



Special Issue - Innovative Commerce: Bridging Business and Computer Applications (ICBBCA-2026)

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A STUDY ON THE MARKETING APPROACHES OF STREET FOOD VENDORS IN MADURAI CITY

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Abstract

Street food vending plays an important role in the urban informal economy by providing affordable food, employment opportunities, and preserving local culinary traditions. This study examines the marketing approaches of street food vendors in Madurai City, Tamil Nadu, a region well known for its rich food culture. The research uses a descriptive design and is based on primary data collected from 85 vendors across major locations such as temple areas, markets, and transport hubs.

Keywords: Street food vending, urban informal economy, Tamil Nadu, descriptive

study, primary data, traditional marketing, strategic location, pricing, food quality.

Introduction

Madurai, one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in India, is renowned not only for its ancient temples but also for its vibrant street food culture. Known as the "Athens of the East," the city seamlessly blends tradition, economy, and daily life, with street vendors forming an integral part of its urban landscape. Areas around the Meenakshi Amman Temple, bus stands, railway stations, and temple streets bustle with vendors serving affordable and flavorful dishes to pilgrims, tourists, and residents. Madurai's street food reflects deep cultural roots, featuring iconic items such as idli, symbolic of



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the city's identity. Dosa, vadai, Kari dosa, parotta, paruthi paal, and the famous Jigarthanda, a dessert. These foods

Objectives of the Study

- To analyse the existing marketing approaches of street food vendors in Madurai City
- To understand consumer perceptions and expectations regarding street food marketing
- To evaluate the challenges faced by street vendors in adopting effective marketing strategies
- To study the influence of tourism and cultural heritage on street food marketing in Madurai
- To assess the role of hygiene and food safety as a marketing strategy

Research Methodology

Research Design

The study follows a descriptive research design to analyze the research problem systematically.

Data is collected from both primary sources (questionnaires/interviews) and secondary sources, and analyzed using tables and charts.

Source of Data

Primary Data

Primary data for the study was collected directly from respondents to ensure accuracy and reliability. Structured questionnaires were used to gather quantitative information, while personal interviews provided detailed qualitative insights. This combination helped in obtaining a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

Secondary Data

Secondary data for the study was gathered from books, journals, company reports, and trusted websites. These sources helped provide context and supported the analysis with credible information.

Sample Size

The study's sample size consisted of 100 respondents selected for data collection. This number was chosen to ensure the results are representative and reliable.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Customer Priorities

S.No	Option	Response	Percentage%
1	Price	28	33%
2	Hygiene	28	33%
3	Taste	18	21%
4	Quantity	11	13%
	Total	85	100%

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Chart



Fig 1: Response

Interpretation

The table highlights the major factors influencing customers in selecting street food vendors. Price (33%) and hygiene (33%) were equally rated as the most important considerations, showing that consumers balance affordability with safety when choosing street food. Taste (21%) emerged as the next significant factor, reflecting that quality and flavor still play a vital role but are secondary to price and hygiene. Quantity (13%) was considered the least important, suggesting that consumers are less focused on portion size compared to value for money and safety.

Findings of the Study

- Most street food vendors rely on word-of-mouth promotion rather than formal advertising.

- Vendors attract customers mainly through taste, quality, and affordable pricing.
- Strategic location (near schools, colleges, and bus stands) plays a major role in sales.
- Visual display of food and live preparation increases customer attraction.
- Discounts and combo offers are occasionally used to increase sales volume.
- Social media usage among vendors is limited but gradually increasing.
- Customer loyalty is built through friendly behaviour and personal relationships.
- Evening hours record higher sales compared to morning hours.

Suggestions and Recommendations

- Street food vendors should improve hygiene and cleanliness practices to attract more health-conscious customers.
- Vendors can use social media platforms (WhatsApp, Instagram) for promotion and customer engagement.
- Offering digital payment options (UPI, QR code) can increase convenience for customers.
- Government and local authorities should provide training programs on food safety and marketing skills.



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Conclusion

The study concludes that street food vending plays a significant role in providing employment and supporting the local economy in Madurai. It serves as an important source of income for individuals with limited education and fewer job opportunities. The findings indicate that customers are mainly attracted by the quality, taste, and affordability of street foods, which makes this sector highly competitive and customer-oriented. Vendors depend largely on informal marketing strategies such as word-of-mouth and maintaining good relationships with customers. Despite its importance, the sector faces several challenges including lack of proper infrastructure, hygiene maintenance difficulties, weather conditions, and regulatory issues. These problems affect the stability and growth of vendors' businesses. Therefore, improving basic facilities, ensuring hygiene awareness, and providing supportive government policies can help enhance the sustainability of street food vending. Overall,

the study highlights that with proper support, this sector can continue to contribute significantly to employment and urban food culture.

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