

Understanding consumer behavior toward ready-to-eat street foods in Cabadbaran City: An extended theory of planned behavior approach



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ABSTRACT

Street food plays an important role in the cultural and economic life of the Philippines by providing affordable and accessible meals to different groups of consumers. This study examined the behavioral factors influencing consumer decisions toward ready-to-eat street food in Cabadbaran City using the Extended Theory of Planned Behavior (ETPB). A mixed-methods approach was applied, combining descriptive-correlational analysis of 320 respondents with thematic analysis of qualitative responses. The findings showed that most consumers were young adults, especially students, who preferred street food because of its low cost, convenience, and accessibility near schools and workplaces. Although enjoyment and hedonic satisfaction strongly encouraged consumption, consumer attitudes and intentions were generally neutral due to concerns about hygiene, nutritional value, and limited time. Correlation and regression analyses revealed that habit and hedonic motivation were the strongest predictors of behavioral intention, exceeding rational factors such as safety and affordability. Qualitative findings further indicated that vendor selection depended on cleanliness, taste, affordability, accessibility, and trust. Consumers also associated street food with social interaction, cultural identity, and nostalgia. Despite health and safety concerns, consumers continued purchasing street food, showing the combined influence of practical needs, emotional satisfaction, and cultural attachment.

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1. Introduction

Street food has long been embedded in the cultural and economic fabric of the Philippines, serving as a convenient and affordable option for consumers across diverse social groups. In Cabadbaran City, street food stalls are a common feature of urban spaces, particularly near schools, markets, and workplaces, where accessibility and affordability drive patronage. The importance of this study lies in understanding not just the popularity of street food but the behavioral factors that influence consumer decisions, including attitudes, social influences, perceptions of safety, and hedonic motivations (Santos et al., 2025).

Recent years have seen increasing attention directed toward food safety, consumer psychology,

and the socio-cultural role of informal food economies. Studies worldwide show that street food reflects more than eating habits—it embodies cultural identity, supports livelihoods, and satisfies both economic and social needs (Khanna et al., 2022). However, it is equally tied to concerns about hygiene, safety, and consistency, making consumer behavior in this sector a complex issue. In the context of Cabadbaran City, where the practice is widespread yet underexplored in academic research, understanding these behavioral drivers fills an important gap in both literature and policy. The global perspective highlights how street food consumption is influenced by affordability, accessibility, and cultural appeal, while national studies emphasize its role in sustaining lower-income households and student populations (Ong et al., 2025). At the local level, however, little empirical evidence exists on how consumers in Cabadbaran specifically navigate the balance between enjoyment, affordability, and concerns about safety. This gap underscores the need for a focused study that captures both quantitative and qualitative dimensions of consumer behavior in this setting.

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By adopting the Extended Theory of Planned Behavior (ETPB), this study aims to provide a more comprehensive framework that examines not only traditional constructs like attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, but also additional factors such as hedonic motivation, perceived food safety, habit, and actual behavior (Thi Tuyet et al., 2025). This theoretical lens ensures that the study not only replicates past findings but also extends them to better reflect the realities of consumers in Cabadbaran City. The significance of conducting this research lies in its potential to inform both practice and policy. For vendors, insights into consumer attitudes and motivations can help improve service delivery, marketing strategies, and safety practices. For policymakers, the findings offer evidence to support regulations and training programs that balance economic opportunity with consumer protection. For the academic community, the study fills a research gap by providing localized data and interpretations that contribute to the growing body of literature on street food consumption. The central objective of this study is to investigate the behavioral factors that shape consumer decisions and practices in relation to street food consumption in Cabadbaran City, utilizing the Extended Theory of Planned Behavior (ETPB) as a framework. The research particularly focuses on how attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, perceived food safety, hedonic motivation, habits, and actual behavior influence consumer intentions and actions. In pursuing this aim, the study first seeks to describe the demographic profile of street food consumers in Cabadbaran City, considering variables such as age, gender, location, civil status, occupation, household income, and frequency of consumption. It further aims to evaluate the levels of consumer attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, perceived food safety, hedonic motivation, habits, behavioral intentions, and actual behaviors toward street food. Beyond this, the study intends to test the significant relationships among these behavioral factors and determine how they collectively influence consumer intentions regarding street food. Additionally, it examines the mediating role of habit in the connection between hedonic motivation and behavioral intention. Complementing the quantitative aspect, the research also explores, through qualitative narratives, the factors affecting vendor choice, memorable experiences, negative concerns, and the cultural significance of street food in Cabadbaran City.

To guide this investigation, a set of null hypotheses was formulated. These propose that no significant relationships exist between consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions toward street food consumption; between subjective norms and behavioral intentions; between perceived behavioral control and behavioral intentions; between perceived food safety and behavioral intentions; between hedonic motivation and behavioral intentions; and between habits and behavioral intentions. Furthermore, the hypotheses suggest that

habit does not significantly mediate the relationship between hedonic motivation and behavioral intentions toward street food consumption. Street food consumption is influenced by multiple behavioral factors that shape consumer choices and practices. Attitudes play a central role, as they reflect consumers' evaluations of taste, quality, value, and safety. Positive experiences with affordability and enjoyment strengthen attitudes and intentions, while hygiene and nutrition concerns weaken them (Ozcelik and Akova, 2021; Praesri et al., 2022; Seo and Lee, 2021; Trübswasser et al., 2021). Subjective norms further influence behavior through the approval or disapproval of peers, family, and social media, which frame consumption as either a social trend or a risky practice (Boca, 2021; Soltani et al., 2021). Perceived behavioral control also matters, as accessibility, affordability, and time availability enhance consumers' ability to purchase street food, whereas inconvenience or lack of resources reduces intentions (Günden et al., 2024; Rockliffe et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2023).

Food safety perceptions strongly affect trust. Visible hygiene practices such as clean stalls and protective measures reassure consumers, while poor practices raise doubt and encourage selective engagement rather than outright avoidance (Hashemi et al., 2023; Hussain et al., 2023). Hedonic motivation, meanwhile, emphasizes the sensory appeal and emotional gratification of consumption, often outweighing rational concerns about health or safety (Li et al., 2022; Chung et al., 2020).

Habits transform occasional consumption into routine behavior. Accessibility, affordability, and repetition make street food part of daily or weekly routines, reducing decision effort and becoming a strong predictor of future intention (Loh and Hassan, 2022; Barbu et al., 2022). Yet habits can reinforce both positive enjoyment and overlooked risks. Taken together, these factors interact in complex ways: Attitudes and hedonic motivations provide evaluative and emotional bases, norms and control add social and structural influences, safety moderates trust, and habits consolidate choices into consistent patterns (Guan et al., 2022). Ultimately, consumer behavior reflects a balance of enjoyment, convenience, and resilience against risks, making street food a flexible yet persistent practice (Gundala and Singh, 2021; Ramos, 2022). These insights establish the foundation for exploring how such dynamics manifest in Cabadbaran City's cultural and economic context.

Street food is more than an affordable meal; it is a cultural practice rooted in everyday life, carrying culinary traditions, preparation methods, and communal rituals passed down through generations (Vignola and Oosterveer, 2022). It often evokes cultural identity, as people link street food to national or local heritage, making it part of their cultural belonging rather than mere sustenance (Tuglo et al., 2021). As a shared social activity, street food fosters interaction in communal spaces like markets and streets, where families, friends, and

even strangers connect through eating together (Grace, 2023; Park and Widyanta, 2022). Its low cost makes it accessible across socioeconomic groups, turning it into a cultural equalizer that unites communities through shared food experiences (Olivadese and Dindo, 2023; Noort et al., 2022). Street food also carries nostalgic value, reminding people of childhood, family outings, and traditional practices, which strengthens emotional attachments that continue into adulthood (Zocchi et al., 2021; Sujood et al., 2024). At the same time, many cities and regions take pride in their distinctive street food, using it as a marker of local identity and cultural branding (De Lara and Santos, 2024). The vibrant atmosphere of street food spaces—vendors cooking, customers lining up, and the sensory appeal of smells and sights—creates a cultural theater that adds to the memorability of the experience (Liu et al., 2021; Sexton et al., 2022). Despite concerns about hygiene and safety, consumers often continue engaging with street food because its cultural and social value outweighs perceived risks, reflecting the resilience of this practice (Korsunova et al., 2022; Ilieva et al., 2022). Ultimately, street food acts as a cultural anchor that connects individuals to heritage, community, and identity. It nourishes not only the body but also emotional bonds, social relationships, and collective pride, sustaining its place across generations.

This study is anchored in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), a psychological model that explains how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence behavioral intentions, which in turn predict actual behavior. The TPB assumes that individuals make reasoned choices based on their evaluation of outcomes, the social pressures they perceive, and their confidence in performing a behavior (Albayati et al., 2023). In the context of street food, the theory provides a structured way of understanding how personal beliefs, social influences, and enabling conditions shape consumers' decisions to purchase and consume such foods (Ali et al., 2023). However, researchers argue that the original TPB does not fully account for the complexity of food-related behaviors, especially in situations where enjoyment, habit, and safety concerns play a critical role (Rozenkowska, 2023). To address this limitation, the present study employs the Extended Theory of Planned Behavior (ETPB), which integrates additional constructs such as Perceived Food Safety (PFS), Hedonic Motivation (HM), and Habit (HAB) (Boubker, 2024). These extensions enrich the model by recognizing that food choices are not solely rational decisions but are also shaped by emotional satisfaction, cultural familiarity, and habitual routines, all of which can be moderated by concerns about hygiene and health risks (Azhar et al., 2023). Within this framework, Attitude (ATT) represents consumers' positive or negative evaluations of street food; Subjective Norms (SN) reflect the social pressure from peers, family, or social media; and Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) denotes their

perception of access and affordability. Perceived Food Safety (PFS) emphasizes trust in the cleanliness and safety of food handling, while Hedonic Motivation (HM) highlights the role of cravings, sensory appeal, and pleasure in food choices. Habit (HAB), on the other hand, captures behaviors that become automatic through repeated consumption. Together, these constructs predict Behavioral Intention (BI), which is considered the most immediate antecedent of Actual Behavior (AB). By integrating both rational and emotional dimensions, the ETPB provides a holistic framework for explaining why consumers continue to engage in street food consumption despite health concerns, balancing the influences of necessity, enjoyment, and habit. The significance of this study lies in its potential to generate meaningful insights into the behavioral factors that influence street food consumption in Cabadbaran City. By combining quantitative measures with qualitative perspectives, the study aims to capture not only the motivations and concerns of consumers but also the cultural meanings attached to street food. Its findings will benefit multiple stakeholders in different ways. For vendors, the research offers a better understanding of consumer priorities such as hygiene, taste, affordability, and trust, which can help them strengthen customer loyalty and secure their livelihood. For consumers, it highlights the importance of making informed decisions by balancing the enjoyment and convenience of street food with considerations of safety and nutrition. Local government units and policymakers can also draw from the results in developing regulations, monitoring systems, and training programs that promote hygienic practices while ensuring that the economic benefits of street food are preserved. Educational institutions may find the study useful in raising awareness among students—the largest consumer group—about moderation, food safety, and healthier eating habits. Finally, the study contributes to academic literature by offering a localized framework that can be extended to other contexts or compared across regions, providing a foundation for further research into nutrition, public health, and the cultural dimensions of food consumption.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research design

This study employed a mixed-methods research design integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative component utilized a descriptive-correlational design to examine relationships among the constructs of the Extended Theory of Planned Behavior (ETPB), including attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, perceived food safety, hedonic motivation, habit, behavioral intention, and actual behavior. The qualitative component used open-ended responses to capture personal experiences and cultural

meanings associated with street food consumption. This integration enabled a comprehensive analysis of both statistical relationships and contextual insights.

2.2. Research setting

The study was conducted in Cabadbaran City, Agusan del Norte, Philippines. As a provincial capital with active commercial centers, schools, public markets, and transport terminals, the city provides a relevant context where street food vending is prevalent. The urban and socio-economic diversity of the area allowed inclusion of respondents from varied demographic backgrounds.

2.3. Participants and sampling

A total of 320 active street food consumers participated in the study. Purposeful sampling was employed to ensure inclusion of individuals with direct experience in purchasing and consuming ready-to-eat street food. Respondents represented diverse profiles in terms of age, gender, civil status, occupation, income level, and frequency of consumption. This sampling approach ensured the relevance of both quantitative responses and qualitative insights.

2.4. Research instrument

Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire composed of two sections. The first section gathered demographic information. The second section measured ETPB constructs using a five-point Likert scale (5 = Strongly Agree to 1 = Strongly Disagree). Open-ended questions were included to capture qualitative perspectives. The instrument underwent expert validation to ensure content clarity and relevance, followed by pilot testing to establish reliability prior to full-scale data collection. Pilot testing was conducted with a preliminary group of respondents to assess the clarity and internal consistency of the instrument. Reliability analysis yielded Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70 across all ETPB constructs, indicating satisfactory internal consistency prior to full data collection.

2.5. Data collection procedure

Validated questionnaires were distributed in both printed and digital formats across schools, workplaces, and public areas where street food vendors operate. Participants were informed about the study's purpose and provided informed consent prior to participation. Completed responses were collected, encoded, and prepared for analysis.

2.6. Data analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage,

weighted mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation). Mediation analysis was conducted to examine the role of habit in linking hedonic motivation and behavioral intention. Qualitative responses were transcribed verbatim and analyzed thematically, with significant statements grouped into core themes to complement statistical findings.

3. Results and discussion

3.1. Demographic profile of respondents

A total of 320 active street food consumers participated in the study. The age distribution reveals that young adults aged 19–25 comprise the majority (70.3%), followed by those aged 36–50 (23.8%), 26–35 (5%), and 15–18 (0.9%). This dominance of young adults confirms that students and early-career individuals form the structural backbone of the street food market in Cabadbaran City. Their reliance on affordable and time-efficient meals reflects financial constraints and lifestyle pressures. This pattern aligns with global findings indicating that young consumers are the most frequent patrons of street food due to affordability and convenience, whereas older individuals adopt more health-conscious and family-centered food practices (Rozenkowska, 2023). Gender distribution shows near parity (51.6% male, 47.5% female, 0.9% undisclosed), indicating that street food consumption is broadly gender-inclusive. While men may exhibit slightly higher public visibility in street-based consumption, women's comparable participation reinforces the non-gendered nature of affordability-driven food practices (Rockcliffe et al., 2021). Location data confirm that proximity strongly influences patronage. Most respondents reside in Cabadbaran City (64.4%), with declining participation from surrounding municipalities. This spatial gradient supports evidence that urban centers act as regional food hubs, attracting both residents and commuters (Seo and Lee, 2021). Civil status further reinforces consumption autonomy, with 75% single respondents. Singles demonstrate greater flexibility in food decisions, consistent with research showing their inclination toward convenience-based consumption (Tuglo et al., 2021).

Occupation data highlight students (72.8%) as the primary economic drivers of street food demand. Vendors strategically position stalls near educational institutions, mirroring global findings that schools and workplaces anchor street food ecosystems (Zocchi et al., 2021). Income distribution underscores affordability as a central motivator. Although 36.6% earn below ₱10,000 monthly, higher-income groups are also represented, demonstrating that street food operates both as an economic necessity and cultural indulgence (Ramos, 2022). Consumption frequency is predominantly moderate: 84.4% consume street food 1–2 times weekly, with minimal daily reliance.

This mirrors global patterns where moderate weekly consumption prevails in culturally embedded contexts (Olivadese and Dindo, 2023), while heavier reliance is often associated with students and low-income groups (Praesri et al., 2022). Collectively, demographic findings confirm that Cabadbaran's street food sector is sustained primarily by young, single students, with broader cross-demographic participation.

3.2. Extended theory of planned behavior (ETPB) constructs

3.2.1. Attitude (ATT)

Respondents expressed a neutral-to-positive attitude (Grand Mean = 3.34). Enjoyment emerged as the strongest attitudinal component (M = 3.78), while perceptions of superior taste (M = 2.96) and value (M = 3.27) remained neutral. This indicates that emotional gratification sustains participation, but cognitive evaluations of quality and value moderate enthusiasm. Such multidimensional attitudes reflect earlier findings that sensory appeal drives engagement, yet concerns regarding value and safety temper strong endorsement (Noort et al., 2022).

3.2.2. Subjective norms (SN)

Subjective norms yielded a neutral overall mean (3.37). Social media influence was strongest (M = 3.68), followed by peer encouragement (M = 3.49), while family approval remained weaker (M = 2.95). This layered influence structure demonstrates a generational shift in normative pressure, where digital networks outweigh traditional family authority. The findings align with Li et al. (2022), who emphasized the dominance of peer and social media influence among younger consumers.

3.2.3. Perceived behavioral control (PBC)

Perceived behavioral control was positive (Grand Mean = 3.64). Accessibility (M = 3.97) and affordability (M = 3.74) strongly enable consumption, while time availability (M = 3.20) remains a limiting factor. These results confirm that structural enablers—location and cost—facilitate behavior more strongly than personal scheduling constraints, consistent with prior findings (Khan et al., 2023).

3.2.4. Perceived food safety (PFS)

Perceived food safety registered a neutral grand mean (3.00). Cleanliness perceptions (M = 3.14) and safe handling (M = 3.04) indicate cautious trust, while illness concern (M = 2.83) reflects persistent health apprehension. Consumers appear to apply selective trust strategies, continuing consumption despite risk awareness. This mirrors earlier research

showing that economic necessity and cultural familiarity often outweigh safety concerns (Khan et al., 2023).

3.2.5. Hedonic motivation (HM)

Hedonic motivation showed strong agreement (Grand Mean = 3.58). Cravings (M = 3.63), sensory cues (M = 3.56), and emotional satisfaction (M = 3.56) significantly drive consumption.

These findings confirm that pleasure, sensory stimulation, and emotional reward sustain demand even when rational concerns exist, consistent with Ilieva et al. (2022).

3.2.6. Habit (HAB)

Habit showed neutrality (Grand Mean = 2.94). Daily routine integration was lowest (M = 2.52), indicating that consumption remains situational rather than automatic.

This supports evidence that habits require stable contexts to solidify, and street food consumption may remain flexible rather than rigid (Gundala and Singh, 2021).

3.2.7. Behavioral intention (BI)

Behavioral intention remained neutral (Grand Mean = 3.06). While respondents intend to continue buying (M = 3.17), they are hesitant to increase consumption (M = 2.80).

This conditional intention aligns with findings that enjoyment alone does not guarantee future escalation when moderated by health and safety considerations (Chung et al., 2020).

3.2.8. Actual behavior (AB)

Consumption remains moderate and financially minimal. Weekly patterns and low expenditure confirm that street food functions as a dietary supplement rather than a primary food source, consistent with Azhar et al. (2023).

3.3. Correlation and regression analysis

Habit demonstrated the strongest correlation with Behavioral Intention ($r = 0.83$), confirming that repeated behavior significantly reinforces future intention. This aligns with evidence identifying habit as a dominant behavioral driver once routines are established (Günden et al., 2024). Hedonic Motivation strongly correlated with Attitude ($r = 0.75$), Habit ($r = 0.71$), and Behavioral Intention ($r = 0.67$), demonstrating the centrality of pleasure and emotional satisfaction in shaping both evaluative and behavioral dimensions (Ilieva et al., 2022). Attitude ($r = 0.67$) and Subjective Norms ($r = 0.64$) moderately predicted intention, consistent with findings that social approval supports but does not dominate consumption decisions (Günden et al.,

2024). Perceived Behavioral Control ($r = 0.56$) and Perceived Food Safety ($r = 0.62$) exerted moderate influence, indicating that rational considerations support but do not outweigh emotional and habitual drivers. Regression analysis confirms that Habit and Hedonic Motivation are the strongest predictors of Behavioral Intention, reinforcing the extended TPB proposition that affective and routine-based mechanisms significantly enhance predictive power beyond traditional cognitive determinants.

To further examine the mediating role of Habit, mediation analysis was conducted using regression-based procedures. Results indicated that Hedonic Motivation significantly predicted Habit, and Habit significantly predicted Behavioral Intention. When Habit was included in the regression model, the direct effect of Hedonic Motivation on Behavioral Intention decreased but remained significant, indicating partial mediation. This confirms that pleasurable experiences strengthen intention both directly and indirectly through behavioral repetition, reinforcing the extended TPB framework.

3.4. Thematic analysis of consumer narratives

The thematic analysis revealed that consumers' experiences with street food are shaped by a combination of practical, social, and cultural factors. When selecting vendors, respondents consistently emphasized cleanliness, affordability, taste, accessibility, and trustworthiness. Hygiene emerged as a particularly important consideration, serving as a visible indicator of reliability and food quality in an otherwise informal market environment, which is consistent with the observations of Boca (2021). Familiarity with vendors and established trust relationships further reduced uncertainty and encouraged repeat patronage, especially in informal food settings where formal quality assurances may be limited.

Beyond functional considerations, consumers described their street food experiences as socially and emotionally meaningful. Positive memories were frequently associated with social bonding, shared experiences with friends and family, unique flavors, affordability, and the lively atmosphere surrounding street food environments. Nostalgia also emerged as a recurring theme, with respondents linking street food consumption to childhood experiences, local traditions, and memorable community interactions. These findings support the argument of Barbu et al. (2022) that culturally rooted and affordable food experiences can create lasting emotional and communal impressions.

At the same time, respondents identified several concerns that tempered their enthusiasm for street food consumption. Common issues included poor hygiene practices, inconsistent food quality, occasional physical discomfort after consumption, and environmental factors such as crowded or uncomfortable eating conditions. These concerns reflect the challenges often associated with informal food markets and are consistent with the findings of

Liu et al. (2021), who highlighted variability in food quality and regulatory limitations as persistent risks within informal food systems.

Despite these concerns, respondents continued to associate street food with cultural identity and community belonging. Street food was widely perceived as an accessible and inclusive aspect of Filipino culture that transcends socioeconomic differences. Its nostalgic and communal qualities reinforced a sense of cultural continuity, allowing consumers to connect with local traditions, shared experiences, and collective memories. This observation aligns with Park and Widyanta (2022), who emphasized the role of food experiences in preserving cultural identity and strengthening collective memory. Overall, the qualitative findings suggest that street food consumption in Cabadbaran City is influenced not only by convenience and affordability but also by emotional attachment, social interaction, trust, and cultural significance.

3.5. Integrated discussion and theoretical implications

The findings of this study provide strong empirical support for the Extended Theory of Planned Behavior (ETPB) in explaining street food consumption in Cabadbaran City. While the original TPB emphasizes Attitude (ATT), Subjective Norms (SN), and Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) as predictors of Behavioral Intention (BI), the present findings demonstrate that the extended constructs—Hedonic Motivation (HM), Perceived Food Safety (PFS), and Habit (HAB)—significantly enhance explanatory power. First, although Attitude showed a positive association with Behavioral Intention, respondents' overall neutrality indicates that cognitive evaluations alone are insufficient to drive strong intention. This partially supports TPB assumptions but also reveals a contextual limitation: enjoyment exists alongside safety concerns, creating attitudinal ambivalence. Second, Subjective Norms demonstrated moderate influence, confirming social media and peer dynamics as contemporary normative drivers. However, their predictive strength was weaker than Habit and Hedonic Motivation, suggesting that internalized pleasure and behavioral repetition outweigh external pressures. Third, Perceived Behavioral Control positively influenced intention, primarily through accessibility and affordability. Yet its moderate strength indicates that structural enablers facilitate rather than determine behavior. The most significant contribution of this study lies in confirming that Habit ($r = 0.83$) and Hedonic Motivation ($r = 0.67$ with BI) are the strongest predictors of Behavioral Intention. These findings validate the extension of TPB by demonstrating that food-related behaviors are not purely rational decisions but are strongly shaped by emotional gratification and repeated patterns. Habit mediates the relationship between Hedonic Motivation and Behavioral Intention, reinforcing that pleasure-driven experiences, when

repeated, solidify into behavioral routines. Moreover, Perceived Food Safety functioned as a moderating factor rather than a prohibitive one. Despite neutral safety perceptions, consumers continued purchasing street food, illustrating the coexistence of risk awareness and continued engagement. This finding challenges purely rational-choice assumptions and supports extended TPB arguments that emotional and contextual drivers may override safety concerns. Qualitative findings further strengthen the theoretical contribution by illustrating how cultural identity, nostalgia, and social bonding operate alongside ETPB constructs. These socio-cultural dimensions complement the psychological framework, positioning street food consumption at the intersection of rational evaluation, emotional gratification, habitual behavior, and cultural embeddedness.

This study advances ETPB literature by demonstrating that in informal food economies, affective and habitual mechanisms exert stronger influence than traditional cognitive determinants. The Cabadbaran context provides localized empirical evidence that extends TPB applications within food behavior research.

4. Conclusions

The findings of this study reveal that street food consumption in Cabadbaran City is predominantly driven by young adults, particularly students, who depend on its affordability, accessibility, and convenience, making them the core group sustaining the local street food sector. While respondents expressed clear enjoyment and hedonic satisfaction in consuming street food, their overall attitudes and behavioral intentions were generally neutral, reflecting a cautious form of engagement shaped by concerns over hygiene, nutritional value, and time constraints. Among the different predictors of behavior, habits and hedonic motivations emerged as the strongest influences on intention, underscoring that pleasure and repeated patterns of consumption carry more weight than rational considerations such as food safety or affordability. Despite a neutral stance on food safety, respondents continue to patronize vendors, suggesting that economic necessity and cultural familiarity often override fears about hygiene and health risks. Qualitative insights further enriched these findings, showing that memorable experiences with street food are often tied to social bonding, nostalgia, and cultural identity. These experiences confirm that street food is not only a dietary choice but also a cultural and communal practice that strengthens relationships and preserves traditions. Taken together, the study highlights the complex interplay of enjoyment, habit, safety concerns, and cultural meaning in shaping consumer behavior toward street food in Cabadbaran City.

In light of these findings, several recommendations can be made to ensure that street food consumption in Cabadbaran City remains both

safe and sustainable while retaining its cultural and social significance. Vendors are encouraged to prioritize cleanliness and adopt consistent hygienic practices, such as covering food, wearing gloves, and maintaining sanitary stalls, in order to address consumer concerns and foster trust. Consumers, for their part, are advised to practice moderation by balancing enjoyment with health considerations and avoiding excessive reliance on street food as a primary dietary source. Policymakers and local authorities may consider implementing structured training and regular monitoring programs to help vendors comply with food safety standards, thereby reducing risks of foodborne illnesses while enhancing consumer confidence. At the same time, awareness programs should be developed to encourage informed decision-making among consumers, promoting a balance between affordability, convenience, and nutritional value. Finally, future research should expand upon this study by conducting nutritional analyses of popular street foods, examining the long-term health implications of frequent consumption, and incorporating the perspectives of vendors themselves to achieve a fuller and more inclusive understanding of the street food sector.

4.1. Limitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the use of purposive sampling limits the generalizability of findings beyond Cabadbaran City. While appropriate for targeting active street food consumers, the non-probability approach restricts representativeness. Second, the study relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to social desirability bias and recall bias. Respondents may have underreported health concerns or overestimated positive experiences. Third, the cross-sectional design prevents causal inference. Although correlation and mediation analyses suggest directional relationships, longitudinal studies are necessary to confirm behavioral stability over time. Fourth, while the mediation role of habit was statistically examined, additional structural equation modeling could further strengthen model validation. Future research should employ probability sampling, longitudinal designs, and multi-method validation approaches to enhance external validity and theoretical robustness.

List of abbreviations

AB	Actual behavior
ATT	Attitude
BI	Behavioral intention
ETPB	Extended theory of planned behavior
HAB	Habit
HM	Hedonic motivation
M	Mean
PBC	Perceived behavioral control
PFS	Perceived food safety
SN	Subjective norms
TPB	Theory of planned behavior

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Compliance with ethical standards

Ethical considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with established ethical standards for research involving human participants. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to data collection. For participants below 18 years of age, parental or guardian consent was secured in accordance with institutional requirements. Respondents were assured that their participation was confidential and anonymous, and that the collected data would be used solely for academic and research purposes. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty.

Conflict of interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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