

An Analytical Study on the Demographic Variations and Key Influencers of Street Food Consumption in Mumbai

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Abstract:

This research paper is titled "An Analytical Study on the Demographic Variations and Key Influencers of Street Food Consumption in Mumbai." It analyses the dynamic factors that shape consumer preferences and behavior in the street food culture of this busy city. The major objectives of this study are to identify which are the key influencers driving the consumption of street food, and then it tries to compare the variations across demographic groups. The study distributed a structured questionnaire to 300 street food consumers in Mumbai and collected 228 valid responses, thus ensuring a diverse and representative sample. Convenience sampling technique is used for data collection. The analysis was done using SPSS software and involved non-parametric tests like the Friedman test, Mann-Whitney U test, and Kruskal-Wallis test to achieve the research objectives. It shows that taste, convenience, and price are the factors that most influence purchases. Taste is the strongest factor driving consumption. Location, word of mouth, and cultural experience are the factors that contribute a lot to these purchases. Health concerns, reputation of the vendor, and social influence show moderate importance. Demographic analysis indicates differences in terms of gender; the women prefer health and price over men, whereas universal factors such as taste and hygiene are independent of age, income, and educational level. The study gives actionable insights to vendors and policymakers for meeting diverse consumer needs to make the street food ecosystem sustainable in Mumbai.

Keywords: Demographic variations, Key Influencers, Street Food, Consumption, Mumbai.

1. INTRODUCTION

Street food forms an integral part of the food culture in cities. Street food vendors provide affordable meals for millions of people across the globe. In developing countries such as India, street food vendors are informal food service providers catering to the daily nutritional needs of diverse groups in the socioeconomic spectrum. Mumbai is also famously known as the "City of Dreams." It has a bustling street food ecosystem, just like its multicultural ethos: flavors that are all about different regions of India and international cuisine. With this population increase in Mumbai, so too does the dependency on this informal street food sector. However, consumption patterns vary significantly with a range of demographic factors such as age, gender, income, occupation, and education level and other influential

factors like affordability, taste, convenience, and social trends (Goyal & Singh, 2007). An analytical study of these dynamics is necessary for understanding consumer behavior and the economic significance of this informal sector in urban India. The increasing popularity of eating street food can be accounted for by its convenience, affordability, and sensory appeal. According to research, taste and price dominate the preferences of consumers, mainly among low- and middle-income groups (Choudhury et al., 2011). In the case of Mumbai, workers, students, and office-goers rely on street food vendors for fast food at minimal prices while on the job. Moreover, demographic variables like income inequalities and gender have been studied to impact the consumption behaviors with males showing higher occurrences of street food consumption in comparison to females (Rane, 2011). These are very inherent factors of social norms, time constraints, and cultures that necessitate exploring the more complex relationships between demographics and consumer behaviors.

Other than demographics, the key influencers of street food consumption are health perceptions, food safety, and social media influence. A concern for the growing urban areas is the hygiene and safety standards in street food, as previously noted in studies linking street food consumption to health risks (FAO, 2012). However, despite health concerns, consumers tend to neglect such factors in the name of affordability and convenience, especially among the lower classes (Biswas et al., 2019). On the other hand, millennial and Gen-Z generations, with experiential consumption and digital influences, have accepted street food culture as a part of their social and gastronomic identity. Social media sites, for example, Instagram and YouTube, have further increased street food's attractiveness, through food influencers in changing mindsets and

increasing consumption practices (Hossain et al., 2020). This represents the confluence of social media, cultural change, and economic considerations as forces shaping contemporary urban food intake. The street food culture of Mumbai also reflects its economic and cultural diversity, where vendors contribute significantly to employment and food security while catering to a wide demographic. Sharma and Kamra (2019) stated that street vendors are an integral part of the informal economy, providing livelihood opportunities to the urban poor while catering to the needs of an ever-growing urban population. However, this sector faces many challenges, such as infrastructural constraints, regulatory barriers, and food hygiene issues (Das et al., 2020). This will give an understanding of demographic variations and factors that influence street food consumption, providing insight into consumer preferences, vendor strategies, and policymaking towards the improvement of quality and safety in street food. This study tries to analyze demographic variations and key influencers of street food consumption in Mumbai. The present research has two objectives 1) To examine the key influencers that drive consumption of street food amongst consumers of Mumbai and 2) To analyze the variations amongst different demographic groups for influencers that drive their street food consumption in Mumbai.

It seeks to bridge the existing knowledge gap regarding factors like age, income, occupation, taste, and media influence. It aims to provide empirical insights about the patterns of urban food consumption. Findings of this study will help the literature base on urban food systems, consumer behavior,

and informal economies, thus acting as a resource to policymakers, food vendors, and urban planners in making recommendations towards food safety, sustainability, and inclusive economic development.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Concept of Street Food

Street food is defined as a type of ready-to-eat food and beverage prepared and sold by street vendors or hawkers in the streets, markets, or fairs (Prayag & Liu, 2024). It is one of the most significant features of food culture in most countries, especially in developing regions, where it gives people an affordable, convenient, and flavorful meal to enjoy by locals and visitors alike (Jeaheng & Han, 2020). Street food is usually prepared on the spot with portable stalls, carts, or makeshift cooking setups. This shows the rich cultural heritage and diversity in terms of food (Narvasa, 2023). This food culture is deep-rooted in tradition and creativity because the vendors

make use of local ingredients and unique preparation techniques to satisfy different palates (Manik et al., 2024). Street food is not just about feeding the belly; it is a cultural and social experience that brings people together and encourages community interaction (Corvo, 2016). From savory snacks and grilled meats to vibrant curries and sweet desserts or refreshing beverages, street food encapsulates the essence of regional tastes (Holland, 2024). It also provides livelihoods for millions, especially in urban areas, and, therefore, contributes considerably to the informal economy (Patel et al., 2014). Still, despite popularity, issues related to hygiene, food safety, and quality standards remain an open concern and highlight the call for regulation and awareness concerning consumer health and satisfaction.

2.2 Street Food of Mumbai

Mumbai is actually known as the "Street Food Capital of India"; it has very lively, diverse street food that will cater to millions of locals and tourists each day. The iconic street food for the city has been flavours, affordability, and accessibility, thus an important culinary identity in the city of Mumbai. A common favorite dish is Vada Pav, commonly known as the "Indian burger": This is a spiced potato fritter served with chutneys and fried chilies in a bread bun (Bhatnagar, 2019). Pav Bhaji-the quintessential Mumbai snack-consists of spicy vegetable mash served with buttered rolls of bread-a dish started as an inexpensive, quickly-prepared nutritious meal for employees of textile mills in the 19th century by Singh, 2020. Bhel Puri and Sev Puri, popular chaat items prepared with puffed rice, tangy chutneys, and crispy toppings, are enjoyed at beachside stalls, especially at Girgaon Chowpatty (Deshpande, 2018). Mumbai street food also comprises the deliciously savory Keema Pav and Baida Roti, which reflects the Mughlai influence of this street food in the fast streets of Mohammed Ali Road (Joshi, 2021). Sea food lovers can also experience a bit of the city's coastal influence in the street food stalls selling fried fish and Bombil fry as fresh flavors from the Arabian Sea (Patil & Rao, 2020). Finally, no talk of street food in Mumbai is complete without mentioning Misal Pav, a spicy sprouted lentil curry topped with farsan (crispy mixture), which is particularly popular among breakfast goers (Kulkarni, 2017). All of these together reflect the multiculturalism, economic dynamics, and rich history of the city, offering a sensory experience to

all those who indulge.

2.3 Factors Influencing Consumers Street Food Consumption

Factors influencing consumers' street food consumption are diverse and interconnected and are driven by a combination of economic, social, cultural, and personal factors. Price affordability plays a pivotal role since street food is often perceived as an economical option for consumers from various socio-economic backgrounds and offers substantial value for money (Gupta et al., 2018). Taste and sensory attributes, such as smell, flavor, and visual attractiveness, are strong factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions, given the fact that street food is known for its rich, unique flavors (Joseph et al., 2017). Convenience is also another factor; easy accessibility to street food, speedy services, and the convenience of availability in busy cities for working people, students, and travelers who are constrained by time are considered convenient options (Tacardon et al., 2023). Social factors, such as word-of-mouth publicity, peer recommendations, and the cultural significance of street food in local traditions, also have a bearing on consumption patterns (Cifci et al., 2021). Demographic factors, such as age, gender, and lifestyle, also affect the same, with young consumers more likely to try out different types of street food (Alimi & Workneh, 2016). However, safety standards and hygienic requirements can pose as a deterrent for consumers because they are becoming more health-conscious about what they eat and would not tolerate poorly managed or unhygienic food (Madilo et al., 2024). Additionally, factors such as sensory nostalgia, which evoke emotional feelings related to one's childhood or cultural identity, can also drive people to crave street food (Low, 2016). Modern trends such as the power of social media enhance the popularity of particular street food vendors and particular street foods, influencing the direction of consumer behavior further (Godjali & Supramaniam, 2024). In total, the consumption of street food is influenced by the dynamic interplay of factors that reflect consumer preferences, affordability, convenience, and changing socio-cultural norms.

2.4 Demographic Variations and Street Food Consumption

Demographic variations influence street food consumption patterns. The influences include age, gender, income, education, and cultural background in eating habits and preferences. Street food preferences differ by age group. Younger consumers are the majority; these comprise students and working professionals because they are affordable, convenient, and offer opportunities for socializing (Das & Mandal, 2021). However, the hygiene and health concerns of the elderly population tend to act as a barrier to street food consumption (Kumar et al., 2020). Gender also

influences street food behavior because women, especially in urban areas, are increasingly adopting street food consumption habits due to changes in lifestyles and greater financial independence (Rao & Singh, 2019). Income groups also create a chasm; low-income classes have no choice but to consume street food for it is the affordable meal option, whereas for higher-income consumers, the option is an occasional pleasure in terms of taste variety (Sharma et al., 2022). Education is a double-edged sword; it increases food safety awareness but at the same time increases demand for healthy products among educated consumers (Ali et al., 2020). Moreover, preferences of street food are conditioned by

cultural and regional elements; local flavors, recipes, and regional cuisines lead to consumption in geographically different areas (Gupta & Choudhary, 2023). In general, demographic variables as a whole determine what drives, worries, or otherwise influences consumers' decisions on street food, marking it as a dynamic ingredient of urban food culture.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology adopted for the study titled "An Analytical Study on the Demographic Variations and Key Influencers of Street Food Consumption in Mumbai" is meticulously designed to ensure the research objectives are achieved efficiently and accurately. The primary objectives of this study are: (1) to examine the key influencers that drive consumption of street food amongst consumers of Mumbai and (2) to analyze the variations amongst different demographic groups for influencers that drive their street food consumption in Mumbai. The data collection instrument-the structured questionnaire-was drafted in utmost care and diligence and within the scope of objectives for research and hypotheses. Such activity involved a careful consideration of the existing literature about consumption from street food and consulting with a research supervisor to check that each question was relevant, clear, and precise enough for the research purposes intended to be pursued. Google Forms is utilized for developing the questionnaire which makes easy distribution and gathering of the data. Convenience sampling is applied to reach the required respondents which are the street food consumers in Mumbai through sending e-mail and social networking for a more diversified set of participants. The data gathering is carried out in the month of December 2024. Questionnaires were dispersed among 300 street food consumers of Mumbai. Total received responses: 232. By careful scrutiny, invalid or incomplete entries have been removed, leaving only valid responses to consider in final analysis: 228. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part consisted of gathering the demographic information such as age, gender, income, education level, and other demographic characteristics of the respondents. The second half of the survey consisted of 12 questions addressing the identification and analysis of the key influencers of consumer consumption of street food with responses recorded on a Likert scale of 5 points, ranging from "Not at all Influential" to "Extremely Influential." To ensure the reliability of the questionnaire and its internal consistency, Cronbach's Alpha was computed, thus obtaining an overall reliability coefficient of 0.778 for the 23-questionnaire and an impressive figure of 0.929 on the 12 items quantifying the factors influencing consumers' purchase behavior. The data was analyzed using SPSS software, which enabled robust statistical analysis. Since the collected data is found to be non-normal, non-parametric tests were conducted in order to meet the research objectives. About the first objective, about determining the significant influencers, the Friedman test is held in order to rank and scrutinize the importance of influencing factors. For the second objective, which is about the analysis of demographic differences among the respondents in terms of who influences the consumption of street food, the Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis tests are used. These non-parametric tests are used to determine the differences among different demographic groups, such as age, gender, and income levels. The systematic approach towards designing the questionnaire, as well as collecting reliable responses, together with analyzing data using appropriate statistical techniques ensures that the findings

are strong and valid, providing excellent insights into the consumption behavior of street food in Mumbai.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1: Demographic profile of respondents

Parameter	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	115	50.9
	Female	111	49.1
	Prefer not to say	--88	--38.9
Age	18-25 Years	53	23.5
	26-35 Years	44	19.5
	36-45 Years	23	10.2
	46-55 Years	16	7.07
Marital Status	Above 55 Years	124	54.8
	Single	102	45.2
	Married		
Educational Qualification	Intermediate	39	17.3
	Graduate	101	44.7
	Postgraduate	40	17.7
	Doctorate	18	8
	Others	28	12.4
Occupation	Student	56	24.8
	Government Employee	37	16.4
	Private Job	38	16.8
	Self-Business	40	17.6
Annual Income	Others	55	24.3
	Not Earning	55	24.3
	Up to 3 Lakhs	48	21.2
	3-6 Lakhs	50	22.1
	6-10 Lakhs	30	13.3
Area of Residence	More than 10 Lakhs	43	19
	Dadar	80	35.4
	Juhu Chowpati	39	17.3
	Andheri	39	17.3
	Kolaba (Church Gate)	34	15
Frequency of Eating Street Food	CST (Mumbai Central)	34	15
	Daily	46	20.3
	2-3 times a week	74	32.7
	Once a week	42	18.5
	Occasionally	36	15.9
Preference of Street Food	Rarely	28	12.3
	Snacks (Vada Pav, Pav Bhaji etc.)	110	48.7
	Sweets (Kulfi, Jalebi etc.)	7	3.1
	Main Dishes (Biryani, Rolls etc.)	79	35
Preferred Time for Eating Street Food	Beverages (Sugarcane Juice, Lemon Soda etc.)	30	13.3
	Morning Breakfast	48	21.2
	Lunch	21	9.2
	Evening Snacks	111	49.1
Average Spending Per Month on Street Food	Dinner	46	20.3
	Up to Rs 500	47	20.8
	Rs 500-Rs 1000	75	32.3
	Rs. 1000-Rs 3000	47	20.8
	Rs. 3000-Rs. 5000	28	12.4
	Above Rs. 5000	31	13.7

4.2 Key Influencers that Drive Consumers Purchase Decision Towards Street Food Consumption in Mumbai

The first objective of the study is to examine the key influencers that drive consumption of street food amongst consumers of Mumbai.

Null Hypothesis (H01): There are no key influencers that drive consumption of street food amongst consumers of Mumbai.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): There are significant key influencers that drive consumption of street food amongst consumers of Mumbai.

As the data is non-normal, therefore non-parametric Friedman test is used to achieve the first objective.

Table 2: Mean Ranks of Key Factors Influencing Consumers to Purchase Street Food in Mumbai

Ranks	
	Mean Rank
Taste	7.61
Hygiene	5.69
Price	6.81
Social Influence	6.18
Variety	6.19
Vendor Reputation	6.21
Location	6.74
Marketing	5.71
Cultural Experience	6.24
Health Concern	6.48
Word of Mouth	6.64
Convenience	7.50

Table 3: Friedman Test Statistics for Factors Influencing Street Food Consumption in Mumbai

Test Statistics ^a	
N	226
Chi-Square	114.873
df	11
Asymp. Sig.	.000
a. Friedman Test	

The results in the above table give key insights into determinants of consumers' demand for street food in the city of Mumbai, making use of the Friedman test. The mean ranks also give an idea of the relative nature of the various attributes at play, where a higher mean rank implies increased influence. Since the Friedman Test gave a statistically significant result, Chi-Square = 114.873, df = 11, p = 0.000, it affirms that there are significant differences in rankings of these influencing factors as perceived by the

respondents, $N = 226$. A significance level of 0.000 suggests that the results are very reliable and valid, which shows that the respondents have ranked the factors distinctly according to their experiences and preferences.

Taste emerged as the most significant factor, with the highest mean rank of 7.61. This is in accordance with the core appeal of street food, which is widely appreciated for its unique and scrumptious flavors. Consumers seek street food for its ability to offer rich and localized tastes that are at times hard to replicate in mainstream restaurants. Street food vendors usually use spices as well as cooking methods appropriate to the local palate, meaning taste is a defining element as to why it is popular. Mumbai is a melting pot of cultures, and their street food variety satisfies the diverse requirements of consumers, which explains why this is perceived as the most significant reason. Convenience follows close to the mean rank, 7.50, that highlights accessibility and time efficiency as key drivers of consumer choices. Street food is normally found in bustling market places, transport hubs, and places with a lot of footfall. This convenience makes it highly accessible for those seeking a quick meal that will not be time-consuming. Working professionals, students, and commuters find street food very convenient because it saves their time and can eat as they go about their busy schedule. The informal nature of street food adds to this convenience, with no need for reservations, formal dress, or longer waiting times, all of which are well in line with fast-paced urban lifestyles. Price (mean rank 6.81) was also a major influencer, reflecting the affordability of street food compared to eating in restaurants or buying packaged meals. Many, especially the middle- to lower-income group consumers can afford street food as some of the best alternatives; being cheap but palatable provides an alternative to other available food sources. Street foods are very affordable, enabling them to be accessible across a wide cross-section population, including students and the laborers, who want both inexpensive options and flavor in their dishes. Price sensitivity can be further pronounced in an urban center such as Mumbai, where high cost of living calls for economical options for food.

Another significant determinant of consumer choice is location (mean rank 6.74). Proximity and ease of access to food vendors determine the location of consumers' dining choice. Street food vendors always position themselves in areas that are very busy, such as markets, schools, offices, and tourist areas. This ensures that consumers can find them easily. Convenience from having food options close to daily activities enhances their appeal. This link between location and convenience further highlights why street food flourishes in urban settings like Mumbai. Interestingly, Word of Mouth has a mean rank of 6.64, indicating that recommendations from friends, family, or peers also significantly influence buying decisions. Positive experiences shared by others often build trust and curiosity, encouraging consumers to try new vendors or dishes. Word of mouth assumes importance in the street food industry because formal marketing may be absent and personal recommendations have much weight in forming consumer attitudes. Health Concern, mean rank 6.48, indicates that though preference for taste and convenience reigns supreme in the preference of consumers, there is also a level of concern about health and hygiene implications of taking street food. Health consciousness is slowly picking up among consumers in urban areas, and there are still some who find street food preparation and security standards

not so appealing after all. This is in congruence with the increase in public discourse on food safety and rising consumer consciousness regarding maintaining a balanced diet and healthy living. Cultural Experience (mean rank 6.24) has many consumers associate street food with cultural and regional identity. Street food often shows the culinary heritage of a place, giving an immersive experience that binds consumers to local traditions and flavors. In Mumbai, there is the street food culture that seems to be wedded into the identity of the city, offering popular dishes like vada pav and pav bhaji and pani puri, which symbolize for many residents as well as visitors a familiar and nostalgic feeling. Vendor Reputation, Variety, and Social Influence are ranked closely with mean scores of 6.21, 6.19, and 6.18, respectively, indicating that all three have a moderate influence. Vendor reputation is involved because consumers will return to vendors with a reputation for quality and consistency. Variety is also significant because consumers like having choices of food, which enable them to pick according to mood, preference, or dietary needs. Social influence includes trends as well as external factors which are peer behavior, cultural norms, and social networking exposure that subtly affect purchasing decisions, which are very prevalent among the younger generation. However, Marketing (mean rank: 5.71), and Hygiene (mean rank: 5.69) were scored relatively much lower, but their influence cannot be denied. Marketing for street food is usually informal, relying more on visual appeal or vendor strategies such as displaying fresh ingredients or preparing food in front of consumers to attract attention. Even though hygiene ranks lower than taste and convenience, it remains an important concern, though lessened by a degree of consumer skepticism about street food safety. Overall, these findings show that though taste, convenience, and price were the most influential factors determining the consumption of street food in Mumbai, location, word of mouth, cultural experience, and health issues are also significant factors. This reflects the diversified nature of consumer behavior, where both rational and emotional considerations play a role in the decision-making process. Street food in Mumbai flourishes because it strikes the right balance between affordability, accessibility, and rich culinary experiences that make it a part of the city's food culture.

From the output presented in Table 3, it can be seen that the null hypothesis H_0 stating, "There are no key influencers that drive consumption of street food amongst consumers of Mumbai," is rejected since the p-value Asymp. Sig. is 0.000, which is less than the chosen significance level of 0.05. The alternative hypothesis (H_1), which says "There are significant key influencers that drive consumption of street food amongst consumers of Mumbai," has been accepted. The Friedman Test results came out to be Chi-Square = 114.873, $df = 11$, $p = 0.000$, showing the presence of significant differences in the mean ranks of the factors that influence consumer behavior. This shows factors like Taste (mean rank = 7.61), Convenience (mean rank = 7.50) and Price (mean rank 6.81) significantly influencing consumer behavior for this market amongst others, considering the factor of street food in Mumbai.

4.3 Variations Amongst Different Demographic Groups for Influencers that Drive Their Street Food Consumption in Mumbai

The second objective of the study is to analyze the variations amongst different demographic groups for influencers that drive their street food consumption in Mumbai.

Null Hypothesis (H02): There are no significant variations amongst different demographic groups for influencers that drive their street food consumption in Mumbai.

Alternative Hypothesis (H2): There are significant variations amongst different demographic groups for influencers that drive their street food consumption in Mumbai.

As the data is non-normal, therefore, non-parametric tests like Mann Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis tests are utilized. For groups with 2 variables i.e., for gender and marital status, Mann Whitney U test is performed and for groups with more than 2 variables, Kruskal-Wallis H test is performed.

Table 4: Mann-Whitney U Test Results for Gender and Marital Status on Factors Influencing

Factors influencing consumer purchase decision towards street food	Gender		Marital Status	
	Mann-Whitney U	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	Mann-Whitney U	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Taste	4290.500	.000	4083.500	.879
Hygiene	5558.000	.085	3901.500	.537
Price	5407.000	.039	3085.000	.006
Social influence	6171.500	.656	2668.000	.000
Variety	6012.500	.434	3765.500	.326
Vendor Reputation	6376.000	.989	4094.500	.905
Location	6191.500	.687	3623.000	.176
Marketing	6366.000	.972	4114.500	.947
Cultural Experience	6299.000	.860	4067.500	.850
Health Concern	5325.500	.026	3824.000	.410
Word of Mouth	6207.500	.712	3780.500	.347
Convenience	6049.000	.476	3404.000	.051

Street Food Purchase Decisions

The results of the Mann-Whitney U Test give a more vivid description of how gender and marital status influence the 12 parameters that guide the choice of street food by consumers in Mumbai. The non-parametric test was chosen due to its appropriateness in comparing differences between two independent groups, such as gender (male and female) and marital status (married and unmarried), since the data are not normally distributed. The interpretation is based on the Asymptotic Significance (2-tailed) values, of which a p-value smaller than 0.05 shows a statistically significant difference between groups. For gender, with parameter Taste $U = 4290.500$; $p = 0.000$, this is statistically highly significant, meaning it suggests that the gender can be an essential factor wherein the taste would influence buying street foods. One possible explanation could be the difference in taste preferences or sensitivity to flavors between male and female consumers. Besides, Price ($U = 5407.000$, $p = 0.039$) and Health Concern ($U = 5325.500$, $p = 0.026$) are also significant, which means that men and women perceive street food as different in terms of affordability and health-related aspects. Females could be more health-conscious and price-sensitive than males, and this might be a cause for this variation. In the case of all the other variables, such as Hygiene, Social Influence, Variety, Vendor Reputation, Location, Marketing, Cultural Experience, Word of Mouth, and Convenience, p-values are above 0.05, and there is no significant variation in this respect based on gender. This suggests that these parameters are

experienced equally by male and female consumers.

Marital status shows a significant difference for a greater number of parameters. Price (U= 3085.000, p = 0.006) and Social Influence (U = 2668.000, p = 0.000) have statistically significant differences, meaning that married and unmarried consumers differ in their preferences. Married people might be more prone to the price factor because of budgeting issues, whereas single people might be more susceptible to social influences such as peer pressure or trends. Surprisingly, Convenience (U = 3404.000, p = 0.051) is near the 0.05 threshold, meaning it is borderline significant. This might imply that single people find street food more convenient since they lead a more fast-paced life than married people. All other factors, including Taste, Hygiene, Variety, Vendor Reputation, Location, Marketing, Cultural Experience, Health Concern, and Word of Mouth do not differ significantly in means between married and unmarried clients (p > 0.05). It thus implies that both marital status groups perceive the following influencers as similar while considering purchasing street food.

In summary, it is observed that gender had a significant effect on perceptions of Taste, Price, and Health Concern, but marital status had a significant effect on Price and Social Influence, with Convenience only being marginally significant. This further indicates that consumer behavior must be analyzed and considered based on demographic differences in terms of gender and marital status because preferences and priorities differ among these groups. For businesses and street food vendors, this information can be a tool for tailoring the marketing strategies and offerings that meet the expectations of their diverse consumer groups.

Table 5: Kruskal Wallis H Test Results for Age, Educational Qualification, Occupation and Annual Income on Factors Influencing Street Food Purchase Decisions

Factors influencing consumer purchase decision towards street food	Age		Educational Qualification		Occupation		Annual Income	
	Kruskal Wallis H	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	Kruskal Wallis H	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	Kruskal Wallis H	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	Kruskal Wallis H	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Taste	3.866	0.424	14.757	0.005	1.429	0.839	3.285	0.511
Hygiene	0.973	0.914	3.854	0.426	4.229	0.376	0.545	0.969
Price	2.623	0.623	19.866	0.001	5.668	0.225	4.701	0.319
Social influence	7.104	0.13	18.4	0.001	6.157	0.188	7.258	0.123
Variety	1.805	0.772	9.144	0.058	0.789	0.94	3.28	0.512
Vendor Reputation	0.919	0.922	12.605	0.013	1.815	0.77	5.302	0.258
Location	2.795	0.593	7.813	0.099	1.105	0.894	1.814	0.77
Marketing	5.319	0.256	2.234	0.693	1.821	0.769	2.121	0.714
Cultural Experience	5.254	0.262	2.44	0.655	0.867	0.929	2.331	0.675
Health Concern	2.768	0.597	7.081	0.132	6.297	0.178	1.199	0.878
Word of Mouth	2.418	0.659	7.072	0.132	1.706	0.79	4.088	0.394
Convenience	7.183	0.127	12.187	0.016	1.473	0.831	12.029	0.017

The Kruskal-Wallis H Test was used to examine the effect of Age, Educational Qualification, Occupation, and Annual Income on 12 parameters that affect street food buying decisions in Mumbai. This is a non-parametric test, which is ideal when the data is not normally distributed to compare differences across multiple groups. The results are interpreted as follows:

Age

The Kruskal-Wallis H test results of different factors that affect the street food consumption by age shows that most of the parameters have no significant variation among the different age groups. In Taste, $H = 3.866$, $p = 0.424$, it was seen that there is no significant difference of variation among the different age groups, and hence, it indicates that taste is universally important to consumers irrespective of age. This suggests that the sensory appeal of street food remains a constant determinant of buying decisions by customers of all ages. In the same way, Hygiene ($H = 0.973$, $p = 0.914$) indicates that no age group differences exist. That is to say that safety from the food and hygiene become significant considerations for all age groups equally. It might be the case that due to food safety standards being a universal concern, the value for hygiene does not differ with age, especially for street food. For Price ($H = 2.623$, $p = 0.623$), the test results indicate that the price does not vary significantly with age, meaning that affordability of all consumers, regardless of age, is viewed in the same manner while they make their purchase decisions. This resonates with the notion that price is an important factor for customers of all ages but perhaps the price sensitivity would not differ much with age. The comparison did not find any significant variation when based on social influence ($H = 7.104$, $p = 0.13$); meaning social effects were quite uniform and did not influence street food consumption based on age group. The groups' behaviors and peer suggestions are part of the general social effects that have less variation among different ages while considering their social groups. The same case is Variety ($H = 1.805$, $p = 0.772$), where availability of street foods from different origins does not significantly vary with age groups and may indicate that street foods, as a choice, tend to appeal to any age group when choosing what to buy from the streets. Vendor Reputation ($H = 0.919$, $p = 0.922$) and Location ($H = 2.795$, $p = 0.593$) do not differ across age groups, as reputation of vendors and convenience of location matters equally to all age consumers when making a decision about street food. These factors do not appear to vary by age, and this indicates that consumers across ages tend to select vendors that have good reputations and are easily accessible. The test results also show no differences in For Marketing ($H = 5.319$, $p = 0.256$), Cultural Experience ($H = 5.254$, $p = 0.262$), and Health Concern ($H = 2.768$, $p = 0.597$), meaning that strategies in marketing, the cultural experience of food, and health concerns are all important to consumers regardless of their age. This implies that the desire for cultural authenticity in food and marketing efforts do not depend much on age, but a concern for health while consuming street food does. Word of Mouth ($H = 2.418$, $p = 0.659$) and Convenience ($H = 7.183$, $p = 0.127$) do not reveal significant differences related to age, either. It means that word-of-mouth recommendation and how convenient street food is become equally strong drivers for everyone. Perhaps this indicates the fact that no matter their age, customers rely more on others' recommendations and prefer quick food that's easily accessible. In summary, the Kruskal-Wallis test results show that age does not significantly influence the factors

driving street food consumption. All the parameters tested, including taste, hygiene, price, social influence, variety, vendor reputation, location, marketing, cultural experience, health concerns, word of mouth, and convenience, seem to be similarly important across different age groups. This would imply that, although there might be other variables related to age as such, which affect a consumer's behavior, there are no other significant differences when it comes to purchasing street food in the city of Mumbai.

Educational Qualification: Results for the Kruskal-Wallis H test, for 12 factors which influence

purchase decisions for street foods based on educational qualification: Taste showed significant variation at $H = 14.757$, $p = 0.005$. Results for the Kruskal-Wallis H test were also positive for differences of Price ($H = 19.866$, $p = 0.001$), Social Influence ($H = 18.4$, $p = 0.001$), Vendor Reputation ($H = 12.605$, $p = 0.013$), and Convenience at $H = 12.187$, $p = 0.016$. These factors show some statistically significant variations across educational qualification groups, which indicates a bearing of educational background towards consumer preferences and priorities. On the other hand, Hygiene ($H = 3.854$, $p = 0.426$), Variety ($H = 9.144$, $p = 0.058$), Location ($H = 7.813$, $p = 0.099$), Marketing ($H = 2.234$, $p = 0.693$), Cultural Experience ($H = 2.44$, $p = 0.655$), Health Concern ($H = 7.081$, $p = 0.132$), and Word of Mouth ($H = 7.072$, $p = 0.132$) do not have significant variations between the groups of educational qualification.

Occupation: The results of the Kruskal-Wallis H test for the 12 factors that affect the decision to

purchase street food based on occupation are not significantly different among the groups. The p-values of all parameters are above the 0.05 threshold, showing that the occupation of the consumers does not have a statistical influence on the importance they give to these factors. More precisely, in the case of Taste ($H = 1.429$, $p = 0.839$), Hygiene ($H = 4.229$, $p = 0.376$), Price ($H = 5.668$, $p = 0.225$), Social Influence ($H = 6.157$, $p = 0.188$), Variety ($H = 0.789$, $p = 0.94$), Vendor Reputation ($H = 1.815$, $p = 0.77$), Location ($H = 1.105$, $p = 0.894$), Marketing ($H = 1.821$, $p = 0.769$), Cultural Experience ($H = 0.867$, $p = 0.929$), Health Concern ($H = 6.297$, $p = 0.178$), Word of Mouth ($H = 1.706$, $p = 0.79$), and Convenience ($H = 1.473$, $p = 0.831$), it was found that occupation did not significantly affect the purchasing decisions about these variables.

Annual Income: The Kruskal-Wallis H test results for different factors affecting street food

buying decisions with regard to yearly income indicated that most of the factors did not differ significantly between the different groups of income. The p-values for factors such as Taste ($H = 3.285$, $p = 0.511$), Hygiene ($H = 0.545$, $p = 0.969$), Price ($H = 4.701$, $p = 0.319$), Variety ($H = 3.28$, $p = 0.512$), Vendor Reputation ($H = 5.302$, $p = 0.258$), Location ($H = 1.814$, $p = 0.77$), Marketing ($H = 2.121$, $p = 0.714$), Cultural Experience ($H = 2.331$, $p = 0.675$), Health Concern ($H = 1.199$, $p = 0.878$), and Word of Mouth ($H = 4.088$, $p = 0.394$) are all greater than 0.05, indicating annual income does not have a significant bearing on the decision-making towards these factors. However, Convenience ($H = 12.029$, $p = 0.017$) is significant at an aggregate level across income groups and indicates that the perceived convenience in purchasing street food differs with annual income.

Based on the results gotten in the Mann-Whitney U Test and Kruskal-Wallis H Test, the null hypothesis is partially accepted on some factors and outright rejected on others depending on the demographic variable. For gender, this indicated that there were differences to an extent for some like taste, price, health concern, among others whereby partial rejection of the null was involved. Similarly, in the case of marital status, a significant difference was found with respect to price and social influence; however, most other factors did not show any kind of variation, and therefore partial acceptance of the null hypothesis was there. No significant difference was seen in age and occupation factors, thus full acceptance of the null hypothesis was found. However, educational qualification and annual income had strong differences for specific factors, such as taste, price, social influence, and convenience, in partial rejection of the null hypothesis. Overall, there is support for the alternative hypothesis where demographic groups were significantly influential for certain factors, with a nuanced approach to the role of demographics in street food consumption.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The study gives a holistic view of the demographic variations and the key influencers that drive street food consumption in Mumbai. The study shows how the dynamics of taste, convenience, and price interplay and become the most important influencers. Taste comes out as the most important influencer, reflecting the attraction to rich and localized flavors characteristic of the street food culture of Mumbai. Convenience and price closely follow, underlining the significance of accessibility and affordability in urban consumers' decision-making processes. Other factors like location, word of mouth, and cultural experience also assume vital roles, emphasizing diverse motivations for street food consumption. Health concerns, vendor reputation, and social influence are moderately significant, suggesting an awareness of food safety and peer-driven preferences. Gender differences show women are more concerned with health and price than men, with taste being a universal concern. Marital status influences price perceptions as well as social influence. There is a higher degree of sensitivity to price for married respondents. For unmarried respondents, responses to peer-driven trends will be higher. Age, qualifications, occupation, and income do not significantly affect changes in the perceived importance of influences such as taste, hygiene, and convenience. They are considered universally valued and transcend demographic groups. Results highlight the multifaceted nature of consumer behavior in combining emotional, cultural, and practical considerations. The study provides crucial insights to street food vendors and policymakers to craft targeted strategies for the benefit of various consumers, taking care of health and safety issues while ensuring the sustainability and inclusiveness of the thriving street food ecosystem of Mumbai.

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