

Product Knowledge Nexus: Shaping Street Food Purchase Intention Among Nursing Students

Bianz E. Lim¹, Hanzen Drue Abellanos¹, Angelov John D. Bana¹,
John Joriz C. Echem¹, Sarakiel Maria M. Roa¹, Mikhailo C. Rosales¹,
Sergiris A. Ortega, CpE, DBM¹

¹ Xavier University – Ateneo de Cagayan, School of Business and Management, Cagayan de Oro, Philippines

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Email of Corresponding Author: sortega@xu.edu.ph

Abstract

This study examined the influence of product knowledge on street food purchase intention among nursing students in Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines. Anchored in the Theory of Planned Behavior, the study conceptualized product knowledge as an attitudinal factor influencing purchase intention and operationalized it through two dimensions: product process and product source. A quantitative research approach was employed using a descriptive–correlational design. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 350 undergraduate nursing students from universities in Cagayan de Oro City, selected through purposive and stratified random sampling. Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation coefficient (r) analysis were used to analyze the data. Results indicated that nursing students were generally informed about street food preparation processes and ingredient sources, reflecting awareness of hygiene, cleanliness, and ingredient safety. Through this knowledge, respondents demonstrated a positive intention to purchase street food, primarily influenced by affordability, convenience, and accessibility. Correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant, but modest, positive relationship between product knowledge and purchase intention. Among the dimensions of product knowledge, product source showed the strongest positive correlation with purchase intention, suggesting that perceptions of ingredient safety and cleanliness play a more influential role in shaping purchasing decisions than preparation-process knowledge alone. These findings confirm that product knowledge contributes meaningfully to purchase intention, although other practical factors also affect decision-making. The study concludes that while nursing students possess health-related knowledge, this does not deter street food consumption; rather, it coexists with practical considerations. The study aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) by addressing food safety awareness among future healthcare professionals and with Sustainable Development Goal 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production) by examining informed consumption within informal food systems. The study's sustainability impact lies in its contribution to public health education, responsible consumer behavior, and the promotion of safer practices in street food consumption.

Keywords: Cagayan De Oro City; Nursing Students; Product Knowledge; Product Process; Product Source; Purchase Intention; Street Food Consumption

1. Introduction

Product knowledge plays a crucial role in consumer decision-making by enabling individuals to evaluate product attributes, benefits, and risks in relation to their needs. In the context of street food, purchasing decisions often involve a trade-off among affordability, convenience, cultural appeal, and potential health risks. This dilemma is particularly pronounced among nursing students, whose health-related education may conflict with the risks posed by street food. This study examines how product knowledge influences street food purchase intentions among nursing students in Cagayan de Oro City, integrating perspectives from consumer behavior, public health, and sustainability.

1.1 Background of the Study on Product Knowledge and Street Food Purchase Intentions of Nursing Students

Product knowledge refers to an individual's understanding of a product's features, benefits, and risks, which directly contributes to purchase intention. Elsy and Indriyani (2019) describe product knowledge as the accurate information stored in memory that assists consumers in making purchase decisions. Adequate product knowledge fosters trust and interest, whereas insufficient knowledge may hinder proper evaluation of product attributes (Hong & Sternthal, 2010). Consumers with greater product knowledge are more likely to select products that align with their expectations. Similarly, Ortega (2025) found that quality information significantly influences purchase intentions.

1.2 Synthesis of Literature on Product Knowledge, Purchase Intention, and Cognitive Dissonance in Street Food Consumption

Prior studies emphasize that product knowledge significantly shapes consumer behavior and purchasing decisions. Quality information has been shown to influence purchase intention, while product knowledge enhances consumers' ability to make informed choices (Ortega, 2025). However, food choices often involve internal conflict. Cognitive dissonance theory explains the psychological tension that arises from inconsistent beliefs and actions, motivating individuals to justify their decisions (Kitayama & Tompson, 2015). In street food consumption, dissonance occurs when consumers value taste and affordability while being aware of potential health risks.

1.3 Contextual Setting of Street Food Consumption among Nursing Students in Cagayan de Oro City

Street food is deeply embedded in Philippine culture and plays a significant socio-economic role. It promotes cultural identity, tourism, and economic growth, particularly in developing countries (Tacardon et al., 2023; May et al., 2021). In Cagayan de Oro City, street foods such as isaw, proben, and siomai are widely available and commonly consumed (Weins, 2024). Globally, approximately 2.5 billion people consume street food daily, highlighting its accessibility and importance (Alto et al., 2025). Despite its popularity, street food vending is frequently associated with inadequate food safety practices, increasing the risk of foodborne illness (World Health Organization, 2025).

1.4 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior

This study is grounded in the Theory of Planned Behavior proposed by Ajzen (1991), which explains behavior in terms of attitudes, intentions, and motivational factors. The theory has been widely applied to health-related behaviors (Godin & Kok, 1996; Phu M.T. et al., 2024). In this study, product knowledge is treated as an attitudinal component influencing purchase intention. Drawing from Andita and Hermawan (2023), product knowledge is examined through functional and technical dimensions, represented by product source (Nuryahati & Hendar, 2019) and product process (Dell, 2025). Purchase intention reflects the individual's motivation to consume street food.

1.5 Research Gaps and Justification for Examining Product Knowledge and Purchase Intentions among Nursing Students

While existing literature addresses product knowledge, food safety, and consumer behavior, limited research focuses on healthcare students' street food consumption. Specifically, there is a lack of empirical evidence on how product knowledge influences the purchase intentions of nursing students in developing urban contexts such as Cagayan de Oro City. Although the economic and cultural importance of street food is well documented, it remains unclear whether nursing students' health-related knowledge affects their purchasing behavior or whether convenience and affordability prevail. Addressing this gap is essential to understanding this distinct and influential consumer group.

1.6 Relevance of the Study to Sustainable Development Goals on Health and Responsible Consumption

This study aligns with SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-Being by examining food safety awareness and consumption behavior among future healthcare professionals, which has implications for public health sustainability. It also supports SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production by assessing whether formal nursing education translates into informed and responsible food consumption choices. The findings may help promote safer consumption practices within informal food systems.

1.7 Significance of the Study to Multidisciplinary Sustainability in Public Health, Education, and Informal Food Systems

The study contributes to public health sustainability by emphasizing the role of health education in shaping personal food choices. It supports socio-economic sustainability by providing insights that may help street food vendors and marketers adapt to the expectations of health-literate consumers. Additionally, it advances educational and institutional sustainability by demonstrating how professional training influences real-world consumption behavior, reinforcing the integration of health, sustainability, and consumer education across disciplines.

2. Material and Methods

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a quantitative research approach to measure and analyze numerical data, yielding objective, measurable results. It utilized a descriptive design to describe the current state of street food consumption among nursing students without manipulating variables. In addition, a correlational design was applied to determine the degree and direction of the relationship between product knowledge and purchase intention, identifying whether the relationship was positive, negative, or neutral.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted among nursing students enrolled in universities located in Cagayan de Oro City. The research setting included all universities offering nursing programs in the city, and respondents came from first-year to fourth-year levels, regardless of their prior experience with street food consumption in the area.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were undergraduate nursing students from universities in Cagayan de Oro City. Eligible participants included students from first to fourth year who were able to complete an online questionnaire. Participation was voluntary, and students who declined participation after reading the informed consent form or who were unable to respond due to medical or mental conditions were excluded from the study.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The target population consisted of nursing students from the identified universities in Cagayan de Oro City. A two-stage sampling process was employed. First, purposive sampling was applied based on the premise that nursing students may express food safety concerns despite having limited actionable knowledge, as supported by Luo et al. (2019). Second, stratified random sampling was used to ensure proportional representation from each university. Cochran's statistical formula was applied to determine the sample size, a method commonly used in survey research requiring random sampling (Johnson, 2025). From a total population of 4,776 nursing students, a sample size of 350 respondents was determined to be statistically significant at a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error. The sample was proportionally allocated across the identified universities, and respondents were selected by simple random sampling within each stratum.

2.5 Research Instrument

The research instrument was a structured questionnaire composed of four sections. The first section collected basic respondent information, including email address, university affiliation, and prior experience with street food. The second section measured Product Process, consisting of four items assessing respondents' knowledge of product preparation. Three items were adapted and modified from Siga and Macalayo (2025), and one item was adapted from Tacardon et al. (2023), using a four-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (4) to Strongly Disagree (1). The third section assessed Product Source through four items measuring awareness of ingredients. Three items were adapted and modified from Siga and Macalayo (2025), and one item was adapted from Andita and Hermawan (2023), using the same four-point Likert scale. The fourth section measured Purchase Intention using four items assessing respondents' willingness to purchase street food, three adapted from Andita and Hermawan (2023) and one from Tacardon et al. (2023). The questionnaire was adapted from multiple sources, including Andita and Hermawan (2023), Ho and Amin (2022), Siga and Macalayo (2025), and Tacardon et al. (2023), with permission obtained from the original authors.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

The study utilized both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected directly from respondents through a survey questionnaire, consistent with the definition of primary data as firsthand information collected for a specific research purpose (Stewart, 2025). Secondary data were gathered from the existing literature to support the theoretical foundations and validate the findings, as defined by Ajayi (2023). Randomly selected nursing students from the identified universities were invited to participate through an online link directing them to a Google Forms questionnaire that included the informed consent form and researcher contact information. Upon providing consent, respondents completed the questionnaire, with all fields set as mandatory to ensure completeness. No time limit was imposed on completing the survey. Collected data were subsequently extracted, coded, tabulated, and prepared for statistical analysis.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, including means, percentages, and standard deviations, were used to summarize respondent data. The Pearson correlation coefficient (r) was employed to test hypotheses regarding the relationship between product knowledge and purchase intention. All statistical analyses were conducted using Python 3.10 on Google Colaboratory, a cloud-based Jupyter notebook platform.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical standards of honesty, integrity, and voluntary participation. No minors were involved, and the research was conducted solely for academic purposes. The researchers declared no conflict of interest and were not affiliated with any street food business or related industry. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. All respondents received and agreed to an informed consent form before participating. No risks, harm, or inconvenience were associated with participation. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained, with no personal identifiers recorded and all data reported in aggregate form. Collected data were securely stored, password-protected, and handled in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act 10173).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Levels of Product Knowledge and Purchase Intention among Nursing Students

3.1.1 Product Knowledge in Terms of Product Process

The results show that the majority of nursing students were informed or highly informed about street food preparation. Overall findings indicate that most respondents demonstrated awareness of cleanliness, hygiene, and ingredient quality in street food preparation, as reflected in the overall mean and low variability. High ratings were observed for indicators related to proper preparation and expected ingredient quality. These findings suggest that nursing students place strong emphasis on hygiene and cleanliness in street food preparation, likely influenced by their health-related education. This supports the study of Morano, Rogério, et. al. (2018), which found that cleanliness enhances perceived healthiness and product quality. Awareness of ingredient quality also aligns with Promsivapallop and Kannaovakun (2019), who noted that food quality influences perceived value and willingness to consume.

3.1.2 Product Knowledge in Terms of Product Source

Findings indicate that nursing students were generally informed about the source of street food products. Most respondents reported awareness of ingredient safety, cleanliness, and absence of contamination. Overall ratings reflected an informed level of product knowledge, with very few respondents indicating low awareness. The results highlight the importance of ingredient safety and sanitation in shaping nursing students' perceptions of street food. This supports Marshall (2024), who emphasized that sanitation is essential for food safety and consumer trust. The role of trust in influencing consumer decisions is further reinforced by Ortega et al. (2025), who identified trust as a key factor in business and consumption relationships.

3.1.3 Purchase Intention toward Street Food

The findings reveal that most nursing students expressed interest in purchasing street food, with a majority indicating positive purchase intention. Overall, results show that street food remains appealing, particularly for its affordability, convenience, and accessibility. Indicators related to personal preference and cost-saving received relatively higher ratings. These results indicate that, despite health-related awareness, nursing students continue to purchase street food for practical reasons. This is consistent with Steyn, Labadarios, and Nel (2011), who found that convenience and accessibility strongly influence purchase intentions for street food. Economic constraints also shape purchasing behavior, as Rinaldi et al. (2024) found, identifying financial limitations and time constraints as factors affecting food choices among nursing students.

3.2 Relationship Between Product Knowledge and Purchase Intention

Correlation analysis revealed statistically significant positive relationships between product knowledge variables and purchase intention. Both product process and product source were positively associated with purchase intention, with product source showing a slightly stronger relationship. The results indicate that higher product knowledge scores were associated with increased purchase intention, although the relationships were modest in strength. These findings suggest that product knowledge contributes to nursing students' willingness to purchase street food, supporting the idea that informed consumers are more likely to buy. This aligns with Andita and Hermawan (2023), who found that product knowledge influences purchase intention. However, the modest correlation values indicate that other factors beyond product knowledge also influence purchase intention. The interpretation of weak but significant correlations is consistent with the explanation provided by Hole (n.d.) of the University of Sussex regarding large sample sizes and statistical significance.

3.3 Product Knowledge–Purchase Intention Nexus

The findings demonstrate a clear connection between product knowledge and purchase intention among nursing students, establishing a nexus between the two. This relationship indicates that product knowledge plays a meaningful role in shaping purchasing behavior for street food. The identified nexus supports previous findings that product knowledge directly affects purchase intention. This is consistent with Mukammil et al. (2025) and Akina et al. (2025), who both reported that product knowledge significantly influences consumers' purchase intentions. The results suggest that improving product knowledge may support more informed consumption decisions while maintaining the practicality of street food choices.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

This study examined the relationship between product knowledge and purchase intention toward street food among nursing students in Cagayan de Oro City. The findings indicate that nursing students are generally knowledgeable about street food, particularly in terms of product process and product source, and demonstrate an overall interest in purchasing street food. Although the relationship between product knowledge and purchase intention was weak, it was statistically significant, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Among the dimensions of product knowledge, product source showed the strongest positive correlation with purchase intention, suggesting that nursing students are more inclined to purchase street food when they perceive the ingredients as clean and safe. Overall, the study provides empirical support for the Theory of

Planned Behavior by demonstrating that product knowledge, particularly awareness of the product source, plays a meaningful role in shaping purchase intentions among nursing students.

Based on the findings, the study recommends emphasizing the importance of product knowledge, particularly regarding product source, in understanding purchase intentions toward street food among nursing students. Strengthening awareness of ingredient safety and cleanliness may help reinforce informed consumption decisions within this group. Additionally, the results may serve as a reference for future studies examining consumer behavior, product knowledge, and purchase intention in similar populations or settings, thereby further validating and expanding the findings of the present research.

Compliance with ethical standards

This study adhered to established institutional and academic ethical guidelines for research involving human participants. Participation was entirely voluntary, and confidentiality, anonymity, and responsible data management were maintained throughout the research process.

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Conflict of interest statement

The authors declare no financial or personal conflicts of interest and affirm that no external individual or organization influenced the conduct, analysis, or outcomes of the study.

Statement of ethical approval

The study employed survey-based data collection conducted with prior permission from the administrators of the participating universities. As the research involved minimal risk to participants, formal ethics board approval was not required, and all procedures complied with accepted research ethics standards.

Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time, in accordance with accepted ethical standards.

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