




Flavors of Cebu: Exploring Stakeholders' Psychographics Towards Street Food

ARREZA, Mariae Khrisna Arreza B.

 0000-0001-7202-6208; Cebu Normal University. Cebu City, Cebu, Philippines. arrezamk@cnu.edu.ph

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ABSTRACT

Street foods have become an important part of the society and are a source of income for most people in the developing cities of the world including Cebu City in the Philippines. This paper seeks to determine the factors that influence the consumption of street food by the residents and tourists and how the identified attributes influence the decision making process; this paper also explore at analyzing the perception of locals and tourists on street foods in Cebu City in terms of safety, quality, and satisfaction. Through the deployment of survey questionnaire, reveals consumers are satisfied and find quality with the street food products; and that street food plays a dual role: as a source of income in the informal sector, as an income generating activity for the vendors, and as a social activity that enhances unity among the people. With Cebu City now being one of the top tourist destinations, the street food business in the city is forced to meet the needs of the customers that include food safety and cleanliness. Thus, the study recommends that the regulatory systems should be enhanced, vendors educated and infrastructure developed to enhance the growth of the street food sub-sector in Cebu. These measures are important to ensure that the sector remains culturally sensitive and at the same time safeguard the health of the public which is a market for street food and a source of income.

RESUMO

Os alimentos de rua tornaram-se uma parte importante da sociedade e são uma fonte de renda para a maioria das pessoas nas cidades em desenvolvimento do mundo, incluindo a cidade de Cebu, nas Filipinas. Este artigo busca determinar os fatores que influenciam o consumo de alimentos de rua pelos residentes e turistas e como os atributos identificados influenciam o processo de tomada de decisão. Através da aplicação de questionários, revela-se que os alimentos de rua desempenham um papel duplo: como uma fonte de renda no setor informal, sendo uma atividade geradora de renda para os vendedores, e como uma atividade social que promove a união entre as pessoas. Com a cidade de Cebu sendo agora um dos principais destinos turísticos, o negócio de alimentos de rua na cidade é forçado a atender às necessidades dos clientes, que incluem segurança alimentar e limpeza. Assim, o estudo recomenda que os sistemas regulatórios sejam aprimorados, os vendedores educados e a infraestrutura desenvolvida para promover o crescimento do sub-setor de alimentos de rua em Cebu. Essas medidas são importantes para garantir que o setor permaneça culturalmente sensível e, ao mesmo tempo, salvaguarde a saúde pública, que é um mercado para os alimentos de rua e uma fonte de renda.

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Introduction

Street food is a concept which is well known in almost every city of the world and plays an important role in the life of citizens. Not only is it a fast and inexpensive method of getting food in a big city but it also tells a lot about the city in question. Street foods are a source of income to many street vendors especially in developing nations, and are also social places where people meet. Street foods are not only known in the Philippines as a form of cuisine but also as an ethnic showcase of the country. Street food is an essential component of the urban food systems and particularly important in the developing countries as it offers affordable food to a broad range of consumers as well as create job opportunities. In most cities across the world, food sale from the street vendors is evidence of culture and social practices. It also serves as a social place where people of different groups meet and interact and therefore foster unity and cultural values. Furthermore, the importance of street food in the economic support of informal traders underlines the importance of street food as a backbone of economies especially in the developing world (Sgroi et al., 2022) : It captures the new generation's urban living, the issues of traffic and time constraints for eating; the sector provides food and income for many people, especially the vulnerable groups, and also helps in creating social relations and culture.

This study is therefore crucial in its contribution to understanding the context of urban growth to assess the input of street food in food security and social relations (Bouafou et al., 2021). The analysis of the topic of street food in the context of cities shows its cultural value and economic importance. Not only do street food vendors present the gastronomic profile of a city, but they also work as a link between different communities and their experiences in the taste of the culture. The nature of street food culture is important because it means that it is not only a source of nourishment but also a part of the city and its development. As cities evolve, the flexibility of street food culture mirrors other sociopolitical processes, thus, it is critical to look into (Prasad et al., 2024).

In the introduction, Morano et al. (2018) capture the importance of street food, especially in generating income in the time of economic shocks and migration, as described by Basinski (2014). Street food is known for its affordable and convenient meals that are sold from mobile units and small structures on the streets of cities, and at fairs (Bellia et al., 2016). There has been a growing trend in the academic literature on street food because of the economic, social, and health concerns that can be associated with it (Alimi, 2016; Basinski, 2014; Franklin and Badrie, 2015; Grunert, 2010; Henderson, 2011).

According to the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) about 2.5 billion people eat street foods each day with high consumers' spending in countries like India and Latin America (Bellia et al., 2016). In Brazil, the street food market had high sales in the year 2016 (Denone, 2017). Consumer attributes like price sensitivity for example, affects consumers who have low

buying power (Chung and Myers, 1999), while perceived quality which determines consumers' behaviors relates to factors like food variety, taste, hygiene and speed of service (Almeida et al., 2014; Tiwari and Verma, 2008).

Cebu City is among the densely populated city in the Philippines and a first-class tourist spot and is well-known for its street foods. Whether it is a small street food location like Larsian and Colon Street or a large market like Carbon Market, major commercial complex like IT Park, street food is present and every vendor has a cultural story to tell through the food items they sell. This makes the street food to be a good means of experiencing the local culture and food as well as for the locals and the tourists. Cebu's street food is the pinnacle of the region's food indulged by both locals and tourists.

Besides, the culinary value, the act of eating with other people in a crowded street adds the cultural and social utility, which makes it not only an economic value but also a cultural value. Cebu informal sector comprises of street food. To most of the vendors, selling street foods is not just a survival of their economic activities but a survival itself. Since there are no many complexities involved in setting up the street food business, people, particularly those who cannot secure employment elsewhere, are able to feed themselves and their families. Many of the vendors operate with small capital and come up with business strategies to satisfy the population's need for fast foods. The informal sector is one of the biggest sectors in the economy though it is not controlled. Vendors purchase raw materials, hire stalls and employ various people to help in the market to improve the economy (Arreza, 2024).

Conventional knowledge holds that street foods are an important component of the economic structure and tourist attractions, yet the sector is not without its problems. The street food business in Cebu is not an easy environment to discuss since there is a constant struggle between the need to regulate and control the quality of the food being sold and the need to respect the fact that most of the times it is an informal economy. Concerns like hygiene, the lack of proper handling standards, and lack of training for the vendors are dangerous not only to the consumers but also to the street food business of the city.

Competition for space has also been experienced due to urban development; food vendors, especially the street food vendors were seen struggling to get the best spaces in the middle of city development projects in Cebu. This presents a dual challenge: the problem of how to preserve street food's appeal and functionality in the context of a growing urbanization of a city while still meeting the required hygiene standards.

The changing consumers' tastes and expectations, particularly the tourists who may not be conversant with street food practices make this factor even more sensitive. With more foreign and local tourists coming to Cebu to try its food specialties, the need for better and organized food preparation and selling platforms is a challenge that increases pressure to the street sellers who may not afford or have the ability to change their structures or hygiene standards

The vibrant street food culture of Cebu is still a reality; however, there is a need for further research on this particular area. Past research has mainly concerned itself with the factor that street foods are affordable or that they constitute part of the informal sector. But, there is the need to go further in the analysis in order to come up with a better understanding of the street foods of Cebu in the cultural, social, and economic aspects that influence both the sellers and the buyers. Despite the fact that Cebu offers beautiful beaches and historical tourist attractions, little has been done to address the role that street food plays in the city's culinary tourism. This means that incorporating street food into Cebu's tourism plans could have the potential of raising the city's global standing while also better supporting vendors through better infrastructure and policy.

Cebu's street food industry is at a critical juncture. While it still is an important part of the city's cultural heritage and a significant part of the urban informal economy, it is experiencing increased pressure from the state as well as from the competition as well as change in customers' preferences. The key question for the future will be how to continue to protect the identity and the informality of street food while also keeping the sector safe, sustainable and viable.

Through this research and development in policy and strategic tourism marketing, Cebu can maintain the celebration of its diverse food culture, improve the quality of life of street food sellers, and enrich the culinary experience for the citizens of Cebu and the tourists.

It is important to know more about the features of the Cebu's street food market for several reasons. From this research, vendors are in a position to understand and appreciate customer needs and how they may need to modify their products to suit the various consumer segments. In the case of policy makers, the research aims to provide empirical evidence that can be used to decide on how best to manage the street food industry and at the same time tackle some of the major health challenges that this industry poses. For tourism officials, the study provides suggestions on how to improve Cebu as a food tourism destination to support the city's broader tourism plan.

In practical terms, the study aims to provide suggestions for enhancing the experience for consumers of street foods and at the same time, address the issue of sustainability of the sector. In theoretical terms, the research will help to advance knowledge about consumption of street foods and reveal the cultural and economic context of the street food industry in Cebu. The findings of this study are expected to fill these gaps and contribute to the improvement of the sustainability, safety, and attractiveness of the street foods as a cultural and economic asset to Cebu.

To achieve this overarching goal, the study has outlined the following specific objectives:

1. Examine the demographics of respondents, including age and type of respondent, to understand the diversity of the sample.

2. Assess how often respondents consume street food to identify consumption patterns.
3. Evaluate the level of agreement among respondents regarding statements related to cultural authenticity of street food experiences.
4. Measure the perceived quality of street food products to gauge standards and expectations.
5. Measure the overall level of satisfaction with street food products among respondents.
6. Test the association between demographic profiles and the perceived quality of street food.
7. Test the association between the frequency of street food consumption and the perceived quality of street food.
8. Test the association between demographic profiles and their satisfaction of street food.
9. Test the association between the frequency of street food consumption and their satisfaction of street food.
10. Investigate the association between perceived quality of street food products and respondent's satisfaction of street food products.

Null Hypotheses

H₀₁ There is no significant association between the demographic profile and the perceived quality of street food.

H₀₂ There is no significant association between the frequency of street food consumption and the perceived quality of street food.

H₀₃ There is no significant association between the demographic profile and the satisfaction of street food.

H₀₃ There is no significant association between the frequency of street food consumption and the satisfaction of street food.

H₀₅ There is no significant association between satisfaction levels and perceived quality of street food products.

The literature reviewed herein is in tandem with the aim of this study on street food. First, it reaffirms the traditional and socio-economic importance of street foods within the urban settings globally. Street foods not only offer cross cultural choice of foods which can be eaten on the streets, but also have a great impact on the local economy especially in the developing countries (Promises and Challenges of the Informal Food Sector in Developing Countries, 2007; Winarno & Allain, 1991). This aspect shows how street food changed over time as people's cultural interaction developed, influencing urban eating habits and consumers' choices (Williams et al., 2019) . Secondly, the factors affecting consumers' perception of street food quality appear as key drivers of its consumption. Such aspects as price, flavor, cleanness, and ethnic identity are pointed as crucial for consumers' judgements and choices (Choi et al., 2013; Phan & Mai, 2016). The culture of eating street food is

appreciated by consumer due to its accessibility and the haptic impression, which play an important part in consumers' satisfaction and future consumption (Lam & Hsu, 2006).

In addition, the effect of street food on tourism and its destination preference widens its importance to improve the visitor experience. Due to its availability of local food and culture the street food has become significant reason that motivates travelers for food tourism (Karsavuran, 2018; Cambourne & Macionis, 2003). Thus, this integration into the tourism development plans does not only enhance cultural tourism but also entice foreigners which in turn boost the economy of the destinations (Lin et al., 2011).

Perceptions of consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions towards street food provide information about their buying behavior and level of satisfaction. Consumers' willingness and loyalty to street foods vendors is influenced by positive attitude towards affordability, taste, and cultural authenticity (Choe & Kim, 2017; Lam & Hsu, 2006). Knowledge of such attitudes is relevant for vendors and policy makers to improve street food and customers satisfaction.

Methods

The approach used in this study makes it easy to respond appropriately to the research questions that are oriented around locals and tourists' influence on street food consumption and the cultural experience as well as the frequency of consumption. A quantitative research approach is adopted relying on the collection of quantitative data using structured instruments. The present study adopts a descriptive-correlational research design which aims to describe the existing association between variables. Descriptive research offers a rich picture of the current state of the influence of the street food consumption while correlational research reveals association between or a range of variables including age, education level, and employment status concerning street food consumption and satisfaction.

The samples will be surveyed from the popular streets in Cebu City namely Colon Street, Carbon Market, Larsian and IT Park due to their prevalent street foods popular to the locals and tourists. For reliability, validity and inter- test reliabilities of the instrument used in this study, a Cronbach's coefficient alpha of 0.80 was realized out of a possible. Respondents of the study are of legal age and are consumers of street food from the provided list of popular streets. Since the population is unknown the sample size was estimated to be 384 participants at 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error.

Results and Discussion

Respondents' Profile Analysis

Demographic distribution in table 1 depicts that largest proportion of respondents belongs to Generation Z while Millennial is second largest this is followed by Generation X and lastly Baby Boomers. This distribution is in line with global trends whereby the Generation Z

has a higher propensity for cultural and social participation through technology innovation such as the social media on which experiences such a food consumption are shared. These two generations are likely to accept street foods as a fast and cheap source of foods. This may indicate that the older consumers of Generation X and Baby Boomers are less likely to engage in street food consumption due to a number of reasons such as shift in the consumption patterns or health wise.

Table 1.

Respondents' Demographic Breakdown by Generation

Generation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Generation Z (18-24)	205	53.25%
Millennials (25-40)	133	34.55%
Generation X (41-56)	35	9.09%
Baby Boomers (57-75)	12	3.11%
Total	385	100%

This generational distribution is in consonant with earlier research which indicate that Generation Z consumers are motivated to engage in cultural activities and value foods and these generation find local food not only as an option (Chen et al., 2024). Competition must also be noted that the primary consumer base, which is actively implementing the 'less but more often and cheaply' rule.

Table 2.

Type of Respondents

Type of Respondent	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Locals	205	53.25
Tourists	180	46.75
Total	385	100%

The analysis of the results presented in Table 2 shows that the majority of the respondents are locals – 53.25%, while the rest are tourists – 46.75%. I believe that this distribution is going to be important in helping to explain why there is such variation in the views of street food. Whereas for the locals, street food is their tradition and a normal way of life, for the tourists, it is an interesting and specific attraction related to cultural experience. Understanding these motivations may benefit vendors – by maintaining the local focus and offering food that is unique and advertised to tourists. Such division of local and tourist consumers is consistent with the research stressing on the differences in the reasons for consuming street foods. Whereas for the locals it is associated with cultural and traditional identity, for the tourists it is associated with identity based on suggestions or advertisements (Wiatrowski et al., 2021). Hence, the capacity of the vendors to provide the expectations of both groups is central to the success of the street food in Cebu.

Street Food Consumption Frequency

A considerable percentage of the respondents (48.57%) said that they take street foods several times a week, 45.45% said that they rarely take it. However, those who responded that they consume street foods daily were only 5.97% of the respondents. These statistics shed light on the importance of street food in everyone's diet especially in urban areas where people need quick and cheap meals.

Table 3.

Respondents' Frequency of Street Food Consumption

Frequency of Consumption	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Several times a week	187	48.57
Rarely	175	45.45
Daily	23	5.97
Total	385	100%

This kind of a high frequency in consuming street foods can be seen in the light of other social facts where street foods are accepted as a way of combating the problems of time and money in fast-paced modern life (Wiatrowski et al., 2021). To many people, street foods are a convenient way of getting a meal. The small number of servings eaten per day indicates that although street foods are consumed frequently, they are not the exclusive or even the primary source of food for the respondents.

In particular, tourists may demonstrate lower frequency of interaction with street food since they are inclined to try new dishes within a limited extent during a trip. From this insight, there are ideas about how vendors of street foods could appeal to customers by portraying street food as a unique experience that tourists cannot afford to miss, while at the same time, being a convenient and easily accessible meal for the locals.

The data also show that street food vendors could better market to tourists and local customers separately. For example, creating campaign ideas or unique products targeting the tourists would make street food more attractive as a touristic product, while the constant supply of good and cheap street food would help to keep its role of the regular meal for the population.

Cultural Authenticity and Street Food

Cultural authenticity is one of the issues that define the street food perception in Cebu. Looking at table 4, respondents are in complete agreement that street food in Cebu City is authentic with a mean score of 3.55. Moreover, the respondents perceive that consuming street food is as a means of experiencing Cebuano culture with a mean score of 3.44. Such high results prove that street food is not only a meal but also a way to learn more about the culture of Cebu for locals and tourists.

Table 4.*Cultural Exploration of Street Food by Respondents*

Indicator	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Street food in Cebu City is authentic.	3.55	0.51	Strongly Agree
Consuming street food helps me connect with Cebuano culture.	3.44	0.50	Strongly Agree

The focus on the authenticity of the experience corresponds to the increasing global trend of cultural tourism, for which the role of food as a means for a person to immerse himself in the culture of the country is paramount (Hansen et al., 2023). This is a significant benefit for the locals in that it re-affirms their sense of cultural pride and for the tourists it offers them a glimpse and feel of the Cebuano culture.

Quality and Satisfaction with Street Food

The evaluation of the quality of street food in Cebu was done according to the following attributes as presented in the table 5. Taste had the highest mean of 3.31 than the overall quality with mean of 3.08. However, cleanliness and hygiene scored the lowest mean of 2.44 which shows that while consumers have given positive feedback in other areas, they still view cleanliness as a weakness. This remains a familiar problem for the global street food market, where, for example, problems of cleanliness and hygiene can become an obstacle to consumer confidence and product satisfaction (Rane, 2011). It was found that if the hygiene standards can be raised without having to adjust the price beyond a reasonable level, then providing street food will offer vendors a competitive advantage, thus making it a more attractive market for locals and tourists alike. This would ensure satisfaction of the consumers' concerns, and thus an improved experience of their dining.

Table 5.*Quality of Street Food Products*

Quality Indicator	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Taste	3.31	0.70	Excellent
Cleanliness and Hygiene	2.44	0.81	Good
Variety	3.09	0.78	Very Good
Freshness	2.70	0.76	Very Good
Overall Quality	3.08	0.75	Very Good

Since the score for cleanliness is lower than the rest of the aspects, the street food vendors should focus on the aspect of cleanliness. These improvements do not necessarily have to be costly, and if so implemented, it will not pose any threat to the affordability of the food as a whole since most of its consumers will be the tourist who are more likely to be wary of diseases contracted from strange foods.

Level of Satisfaction with Street Food

The results presented in Table 6 reveal that the respondents are highly responsive to several elements of street food service, and the score 3.45 was assigned to the price factor, while the overall satisfaction score was 3.32. Time taken to serve food and availability of condiments also received impressive positive ratings, thus proving consumers' satisfaction with the speed and diverse options of the street food sellers. On the other hand the score for size of serving was slightly lower (3.20) which indicates that the restaurant can still improve in serving sizes.

Table 6.

Satisfaction Levels with Street Food Products

Satisfaction Indicator	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Service Provided	3.29	0.46	Very Satisfied
Speed of Service	3.30	0.46	Very Satisfied
Availability of Condiments	3.29	0.46	Very Satisfied
Size of Serving	3.20	0.40	Satisfied
Price	3.45	0.50	Very Satisfied
Overall Satisfaction	3.32	0.34	Very Satisfied

Changing portion sizes or giving better instructions on the price depending on the serving size may go a long way in improving the satisfaction of the customers who may think that the portions offered may not be satisfactory. This high degree of satisfaction has something to do with the ability of the street food vendors in providing what consumers want in terms of price, speed and service. Even the small issues like portion control and cleanliness could be improved to even further improve the customer appeal of the street food in Cebu.

Association Between Profile and Perception of Street Food Quality

In Table 7, the chi-square test results show that both age and type of respondent have no significant association with the perception of street food quality.

The p-values of 0.149 for age and 0.713 for type of respondent are both greater than 0.05, leading to the failure to reject the null hypothesis. This means that, regardless of the age group or whether the respondent is a local or tourist, the perception of street food quality does not significantly differ.

The Cramer's V values (0.10 and 0.06, respectively) also indicate weak and very weak associations between these variables.

Table 7.*Association Between Profile and Perception of Street Food Quality*

Variable Pair	Chi-Square Value	P-value	Cramer's V	Level of Association	Decision	Interpretation
Age and Level of Quality	13.300	0.149	0.10	Weak Association	Fail to Reject	Not significant
Type of Respondent and Level of Quality	3.72	0.713	0.06	Very Weak Association	Fail to Reject	Not significant

This finding suggests that street food quality is perceived consistently across different generations and respondent types. It reinforces the idea that street food vendors maintain a relatively uniform standard of quality that appeals to a broad demographic. However, efforts to improve specific aspects like cleanliness (which received lower ratings) would benefit all groups equally.

Association Between Profile and Level of Satisfaction

In table 8, chi square test of association was used to compare the respondent's age and type to their level of satisfaction. As for the age factor, p equals 0.06 which is somewhat greater than the conventional significance level of 0.05, meaning that there is no significant correlation between the age and the satisfaction level. Likewise, the p-value obtained for type of respondent is 0.539 implying that there is no significant relationship between the type of the respondent and the satisfaction level.

Table 8.*Association Between Profile and Level of Satisfaction*

Variable Pair	Chi-Square Value	P-value	Cramer's V	Level of Association	Decision	Interpretation
Age and Level of Satisfaction	11.70	0.06	0.12	Weak Association	Fail to Reject	Not significant
Type of Respondent and Satisfaction	3.11	0.539	0.06	Very Weak Association	Fail to Reject	Not significant

These findings suggest that the level of satisfaction with the street food is the same for any age brackets as well as the kind of respondent. Hypotheses 1a and 1b are supported by the low Cramer's V values of 0.12 and 0.06 respectively meaning that the level of satisfaction does not vary greatly with the demographic characteristics of the respondents; in effect most of them have similar levels of satisfaction with the services provided by the street food vendors.

Association Between Frequency of Consumption, Satisfaction, and Quality

In table 9, we look at how the frequency of consumption of street foods, satisfaction and perceived quality are related. The study found out that there is a association between the consumption rate and satisfaction ($p < 0.05$) with a Cramer's V of 0.15 showing a weak, yet present association. This implies that out of the two groups of respondents, the one that is likely to have higher satisfaction levels is the one that consume more of street foods. This

insight could be valuable to vendors, and they could use it to offer their customers similar items at a cheaper price so that they could increase satisfaction among customers even further by means of reward schemes.

Table 9.

Association Between Frequency of Consumption, Satisfaction, and Quality

Variable Pair	Chi-Square Value	P-value	Cramer's V	Level of Association	Decision	Interpretation
Frequency of Consumption and Satisfaction	18.74	0.0046	0.15	Weak Association	Reject Ho	Significant
Frequency of Consumption and Quality	16.58	0.06	0.11	Weak Association	Fail to Reject	Not Significant
Satisfaction and Quality	113.27	0.00	0.38	Moderate Association	Reject Ho	Significant

In contrast, the relationship between the frequency of consumption and quality was non-significant, $\chi^2 = 5.44$, $p < 0.05$, which suggested that the perceived quality of street food does not differ with the regularity with which respondents consume street foods. It could be a sign of a constant quality which is being received in an equally manner by both the frequent and the infrequent consumers.

The results for satisfaction and quality are moderate and significant with a Cramer's V of 0.38 and p-value < 0.01 . In essence, the findings present a very high positive association, which suggests that satisfaction depends on the perceived quality of street food. Thus, the quality of the food, particularly the factors such as cleanliness, could have a positive association with the level of satisfaction of the customers.

The statistical analysis between the respondents' profiles and their perceptions of street food quality, as well as their satisfaction levels, reveals several important insights. First, there was no significant association between age or type of respondent and the perception of street food quality. This suggests that across different age groups and whether respondents are locals or tourists, the overall perception of street food quality remains consistent. The weak and very weak associations between these variables indicate that street food vendors provide a relatively uniform experience to diverse demographic groups. This reinforces the idea that improvements in specific areas, such as cleanliness, would benefit all respondents equally and increase trust in street food offerings (Wiatrowski et al., 2021).

Similarly, no significant associations were found between age or type of respondent and their level of satisfaction with street food. The weak associations here suggest that satisfaction is perceived consistently across different groups. This consistency in satisfaction levels points to a general appreciation for street food offerings, regardless of demographic differences. However, there remains an opportunity to further enhance satisfaction through quality improvements, particularly in the areas of hygiene and food safety (Rane, 2011).

More notably, a significant association was found between frequency of street food consumption and satisfaction. Respondents who consumed street food more frequently were

generally more satisfied, suggesting that regular engagement with street food leads to higher levels of contentment. This insight provides an opportunity for vendors to develop strategies that encourage repeat consumption, such as offering loyalty rewards or discounts for regular customers, thus fostering a more satisfied consumer base. However, the data also showed no significant association between frequency of consumption and the perception of street food quality, indicating that quality is perceived similarly by both regular and occasional consumers.

Lastly, there is a moderate association between satisfaction and quality, showing that perceptions of quality directly influence overall satisfaction. Improving the quality of street food, particularly in areas that received lower scores like cleanliness and hygiene, would likely result in higher customer satisfaction levels. This strong link between satisfaction and quality underscores the importance of maintaining high standards in street food offerings, as improvements in quality are likely to lead to a more favorable consumer experience. Addressing these concerns could be key to boosting both local and tourist engagement with street food.

These ratings stress that street food is a means of intercultural exchange for both the population and guests. This view is in consonance with the gastronomy tourism where food experiences assist the tourists to gain deeper insights of the culture of the host community (Kovalenko et al., 2023). In terms of policy, it is possible to maintain the street food cultural identity, yet conform to current hygienic standards and contribute to positioning Cebu as a culinary city.

Such high levels of satisfaction especially on the price and speed of service are in harmony with Zeithaml and Bitner's (2012) perceived value where the consumer determines the value of a product against the cost and availability of the product. The existing literature on street food has shed light on a number of factors affecting both the vendors and the buyers, especially given the increased role of street foods in people's lives due to growing urbanization.

Sgroi et al. (2022) support the interaction of rural and urban ways of life in street food, noting that street food sellers are significant in the urban community because they offer cheap and diverse meals. Based on their research, they conclude that street food is not only a way of getting food but also a way of getting connected. This is in line with this study where street food was perceived to bring the locals and tourists closer to Cebuano culture. The idea that street food creates social interaction in urban areas supports the finding that consumers appreciate the authenticity of street food and the culture it brings to the table on how street food improves the overall experience of Cebu.

In contrast, the socioeconomic aspect of street foods especially participating in generation of employment and affordable meals highlighted by Winarno and Allain (1991). The economic importance is reflected in the results where majority of the respondents (locals) visit street food vendors more than twice a week; this shows the economic importance of street food as an affordable food source for the working population. However, both studies admit the

difficulties of hygiene and food safety in street food vending that is in line with present research where cleanliness got the lowest score among the quality criteria.

On the other hand, Dipka (2022) provides an understanding of the cultural aspect of street food and points to the conflict between the traditional food culture and the modern fast food culture. This tension is evident in the consumers' interactions with street food, which was seen as culturally appropriate and was given high scores, but at the same time, the street food industry is challenged by the globalization of fast food culture. In agreement with Dipka (2022), the study reveals that both locals and tourists view street food as a cultural representation, however, as consumers become busier, traditional food practices may be at the risk of being replaced.

The public health aspect is explored by Sousa et al. (2022) where they concentrate on the nutritional value of the food as well as the health implications of the food sold in street vending in urban areas. In the context of the growing rate of urbanization, street food is characterized by the use of a large amount of fat and salt, which is dangerous for people's health and leads to obesity. The study did not directly explore the nutritional value of Cebu street food, the low scores on the cleanliness and hygiene may link with Sousa et al., (2022) . These findings imply that although street food has cultural and economic advantages, there is a need for its enhancement.

Another source of data is Morano et al., (2018) who focus on consumer perceptions of street food quality. They found out that hygiene, social contact and the behavior of vendors play a big role in food hygiene. To expound on Morano et al., (2018) observations, that cultural values and previous experiences also contribute to the perception; in my study, cultural importance of street food is highly valued by both locals and tourists.

In the same way, Jeaheng et al., (2023) focus on the street food from the tourist's viewpoint and I find that cultural experience, safety, and sensory appeal are the factors that have a significant impact on the tourists' repurchase intention. This is in agreement with the findings where 46.75% of the respondents were tourists and authenticity and quality of food were key factors that influenced their engagement with street food. The cultural connection was also high with an average of 3.44, which is in agreement with Jeaheng et al., (2023) who noted that to improve the tourist experience, cultural street food should be featured.

Huynh-Van et al.,(2022) explain that education and infrastructure development are critical in enhancing food safety among the street vendors. They also noted that aspects like business capital, infrastructure, and food safety training are important for the vendors to meet the safety standards.. These infrastructural and educational challenges can be seen as potential solutions to enhance the quality and safety of street food, thus enhancing the overall health of the population and the trust of consumers.

Conclusion

Street food in Cebu is the place where culture, economy and urban development meet, and the food maps the connection between these spheres in the city. It represents the gastronomic heritage of the Philippines, as well as being a cultural hub and an important source of income for vendors in the informal sector. However, the sector has its own problems such as the lower perception of consumers on the issue of food safety; its lack of regulation and the changing dynamics of the tourism industry.

The study also reveals the dual cultural and economic nature of Cebu's street food. On one hand, street food is a readily available and relatively affordable source of nourishment for people of all walks of life and a form of entertainment, as well as a way to taste local cuisine. On the flip side, issues to do with hygiene and the lack implementation tough food safety laws are threats to the health of the public and the future of the industry.

Therefore, to further enhance the growth of Cebu as it moves towards a more advanced setting, these problems need to be solved through enhanced rules and regulations, increased understanding of the vendors, and better support structures. The street food establishments of the city should be able to maintain its tradition in order to be more effective in delivering quality food products as it becomes a major part of Cebu's tourism plan. In this manner, the city can help preserve local street food and at the same time promote its growth through measures that protect the public health of its consumers. This will not only help the local vendors and consumers but also will enhance the image of Cebu in the culinary industry in the international market.

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