SUKEI SYSTEM AS A MARKETING STRATEGY AT
THE BAGUIO CITY PUBLIC MARKET

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ABSTRACT This study focused on the Suki System as a marketing strategy at the Baguio City Public Market, the factors that affect the Suki System, marketing strategies employed by the sellers and buyers and the effects of the Suki System to the respondents along the following: socio-cultural effects, economic effects, and personal effects. The respondents of the study are the sellers and buyers. Data were gathered through interviews which were transcribed, analyzed and interpreted.

Suki system is practiced in Baguio City Public Market as seen in the volumes of purchased and the frequency of transaction. The clients of the sellers are ahentes coming from the neighboring provinces of Benguet, tourists and retailers. Suki system in the Public Market is a process of exchange where there is a repeated transaction between the sellers and buyers. There are several factors that affect the suki system. For socio-cultural factor, kinship and language affect the suki system. For economic factor, the ability to pay of their clients is what affects the sellers. For the buyers, they always look at the quality of the product. On the personal factors, both the seller-respondents and buyer respondents are affected by the attitude of their clients and suki sellers. Sellers used several strategies to maintain and sustain their sukis. The same is true with the buyers. The best strategy used by the sellers is to offer quality products which are connected with the strategy of the buyers. For the buyers, the best strategy is to assess or evaluate the quality of the product. The most beneficial effect of the suki system on socio-cultural factor is that suki system fostered loyalty and trust; and for the economic factor, the best effect of the suki system for the sellers is having an outlet for the easy and continuous disposal of their product. On the part of the buyers, they were able to ask for credit, availed of free delivery and discounts and were assured of good products. Assurance of quality product is what the buyer-respondents deemed as the most important benefit of suki system. Personally the buyers and sellers have the same results when it comes to the effects of the suki system. They became friendly, patient and humble. The government and other private and public sectors should initiate programs or regulations on how to strengthen the values developed in the suki system not only in marketing but in all activities as well. This in turn will guide businessmen alike to focus on the social impact of the Suki System used as a marketing strategy.

INTRODUCTION

Individuals belong to a society where they interact with each other. They adapt to their society in order to survive. It is in the society where their basic needs are satisfied. Being a member of the society, individuals are guided by sets of norms. They can also change the patterned forms of interaction (Panopio et al., 1987). When individuals interact in the society, the process of exchange happens.

Exchange is the practice of giving and receiving valued objects and services (Panopio and Rolda, 2000). Peter Blau and Homans believe that what is significant in exchange is the mutual expectation that equal reciprocation occurs. This is by Homans a distributive justice and by Blau a fair exchange (Panopio et al., 1987). Thus, exchange is a give and take relationship. If the expectation of both parties is met, the exchange will continue. If the exchange is unequal, then the relationship will be cut or discontinued.

Market, according to Medina (1990), is composed of people with needs to satisfy, the money to spend, and the ability to satisfy the objectives of the sellers. People involved in the
market have needs and wants that need to be satisfied. Marketing involves the sellers and the buyers. Each of them satisfies the needs of the other. For the sellers, they sell their goods expecting a profit in return. Buyers on the other hand, transact business with the sellers to purchase and avail of goods and services for their satisfaction. The sellers and the buyers are both involved in marketing that includes the exchange that transpires to satisfy each other’s needs.

There are different schemes followed in marketing like grading, sorting, warehousing, transporting and buying and selling. These schemes are practiced to ensure profit and satisfaction of needs and wants. Each of these schemes uses marketing strategies (Medina, 1990). In buying and selling, there are several strategies to be used to ensure beneficial results both to the buyers and to the sellers. The buyers and sellers employ a lot of marketing strategies to satisfy their needs and wants. Marketing segmentation, marketing mix and product position are examples of marketing strategies. In the Philippines, one common strategy employed by sellers to establish themselves with the buyers is the “suki” system. Suki system is a system of regular trading relations whether as a buyer or a seller established by either a combination of need or by affinity or blood relations or goodwill (Sim, 1997). The seller encourages the buyer to be loyal to him and to the product. On the other hand, buyers will encourage the sellers to give them discounts and quality products. For a businessman or a seller to be able to win a suki (loyal customer), various techniques are employed by him.

The Suki system is affected by the consumer behavior. Sellers and buyers are affected by several factors like socio-cultural, economic and personal. These factors have a great impact on the suki system because these will define if there will be a continuous transaction. The effectiveness of the suki system will be seen on the benefits and costs that will be gained by the sellers and buyers from the suki relationship.

Through this study, it is hoped that the values that will come out of the suki relationship will be of help in the promotion of harmonious relationship between and among the buyers and the sellers. Values such as trust, loyalty, honesty and discipline can be used in the building of a cohesive bond among the Filipinos for national consciousness that can lead to national development.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed the descriptive method of research. The descriptive research method is meant to illustrate a point about the sample population that is composed of 10 vegetable sellers and 10 vegetable buyers. Based on their responses, the following points were given emphasis: the factors that affect the suki system, the strategies employed by the respondents to maintain the suki-relationship and the effects of the suki system to the respondents.

Since this research is a case study, the data was interpreted qualitatively. This research involved the use of qualitative data, such as interviews and participant observation data to understand and explain the Suki System. All data were transcribed after which it was interpreted and analyzed based from how the respondents answered the questions from the interview schedule.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Factors Affecting the Suki System

Suki System is prevalent at the Baguio Public City Market-Hangar Market as seen by the frequency of purchase made by the buyers and the quantity of vegetables sold and bought. As
mentioned by Go (1990), buyers and sellers have different needs and wants and they can make use of varied techniques to achieve such. The techniques they employ affect the suki system and the effects are varied based on their own individual goals.

**Socio-cultural factors.** According to the respondents, the socio-cultural factors with the exception of language and kinship have effects on the suki system. For the buyer-respondent and the seller respondents, kinship and language affect the suki system. One buyer-respondent said that the first person he looks for when he goes to the market to buy vegetable is his relatives. This supports the idea of Hunt et al., (1987) that among relatives, there exists a strong reciprocal system of mutual assistance in carrying out their social and economic commitments. On the side of the seller respondents, kinship is also influential. For instance one respondent stated that his relatives help in the disposal of his goods that will mean more profit. In consideration of the other socio-cultural factors, the respondents did not consider ethnic affiliation, religion and social class as influential to the suki system.

**Economic factors.** Economic factors include profit orientedness, capacity to pay/credit, price of vegetable, marketing cost, need and availability and quality of products. Based on the data gathered, what really affects the suki system is the capacity of the buyers to pay. For the buyer-respondents, the most important factor that affects the suki system is the quality of the product sold to them by the sellers.

**Personal factors.** The personal factors considered in this study are: age, physical appearance, civil status, occupation and attitude. Based on the factors presented, nowadays, economic factors are more important than the socio-cultural factor and personal factors. The seller respondents are more interested in looking for people who can pay the products that they sell rather than establishing a smooth relationship with the buyers. For the buyers, economic factors are more important than the socio-cultural and personal factor. What affects the suki system for the buyer-respondents is the quality of vegetable sold to them by the sellers. The price of the vegetable only becomes secondary, since the buyers are willing to pay more or higher as long as the vegetables also are of high quality. This implies that, the quality of vegetable will lead to the satisfaction of the needs and wants of the sellers that will in turn result to continuous relationship. Eventually, it will lead to trust and l

### Strategies on How to Maintain and Sustain suki

Most of the sellers pointed out that the best strategy that they use to maintain their suki is giving their buyer quality products. The quality of products will ensure customer’s loyalty. Sellers should give quality products to their buyers. On the other hand, the buyers also employ their own strategies, which, based on the data is not different from that of the seller. In looking for a suki seller, the buyer respondents look for somebody who sells quality products.

### Effects of Suki System to the Respondents

The suki system also affects the respondents (sellers and buyers) along the following factors: socio-cultural, economic, and personal. The Suki System somewhat changed the exchanges and the way this exchanges were facilitated.

**Socio-cultural effects.** Based on the findings, most of the respondents, seller-respondents and buyer-respondents said that the suki system fostered trust and loyalty, made them sociable and strengthened family relationship. Trust and loyalty are the foremost values that were intensified in the suki system.

**Economic effects.** The best effect of the suki system to the sellers is that sellers have an easy access of disposing their products. The sellers need not worry if they can sell the vegetables or not since they are assured that their suki-buyers will definitely buy from them. Easy disposal of their product means more profit to the sellers. One respondent also mentioned that some of her suki-buyers lend her some money if she is in need. Because of Suki System, some buyers were
able to avail of big discounts and free delivery. They were able to save a part of their budget and used it to buy their other needs. Discounts as stated by Kotler (1997), provides an incentive to the customer to order from a given seller rather than by buying from multiple sources. Discounts serve as a reward in suki system. If the buyer bought a big or large volume of vegetable, he would be given a discount.

For the buyers, the suki system assured them of a good or quality product that is also the basis in looking for a suki. The quality of product is not taken for granted by the buye respondents. The respondents are always assured with quality products.

Personal effects. Based on the data gathered, the seller-respondents and buyer respondents learned to be more friendly because of the suki system. Because of the establishment of a suki relationship, sellers and buyers became friends. Humility is also one of the values strengthened because of the suki system. Both the seller respondents and buyer-respondents learned to meet halfway in their demands. On the side of the buyer-respondents, many of them became more humble. They treat the sellers in a nice way. They realized that humility is very important in dealing with other people.

Sellers meet a lot of buyers with different personality everyday. It is the same with the buyers. Personally, both the buyers and sellers learned to become patient. As quoted by one respondent, “An anusak jay maysa nga suik. Uray suplada, ken barat isu na, ayos lang basta ada ti suik.” (I bear with one of my suki, even if she’s unsociable and tightwad, it’s okay as long as I have a suki.) The patience of the sellers is tested whenever they transact with their clients especially if they discuss about quality and price of products with their buyers. On the other hand, the buyer-respondents learned to become patient so that they can ask for discount and other services that can be given by their suki seller.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Suki system is practiced at the Baguio City Public Market. The suki system is a continuous transaction between the sellers and buyers that is evident since the buyers almost everyday from their suki-sellers.

2. The suki system is affected more by the economic factors. There are some socio-cultural factor and personal factor that affect the suki system but these are just secondary to that of the economic factors. The effects are either positive or negative depending on the sellers and buyers.

3. The quality of the vegetable is very important in the suki relationship. This was taken into consideration by the buyer-respondents and seller-respondents when they used a strategy to sustain and look for a suki. For the buyers, they assess or evaluate the quality of the product. For the sellers, they consider the buyer’s ability to pay.

4. The effect of the suki system to the respondents was more on the economic factors. The socio-cultural and personal factors are just secondary.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Guided by the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are forwarded:

1. To create an atmosphere that is not antagonistic but of cooperation, sellers and buyers should be sensitive to the needs of each other so that total satisfaction will be attained.
2. Since *Suki* System is more on the economic side, buyers and sellers should not cease to be vigilant in monitoring the right price of the goods. Price will always depend on the supply of goods and the quality of the product.

3. Seminars should be conducted on how to package, store and transport the products to maintain its quality. Since the sellers and buyers consider the quality of products, methods on how to package, store and transport the vegetables should be taught and enhanced.

4. When it comes to the effect, *suki* system is more on the economic side. The government and other private and public sectors should initiate programs or regulations on how to strengthen the values developed in the *suki* system not only in marketing but in all activities as well. This in turn will guide businessmen alike to focus on the social impact of the *Suki* System used as a marketing strategy.

5. More studies in the *Suki* System and probably in other products to gain more knowledge on how effective the *Suki* System is as a marketing strategy.

**LITERATURE CITED**


