Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development
ISSN 2222-1700 (Paper) ISSN 2222-2855 (Online)
Vol.16, No.8, 2025

The Determinants of Street Food Culture and their Implications on the Societal Fabric: The Perspective of Culinary Entrepreneurship in the Bamenda Municipality

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the effect of street food factors on the societal fabric: the perspective of culinary entrepreneurship in the Bamenda Municipality. Street food vending and consumption is an informal economic activity that fosters food or culinary entrepreneurship and contribute to the community fabric. The first objective is to investigate the role of the socioeconomic indicators on the fabric of the community under study while the second objective explores the influence of cultural factors on the societal fabric. The third objective assesses the effect of environmental or risks factors associated with food vending in the Bamenda municipality. The primary method of data collection is implemented where questionnaires are distributed to at least 302 of them to street food consumers, who stand as participants in this study. The multiple regression analysis is used to assess the three objectives. The results of the first objective indicate that an additional socioeconomic indicator contributes to an increase in the societal fabric score by 0.924 units, and this result is statistically significant at 1% level. In the same light, cultural indicators contribute to an increase in the societal fabric score by 0.647 units, and this result is statistically significant at 1% level. Lastly, the discoveries from the findings reveal that the environmental or risks factors associated with food vending have a negative effect on the societal fabric under study. That is, a unit rise in these factors leads to distortion or fall in the societal fabric score by 0.165 units, and this result is statistically significant at 1% level. Societal fabric in this study is captured as a summated score of seven indicators. It represents street food vending benefits constituting elements having an (economic impact, poverty reduction effect, social interaction of consumers, community building, culinary innovation, environmental impact, health and safety concerns). Street food culture in the Bamenda Municipality and Cameroon at large, is a vibrant and integral part of daily life, offering accessible and affordable meals while also reflecting the nation's diverse culinary traditions. It plays a significant role in both social and economic spheres, providing employment opportunities and fostering a sense of community. However, challenges exist in maintaining food safety and hygiene standards within the informal street food sector. .Following the results, we recommend that the socioeconomic and cultural factors of street food culture be encouraged while strategies sought to mitigate the risks associated with street food culture or environmental factors in order to enhance the societal fabric and health of the participants of the Bamenda Municipality.

Key Words: *Street food culture, Societal Fabric, socioeconomic indicators, cultural factors, environmental factors or risks of street food vending, Bamenda Municipality-Cameroon.*

DOI: 10.7176/JESD/16-8-04
Publication date: November 30th 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, it is observed that the informal food sector all over the world is fast gaining grounds, especially in the developing countries. Universally, street food marketing is widespread though complex (Tinker, 1997; Marxwell et al., 2000). According to FAO (2007), street food is defined as ready to eat foods and beverages prepared and or sold by vendors on the streets from push carts or buckets or balanced poles or stalls or from shops which have fewer than four permanent walls. It is classified in to three types depending on the location of the vendors. The first group are those who sell at street pavements. Secondly, some of the vendors sell at places where people assemble especially for occasions or celebrations. Thirdly, there are those who sell in a bazaar. A bazaar is equivalent to a seasonal or periodic market, where vendors sell from a piece of public or private land. In addition, this food is also sold in places like schools, around places of work, hospitals, railway stations, and bus terminals. (Nirathron, 2006). The high proliferation of the informal food sector is a clear indication that the formal food industry is not catering for the needs of the majority of the population in the

urban areas. The urban poorer population of most developing countries depend fully on street food due to some factors. Some writers have also indicated that a good number of people from different socio-economic background rely daily of street food for their nutritional sustenance. (IFPRI, 2010; Shenoy, 2005; Ottoo & Fulton, 2011)

Street food vending is an informal economic activity that fosters food or culinary entrepreneurship and contribute to the community fabric. Many writers have proven that the informal food sector is growing rapidly especially in the developing economies. Around 20 to 25% of the household food expenditure is incurred outside the home and some segments of the population depend entirely on street foods. This is the consequence of urbanization and rural-urban migration. (Mensah et al; 2002 ; Soula et al., 2020; Ferrari et al., 2021; Koffi, 2021). In most of these developing nations, the street food vendors constitute a greater portion of the food supply chain. At the same time, there is a major public health challenge posed by this street food vending. The food sometimes is prepared and sold under highly dirty unhealthy condition with limited availability of clean water, sanitary services and inadequate garbage disposal facilities. In this case, there is a high possibility of food poisoning and health issues caused by the consumption of street food. (King et al; 2000)

Manga et al. (2021), postulate that street food vending in Cameroon presents a complex issue with both positive and negative impacts on society. Research topics could explore the economic contributions, health implications, and social dynamics associated with this informal sector. Specific areas of interest include the role of street food in poverty alleviation and income generation, the prevalence of foodborne illnesses linked to poor hygiene, and the ways in which street vending shapes urban spaces and social interactions.

In Cameroon, street food selling is common in most urban areas like the Bamenda Municipality. From the onset, the majority of the population believed that street food consumption was meant strictly for the urban poor but experience has proven the contrary. The majority of street food vendors have observed that a greater portion of street food consumers are clients of very high socio-economic status as indicated by the number of cares that are frequently parked on these spots. Most shopping centres and transport agencies spots in the Bamenda Municipality are avenues for street food vendors. In each area, vendors put up stalls on the open space in front of the shops. A variety of food is prepared and sold at this place. Vendors either prepare food for sale, or street food customers buy raw food which they request vendors to prepare for them. (Newman & Burnet, 2013). The informal food sector is poses a lot of health risk given that it is generally not regulated by laws or taxes and is carried out in very poor hygienic conditions, thus causing some recurrent cases of food borne diseases like typhoid and diarrhea. (Hayarni et al; 2006). At this juncture, street food vending in Cameroon, especially in the Bamenda municipality can not be banned but promulgated because it is a source of livelihood both for the consumers and the sellers. The State agents need to instead find solutions to help the suppliers of street food to improve on their hygienic conditions. Street food selling is a big source of employment in the informal sector.

From review of literature, we find that in Cameroon, little or no study has been carried out to investigate the determinants of street food consumption both from the seller and consumer points of view. There are a series of factors influencing the proliferation of street food consumers and vendors. Amongst all, these reasons include, the desire for ethnic tastes, the opportunity to have a fast meal, the joy of having good priced food within sociable settings. (Shenoy, 2005). Therefore, food consumption is an important physical cultural activity that can define social identity. In the context of some world cultures theory of globalization, consumption of ethnic foods can be seen as an effort on the part of the indigenous people to combat the forces of globalization that are menacing local foods. According to this theory, there is a constant struggle between the regimenting forces of globalization dynamics and the resistant local ideals. Food, as a cultural resource has the potential to attract tourists. Sualeh et al. (2020), postulated that food defines the peoples' lifestyles and religion and it is the very essence of a country or a region. In that light, food can be an important cultural resource that can be exploited for tourism purposes.

Most studies on street food consumption have been primarily based on health and hygiene issues as well as concerns of vendors. (Muzaafar et al; 2009). From all indications, no research has been carried out to assess the determinants of street food vending or consumption by people of different profiles. In addition, there is a literature gap in the context of the determining factors of the choice of food outlets. In study will greatly contribute to knowledge in that domain. This work therefore tends to verify the following questions: why is there an increase in the demand for street food despite its limitations? What strategies can be put in place to ameliorate the conditions of street food selling and consumptions? The findings obtained could be employed to draw up a

framework on how to maximize the benefits of street food selling and how the tourism industry could be developed from this economic activity.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Street food vending represents a very vital source of income for most poor families in developing countries like Cameroon. In Bamenda Municipality, it stands out as one of the major economic areas that provide self-employment to most vulnerable and marginalized sector of the society. At the same time, it poses a very big challenge in the ambit of public health. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 600 million cases of foodborne illness and 420,000 deaths occur each year, with 125,000 deaths among children under five years old, due to unsafe food consumption (Andrade et al; 2023). This poses some challenges on community health, economic and social sectors of the society. Local municipalities like Bamenda are vulnerable to the risk of foodborne diseases because of the unhygienic food preparation, poor individual and collective hygiene, inadequate production, handling and storage conditions, low levels of literacy and education and a lack or insufficient implementation of food safety legislation (Faour-Klingbeil et al; 2020). These risks are so conspicuous in street food vending, which plays an important socioeconomic role in responding to the nutritional and subsistence needs of low-income urban populations around the world like the Bamenda Municipality

Women and children are the majority of those involved in street food economic activity. In most cases, these female entrepreneurs are single mothers or widows working in this sector to provide some economic livelihood to the household due to lack of job opportunities in the formal employment sector. (Sualeh et al., 2020). As food entrepreneurs, these women lack access to formal financial credit like banks for start up capital. The Cameroon government does not offer them training in good food production practices or proper business management procedures. Consequentially, this deficiency, causes street foods to be vulnerable to microbiological contamination, which is a source of diarrhea, typhoid and other food borne sicknesses. This lapse makes street food vending a high-risk business for community health. Street food selling is a very important economic and nutritional activity in many developing areas like Bamenda Municipality. The information gotten from this study will greatly help the government, policy makers and the local community of the Bamenda Municipality to find strategies geared at improving the hygiene condition of street food vending in order to in turn foster public health in this area of study and why not Cameroon in general. This work is also important because it will greatly contribute to knowledge in the food entrepreneurship sector of this economy. This study tends to answer the following research questions

1.2 Research Objectives

- To assess the effect of socioeconomic indicators of street food consumption on the societal fabric of the Bamenda Municipality
- To investigate the influence of cultural factors of street culture on the societal fabric under study
- To assess the environmental indicators or risks factors associated with street food culture and their effect on the societal fabric under study

1.3 Research Hypothesis

On the basis of the forgoing research objectives, this thesis verifies the following alternative hypotheses:

- The socioeconomic indicators of street food consumption are expected to significantly affect the community fabric under study
- The cultural factors are likely to influence the fabric of the Bamenda Municipality
- The environmental factors or risks associated with street food vending are expected to significantly affect the societal fabric under study

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The Concept of Street Food culture

The concept of street food is self-revealing. Street food is everything that can be bought at a stall or booth and eaten directly on the street. “Street food is ready-to-eat food or drink sold by a street vendor or seller on the street or in another public place, such as a market or fair. It is often sold from a portable food stand, food

cart or food truck and is intended for immediate consumption. Some street foods are regional, but many have spread beyond their region of origin. Most street food is also called finger food or fast food and is usually cheaper than a restaurant meal. The types of street food vary between regions and cultures in different countries around the world. (Simopoulos, 2000)

Street food constitutes part of the informal food sector. The concept has been developed by so many authors who have brought up varying definitions. According to Secke (2007) and FAO (2007), the selling and consumption of food from outside embody a variety of names like 'street food', 'popular catering, etc. According to Priviteria et al. (2015), **street food** is food sold by a hawker or vendor on a street or at another public place, such as a market, fair, or park. It is often sold from a portable food booth, food cart, or food truck and is meant for immediate consumption. Some street foods are regional, but many have spread beyond their regions of origin. Most street foods are classified as both finger food and fast food, and are generally cheaper than restaurant meals. The types of street food vary between regions and cultures in different countries around the world. FAO (2014) indicates that about 2.5 billion people consume street food daily. Some cultures regard it to be disrespectful to eat while walking on the street. At the same time the majority of middle- and high-income earners depend on street food for their daily feeding and job opportunities due to its accessibility and affordability, especially in developing countries. Many governments and other renowned organizations nowadays are interested in the socioeconomic usefulness of street food and the risks connected to it. These risks consist of food safety, sanitation issues, illegal use of public or private areas, social problems, and traffic congestion.

At the onset, FAO (2014) defines the informal food sector as one producing food and beverages ready to be consumed, prepared and/or sold by vendors, especially in the streets and other similar public places. Thus, in connection with the ideas of Canet (1997), street food occupies a big place in the urbanization process and in the functioning of the urban economy and replicates the way of life and survival in African cities. Warde & Martens (2000) adds that street catering entails 'eating out' and it depends on the context. The act of 'eating out' is in four dimensions namely: the dimension of sociability, an affective dimension, a heritage dimension and a hygienic or sanitary dimension. This is in accordance with the definition of Soula et al. (2020) who postulates that the act of 'eating out' indicates all food items that generates a transaction in a commercial restaurant. In addition, Allen et al. (2018), postulates that out-of-home catering stands for street food and catering. Street food or the informal food sector is one of the forums in the food chain where it plays an important function mainly in cities, enabling all socio-professional groups of people to meet their needs of food (Van't Riet et al., 2003; Ohiokpehai, 2003; Kouamé et al., 2020). In the same context, Albuquerque et al. (2019) and Soula et al. (2019), defines street food as homemade food and junk food eaten outside the home or vended on the street. Ferrari et al. (2021) also adds that street food constitutes outlets for ready-to eat foods supplied on the public highway. It is a job.

2.2 Proliferation of street food culture in the world today

Ruiz-Pérez et al. (2023), postulate that street food is not just food—it's an experience. Street food culture has flourished globally. What accounts for this reality is that people seek out authentic, indulgent, and affordable flavors for their sustenance and enjoyment. In many parts of the world, there seems to be a projection of the vast growth in the street food industry. For example, Morales-Quintero et al. (2023), hypothesizes that street vendor industry in the U.S. is projected to reach a staggering $3.9 billion, growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 12.3%. In the face of economic pressures, including inflation, global street food trends are rapidly evolving, with consumers gravitating towards meals that provide indulgence, affordability, and, importantly, convenience.

Shankar et al. (2024), observes that in India, specifically in the city of Bangalore, also known as Bengalurus, street food vending has been an important center of commerce and culture for centuries, and its cuisine reflects its rich history. The street food scene in Bangalore is vibrant, offering a variety of delectable options that cater to all palates. Bangalore's street food culture is a celebration of flavors, creativity, and the spirit of the city. From the iconic local snacks that have become culinary legends to the bustling street food markets that offer a feast for the senses, Bangalore's street food scene is a treasure trove of gastronomic delights.

The growth of street food culture in Africa is also worth noting. There are numerous factors that account for this rapid expansion in the street food sector in the developing regions especially in Africa. Some factors instigating this fast growth are: rapid urbanization, some challenges connected with the workplaces and home, poverty and development of women's activity, the bursting of family solidarity, appearance of new food styles). In addition, for lack of adequate means of transport, of time, of an efficient system of collective catering, such as canteens in the workplace, many Africans buy food on the street, at little cost compared to what they pay. (Mateusz Brodowicz, 2024)

In addition, Staatz and Hollinger (2016) also observe that in Africa, the income factor is one of the strong elements attracting the growth of the street food sector. Allen et al. (2018), justifies that this sectors is constantly booming given that the demand for labour in the street food industry is rising. To note just a few, we have the following examples: In Algeria, the place of lunch is linked to the organization of the working day. Thus, 24.3% of Algerians eat lunch at restaurants and 27.2% at fast food. Out-of-home is still rarely practiced outside of lunch (Faour-Klingbeil et al., 2020). In Benin, consumption outside the home, in particular in the street or in small restaurants, is higher in Cotonou. It begins in the morning and continues until the afternoon. Street food is less in the evening, the main occasion for family meals (Hayden, 2011). In Côte d'Ivoire, street food is organized and developed in cities due to lack of canteens in public and private companies as well as in schools (Avital et al., 2019). It constitutes an invaluable source of income for the unemployed and especially for women who are generally less educated than men (Kouamé et al., 2020). In Abidjan, the entire urban space is home to women who use the street as a place of work. Three factors have contributed to the increase in the number of these women: the increase in the local population, the expansion of the city and the need to diversify sources of income in all households.

Moreover, Kouamé et al. (2020) argue that the street food industry plays an important role in cities and towns in many developing countries to meet the food demands of city dwellers in Bangladesh. It also generates jobs for a large group in the informal sector and ensures food security for low-income urban populations. A study in Lusaka (Zambia) establishes that for street vendors, accessibility of customers is a key factor and that they strategically locate in the streets to avoid formalization costs such as rent, taxes and fees licenses. Selling street food has proven to be a viable socio-economic activity providing gainful employment for populations with limited education and skills.

In Cameroon, Yaounde is experiencing very rapid urbanization. Its population has grown from 812.000 inhabitants in 1987 to about 2.100.000 inhabitants in 2007 (les populations du monde - IDH, 2014). The increase in the food demand inherent to this population growth has led to the development of urban food crafts, which constitute, through street foods, both one of the main feeding sources of people and source of income for actors involved. Street food vending is a significant part of Bamenda's food scene, with popular spots including Mile 2 junction and Plaza Plus CL VIP. Vendors sell a variety of prepared meals like shawarma and barbecued/grilled meats, with some even supplying raw meat to restaurants. Many vendors operate from stalls, markets, and food carts in busy public areas. Mile 2 junction: Also known as "Neuro junction," this is a busy meeting point where you can find vendors selling food. Street food is also available from market stalls, and other food carts throughout the city. Vendors operate from food trucks, carts, market stalls, and roadside stands. Customers can often interact directly with vendors to choose items, such as selecting the raw meat they want. (Manga et al., 2021)

2.3 The concept of Societal Fabric

The concept of community fabric has a multidimensional notion as indicated by many authors. According to *Ruiz-Pérez* (2023), the "fabric of society" is a metaphor describing the complex structure and interconnectedness that holds a society together. It is a concept that is developed from various threads like shared values, norms, laws, institutions, and cultural practices. These elements bind individuals and groups, creating a cohesive whole and shaping a society's identity and character. This social fabric influences every aspect of the community, from the way people interact with others to the opportunities available for them. secondly, Hayden (2011), indicates that a "social fabric" includes people, institutions, social beliefs, cultural values, a sense of community and relationships between these components (Hayden, 2011).

According to *Ruiz-Pérez et al.* (2023), Collective or massive violence can break social bonds and these dynamics may intensify may processes of economic impoverishment, social isolation, fear, and public health problems, among other effects. Around the world, many countries have suffered decades of civil wars, corruption, military governments and or persistent violation of main human rights. On the other hand, in Latin America, reports as show a decline in support for democracy, which is associated with high levels of inequality, high discredit of political and judicial institutions and high scores of delinquencies. Under these perceptions, Latin America region became vulnerable to populism and authoritarianism

Street food culture in Cameroon is a vibrant and integral part of daily life, offering accessible and affordable meals while also reflecting the nation's diverse culinary traditions. It plays a significant role in both social and economic spheres, providing employment opportunities and fostering a sense of community. However, challenges exist in maintaining food safety and hygiene standards within the informal street food sector. (Manga et al., 2021)

2.4 The importance of street food culture (vending and consumption)

Street food is an integral part of urban culture in many cities worldwide, reflecting local culinary traditions and contributing significantly to the social, cultural, and economic fabric of a city. In the Bamenda Municipality, as well as in Cameroon, street food plays a primordial role in shaping the community's identity. This review of literature explores the multifaceted impact of street food in the world today and Cameroon inclusive, considering the cultural significance, economic contributions, tourism appeal, social dynamics, and challenges it presents. (Meva'a et al., 2020)

Firstly**,** street food has a cultural significance. Street food in most countries and Cameroon inclusive, reflects the rich tapestry of the city's **cultural diversity**. Vendors offer a wide array of regional and international cuisines. For example, street food in Cameroon constitutes dishes predominantly from all the regions of the country. Therefore, there is great need to appreciate these vendors for their role to preserve and showcase local and regional culinary traditions. (Meva'a et al. (2020), notes that street food serves as a bridge between the past and the present, connecting generations to their food heritage.

Street food culture is significant as it contains an **economic impact**. Many research findings indicate that street food vending greatly contributes to the local economy. In this light, Banerjee et al. (2018) discloses that street food vendors offer job opportunities to a good number of individuals, both as primary business owners and as support staff. Additionally, these vendors stimulate economic activity in the areas they operate, benefiting local markets and suppliers. This economic vitality extends to low-income individuals who can afford a meal from street vendors (Bhat et al., 2019).

Thirdly, with street food vending fosters tourism and image building of a community. A study by Kumar and Rao (2016) spells out how the city's street food culture fosters the tourism industry. This industry attracts both domestic and international tourists, shaping the city's image as a vibrant culinary destination. (Ramesh, 2020).

Many embark on street food consumption with the explanation it is affordable and accessible**:** The affordability and accessibility of street food are frequently emphasized in the literature. Street food vendors in Bamenda and Cameroon as a whole offer a cost-effective dining option, catering to various income groups, including students, low-income residents, and even tourists. A study by Reddy and Sharma (2019) indicates that street food is often the preferred choice for those seeking a quick, delicious, and budget-friendly meal.

According to Khan et al. (2017), street food vending creates avenues for social Interaction and community Building**:** Street food stalls or kiosks in many countries serve as informal meeting places where people from diverse backgrounds come together to enjoy a meal. This communal dining experience promotes social cohesion and reflects the city's cosmopolitan nature.

Street food influence urban planning and zoning policies. Researchers note the necessity of balancing the preservation of street food culture with broader urban development plans. Street food vendors often face challenges related to licensing, space allocation, and infrastructure. The dynamics between street food and urban planning need to be thoughtfully addressed (Shankar et al., 2024).

Street food culture also carries an environmental impact. Many researchers remark that the influence street food culture has, particularly in terms of waste generation, has drawn attention in recent years. The use of disposable plates, cutlery, and packaging contributes to environmental pollution. Sustainable alternatives, such as biodegradable containers and waste management practices, are being explored as a means to reduce the environmental footprint of street food operations (Shankar et al., 2024).

Street food culture spurs competition with restaurants. The competitive relationship between street food vendors and traditional restaurants is an intriguing subject. Research by Simopoulos et al. (2000) demonstrates how street food businesses compete on price, uniqueness, and adaptability, often attracting customers looking for both affordability and culinary innovation. Understanding these dynamics can offer insights into the changing food landscape in Cameroon.

In addition, street food culture brings Culinary Innovation. Street food vendors in Cameroon are known for their culinary innovation. These vendors continually experiment with flavors and ingredients, contributing to the city's evolving food culture. Their adaptability and willingness to embrace new trends make street food a source of culinary diversity and innovation. (Manga et al., 2021)

Street food vending and consumptions has health and safety concerns. Despite its cultural and economic importance, street food is not without its challenges. Health and safety concerns are frequently cited in the literature. Studies have highlighted the need for stringent regulations to ensure food hygiene and safety standards. Measures to monitor and address these issues are imperative to safeguard public health. (Simopoulos et al., 2000)

2.5 Risks associated with street food vending and consumption

In most developing countries, the vending of street food is a lucrative and common income source for most towns and cities. The majority of those living in these towns are consumers of street food because of its gustatory characteristics. The scrumptiousness of this food is connected to the culinary prowess or expertise of the vendors. In most developing countries street food vending activities are not easily regulated or protected by the governments. it is a very important economic activity though not well appreciated given the informal nature of the enterprise and lack of official data on volume of trade involved. Street food vending constitutes a greater proportion of informal sector of the economy of most developing countries. For example, about 28.5% labor force in Mexico find employment in the informal sector, and the majority of them are involved in the street food vending activity. In Malaysia there are over 100,000 street food vendors, self-employed for survival purposes. In spite of this, the sector is flooded with distasteful activities that seems to create serious problems regarding the safety and health of the consumers. (Buliyaminu, 2020). There are a good number of risk factors associated with street food vending, especially in the developing societies.

Firstly, the agricultural practices are one of the risk areas. The growing world population puts a lot of pressure on food production. There is great need to use the available resources to speed up farm proceeds in order to meet up with the food needs of the fast-growing population. In response to this situation, farmer use inorganic agrochemicals and organic manure to improve the yield of farm produce, prevent competition with weeds and maintain the quality by preventing infestation by insects and spoilage by microorganisms on the field and during storage. The use of these chemicals is regulated in developed countries unlike developing countries. The exaggerated use of these chemicals affects the health of consumers (Buliyaminu, 2020).

The second risk area emanates from the sources and quality of raw foods and ingredients. Given the pressing need for profit making by the food vendors and the desire to make the food affordable for customers, most of these vendors use cheap and unsafe ingredients that may be detrimental to the health of the consumers. For instance, vendors of street foods in Cameroon consider the volume (94%) and the price (93%) than the freshness and cleanliness when buying raw foods to be cooked or vended.

Food preparation, handling and vending is another area of risk associated with street food vending. The unhygienic way in which the food is prepared exposes it to recontamination, cross contamination and transmission of pathogens and food borne illnesses. Most of the foods for street vending are usually prepared in bulk at different times ahead of retailing.

In addition, the method of transportation plays a significant role in the contamination of street foods. The transportation and display of meats play significant role in the acceleration of their spoilage and transmission of zoonotic diseases. The manner of moving slaughtered animal carcasses from slaughter points to retailing points in crude structures such as wooden push carts, open plastic or aluminum trays on heads or “off-road” vehicles increased the chances of cross contamination. Meats are retailed in the markets and streets of Africa in open wooden trays that are usually difficult to wash thoroughly thereby harboring niches for microorganisms’ contamination of meats and deposition of airborne pollutants. (Soliman, 2021)

Other risk factors identified in the preparation and handling of street foods include: the common use of stove charcoal for keeping and warming of food over a long period of time which may not provide adequate temperature enough to prevent proliferation of pathogenic microorganisms; as reheating of food at temperature below 40 ◦C could increase salmonella contamination, overheating at higher temperature could lead to loss of essential nutrients and flavors in the food; holding of foods at ground level and incessant uncovering of foods for dispensing exposed street foods to dust contamination and flies which has been linked to food borne diseases such as cholera and diarrheal. (Manga et al.,2021)

Vending environments pose a risk to the consumers of street food. . Street food vending is a common site in such areas as major street corners, industrial/construction sites, bus/train terminals, public places and school compounds. The vending units are either mobile or stationary using open or protected crude structures such as push carts, display wooden tables, aluminum trays or bowls or chop bars. The areas in which street foods are prepared, sold and eaten exposes them to recontamination and cross contamination from environmental pollutants such as airborne chemicals in dusts, exhaust discharges from moving vehicles and industrial engines, burning fumes and offensive smell from accumulated waste and effluent from industrial discharge, insects and rodents. Since nearness to customers is the primary target of street food vendors, vending sites usually lack basic facilities such as toilets, hand washing facilities, potable water, good drainage and waste disposal system. Where some of these facilities are provided, large concentration of vendors in human congested areas usually placed serious strain on them resulting in interference with city plans and adverse effects on daily life. All these conditions enhance the incidence of food borne illnesses and transmission of diseases among vast consumers of street foods. (Buliyaminu, 2020).

Another risk is that the vendors implement some unhygienic practices. This is due to the negligence of hygiene rules during the preparation and selling of street food. Many studies have testified about this food

vending risks. (Bouafou et al. 2021; Barro et al., 2002a, 2002b). Several studies on street foods and those in canteens have revealed the presence of viruses and sicknesses.(King et al., 2000; Barro et al., 2002a;). Findings from the research work of Buliyaminu (2020) indicate that most of the vendors are aware of the need of cleanliness but in practice the fail to maintain these required hygienic conditions. Most of these places lack pipe borne water and toilet facilities. The lack of these facilities sometimes force most street food consumers to seek secluded areas within the vicinity like bushes and uncompleted buildings for excretion. Some of them do not bath regularly, wash hands when preparing food, serving, after usage of toilet, sneezing, coughing, handling contaminated materials like money and smoking. Most of them do not wear head covering, apron and gloves. They consider this to be a wastage of time.

Attitude of consumers to the hazards of street food poses a risk to the safety of street food. Consumers are the major risk bearers of the consequences of street food safety. The attitude of consumers to safety of street food varied and is dependent on some socio-economic factors. While some are cautious of where and how they purchase the street foods because of their knowledge of the hazards attached; others are beclouded with the urgency to satisfy their culinary drive and enjoy the gustatory attributes attached to the street foods. Consumers' attitude and perception of hazards in street foods is often driven by their level of education, income, knowledge of food safety, age and gender. Literature reported varied effect of these factors on the attitude of consumers to safety of street food and their perception of hazards inherent in its consumption. (Buliyaminu, 2020).

2.6 Empirical Literature

Street food vending is one of the major activities in the large informal food sector of most developing countries especially in urban centers. It has become an omnipresent activity especially influenced by urbanization and globalization. Many authors have carried out research in this area in order to contribute to the upliftment of the communities in which they live. The following few articles based on the developing countries and more on Cameroon indicate the important of street food within culinary entrepreneurship.

Namrata & Renu (2023), carried out a study on street food consumption among college students.-The objective of this work was to assess attitudes and preferences of street food among college-going boys and girls. A descriptive research design was used in this study. For data collection, 60 boys and 60 girls were randomly selected who were studying at Maharana Pratap University of Agriculture and Technology in Udaipur. A structured questionnaire was prepared for the student in different colleges under MPUAT University in Udaipur City to gather data related to the subject. It was found from the study that a large majority of the respondents belonged to the age group of 19-20 years (70%), while 30% of them were between 21-24yrs. Among these majority of (96%), of girls have higher knowledge about food safety and hygiene than boys. Regarding food safety regulations and laws, girls have higher knowledge than boys. 88.3% of the boys and 90% of the girls agreed that their enthusiasm try out new dishes influences them to buy street food. Street food is preferred by boys and girls due to taste, peer group, fun, mood, less price, easy convenience, stress, loneliness, and menu items. water contamination an and unhygienic environment are the major issues faced by the respondents at food stalls. Awareness of health hazards associated with street food use among 80% of boys and 75% of girls was observed in this study.

Avital et al. (2019,) present the *social fabric framework*, which comprises a structured five-step approach for eliciting, interpreting, and representing the situated social idiosyncrasies and underlying patterns of the social making of organizations. The paper focuses on the application of the social fabric framework as a research method. However, the framework also lends itself to practice as a diagnostic tool that can detect emergent changes in the social fabric of an organization as well as support organizational development and change. Moreover, by providing a vocabulary for articulating the social making of organizations, the framework can help organization members reify their dispositions, make sense of the social dynamics, and enable a constructive discussion at the grassroots level about any controversy or aspiration.

Salamandane et al. (2023), investigated the socioeconomic factors of street food vending in developing countries and its implications for public health: A Systematic Review**.** The aim of this review was to update knowledge about the main causes of foodborne illnesses in developing countries, including the growing concern with the microbial transmission of antibiotic resistance. Following PRISMA guidelines, this systematic review was conducted on original articles published from January 2010 to July 2023. The search was carried out using Scopus, PubMed, Web of Science, Food Science and Technology Abstracts (FSTA), the International Information System for Agricultural Sciences and Technology (AGRIS), as well as isolated searches of relevant articles from Google Scholar. The initial search identified 915 articles, 50 of which were included in this systematic review. The results indicate that, in the majority of the 15 countries examined, women constitute the predominant segment of street food vendors, representing more than 55% of the total number of these vendors. In 11 countries, street food vendors under the age of 18 were identified. Most vendors had a low level of education and, consequently, were unaware of good hygiene practices when handling food. The combination of factors such as poor hygiene practices on the part of food handlers and the lack of facilities, namely, the absence

of available potable water, were frequently listed as the main causes of food contamination. To address the challenges faced by street vendors and improve their economic activities, it is necessary for government entities, consumers, and vendors to work together collaboratively.

In the same light, Kaptso et al. (2021) carried out a study on the assessment of food hygienic and vending practices among street food vendors in Buea and Kumba City Council, South-West Region Cameroon. This work aimed to evaluate the basic characteristics of street food services and hygienic condition of the processing and distribution of street food. A cross sectional study approach was adopted focusing on some vending sectors in Buea and Kumba. Random samplings of 80 vendors were used and questionnaires were administered to vendors. The results showed that women dominate street food vending amongst all age groups. Most of street vendors have a low educational level and do not have any formal food safety training which contributed to the unsafe conditions under which the foods were prepared and vended. There were several poor personal hygienic practices amongst the vendors. Only 28.8 % always used aprons; 22.5 % always covered their hair and 18.8% always kept away from food preparation and vending when sick or having a wound. Street foods are good sources of diseases as the government pays in less attention to the sector. The study recommends the creation of food centers, regulation of vending activities by the government and development of training programs to enrich vendors on food safety and hygiene.

Edima et al. (2024). Carried out a case Study of the Street Food Sector in the Metropolitan Areas of a Cameroonian City, Yaounde. During this study, information was obtained concerning the street food vendors and their activities by observation and brainstorming, and by interviewing 100 street food vendors using questionnaires. Results show that the major street food consumption points are located around areas of high social activity such as pubs, markets and road junctions. The most consumed street foods are roasted fish, bread, fried dough, roasted beef, roasted or fried plantain and baton (fermented cassava roll). The cooking/preparation methods include: boiling, frying, roasting and simple washing. The vendors are mostly women (60.61%), with 74% of them being Christians. For 40% of the vendors, the practice of street food vending is an easy way of earning money. The general hygiene of the vendors is poor. Some of the hygiene malpractices in the street food system are due to: the absence of running water at the vending site, lack of proper toilets, and the lack of demand for quality in terms of hygiene by the consumers. Therefore, there is a need for relevant authorities to regulate the street food sector.

Yemmafouo (2018), concentrated on Street Vending Power Relationships and Governance of Public Spaces in Bafoussam, West Cameroon. Intermediate cities such as Bafoussam, animating dynamic peripheries have an economic fabric which is strongly supported by informal economies. These cities seek to regulate informal trade in order to mitigate unemployment impact while generating income. The target of this article is to show how power relationship building by street vending impacts the governance of public spaces. It is hypothesised that at the grassroots level of the network of urban economic fabric in medium-sized cities, the tolerance of street vending as a governance model has become a power sharing with Vendors. 35 in-depth interviews and three focus group discussions were conducted with vendors along Market A and Market B road that spans over 10 kilometres. This was to understand the strategies that govern the occupation and functioning of street vending, the network relationships it displays and the implications on governance of public spaces. The importance of street vending and the networks it shapes in Bafoussam gives it a power that ensures its long-term presence on public spaces, urban economic and socio-political stability.

Bourinyuy et al. (2024), worked on knowledge and practical measures employed by food vendors in the implementation of food hygiene at the Moveg-Betsi Market, Yaounde Cameroon. The goal of this study was to assist in improving food-related disease prevention measures at the Ministry of Public Health and Community level. A community-based cross-sectional study using systematic random sampling was the design of the investigation. Mvog-Betsi Market, one of the food vending marketplaces in Cameroon's Center Region, served as the study region. A semi-structured questionnaire including four sections of closed and open-ended questions with predetermined objectives served as the data gathering method. SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 20 statistical software was used to analyze the data, which was then displayed as a frequency distribution table, pie charts, and bar charts. 81.8% of the 110 respondents that were enlisted for the study were female, and 18.2% were male, according to data collection and analysis. Given that they make up the majority, women are in charge of handling matters pertaining to food. Sixty-seven percent of the food vendors knew what food hygiene was. In terms of practice, the current study reveals that just 25.6% of respondents follow good food hygiene, while 74.4% do not. The majority of food vendors had poor food hygiene practices, although having strong knowledge of food hygiene, it may be concluded. The government should regulate vending activities and create training programs to educate sellers about food safety and hygiene, according to this finding.

Manga et al. (2021), researched on the evaluation of sanitary risks associated with the consumption of street food in the city of Yaoundé (Cameroon): case of braised fish from Mvog-Ada, Ngoa Ekélé, Simbock, Ahala and Olézoa. An investigation was performed to evaluate the braising fish practices and the level of hygiene of the sellers in the city of Yaoundé. Thereafter, five braised carp samples were collected from each of

the five selected sites and their microbiological quality assessed. The results showed that all the braising sites do not satisfy the Good Hygiene and Manufacturing Practices.

Mapingure et al. (2015), researched on the determinants of street food consumption in low income residential suburbs: The Perspectives of Patrons of KwaMereki in Harare, Zimbabwe. The method of data collection was through interviews and questionnaires and the data analysis was by a thematic approach. The major results of the study revealed that the socioeconomic determinants of street food culture constitute the quest for cultural identity expressed in consuming traditional dishes, the desire to fulfill psychological needs such as self-esteem, love and sense of belonging, social recognition as expressed in material possessions and the relaxation provided by the setting, flexibility and convenience. With regards to strategies on improving the facility, vendors suggested that the practice of food vending be legalized, while patrons suggested that the general hygiene and cleanliness of the place should be enhanced. Since food is a key component of the tourism industry, the findings of the study were used to design a framework which can be used to guide the development of street food vending, so that mutual benefits could accrue to the vendors as well as the tourism and hospitality industry at large.

3 Materials and Methods

3.1 Area of study (Bamenda Municipality, North West Region of Cameroon)

Bamenda, also known as Abakwa and Mankon Town, is a city in northwestern Cameroon and capital of the Northwest Region. The city has a population of about six hundred thousand people and is located 366 km (227 mi) north-west of the Cameroonian capital, Yaoundé. Bamenda is known for its cool climate and scenic hilly location. The city has three Municipalities (Bamenda I, II and III Municipalities). The current metro area population of Bamenda in 2024 is 615,000, a 3.54% increase from 2023. The metro area population of Bamenda in 2023 was 594,000, a 3.66% increase from 2022. The metro area population of Bamenda in 2022 was 573,000, a 3.62% increase from 2021.

In the context of culinary entrepreneurship, street food vending in Cameroon is a widespread economic activity, particularly for women, providing crucial income, employment, and affordable food for urban dwellers. Popular dishes include grilled meats like Soya (often called 50/50) and seasoned Ndule and plantains (a dish with spaghetti and beef), alongside snacks such as puff puffs and parfait . However, the sector faces challenges with food safety and hygiene, including vendors' personal hygiene, water quality, handling practices, and limited training, posing health risks to consumers and highlighting the need for government intervention, hygiene education, and organized vendor associations (Acho-Chi, 2002). This justifies the need of research in this economic area so as to enrich this sector and thus the vendors for their family sustenance.

3.2 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

The **sampling technique** implemented for this work is a combination of convenience sampling and voluntary response sampling technique which are both non-probability sampling techniques. Convenience sampling involves selecting participants based on their accessibility and availability to the researcher while a voluntary response sample is one which consists of participants who voluntarily choose to participate in the study (Kothari, 2004). This is very characteristic of online surveys and questionnaires sent via mail. Participants in a voluntary response sample often choose to respond to surveys because they have a strong opinion about the subject of the survey. .More specifically, the street food consumers selected for this work were based on their accessibility and availability.

The **sample size** for this study is **302** The respondents were given physical questionnaires to fill. Three hundred and twenty (310) questionnaires were distributed to graduates from the following selected universities who own small enterprises and 302 were answered and returned making a sample size of 302 entrepreneurial graduates. The partition of these respondents according to the various university institutes is summarised on Table 3.1.

Table 3. 1. Number of Selected University Institutes in the Bamenda Municipality, North West Region of Cameroon

SN	Place of Residence of participants	Number of participants	Percentage
1	Bamenda I	101	33.77
2	Bamenda II	104	34.44
3	Bamenda III	96	31.79
	Total	302	100%

Source: Field Survey by the Researcher (2025)

3. 3 Model Specification and Estimation Technique for three Objectives

The study made used of Ordinal Least Square (OLS) estimation technique. A multiple Linear Regression (The ANOVA test) was used to estimate the data collected and to test the hypothesis. In summary, the t-statistical or t-value is used to justify whether the coefficient of the estimated parameters are statistically significant at a certain degree of freedom.The F-statistic is used to test the overall significance of the coefficient of determination (R square) or adjusted coefficient of determination (R2 adjusted). It shows the reliability of the results.

The first objective is to investigate the influence of socioeconomic factors on the societal fabric. The second objective assesses the effect of the environmental and cultural factors on the societal fabric under study. The model adopted for this purpose is the multiple linear regression (MLR) model which consists in regressing the dependent variable (societal fabric) on a set of independent variables (socioeconomic indicators and cultural and environmental factors). The control variables in this model include the gender (Sex), their age (Age), their level of education (Educ) and their marital status (MS)

The error term is captured by μ and β_i represents the coefficients of the right-hand variables to be estimated. **The model is specified in econometric form as follows:**

Societal fabric =f (socioeconomic factors, *environmental and cultural factors****)----------1***

The causal link between societal fabric and the socioeconomic and cultural factors can thus be modelled econometrically as:

$$\textit{societal fabric} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 \textit{socioeconomic factors} + \alpha_2 \textit{environmental and cultural factors} + \alpha_3 Age + \alpha_4 Educ + \alpha_5 \text{MS} + \alpha_6 \text{gender} + \varepsilon \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots 2$$

Where societal fabric is the dependent variable and the socioeconomic indicators, cultural indicators and the environmental factors are the independent variables of interest. The control variables in this model include the gender of the participants' (Sex), their age (Age), their level of education (Educ), and their marital status. The error term is captured by μ and β_i represents the coefficients of the right-hand variables to be estimated.

Table 3. 2. Variables and their meaning in the Societal fabric model

Variable	Meaning/measurement	Expected sign
Societal fabric indicators	Societal fabric indicators are a summated score of street food vending factors beneficial for community building and those that are detrimental to the environment and health of the participants It ranges from 3 to 15. It is the dependent variable	
Socioeconomic indicators of street food consumption	This independent variable is a summated score of factors that cause participants to cherish street food. It ranges from 6 to 30	+
Cultural indicators	They are a summated score of all cultural elements that cause street food consumers to prefer street food to hotel or restaurant feeding. They range from 9 to 48	+
Environmental factors or Street food vending risks	They are the environmental degradational factors caused by street food vendor. They range from 11 to 49. This variable is a summated score of all risks associated with food vending.	-
Level of education	It is an ordinal variable indicating the different educational levels of the participants. It ranges from 0 to 8	+/-
Marital status	It is a nominal variable representing the various marital status of the respondents. It ranges from 1 to 4	+/-
Sex	Sex of respondent which is equal to 1 if male and 0 otherwise	+/-
Age	Age of respondent. It is an ordered categorical variable. It ranges from 1 to 5	+/-
Area of residence	Residence: where respondent lives. It is nominal, ranging from 1 to 3	+/-

Source: Researcher's field work (2023)

Societal fabric is captured as a summated score of seven indicators. It represents street food vending benefits constituting elements having an (economic impact, poverty reduction effect, social interaction of consumers, community building, culinary innovation, environmental impact, health and safety concerns). The summated score obtained is thus a continuous variable that ranges from 8 to 45, where higher values represent

higher benefits of street food vending to the society and 8representing the demerits of street food vending to the society

The socioeconomic determinants are also captured as a summated score of six factors namely (price factor, accessibility of the food, appearance of new food styles, freedom and convenience of street food vending environment, work pressure and need for relaxation and income generation for family sustainability). The summated score obtained is thus a continuous variable that ranges from 6 to 30, where higher values represent higher benefits of socioeconomic factors to societal fabric the society and 6, representing the demerits of socioeconomic determinants to societal growth.

The cultural factors are also captured as a summated score of six factors namely (availability of ethnic dishes, street food being a solution to stress and loneliness, quest for cultural identity, lack of canteens at work places, time saving and problem of the distance between house of respondents and work places). The summated score obtained is thus a continuous variable that ranges from 9 to 48, where higher values represent higher benefits of cultural factors to societal fabric the society and 9, representing the demerits of cultural factors to the societal growth.

The environmental factors are also captured as a summated score of 5 factors namely (poor agricultural practices, method of transportation, vending environment, unhygienic practices of vendors and consumers' attitude towards street food). The summated score obtained is thus a continuous variable that ranges from 11 to 49, where higher values represent higher demerits of environmental hazards of street food vending to societal fabric and 9, representing the merits of environmental factors of food vending to societal growth.

3.4 Method of Data Analysis and Appraisal

For data analysis, both a descriptive and an inferential statistic will be used. For the descriptive analysis which consists in describing the characteristics of the data as they are, summary tables, bar charts and pie charts will be used. The statistics to be reported here will include simple means, frequencies, standard deviations, minimum and maximum values and measures of skewness and kurtosis. For the inferential statistics which consist in making inferences about population parameters based on sample statistics, hypotheses will be accepted or rejected based on certain test results. Student t-statistics and z-statistics will be used to make inferences about individual parameter estimates for the linear and non-linear models, respectively. The Fisher F-statistics will be used to make inferences about model or global significance. Other specific test results will be used to judge model characteristics such as the variance inflation factors (VIF) to test the presence of multicollinearity, the Breusch-Pagan chi2 statistic to test for heteroskedasticity, and so on. The data will be entered in Excel, cleaned and analysed in Stata 15.

4. Presentation and Discussion of Findings

This section constitutes the empirical section of the study devoted to the presentation of results and the discussion of findings. The area starts with a presentation of the descriptive analyses before moving to the presentation of the empirical results according to the objectives of the study.

4.1 Presentation of Descriptive Results

4.1.1. Demographic characteristics of respondents

Table 4. 1. Descriptive statistics of socio-demographic variables

Variables	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	Skew.	Kurt.
gender (1=female, 0= male)	302	0.45	.498	0	1	0.2	1.04
Marital status	302	2.252	1.137	1	4	0.285	1.655
Age	302	3.003	1.227	1	5	0.145	2.043
Education	302	4.248	2.134	1	8	0.053	1.908
Place of residence of respondents (Bamenda I, II and III Municipalities)	302	1.98	0.811.	1	3	0.036	1.527

Source: Researcher's field work (2025)

Table 4.1 presents summary statistics of the socio-demographic characteristics of participants in the study including their means, their standard deviations, their minimum and the maximum values as well as their

measures of skewness and kurtosis. The sample was made up of 302 respondents (consumers of street food) drawn from the three Municipalities of the North West Region of Cameroon (that is, Bamenda I, II and III Municipalities).

The sex of the respondents varied from 0 to 1, where 0 meant that the respondent is male and 1 meant the respondent is female. The mean value of 0.45 which is closer to zero implies that the sample was dominated by male respondents. Therefore, the men form a greater population of those who eat street food than women. This is depicted on Figure 4.1. The skewness and kurtosis values are well below 1 and 3 in absolute value, respectively, implying the absence of outliers and implying that the variable is somewhat normally distributed.

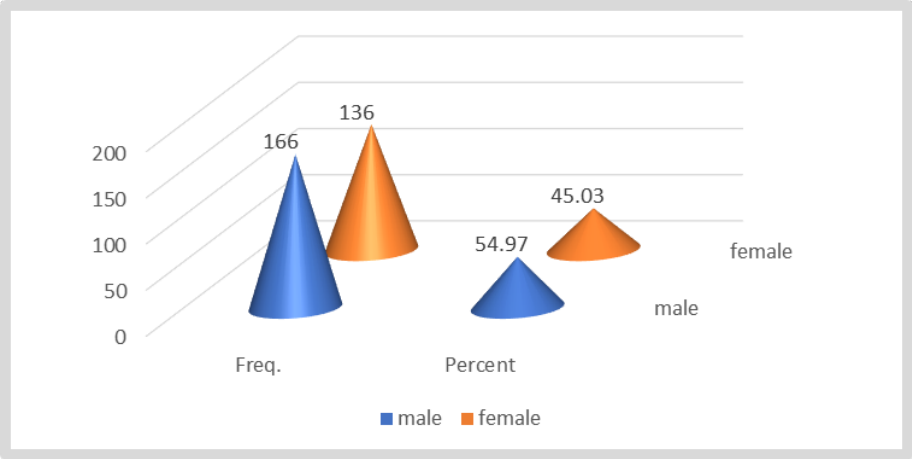

Figure 4. 1. Sex distribution of respondents

The sex distribution of the respondents is reported on Figure 4.1. Of the 302 respondents, 166 (representing 54.97% of the respondents) were male while only 136 (representing 45.03% of the respondent) were female. This could mean that there is a weak female representation of those who consume street food.

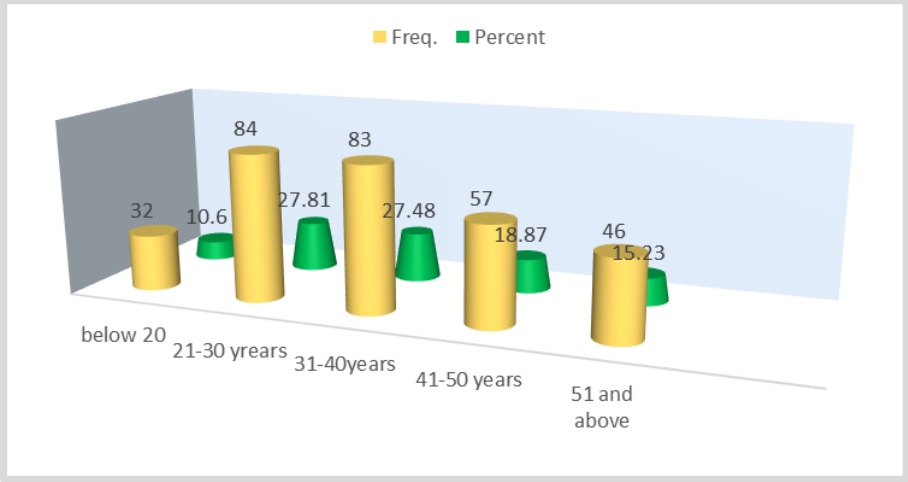

Figure 4. 2. Age distribution of respondents

Age is an ordered categorical variable with five categories as seen in (Figure 4.2). Table 4.1 shows that the skewness and kurtosis values are below 1 and 3 in absolute value, respectively, indicating that the variable is approximately normally distributed. The mean age value is 3.003 and tends towards the age groups that are the highest consumers of street food (that is those between the ages of 21-30 years, 31-40 years and 41-50 years). The respondents sampled in this classified in to different age groups. Firstly, those below 20 years were 32 (that is, 10.6 % of the respondents) followed by participants between 21-30 years (that is, 27.81% of the

respondents). The respondents between 31-40 years were 83 (that is 27,48%), while those within the age range of 41-50 years constituted a population of 57 (that is 18.87%) of the respondents and lastly those in the age group of 51 years and above were 46 (representing 15.23%). The skewness and kurtosis values are well below 1 and 3 in absolute value, respectively, implying the absence of outliers and implying that the variable is somewhat normally distributed.

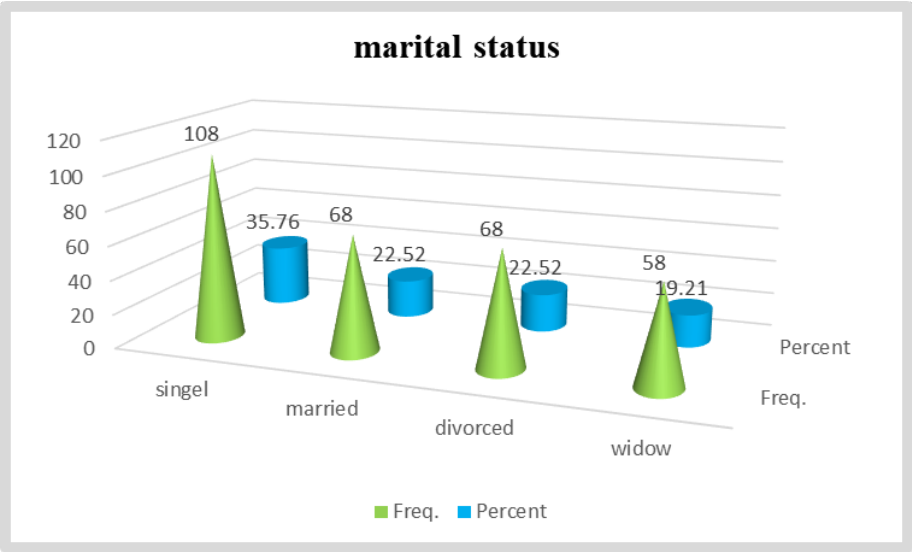

Figure 4. 3. Marital Status of respondents

Marital status is a nominal variable with four categories (Figure 4.3). Most participants in the study were single that is, 108 respondents, representing 35.76%. Those in the married and divorced groups constituted 68 respondents respectively and lastly the widows made up 9.21% of the consumers of street food. In effect, the majority of street food beneficiaries are those who are single. This is justified from the mean value 2.252 of marital status as seen in table 1. The minimum value is 1 and the maximum of the categories is 4. In addition, the skewness and kurtosis values are below 1 and 3 in absolute value, meaning the variable is approximately normally distributed.

Table 4.2: The educational level of the respondents

Level of Education	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
No education	41	13.58	13.58
Completed First School leaving Certificate (FSLC)	33	10.93	24.50
completed Ordinary Level (O/L)	44	14.57	39.07
Completed Advanced Level (A/L)	52	17.22	56.29
currently in university (all levels)	27	8.94	65.23
first degree	55	18.21	83.44
masters degree	29	9.60	93.05
Ph.D	21	6.95	100.00
Total	**302**	**100.00**	

Source: Researcher's field work (2025)

The education level of the participants is an ordinal variable with eight categories (Table 4.2). Most of the respondents had a Bachelor's Degree (55 respondents, representing 18.21 % of the sample). Following this category was those who had A/L (52 participants, representing 17.22% of the sample), then by those who had O/L (44 respondents, representing 14.57 % of the sample). The uneducated respondents

constituted 13.58% of the population under study while the street food consumers having Masters and Ph.D and those currently in university formed just 29 (9.60%), 21 (6.95%) and 27 (8.97%) respectively. From this observation, it shows that the majority of those with higher levels of education do not eat street food. One may presume that with their level of education, they are aware of the harm the unhygienic nature of street food causes to their health. This is justified by the results in table 4.1. The mean value of the educational level is 4.248. the minimum value is 1 and the maximum value of the categories is 8. The mean value is tending towards the value 8, indicating the majority of the street food consumers are those with lower levels of education. The skewness and kurtosis values are well below 1 and 3 in absolute value, respectively, implying the absence of outliers and implying that the variable is somewhat normally distributed.

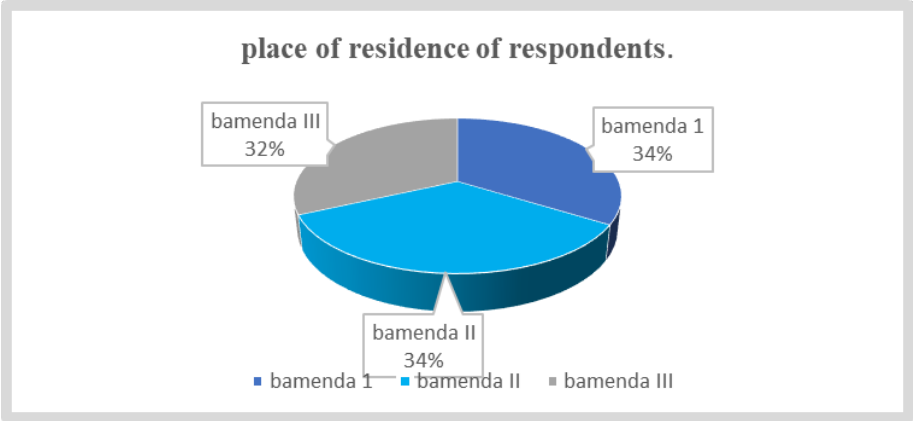

Figure 4.4: Place of residence of the participants

Figure 4.4, indicates the place of residence of the participants. They were sampled from the three municipalities of Bamenda, capital of the North West Region of Cameroon. From Bamenda I, II and III zones, 34%, 34% and 32% respectively of the respondents were selected. From Table 4.1, we notice that the skewness and kurtosis values are well below 1 and 3 in absolute value, respectively, implying the absence of outliers and implying that the variable is somewhat normally distributed.

Table 4.3: The types of food preferences of Street food consumers

Types of food I prefer eating/drinking at Street food spots	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
sawyer	27	8.94	8.94
roasted chicken	32	10.60	19.54
roasted fish	32	10.60	30.13
any traditional food	61	20.20	50.33
palm wine	22	7.28	57.62
roasted corn	45	14.90	72.52
fried port	29	9.60	82.12
breakfast	46	15.23	97.35
other preferred meals	8	2.65	100.00
Total	302	100.00	

Source: Researcher's field work (2025)

Table 4.3 indicates the food preferences of the various 302 street food consumers under study. We noticed that sawyer, roasted chicken, roasted fish, traditional food, palm wine, roasted corn, fried pork, breakfast, and other meals are consumed by 8.94%, 10.60%, 20.20%, 7.28%, 14.90%, 9.60%, 15.23% and 2.65% of the participants respectively.

Table 4.4: Frequency of visits of street food consumers to street food places

Frequency of Visits to food sellers (restaurants, bars or any spot where food is	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
daily	105	34.77	34.77
once a week	49	16.23	50.99
monthly	48	15.89	66.89
twice a week	100	33.11	100.00
Total	302	100.00	

Source: Researcher's field work (2025)

Table 4.4 presents the frequency of visits of street food consumers to street food places. The respondents visit these spots daily, once a week, monthly and twice a week. The frequencies are indicated and the percentages rating the frequency of visits are 34.77%,16.23%, 15.89% and 33.11% respectively. This indicates that all the 302 respondents under study do visit street food areas for food consumption.

Table 4.5: Purpose of visit at street food spots

Purpose of visit at street food places	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
eating	37	12.25	12.25
drinking	37	12.25	24.50
social networking	38	12.58	37.09
entertainment	47	15.56	52.65
all of the above	143	47.35	100.00
Total	**302**	**100.00**	

Source: Researcher's field work (2025)

Table 4.5 presents the reasons why the 302 respondents under study do visit street food spots. The purpose is for eating, drinking, social networking and entertainment. The percentage indicated for these reasons by the various respondents is 12.25%, 12.25%, 12.58%, 15.56% respectively and 47.35% of them visit the places for all the above stated reasons.

Table 4.6: The hygiene condition of the street food spots

how is the hygienic condition of most places where street food is sold?	Frequency	Percentage
poor	184	60.93
average	55	18.21
good	41	13.58
very good	22	7.28
Total	302	100.00

Source: Researcher's field work (2025)

Table 4.6 shows the rating of the participants regarding the hygiene condition of the street food places. The respective 302 participants indicated that the hygienic situation is poor, average, good or very good. The respective percentage assessment by these respondents indicates that 60.93% of them confirmed that the hygiene of the street food spots is poor, 18.21% say it is average, 13.58% indicate that the hygiene is good while only 7.28% acknowledged that the hygienic situation of these street food places is very good. Following from the findings in table 4.6, one can begin to notice that the majority of the street food consumers visit those places because of the reasons stated in table 4.5 but they are not happy with the hygiene of street food vendors.

Table 4.7: Descriptive statistics of the main variables of interest

Variables	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	Skew.	Kurt.
Socioeconomic determinants	302	25.404	5.616	6	30	-1.649	5.861
Cultural and environmental determinants	302	36.205	9.139	9	48	-0.905	3.068
Risk associated with street food vending	302	26.358	14.048	11	49	0.131	1.409
Societal fabric indicators	302	38.623	8.694	8	45	-1.803	6.156

Source: Researcher's field work (2025)

4.1.2 Societal Fabric benefits of street food vending

The variables that describe the fabric of the society are summarized on Table 4.8. The questions that were asked to capture the elements of the societal fabric are presented in Section D of the research questionnaire (see Appendix 1 for the questionnaire). The questions asked or opinions raised were Likert-scale in nature and respondents could either strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree or be neutral regarding the question or opinion. The frequencies and percentages of the responses to each opinion regarding employee loyalty are presented on Table 4.8

Table 4.8: Societal fabric benefits indicators of street food vending

Items		disagree	strongly disagree	neutral	agree	Strongly agree
Street food selling makes up a significant portion of the informal food distribution	Freq.	17	16	11	108	50
	%	5.63	5.3	3.64	35.76	49.67
Street food selling generates income and employment for a greater population of	Freq.	11	10	11	115	155
	%	3.64	3.31	3.64	38.08	51.32
It reduces the poverty level and improves living standard	Freq.	11	10	11	120	50
	%	3.64	3.31	3.64	39.74	49.67
It gives a chance for the vendors to learn business skills for self-employment	Freq.	8	10	11	114	159
	%	2.65	3.31	3.64	37.75	52.65
It facilitates food security (it gives many a chance to have access to food supply	Freq.	10	11	11	110	160
	%	3.31	3.64	3.64	36.42	52.98
Street food is a cultural resource and eating as a cultural act that facilitates interaction and social differentiation among people	Freq.	11	15	6	112	158
	%	3.64	4.97	1.99	37.09	52.32
Through street food, the indigenous people resist the forces of globalization	Freq.	12	11	8	122	149
	%	3.97	3.64	2.65	40.4	49.34
Street food is a cultural resource has the potential to attract tourists	Freq.	10	11	11	110	160
	%	3.31	3.64	3.64	36.42	52.98
street food reflects people's lifestyles and religion	Freq.	11	15	6	112	158
	%	3.64	4.97	1.99	37.09	52.32

Source: Researcher's field work (2025)

Table 4.8 presents a summary statistics for the composite variable 'societal fabric benefits' which was constructed as a summated score of the indicators reported on Table 4.7. The mean value of the responses

indicating the benefits of street food vending to the society is 38.623. The minimum is 09 while the maximum is 45. The kurtosis is 6.156, above 03 which is the bench mark. This shows there are outliers or gap of views regarding the benefits of street food vending to the society. the mean is 38.623, a figure tending toward the maximum value of 45. This indicates that the majority of the participants (street food consumers) agree that street food vending is an activity that is beneficial to the society.

Table 4.8 therefore, displays the information regarding the societal benefits of street food consumption. The first item shows that street food selling makes up a significant portion of the informal food distribution. To this assertion, 145 (representing 48.01%) agree to this fact, while 134 (44.37%) strongly agreed. The minority 1.66%,1.99% and 3.97% respectively, disagreed, strongly disagreed and others remained neutral. This is a proof that street food vending is an economic activity to be encouraged.

Secondly, another importance of street food vending seen on table 4.8 is that street food selling generates income and employment for a greater population under study. To this fact, we observe that 155 (51.32%) strongly agree, 115 (38.08%) agreed. The minority 3.64%, 3.31% and 3.64% respectively, disagreed, strongly disagreed and others remained neutral. This is a proof that street food vending is an economic activity that generates income and employment for a greater population under study.

Thirdly, the societal benefit of street food vending is that is it reduces the poverty level and improves living standards. To this statement, 50 (49.67%) strongly agreed, 120 (38.74%) agreed and the minority 3.64%, 3.31% and 3.64% respectively, , disagreed, strongly disagreed and others remained neutral. This is an important indication that street food vending curbs the level of poverty in the municipalities under study. Many could be encouraged to engage in this business given its lucrative nature.

In addition, street food business activity gives a chance for the vendors to learn business skills for self-employment. In answer to this statement, 159 (52.65%) of the street food consumers strongly agreed and 114 (37.75 %) agreed. The minority 3.64%, 3.31% and 2.65% respectively, disagreed, strongly disagreed and others remained neutral.

Another indication of societal fabric benefit in terms of street food vending is that it facilitates food security (it gives many a chance to have access to food supply. The results show that out of the 302 participants, 160 (representing 52.98%) strongly agreed and 110 (36.42%) of them agreed. To this statement, 11 (3.64%) and 10 (3.31%) of them respectively, remained neutral, some strongly disagreed and others disagreed. With the majority in favour of this assertion, we observe that street food vending is a source of food security.

The data also show that street food is a cultural resource and eating as a cultural act that facilitates interaction and social differentiation among people. In response to this statement, 158 (52.32%) out of the 302 respondents, strongly agreed and 112 (37.09%) agreed. This is in contrast to 11 (3.64%) who disagreed, 15 (4.97%) strongly disagreed and 6 (1.99%) stayed neutral.

The respondents were also made to give their impressions to the statement that through street food, the indigenous people resist the forces of globalization. The results show that out of the 302 participants, 149 (representing 49.34%) strongly agreed and 122 (40.4%) of them agreed. To this statement,08 (2.65%), 11 (3.64%) and 12 (3.97%) of them respectively, remained neutral, some strongly disagreed and others disagreed. With the majority in favour of this assertion, we observe that street food vending is an area where the indigenous people resist the forces of globalization

The data also show that street food is a cultural resource that has the potential to attract customers. The results show that out of the 302 participants, 160 (representing 52.98%) strongly agreed and 110 (36.42%) of them agreed. To this statement, 11 (3.64%) and 10 (3.31%) of them respectively, remained neutral, some strongly disagreed and others disagreed. With the majority in favour of this assertion, we observe that street food vending is a cultural resource has the potential to attract tourists

Lastly, the findings show that street food reflects people's lifestyles and religion. In response to this statement, 158 (52.32%) out of the 302 respondents, strongly agreed and 112 (37.09%) agreed. This is in contrast to 11 (3.64%) who disagreed, 15 (4.97%) strongly disagreed and 6 (1.99%) stayed neutral. The overall view of the respondents following the various indicators of the importance of street food vending to the societal fabric. This economic activity is very vital to the community under study.

4.1.3: Socioeconomic determinants of street food consumption

Table 4.9: Socioeconomic indicators

Item		disagree	strongly disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
There is the development of women's activity. (many women are vendors of street food to sustain their families financially)	Freq.	5	6	12	145	134
	%	1.66	1.99	3.97	48.01	44.37
The pressure of work causes many people—not just those with low to middle incomes—to spend most of their time outside their homes and eat at these street food spots	Freq.	40	20	9	110	123
	%	13.25	6.62	2.98	36.42	40.73
The food sold in street food spots is fairly cheap than hotels or restaurants (**price factor)**	Freq.	11	6	7	123	155
	%	3.64	1.99	2.32	40.73	51.32
I prefer eating on food spots where I can freely talk to my friends and even shout to someone passing by without someone staring at me (freedom and convenience)	Freq.	10	8	5	130	149
	%	3.31	2.65	1.66	43.05	49.34
There is also the appearance of new food styles that prompt people to eat at these places	Freq.	18	6	10	123	145
	%	5.96	1.99	3.31	40.73	48.01
Street food is affordable and accessible, especially for workers	Freq.	9	8	7	123	155
	%	2.98	2.65	2.32	40.73	51.32

Source: Researcher's field work (2025)

Table 4.9 displays the socioeconomic determinants of street food consumption. Here, we observe the factors prompting the participants to demand for street food and for vendors to develop this economic activity. One of the indicators is that many women are vendors of street food to sustain their families financially. In response to this statement, out of the 302 respondents, 134 (representing 44.37%), strongly agreed and 145 (48.01%) agreed. This is in contrast to 05 (1.66%) of them who disagreed, 06 (1.99%) strongly disagreed and 12 (3.97%) remained neutral. This strongly suggests that the majority of the respondents consume street food to sustain the vendors in the attempt to sustain their families financially.

Secondly, the participants cherish street food due to the pressure of work that limits the time at their disposal. A high proportion of the respondents, 123 (40.73%) of them strongly agreed, 110 (36.42%) agreed, 40 (13.25%) disagreed, 20 (6.62%) strongly disagreed and 09 (2.98%) were neutral. It is still evident that the majority of them appreciate street food given that it solves the problem of time constraint at work.

The third indicator is the price factor. That is, the food sold in street food spots is fairly cheap than hotels or restaurants. In response to this statement, 155 (51.32%) of the participants strongly agreed, 123 (4.073 %) of them agreed, 11 (3.64%) disagreed, 06 (1.99%) strongly disagreed and 07 (2.32%) stayed neutral to this factor.

One of the indicators states that 'I prefer eating on food spots where I can freely talk to my friends and even shout to someone passing by without someone staring at me. That is, they eat street food because of

freedom and convenience they enjoy at these food sites. To this concept, 149 (49.34%) strongly agreed, 130 (40.03%) agreed, 10 (3.31%) disagreed, 08 (2.65%) strongly disagreed and 5 (1.66%) remained neutral.

The data presents the fact that 'there is also the appearance of new food styles that prompt people to eat at these places'. Here, the street food consumers under study gave responses to this notion. We noticed that 145 (48.01), of them strongly agreed, 123 (40.73%) agreed, 18 (5.98%) disagreed, 06 (1.99%) strongly disagreed and 10 (3.31%) were neutral. It is still evident that the majority of them appreciate street food given that it has the appearance of new food styles that make it attractive to the consumers.

4.1.4: Cultural and environmental Determinants of street food consumption

Table 4.10: Cultural and environmental indicators

Item		disagree	strongly disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
I eat in street food spot where our ethnic dishes are available	Freq.	10	8	6	121	157
	%	3.31	2.65	1.99	40.07	51.99
Eating here with friends removes stress or loneliness	Freq.	14	10	20	111	147
	%	4.64	3.31	6.62	36.75	48.68
I eat this food for fun or to have a change	Freq.	11	10	20	111	150
	%	3.64	3.31	6.62	36.75	49.67
There is quest for cultural identity expressed in consuming traditional dishes	Freq.	14	20	10	107	151
	%	4.64	6.62	3.31	35.43	50
The distance between workplaces and home causes many to eat street food	Freq.	26	27	11	98	140
	%	8.61	8.94	3.64	32.45	46.36
At work places, there is no efficient system of collective catering, such as can	Freq.	24	49	11	99	119
	%	7.95	16.23	3.64	32.78	39.4
There is the desire to fulfill psychological needs such as self-esteem, love and sense of belonging, social recognition as expressed in material possessions and the relaxation provided by the setting, flexibility and convenience (social interaction)	Freq.	8	10	7	107	170
	%	2.65	3.31	2.32	35.43	56.29
It is time-saving when I have break from work	Freq.	35	66	12	89	100
	%	11.59	21.85	3.97	29.47	33.11
I eat street food to remove stress, loneliness, etc.	Freq.	35	66	12	89	100
	%	11.59	21.85	3.97	29.47	33.11

Source: Researcher's field work (2025)

We also analyze some of the cultural and environmental determinants of street food consumption. One of the factors is that, 'I eat in street food spot where our ethnic dishes are available". Out of the 302 respondents, 157 (51.99%) strongly agreed, 121 (40.07%) agreed, 10 (3.31%) disagreed, 08 (2.65%) strongly disagreed and 6 (2.65%) remained neutral.

Secondly, the second factor stated that street food consumers go to street food site because 'there is the desire to fulfill psychological needs such as self-esteem, love and sense of belonging, social recognition as expressed in material possessions and the relaxation provided by the setting, flexibility and convenience (social interaction). In response to this factor, 170 (56.29%) strongly agreed, 107 (35.43%) agreed, 08 (2.65%) disagreed, 10 (3.31%) strongly disagreed and 7 (2.32%) were neutral.

Another cultural factor attracting street food consumers to these sites is because there is quest for cultural identity expressed in consuming traditional dishes. In answer to this fact, 151 (50%) of the 302 respondents strongly agreed, 107 (35.43%) agreed while 14 (4.64%) disagreed, 20 (6.62&) strongly disagreed and 10 (3.31%) took a neutral stand.

4.1.5: Safety and Hygiene condition of street food

Table 4.11: Safety and hygiene indicators of street food

Item		disagree	strongly disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree
Some of the food is prepared in very good hygienic conditions. The food vendors are clean	Freq.	75	92	13	62	60
	%	24.83	30.46	4.3	20.53	19.87
The buildings/ structures where most street food is sold are very poor and old (unhygienic environment)	Freq.	73	49	12	86	82
	%	24.17	16.23	3.97	28.48	27.15
Most street food spots do not have waste disposal systems, thus there is a lot of littering	Freq.	71	52	13	83	83
	%	23.51	17.22	4.3	27.48	27.48
They lack clean water supply (like running water taps) for the customers (water contamination)	Freq.	71	52	13	83	83
	%	23.51	17.22	4.3	27.48	27.48
Toilets and washing facilities at the place are inadequate, and the washing of hands, utensils and dishes is often done in buckets and bowls	Freq.	73	55	12	82	80
	%	24.17	18.21	3.97	27.15	26.49
street food is usually prepared in conditions which are unsafe, due to the limited access to safe water and other important services	Freq.	73	55	12	82	80
	%	24.17	18.21	3.97	27.15	26.49
Most of these foods give foodborne diseases (health related problems)	Freq.	73	55	12	82	80
	%	24.17	18.21	3.97	27.15	26.49
The street food spots have poor siting facilities	Freq.	73	82	12	55	80
	%	24.17	27.15	3.97	18.21	26.49
These street food places have improper serving facilities	Freq.	73	82	12	55	80
	%	24.17	27.15	3.97	18.21	26.49

Source: Researcher's field work (2025)

Table 4.11 highlights the impressions of the respondents regarding the safety and hygiene condition of street food under study. The respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the safety and hygiene indicators of this work. The first element shows that 'the food is prepared in very good hygienic conditions and the food vendors are clean. To this assertion, 92 (representing 30.46 %) out of the 302 participants, strongly disagree, 75 (24.83%) disagreed, 13 remained neutral, 62 (20.53%) agreed and 60 (19.87%) strongly agreed. From the findings, it is evident that the majority acknowledge that the street food sites are not in good hygiene conditions. This is in conformity with the information on table 4.6 where the respondents were asked to grade the hygiene condition of

the street food spots. We find that 184 (60.93) out of the 302 participants rated the hygiene of these places to be poor. There is therefore need for improvement.

The second aspect is that the buildings and structures where most street food is sold are very poor and old. In summary, these environments are so unhygienic. From the participants' evaluation of this statement, 82 (27.15%) strongly agreed and 86 (28.48%) agreed. In contrast, 73 (24.17%) disagreed, while 49 (16.23%) strongly disagreed and 12 of them remained neutral. It is evident that the majority attests that the food spots under study are unhygienic.

The third element of specifying their hygienic situation is that most street food spots do not have waste disposal systems, thus there is a lot of littering. The street food consumers under study were given a chance to assess this notion. In this regard, out of the 302 respondents, 83 (27.48%) strongly agreed, the same number agreed, 71 of them disagreed, 52 strongly disagreed while 13 stayed neutral. Cumulatively, we notice that 166 of them agreed that there is a lot of littering at these places due to lack of waste disposal systems.

The street food spots also lack clean water supply for the customers thus water contamination. We find that out of the 302 respondents, 83 (27.48%) strongly agreed, the same number agreed, 71 of them disagreed, 52 strongly disagreed while 13 stayed neutral. Cumulatively, we notice that 166 of them agreed that there is water contamination at these places due to lack of waste disposal systems.

The next areas of hygiene observed in these food places under study is that the toilets and washing facilities at the place are inadequate, and the washing of hands, utensils and dishes is often done in buckets and bowls. In addition, street food is usually prepared in conditions which are unsafe, due to the limited access to safe water and other important services. We also find that most of these foods give foodborne diseases (health related problems). In answer to these three notions about the hygiene of these street food places, 80 (26.49 %) of them strongly agreed, 82 (27.15%) agreed, 73 (24.17%) disagreed, 55 (18.21%) strongly disagreed and 12 of them were neutral. Summarily, the majority of these participants under study observe that the hygiene situation of these food spots under study is poor. There is need for some improvement.

4.2 Presentation of Empirical Results

Table 4.12: Pairwise correlation matrix

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
(1) societal fabric	1.000									
(2) socioecons factors	0.182	1.000								
(3) cultural factors	0.237	0.255	1.000							
(4) food safety	0.349	0.105	0.581	1.000						
(5 gender	-0.185	-0.166	-0.235	-0.142	1.000					
(6) marital status	-0.202	-0.140	-0.395	-0.927	0.233	1.000				
(7) age	0.040	-0.010	-0.010	-0.134	-0.002	0.128	1.000			
(8) education	-0.221	-0.357	-0.130	-0.443	0.163	0.230	0.144	1.000		
(9) residence	-0.711	-0.759	-0.386	-0.218	0.228	0.192	0.187	0.425	1.000	
(10) visits	-0.736	-0.784	-0.884	-0.948	0.182	0.316	0.076	0.915	0.939	1.000

Source: Researcher's field work (2025)

Table 4.13: OLS results of the effect of socioeconomic, cultural and environmental factors on the societal fabric of the Bamenda Municipality

Dependent variable (societal fabric)	**Coef.**	**St.Err.**	**t-value**	**p-value**	**[95% Conf**	**Interval]**	**Sig**
Independent variables							
Socioeconomic factors score	.924	.114	8.14	0.00	.701	1.148	***
Cultural factors score	.647	.08	8.11	0.00	.49	.804	***
Environmental factors (risks)	-.165	.028	-5.87	0.00	-.22	-.109	***
gender: base male	0	.	.	.	.	.	
female	-.36	.221	-1.63	.105	-.795	.075	*
marital status: b~l (single)	0	.	.	.	.	.	
married	-.738	.779	-0.95	.345	-2.271	.796	
divorced	1.191	.87	-1.37	.172	-2.904	.521	
widow	-.561	.998	-0.56	.574	-2.525	1.403	
age : base below 20	0	.	.	.	.	.	
21-30 yrears	.123	.327	0.37	.708	-.521	.766	
31-40years	-.179	.307	-0.58	.561	-.784	.426	
41-50 years	.137	.419	0.33	.744	-.688	.962	
51 and above	2.596	.479	5.42	0.00	1.652	3.539	***
education : base p~y (no educ)	0	.	.	.	.	.	
currently secondary	-.57	.36	-1.58	.115	-1.279	.14	
completed o/L	-1.253	.36	-3.48	.001	-1.961	-.545	***
completed A/L	-2.409	.79	-3.05	.003	-3.965	-.854	***
currently in university	-1.671	.95	-1.76	.08	-3.541	.199	*
first degree	.455	1.006	0.45	.651	-1.524	2.435	
masters degree	-1.915	1.105	-1.73	.084	-4.091	.26	*
Ph.D	-1.65	1.411	-1.17	.243	-4.426	1.127	
place of residence~d (Bamenda I)	0	.	.	.	.	.	
bamenda II	1.563	.847	1.85	.066	-.104	3.231	*
bamenda III	2.633	.976	2.70	.007	.711	4.554	***
Frequency of Visit~l	0	.	.	.	.	.	
once a week	0	.947	-0.00	1	-1.864	1.864	
monthly	-.803	1.018	-0.79	.431	-2.808	1.201	

twice a week	.592	1.061	0.56	.577	-1.496	2.679	
Constant	-4.068	2.087	-2.95	.000	-8.177	-.041	***
Mean dependent var		38.623	SD dependent var			8.694	
R-squared		0.884	Number of obs			302	
Adjusted R-squared		0.7822					
F-test (F(23, 278)		723.322	Prob > F			0.000	
Akaike crit. (AIC)		969.557	Bayesian crit. (BIC)			1058.607	
Breusch-Pagan Chi(1)		0.89	Breusch-Pagan Chi(2)			**0.3460**	

****** p<.01, ** p<.05, * p<.1***

Source: Researcher's field work (2025)

The results in Table 4.13, shows that the choice of OLS was informed by the fact that the dependent variable (societal fabric) is continuous and significantly variable. The variance inflation factors (VIFs) reported on Appendix 3 are significantly lower than 2.5, implying the absence of multicollinearity among the independent variables. The heteroskedasticity test reported on Appendix 4 reveals no presence of heteroskedasticity, hence the estimation with multiple regression is justified.

The F statistic is 723.322 and the associated p-value is 0.000 implying that the model is globally significant at 1% level. The R squared is 0.884 meaning that the included covariates jointly explain only 88.4% of the variations in societal fabric. This entails that all the independent variables of this study jointly affect the societal fabric by 88.4%. The societal fabric represents street food vending benefits constituting elements having an (economic impact, poverty reduction effect, social interaction of consumers, community building, culinary innovation, environmental impact, health and safety concerns).

The results reveal that **socioeconomic factors** have a positive and statistically significant effect on the societal fabric of the Bamenda Municipality. Specifically, an additional socioeconomic indicator contributes to an increase in the societal fabric score by 0.924 units, and this result is statistically significant at 1% level. This finding is consistent with previous expectations and with previous studies. This result leads us to reject the first hypothesis formulated in this study, namely, that socioeconomic factors do not have any statistically significant influence on societal fabric. The consumers of street food under study contribute positively to the societal fabric and it is visible through the following societal fabric indicators like (economic impact, poverty reduction effect, social interaction of consumers, community building, culinary innovation, environmental impact, health and safety concerns).

The results reveal that **cultural factors** have a positive and statistically significant effect on the societal fabric of the Bamenda Municipality. Specifically, an additional cultural indicator contributes to an increase in the societal fabric score by 0.647 units, and this result is statistically significant at 1% level. This finding is consistent with previous expectations and with previous studies. This result leads us to reject the first hypothesis formulated in this study, namely, that cultural factors do not have any statistically significant influence on societal fabric.

The results reveal that the **environmental or risk food vending factors** have a negative and statistically significant effect on the societal fabric of the Bamenda Municipality. Specifically, an additional environmental indicator contributes to a distortion or fall in the societal fabric score by 0.165 units, and this result is statistically significant at 1% level. This finding is consistent with previous expectations and with previous studies. This result leads us to reject the first hypothesis formulated in this study, namely, that environmental factors do not have any statistically significant influence on societal fabric.

From the findings in Table 4.13 shows that the **level of education** of the participants greatly influence the societal fabric. For instance, we notice that those who have completed ordinary level, advanced level, those currently in the university and those with masters degree all have a 0.57, 1.253,0.2409 and 0.1915 positive effect on the societal fabric respectively. These are all significant at 1% and 10% respectively. Those currently in secondary school, those with first degree and Ph.D have a positive but insignificant influence on the fabric of the society. Following the information on Table 4.2, we observe that 44 out of the 302 participants completed Ordinary level, 52 of them completed advanced level, 27 are currently in the university and 29 of them have Masters degree. They are all street food consumers under study. This therefore is an indication that educated have either a positive significant or insignificant effect on the societal fabric under study unlike those respondents that are uneducated.

Gender has some influence on the societal fabric of the Bamenda Municipality. For example, the results in table 4.13, show that the female street food consumers have a 0.36-unit negative significant effect on the societal fabric compared to their male counterparts. The reason might be that women form the minority of street food consumers. Evidence from figure 4.2 show that 166 (54.97%) out of the 302 participants under study are male and only 136 (45.03%) are female. In terms of street food vendors, the majority are women.

Age and marital status of the respondents have a positive but insignificant effect on the societal fabric under study except those from 50 years and above that have a 2.596-unit positive effect on the fabric of the Bamenda municipality and it is statistically significant at 1% level. Therefore, a unit increase in the age of the participants will obviously bring a positive effect on the societal fabric. In addition, **marital status** has both positive and insignificant effect on the societal fabric. That is, the participants that are married and those widowed have a negative insignificant influence on the fabric of the society while those divorced have a positive insignificant effect compared to those that are single. This is substantiated from the results in figure 4.3. Here, we notice that 108 (35.76 %) out of the 302 consumers of street food under study are single, thus they obviously contribute greatly to the societal fabric.

Table 4.14; Variance inflation factor

Variables	VIF	1/VIF
Socioeconomic factors	0.934	.011
Cultural factors	1.087	.008
Environmental factors or risks associated with street food consumption	4.767	.029
Gender (0=Male and 1=female)	2.714	.368
married	1.377	.042
divorced	1.654	.034
widowed	3.68	.029
21-30 years (below20 years as base group)	1.822	.207
31-40years	1.229	.236
41-50 years	1.036	.166
51 and above	6.66	.15
completed primary school (no education being the base group)	2.839	.352
completed O/L	3.613	.277
completed A/L	1.975	.05
currently in university	1.492	.061
first degree	3.816	.03
master's degree	3.802	.042
Ph. D	2.902	.035
Bamenda II municipality (Bamenda I being the base group)	3.364	.027
Bamenda III municipality	1.39	.022
Mean VIF	**1.738**	.

Based on the results from table 4.14, there is no serious problem of multicolinearity in the model considering the fact that the mean VIF is 1.738 which far lower than 2.5 as prescribed by Gujarati (2004). Furthermore, this was further comforted by the fact that none of the individual VIF exceeded 10 and thus the results from the estimation procedure are reliable and valid.

4.3 Discussion of results by Objectives

Objective one of this study looks at the effect of socioeconomic determinants of street food culture in the Bamenda Municipality and their effect on the societal fabric while objective two focuses on the cultural factors and their effect on the community fabric. Results from table 4.13 indicate that both the socioeconomic and cultural factors have a positive significant effect. This result permits us to reject the first and second hypothesis of the study which postulate that there is no significant effect of socioeconomic and cultural factors on the societal fabric in Bamenda municipality. This is in line with the prior expectation of this study. The results are in line with the findings of Mapingure et al. (2015) who also discovered their positive effect. Therefore, we confirm that street food is an informal socioeconomic activity that creates employment and sustains a lot of household financially in the area under study. It strengthens social interaction, fortifies cultural identity and encourages culinary innovation. It is a significant income generating activity for most household and thus curbs unemployment.

Objective three assesses the effect of the environmental factors or risks associated with street food vending and consumption. The results in table 4.13 reveal that these factors have a negative effect on the societal fabric due to the negative effect on health of the consumers. This discovery is in line with the studies carried out by most Cameroonian authors like (Manga et al., 2021, Kaptso et al., 2021, Edima et al., 2024, Bouriyuy et al., 2024). All these authors acknowledged that street food vending and consumption causes health hazards. They explain that the general hygiene of the vendors is poor. Some of the hygiene malpractices in the street food system are due to: the absence of running water at the vending site, lack of proper toilets, and the lack of demand for quality in terms of hygiene by the consumers. Therefore, there is a need for relevant authorities to regulate the street food sector. In addition, there are no government policies to regulate this informal economic activity as confirmed by Yemmafouo (2018) in his study. Titled, 'the street vending power relationships and governance of public spaces in Bafoussam, West Cameroon. He recommends that intermediate cities such as Bafoussam, animating dynamic peripheries have an economic fabric which is strongly supported by informal economies. These cities should endeavour to regulate informal trade in order to mitigate unemployment impact while generating income.

4.4 Contribution to Knowledge

This study fills a very big research gap especially within the context of the study area of the Bamenda Municipality and Cameroon as a whole. Following the literature review made during this research work, it was noticed that most of the writers concentrated on the risk factors associated with food vending and consumption. In the context of the study area, most of the researchers failed to elaborate on the effect of socioeconomic, cultural and environmental factors on the fabric of the society. This study therefore fills that gab. In a developing zone like the Bamenda Municipality and Cameroon at large, the vending of street food is a lucrative and common income source for most towns and cities. The majority of those living in these towns are consumers of street food because of its gustatory characteristics. The scrumptiousness of this food is connected to the culinary prowess or expertise of the vendors. . Street food vending constitutes a greater proportion of informal sector of the economy of Bamenda and the whole of Cameroon as confirmed by studies by most Cameroon authors like (Manga et al., 2021, Kaptso et al., 2021, Edima et al., 2024, Bouriyuy et al., 2024). There is therefore need to develop this sector. This work outlines clearly the aspects of the societal fabric that street food consumption contributes positively. In this work, the societal fabric is captured as a summated score of seven indicators. It represents street food vending benefits constituting elements having an (economic impact, poverty reduction effect, social interaction of consumers, community building, culinary innovation, environmental impact, health and safety concerns). The summated score obtained is thus a continuous variable that ranges from 8 to 45, where higher values represent higher benefits of street food vending to the society and 8representing the demerits of street food vending to the society.

This research work also corroborates with the findings of authors like (Manga et al., 2021, Kaptso et al., 2021, Edima et al., 2024, Bouriyuy et al., 2024) about the environmental factors or risks associated with street food informal economic activity. In line with the discoveries of Buliyaminu (2020), we affirm that there are risks associated with street food activity. It is at the root cause of most of the health hazards faced by the participants in the area under study. We discover that the following environmental risks factors; the poor agricultural practices on food, the unhygienic practices of street food vendors, the poor method of transportation that contaminates street food and the attitude of street food consumers. Most are conscious of the unhygienic nature of this food but nothing is done and they too aggravate the situation by their own poor environmental habits like littering. Therefore, there is need for some strategies and policies to mitigate these risk and develop this economic informal activity.

In most developing areas like Cameroon, street food vending activities are not easily regulated or protected by the governments. it is a very important economic activity though not well appreciated given the informal nature of the enterprise and lack of official data on volume of trade involved. Street food vending constitutes a greater proportion of informal sector of the economy of most developing countries. For example, about 28.5% labor force in Mexico find employment in the informal sector, and the majority of them are involved in the street food vending activity. In Malaysia there are over 100,000 street food vendors, self-employed for survival purposes. In spite of this, the sector is flooded with distasteful activities that seems to create serious problems regarding the safety and health of the consumers. (Buliyaminu, 2020). There are a good number of risk factors associated with street food vending, especially in the developing societies.

4.5 Recommendations/ Policy Implication

Street food vending is a very important socioeconomic and cultural activity in the Bamenda Municipality. Its importance is evident given that there is a high volume of trade involved, the vendors provide readymade meals and this sector too makes available possibilities of self-employment for the crawling populace along the chain of the business. The benefits and contribution of street food trade to the economy of developing areas like the Bamenda Municipality prompted recommendations from this study on ways to mitigate the hazards in its consumption and safeguard the health of consumers. In this study, it was discovered that there are little or no policies and regulations for safe street food trade. If existing, some of the policies are very weak and poorly enforced in this study area.

It is worth noting that if these policies and strengthened and properly enforced, it is certain that the hazards of street food consumption will be greatly curbed. To implement these policies, there is therefore need for active participation of all stakeholders in street food trade such as governments, street food vendors, consumers' associations, civil society groups and development partners. It is important to raise awareness on the treat of unwholesome practices in street food trading through dissemination of information in mass media and audience participatory programs

The participants were asked to give their own assessment of the street food places. Most of them rated the hygiene of these places to be very poor. There are a lot of health risk associated with the vending and consumption of street food. The results also show that the environmental factor or risks factors have a negative effect on the societal fabric. To these laps, this study recommends that the vendors should provide adequate toilets and washing facilities instead of the washing of hands, utensils and dishes done in buckets and bowls. There is need for the provision of ablution facilities like rooms or areas equipped for washing, including toilets, showers, and sinks, refuse bins and the granting of trade licenses so as to avoid running battles with the police.

4.6 Conclusion

The study revealed that the socioeconomic and cultural factors have a significant positive effect on the societal fabric of the Bamenda Municipality in the numerous ways. Street food vending benefits constitute elements having an (economic impact, poverty reduction effect, social interaction of consumers, community building, culinary innovation, environmental impact, health and safety concerns). This scenery is of primordial importance to the customers in that it promulgates cultural identity, social interaction and recognition. Policy makers should recognize the existence of street food informal sector, with its potential of becoming a competitive and viable economic activity because of the availability of a growing market in the Bamenda Municipality and Cameroon at large.

Conflicts of Interest

This work has no conflict of interest

Funding Statement

This study has no financially supporting bodies. This is purely the effort of the Author of this work

Acknowledgements

The Author of this work is grateful to the street food consumers of the Bamenda Municipalities who collaborated to excellently to provide the necessary information during the administration of the interviews and questionnaire. They actually provided the primary data for this work..

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Research Questionnaire

CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF CAMEROON
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS
RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent,

I am Sr. Dr. Elizabeth Ankiambom Chiatii, (a Lecturer in the Department of Economics, Faculty of Business and Management Sciences, Catholic University of Cameroon (CATUC) Bamenda). I will be grateful if you could provide sincere answers to the following questions. This questionnaire is designed in order to facilitate the collection of data for my Research Work which centres on: "The determinants of street food culture and their implications on the societal fabric: the perspective of culinary entrepreneurship in the Bamenda Municipality" '

N/B: The information you provide will be kept strictly confidential.

Section A: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

1) Gender Male [ ] Female [ ]

2) **Please indicate your Marital Status**: (a) Single [ ] (b) Married [ ] (c) Divorced [ ] (d) Widowed [ ]

3) **Please indicate your Age range:**

a) Below 20 [ ]
b) 21 -30 [ ]
c) 31-40 [ ]
d) 41-50 [ ]
g) 51 and above [ ]

4) Academic Qualification

a) Primary school [ ]
b) currently in secondary school [ ]
c) completed ordinary level [ ]
d) completed Advance level [ ]
e) Currently in the University [ ]
f) First Degree [ ]
g) Masters Degree [ ]
h) Ph.D [ ]

5) Your place of residence

a) Bamenda I
b) Bamenda II

c) Bamenda III

6) Do I visit any place where food or drinks are sold (restaurants, bars, hotels or any place where food or drinks are sold)? A) Yes [ ] b) No [ ]

7) Frequency of Visits to food sellers (restaurants, bars or any spot where food is sold)

a) Daily [ ]
b) once a week [ ]
c) twice a week [ ]
d) monthly [ ]

8) Purpose of visit at street food places

a) eating [ ]
b) drinking [ ]
c) social networking (to associate with friends or family) [ ]
d) for entertainment [ ]
e) all of the above [ ]

9) **how is the hygienic condition of most places where street food is sold?**

a) average [ ] d) very clean
b) good/clean [ ] e) very dirty
c) poor/ dirty **[ ]**

10) Types of food I prefer eating/drinking at Street food spots

a) sawyer [ ] b) roasted chicken [ ] c) roosted fish d) any traditional food e) palm wine f) roasted corn [ ] g) fried pork [ ] h) breakfast (coffee or tea with milk) [ ] i) other preferred meals [ ]

Section B: Determinants of Street Catering (Factors influencing street food consumption)
The Customer Perspectives

Kindly tick any of the following answers:

	The reasons for street food consumption					
	Socioeconomic determinants					
		D	**SD**	**N**	**A**	**SA**
	There is the development of women's activity. (many women are vendors of street food to sustain their families financially)					
	The pressure of work causes many people— not just those with low to middle incomes—to spend most of their time outside their homes and eat at these street food spots					
	The food sold in street food spots is fairly cheap than hotels or restaurants (**price factor)**					
	I prefer eating on food spots where I can freely talk to my friends and even shout to someone passing by without someone staring at me (**freedom and convenience**)					
	There is also the appearance of new food styles that prompt people to eat at these places					
	Street food is affordable and accessible, especially for workers					
	Cultural factors of street food culture					
	I eat in street food spot where our ethnic dishes are available					
	Eating here with friends removes stress or loneliness					
	I eat this food for fun or to have a change					
	There is quest for cultural identity expressed in consuming traditional dishes					
	The distance between workplaces and home causes many to eat street food					
	At work places, there is no efficient system of collective catering, such as canteens in the workplace. This makes most workers eat street food					
	There is the desire to fulfill psychological needs such as self-esteem, love and sense of belonging, social recognition as expressed in material possessions and the relaxation provided by the setting, flexibility and convenience (social interaction)					
	It is time-saving when I have break from work					
	I eat street food to remove stress, loneliness, etc					
	I love eating in food spot because they have the food vendors provide exceptionally high quality of service					

Section C: Environmental factors or risks associated with street food culture

Kindly tick any of the following answers:

D= disagree SD= strongly disagree N=Neutral A= agree SA=strongly agree

	Statements/ Environmental factors of street food culture	D	SD	N	A	SA
	Some of the food is prepared in very good hygienic conditions. The food vendors are clean					
	The buildings/ structures where most street food is sold are very poor and old (unhygienic environment)					
	Most street food spots do not have waste disposal systems, thus there is a lot of littering					
	They lack clean water supply (like running water taps) for the customers (water contamination)					
	Toilets and washing facilities at the place are inadequate, and the washing of hands, utensils and dishes is often done in buckets and bowls					
	street food is usually prepared in conditions which are unsafe, due to the limited access to safe water and other important services					
	Most of these foods give foodborne diseases (health related problems)					
	The street food spots have poor siting facilities					
	These street food places have improper serving facilities					
	Vendors use cheap and unsafe ingredients that may be detrimental to the health of the consumers					
	The attitude of consumers to safety of street food varied and is dependent on some socio-economic factors					
	The manner of moving slaughtered animal carcasses from slaughter points to retailing points in crude structures such as wooden push carts, open plastic or aluminum trays on heads					

SECTION D: Street food and Societal Fabric benefits

Just as fabric is made up of individual threads, woven together to create a cohesive whole**, the Fabric of Society** is composed of various elements such as shared values, norms, laws, institutions, socioeconomic and cultural practices beneficial to the society

	Societal Fabric benefits of street food consumption	D	SD	N	A	SA
	Socioeconomic benefits					
	Street food selling make up a significant portion of the informal food distribution sector, aiding small farmers by serving as a market for their rural produce					
	Street food selling generates income and employment for a greater population of the Bamenda municipality					
	It reduces the poverty level and improves living standard					
	It gives a chance for the vendors to learn business skills for self-employment					
	It facilitates food security (it gives many a chance to have access to food supply)					
	Street food is a cultural resource and eating as a cultural act that facilitates interaction and social differentiation among people					
	Through street food, the indigenous people resist the forces of globalization which are threatening local foods					
	Street food is a cultural resource has the potential to attract tourists or visitors					
	street food reflects people's lifestyles and religion and it is the very essence of a region					