Research on the Factors Influencing Consumers' Spending on Street Food in Hanoi

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ABSTRACT

Street food is increasingly becoming an important part of urban consumers' spending in Hanoi, not only meeting the demand for convenient meals but also reflecting cultural and social values. This study aims to identify the factors influencing spending on street food in the context of urbanization and changing consumer lifestyles. Data were collected through a quantitative survey with 306 valid responses and analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha, EFA, Pearson correlation, and OLS regression. The findings reveal four main factors that positively influence spending: income, price, food quality, and food safety. Among these, food quality and price exert the strongest impacts on spending decisions. These results not only reinforce consumer behaviour theory but also provide empirical evidence for the street food sector in Vietnam. Based on this, the study proposes several solutions to improve food quality, ensure safety, and maintain reasonable prices to promote sustainable consumer spending.

Keywords: Street food, consumer spending, food quality, Hanoi.

INTRODUCTION

Street food is an important part of urban life, not only meeting daily dietary needs but also reflecting the cultural and economic values of society. In major cities of developing countries, including Vietnam, street food serves not only as a low-cost source of nutrition but also as a form of "cultural identity" favored by both tourists and local residents (Pill, 2011). According to the survey by Harris et al. (2020), the proportion of household spending on out-of-home food in Vietnam has been increasing rapidly, particularly in the context of urbanization and changing lifestyles. This indicates that street food is becoming an increasingly significant component of urban food expenditure.

Consumer spending on street food is influenced by multiple factors. From a socio-economic perspective, income plays a decisive role: as income rises, spending on out-of-home food, including street food, tends to increase at a faster rate than essential food items (Vu, 2020). However, price sensitivity is also evident, especially among middle- and low-income groups, where price fluctuations directly affect consumption frequency and spending levels (Reshi et al., 2023). In addition, convenience and accessibility—such as the density and location of food stalls—have been proven to be important drivers of frequent consumption (Salamandane et al., 2023).

Beyond economic factors, the study by Khanh & Huong (2024) highlights that marketing stimuli and situational factors (time pressure, dining with friends, promotions, and attractive food scents) can trigger impulse purchases, thereby increasing spending on street food. At the same time, Hanoi's rich culinary culture strongly reinforces consumption: consumers often associate street food with "authenticity" and distinctive local flavors that are hard to replace (Bui & Hossain, 2025). However, a major barrier remains concerns about food safety. Research by Nguyen Van Nam et al. (2023) in Hanoi found that limited knowledge and poor food safety practices among vendors undermine consumer trust, negatively affecting spending (Nam et al., 2023).

Although many international and domestic studies have examined consumer behaviour toward street food, most have focused on safety, health, or tourist satisfaction aspects (Huong et al., 2020; Khanh & Huong, 2024; Thuy,

2024; Tram & Thao, 2024). However, there is still a lack of in-depth research analysing the direct determinants of urban consumer spending, particularly in Hanoi—widely regarded as the "capital of street food" in Vietnam. Clarifying these factors not only holds scientific significance by enriching consumer behavior theory but also carries practical value in shaping management policies, fostering sustainable street food business development, and meeting the increasingly diverse needs of residents.

From this context, the study *"Research on the Factors Influencing Consumers' Spending on Street Food in Hanoi"* was conducted to analyze the impacts of socio-economic, marketing, convenience, cultural, and food safety factors on spending decisions. The study aims to provide scientific evidence for policy recommendations, as well as to support street food vendors in adjusting their business practices to enhance economic efficiency and better meet consumer demand.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Literature Review

The study by Tran Yen and Le Giang (2021) on factors influencing online fast-food consumption behavior in Ho Chi Minh City collected data from 578 survey responses using a non-probability sampling method and distributed via Survey Monkey. Regression analysis revealed seven factors affecting online fast-food consumption in HCMC: (1) financial and time risk (RR); (2) product variety (DD); (3) price perception (CNGC); (4) product quality (CLSP); (5) promotion (CT); (6) website responsiveness (TDU); and (7) convenience (STT) (Yen, 2021). Among these, financial and time risk had the strongest impact, while the other factors also showed positive influences. The findings suggest that businesses could attract more customers by minimizing perceived financial and time risks.

Vu (2020), in *Economies*, analyzed household food consumption patterns in Vietnam using a complete demand system and socio-demographic information. Demand elasticities were estimated via the Almost Ideal Demand System (AIDS) model. Results showed all food groups had positive expenditure elasticities, with food away from home (FAFH) having the highest coefficient (2.1–2.4), significantly exceeding that of rice, meat, and vegetables. This indicates that as income increases, spending on eating out rises much faster than spending on essentials. Meanwhile, the highly negative price elasticity highlights consumers' sensitivity to price fluctuations, particularly in low-income groups.

Harris et al. (2020), in their study on Vietnam's nutrition transition—covering food supply, food prices, household expenditure, diet, and nutritional outcomes—argued that Vietnam is in the early stages of transition: malnutrition is decreasing, while obesity and chronic diseases are rising. A key indicator is the sharp increase in spending on out-of-home food, reflecting urban lifestyle shifts and disposable income growth. However, the study emphasized that despite street food being associated with "freshness and authenticity," growing food safety concerns significantly affect spending decisions.

Street vending is a global phenomenon present in both developed and developing countries and has become more visible as modernization, urbanization, and globalization advance. Pill (2011) examined the role of street vendors in Hanoi's Old Quarter from their own perspective and analyzed how street vending policies may benefit them. The study positioned street food as an integral part of urban life and as a "safety net" for low-income earners. While cheap and convenient, street food also raised policy dilemmas: governments wanted to promote it as a cultural-tourism asset but worried about sanitation, congestion, and urban order. These tensions indirectly shape consumer spending, where decisions are influenced by both cultural–traditional preferences and perceptions of safety and legality.

Khanh and Huong (2024) investigated the influence of marketing stimuli and situational factors on impulse buying among Vietnamese consumers. Data were collected from 264 respondents in Hanoi, Da Nang, and Ho Chi Minh City through an online survey. The findings indicated that marketing stimuli (promotions, advertising, product display) and situational factors (time pressure, purchasing power) strongly influence impulse buying. Particularly for low-cost, instantly consumable products like street food, the likelihood of impulse purchases is very high. The results suggest that marketing and situational triggers can substantially increase spending per

transaction, offering strategic insights for firms aiming to stimulate consumer psychological responses and encourage unplanned purchases.

Pham Thi Thu Thuy (2024), in her study on tourist satisfaction with street food in Da Nang, surveyed 130 tourists using a questionnaire structured around five factors: facilities and dining environment, food safety, service quality, food quality, and price. Results indicated that reasonable prices combined with outstanding flavors and fast service enhanced average consumer spending. Food safety, meanwhile, was a prerequisite for transitioning from "trial consumption" to repeat purchases. The survey also revealed that tourists consuming street food in Da Nang were mostly young and earned less than VND 7 million per month.

Nguyen Van Nam et al. (2023) surveyed 290 street food vendors in Son Tay town, Hanoi, to analyze factors related to their knowledge and practices of food safety. Results showed inconsistencies: 64.1% had good knowledge, while 66.9% demonstrated good practices. From a consumer perspective, high perceived risk in sidewalk settings reduced spending, particularly among households with children and the elderly. The findings suggest that standardized and well-trained food safety practices (e.g., separate tools for raw/cooked food, handwashing facilities, protective clothing) could mitigate psychological barriers and increase spending across income groups.

Synthesizing domestic and international studies reveals that consumer spending on street food is shaped by multiple dimensions. Socio-economic factors (income, price sensitivity, disposable expenditure) directly determine spending levels (Vu, 2020; Reshi et al., 2021). Marketing stimuli and situational triggers (promotions, time pressure, attractive flavors) can drive impulse buying, thereby increasing spending per purchase (Khanh & Huong, 2024). Cultural and social values, especially the association of street food with culinary identity and community life, foster consumption intentions (Pill, 2011; Pham Thi Thu Thuy, 2024). However, concerns about hygiene and food safety remain major barriers limiting spending (Harris et al., 2020; Nam et al., 2023). Thus, while prior studies offer a fairly comprehensive picture, several gaps remain to be addressed in the context of Hanoi.

RESEARCH GAPS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Research Gaps

Although many studies have analyzed fast-food, out-of-home dining, and street food consumption behaviors in Vietnam, most have focused on consumer satisfaction, food safety, or impulse buying behavior. Quantitative research specifically examining the direct factors influencing street food expenditure among urban consumers remains limited, especially in the context of Hanoi—where street food is both an essential need and a cultural symbol. Moreover, prior studies rarely integrate socio-economic factors, marketing and situational triggers, cultural preferences, and food safety concerns into a comprehensive analytical model. Therefore, this study contributes by developing and testing a model of factors influencing street food expenditure, providing new evidence in both theoretical and practical dimensions.

Theoretical Framework

Key Concepts

Consumer Expenditure

Consumer expenditure refers to the total amount of money spent by an individual or household on goods and services within a specific period (Deaton & Muellbauer, 1980). According to Engel's Law, the share of food expenditure declines as income increases, although the absolute amount of food spending rises (Houthakker, 1957). Vu (2020) found that in Vietnam, expenditure on food away from home, including street food, shows positive elasticity and grows faster than spending on essential foods. Similarly, Ahmad Reshi et al. (2021) confirmed that price and quality are key determinants shaping expenditure in the fast-food sector. Synthesizing these perspectives, this study defines consumer expenditure as the total amount an individual spends on

purchasing and consuming street food within a given period, reflecting the level and frequency of participation in this type of food consumption.

Street Food

The World Health Organization (WHO, 1996) defines street food as "foods and beverages prepared and/or sold by vendors and hawkers in streets and other public places for immediate consumption or consumption at a later stage without further processing." Pill (2011) emphasized that street food is an inseparable part of urban life in Hanoi, serving both as a livelihood for vendors and as a marker of local culture. Harris et al. (2020) also confirmed that street food contributes significantly to out-of-home food expenditure in Vietnam, especially as urbanization drives demand for convenience. Moreover, Pham Thi Thu Thuy (2024), in her study in Da Nang, highlighted that street food is associated with taste experience, affordability, and availability. For the purpose of this research, street food is defined as food and beverages prepared and sold at stalls or public spaces in Hanoi, characterized by convenience, reasonable price, and strong linkage with local cultural values.

Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior is "the process by which individuals or groups select, purchase, use, and dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and desires" (Kotler & Keller, 2009). Solomon (2018) added that consumer behavior is influenced by personal, psychological, social, and cultural factors. Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) further posits that consumption intention depends on attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In the Vietnamese context, Khanh & Huong (2024) emphasized that marketing stimuli and situational factors strongly affect consumers' impulse buying. Drawing on these perspectives, this study defines consumer behavior as the overall decision-making process related to purchasing and spending on street food, influenced by economic, cultural, social, and situational factors.

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) posits that human behavior is driven by behavioral intention, which is determined by three main factors: Attitude toward the behavior, Subjective Norms, and Perceived Behavioral Control.

Attitude toward the behavior refers to the degree to which an individual evaluates the behavior positively or negatively. In the case of street food, attitudes are reflected in whether consumers perceive it as "tasty, convenient, worth trying" or "unsanitary, not advisable to consume often."

Subjective Norms refer to the social pressure or influence from family, friends, and the community on consumption behavior. In Hanoi, activities such as late-night dining with friends or colleagues, or young people "checking in" at food streets, reinforce positive subjective norms and encourage spending on street food.

Perceived Behavioral Control refers to the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior. Since street food is usually inexpensive, readily available, and accessible, it enhances perceived behavioral control and increases the likelihood of spending.

Many studies have applied TPB to explain out-of-home eating behavior. Some findings show that a positive attitude toward the value and taste of street food, combined with peer support, enhances consumption intention (Tobias-Mamina & Maziriri, 2023). The study of Khanh & Huong (2024) adds situational factors (time pressure, promotions) as triggers that accelerate intention into impulsive buying behavior. Therefore, TPB helps explain why, in the context of Hanoi, the combination of positive attitudes (tasty, cheap), subjective norms (peer influence, group culture), and accessibility (perceived control) leads to higher spending on street food.

Perceived Value Theory

The Perceived Value Theory (Zeithaml, 1988) suggests that consumer spending depends on the comparison between perceived benefits and costs. Perceived value is formed through four main dimensions:

- **Functional benefits:** taste, freshness, satiety, nutrition
- **Emotional/social benefits:** food experiences, cultural bonding, sharing with friends
- **Monetary costs:** price, affordability relative to income
- **Non-monetary costs:** waiting time, food safety risks, inconveniences in the consumption environment

When perceived benefits outweigh costs, consumers are willing to spend more. In the fast-food sector, the balance between quality and price is crucial to sustain spending (Reshi et al., 2023). In Vietnam, Harris et al. (2020) and Nam et al. (2023) emphasize that food safety concerns represent psychological costs that can significantly reduce perceived value, thereby constraining street food spending. Conversely, when street food provides an "authentic, local" experience (Pill, 2011; Thuy, 2024), cultural–social value is enhanced, encouraging consumers to pay more.

Therefore, in this study, spending on street food in Hanoi will be analyzed based on the balance between benefits (taste, convenience, cultural identity) and costs (price, food safety risks). The Perceived Value Theory helps explain why, even in price-sensitive contexts, consumers may still spend more if they perceive superior value.

Hypothesis Development

Income is a fundamental factor determining purchasing power and food consumption levels. Vu (2020) found that in Vietnam, out-of-home food expenditure has a positive expenditure elasticity (2.1–2.4), meaning that as income increases, spending on eating out, including street food, rises faster than spending on essential foods. Harris and Popkin (2020) also affirm that rising urban income accompanies a nutritional transition, shifting expenditure from "eating to be full" to "eating for convenience and experience." According to TPB, higher income enhances perceived behavioral control, which in turn increases consumption intentions and behaviours (Ajzen, 1991). Based on these arguments, the author proposes the hypothesis:

H1: Consumer income has a positive effect on spending on street food.

Price is a key factor influencing consumers' perceived value. Ahmad Reshi et al. (2021) showed that in the street-food sector, reasonable price perception increases consumption decisions, especially for low-value products. Khanh and Huong (2024) also found that in Vietnam, low prices and promotions strongly drive impulsive buying, particularly for street food. However, as Zeithaml (1988) emphasized, perceived value depends not only on absolute price but also on the balance between quality and cost. This means that when consumers feel it is "worth the money," they tend to increase street food spending. Thus, the hypothesis is:

H2: Price has a positive effect on spending on street food.

Food quality, including taste, freshness, and nutritional value, is an important factor shaping consumers' positive attitudes. Ali and Abideen (2021) confirmed that in the street-food sector, product quality strongly predicts spending intention and repeat purchase behavior. In Vietnam, Khanh and Huong (2024) also reported that product attractiveness significantly influences impulsive consumption. Furthermore, Pill (2011) showed that Hanoi's street food is closely tied to local culinary identity; when quality is consistently maintained, it reinforces trust and encourages repeat spending. Therefore, the hypothesis is:

H3: Food quality has a positive effect on spending on street food.

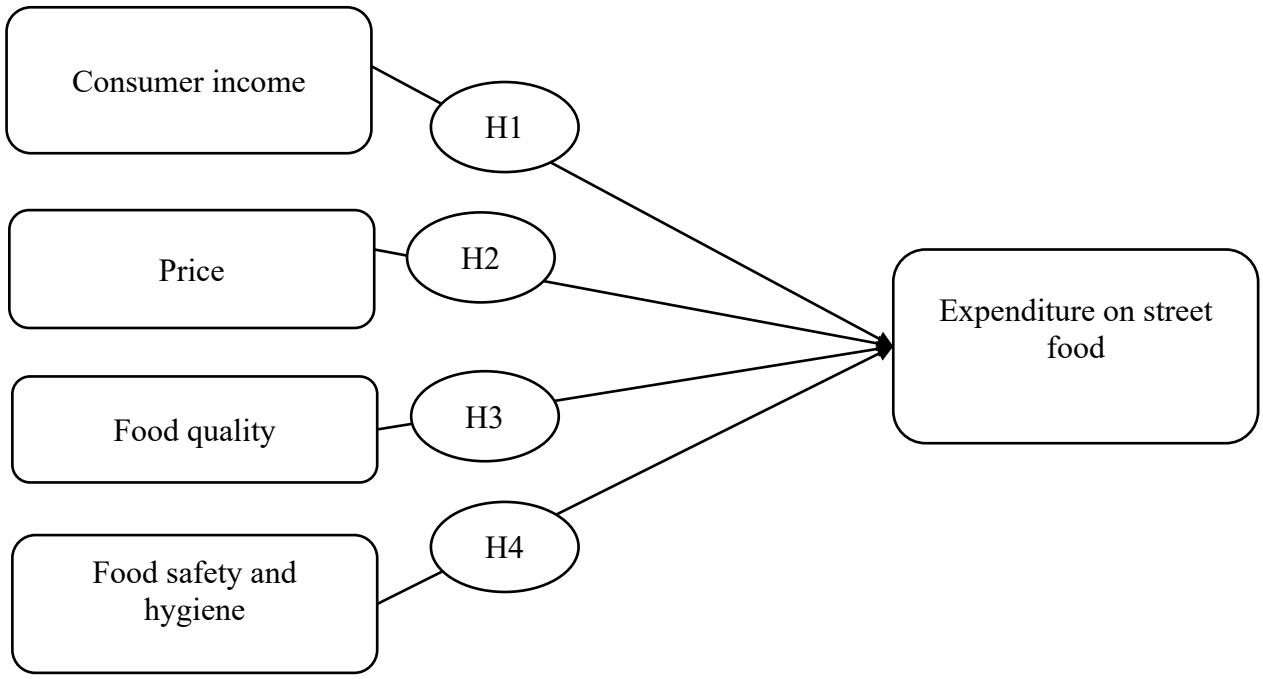
Convenience is considered a competitive advantage of street food compared to other types of dining. Khanh and Huong (2024) highlighted that accessible, low-value, ready-to-eat products often trigger quick purchases, increasing average spending. Similarly, Harris and Popkin (2020) observed that demand for convenient eating rises with urbanization and nutritional transition in Vietnam. In addition, Pill (2011) noted that in Hanoi, street food serves as a "convenient daily meal solution" due to its dense distribution and fast service. Therefore, convenience is expected to positively affect street food spending. Thus, the hypothesis is:

H4: Convenience has a positive effect on spending on street food.

Food safety concerns are a major barrier to street food consumption. Harris and Popkin (2020) emphasized that while street food is attractive for its convenience and local flavor, hygiene concerns reduce demand. Nam et al. (2023), in a study in Hanoi, also found that inconsistent food safety knowledge and practices among vendors erode consumer trust, especially among households with children and the elderly. Conversely, Pham Thi Thu Thuy (2024) demonstrated that in Da Nang's tourism context, when hygiene is assured, customers tend to increase their average spending. Therefore, food safety is expected to have a positive effect on street food spending. Thus, the hypothesis is:

H5: Food safety has a positive effect on spending on street food.

The research model is presented below:



(Nguồn: Tác giả đề xuất)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative survey method using a structured questionnaire to collect data from consumers who have consumed and spent on street food in Hanoi. A random sampling technique was applied to ensure objectivity and high representativeness of the research sample.

The survey respondents were selected from various locations, including Hanoi's Old Quarter, night markets, street food areas near universities, office buildings, shopping centers, and densely populated residential areas. The questionnaire was administered in two formats: online via Google Forms and direct surveys at street vendors, sidewalk eateries, and food streets. A total of 350 questionnaires were distributed, of which 306 valid responses were retained after data screening and analyzed using SPSS 20.

According to the recommendation of Hair et al. (2006), the minimum sample size for data analysis is 200 observations, based on the formula $i \times 5$ (where i is the number of observed variables). With 306 valid responses, this study meets the requirement, ensuring reliability for statistical analyses such as Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Cronbach's Alpha reliability test, and multiple linear regression.

The observed variables in the questionnaire were measured using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "1 = Strongly Disagree" to "5 = Strongly Agree." The questionnaire items were developed based on previous studies

and theoretical foundations, covering factors such as income, price, food quality, convenience, and food safety and hygiene.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Reliability Test – Cronbach's Alpha

The results of the reliability test show that all Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of the observed variable groups are greater than 0.7. All item–total correlations are above 0.3, and removing any variable would reduce the overall reliability of the scale. Overall, the observed variables demonstrate sufficient reliability for conducting further analyses. Therefore, all observed variables will be retained for Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA).

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

The results of EFA for the independent variables are presented in the table below:

Table 1. Results of EFA for Independent Variables

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.886
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3404.967
	df	153
	Sig.	.000

The results of the EFA indicate that the KMO index = 0.886 > 0.5, which falls within the acceptable range of 0.5 to 1, confirming the suitability of the data for factor analysis. In addition, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity shows a significance value of 0.000 < 0.05, further validating the appropriateness of conducting EFA on the independent variables.

Four factors were extracted based on the criterion of eigenvalues greater than 1, with the total variance explained reaching 73.232% > 50%. This means that the four extracted factors account for 73.232% of the variance in the observed variables included in the analysis.

The rotated component matrix shows that the observed variables are clearly loaded onto four distinct factors, which correspond to the four independent variable hypotheses proposed at the outset.

Table 2. Results of Factor Rotation for Independent Variables

Variable	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**
INC4	.863			
INC3	.860			
INC5	.853			
INC2	.823			
INC1	.774			
FSA1		.844		
FSA5		.838		
FSA4		.828		
FSA2		.825		

FSA3		.696		
PR4			.891	
PR3			.875	
PR2			.870	
PR1			.854	
QUA1				.830
QUA4				.813
QUA3				.813
QUA2				.806

The results of the EFA show that the KMO coefficient = 0.725 > 0.5 and Sig. = 0.000 < 5%, both of which meet the required conditions. This indicates that factor analysis is suitable for the data and that the variables are correlated with one another. Based on the criterion of Eigenvalue > 1, one factor was extracted, effectively summarizing the information from three observed variables. The total variance explained by this factor is 75.834% > 50%, and all factor loadings of the observed variables are greater than 0.5. Therefore, the results of the factor analysis are considered highly reliable.

Pearson Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis results show that the independent variables are statistically significantly correlated with the dependent variable, as all Sig. values are less than 5%. All independent variables have a positive correlation with the dependent variable, with Pearson correlation coefficients greater than 0. Thus, it can be concluded that the independent variables are able to explain the dependent variable.

OLS Regression Analysis

The ANOVA table shows that the significance value of the F-test is 0.000 < 0.05, indicating that the regression model is appropriate.

According to the regression results presented in Table 3, the R^2 value = 0.551, indicating a relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The adjusted R^2 = 0.545, which means the independent variables explain 54.5% of the variation in the dependent variable, while the remaining variation is explained by factors outside the model and random error. The Durbin–Watson value = 1.693, which falls within the acceptable range of 1.5 to 2.5, confirming that the collected data is reliable and that there is no autocorrelation problem among the variables in the model.

Table 3. Model Summary b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Errir of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.742[a]	.551	.545	.63060	1.693
a. Predictors: (Constant), FSA, INC, QUA, PR					
b. Dependent Variable: EXP					

Based on the results in Table 4 below, the VIF coefficients of the independent variables are all less than 2, indicating that the data does not violate the multicollinearity assumption. All variables in the model have significance values less than 0.05; therefore, they are statistically significant and exert an effect on the dependent variable (EXP). The regression coefficients of these independent variables are all positive, suggesting that the four independent variables have a positive impact on the dependent variable.

Table 4. Coefficients a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
		B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**			**VIF**
1	Constant	-.948	.256		-3.711	.000	
	INC	.214	.040	.219	5.301	.000	1.147
	PR	.416	.056	.325	7.493	.000	1.262
	QUA	.385	.046	.343	8.386	.000	1.127
	FSA	.203	.042	.208	4.791	.000	1.265

Nguồn: Tác giả

Hypothesis Testing Results:

- **H1**: Consumer income has a positive impact on expenditure on street food. (**Accepted**)
- **H2**: Price has a positive impact on expenditure on street food. (**Accepted**)
- **H3**: Food quality has a positive impact on expenditure on street food. (**Accepted**)
- **H4**: Food safety and hygiene have a positive impact on expenditure on street food. (**Accepted**)

Based on the regression coefficients, the author develops the following standardized regression equation:

$$Y = QUA*0.343 + PR*0.325 + INC*0.219 + FSA*0.208 + e$$

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The regression results indicate that all four factors—income, price, food quality, and food safety—positively influence consumer spending on street food in Hanoi. Among these, **food quality (β = 0.343)** has the strongest effect, consistent with Pham Thi Thu Thuy (2024), who emphasized that taste and quality are key elements driving consumers beyond "just trying" to increased spending. This aligns with Yen and Giang (2021), who found product quality to be one of the most critical determinants in food consumption decisions.

Price (β = 0.325) also plays a significant role, suggesting that consumers value the affordability and income-appropriateness of street food. This finding is consistent with Vu (2020), who highlighted the high price sensitivity in Vietnam's food consumption model, particularly among lower-income groups. Thus, while street food is tied to convenience and cultural identity, pricing remains a direct driver of consumer spending decisions.

Income (β = 0.219) exerts a positive effect as well, reinforcing the notion that rising disposable income leads to greater demand for dining out (Harris et al., 2020; Vu, 2020). However, its coefficient is weaker than those of quality and price, indicating that even with higher income, consumers prioritize perceived quality and value when choosing street food.

Finally, **food safety (β = 0.208)**, although the weakest predictor, serves as a fundamental prerequisite. This finding is consistent with Nam et al. (2023), who argued that perceived food safety risks act as barriers to spending, especially among households with children and elderly members. Similarly, Harris et al. (2020) noted that food safety concerns can restrict the growth of street food expenditure. Thus, while hygiene does not directly drive spending as strongly as quality or price, it provides the necessary foundation for consumers to feel secure in increasing their expenditure.

Overall, the findings suggest that street food consumption in Hanoi is not only shaped by socio-economic factors but also closely tied to perceived value (Zeithaml, 1988) and planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991).

CONCLUSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

This study identifies four factors positively influencing consumer spending on street food in Hanoi: food quality, price, income, and food safety. Among these, quality and price exert the strongest effects, reflecting consumers' prioritization of direct benefits from the product. Income plays a supportive role, while food safety functions as a necessary condition. These results enrich empirical evidence on street food consumption behavior in Vietnam's urban context, highlighting the distinct consumer profile in Hanoi—balancing value perception with safety concerns.

Based on these findings, several managerial implications are proposed to enhance consumer-perceived value, improve the image of street food, and foster its sustainable development in Hanoi:

The results of this study provide important managerial and policy implications for the sustainable development of the street food sector in Hanoi. Among the four factors identified, food quality emerges as the most influential determinant of consumer spending. This indicates that vendors must give priority to the use of fresh ingredients, careful food preparation, and consistency in taste. Maintaining high quality not only enhances immediate spending but also builds long-term consumer trust, loyalty, and repeat purchases. For Hanoi, where street food has become an emblem of local culinary culture, consistent quality can contribute to the development of a recognizable "Hanoi street food brand," which would reinforce both economic and cultural value.

Price is the second strongest factor influencing spending, highlighting the importance of affordability and perceived value. Vendors are advised to adopt flexible pricing strategies that accommodate different income groups, such as offering small promotions, combo meals, or time-based discounts. These tactics increase the perceived value of consumption and stimulate impulse purchases. At the policy level, local authorities could consider issuing reference price guidelines for popular food streets or tourist-oriented areas. Such measures would help prevent overpricing, protect consumer confidence, and ensure that the economic benefits of street food are distributed more fairly among both vendors and consumers.

Food safety, while exerting a relatively weaker direct effect compared to quality and price, plays a fundamental enabling role. Without adequate hygiene and safety practices, consumers are reluctant to increase their spending, particularly families with children or elderly members. Therefore, municipal authorities should design short training programs for street vendors, focusing on basic but critical practices such as separating raw and cooked food, ensuring proper storage, and maintaining personal hygiene. Introducing simple certification systems, such as visible stickers or boards indicating compliance with safety standards, could provide an accessible and transparent signal of trustworthiness. When food safety risks are minimized, the consumer base for street food will expand, and overall spending will grow.

In addition to these micro-level measures, there are broader policy implications. Street food should be recognized not only as a consumption outlet but also as an important cultural and tourism asset for Hanoi. With appropriate support, street food can contribute to the city's identity as a gastronomic capital while also functioning as a social safety net for low-income groups who depend on vending for their livelihood. Policymakers should therefore balance regulation with promotion, ensuring urban order and public health without stifling the vibrancy and diversity of the street food sector. At the same time, cultural promotion campaigns can highlight street food as part of Hanoi's intangible cultural heritage, thereby attracting tourists and strengthening local pride.

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