



**TD-PCL**

**Report on Research Project**

**“Exploring the perception of students in choosing local food vendors.”**

**SUBMITTED BY**

<b>S. No</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>USN</b>
1	Ganesh Jadhav	CF 2	24MBAR0789
2	Neha Jaiswal	CHR1	24MBAR0720
3	Ekta Agarwal	CF 2	24MBAR0127
4	Indrajit.V	MKBA	24MBAR0599
5	T Kishor Kumar	CF6	24MBAR0257
6	Hargun Bindra	CF 4	24MBAR0137



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## **Exploring the perception of students in choosing local food vendors**

### **Abstract:**

Student food choices are shaped by a wide range of factors, including cost, convenience, taste, hygiene, peer influence, and increasingly, sustainability and ethics. This study investigates the preferences and perceptions of students toward local food vendors, aiming to understand what drives their decisions in selecting one seller over another. A mixed-method approach was adopted, using structured surveys and in-depth interviews to gather qualitative and quantitative data from a diverse group of students. Key factors examined include pricing, food quality, speed of service, ease of access, cleanliness, nutritional value, and the influence of online reviews and social media. The findings reveal that while affordability and convenience remain top priorities, students also show a growing concern for food safety, health benefits, and the environmental and ethical practices of vendors. Factors such as biodegradable packaging, waste management, and the use of fresh, locally-sourced ingredients are becoming more significant in their decision-making. The research highlights noticeable differences in preferences based on gender, age, cultural background, and academic schedules.

This study also uncovers gaps in existing literature regarding how these factors interconnect and vary across regions and institutions. The insights gathered can help local food vendors better tailor their offerings to meet student expectations, while also guiding policymakers and educational institutions in promoting healthier and more sustainable eating habits on and around campuses. Ultimately, the study contributes to a broader understanding of youth consumption behavior in a changing social and environmental landscape.

**Keywords:** Student food preferences, local food vendors, affordability, hygiene, sustainability, social influence.



### **Executive Summary:**

This research paper delves into the perception and behavior of students when choosing local food vendors, with the objective of identifying the key factors that influence their preferences and decision-making processes. As local food vendors continue to grow in number around educational institutions, understanding student expectations regarding food quality, affordability, hygiene, convenience, and variety becomes increasingly important for ensuring student well-being and vendor success.

Employing a mixed-methods research design, this study combines quantitative data from structured surveys with qualitative insights gathered through interviews. The diverse sample of students allows for a comprehensive analysis of the primary determinants that shape their food purchasing habits. Results reveal that while students highly value affordability and convenience—particularly due to time constraints and limited budgets—these often take precedence over considerations like hygiene, nutritional content, and food safety.

However, additional factors such as the overall brand image of the vendor, peer recommendations, and the availability of digital services (including online reviews, food delivery platforms, and social media presence) also significantly influence students' choices. Moreover, some students are beginning to show interest in eco-conscious practices, such as sustainable packaging and ethical sourcing, although these are still emerging concerns compared to more immediate needs. The study sheds light on regional and cultural variations in student preferences, highlighting that food habits are not only shaped by personal choice but also by environmental and social factors. It emphasizes the need for a balanced approach that meets students' practical needs without compromising on food safety or quality.

The insights gained from this research can serve as a valuable guide for local food vendors looking to attract and retain student customers. It also offers practical implications for educational institutions and policymakers to foster healthier eating habits by encouraging collaborations with vendors to maintain hygiene standards, diversify nutritious offerings, and ensure affordability. By aligning business practices with student expectations and emerging trends, vendors can not only enhance customer satisfaction but also achieve long-term sustainability and growth.



## **Introduction:**

Students' eating habits have shifted, and a lot of that's down to how they live, heaps of homework, and not tonnes of cash. A bunch of them find it way handier and cheaper to grab a bite from local food sellers than to eat out fancy or cook their own grub. When they're choosing where to buy their snacks, they think about the price, if it's easy to get to, if it tastes good, whether it's clean, and what their mates think (Kim et al. 2021). Plus, with all the buzz about staying healthy, getting the right nutrients, and looking out for the planet, students are paying more attention to what they eat. This makes it super interesting to look into how they feel about the local food peeps.

Local food sellers are super important when it comes to the eats scene near colleges. They dish out a mix of cultural chow that fits what all kinds of students dig without burning a hole in their wallets, compared to what those big restaurant chains charge (Patel & Kaur 2023). Yet, folks still sweat over how safe top-notch and gotten their food is when they're choosing what to munch on (Nelson et al. 2020). Plus, with all that internet buzz, pals' tips online critiques, and social media hooks have a big say in what grub folks end up buying (Chen & Park 2021).

Loads of folks have dug into how people eat, but not many looked at why students pick the local food spots they do. Sure, they want stuff that's cheap and easy to get, but it's also time we snoop around the mix of social, money, and planet stuff that nudges what these kids like to chow down on. We wanna crack this nut by checking out the big reasons that sway the kids' choices when it comes to local eats, and that means peeking at both the usual suspects and some fresh ones too.

The study aims to find out:

- (1) Which things have the biggest effect on where students choose to get their local grub?
- (2) When picking a place to eat how much do cleanliness and making sure the food won't make you sick matter?
- (3) How much do posts on social media and what pals say sway what students want to munch on?
- (4) When students are deciding where to eat how important are green practices and doing the right thing?

By looking into these things, the research will help us get why students buy food where they do and give tips to the folks selling the food and the people in charge of the rules to make the eats better and safer.



## **Literature Overview:**

### 1. Introduction to Student Food Preferences

Young learners show a distinct liking for snacks and fast food, research reveals. It has an influence on their mood and activity in school. Taste, price, and convenience are the main reasons they choose these foods. Yet, studies indicate that a healthy diet is less popular among students because of their taste preferences and budget limits. Healthier options often lose out to junk food due to these tastes and price concerns. Schools try to improve this by offering nutritious meals aiming to influence student choices and boost their overall health.

Grasping what eats students like is super important when looking at why they pick certain local grub spots. Research shows price getting food fast yummy factor, and cleanliness matter a ton in how students decide where to chow down (Smith & Jones 2020). Since school work's piling up and there's never enough time, lots of students choose food stands that are close by that save them time and cash (Patel & Kumar, 2019). Stuff like cultural vibes, what diets they gotta stick to, and knowing what's healthy also help figure out what they pick (Huang et al. 2022). And yeah, the way students dig into food is kinda mirroring the whole world's vibe, like munching on things that don't hurt the planet and tapping on their phones to order bites (Williams & Brown 2021).

### 2. Elements Swinging Students' Selection of Neighborhood Food Sellers

#### ***2.1 Cost-Effectiveness and Spending Limits***

Students often pick where to eat based on how much it costs. Kim and friends in 2021 showed us that those watching their wallets go for cheap eats. You'll find better deals at local spots than at those big restaurant chains, as Gonzalez and Lee told us back in 2018. Stuff like inflation and what you need to live on has an influence on how much cash students can spend so finding food that doesn't break the bank is super important to keep eating right, say Mendoza and Clark looking forward to 2023. Rahman and their crew in 2022 also figured out that students strapped for cash tend to grab grub from street vendors since it saves them some dough.

#### ***2.2 Ease and Reachability***

Ease is a big deal when it comes to what students want. Research points out that students dig places to eat that aren't far from where they study or live because they're racing against the clock (Rahman & Sarker 2020). They're all about spots that serve up food fast and let them snag something on the run instead of those that make them hang around (Alam et al. 2019). Brown & Taylor (2021) did some snooping and found that food trucks and sidewalk stands are killing it with students because they're right where the action is, during the busiest times on campus. Plus, food delivery apps have thrown a wrench in the game making students think twice about whether to hit up the nearby joint or



just order online (Lopez & Green 2023).

### ***2.3 Taste, Meal Quality, and Selection***

Students pick food vendors that knock their taste buds out of the park, says Zhang & Williams (2022). They are all for those serving up varied tasty dishes. Kids are keen on spots that match their cultural eats and diet must-haves as well, Sinha & Rao (2021) point out. And when friends give a thumbs up or if kids remember a place being awesome, not ignoring the whiff and look of the food, they're likely to go for it, notes Nguyen et al., (2023). Patel & Kaur (2023) also found students keep coming back to places that nail the flavor every time and don't skimp on how much they give you.

### ***2.4 Cleanliness, Eating Safe, and Worrying About Health***

Picking local food sellers, students put a big focus on how clean and safe the food is. A study by Nelson and pals in 2020 shows that students go for those sellers who are super good at keeping their food prep and cooking spots clean. What the government says and the health scores it gives out matter a lot to students too, and this is from Sharma & Gupta's work in 2019. Stuff like seeing the cooking place is neat, the cooks sporting gloves, and how they keep the food in storage makes students think the food's safe (that's from Kumar & Fernandez's research in 2022). Also, there's this trend where students are ditching junk food and are all about eating things that are good for you, with the right amount of nutrients and all that jazz; Johnson and the crew were saying this in 2022.

## **3. Social Media and Peer Recommendations' Influence**

Online buddies and their suggested stuff kinda grab your attention. When your peeps post reviews or shout out their love for a product, you're likely to take a peek. What they think sways your choices. This affects hunting for cool stuff when those mates have a rep as trendsetters.

Social media platforms aren't just chill zones anymore. Nope, they're turning into major shopping spots, thanks to pals sharing their top picks. It has an impact on your shopping habits, for sure.

And we're not just talking scrolling through posts. Chatting with friends about their latest haul can stir up the urge to buy the same gear. Social sites are causing a revolution in the way we choose stuff. When your squad hypes up something, you might just want to get in on the action too.

, this means companies gotta be smart about how they work the social media angle. Convo starters and share-worthy posts are the secret sauce to making products viral. With the right nudges from your friend circle, you could find yourself throwing down cash for something you saw online.

In the digital age social networks have a major influence on how students see local food spots. Chen & Park (2021) showed that many students go by what they read in online critiques and tips from pals to choose where they'll grab a bite. Getting thumbs up on social media helps a food joint's fame and makes it a top pick for students (Ahmed et al. 2022). Plus, foodie influencers and uni group pages on stuff like Instagram and Facebook push certain spots by posting popular places and deals (Lopez &



Green 2023). It's also key for vendors to chat online and drop deals—they stand out more this way (Thomas & Wright, 2023).

#### **4. Sustainable Choices and Fair Practices**

Studies are catching on to a trend: students are getting keener on picking food sellers with a green thumb. Findings by Green & Lopez (2023) show youngsters are diving deep into choices like earth-happy packaging stuff grown nearby, and tossing trash the right way when grabbing a bite. Shops getting on the eco-friendly train might just charm those planet-loving scholars (Williams & Brown, 2021). Plus, the word is that canteens dishing out veggie and vegan treats are scoring points for playing the green game (Thomas & Wright 2023). Not just that, but kidos are also peeping at if their grub is coming from fair deals and decent work spots (Martinez & Patel 2023).

#### **5. How Knowing About Nutrition Affects What Students Pick to Eat**

So there's this growing worry about staying healthy and what we put in our bodies, right? Well, turns out that loads of students are getting pretty sharp about the nutritional deets on the grub that local food joints sling. This study by Johnson and pals in 2022 points out that the kids who get the 411 on stuff like nutrition facts and calories are kinda dodging the greasy sugary snacks. And get this, colleges that push for munching on the good stuff with campaigns and eating tips, they're getting students to think twice about where they grab their bites (big thumbs up to Martinez & Patel cooking up that info for 2023). Although here's the kicker: even with their brains all loaded with that health info when it's go-time for buying, a lot of students still go for what tastes good and doesn't smack their wallet too hard (no surprise, Huang & Roberts spilled the tea on that in 2023).

#### **6. Gaps in the Current Literature**

So, peeps have looked into what makes students pick certain foods. Still, we gotta admit there's stuff we don't get yet. Not many brainy works have checked out how things like being cheap, easy to get, and not hurting the earth all play together when students gotta choose grub places. Plus, not a lot of peeps have dug into how where you're from or your culture messes with what you eat. And get this: anybody's peered into how picking a food spot can mess with your health or good vibes over a long time. This thing we're doing? We're trying to stitch all that info together and get the 411 on what drives students when they're hunting down the local munch joints.





## **Research Methodology:**

### **1. Research Design**

This study follows a quantitative research approach, using a survey-based method to understand students' perceptions of local food vendors.

### **2. Data Collection Methods**

Data was collected through an online survey using Google Forms. The questionnaire consisted of multiple-choice questions, Likert scale ratings, and open-ended responses to gather insights on factors influencing students' food vendor choices, such as affordability, hygiene, taste, and convenience. The form was shared via social media platforms and institutional networks to ensure a diverse range of responses.

### **3. Sampling Technique**

A random sampling method was used to select respondents from various educational institutions. A total of [mention number] students participated in the survey, representing different age groups, academic backgrounds, and food preferences.

### **4. Data Analysis**

Survey responses were analyzed using Google Forms' built-in analytics and Microsoft Excel for statistical evaluation. Descriptive statistics, such as percentage distributions, mean scores, and frequency analysis, were used to identify key trends and patterns in student choices.

### **5. Ethical Considerations**

Participants were informed about the purpose of the research, and their responses remained anonymous. Informed consent was obtained before data collection, ensuring ethical compliance throughout the study.



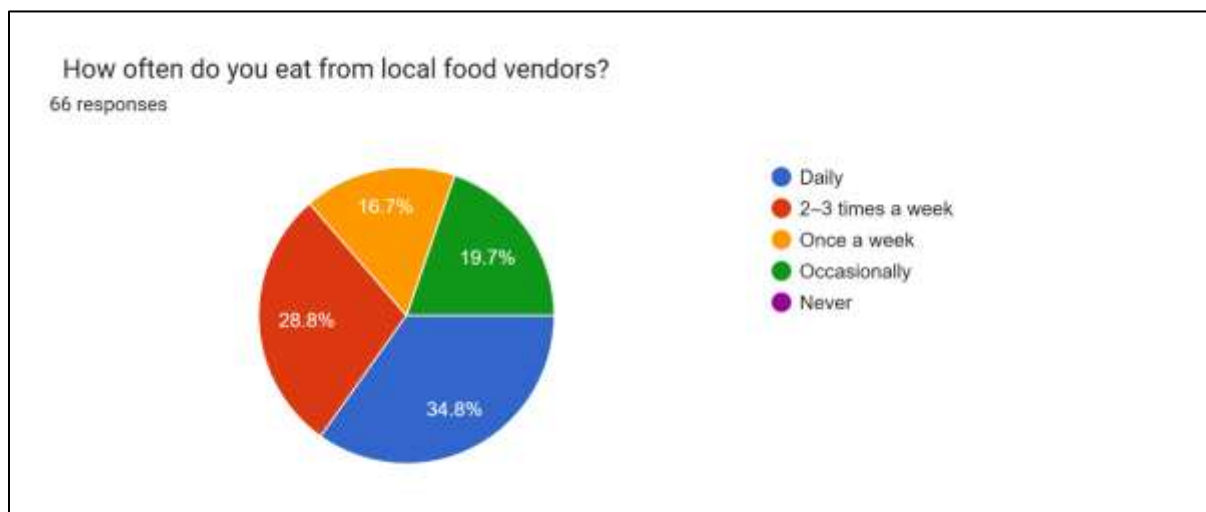
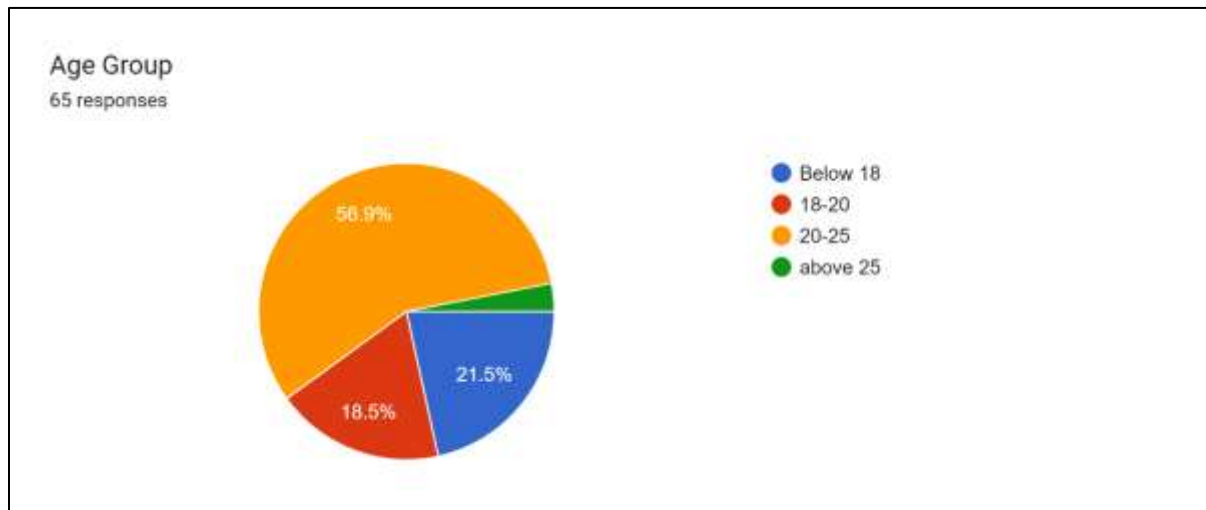
### **Data Interpretation and Analysis**

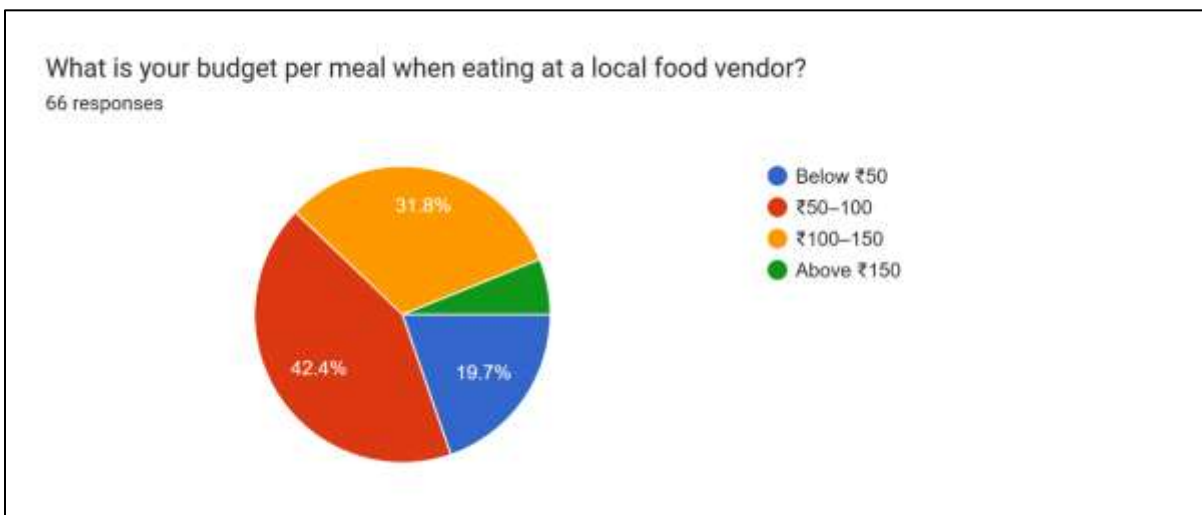
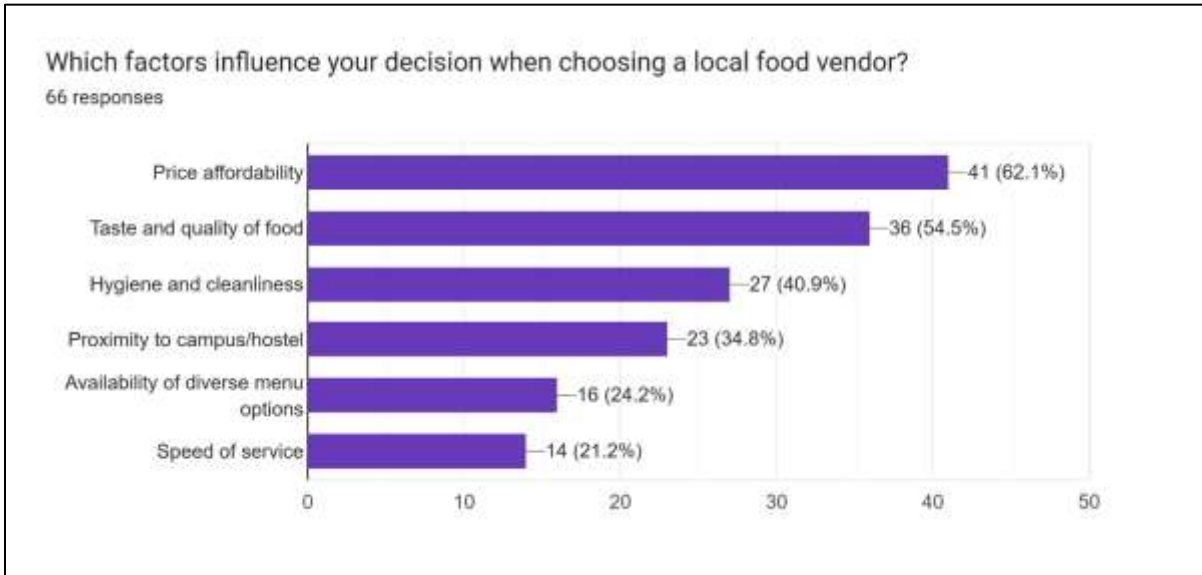
This questionnaire is designed to explore students' preferences, motivations, and concerns when selecting local food vendors. The survey aims to collect insights on the factors influencing students' choices, their satisfaction levels, and how they perceive the quality, affordability, and convenience of local food options compared to other dining alternatives.

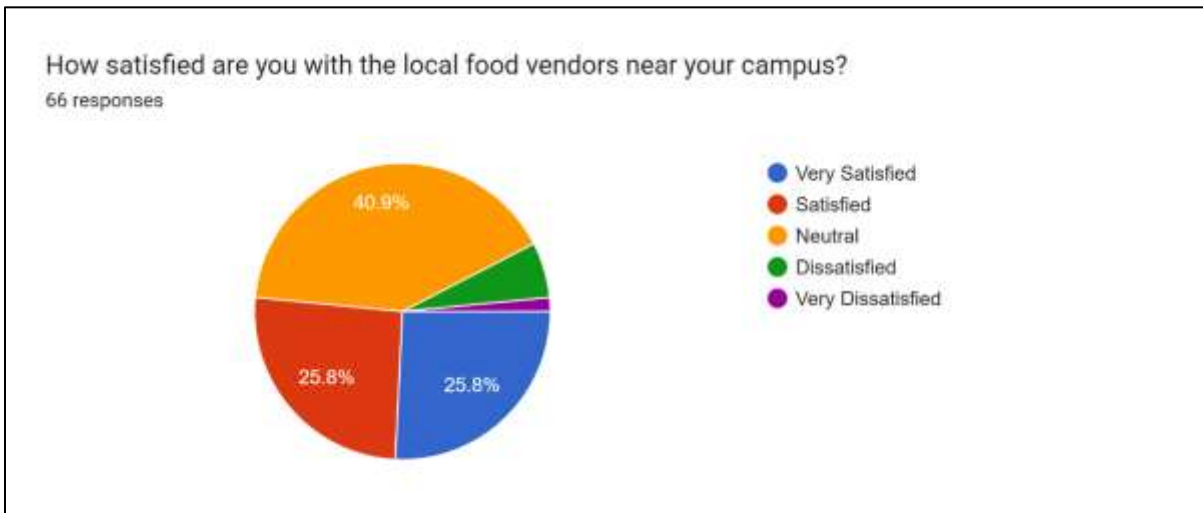
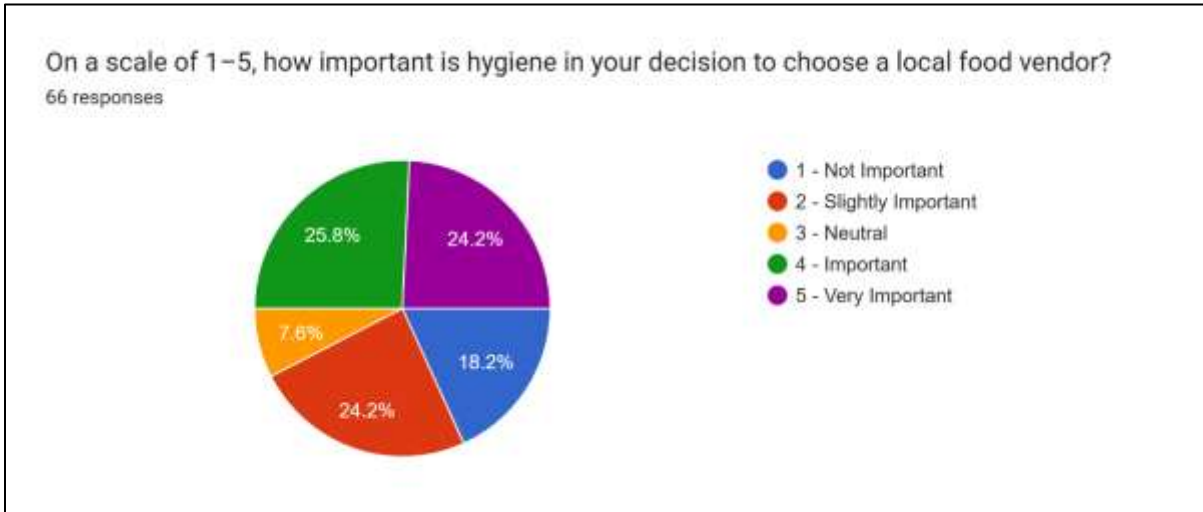
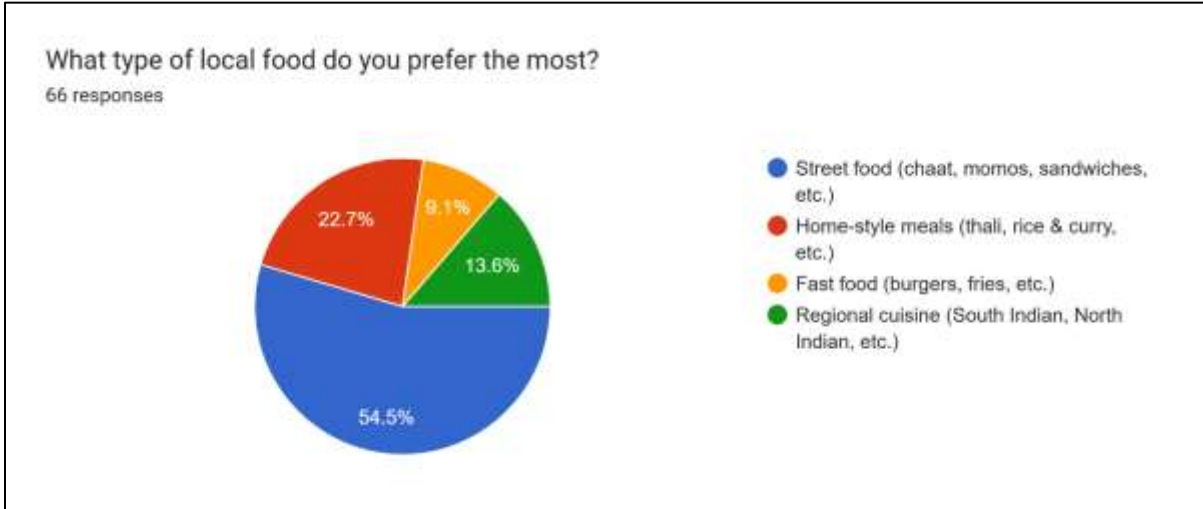
1. Age Group
2. How often do you eat from local food vendors?
3. Which factors influence your decision when choosing a local food vendor?
4. How do you typically learn about a local food vendor?
5. What is your budget per meal when eating at a local food vendor?
6. What type of local food do you prefer the most?
7. On a scale of 1–5, how important is hygiene in your decision to choose a local food vendor?
8. How satisfied are you with the local food vendors near your campus?
9. What time of the day do you mostly purchase food from local vendors?
10. Have you ever faced any health issues after eating from a local food vendor?
11. Would you recommend your favorite local food vendor to a friend?
12. Would you prefer ordering from a food delivery app over eating at a local food vendor? Why or why not?
13. What improvements would you suggest for local food vendors to enhance your dining experience?

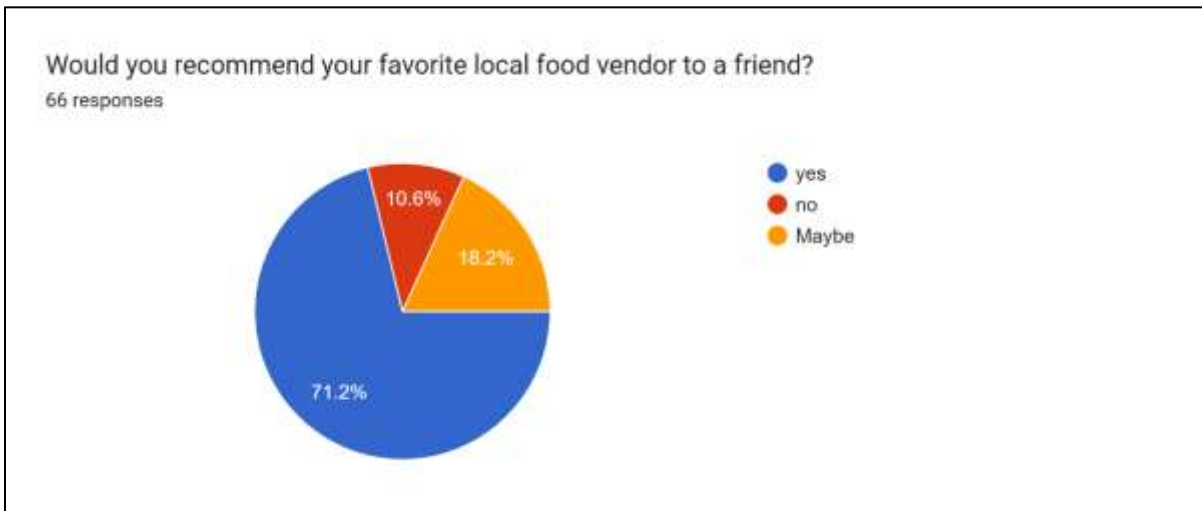
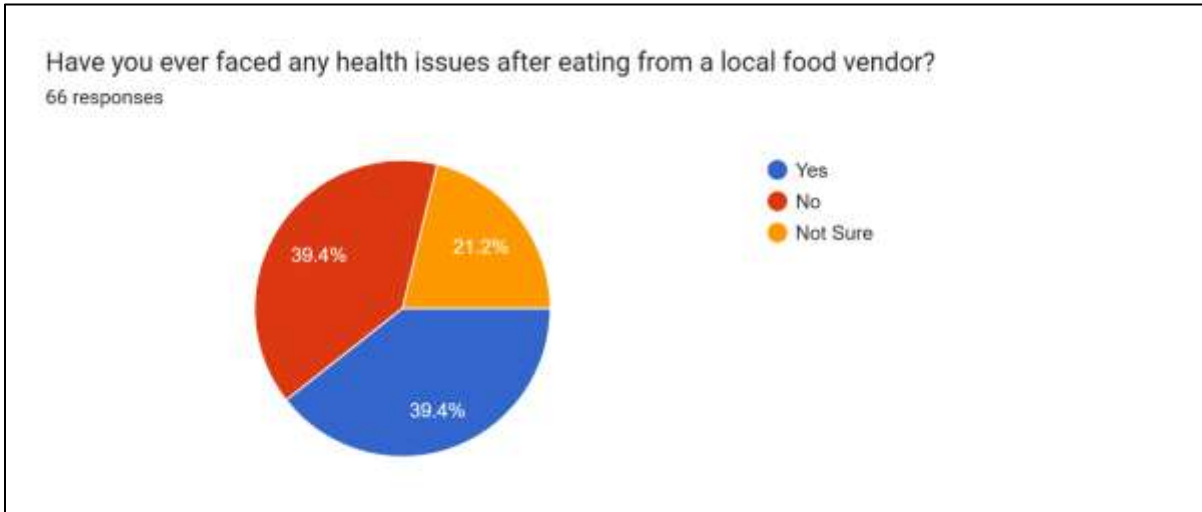
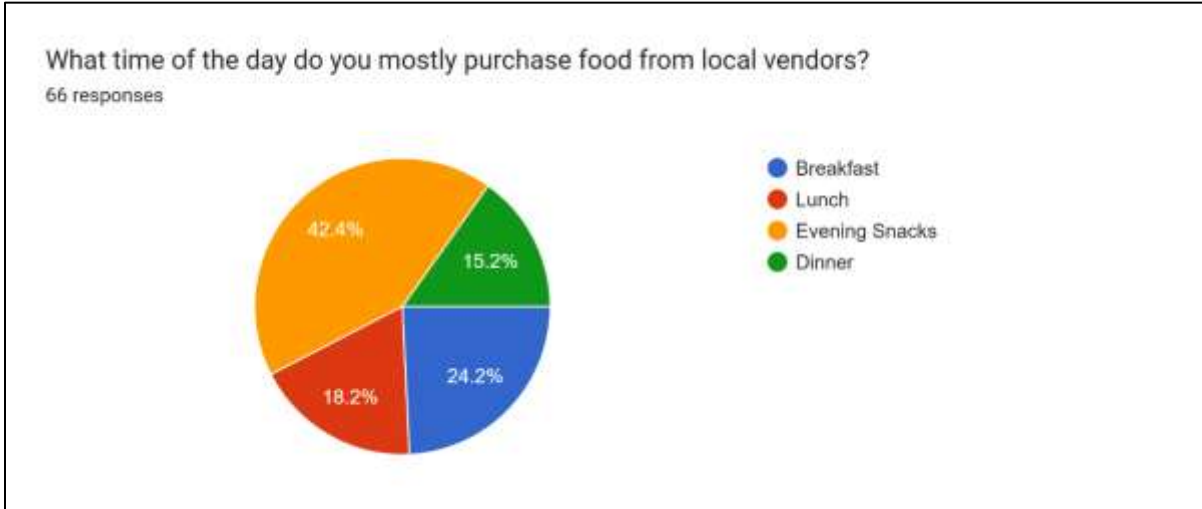


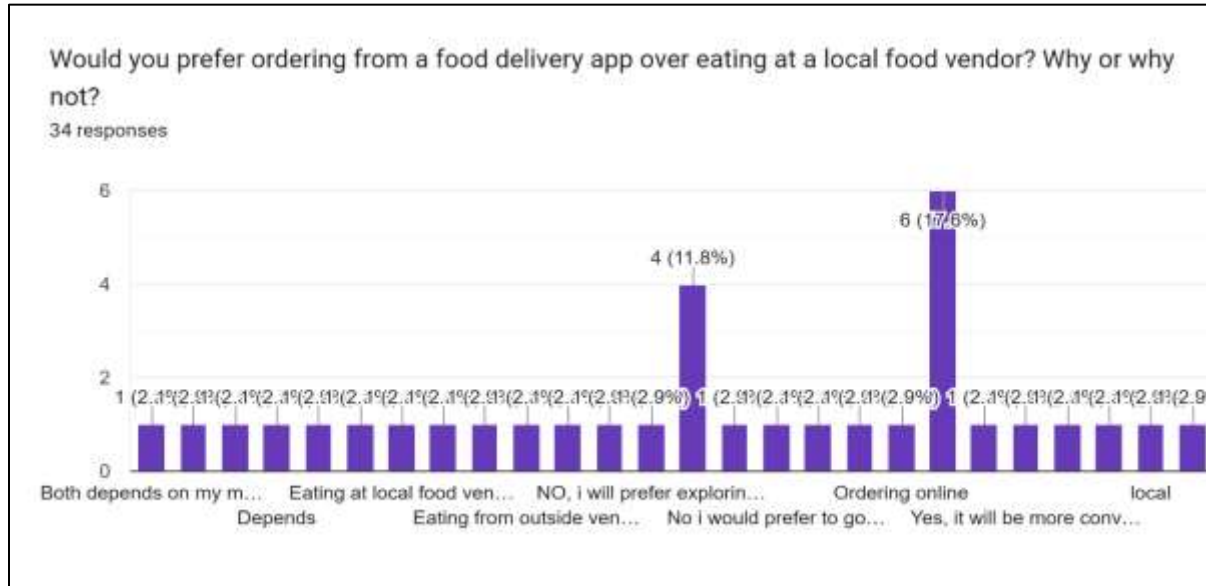
### Data Responses













## Data Analysis

The dataset comprises responses from students, primarily aged 18–25, regarding their preferences, habits, and satisfaction levels with local food vendors near their campus. The survey covers aspects such as frequency of consumption, decision-making factors, budget, food preferences, hygiene importance, and suggestions for improvement. Below is a detailed interpretation of the findings.

### 1. Demographic Overview

The majority of respondents fall within the **20–25 age group**, indicating that young adults, likely college students, are the primary consumers of local food vendors. A smaller segment includes those aged **18–20** and **below 18**, while respondents **above 25** are minimal. One respondent did not disclose their age. This demographic skew suggests that local food vendors primarily cater to students, particularly those in higher education institutions. The high participation from the 20–25 age group may reflect their greater independence in food choices compared to younger respondents.

### 2. Consumption Frequency and Habits

The data reveals that **eating from local vendors is a regular habit** for most respondents. The most common frequencies are:

- **Daily (12 respondents)**: Indicates heavy reliance on local vendors, likely due to convenience and affordability.
- **2–3 times a week (20 respondents)**: Suggests moderate but consistent usage, possibly balancing between campus meals and outside food.





- **Once a week or occasionally:** Fewer responses, indicating sporadic use, possibly due to budget constraints or preference for other options.

The **time of purchase** is predominantly **evening snacks**, followed by lunch and breakfast. This aligns with student routines, where evening hours may offer more flexibility for casual dining. Vendors can capitalize on this by ensuring availability and quick service during peak hours.

### 3. Key Decision-Making Factors

When choosing a local food vendor, respondents prioritize:

1. **Price affordability (most cited):** Students are budget-conscious, with most spending **₹50–100 per meal**. A smaller group spends **₹100–150**, and very few exceed ₹150 or spend below ₹50.
2. **Taste and quality of food:** Closely tied to price, indicating that students seek value for money.
3. **Hygiene and cleanliness:** A significant factor, especially for older respondents (20–25), though some younger respondents (below 18) rated hygiene as "not important."
4. **Proximity to campus/hostel:** Convenience plays a major role, as students prefer vendors close to their institutions.
5. **Speed of service and diverse menu options:** Secondary but notable factors, particularly for those with limited time between classes.

**Discovery of vendors** is primarily through **friends/peers' recommendations**, highlighting the power of word-of-mouth. Social media and personal exploration ("walking by") are less common but still relevant, suggesting vendors could benefit from targeted online marketing.

### 4. Food Preferences

- **Street food (chaat, momos, sandwiches):** The most popular choice across all age groups, likely due to its affordability, quick preparation, and variety.
- **Home-style meals (thali, rice & curry):** Preferred by a smaller segment, possibly those seeking healthier or more traditional options.
- **Regional cuisine (South Indian, North Indian) and fast food (burgers, fries):** Less common but present, indicating niche demand.

The dominance of street food suggests vendors should focus on maintaining quality and variety in this category while also catering to those seeking healthier or culturally specific meals.

### 5. Hygiene and Satisfaction

- **Hygiene Importance:**
  - Rated "**very important**" (5) by many, especially in the 20–25 group.



- Some younger respondents (below 18) rated it "**not important**" (1), possibly due to lower awareness or prioritization of taste/price.
- **Satisfaction Levels:**
  - Most respondents are **satisfied or very satisfied**, but a notable portion is **neutral or dissatisfied**, indicating room for improvement.
  - Complaints often cite **hygiene issues**, suggesting vendors should invest in visible cleanliness measures (e.g., gloves, clean utensils, covered food).

## 6. Health Concerns and Recommendations

- **Health Issues:**
  - **16 respondents** reported no issues, **9 said yes**, and **10 were unsure**. This mixed feedback suggests occasional lapses in food safety, which vendors must address to retain trust.
- **Recommendations:**
  - **Over 90% would recommend their favorite vendor**, reflecting strong brand loyalty where quality and service meet expectations.

## 7. Delivery vs. On-Site Dining

- **Preference for On-Site Dining:**
  - Reasons include "**vibe**," "**affordability**," and "**no delivery charges**." Many enjoy the experience of eating out.
- **Preference for Delivery:**
  - Cited for **convenience**, especially during busy schedules or unfavorable weather.
- **Key Insight:** While delivery apps are gaining traction, the **local vendor experience remains irreplaceable** for many. Vendors could explore hybrid models (e.g., in-house dining + delivery partnerships) to cater to both preferences.

## 8. Suggested Improvements



Respondents highlighted several areas for enhancement:

1. **Hygiene:** The most frequent suggestion, including cleaner preparation areas and staff practices.
2. **Food Quality:** Consistency in taste and freshness.
3. **Diverse Menus:** More options for varied dietary preferences (e.g., vegan, regional specialties).
4. **Speed of Service:** Reducing wait times during peak hours.
5. **Ambience and Digitalization:** Better seating, music, or app-based ordering for convenience.

### Key Takeaways and Recommendations

1. **Target the 20–25 Age Group:** They are the most active consumers. Tailor marketing (e.g., student discounts, social media promotions).
2. **Prioritize Affordability and Hygiene:** Ensure meals are budget-friendly while maintaining cleanliness to attract hygiene-conscious students.
3. **Optimize for Peak Hours:** Focus on evening snacks and lunch rushes with quick-service options.
4. **Expand Menu Diversity:** Include street food staples but also regional/home-style meals for broader appeal.
5. **Leverage Word-of-Mouth:** Encourage satisfied customers to refer peers; consider loyalty programs.
6. **Improve Hygiene Visibility:** Use clear packaging, hand sanitizers, and staff uniforms to build trust.
7. **Explore Delivery Partnerships:** Collaborate with apps to reach students who prefer convenience.

Local food vendors play a vital role in students' daily lives, offering affordable, convenient, and tasty options. While satisfaction is generally high, improvements in hygiene, menu variety, and service efficiency can further enhance customer loyalty. Vendors who adapt to these preferences—balancing cost, quality, and convenience—will likely thrive in this competitive space.



## **Findings and Recommendations:**

### **Findings-**

This report presents the findings of an online questionnaire created to explore student perceptions and behaviours related to local food vendors. The survey, distributed primarily through friends and family networks, aimed to understand the factors influencing students' choices, their satisfaction with local food options, and areas where vendors could improve their services. With 66 responses collected, the data offers valuable insights into the student experience with local food vendors, providing a foundation for recommendations aimed at enhancing both vendor practices and student satisfaction. While the distribution method focused on personal networks, the responses provide a significant snapshot of student preferences within those connected communities.

### **1. Age Group:**

- The majority of respondents (56.9%) are aged 18-20, indicating a strong representation of young adults, likely college or university students. This demographic's preferences and behaviours will heavily influence the overall survey results. A significant portion (21.5%) are below 18, suggesting the inclusion of high school students or younger individuals. The 20-25 age group (18.5%) represents a smaller segment, and those above 25 (3.1%) are a minority. This age distribution highlights the need to consider the specific preferences of the younger student population.

### **2. How Often Do You Eat from Local Food Vendors?**

- "Occasionally" (34.8%) is the most frequent response, indicating that local food vendors are not a daily staple for most respondents. However, a significant portion (28.8%) eat from local vendors once a week, showing a regular pattern of consumption. Daily (19.7%) and 2-3 times a week (16.7%) consumption suggests that local vendors play a regular role in the diets of a notable minority. This data shows a range of usage, from occasional treat to regular meals.



### **3. Which Factors Influence Your Decision When Choosing a Local Food Vendor?**

- Price affordability (62.1%) and taste/quality of food (54.5%) are the primary drivers, emphasizing the importance of value and good food. Hygiene and cleanliness (40.9%) and proximity to campus/hostel (34.8%) are also important, reflecting concerns about safety and convenience. Availability of diverse menu options (24.2%) and speed of service (21.2%) are less influential, suggesting that these factors are secondary to price and quality.

### **4. How Do You Typically Learn About a Local Food Vendor?**

- Friends/peers' recommendations (48.5%) are the most common way students discover local vendors, highlighting the importance of word-of-mouth. Social media (25.8%) and walking by and exploring (25.8%) also play significant roles, showing the influence of digital platforms and personal discovery.

### **5. What Is Your Budget Per Meal When Eating at a Local Food Vendor?**

- The majority (42.4%) spend ₹100-150 per meal, indicating a moderate budget. A significant portion (31.8%) spend ₹50-100, and a smaller group (19.7%) spend below ₹50, showing price sensitivity. Very few spend over 150 rupees.

### **6. What Type of Local Food Do You Prefer the Most?**

- Street food (54.5%) is the most popular, reflecting a preference for quick, affordable, and accessible options. Fast food (22.7%), home-style meals (13.6%), and regional cuisine (9.1%) are less popular, suggesting a focus on convenience and affordability.

### **7. On a Scale of 1–5, How Important Is Hygiene in Your Decision to Choose a Local Food Vendor?**

- A significant portion (48.4% combined) rate hygiene as important or very important, showing it is a key consideration. However, a large portion are neutral or rate it as slightly important or not important. This shows a wide range of opinions. This data shows that vendors can increase customer base by improving hygiene.

### **8. How Satisfied Are You with the Local Food Vendors Near Your Campus?**

- Overall satisfaction is positive, with 40.9% very satisfied and 25.8% satisfied. However, 25.8% are neutral, indicating room for improvement in specific areas. Dissatisfaction is low.



### **9. What Time of the Day Do You Mostly Purchase Food from Local Vendors?**

- Evening snacks (42.4%) are the most popular time, followed by breakfast (24.2%), indicating peak demand during these periods. Lunch and dinner are less popular.

### **10. Have You Ever Faced Any Health Issues After Eating from a Local Food Vendor?**

- A significant percentage (39.4%) have experienced health issues, and another 39.4% are unsure, highlighting concerns about food safety. Only 21.2 percent have had no issues.

### **11. Would You Recommend Your Favorite Local Food Vendor to a Friend?**

- The majority (71.2%) would recommend their favorite vendors, showing positive experiences. This shows that good vendors get good word of mouth.

### **12. Would You Prefer Ordering from a Food Delivery App Over Eating at a Local Food Vendor? Why or Why Not?**

- Preferences are mixed, with convenience (delivery), cost (local vendors), and the experience of eating out being key factors. This highlights the competition between delivery services and local vendors.

### **13. What Improvements Would You Suggest for Local Food Vendors to Enhance Your Dining Experience?**

- Hygiene, menu variety, and food quality are frequently mentioned, providing actionable feedback for vendors to improve their services. These are the most important things the vendors can improve on.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

### **Demographic Dominance:**

- The 18-20 age group forms the majority of respondents, significantly influencing the overall trends.

### **Key Decision Factors:**

- Price affordability and taste/quality of food are the most critical factors influencing student choices.
- Hygiene and proximity to campus/hostel are also significant considerations.

### **Discovery Methods:**



- Word-of-mouth recommendations from friends and peers are the primary way students discover local food vendors.
- Social media and personal exploration also play notable roles.

#### **Budget Considerations:**

- Students typically budget between ₹100-150 per meal.
- A substantial portion of students are budget-conscious, aiming to spend less.

#### **Food Preferences:**

- Street food is the most popular food type among students.

#### **Hygiene Concerns:**

- Hygiene is a significant concern for many students, though opinions vary.
- Vendors that improve hygiene will increase satisfaction.

#### **Satisfaction Levels:**

- Overall satisfaction with local food vendors is positive.
- A significant portion of students are neutral, indicating potential for improvement.

#### **Peak Purchase Times:**

- Evening snacks are the most popular time for students to purchase food.
- Breakfast is the second most popular time.

#### **Health Issue Concerns:**

- A considerable percentage of students have experienced or are unsure about health issues related to local vendors.
- Food safety is a critical area for vendors to address.

#### **Recommendation Willingness:**

- Students are generally willing to recommend their favorite vendors.

#### **Delivery App vs. Local Vendor Preference:**

- Preference between delivery apps and eating at local vendors is mixed.
- Convenience, cost, and the dining experience are key factors influencing this preference.



### **Recommendations:**

#### **1. Prioritize Affordability and Quality:**

- Given that price affordability and taste/quality of food are the most significant factors influencing student choices, vendors should strategically price their offerings to align with student budgets (₹100-150 range) and focus on consistently delivering high-quality, flavourful food. This is fundamental to attract and retain student customers.

#### **2. Enhance Hygiene and Cleanliness:**

- Hygiene is a major concern for a substantial portion of students. Vendors must invest in and visibly maintain clean and sanitary food preparation and serving areas. Clear displays of hygiene practices could bolster student confidence.

#### **3. Leverage Word-of-Mouth and Social Media:**

- Recognizing that friends/peers' recommendations are the primary source of vendor discovery, vendors should encourage positive reviews and referrals. Additionally, establishing a strong social media presence can capitalize on the digital influence among students.

#### **4. Focus on Street Food Offerings:**

- Street food's popularity among students suggests that vendors should prioritize these items. Expanding and innovating within this category can cater to student preferences for quick, affordable, and varied options.





#### **5. Address Health Concerns:**

- The significant percentage of students reporting or being unsure about health issues underscores the need for stringent food safety practices. Vendors should implement and communicate their commitment to safe food handling to build trust.

#### **6. Improve Evening Snack and Breakfast Options:**

- Evening snacks and breakfast are the peak purchasing times. Vendors should optimize their menus and operational hours to capitalize on this demand.

#### **7. Address Neutral Satisfaction:**

- Since a large portion of students are neutral in satisfaction, vendors should perform more research, to find out what is causing this neutral response. They should then act on this information, to increase customer satisfaction.

#### **8. Compete Effectively with Food Delivery Apps:**

- Vendors must recognize the competition from food delivery apps. To maintain competitiveness, vendors can emphasize the unique experience of dining locally, the value of direct interaction, and potential cost savings compared to delivery services.

#### **9. Implement Feedback Mechanisms:**

- Actively solicit and respond to student feedback, especially regarding hygiene, menu variety, and food quality. This demonstrates a commitment to improvement and enhances customer loyalty.

#### **10. Target the 18-20 Demographic:**

- Because the 18-20 demographic is the largest group of responders, vendors should tailor their marketing and menu to this group of people.



## Conclusion

In the present research, important findings regarding the determinants of students' decisions in choosing local food suppliers have been achieved. Through extensive survey analysis, it is revealed that price, convenience, taste, and hygiene are the determining factors most affecting student choice. The results show that although students are mostly motivated by cost reduction, they also have high regard for food quality and safety. Nonetheless, concerns over hygiene are a significant target area since many students indicated having had or being unsure of foodborne health issues.

In addition, social influence is a critical driver of the food choices made by students. Word of mouth from friends and online reviews greatly influence students' attitudes towards food vendors. As more people consume information from the internet, vendors who employ the use of social media and online feedback marketing can get an advantage for themselves. The contribution of sustainability in the decision process is also being attained, as students increasingly identify ethical and sustainable food practice. Retailers who use environmentally friendly practices, like the utilization of biodegradable packaging and locally sourced products, are able to tap into an increasing portion of socially conscious shoppers.

The research also identifies personal consumption patterns among students. Although most students eat at food vendors quite often, their food, meal timing, and affordability differ. Street food remains the most sought-after category due to its affordability and availability, but the demand for healthier and cleaner food is also increasing. The vendors that improve their level of hygiene, food safety, and menu diversity with healthier options may experience more student patronage.



Additionally, the study identifies competition from local food vendors and online food-delivery platforms. Even with convenience being the largest benefit of food-delivery applications, students would still prefer eating at vendors' premises due to social and economic factors. Vendors can promote on-site eating experience in order to compete, provide loyalty programs, and keep prices low.

In summary, street vendors are a necessary aspect of students' daily life, offering affordable and convenient food. Vendors need to resolve issues such as sanitation, adopt web-based marketing, and diversify menus to accommodate evolving students' tastes to retain and grow their clientele. Future research might explore how cultural heritage, eating habits, and long-term health concerns affect students' food intake. A more student-centric food environment can be achieved by applying the findings of this study with a balance between affordability, quality, and sustainability.

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