

Study Of Consumer Consumption Patterns of Street Food Based on Hygiene and Sanitation Practices of Street Food Vendors in Ahmedabad City

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In: *Advances in Interdisciplinary Research in Engineering, Business Management and Social Sciences*, edited by Dr.M.Mahadev. Xplore Publications. ISBN: 978-81-963834-1-1. © 2026 Xplore Publications. All rights reserved.

ABSTRACT

This research investigates consumer consumption patterns of street food in Ahmedabad and the influence of hygiene and sanitation practices of street food vendors on these patterns. Conducted between 2020 and 2021, the study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys, observations, and secondary data analysis. The findings reveal that while taste and affordability remain primary factors in consumer choice, hygiene and sanitation have become significant considerations post-COVID-19. Significant gaps in hygiene practices and regulatory compliance among vendors were identified despite this shift. Recommendations include comprehensive training programs, improved communication strategies, strengthened regulatory oversight, and targeted public health campaigns. These measures are essential to enhance food safety and public health outcomes in Ahmedabad's street food sector.

Keywords: Street Food, Consumer Behaviour, Hygiene, Sanitation, Public Health, Ahmedabad, COVID-19

Introduction

Street food constitutes a significant element of the urban gastronomic landscape, particularly in developing countries like India, where it is integral to the culinary culture and the economy. Ahmedabad, known for its rich culinary heritage, has witnessed a proliferation of street food vendors. While enriching the local food scene, this growth has raised significant public health concerns due to inconsistent hygiene and sanitation standards among vendors, a common issue in rapidly urbanizing areas.

Globally, the linkage between poor hygiene among street food vendors and the risk of foodborne illnesses is well-documented (Abid et al., 2022; Ayodele & Panama, 2016). Despite extensive research on street food safety, there remains a notable gap in focused studies that address specific urban contexts, particularly in cities like Ahmedabad, known for their culinary prominence and hygiene

challenges (Dalal, 2016; Le Nguyen et al., 2018).

This research, conducted between 2020 and 2021, aims to fill this gap by examining how consumer consumption patterns in Ahmedabad are influenced by their perceptions of hygiene and sanitation practices of street food vendors. The findings from this study are intended to enhance public health policies and guide-lines, offering insights that could improve food safety across similar urban settings (Gupta et al., 2018; Karim, 2014).

Employing a mixed-methods approach, this study combines surveys, observations, and secondary data analysis to provide a comprehensive overview. The timing of this research is particularly pertinent given the recent global focus on hygiene prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has fundamentally altered public attitudes towards sanitation and safety. The potential commercial implications of this study include developing hygiene rating systems for vendors and creating consumer awareness programs, presenting new business opportunities within the street food sector (Wiatrowski et al., 2021; Zanetta et al., 2022).

However, this study has its limitations. It focuses solely on Ahmedabad and involves a sample of 100 vendors and 325 consumers, which may not capture broader regional or national trends. Additionally, excluding macroeconomic factors and biological testing of food samples limits the depth of the findings. Conducted over one year, the research provides a snapshot rather than a longitudinal perspective, restricting its ability to track evolving trends over time.

By concentrating on Ahmedabad and engaging directly with vendors and consumers, this study endeavours to deliver an in-depth understanding of the hygiene and sanitation practices within the local street food industry. With a strategic and methodological approach, it is poised to offer valuable insights into improving public health through enhanced food safety practices.

Objective of the Study

- Assess the hygiene and sanitation practices among street food vendors in Ahmedabad.
- Understand consumer perceptions and attitudes towards these practices.
- Examine the relationship between vendors' hygiene practices and consumer consumption patterns.

Literature Review

The significance of street food in urban diets, especially in developing economies, is well-documented. However, street food vendors' implications of hygiene and sanitation practices have received varying degrees of attention across different regions. In Ahmedabad, a city known for its vibrant street food culture, it is crucial to examine these aspects due to their direct impact on public health.

Global Context and Local Specificity: Studies such as those by Abd Hanan et al. (2021) and Alimi Workneh (2016) have highlighted that consumers often prioritize taste and affordability over hygiene, leading to significant health risks. This tendency underscores the importance of integrating health awareness into consumer choices. In contrast, Dalal (2016) and Le Nguyen et al. (2018) emphasize the need for more focused research on hygiene practices in specific urban settings like Ahmedabad, where

street food is an integral part of the local culture but is marred by inconsistent hygiene standards.

Consumer Perceptions and Hygiene Practices: Research by Gupta et al. (2018) indicates that consumer perceptions of hygiene can significantly influence their eating habits. However, this often competes with the lure of taste and convenience. The study by Karim (2014) further supports this by demonstrating that improved public awareness of hygiene can significantly alter consumer behaviour, promoting safer eating practices.

Hygiene and Public Health: The relationship between vendor hygiene practices and public health outcomes is critical. Ayodele and Panama (2016) prove that poor hygiene

among street food vendors is linked to higher incidences of foodborne illnesses. Similarly, studies by Wiatrowski et al. (2021) and Zanetta et al. (2022) suggest that effective regulatory frameworks and vendor training programs can mitigate these risks, enhancing food safety and consumer confidence.

The Impact of COVID-19: The recent COVID-19 pandemic has brought an unprecedented focus on hygiene, affecting consumer behaviours and vendor practices globally. This shift is seen in the increased emphasis on sanitation measures among vendors and the growing consumer demand for higher hygiene standards, which could permanently reshape the street food landscape.

Cultural Dimensions of Street Food: The cultural significance of street food in Ahmedabad, as described by local gastronomic traditions, plays a pivotal role in the consumption patterns observed. The city's festivals and daily social practices involving street food highlight the need for targeted public health interventions that are culturally sensitive and effective in promoting hygiene without detracting from the cultural value of street food experiences.

This literature review establishes a foundation for understanding the complex interplay between consumer behaviour, vendor practices, and regulatory frameworks in street food hygiene and public health. It highlights the need for localized research that considers cultural specificities and consumer preferences, which can inform more effective public health policies and interventions in urban settings like Ahmedabad.

Methodology

Research Design: This study employs a mixed-methods approach to understand consumer consumption patterns and the hygiene and sanitation practices of street food vendors in Ahmedabad. The research integrates qualitative and quantitative techniques, including surveys, observations, and secondary data analysis. This approach allows for a nuanced exploration of the subject, capturing statistical trends and contextual insights.

Study Area: The research was conducted in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India. This city was chosen due to its rich culinary heritage and status as a significant hub for street food. Four prominent street food hubs within Ahmedabad were selected for the study to ensure a representative sample of vendors and consumers.

Sampling Procedure: The study involved a purposive sampling method to select street food vendors and a stratified random sampling method to select consumers. A total of 100 street food vendors and 325 consumers were included in the study. Vendors were selected based on their location within the four designated street food hubs, while consumers were stratified by age, gender, and income to ensure diversity.

Data Collection Tools and Techniques

Surveys: Structured questionnaires were administered to both vendors and consumers. The vendor survey focused on hygiene practices, awareness of food safety regulations, and the impact of COVID-19. The consumer survey explored consumption patterns, factors influencing food choices, and perceptions of vendor hygiene.

Observations: Field observations were conducted to document vendors' hygiene practices and the interaction between vendors and consumers. This included ob-

serving food preparation, handling, and serving practices.

Secondary Data Analysis: To contextualize the primary data within broader trends and regulatory frameworks, a comprehensive review of existing literature, government reports, and previous studies was conducted.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Data: Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were performed using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics provided insights into the demographics of the sample and the frequency of various practices. Inferential statistics were used to identify significant relationships between variables, including chi-square tests and regression analysis.

Qualitative Data: Thematic analysis was employed to analyze qualitative data from observations and open-ended survey responses. This involved coding the data to identify recurring themes and patterns related to hygiene practices and consumer perceptions.

Limitations: The study is limited to Ahmedabad and may need to be more generalizable to other regions. The sample size, while sufficient for the scope of this study, may only capture some variations in practices and perceptions. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data could introduce bias, as respondents may underreport or overreport certain behaviours.

Principles of Research Design: The research design adheres to validity, reliability, and triangulation principles. Validity was ensured using well-established survey instruments and cross-referencing findings with secondary data. Reliability was achieved through consistent data collection procedures and thorough training of field researchers. Triangulation was employed by integrating multiple data sources and methods to understand the research questions comprehensively.

This study employs a robust mixed-methods approach to provide actionable insights into the hygiene and sanitation practices of street food vendors in Ahmedabad and their impact on consumer

consumption patterns. The findings are in-tended to inform public health policies and contribute to the development of effective interventions to enhance food safety in urban environments.

Results and Findings

The research aimed to uncover how street food vendors’ hygiene and sanitation practices in Ahmedabad impact consumer consumption patterns. This section presents the key findings from the study, highlighting significant trends and in-sights derived from the data collected.

Consumer behaviour and Preferences: The survey revealed that taste and af-fordability were the most influential factors driving consumer choice, consistent with findings by Abd Hanan et al. (2021) and Alimi Workneh (2016). However, the

post-COVID-19 landscape has shifted consumer priorities, with 23% of respon-dents considering hygiene and sanitation as critical factors in their decision-mak-ing. This marks a notable divergence from earlier behaviours where, as Gupta et al. (2018) observed, consumers often overlooked hygiene in favour of taste and convenience.

Consumption Patterns: The study provided a comprehensive overview of street food consumption patterns in Ahmedabad.

Table 1: Frequency of Street Food Consumption by Age Group

Age Group	Daily (%)	Weekly (%)	Monthly (%)
18-25	20.3	34.6	10.0
26-35	15.2	25.7	15.1
36-45	10.5	20.3	12.0
46+	7.5	15.4	5.4

Table 2: Consumer Monthly Expenditure on Street Food by Gender

Gender	<100 Rs (%)	100-500 Rs (%)	>500 Rs (%)
Male	15.3	40.7	44.0
Female	25.6	60.2	14.2

Young adults aged 18-25 were the most frequent consumers, comprising 64.9% of the sample. This demographic exhibited diverse consumption frequencies, ranging from daily to monthly visits. Additionally, the data indicated varying levels of monthly expenditure on street food, with a significant portion of males spending over 500 Rs monthly, while females generally spent less. Hygiene and Public Health Concerns: Street food vendors' hygiene and sanitation practices play a critical role in public health.

Table 3: Hygiene and Sanitation Practices Among Vendors

Practice	Percentage Adopting (%)
Regular hand washing	57
Use of Sanitizers	22
Use of Gloves	31
Daily Cleaning of Vending Cart	47

Waste Disposal Practices	68
Enhanced Sanitation During COVID	31

The table illustrates the hygiene and sanitation practices adopted by street food vendors. The data shows that 57% of vendors practice regular hand washing, while only 22% use sanitisers and 31% use gloves. Daily cleaning of vending carts is conducted by 47% of vendors, and 68% follow proper waste disposal practices. However, only 31% of vendors implemented enhanced sanitation measures during the COVID-19 pandemic. These figures highlight significant gaps in comprehensive hygiene practices among vendors, indicating a need for improved training and stricter enforcement of sanitation standards.

Table 4: Consumer Opinions on Hygiene and Safety of Street Food

Opinion	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Street food is generally safe	35	87	105	67	31	325
Vendors follow good hygiene	20	65	120	80	40	325
Concerned about food-borne illness	120	90	70	30	15	325
Hygiene awareness increased post-COVID	140	100	55	20	10	325

The table presents consumer opinions on the hygiene and safety of street food. A total of 122 consumers (35 strongly agree, 87 agree) believe that street food is generally safe, while 98 (20 strongly agree, 65 agree) think vendors follow good hygiene practices. A significant portion, 210 consumers (120 strongly agree, 90 agree), are concerned about foodborne illnesses. Additionally, 240 consumers (140 strongly agree, 100 agree) reported increased hygiene awareness post-COVID-19. This data reflects a heightened concern for hygiene and safety among consumers, particularly in the post-pandemic context.

Table 5: Consumer Satisfaction with Street Food Hygiene

Satisfaction Level	Percentage (%)
Very Satisfied	9.2
Satisfied	38.5
Neutral	30.8
Dissatisfied	15.4
Very Dissatisfied	