuses on strategic pricing decisions and competitive sellers, it strengthens that consumers' reactions to timing and price levels have real effects on

consumption choices and purchase behavior. Thus, this research helps frame the present study's focus on how changes in prices, especially unreasonable or high prices, may have an effect on how consumers manage their budgets in everyday market situation and their willingness to buy perishable goods.

Nam and Jo (2025) studied the impact of food price inflation on consumer welfare using combined time-series data from the United States. Their study measured changes in consumer surplus for food consumed at food and home services by separating price movements into supply and demand side components. The research found that consumer welfare, described by consumer surplus, varied with changes in food price inflation, especially during economic disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic and recessions. This shows that increases in food prices do not only influence market outcomes but also in household purchasing power and well-being. The findings support the present study by showing that price changes in necessary food items influence consumer purchasing behavior and welfare, which corresponds to the focus of this qualitative research. By understanding how price inflation changes consumer decision-making and surplus, this study supports the idea that higher prices of perishable goods can reduce consumers' welfare and strain household budgets, reinforcing the need to examine local consumer experiences with overpricing in everyday markets. The study examines how consumers value pricing and freshness in perishable goods, finding that willingness to pay reduces as remaining shelf life shortens, and that price markdowns influence the decision of consumers on perishable products de Magalhães *et al.* (2025). This research strengthens to recognize how price structures directly shape consumer perspectives of value and behavior in food markets. For our research on overpricing perishable goods in Noveleta, Cavite, this study provides theoretical grounding on how product quality and price sensitivity attributes interchange in shaping consumer decision-making and welfare within perishable food markets. Its insights help explain why high prices, especially on goods consumers view as less fresh, may guide us to changes in purchasing patterns or dissatisfaction.

The study by Hu *et al.* (2024) [5] investigates determinants of consumers' willingness to pay premium prices for foods that are organic, highlighting perceived value, price sensitivity, and consumer welfare effects in good choice. Even though it focuses on organic food markets the authors illustrate that how consumers respond to price premiums is highly important to understanding their behavior when purchasing, a concept that is also relevant to overpriced perish goods. For the present study, this article helps explain that consumer welfare is influenced by value judgment and price perception, not just by price level. It thereby supports the exploration of the present study of how consumers in Noveleta judge overpriced perishables and adjust their buying behavior, specifically when prices exceed their expectations.

Local

The Department of Agriculture's report on holiday food demand shows how seasonal spikes in supply and demand restraints elevated prices of vegetables and other staple foods, contributing to rising food price inflation in December 2025 DA Press Office (2026). This local report highlights how supply tightness, market conditions and

demand surges can drive up the prices of perishable goods, causing increased financial pressure on households. This contextual source is exceptionally relevant to the present study because it shows that locally experienced food price increases are not unique situations but are connected to broader seasonal and economic market behaviors that directly impact consumer welfare. It proves why perceived overpricing of perishables in Noveleta may be rooted in demand dynamics and actual market supply faced by consumers.

Official statistics from the Philippine Statistics Authority (2025) indicate how changes in food prices affect consumers' purchasing power and daily expenses. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) encompasses non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages, which represent essential perishable goods like vegetables, dairy products, and meat. Recent CPI reports indicate that good price guides have continued to influence overall inflation trends within the Philippines, with non-alcoholic beverages and food participating in the year-on-year changes in the inflation rate. This advocates that price movements in perishable food items directly have an impact on the household budgets, especially for families that depend on these goods for daily consumption.

Furthermore, PSA data shows that specific groups such as vegetables, meat, fish, and other perishables have experienced inequality in their price indices over time, reflecting the instability in food pricing. For example, regional CPI reports show changes in inflation for tubers, vegetables, and other basic food categories, which emphasize how price changes for perishable goods chip into consumer cost hardship. These statistics help explain the real economic pressures encountered by households when essential food increases, supporting the focus on present study about how overpricing of perishable goods affects budgeting decisions and consumer welfare in Noveleta, Cavite.

Data from the Philippines Statistics Authority (2025) show the effects of rising food prices, including perishables, on the national Consumer Price Index or CPI, denoting that food inflation continues to contribute positively to the overall cost of living in the Philippines PSA (2025). These official CPI figures give observational evidence of wider price trends that shape consumers' everyday experiences with food purchasing. For the present study, including this local statistic supports qualitative results by connecting statistical trends with consumer perceptions of food price increases in Noveleta showing nationwide food price inflation. This relationship strengthens the argument that consumer welfare is persuaded not only by individual perceptions of overpriced perishables but also by macroeconomic food price trends that impact the affordability of goods.

The Department of Trade and Industry or DTI (2025) [3] monitoring report on the prices of rice, pork, and other goods in Quezon City emphasizes current issues in the instability of perishable goods in local markets and food pricing. This article gives concrete evidence that consistency in prices for essential products directly impacts consumer purchasing power and access, which aligns with the key themes of the present study. By discussing the government's efforts to regulate price changes and monitor, this source helps assist the broader policy and economic context surrounding perishable food pricing. The report shows how rising costs for necessary goods like rice and pork can

influence buying behavior and strain household budgets, which is directly significant to understanding the lived experiences of consumers in Noveleta. This enhances our research by offering a real-world backdrop against which the qualitative data from our participants can be analyzed and compared.

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The study of Food Safety Compliance and Risk Perception as Determinants of Consumer Behavior Toward Perishable in Manila Wet Markets examines how consumers' perception of safety and food safety practices influence their intention to purchase perishable goods in traditional market settings. Using multiple linear regression analysis, the research found that both risk perception and food safety practices have significant positive effects on purchase intention, meaning that when consumers trust that food is handled carefully and safely, they are most likely to buy perishable products. This study identifies how consumer perception, including concerns about quality and safety, affect decisions related to buying perishable items, which is applicable when examining how product and pricing value influence consumer choices. These findings show that consumer behavior towards perishable goods is influenced not only by their price but also by how consumers perceive the safety of these products and value. Understanding these factors is important when analyzing how overpricing of perishable items affects consumer welfare and purchasing behavior in Noveleta, Cavite, because price increase may be even more a challenge for consumers to accept when they also worry about the quality and safety of the products they buy. Therefore, this research supports the focus of the present study by giving insight into the complex relationship between market conditions, consumer perception, and purchasing behavior toward perishable food items.

3. Research Methodology

This chapter will address the research processes and methodologies committed by the researcher to address the specific issues raised in the study. This chapter will cover the research design, locale, participants, the procedure on gathering the data, and how the researcher analyzed the data.

Research Design

This study used a qualitative phenomenological research design to comprehend the lived experiences of vendors and consumers regarding the overpricing of perishable goods in public and local markets in Noveleta. Phenomenology is appropriate in ways that it focuses on exploring personal perceptions and experiences about a particular issue. The

researchers conducted interviews with ten participants who had direct experience in selling and buying perishable goods. Participants were chosen using purposive sampling to guarantee that they provided meaningful and relevant information for them to fully understand the given questions properly. The gathered data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify common patterns and themes about how overpricing affects the consumers' purchasing decisions, daily lives, and budgeting.

Respondents/Participants

The study's respondents participated by answering the prepared questions made by the researchers and by being interviewed face-to-face by the researchers. The researchers gathered participants from different consumers and vendors; they chose vendors who only sell meat, vegetables, fish, or fruits.

The population of the study is the consumers and vendors from Noveleta, Cavite, which was 10 participants. The sample was taken from the vendors who sell and consumers who buy perishable goods.

The sample size consisted of ten (10) participants, given the set limit for the study. The researchers focused on collecting rich information and details of experiences connected to high prices of perishable goods. The selected participants were considered enough to identify common patterns and themes relevant to the objectives of the study.

The criteria for participants were: (1) those who regularly buy perishable goods such as fish, fruits, vegetables, and meat, (2) those who sell perishable goods, (3) residents of Noveleta, Cavite, and (4) individuals aged 17–70 years old. Individuals who do not personally contribute to buying food for their households were not included in the study. These criteria helped to ensure that the participants could provide relevant and accurate information related to the objectives of the research.

Sampling Technique

In this study, purposive sampling was used because the researchers selected participants based on their availability and if the participants are willing to share their experiences during the data gathering period. Participants were chosen using purposive sampling to guarantee that they could provide meaningful and relevant information for them to fully understand the given questions properly. This method was relevant for the study since it concentrated on collecting detailed personal experiences rather than targeting statistical generalization. The accessibility of participants within local markets in Noveleta made it suitable and practical for the qualitative design of the research.

Research Locale

The study will be conducted in public and local markets in Noveleta, Cavite. The researchers chose the public market in Noveleta because it is near and convenient. The researchers also want to know if the consumers and vendors in Noveleta, if overpricing influences their buying decisions and behavior. Furthermore, the study will be conducted in the second semester of the academic year 2025–2026 and finished by the end of the second quarter.

Research Instrument

The study was conducted in public and local markets in Noveleta, Cavite. The study's participants can participate by

answering the prepared questions made by the researchers and by being interviewed face-to-face by the researchers. The researchers chose the public market in Noveleta because it is near and convenient. The researchers also want to know if the consumers and vendors in Noveleta, if overpricing influences their buying decisions and behavior. The researchers will gather participants from different consumers and vendors; they choose vendors who only sell meat, vegetables, fish, or fruits. Furthermore, the study will be conducted in the second semester of the academic year 2025–2026 and finished by the end of the second quarter.

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Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers will gather the data through the use of interviews. The study participants will be asked the given questions personally so that they can understand properly so that the researchers will record and collect the data needed. The questions asked are all related to the research topic and are stated throughout the study. Once the researchers reach the limit for the interview respondents, they will save the records containing the respondents' answers.

First, the researchers will create a letter of permission to properly ask the school principal about the study that the researcher is aiming to conduct within the local and public markets in Noveleta so that the researcher will have permission to gather the data needed. Then, the researcher will also make sure that the consent paper contains all the benefits, rights, and risks of participants to make sure that they are aware of what they are participating in. The research instrument in the interview, such as semi-structured interview questions and voice recorder will also contain all the information that the respondents need to guide them in answering it properly and without confusion.

Second, the researchers will use a smartphone to record the respondents' answers and exchange conversation all throughout the process of interviewing. This will ensure that all the data that has been collected in the study is recorded

clearly and prove that the researchers did not make up for the answers. All information taken in the study will be used only for academic purposes and will remain confidential.

Lastly, after all the researchers conduct the data gathering, they will use thematic analysis to analyze the data given by the vendors and consumers from consumers in Noveleta, Cavite. In this point, the research will also know if there is an influence between the effects of overpricing and the consumers' and vendors' buying decision and behavior. Thus, after all the procedures are done, the researchers will express whether they accept or reject the study's null hypothesis and make a conclusion.

Data Analysis Procedure

In this study, the researchers studied the data collected from the face-to-face interviews conducted among selected vendors and consumers. All interviews were voice recorded with the permission of the participants to ensure completeness and accuracy of responses. After conducting the interviews, the researchers transcribed the answers that are recorded per word to avoid the loss of important details and misinterpretations. Once the transcription process was completed, the researchers carefully reviewed and read all responses several times to become familiar with the data, including their expression and pauses. The researchers ensured that the transcription is fully detailed. The transcription process was done manually to make sure that the important details, expression, and explanation of the participants were included. This stage helped the researchers to become more knowledgeable with the information of the responses and enabled them to review the respondents' exact statements.

At the time of writing, the researchers are still in the transcription stage of data analysis. After completing the transcription, the researchers will continue to organize similar responses and proceed to coding the data into themes. These themes will then be used to explain how overpricing affect goods affect the buying behavior, experiences, and decisions of vendors and consumers in Noveleta, Cavite.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers made sure that the rights of the participants were confidential during the study. Before the researchers started the interview, the participants were given a consent paper that explained what they would do, the purpose of the study, and the possible effects of participating in the study. Participation was voluntary, which means it is up to the participants whether they will answer or not, or stop joining the study anytime. The researchers also kept the identity of the participants private by using alias or Also Known As (A.K.A.). All information gathered was kept safe by the researchers and was used for academic purposes only.

The researchers also guaranteed to be honest in handling the study. They did not change or make up the answers of the participants, only polished some if the answers were vague. The questions asked were also straightforward and were not meant to make the participants feel uneasy throughout the interview process. In total, the researchers ensured that the participants were respected and comfortable from start to finish of the research process. The researchers protected the voice recorded responses of the participants by putting it in an app that needs encryption to open it. Some vendors or consumers that were asked if they can participate in the

interview process refused to join, and the researcher responded politely before proceeding to ask the other vendors or consumers who are possible to participate.

4. Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation of Data

Budgeting and Limiting Purchases: This theme shows how respondents manage their expenses carefully regarding high prices. They allocate money strategically and prioritize necessary goods to make their budget last, often only buying what is necessary.

Moi shared that he selects products that are both proven and affordable to be dependable, emphasizing his careful budgeting to stretch his resources.

“Siyempre nabase ako sa mura tsaka sa proven and tested na pero mura, ayun.”

(Moi)

Similarly, Totoy has stated that he limits the quantity of items he buys to ensure his money lasts.

“Ah bilang lang po yung bibilhin ko para magkasya yung budget.”

(Totoy)

Van has stated that high prices sometimes stop him from buying his needs, which leads to challenging his budgets.

“Minsan kase inutusan ako ng grandfather ko syempre merong over pricing, di ako prepare na kulang pala ang money na dinala ko kaya yung binibili ko kulang siya.”

(Van)

Jul explained that she buys small quantities and buys cheaper products to prevent maximize use and spoilage:

“Yung mga product namin, mas kumukuha kami ng mas mababang presyo para hindi kami mabulukan, tapos konti lang yung kukunin naming paninda, at least nako- consume kung gaano katagal yung pinamili mo, ganon lang sya.”

(Jul)

Osang has stated that she carefully chooses fruits at different ripeness levels to ensure her budget lasts and prevent waste in case she will not immediately consume it.

“Hindi, para magkasya 'yung budget, bibili ka s'yempre ng prutas na hindi agad mabulok. Let's say saging. 'Wag puro hinog bibilhin mo, kailangan medyo hilaw para hindi siya sabay-sabay mahinog at maiwasan 'yung bulok.”

(Osang)

Jessy shared that she prevents spoilage and only buys what she can use in order for her to save money, showing conscious financial planning.

“As a vendor let's say i'm a consumer also, pagka bumibili ako kailangan yung bibilhin ko, kung ano lang yung gagamitin, di ako pwedeng bumili nang sobra kase mabubulok so ang sistema kung magtitinda ka ngayon, gagamitin mo, yun lang yung bibilhin mo

para ma-save mo yung money mo then walang nawe-waste.”

(Jessy)

Sunny Boy has stated that his restricted income forces him to prioritize his spending cautiously.

“Kumpirme sa bibilhin ko pero pinaka budget ko ay isang daan lang sa liit ng sweldo ko at sa kamahalan ng bilihin.”

(Sunny Boy)

Aling Ema also explained that she carefully tracks her daily earnings to essential purchases, prioritizing household and school needs first.

“Ah syempre ah kung ano yung kita ko, yun ang pinagkakasya ko sa araw-araw, pangastos sa mga baon ng bata, ng baon ng pag mga nagtatrababaho, unang una sa pag-aaral ko iniipit yon, don ko pinagkakasya.”

(Aling Ema)

Adjusting Quantity or Food Choices: This theme shows how participants reduce the quantity of purchases and change their food choices when prices increase.

This helps them manage their budget while still acquiring essential items.

Moi has stated that high prices prevent him from buying his chosen items, so he adjusts expenses based on what he can afford.

“Ano nakakaapekto siya kase di mo mabibili yung pinaka-want mo, dahil nga mahal compare dati na nabibili mo siya.”

(Moi)

Similarly, Totoy has stated that the increase in prices of vegetables causes him to manage his expenses and even buy smaller amounts.

“Malaki po talaga yung impact sa akin ng pagtaas ng gulay, kaya kukunti lang din po yung bibilhin ko.”

(Totoy)

Jessy has stated that there is another way such as reducing the quantity of other ingredients when the other is overpriced.

“Malaki yung epekto nya pero minsan merong other way, kunyare yung talong, kunyare nagmahal sya, syempre pwede mong i-lesser yon, magdagdag ka ng product na mura, kunyare nagluluto ka ng pakbet, kunyare mura ang kalabasa, mahal ang talong, less mo si talong, dagdagan mo si kalabasa.”

(Jessy)

Angel mentioned that overpricing affects her buying decision and she chooses affordable perishable goods instead of expensive items.

“Syempre nakakaapekto to sa decision ko kapag kunyare overpricing sya, don ako sa yung alam kong

pasok sa budget na foods gaya ng mga perishable goods na bibilhin."

(Angel)

Sunny boy is reducing some ingredients and altering his recipes to still prepare meals despite high prices.

"Eh yun, for example kapag bumibili ako ng manok na halagang trenta, di ko na lalagyan nang sahog na sibuyas, bawang, kundi toyo na lang tapos suka."

(Sunny Boy)

Aling Ema also shared that because of increased prices, she sometimes cannot buy everything that she wants and instead purchases only what she can afford or what fits her budget.

"Hindi ako nakakabili minsan, kung ano lang yung kasyang ibili ko, kung ano yung mura."

(Aling Ema)

Searching and Negotiation for Lower Prices: This theme reveals that participants often look for cheaper alternatives or engage in bargaining to cope with overpricing. Negotiation helps them make purchases more budget friendly.

Moi mentioned that he observes that his mother uses social connections and bargaining to get lower prices from vendors.

"May diskarte dyan eh, minsan yung nanay ko pag nakikita ko, pag kaibigan nya yung tindera, ang ginagawa nya "may tawad po ba ito?" yan syempre yan, signs of respect yan."

(Moi)

Totoy emphasizes that he actively negotiates with vendors regarding the prices and for his budget to fit within expenses.

"Ang ginagawa ko po ay tatawaran ko po kahit sobrang mahal ng kanilang bilingin at para po maging pasok sa budget."

(Totoy)

Shizuka has stated that she will request discounts when buying perishable goods.

"Siguro hihingi ng tawad, kayang price lang."

(Shizuka)

Jul has stated that consumers bargained or lowballing when buying.

"Tumatawad sila o nambabarat."

(Jul)

Jessy added that consumers asking for discounts is part of the normal practice in market and it is routine.

"Dumadagdag, tawad mga ganon lang naman yon eh "pahingi kami dagdag" "tawad kami" ganon lang naman eh, wala namang iba."

(Jessy)

Angel also mentioned that bargaining is culturally common when buying many products or goods.

"kapag sa palengke ka bibili mas marami-rami kaming bibilhin, parang nakasanayan na rin ng mga pilipino na parang pagtawad-tawad."

(Angel)

Causes of overpricing: This theme illustrates participants' understanding of why overpricing happens. Common reasons include scarcity, vendor practices, supply and demand, and seasonal availability.

Shizuka stated that overpricing may happen because people coming from other places contribute to increased prices.

"Siguro kase diba ang mga product is galing sa iba pang lugar siguro dahil sa kulang, hindi na rin ganon kasapat yung pagkakatubo."

(Shizuka)

Jessy explained that overpricing is often due to supply and demand fluctuations.

"Minsan kase parang supply and demand."

(Jessy)

Angel has stated that overpricing of goods happens when there is shortage.

"Ayon nga, sa sinabi ko kanina nagaganap yung overpricing ng mga goods kapag merong shortage na tinatawag."

(Angel)

Sunny Boy added that vendor pricing influences overpricing.

"Eh sa mga nagbebenta rin ng mga produkto"

(Sunny Boy)

Aling Ema explained that vendors raise their own prices.

"Tinataasan ng mga tindera, tinataasan nila kaya nagiging mataas."

(Aling Ema)

Product Quality and Trust: This theme explores how perceived quality and trust in sellers influence behavior of consumers. High prices can affect trust if quality is not steady.

Shizuka has stated that high prices do not always mean good quality.

"Minsan overprice siya pero hindi maganda yung quality."

(Shizuka)

Similarly, Jul has stated that consumers will automatically lose interest if the other seller has low prices while the one where she buys overcharged the price.

"Syempre mas mawawalan ka talaga ng tiwala kung mataas ang presyo ng pinag binilhan mo tas yung sa kabila mababa sya."

(Jul)

Angel described that some people trust expensive products more than cheaper products because they think higher prices means the quality is good.

"Maraming mas nagtitiwala sa mas mahal na produkto kase nga parang mas mahal mas maganda yung quality."

(Angel)

Sunny Boy has stated that there are some sellers who still sell goods at high prices despite it being spoiled.

"Merong bulok na binebenta pa ng mahal."

(Sunny Boy)

Aling Ema also stated the significance of quality to gain the trust of consumers.

"Kailangan maging maganda ang mga paninda mo."

(Aling Ema)

Product Availability and Seasonality: Participants emphasized that the seasonality of goods has an impact on the prices. Off-season items are expensive while products in season are more available and are cheaper, influencing decisions when purchasing.

Osang explained that fruit prices vary by season.

"Kumporme sa prutas, halimbawa hindi niya season, mahal 'yun kase hindi n'ya season pero 'pag season mababa ang presyo, kase season siya, marami."

(Osang)

Jessy has stated that certain products, like fish, are overpriced in specific areas and that despite different areas selling perishable goods, they still have the same prices.

"Actually, kung sa Noveleta, ang nag-o-overprice talaga malimit is isda, masyadong mahal compare don sa mismong kinukuhanan, compare din sa ibang market pero minsan naman pag pumunta ka sa palengke natin, pumunta ka ngayon sa tanza, pumunta ka sa cavite city, pag nagtanong ka pare-pareho naman yung presyo nila."

(Jessy)

Angel also stated that according to his father, seafoods are the most expensive one and she thinks it is because of limited seafood in their area.

"Minsan sa papa ko. Ang mga mahal, mga seafoods, kaya minsan lang kami mag seafoods, mga hipon kase siguro mahirap sya hulihin dito sa lugar natin kaya sa tingin ko yun yun mga madalas overprice sa mga local market."

(Angel)

Coping Strategies and Adaptation: This theme shows how respondents adapt to overpricing by switching stores, altering purchases, or adjusting consumption. This applies practical techniques to cope with high prices.

Osang shared that she prevents herself from buying excess items to manage price fluctuations.

"Hindi ako nags-shopping, 'pag may shopping, para sa business. Hindi ako mag-shopping. Bihira akong ma-excess sa mga gan'yan."

(Osang)

Sunny Boy has stated that he adapts by deciding his recipes to deal with high prices.

"Kapag bumibili ako ng manok, halagang trenta, di ko na lalagyan nang sahog na sibuyas, bawang, kundi toyo na lang tapos suka, ok na. adobo na at konting betsin, konting asin kase sa sobrang mahal nga, bina-budget ko lang ang aking pera."

(Sunny Boy)

Aling Ema shared that she finds practical ways to purchase goods that have prices.

"Ah ginagawan ko ng paraan para mabili"

The result of this study supports the research of Sousa *et al.* (2025) ^[10], which introduce that consumers adjust their readiness to pay dependant on perceived and price value of perishable goods. In the present study, respondents reported selecting cheaper alternatives, prioritizing affordable products, and limiting their purchases when prices increase. These behaviors show how perception of price influences consumer decisions when purchasing, similar to the findings of Sousa *et al.* (2025) ^[10].

The findings of this study also assist Hou *et al.* (2024) ^[4], who explained that consumers respond strategically to pricing conditions in public and local markets. Participants in the study often engaged in searching and bargaining for lower prices when purchasing perishable goods. The behavior shown that consumers actively react to high prices to handle their limited budgets, which reflects the responses to pricing behavior by Hou *et al.* (2024) ^[4].

Lastly, the report of the Philippines Statistics Authority (2025) also aligns with the results gathered, which indicated that increased food prices influence daily spending decisions and reduce household purchasing power. The information collected stated reducing food quantities, carefully budgeting their income, and adjusting meal preparation because of high prices of perishable goods.

5. Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Summary of Findings

This study aimed to examine the effects of overpricing of perishable goods on consumers in Noveleta, Cavite. Data was collected from ten participants, including both consumers and vendors, through face-to-face interviews. The responses were analyzed and organized into themes to better understand their experiences and perspectives regarding the rising prices of perishable goods.

When there is a shortage of products available on the market, prices tend to increase, this is what happens when there's a shortage of supply. And it's not just that; people wanting to buy certain things, like vegetables and other everyday ingredients, also drive up the prices. These are some of the main reasons why perishable goods end up

being overpriced. The demand for these goods is high, and when supply can't keep up, it leads to higher prices. It's a straightforward thing, when people want something and there isn't enough of it, they're willing to pay more to get it. The research showed that when prices are too high, it really affects people's everyday budgets. Many of the people in the study said they deal with this by buying fewer things or looking for cheaper options to save money. Some people even change the way they cook, using less expensive ingredients or finding substitutes that don't cost as much. Sellers also have problems because they charge too much. Some of them said that customers often try to get a better deal by negotiating or bargaining for lower prices. This means that sellers must adjust their pricing plans so they can make a profit and keep their customers happy. They need to find a balance between making money and keeping prices low enough that people will still buy from them. Overall, the study shows that both consumers and vendors are impacted by the rising prices of perishable goods. In response, they develop different strategies to cope with these market changes, reflecting resilience and adaptability in their daily lives.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that overpricing of perishable goods has an important effect on the everyday lives of consumers in Noveleta, Cavite. The increase in prices is primarily influenced by factors such as high demand and supply shortage in the market. These factors contribute to the continuous changes in the perishable goods prices. The study also disclosed that consumers develop various ways to manage their limited budget. Many consumers choose more affordable alternatives, adjust the ingredients they use when preparing meals, or reduce the number of products they buy. These adjustments help them adjust with the effects of overpricing while still meeting their daily necessities. Furthermore, the study found that vendors are also influx by the instances since customers often bargain to lower the price. Because of this, vendors try to balance their pricing to maintain their sales while still earning profit. Overall, overpricing of perishable goods creates challenges for both vendors and consumers. However, both groups find ways to adapt to these challenges through practical strategies in budgeting, buying, and selling.

Recommendations

For Consumers: Consumers are encouraged to practice proper budgeting and wise purchasing when buying perishable goods. Due to the frequent changes in market prices, it is important for consumers to be mindful of their spending habits and purchasing decisions. They may compare prices from different vendors before making purchases and prioritize buying only the necessary items to avoid overspending. Consumers may also benefit from planning their meals in advance and preparing a list of needed items before going to the market. In addition, choosing alternative or more affordable ingredients that provide similar nutritional value may help reduce daily expenses. Through careful decision-making and responsible purchasing behavior, consumers can better manage their finances despite the increasing prices of perishable goods.

For Vendors: Vendors are encouraged to maintain fair and reasonable pricing of their products while still considering

the operational costs involved in selling perishable goods. They should also consider the purchasing capacity of their customers, particularly those who rely on local markets for their daily food supply. Transparency in pricing is important, and vendors may explain the reasons behind price changes, such as increased supply costs, transportation expenses, or limited product availability. By maintaining honesty and fairness in pricing, vendors can build trust and strengthen their relationship with consumers. Implementing balanced pricing strategies may also allow vendors to sustain their business while ensuring that their products remain accessible to buyers.

For Parents and Guardians: Parents and guardians play a significant role in guiding their families in managing household expenses, especially in times when the prices of basic goods continue to increase. They may help by carefully planning family meals, selecting affordable yet nutritious ingredients, and teaching family members the importance of responsible spending. Encouraging children and other household members to understand the value of budgeting and financial discipline may contribute to better management of household resources. Through these practices, families may be better prepared to cope with the financial challenges brought by the increasing prices of perishable goods.

For Local Authorities and Market Administrators: Local authorities and market administrators are encouraged to strengthen monitoring systems for the prices of perishable goods in public markets. Regular monitoring and evaluation of market prices may help ensure that vendors follow fair pricing practices and prevent unreasonable price increases. Authorities may also implement policies, programs, or guidelines that promote transparency and fairness in the marketplace. Providing updated price information to the public and conducting regular inspections may help protect consumers while also supporting vendors who follow proper market regulations. These initiatives may contribute to maintaining balance and fairness within the local market system.

For Community Members: Community members are encouraged to support fair market practices within their local area. Being aware of price changes and choosing to buy from vendors who practice reasonable pricing may help promote ethical business practices. Community cooperation between buyers and sellers may also create a more stable and balanced marketplace. In addition, raising awareness about fair pricing within the community may help discourage overpricing and encourage responsible behavior among vendors. Active participation from community members can therefore contribute to maintaining fairness and stability in local market transactions.

For Future Researchers: Future researchers may conduct further studies related to the overpricing of perishable goods by involving a larger number of participants to obtain more comprehensive and reliable data. Expanding the scope of the study to include respondents from different locations or communities may also provide broader insights into the issue. Additionally, future research may explore other possible factors affecting price increases, such as transportation costs, seasonal supply variations, weather conditions, storage limitations, and market competition. Examining these variables may contribute to a deeper understanding of the problem and help identify more

effective strategies for addressing overpricing in local markets.

6. Dedication

The researchers dedicated this study to the people who supported and helped them throughout the completion of this research. This work was made possible through the guidance, encouragement, and strength given by those who played an important role in their journey.

To the Almighty God, for granting the researchers strength, wisdom, and perseverance, especially during challenging times, and for guiding them toward the successful completion of this work.

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