

# Level of Adaptability of Street Food Vendors to Challenges and Perceived Level of Effectiveness of Coping Mechanisms: A Basis for Government Policy Recommendations

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## ABSTRACT

Businesses play an important role in the growth of communities and the economy, with large and formal enterprises often receiving the most recognition. However, small-scale and informal businesses, particularly street food vending, play an equally vital role by providing accessible livelihood opportunities for individuals with limited access to formal employment. Despite this importance, street food vendors face persistent challenges such as financial vulnerability, operational difficulties, restrictive regulation, and their contributions often remain unrecognized, leaving them vulnerable to exclusion and neglect. Therefore, this study seeks to assess the level of adaptability of street food vendors to challenges and their perceived level of effectiveness of coping mechanisms that will provide insights to guide government interventions towards protecting their livelihood and promoting inclusive urban development. A descriptive design was employed, using data collected from 40 street food vendors in Bayombong and Solano, Nueva Vizcaya. Surveys were administered through a structured questionnaire using a 4-point Likert scale and an open ended question, with data analyzed through mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage, while qualitative responses were reviewed thematically to support numerical findings. Findings reveal that street food vendors demonstrate a high level of adaptability, particularly in managing financial strain, addressing operational issues, complying with regulations, and balancing family or interpersonal responsibilities. Their coping strategies such as emotional resilience, adaptation to regulation, and operational adaptation were generally perceived as highly effective. However, despite their resourcefulness and adaptability, many of these mechanisms tend to be short-term and insufficient for ensuring long-term stability. This underscores the need for structural and systemic government support, including the establishment of designated vending areas, provision of financial assistance, skills development programs, and the implementation of fair and inclusive regulatory policies. Strengthening these support mechanisms will enhance the resilience, sustainability, and overall welfare of street food vendors while contributing to inclusive urban development.

**Keywords:** Adaptability, coping mechanisms, government intervention, street food vendors

## INTRODUCTION

Street food vending, as a prominent and integral aspect of urban life in many developing countries, serves as a vital socio-economic activity that significantly contributes to community development. It generates livelihood opportunities for individuals with limited access to formal employment, enabling them to support their families through small-scale entrepreneurship, as many are pushed into vending due to unemployment, underemployment, and lack of better job alternatives (Engadin et al., 2024). At the same time, it ensures affordable and accessible meals for low-income families, thereby contributing to food security, which is particularly evident in Manila, Philippines where many urban households struggle to afford healthy diets and rely on informal food vending for daily sustenance (Mwambi et al., 2023). By fulfilling both economic and

nutritional needs, street food vending plays a vital socio-economic role in community development and inclusive urban growth, making it an important focus for government policies and future research.

Despite their recognized socio-economic importance, street food vendors in the Philippines face persistent challenges that threaten the long-term sustainability of their livelihoods. Vendors often deal with unstable income and lack of legal recognition, which expose them to harassment and limit access to social services, as observed among street food vendors in Manila (Romero et al., 2024a). They are also exposed to social and environmental risks, while many are excluded from urban planning and institutional support (Carel et al., 2024). Urban expansion and commercialization frequently displace vendors from public spaces, and policies tend to prioritize formal businesses, forcing informal vendors into insecure and marginal operating environments. These conditions necessitate street food vendors to consistently develop adaptive strategies and implement various coping mechanisms to sustain their businesses and maintain competitiveness.

Understanding how they respond to such challenges underscores their resilience and its critical contribution to the informal economy. Gonzales and Pabilando (2023b) found that in Biliran Province, the effectiveness of vendors' coping mechanisms depends not only on their individual initiative but also on supportive policies, legal protection, and access to training, particularly in food safety and public health, where gaps between knowledge and practice can put consumers at risk. Similarly, a study in Ifugao found that vendors were aware of food safety standards but struggled to implement them effectively, emphasizing the need for systematic training and regulatory oversight (Capiro et al., 2025). These findings highlight both the strengths and vulnerabilities of the sector, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions and policy support.

Street food vending plays a crucial role in achieving multiple United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by linking livelihoods to broader social and economic development. Economically, it provides income to families with limited job opportunities, supporting SDG 1 No Poverty (Beckford et al., 2024). It also encourages small-scale entrepreneurship, contributing to SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth (Carel et al., 2024), and offers income opportunities to marginalized groups, helping to achieve SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities (Romero et al., 2024a). In terms of health, the sector promotes safe food practices, supporting SDG 3 Good Health and Well-Being (Capiro et al., 2025). Across local communities, street vending also improves access to goods and services, strengthens local resilience, and fosters vibrant urban areas, aligning with SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities (Gonzales & Pabilando, 2023b). Together, these contributions show how street vending not only supports individual livelihoods but also promotes sustainable development across economic, social, and urban dimensions.

### **Adaptability to Challenges**

Street food vendors often encounter numerous challenges that threaten the sustainability of their livelihoods, including unstable income, lack of legal recognition, and persistent regulatory and operational pressures. These conditions drive them to continuously adapt in order to remain competitive in urban markets (Romero et al., 2024a). Adaptability in this context refers to the ability of vendors to adjust their practices, behaviors, and strategies in response to social, economic, operational, and regulatory challenges. Such adjustments may include mobility, pricing strategies, and product diversification, which are essential for sustaining their enterprises (Solidum, 2023). Adaptability also contributes to maintaining consumer trust and ensuring business continuity. This study draws on the framework of Romero et al. (2024a), which provides a structured lens for assessing how vendors cope with challenges and highlights areas where government support and policy interventions are most needed. The level of adaptability among street food vendors can be examined across eight key domains, including interpersonal and family dynamics, where vendors balance business responsibilities with household obligations, educational aspirations and awareness, which shape their ability to manage and grow their enterprises, financial vulnerability, requiring strategies to cope with irregular income and limited access to formal credit, market competition, which drives innovation and customer retention, operational challenges, such as poor infrastructure and harsh working conditions, supply chain dependency, necessitating flexibility in sourcing and menu adjustments, health and labor conditions, compelling vendors to manage physical demands and hygiene risks, and regulation and enforcement, which demand strategic negotiation and compliance in an often unpredictable legal environment. The following sections explore specific domains of adaptability,

highlighting how vendors respond to these challenges and the strategies they employ to overcome obstacles in the informal urban food sector.

### **Interpersonal and Family Dynamics**

One of the major challenges faced by street food vendors is balancing business responsibilities with family obligations. Vendors often work long and irregular hours, starting early in the morning and ending late at night, which leaves limited time for household duties. This imbalance creates stress as they strive to generate income while also fulfilling caregiving roles. In Tacloban City, many vendors shared that conflicts frequently occur when family responsibilities interfere with business demands (Carel et al., 2024). To address this, vendors frequently involve family members in vending activities such as cooking, serving, and managing stalls, enabling them to sustain both livelihood and household responsibilities (Romero et al., 2024a). In the Filipino context, these vendors often get strength from their families, but they also face pressure to meet household needs, such as food, education, and health care. While this shared effort helps reduce individual strain and ensures business continuity, it also exposes the entire family to the same risks, making them collectively vulnerable during economic downturns (Sabusap, 2025). The adaptability of vendors can be seen in their ability to balance income with family needs, efficiently share or borrow resources, and maintain both livelihood and household obligations despite daily challenges (Damanik, 2022).

### **Educational Aspirations and Awareness**

Education plays a crucial role in shaping street food vendors' ability to manage their businesses effectively. However, many vendors have limited formal schooling, which restricts their financial literacy, business management skills, and understanding of food safety standards. A study in Ifugao found that vendors often relied on personal experience rather than formal training to guide their food handling practices, increasing the risk of non-compliance with health regulations (Capio et al., 2025). Despite these limitations, vendors' desire for better opportunities motivates them to adapt and learn through informal means, demonstrating resilience and a capacity to overcome obstacles even without formal education. They acquire knowledge by observing peers, responding to customer feedback, and occasionally attending community workshops. While these strategies enhance adaptability, the lack of structured, vendor-focused education programs leads to fragmented knowledge and inconsistent application of standards, limiting both business growth and public health protection. By enhancing education, vendors can strengthen their decision-making, problem-solving, and ability to develop innovative practices, to support effective and consistent vending operations. Measuring their adaptability in this context involves street food vendors' awareness of safety standards, their willingness to participate in workshop programs, and their ability to use educational resources to improve street vending practices. Verma et al. (2022) highlight the role of socioeconomic and educational factors in influencing vendors' food safety behaviors, while Elshoryi et al. (2024) emphasize the importance of knowledge and attitudes toward food safety in shaping vendors' practices.

### **Financial Vulnerability**

Financial vulnerability is a defining feature of street food vending, as vendors often rely on irregular daily earnings that can be easily disrupted by bad weather, market fluctuations, or emergencies (Magidi, 2021). In Nueva Ecija, many mobile food vendors reported incomes below the minimum wage and limited access to formal credit or financial reserves (Armas et al., 2024a). Vendors employ various adaptive strategies, such as diversifying their menus, shifting selling locations to reach different customer bases, participating in informal credit systems like high-interest "5-6" loans, or lowering prices to remain competitive despite shrinking profit margins (Salamandane et al., 2023). While these strategies help vendors to stay afloat, they are largely short-term and reactive, leaving many trapped in cycles of debt and financial instability, especially without access to affordable formal credit or government-supported financial inclusion programs. These financial challenges highlight the importance of adaptability, requiring vendors to exercise skills in budgeting, decision-making, and problem-solving. Assessing adaptability in this context involves examining vendors' responses to income fluctuations and their ability to manage finances during emergencies, enabling them to launch new products or services and sustain their business despite economic strains (Adami et al., 2024).

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## Market Competition

Street food vending operates in a highly competitive environment, both within the informal sector and against formal food establishments, where customers are extremely price-sensitive. In Legazpi City, this often results in price undercutting, which reduces profit margins and leaves vendors financially vulnerable. To sustain their livelihoods, vendors adapt by adjusting prices strategically, modifying product offerings, and improving service quality to attract and retain customers (Cepeda et al., 2021). They also employ differentiation strategies, such as offering unique or specialized food items, enhancing customer service, and selecting busy locations near schools or offices. Despite these efforts, limited access to modern marketing tools and digital platforms restricts their ability to compete effectively in an evolving urban market. Nevertheless, the competitive pressures encourage vendors to innovate in pricing, menu variety, and service delivery, enhancing their resilience and adaptability (Dano et al., 2025). For street food vendors, competition represents both a challenge and an opportunity, as it creates stress but also drives them to refine their methods, build customer loyalty, and distinguish their business from others. Their adaptability can be seen in their ability to maintain loyal customers and change products based on customer preferences (Belitski et al., 2021), which allows them to survive and grow in a competitive environment.

## Operational Challenges

Street vending is often challenged by poor infrastructure, limited access to clean water and electricity, and exposure to harsh weather conditions, which increase food spoilage, raise health risks, and make vendors' work physically exhausting (Nkosi et al., 2021). In Maseru, Lesotho, vendors reported heavy physical demands due to the absence of proper stalls, storage, and equipment, forcing them to rely on makeshift arrangements (Letuka et al., 2021). To cope with these challenges, vendors adapt by using mobile carts, constructing temporary stalls, adjusting working hours, relocating their business, or paying for permits. These strategies demonstrate their adaptability in responding to space restrictions and daily disruptions. However, such improvisations cannot fully replace formal infrastructure, and without government support for safe vending zones and access to basic utilities, operational challenges continue to compromise vendors' efficiency, health, and overall business sustainability.

## Supply Chain Dependency

Street food vendors face major challenges due to unstable supply chains, as fluctuations in ingredient availability and cost directly affect their operations. During the phase of pandemic recovery, inconsistent supplies and market-driven price increases were found to limit vendors' ability to meet consumer demand, as disruptions in sourcing ingredients affected their daily operations (Curran et al., 2024). To adapt, vendors employ multiple strategies, such as diversifying their suppliers, purchasing in bulk when prices are favorable, adjusting menus according to ingredient availability, and strengthening relationships with farmers or wholesalers. While these practices enhance short-term resilience, the absence of formal and reliable supply networks leaves vendors vulnerable to sudden shocks, which can compromise both food quality and affordability. In this context, adaptability can be assessed by how quickly vendors respond to supply disruptions, the effectiveness of their communication with suppliers, and the creativity they employ to maintain product quality under constraints, reflecting their ability to manage resources and overcome external challenges.

## Health and Labor Conditions

Street vending involves long hours of standing, repetitive physical labor, and exposure to pollution and extreme weather, all of which negatively affect vendors' health. The COVID-19 pandemic intensified these risks, requiring vendors to adopt stricter hygiene practices while facing reduced customer demand. A study in Thailand found that vendors adapted by wearing masks, sanitizing utensils, and reducing working hours, but these measures often added financial strain to already limited incomes (Suvittawat, 2023). Many vendors continue working despite illness, as more hours directly translate to more income, highlighting the tension between health and livelihood. Adaptability in this context include maintaining work routines despite illness, implementing strategies to reduce health risks, and accessing informal health support systems. Nevertheless, limited access to

health insurance and formal occupational safety programs constrains the effectiveness of these adaptive strategies, leaving vendors highly vulnerable to health risks.

### **Regulation and Enforcement**

Regulation and enforcement are essential government functions that protects the lawful grounds of the community, businesses, individuals, and the economy (Sibley et al., 2024). However, unclear regulations and inconsistent enforcement create an environment of insecurity where street food vendors operate. Licensing requirements for street food vendors in the Philippines are often costly and administratively complex, while enforcement can be punitive, including harassment or eviction (Peimani & Kamalipour, 2022). The informal status and lack of legal recognition of many vendors further expose them to such repressive measures, highlighting how strict licensing and enforcement practices contribute to the vulnerability of their working conditions. These vendors adapt by negotiating with the local authorities and relocating their business frequently, allowing them to maintain operations despite restrictive policies and uncertain enforcement (Ngoc Thao et al., 2025). While these strategies help vendors maintain their businesses, they may also perpetuate the informal and unstable nature of their work, reflecting the difficulties of dealing with strict rules and limited government support (Rahayu et al., 2025). Their adaptability reflects the necessity for flexibility and strategic decision-making in navigating unpredictable governance, including how they plan, negotiate with authorities, and sustain operations despite regulatory restrictions (Arif, 2023).

Together, these domains illustrate the multifaceted nature of adaptability among street food vendors, highlighting not only their resilience but also the strategic and innovative ways they navigate the complex challenges of informal urban entrepreneurship. Understanding these adaptive responses is essential for informing policy interventions and support programs aimed at improving the sustainability and security of street vending livelihoods.

### **Coping Mechanisms**

Street food vendors adapt to economic, operational, regulatory, and social challenges to sustain their livelihoods and remain competitive in urban markets. To sustain income and well-being, they rely on various coping mechanisms such as financial assistance, personal savings, and family support to adapt effectively to changing market conditions (Thanh & Duy, 2024b). These mechanisms include debt and financial management, which involves strategies such as informal lending, savings, and household budgeting to cope with income instability, operational adaptation, where vendors adjust their work practices, locations, and resource use to maintain service delivery despite environmental and infrastructural constraints, community assistance and support, which leverages family, peer, and local networks for labor, guidance, material aid, and emotional support, adaptation to regulation, encompassing strategies to navigate licensing requirements, inconsistent enforcement, and harassment, often through selective compliance, relocation, or collective representation, and emotional resilience, which enables vendors to endure stress, maintain optimism, and creatively solve problems under persistent economic and social pressures. These strategies provide internal and external resources that support motivation, stress management, and business continuity (Sarkar et al., 2025). While vendors perceive these mechanisms as effective when they help stabilize income and sustain operations, structural barriers including limited access to formal financial services, inadequate infrastructure, and inconsistent enforcement often constrain their success, underscoring the need for flexible policy adjustments and proactive government guidance (Du et al., 2024).

### **Debt and Financial Management**

Financial instability is a persistent challenge for street food vendors, driven by fluctuating customer demand, competition, and unexpected expenses. Many vendors often rely on debt and financial management strategies, including informal lending networks, microloans, or rotating savings groups, which help cover daily operating costs and recover from economic shocks (Lyngwa & Sahoo, 2022). These strategies also involve household and community measures, such as reprioritizing resources, reducing non-essential spending, and making collective financial decisions. In the Philippines, vendors often use the informal “5-6” lending system, where small loans

carry high interest and require daily repayment, helping manage short-term cash flow but often create a cycle of debt (Labitad, 2025). Such mechanisms provide immediate relief and protect households against economic shocks. While reliance on high-interest loans can increase financial vulnerability, these strategies support financial resilience and are essential for sustaining livelihoods and managing uncertainty in competitive urban markets.

### **Operational Adaptation**

Street food vendors face daily operational challenges such as limited infrastructure, lack of storage, and exposure to extreme weather, all of which undermine service delivery and product quality. Studies show that without cold storage and proper facilities, and with frequent problems like floods, heat, and heavy rain, vendors often lose income and see their products spoil (Mkhize & Cele, 2025). In Pagadian City, mobile vendors adjust locations, build ties with authorities, and use flexible operations to sustain their livelihood despite regulatory, environmental, and logistical challenges (Abulencia et al., 2025). These practices illustrate operational adaptation, a coping mechanism in which organizations or institutions adjust their operations to survive and thrive under constraints. Effective operational adaptation involves innovation, flexibility, responsiveness, resourcefulness, and clear communication, enabling businesses to sustain services, minimize losses, and meet stakeholder needs. Unlike individual financial strategies, it works at a systemic level, enhancing both short-term survival and long-term resilience. Saemaldaher and Emeagwali (2025) support this by showing that adaptability, built through open innovation and collaboration, strengthens resilience and sustainability in changing environments.

### **Community Assistance and Support**

Vendors frequently rely on social networks, such as family, peers, and local associations, for labor, guidance, and material support. This cooperative approach alleviates workload pressures, provides access to shared knowledge, and strengthens emotional resilience. Zhong and Werner (2024) observed that wet market vendors in China draw on both strong ties with family, kin, and suppliers and weak ties with diverse customers to secure financial help, reliable supplies, and market opportunities, which enables them to manage risks and stay competitive despite structural pressures. This shows that community assistance and support form the backbone of street vending, serving as the foundation for economic stability, social resilience, and the continuity of livelihoods in vulnerable urban economies.

### **Adaptation to Regulation**

Street food vendors confront stringent licensing requirements, inconsistent enforcement, and harassment due to their informal status. During the COVID-19 lockdown in South Africa, traders struggled with burdensome permit processes, arbitrary policing, and confiscation of goods, which disrupted their livelihoods and weakened food security in poor communities (Rwafa-Ponela et al., 2022). Coping strategies include selective compliance, relocation to less-regulated areas, and forming or joining associations to collectively negotiate with local authorities. In the Philippines, Executive Order No. 452 (1997) secures registered vendors by requiring registration, assigning vending sites in consultation with vendors, protecting them from arbitrary eviction, and promoting vendor associations for collective representation. While these help vendors maintain operations, strict regulations can make their jobs unstable and insecure. In Tacloban City, vendors face legal and social challenges, including harassment, precarious working conditions, and lack of government recognition. This highlights the need for supportive policies to improve their working conditions, strengthen economic security, and build long-term resilience.

### **Emotional Resilience**

Street vendors constantly face the pressures of unstable income, social exclusion, and frequent exposure to health risks, all of which create heavy emotional and psychological burdens. The uncertainty of daily earnings, harassment or neglect from authorities, and vulnerability to illness amplify their stress and make survival a

persistent challenge. To cope, vendors draw on emotional resilience strategies such as maintaining optimism, nurturing perseverance, and relying on family, peers, and community networks for both emotional and material support. They also develop practical problem-solving skills to find creative ways to adapt their work practices, manage scarce resources, and overcome daily obstacles. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, vendors faced intensified health risks and economic instability, which demanded greater reliance on resilience and adaptive capacities (Romero-Michel et al., 2021). In such contexts, perseverance, optimism, and innovation often supported by family and community networks became critical for sustaining livelihoods under crisis conditions (Godjali & Supramaniam, 2024b). Emotional resilience strategies not only encourage motivation, but also strengthen perseverance and optimism, enabling vendors to continue operating even when material resources are limited. Unlike purely economic adjustments, emotional resilience provides the psychological foundation that helps vendors endure daily challenges, recover from setbacks, and sustain their livelihoods under persistent hardship.

Together, these coping mechanisms illustrate how street food vendors combine financial, operational, social, regulatory, and emotional strategies to navigate complex challenges, maintain business continuity, and sustain their livelihoods in dynamic urban environments. Understanding these mechanisms is essential for designing policies and programs that strengthen the resilience and well-being of vendors in informal economies.

### **Government Role**

Street food vending constitutes an important source of livelihood, particularly for marginalized groups in urban areas. Despite its contribution to local economies and food accessibility, the sector continues to encounter persistent challenges such as financial constraints, health and sanitation risks, and regulatory barriers (Romero et al., 2024a). To address these difficulties, vendors employ a variety of coping mechanisms, including operational adjustments, relocation of stalls, and reliance on community networks. While these strategies demonstrate resilience, they generally provide short-term relief and do not resolve the structural vulnerabilities inherent in informal work (Hidalgo et al., 2022b).

Government regulation plays a significant role in shaping the environment in which street vendors operate. National laws and local ordinances both restrict and enable vending practices. In the Philippines, the Local Government Code of 1991 (Republic Act No. 7160) grants local government units authority over the use of public spaces, while the National Building Code (Presidential Decree No. 1096) prohibits obstructions in sidewalks, pathways, and loading or unloading areas, in which street vendors operate. Conversely, Act No. 3021 provides a licensing framework for hawkers and peddlers, which demonstrates how local governments may legitimize vending through recognition, regulation, and relief measures. At the local level, barangay ordinances, city regulations, and issuances from agencies such as the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) further establish rules on permits, temporary stalls, and vending spaces, reflecting ongoing attempts to balance public order, health, and economic resilience.

Despite the presence of both coping strategies among vendors and regulatory frameworks from government, neither is sufficient to secure long-term stability in the sector. In Manila, Romero et al. (2024a) found that vendors constantly rely on informal loans, solidarity networks, and adaptive routines to survive, while local regulations often result in harassment, confiscation, and shifting enforcement that undermine security. Their study concludes that these survival strategies and existing ordinances may sustain day-to-day operations but do not translate into durable livelihoods, reinforcing that long-term stability requires inclusive policies and institutional support beyond coping and regulation.

Another major barrier is limited access to social protection. A large proportion of vendors remain unregistered, excluding them from social protection mechanisms such as health insurance and pension benefits. In New Delhi, less than one-third of women street vendors held vending certificates, reflecting a broader Global South pattern where informal workers lack legal recognition and access to relief measures (Khan, 2024). In the Philippines, the Universal Health Care (UHC) Act (Republic Act No. 11223), enacted in 2019 to ensure equitable access to

quality and affordable health services through automatic enrollment in the National Health Insurance Program, guarantees coverage for all 112.88 million Filipinos. However, only 91% were formally registered with the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) in 2024, leaving many informal workers effectively outside the system. This incomplete translation of policy commitments into actual registration leaves a significant number of vendors excluded from social protection.

Furthermore, weak enforcement of sanitation standards and the absence of adequate facilities limit the effectiveness of existing policies. Recent monitoring by the Department of Health's Regulation, Licensing, and Enforcement Division in Region II revealed that numerous health facilities still required technical assistance to meet minimum licensing requirements, reflecting uneven compliance and persistent gaps in infrastructure and resources despite regulatory frameworks (Telan, 2023). These shortcomings extend to the street vending sector, where inadequate sanitation facilities and irregular monitoring expose vendors and consumers alike to health risks, undermining both livelihoods and public safety.

While existing studies on street food vendors have largely examined either the challenges they face or the coping mechanisms they employ, there remains a limited research that investigates both the level of adaptability of vendors to challenges and the perceived level of effectiveness of their coping strategies, in providing concrete policy recommendations. This underscores the need for a comprehensive analysis that links the resilience of vendors with evidence-based government interventions to enhance long-term livelihood sustainability in the street vending sector.

Thus, the sustainability of street food vending as a livelihood relies on aligning vendor resilience with consistent state support. While vendors continue to innovate to adapt and laws exist to regulate, these efforts fall short when taken on their own. There is a need for coherent and inclusive policy framework that integrates vendor practices with reliable government measures. This necessitates the importance of formulating policy recommendations that move beyond fragmented responses and foster long-term sustainability.

This study, therefore, identifies the coping mechanisms employed by street food vendors to navigate economic, operational, and regulatory challenges, and assessed the effectiveness of their coping mechanisms, and examined the gaps between vendor practices and institutional support in promoting long-term sustainability. Based on these insights, it aimed to recommend policy interventions that align vendor resilience strategies with formal mechanisms to enhance economic security, health protection, and operational stability in the street vending sector.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

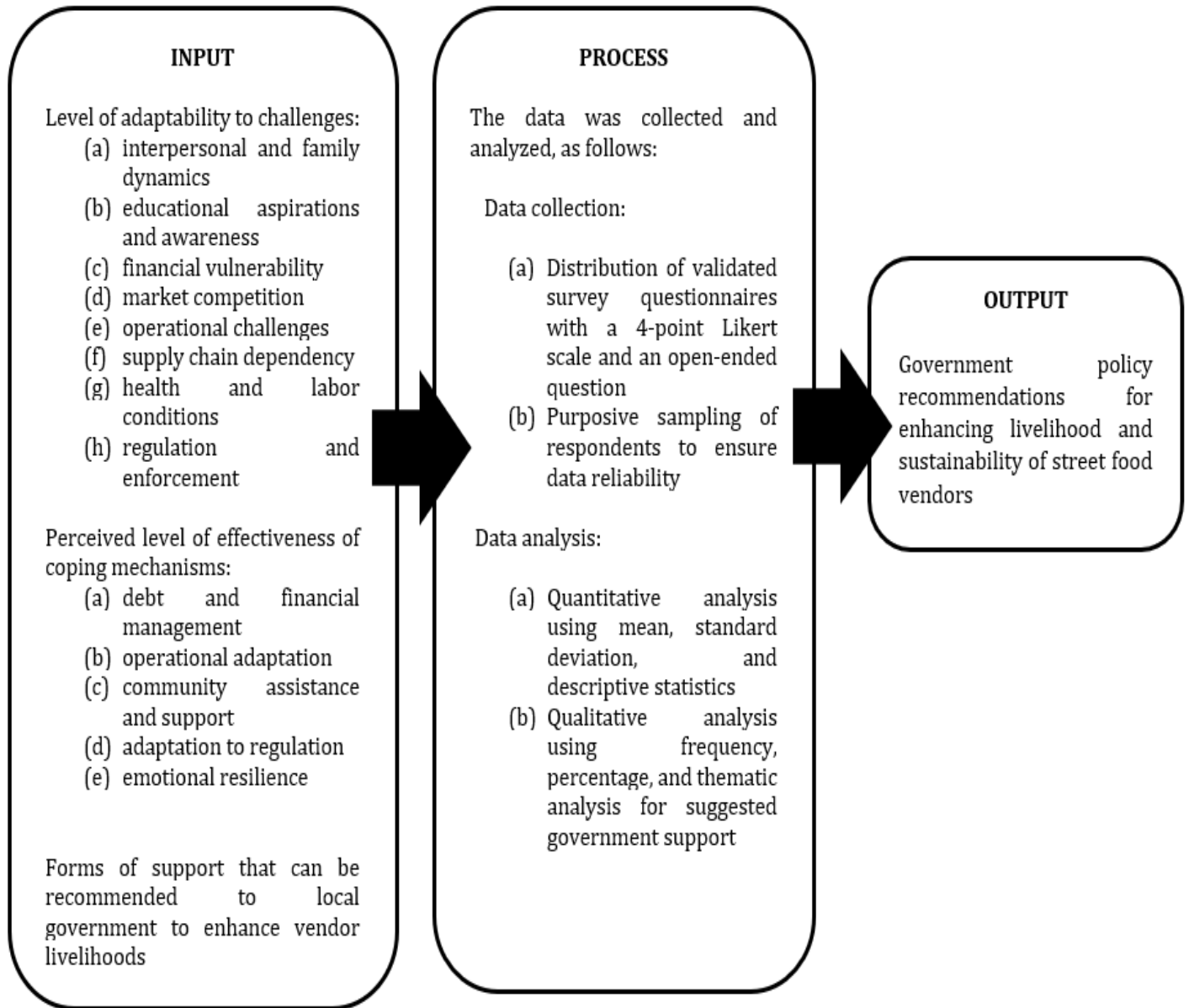
Street food vendors continue to face multiple challenges that affect their stability and survival in the informal economy. To survive, they adopt different coping mechanisms that help them adjust and remain in business. For this study, the conceptual framework is organized using the Input–Process–Output (IPO) model to assess the level of adaptability of street food vendors to challenges and the perceived level of effectiveness of their coping mechanisms as a basis for government policy recommendation.

In this IPO model, the input includes the challenges faced by vendors, the coping mechanisms they employ, and forms of support that can be recommended to the local government. The level of adaptability to challenges is measured across eight areas, as shown in the figure. The perceived level of effectiveness of coping mechanisms is also assessed in five areas, as shown accordingly. These inputs act as the independent variables of the study.

The process involves the systematic collection and analysis of data. Data were gathered using validated survey questionnaires with a 4-point Likert scale and an open-ended question, using purposive sampling technique to ensure reliable responses. Quantitative analysis, including mean, standard deviation, and descriptive statistics, was used to evaluate the level of adaptability and perceived level of effectiveness of coping mechanisms, while qualitative analysis, including frequency, percentage, and thematic analysis, examined suggested forms of government support.

Finally, the output consists of government policy recommendations aimed at enhancing the sustainability of street food vending. This serve as the dependent variable of the study and provides practical guidance for policymakers seeking to strengthen the livelihoods of street food vendors.

**Figure 1 Research Paradigm**



**Statement of the Problem**

This study aimed to assess the level of adaptability of street food vendors to challenges in the street vending industry and the perceived level of effectiveness of the coping mechanisms they employ, to provide a basis for government policy recommendations. Specifically, it is sought to answer the following questions:

What is the level of adaptability of street food vendors to challenges in terms of:

- (a) Interpersonal and family dynamics
- (b) Educational aspirations and awareness
- (c) Financial vulnerability
- (d) Market competition

- (e) Operational challenges
- (f) Supply chain dependency
- (g) Health and labor conditions
- (h) Regulation and enforcement

What is the perceived level of effectiveness on the coping mechanisms adopted by street food vendors in managing the challenges of the street vending industry in terms of:

- (a) Debt and financial management
- (b) Operational adaptation
- (c) Community assistance and support
- (d) Adaptation to regulation
- (e) Emotional resilience

What forms of support can be recommended to the local government to enhance the livelihood and sustainability of street food vendors?

## **METHODOLOGY**

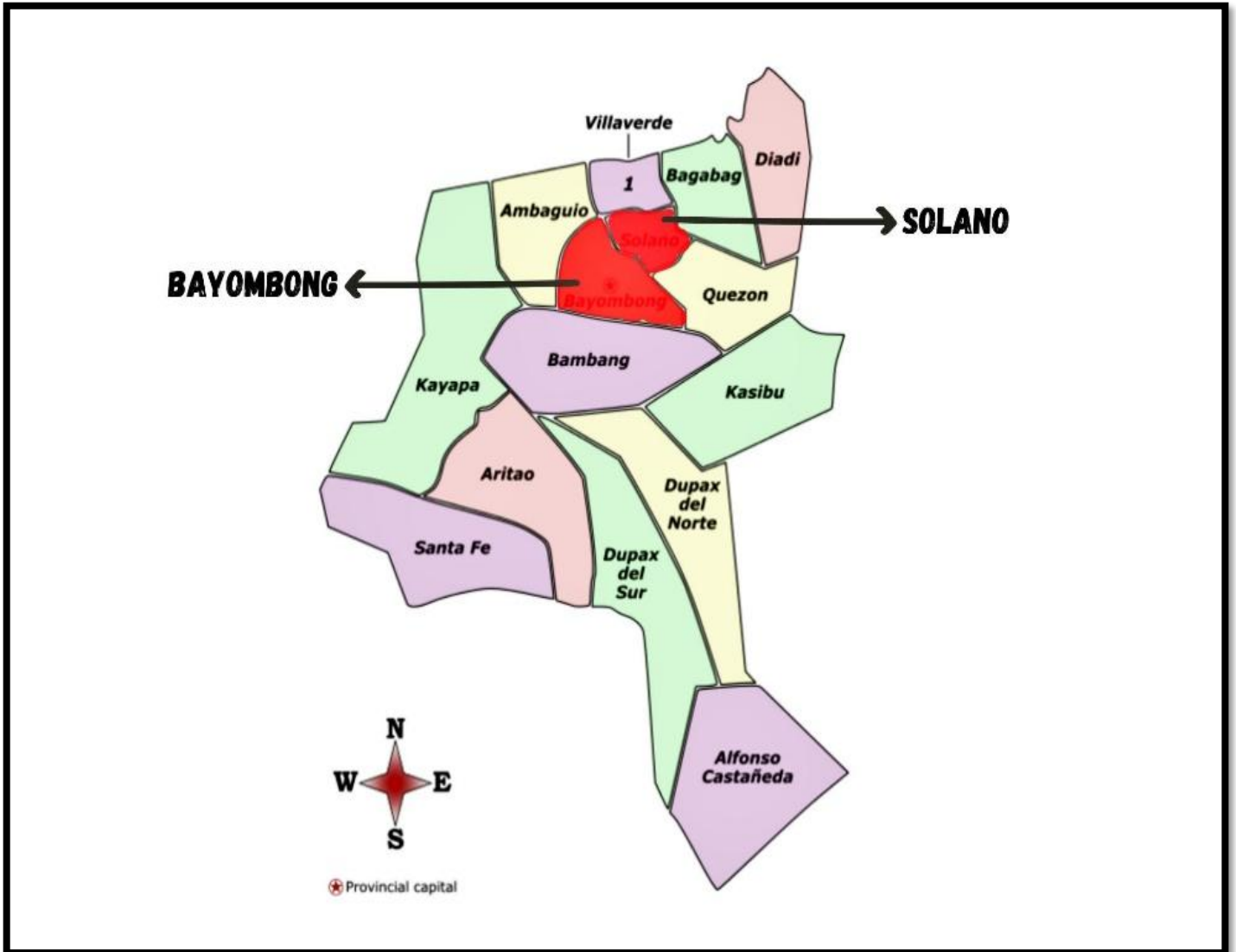
### **Research Design**

This study employed a descriptive research design to assess the level of adaptability of street food vendors to challenges and their perceived level of effectiveness of coping mechanisms as a basis for government policy recommendations. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected to present a comprehensive understanding of the vendors' situations. A structured questionnaire using a 4-point Likert scale was utilized to measure the level of adaptability of vendors and the perceived level of effectiveness of their coping strategies. The quantitative data were analyzed using statistical tools, including mean and standard deviation, to identify patterns and variations in responses. Additionally, an open-ended question was included to capture qualitative insights, allowing respondents to share their personal experiences and perspectives. These qualitative responses were analyzed using frequency and percentage to identify common themes that complemented the quantitative findings. Through this descriptive approach, the study offered a detailed and factual understanding of the current conditions of street food vendors, serving as a foundation for policy formulation aimed at enhancing their resilience and long-term sustainability.

### **Research Locale**

This study was conducted in Nueva Vizcaya, specifically in the municipalities of Bayombong and Solano. Street vendors are highly mobile and often operate in crowded public spaces such as markets, sidewalks, and bus stations to reach a wide range of customers, strategically occupying available "in-between" spaces to adapt to spatial constraints and maximize pedestrian access (Thin et al., 2025). Since Bayombong and Solano are among the most populated municipalities in Nueva Vizcaya, they were selected as the study sites. According to the Philippine Statistics Authority (2024), Bayombong has the highest population in the province with 72,890 residents, while Solano follows closely with 62,269 residents. The high population density in these municipalities creates significant business opportunities for street vendors, making these areas ideal for studying the operations, challenges, and coping mechanisms of street food vendors.

**Figure 2 Map of Bayombong and Solano, Nueva Vizcaya**



### Research Participants

The participants of this study consisted of 40 street food vendors who actively operate in high-traffic public spaces such as markets, parks, and busy streets. These vendors skillfully prepare and sell a wide variety of popular street foods including barbecues, fish balls, and other local favorites, with some vendors specializing in particular products based on customer demand and personal expertise. Participants were selected through purposive sampling technique to ensure that they possessed the essential characteristics of street food vendors, including selling food daily or occasionally on streets or public areas, using movable carts rather than permanent stalls, and residing in the municipalities of Solano and Bayombong in Nueva Vizcaya. The sample included vendors of varying ages, genders, years of experience, and location, which allowed the researchers to capture a broad range of perspectives and practices within the street food vending industry. A sample size of 40 was chosen to provide sufficient data for a reliable and detailed analysis of vendors' challenges and coping mechanisms, while remaining manageable within the constraints of time and resources. This careful selection ensured that the data collected would accurately reflect the diverse experiences and realities of street food vendors in the local context. While purposive sampling helped the researchers select participants who were most relevant to the study, it limits the broader applicability of the findings, as the results may not represent all street food vendors in other areas or settings. Additionally, the small sample size of 40 participants may limit the range of perspectives gathered. Thus, the findings should be understood as representing only the selected group rather than the entire population of street food vendors. Despite these limitations, the sample size was considered sufficient to provide meaningful and in-depth insights into the challenges and coping mechanisms of street food vendors.

**Table 1 Demographic Profile of Street Food Vendors (N=40)**

Demographic Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age</b>	18 to 22 years old	9	22.50%
	23 to 27 years old	9	22.50%
	28 to 32 years old	5	12.50%
	33 to 47 years old	10	25.00%
	48 to 52 years old	0	0.00%
	53 to 57 years old	4	10.00%
	Others	3	7.50%
<b>Sex</b>	Male	21	52.50%
	Female	19	47.50%
<b>Years of experience</b>	1 to 2 years	11	27.50%
	2 to 3 years	15	37.50%
	3 to 5 years	6	15.00%
	Others	8	20.00%
<b>Location</b>	Outside schools	8	20.00%
	Next to establishments	3	7.50%
	Parks	28	70.00%
	Others	1	2.50%

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the 40 participants. As can be seen, in terms of age, most vendors fall within the 33 to 47 year old age group (25%), indicating that middle-aged adults are heavily engaged in street vending. The next largest groups are 18 to 22 years old (22.5%) and 23 to 27 years old (22.5%), showing significant participation by young adults. In terms of sex, the distribution is nearly equal, with 52.5% male and 47.5% female, highlighting that street vending is accessible to both men and women. Regarding years of experience, the largest portion of vendors (37.5%) have been in the business for 2 to 3 years, suggesting that many are relatively new yet gaining stability. Finally, in terms of location, most vendors operate in parks (70%), indicating that public spaces are the most common and strategic areas for vending.

These findings suggest that street food vending is a flexible livelihood attracting both young and older individuals, particularly those with limited formal employment opportunities. The nearly equal gender participation underscores its inclusivity, while the relatively short years of experience imply that many have recently turned to vending, likely due to economic pressures. Moreover, the high concentration in parks emphasizes the importance of public spaces, which provide vendors with steady access to potential customers.

These observations are supported by previous studies. Jorales et al. (2024) noted that many Filipinos turn to vending due to scarce employment opportunities, particularly among younger workers. Carel et al. (2024) emphasized that vending offers accessible livelihood opportunities for both men and women. Meanwhile, Armas and Galano (2024b) highlighted the crucial role of public spaces, such as parks and plazas, in sustaining informal livelihoods by enabling vendors to remain visible and connected with customers despite competition. Collectively, these studies confirm that street food vending is not merely a fallback option but also a resilient livelihood strategy closely linked to shared community spaces.

### Research Instruments

The researchers utilized a structured questionnaire, which was distributed to street food vendors operating across Bayombong and Solano. To ensure clarity and ease of understanding, the questionnaire was researcher-made written in English and translated into Filipino using a standardized language approach, allowing participants to comprehend the questions more easily. The first part of the questionnaire collected demographic information, including the vendor's name, age, sex, years of vending experience, and vending location. This data allowed the researchers to examine how different challenges might vary according to demographic profiles. The second part employed a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, to assess the vendors' level of adaptability to challenges and the perceived level of effectiveness of their coping mechanisms, both of which

are categorized according to specific challenges and coping mechanisms. By quantifying responses, this helped the researchers to analyze and interpret the data to determine both adaptability levels and perceived level of effectiveness of coping mechanisms. The final section included an open-ended question, asking vendors to provide suggestions and specify the support they require from the government to sustain their market operations. This section offered additional insights into the difficulties faced by street food vendors and provided government recommendations for policy improvements. Importantly, the research instrument was validated using PSPP reliability testing to ensure its consistency and accuracy in measuring the intended constructs.

**Table 2 Reliability Statistics for the Questionnaire Items Assessing the Level of Adaptability of Street Food Vendors to Challenges**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.955	24

Table 2 presents the reliability statistics for the questionnaire items assessing the level of adaptability of street food vendors to challenges. As shown, the Cronbach's Alpha is 0.955, indicating excellent internal consistency among the 24 items. This demonstrates that the questionnaire is a highly reliable instrument for measuring the level of adaptability of vendors to the challenges in the street vending industry.

**Table 3 Reliability Statistics for the Questionnaire Items Assessing the Perceived Level of Effectiveness of Coping Mechanisms Adopted by Street Food Vendors**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.875	15

Table 3 presents the reliability statistics for the questionnaire items assessing the perceived level of effectiveness of coping mechanisms adopted by street food vendors. As shown, the Cronbach's Alpha is 0.875, indicating high internal consistency among the 15 items. This confirms that the questionnaire is a reliable instrument for measuring the perceived level of effectiveness of coping mechanisms adopted by vendors in managing the challenges of the street vending industry.

### Data Gathering Procedure

In this study, the researchers utilized a structured questionnaire composed of a 4-point Likert-scale and an open-ended question. Each item in the questionnaire was carefully aligned with the specific objectives of the study. The Likert-scale items were used to quantify measurable indicators, while the open-ended question provided an opportunity for participants to provide suggested forms of support according to their experiences, ensuring that all relevant aspects of the study were effectively addressed.

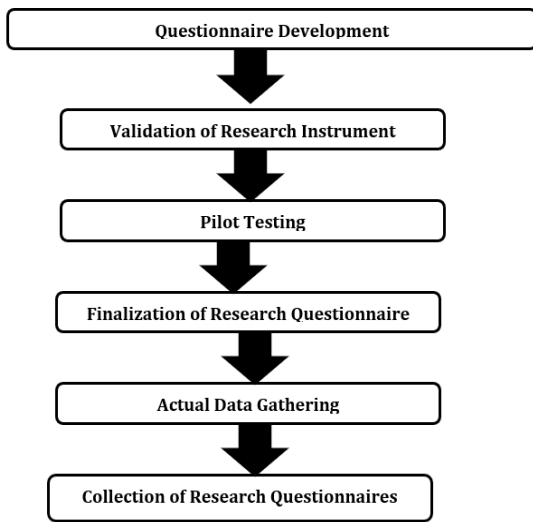
To ensure validity and reliability, the questionnaire underwent two rounds of validation. Prior to its administration, the researchers obtained approval from the Learning Area Coordinator (LAC) and the school principal. A pilot test was then conducted with 30 participants from Bagabag and Aritao in Nueva Vizcaya. These areas were chosen to avoid including respondents from Bayombong and Solano, where the actual study would take place, thereby preventing duplication. During the pilot testing, participants were informed about the purpose of the study, assured of confidentiality, and reminded of their right to withdraw at any time. Afterwards, the instrument was validated using Cronbach's Alpha to determine its internal consistency and reliability.

Once the research instrument was validated and approved, the researchers prepared a communication letter and finalized the questionnaire for the actual data gathering. Data collection was conducted among 40 street food vendors in Bayombong and Solano in Nueva Vizcaya using purposive sampling technique. Each researcher was assigned specific areas to efficiently gather responses. The participants were fully informed about the study, voluntary participation was emphasized, and assistance was provided when needed to ensure accurate completion of the questionnaire while maintaining confidentiality.

After data collection, the researchers organized and analyzed the responses using Microsoft Excel and PSPP. The results were then interpreted, and conclusions were drawn based on the findings, ensuring that participants'

privacy and rights were maintained throughout the research process. Next page shows the visual representation of the sequential steps followed in the study and the documentations:

**Figure 3 Flowchart on Data Gathering Procedure**



**Figure 4 Documentation on Pilot Testing**



**Figure 5 Documentation on Actual Data Gathering**



**Treatment of Data**

The data gathered from the respondents in Bayombong and Solano, Nueva Vizcaya, were systematically organized, coded, and analyzed to ensure accurate and meaningful interpretation. The study utilized a structured questionnaire consisting of 4-point Likert-scale items and an open-ended question, which allowed for both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

For the Likert-scale items, the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically through mean and standard deviation. The mean provided insight into the overall level of adaptability of street food vendors to challenges and the perceived level of effectiveness of their coping mechanisms, while the standard deviation indicated the consistency and variability of responses.

**Table 4 4-point Likert scale**

Numerical Scale	Interpretation
4.00	Strongly agree
3.00	Agree
2.00	Disagree
1.00	Strongly disagree

Table 4 shows the 4-point likert scale used in the study to quantify the responses of the street food vendors. As can be seen, responses were assigned numerical values from 1.00 to 4.00, ranging from Strongly agree to Strongly disagree. This enabled the researchers to convert subjective answers into measurable data to systematically analyze the respondents’ perceptions and opinions.

**Table 5 Mean Range for the Level of Adaptability of Vendors to Challenges**

Numerical Scale	Interpretation
3.26-4.00	Highly adaptable
2.51-3.25	Adaptable
1.76-2.50	Less adaptable
1.00-1.75	Not adaptable

Table 5 presents the mean range for the level of adaptability of street food vendors to challenges. As can be seen, mean scores were classified into four categories, ranging from Highly adaptable to Not adaptable (1.00-4.00). This provides a clear framework for interpreting the level of adaptability of vendors to the challenges according to the computed mean scores from the Likert scale responses.

**Table 6 Mean Range for the Perceived Level of Effectiveness of Coping Mechanisms Adopted by Vendors**

Numerical Scale	Interpretation
3.26-4.00	Very effective
2.51-3.25	Effective
1.76-2.50	Less effective
1.00-1.75	Not effective

Table 6 presents the mean range for the perceived level of effectiveness of coping mechanisms adopted by street food vendors. As shown, mean scores were categorized into four levels, ranging from Very effective to Not effective (1.00-4.00). This framework serves as a guide for evaluating which coping strategies were perceived as most effective and which may require further support or improvement.

For the open-ended question, the responses were treated using frequency and percentage counts to identify how often particular ideas or suggestions were raised, and thematic content analysis to group recurring responses into categories. These were then linked to the study objectives to provide deeper contextual understanding of the participants' perspectives.

By integrating both quantitative and qualitative analyses, the study achieved a comprehensive understanding of the level of adaptability of street food vendors to challenges and their perceived level of effectiveness of coping mechanisms, which served as the foundation for formulating evidence-based government policy recommendations. All data handling procedures adhered to strict ethical standards, ensuring voluntary participation, confidentiality, and accurate representation of respondents' views throughout the research process.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Section 1. Level of Adaptability of Street Food Vendors to Challenges of the Street Vending Industry

**Table 7 Level of Adaptability of Street Food Vendors to Interpersonal and Family Dynamics**

Interpersonal and Family Dynamics	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Interpretation
1. I maintain good working relationships with fellow street vendors.	3.65	0.53	Highly adaptable
2. I can manage personal and family issues without affecting my business.	3.33	0.69	Highly adaptable
3. I avoid conflicts with others in the vending area by adjusting my behavior.	3.53	0.75	Highly adaptable
<b>Overall Mean and Standard Deviation</b>	3.50	0.67	Highly adaptable
<b>Mean (<math>\bar{x}</math>) Legend:</b> 3.26-4.00 Highly adaptable 2.51-3.25 Adaptable 1.76-2.50 Less adaptable 1.00-1.75 Not adaptable			

Table 7 shows the level of adaptability of street food vendors to interpersonal and family dynamics. As can be seen, there is an overall mean of 3.50, which is indicated as highly adaptable. This means that vendors are generally capable of managing personal and social aspects related to their livelihood. The highest mean was seen in maintaining good working relationships with fellow street vendors ( $\bar{x}=3.65$ ), which is indicated as highly adaptable. This means that cooperation and camaraderie serve as key strategies for sustaining their vending activities. On the other hand, the lowest mean was observed in managing personal and family issues without affecting business ( $\bar{x}=3.33$ ), which is still indicated as highly adaptable. This means that balancing family life with work responsibilities poses more difficulty for vendors compared to maintaining peer relationships. In summary, the findings indicate that vendors are very capable of building positive relationships and avoiding social conflicts, but struggle more when personal and family responsibilities overlap with their work.

These findings imply that social harmony and cooperation are strong assets for vendors, allowing them to thrive in competitive and crowded vending spaces. However, the relatively lower adaptability in handling family concerns suggests that their livelihoods are closely tied to their household responsibilities. This means that while vendors can adjust well in social settings, they may require more support in balancing family obligations and business stability.

Several studies show that strong family and community ties are key sources of resilience for street vendors. In Cebu City, families shared tasks and resources to help vendors continue their livelihood despite difficulties (Esguerra et al., 2024). In Tacloban City, cooperation with fellow vendors and family members was a common way to manage stress and avoid conflicts in vending areas (Carel et al., 2024). Similarly, a study in Southeast Asia during the COVID-19 pandemic found that vendors relied heavily on family support and teamwork to survive livelihood shocks, though this often required balancing business with household duties (Turner et al., 2021). These studies confirm that cooperation strengthens adaptability, but also highlight the ongoing challenge of managing both work and family responsibilities that requires more external support.

**Table 8 Level of Adaptability of Street Food Vendors to Educational Aspirations and Awareness**

Educational Aspirations and Awareness	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Interpretation
1. I actively seek new knowledge or skills to improve my business.	3.63	0.63	Highly adaptable
2. I adapt my business practices when I learn something new or helpful.	3.58	0.59	Highly adaptable
3. I read or watch business-related content to keep myself informed.	3.25	0.78	Adaptable
<b>Overall Mean and Standard Deviation</b>	3.48	0.69	Highly adaptable
<b>Mean (<math>\bar{x}</math>) Legend:</b> 3.26-4.00 Highly adaptable    2.51-3.25 Adaptable 1.76-2.50 Less adaptable    1.00-1.75 Not adaptable			

Table 8 presents the level of adaptability of street food vendors to educational aspirations and awareness. As presented, there is an overall mean of 3.48, which is indicated as highly adaptable. This means that vendors are generally open to learning opportunities that can improve their livelihood. The highest mean was seen in actively seeking new knowledge or skills to improve their business ( $\bar{x}=3.63$ ), which is indicated as highly adaptable. This means that vendors value continuous learning as a way to strengthen their operations. On the other hand, the lowest mean was observed in reading or watching business-related content ( $\bar{x}=3.25$ ), which is indicated only as adaptable. This means that vendors rely less on formal or media-based resources and instead favor more practical learning strategies. In summary, the results show that vendors are proactive in learning and applying useful ideas to improve their business, but rely more on practical experience than formal educational resources.

These findings imply that vendors see learning as important when it directly benefits their work, especially through skills and practical knowledge. However, the relatively lower use of business-related content shows that they may need more accessible and engaging ways to learn. This suggests that training programs, workshops, and community-based learning opportunities could further strengthen their adaptability and long-term growth.

Studies show that vendors often learn effectively through hands-on experience. In the Philippines, vendors developed strong knowledge about food safety even with limited formal training, highlighting their ability to learn informally (Carpio et al., 2025). In Ethiopia, vendors with higher educational levels were more likely to follow safe food practices, showing that education directly improves adaptability in business operations (Girma et al., 2025b). A systematic review also found that vendors with more knowledge, whether from formal training or practical experience, managed their businesses more safely and sustainably (Desye et al., 2023). These studies confirm that both structured and informal learning strengthen vendor adaptability, but tailored and practical educational support can make this learning more effective.

**Table 9 Level of Adaptability of Street Food Vendors to Financial Vulnerability**

Financial Vulnerability	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Interpretation
1. I can still continue selling even during days of low income.	3.43	0.71	Highly adaptable
2. I avoid unnecessary spending to save for emergencies.	3.58	0.55	Highly adaptable
3. I look for ways to reduce costs without affecting product quality.	3.40	0.67	Highly adaptable
<b>Overall Mean and Standard Deviation</b>	3.47	0.65	Highly adaptable
<b>Mean (<math>\bar{x}</math>) Legend:</b> 3.26-4.00 Highly adaptable 2.51-3.25 Adaptable 1.76-2.50 Less adaptable 1.00-1.75 Not adaptable			

Table 9 shows the level of adaptability of street food vendors to financial vulnerability. As can be seen, there is an overall mean of 3.47, which is indicated as highly adaptable. This means that vendors are generally able to manage financial pressures in their business. The highest mean was seen in avoiding unnecessary spending to save for emergencies ( $\bar{x}$ =3.58), which is indicated as highly adaptable. This means that vendors practice financial discipline to prepare for uncertainties. On the other hand, the lowest mean was observed in finding ways to reduce costs without affecting product quality ( $\bar{x}$ =3.40), which is also indicated as highly adaptable. This means that vendors still find it more difficult to balance affordability and quality compared to other financial strategies. In summary, the results show that vendors are resilient in continuing their livelihood despite financial pressures, but maintaining product quality while cutting costs remains a key challenge.

These findings imply that street food vendors are resourceful in managing daily income fluctuations, mainly through saving and avoiding wasteful expenses. However, their difficulty in reducing costs without sacrificing quality suggests the need for financial skills training and access to support systems that can help them sustain product standards while staying financially stable.

Researches highlight the importance of financial literacy and resource management for vendor survival. In Tagum City, vendors with stronger financial literacy were better at handling income and staying resilient against financial pressures (Tagalog et al., 2022). In Kuala Lumpur, vendors relied on an entrepreneurial mindset, such as cost-cutting and family support, to survive during the COVID-19 crisis (Godjali & Supramaniam, 2024b). However, a study in the Philippines shows that reliance on informal credit often traps vendors in cycles of debt due to high interest (Labitad, 2025). These findings imply that while vendors can adapt to financial challenges, long-term stability requires affordable credit access and financial education programs.

**Table 10 Level of Adaptability of Street Food Vendors to Market Competition**

Market Competition	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Interpretation
1. I find ways to attract customers even if many vendors are selling similar items.	3.43	0.78	Highly adaptable
2. I promote my food through word-of-mouth or other creative methods.	3.25	0.63	Adaptable

3. I am open to changing or expanding my menu to stay competitive.	3.23	0.70	Adaptable
<b>Overall Mean and Standard Deviation</b>	3.30	0.71	Highly adaptable
<b>Mean (<math>\bar{x}</math>) Legend:</b> 3.26-4.00 Highly adaptable 2.51-3.25 Adaptable 1.76-2.50 Less adaptable 1.00-1.75 Not adaptable			

Table 10 presents the level of adaptability of street food vendors to market competition. As can be seen, there is an overall mean of 3.30, which is indicated as highly adaptable but falls at the lower boundary of the range. This means that vendors show only moderate capacity to manage competitive pressures. The highest mean was found in finding ways to attract customers despite many vendors selling similar items ( $\bar{x}$ =3.43), which is indicated as highly adaptable. This means that vendors rely on simple strategies to remain visible in the market. On the other hand, the lowest mean was observed in being open to changing or expanding their menu ( $\bar{x}$ =3.23), which is indicated as adaptable but close to highly adaptable. This means that vendors are less inclined to adopt bigger adjustments such as menu innovation that could enhance competitiveness. In summary, the results suggest that while vendors can adapt through small, practical efforts, they are less prepared to engage in more substantial strategies that demand creativity and innovation.

These findings imply that vendors focus on maintaining customers through basic, low-cost strategies like word-of-mouth promotion or friendly service. However, their limited openness to new menus and modern marketing shows that their competitiveness may not be sustainable if customer demands change. This suggests that vendors could benefit from training in business innovation and affordable marketing strategies to strengthen their adaptability in highly competitive environments.

Several researches supports this implication by showing that vendors often rely on practical and personal strategies in competitive markets. Hilmi (2020) found that most vendors depend on close ties with customers and simple promotions instead of advanced marketing tools. In Indonesia, Widjajanti et al. (2025) noted that vendors share limited resources such as electricity and water to cope with tough conditions, reflecting small but effective adjustments. In the local context, Dano et al. (2025) reported that vendors use affordable prices, friendly customer service, and attractive presentation to stand out in crowded markets. These studies imply that while vendors adapt in simple ways, external support and skills development are needed for them to become more competitive in the long term.

**Table 11 Level of Adaptability of Street Food Vendors to Operational Challenges**

Operational Challenges	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Interpretation
1. I adjust my working hours depending on customer demand or situation.	3.33	0.73	Highly adaptable
2. I make sure I follow food safety practices even in outdoor conditions.	3.58	0.64	Highly adaptable
3. I am resourceful in solving daily problems like water supply, electricity, or trash disposal.	3.50	0.68	Highly adaptable
<b>Overall Mean and Standard Deviation</b>	3.47	0.69	Highly adaptable
<b>Mean (<math>\bar{x}</math>) Legend:</b> 3.26-4.00 Highly adaptable 2.51-3.25 Adaptable 1.76-2.50 Less adaptable 1.00-1.75 Not adaptable			

Table 11 presents the level of adaptability of street food vendors to operational challenges. As can be seen, the overall mean is 3.47, which is indicated as highly adaptable. This means that vendors are generally able to cope with the operational demands of their work. The highest mean is observed in being resourceful in solving daily problems such as water, electricity, or trash disposal ( $\bar{x}$ =3.58), which is indicated as highly adaptable. This means that vendors are creative and practical in addressing basic operational needs. The lowest mean is seen in adjusting working hours depending on customer demand or situation ( $\bar{x}$ =3.33), which is also indicated as highly adaptable. This means that while vendors can modify schedules when necessary, they are still limited by personal, family,

or environmental factors. In summary, the results show that street food vendors are resilient in managing operational challenges, with particular strength in resourcefulness and food safety, but display less flexibility in work scheduling.

These results imply that vendors are resilient in handling operational challenges and maintaining consistent practices that sustain customer trust. Their resourcefulness in managing sanitation and utilities reflects their capacity to adapt to urban difficulties. However, their limited flexibility in working hours suggests challenges in balancing livelihood with personal obligations and external restrictions, showing the need for more support in improving time management and work-life balance.

Recent studies supports this implication. Huynh-Van et al. (2022) found that vendors with access to clean water and sanitation were more compliant with safety standards, showing how resources enhance adaptability. Labao et al. (2023) reported that vendors with better knowledge of food safety were more consistent in applying hygiene practices, highlighting the role of training. Finally, Desye et al. (2023) further noted that vendors worldwide are generally adaptable but are constrained by limited infrastructure, financial difficulties, and weak institutional support. These findings affirm that while vendors are highly adaptable, they require adequate resources, training, and policy support to strengthen flexibility and sustainability in managing operational challenges.

**Table 12 Level of Adaptability of Street Food Vendors to Supply Chain Dependency**

Supply Chain Dependency	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Interpretation
1. I buy ingredients in bulk to avoid daily shortages.	3.20	0.72	Adaptable
2. I maintain good relationships with suppliers for smoother transactions.	3.60	0.67	Highly adaptable
3. I plan my purchases based on market prices and budget.	3.38	0.90	Highly adaptable
<b>Overall Mean and Standard Deviation</b>	3.39	0.78	Highly adaptable
<b>Mean (<math>\bar{x}</math>) Legend:</b> 3.26-4.00 Highly adaptable    2.51-3.25 Adaptable 1.76-2.50 Less adaptable    1.00-1.75 Not adaptable			

Table 12 shows the level of adaptability of street food vendors to supply chain dependency. As shown, the overall mean is 3.39, which is indicated as highly adaptable. This means that vendors can generally handle supply-related challenges in their operations. The highest mean is found in maintaining good relationships with suppliers ( $\bar{x}$ =3.60), which is indicated as highly adaptable. This means that vendors rely on trust and cooperation with suppliers to ensure smoother transactions. Meanwhile, the lowest mean is observed in buying ingredients in bulk to avoid daily shortages ( $\bar{x}$ =3.20), which is indicated as adaptable. This means that while some vendors use bulk buying to secure supplies, others face barriers such as limited capital or storage space. Overall, the results show that vendors are resilient in managing supply chain dependency, by relying mainly on supplier relationships, but still face financial and logistical constraints in bulk purchasing.

These results imply that personal networks with suppliers are the strongest factor supporting the adaptability of vendors. This shows the importance of trust-based relationships in securing consistent supplies. However, the lower score in bulk buying highlights the financial and logistical barriers that vendors face, while moderate planning based on prices and budget suggests challenges in managing fluctuating incomes and market costs. This means that while supplier relationships sustain short-term supply stability, long-term resilience may require financial support, storage access, and capacity-building in planning.

Petruzzelli et al. (2023) found that short food supply chains in Southeast Asia became more resilient during disruptions when trust and cooperation among stakeholders were strong, underscoring the importance of supplier relationships. Herzig and Zander (2025) similarly showed that small vendors in Europe benefit from close ties with suppliers that help secure products during difficult times. On the other hand, Bayir et al. (2022) reported that bulk buying and purchase planning are often difficult for small businesses because of limited working capital

and lack of storage facilities. These studies affirm that supplier relationships are one of the strongest strategies of vendors to remain adaptable, but financial and logistical barriers continue to limit their capacity to manage supply chain dependency effectively.

**Table 13 Level of Adaptability of Street Food Vendors to Health and Labor Conditions**

Health and Labor Conditions	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Interpretation
1. I wear protective gear like hats, gloves, or aprons to stay safe.	3.35	0.66	Highly adaptable
2. I take safety measures to avoid illness or injury while working.	3.48	0.75	Highly adaptable
3. I rest when needed to maintain my health and continue vending.	3.53	0.78	Highly adaptable
<b>Overall Mean and Standard Deviation</b>	3.45	0.73	Highly adaptable
<b>Mean (<math>\bar{x}</math>) Legend:</b> 3.26-4.00 Highly adaptable 2.51-3.25 Adaptable 1.76-2.50 Less adaptable 1.00-1.75 Not adaptable			

Table 13 presents the level of adaptability of street food vendors to health and labor conditions. As can be seen, the overall mean is 3.45, which is indicated as highly adaptable. This means that vendors are generally capable of maintaining their health and safety while vending. The highest mean is resting when needed to maintain health and continue vending ( $\bar{x}$ =3.53), which is indicated as highly adaptable. This means that vendors value rest as an important way to sustain productivity. On the other hand, the lowest mean is observed in wearing protective gear such as hats, gloves, or aprons ( $\bar{x}$ =3.35), which is also indicated as highly adaptable. This means that while some vendors use protective equipment, others may be limited by cost, access, or perceived necessity. Overall, the results show that vendors demonstrate strong adaptability through rest, though their practices are less consistent when it comes to protective gear.

These results imply that vendors are resilient in protecting their health by taking rest and basic safety measures, which helps them sustain their work despite difficult conditions. However, the lower use of protective gear suggests a vulnerability that may expose them to risks, pointing to the need for greater support in providing affordable equipment and stronger health and safety programs.

Research shows that rest is an essential coping mechanism for informal workers exposed to hazardous conditions (Sepadi & Nkosi, 2022), while training and infrastructure can improve compliance with safety measures, including protective equipment (Huynh-Van et al., 2022). At the same time, affordability and accessibility challenges often prevent consistent use of gear, as seen among vendors in Dhaka (Islam et al., 2024). Together, these findings support the results in Table 14: vendors adapt well through rest and preventive actions but require better resources to strengthen protective practices.

**Table 14 Level of Adaptability of Street Food Vendors to Regulation and Enforcement**

Regulation and Enforcement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Interpretation
1. I find legal and peaceful ways to continue vending even during strict enforcement.	3.50	0.75	Highly adaptable
2. I move to a new spot or comply when clearing operations are conducted.	3.33	0.76	Highly adaptable
3. I register my business or comply with needed documents when required.	3.58	0.75	Highly adaptable
<b>Overall Mean and Standard Deviation</b>	3.47	0.76	Highly adaptable
<b>Mean (<math>\bar{x}</math>) Legend:</b> 3.26-4.00 Highly adaptable 2.51-3.25 Adaptable 1.76-2.50 Less adaptable 1.00-1.75 Not adaptable			

Table 14 shows the level of adaptability of street food vendors to regulation and enforcement. As can be seen, the overall mean is 3.47, which is indicated as highly adaptable. This means that vendors are generally able to cope with legal and enforcement challenges. The highest mean is seen in registering their business or complying with needed documents when required ( $\bar{x}$ =3.58), which is indicated as highly adaptable. This implies that vendors value formalization as a way to gain legitimacy and avoid penalties. Conversely, the lowest mean is seen in relocating during clearing operations ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.33), which is still indicated as highly adaptable. This means that while vendors can relocate when necessary, such displacement disrupts their operations and customer relationships. In summary, the results show that vendors excel in compliance through proper documentation but face challenges regarding mobility during enforcement actions.

These findings imply that vendors are flexible and willing to follow rules, particularly through documentation and lawful strategies that allow them to sustain their business. However, lower adaptability in relocation underscores the instability caused by displacement, which can negatively impact income and customer loyalty. This highlights the need for policies that simplify registration processes while ensuring stable vending areas to protect both regulatory order and livelihoods.

In Kigali City, simplifying formalization processes and providing infrastructure helped vendors achieve security and stable livelihoods (Rwibutso, 2024). Global studies also emphasized that frequent relocation harms vendors, whereas inclusive policies offering safe vending spaces benefit both cities and vendors (Coletto et al., 2021). Similarly, in Indonesia, fair and inclusive rules governing public spaces helped balance urban order with the economic needs of vendors (Rahayu et al., 2025). Collectively, these studies reinforce that while vendors are highly adaptable through compliance and lawful practices, mobility challenges call for supportive, inclusive regulatory approaches.

**Section 2.** Perceived Level of Effectiveness of Coping Mechanisms Adopted by Street Food Vendors in Managing the Challenges of the Street Vending Industry

**Table 15** Perceived Level of Effectiveness of Debt and Financial Management

Debt and Financial Management	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Interpretation
1. I borrow money or take credit when needed to keep my business running.	2.70	1.11	Effective
2. I am able to pay back my debts on time without harming my business.	3.50	0.68	Very effective
3. I budget my income and expenses carefully.	3.55	0.78	Very effective
<b>Overall Mean and Standard Deviation</b>	3.25	0.95	Effective
<b>Mean (<math>\bar{x}</math>) Legend:</b>	3.26-4.00	Very effective	2.51-3.25 Effective
	1.76-2.50	Less effective	1.00-1.75 Not effective

Table 15 presents the perceived level of effectiveness of debt and financial management among street food vendors. As can be seen, the overall mean is 3.25, which is interpreted as effective. This indicates that vendors generally find their financial practices helpful in sustaining their businesses. The highest rated practice was budgeting income and expenses ( $\bar{x}$ =3.55), which is interpreted as very effective. This shows that careful financial planning supports stability. Meanwhile, the lowest mean was found in borrowing money or taking credit ( $\bar{x}$ =2.70), which is rated as effective. This means that vendors are cautious about loans due to repayment risks or limited access to fair credit. Overall, the results suggest that vendors rely more on financial discipline than borrowing to sustain their livelihood.

This suggests that vendors are resilient in managing finances through careful planning and timely repayment. At the same time, their caution in borrowing reflects structural financial barriers, such as lack of access to affordable credit, which could limit their ability to expand or recover from unexpected losses.

Martínez and Short (2022) highlighted that street vendors rely on flexible financial strategies to cope with uncertainty and competition. Additionally, many turn to moneylenders or shopkeepers instead of banks, where

loans are costly, unregulated, and often involve social pressure, leading to potential debt cycles (Yimer, 2025). In the Philippines, the “Bombay 5–6” system provides easy loans but with high repayment risks, which can trap vendors in cycles of debt (Labitad, 2025). These findings collectively highlight the importance of financial discipline over reliance on credit for sustaining street vendors’ businesses.

**Table 16 Perceived Level of Effectiveness of Operational Adaptation**

Operational Adaptation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Interpretation
1. I change my product offerings based on what sells best.	3.10	0.74	Very effective
2. I adjust my operating hours depending on customer demand, weather or enforcement.	3.40	0.84	Very effective
3. I find ways to reduce operating costs without lowering quality.	3.45	0.64	Very effective
<b>Overall Mean and Standard Deviation</b>	3.32	0.76	Very effective
<b>Mean (<math>\bar{x}</math>) Legend:</b>	3.26-4.00 Very effective	2.51-3.25 Effective	
	1.76-2.50 Less effective	1.00-1.75 Not effective	

Table 16 presents the perceived level of effectiveness of operational adaptation among street food vendors. As can be seen, there is an overall mean of 3.32, which is indicated as very effective. This means that vendors generally view their operational adaptation strategies positively. Among the specific strategies, finding ways to reduce operating costs without lowering quality scored the highest mean ( $\bar{x}$ =3.45), which is indicated as very effective. This means that cost management is considered highly impactful for sustaining their business. On the other hand, changing product offerings according to what sells best scored the lowest mean ( $\bar{x}$ =3.10), which is still interpreted as very effective. This means that product adjustments are helpful but less influential than cost management. In summary, the findings suggest that vendors actively implement strategies that improve efficiency, with a strong focus on cost management, while product adjustments are practiced but less emphasized.

These findings imply that street food vendors prioritize operational strategies that directly influence profitability and business stability, such as controlling costs and adjusting operating hours. These strategies provide immediate and tangible benefits, helping vendors navigate daily uncertainties and maintain consistent income. However, the lower score for product adjustments suggests that adapting offerings may require more market insight, experimentation, or risk-taking. This highlights an opportunity for vendors to enhance competitiveness by incorporating more proactive product innovation alongside operational efficiency.

This implication is supported by Romero et al. (2024a), who found that street vendors in Manila who practiced cost management and flexible scheduling were better able to sustain their businesses during economic fluctuations, demonstrating the role of operational efficiency in resilience. Similarly, Hernandez et al. (2023) noted that small and medium enterprises in the Philippines that aligned operations with market conditions experienced improved performance and stability, highlighting the strategic value of optimizing resources. Furthermore, Mudau et al. (2024) emphasized that maintaining cost-efficiency and schedule flexibility is crucial for small food businesses to remain competitive in dynamic urban markets. Together, these findings support that operational adaptations focused on efficiency and flexibility are key drivers of business sustainability and competitiveness.

**Table 17 Perceived Level of Effectiveness of Community Assistance and Support**

Community Assistance and Support	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Interpretation
1. I receive help or advice from fellow vendors when facing business problems.	3.05	0.81	Effective
1. I feel supported by people in my neighborhood or community.	3.40	0.59	Very effective

2. I participate in vendor groups or informal associations.	2.98	0.86	Effective
<b>Overall Mean and Standard Deviation</b>	3.14	0.78	Very effective
<b>Mean (<math>\bar{x}</math>) Legend:</b>	3.26-4.00 Very effective	2.51-3.25 Effective	
	1.76-2.50 Less effective	1.00-1.75 Not effective	

Table 17 presents the perceived level of effectiveness of community assistance and support among street food vendors. As can be seen, the overall mean is 3.14, which is indicated as very effective. This means that vendors generally find community support helpful in managing business challenges. The highest mean is seen in feeling supported by people in the neighborhood or community ( $\bar{x}$ =3.40), which is indicated as very effective. This shows that strong social and emotional support from the community greatly helps vendors maintain confidence and stability. In comparison, participation in vendor groups or informal associations scored the lowest mean ( $\bar{x}$ =2.98), which is only indicated as effective. This means that while organized groups are beneficial, their support may not always be fully maximized or consistently accessed. In summary, vendors benefit most from general community support, while both peer and group-based support remain helpful but slightly less strong.

These results imply that strengthening participation in vendor groups and improving engagement within these associations could enhance the consistency and overall effectiveness of community assistance and support. By encouraging more vendors to actively join and interact in these groups, they may gain more reliable access to advice, resources, and collective problem-solving, which could complement the already strong general community support.

Alfers et al. (2022) found that vendors with strong networks and groups recovered more effectively from disruptions. Moreover, Moussié et al. (2020) reported that vendor associations provide aid and protect rights, showing that structured groups increase support reliability. Finally, Shan and Tian (2022) emphasized that trust and social networks help small businesses navigate challenges. These studies further highlight that strong participation in vendor groups with ongoing general community support can maximize the effectiveness of assistance for street food vendors.

**Table 18 Perceived Level of Effectiveness of Adaptation to Regulation**

Adaptation to Regulation	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Interpretation
1. I know the rules and policies that apply to street vending in my area.	3.45	0.75	Very effective
2. I adjust my practices to comply with government policies or regulations.	3.48	0.68	Very effective
3. I cooperate when faced with clean-up, clearing, or enforcement operations.	3.48	0.78	Very effective
<b>Overall Mean and Standard Deviation</b>	3.47	0.73	Very effective
<b>Mean (<math>\bar{x}</math>) Legend:</b>	3.26-4.00 Very effective	2.51-3.25 Effective	
	1.76-2.50 Less effective	1.00-1.75 Not effective	

Table 18 presents the perceived level of effectiveness of adaptation to regulation among street food vendors. As can be seen, the overall mean is 3.47, which is indicated as very effective. This means that vendors generally consider their strategies for complying with rules and regulations highly reliable. The highest mean scores are found in adjusting practices to comply with government policies and cooperating during clean-up, clearing, or enforcement operations ( $\bar{x}$ =3.48), which are both indicated as very effective. This shows that vendors recognize the importance of compliance to maintain their livelihoods. In comparison, knowledge of rules and policies scored slightly lower ( $\bar{x}$ =3.45), still interpreted as very effective. This suggests that targeted training could further improve the effectiveness of their adaptation to regulation. In summary, vendors demonstrate strong adaptability to regulations, with a consistent tendency to follow policies and cooperate with authorities.

These findings imply that regulatory compliance is a key strategy for vendors to reduce risks such as fines, displacement, or confiscation of goods. Their willingness to adjust practices and cooperate suggests resilience, but the slightly lower knowledge score indicates a need for clearer communication and guidance from local governments to ensure compliance is both informed and sustainable.

Arif (2023) emphasized that vendors' ability to adapt to regulations determines their long-term viability, as non-compliance increases vulnerability to eviction and penalties. Similarly, Hoang & Le (2024) found that regulatory adaptation, supported by self-regulatory mechanisms such as playful work design and ambidexterity, fosters safer and more stable working environments by enabling workers to proactively adjust to changing conditions while maintaining engagement and resilience. Furthermore, Berker et al. (2022) noted that compliance builds trust with policymakers and opens opportunities for formalization and support. Together, these studies support that adaptation to regulation is both a protective strategy and a pathway towards recognition and livelihood stability.

**Table 19 Perceived Level of Effectiveness of Emotional Resilience**

Emotional Resilience	Mean	Standard Deviation	Qualitative Interpretation
1. I do not give up easily even when challenges feel overwhelming.	3.70	0.61	Very effective
2. I find ways to stay motivated despite slow sales or other problems.	3.60	0.55	Very effective
3. I have a strong sense of purpose in continuing my street vending business.	3.63	0.63	Very effective
<b>Overall Mean and Standard Deviation</b>	3.64	0.59	Very effective
<b>Mean (<math>\bar{x}</math>) Legend:</b>	3.26-4.00	Very effective	2.51-3.25 Effective
	1.76-2.50	Less effective	1.00-1.75 Not effective

Table 19 shows the perceived level of effectiveness of emotional resilience among street food vendors. As can be seen, the overall mean is 3.64, which is indicated as very effective. This means that vendors generally consider their emotional resilience a reliable strategy for managing challenges in the street vending industry. The highest rated item is not giving up easily even when challenges feel overwhelming ( $\bar{x}$ =3.70), which is indicated as very effective. This shows that persistence is a central trait supporting continuity of work. In comparison, staying motivated despite slow sales received the lowest mean score ( $\bar{x}$ =3.60), which is still interpreted as very effective. This implies that while vendors generally remain resilient, maintaining motivation during periods of slow sales is relatively more challenging. Overall, the results show that vendors demonstrate high emotional resilience, anchored in persistence, motivation, and purpose.

These results imply that emotional resilience is a key factor in sustaining vendor livelihoods, helping them maintain income continuity and commitment despite risks and instability. However, reliance solely on personal resilience may mask structural challenges, such as lack of financial support or vulnerability to external shocks, highlighting the need for complementary institutional and community support.

Anupriya and Anuradha (2025) found that resilience, strengthened by social networks and financial stability, helps street vendors manage stress and adapt effectively to unpredictable urban environments. Additionally, Mercy et al. (2023) observed that persistence and motivation, strengthened through supportive street vendor associations, enable Nairobi vendors to withstand economic downturns. Finally, Golparvar and Parsakia (2023) emphasized that while a sense of purpose sustains commitment, resilience in professionals must be reinforced by organizational and systemic interventions to prevent burnout and avoid overreliance on individual coping strategies. Together, these studies reinforce that emotional resilience is vital for vendor survival but should be complemented with policy and community support mechanisms.

### Section 3. Recommendations for Local Government Support

**Table 20 Suggested Forms of Support From Street Food Vendors for the Local Government**

Themes	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Designated and Safe Vending Spaces	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "Bigyan ng maayos at ligtas na pwesto ang mga street vendors"</li> <li>2. "The local government should provide...proper sales areas to street food vendors."</li> <li>3. "They should give proper vending areas...to ensure safety and support..."</li> <li>4. "...sana bigyan ng sariling lokasyon ang mga vendors upang mapanatili silang nagbebenta at hindi rin sila maapektuhan"</li> <li>5. "Mabigyan ng magandang pwesto"</li> <li>6. "Pagpapatupad ng pagkakaroon ng sari-sariling</li> </ol>	11	24.44%
	<p>pwesto sa bawat lugar na laging pinupuntahan ng maraming tao...ng walang binabayaranang renta..."</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. "Sana po magkaroon ng...maayos na pwesto"</li> <li>8. "Pagtatatag ng mga vending zones, maglaan ng mga partikular na lugar para sa mga nagtitinda sa kalye upang maiwasan ang kaguluhan sa mga pampublikong lugar."</li> <li>9. "Mag karoon sana ng sariling pwesto para safe kumain yung mga customer"</li> <li>10. "Malaking tulong kung maglalagay ng designated area...magiging organisado ang pagtitinda at hindi namin kailangan maghanap ng pwesto araw araw."</li> <li>11. "Maayos na puwesto"</li> </ol>		

<p><b>Financial Assistance and Capital Support</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "Government subsidies"</li> <li>2. "suporta ng government kapag humina ka na bankrupt ka may makukuha ka ng pera para tulong sainyo"</li> <li>3. "Government subsidies...to continue their business"</li> <li>4. "...provide...financial support...to street food vendors."</li> <li>5. "Financial assistance"</li> <li>6. "...Give financial assistance or micro loans."</li> <li>7. "Sana po magkaroon ng dagdag puhunan..."</li> <li>8. "Sana bigyan din kami ng tulong sa puhunan kasi hindi araw araw may pera ang mga street vendors"</li> <li>9. "Masasabi ko lang po sana mabigyan po kami ng puhunan po para may magdagdag...para masoportahan namin ang aming pamilya na hindi lagi umaasa sa bigay ng government asistance"</li> </ol>	<p>9</p>	<p>20.00%</p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "Sana po magkaroon ng dagdag puhunan..."</li> <li>2. "Sana bigyan din kami ng tulong sa puhunan kasi hindi araw araw may pera ang mga street vendors"</li> <li>3. "Masasabi ko lang po sana mabigyan po kami ng puhunan po para may magdagdag...para masoportahan namin ang aming pamilya na hindi lagi</li> </ol>		
<p><b>1. Affordable and Fair Permits, Fees, and Taxes</b></p>	<p>umaasa sa bigay ng government asistance"</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. "If there is already a permit i hope there is no ticket"</li> <li>5. "Kung may permit wag na dapat mag ticket"</li> <li>6. "They should give...fair permits..."</li> </ol>	<p>7</p>	<p>15.56%</p>

	<p>7. "...Give affordable business permits...</p> <p>8. "Bawasan or ibaba ang bayad sa business permit ng mga vendors"</p> <p>9. "Lahat ng babayaran ng stall ay hindi nila alam na hindi nakakakuha ng masyadong pera para mabayaran"</p> <p>10. "...sana babaan sana ang mga pinababayad sa municipal at provincial permits para sa mga maliliit na paninda dahil wala na sila o kaming naiuwi para sa pamilya o pansarili."</p>		
<p><b>2. Fair and Supportive Regulation for Street Vendors</b></p>	<p>1. "sumunod sa kung ano man patakaran na ipairal sa kung san ka man lugar nagbebenta o nakapwesto upang magkroon ka ng mapayapang pagtitinda sa bawat araw.."</p> <p>2. "Sana wag masyadong higpitan ang mga nagtitinda"</p> <p>3. "A government policy na kayang protektahan ang mga nag titinda"</p> <p>4. "Huwag maging mahigpit sa mga street vendors. Kapag bawal sa lugar, pagsabihan at hanapan ng pwedeng pag pwestohan"</p> <p>5. "According to my experience, sana hayaan kaming magtinda dito, at kapag may basura sa gilid gilid wag kami yung sisihin at yung paalisin. Hindi naman lahat ng vendor madumi at makalat, sinisisi ang street vendors dahil dito sa mga basura"</p> <p>6. "Maintain and improve the status quo of each vendors regardless of the difference of product introduced"</p> <p>7. "Payagan sana nila magbenta yung mga street vendor sa iba't-ibang barangay ng hindi pinagbabawalan"</p>	7	15.56%
<p><b>3. Customer Relations, Cleanliness, and Hospitality</b></p>	<p>1. "Maintain a good fellowship and mutual respect. Especially when other people buys a food or products to your business and don't forget to know hospitality to them and keep your goods clean and fresh every time you are selling."</p>	4	8.89%

	<p>2. "...training about food safety, cleanliness, and proper handling of ingredients so that the food we sell is safe for the public..."</p> <p>3. "Una, pakikisama sa customer. Pangalawa, kalinisan ng paligid at ng panininda. Pangatlo, tapat at mabait pagpapakumbaba"</p> <p>4. "Maging mabait sa mga customer at maging malinis sa mga benta at paligid ng pinagbebentahan"</p>		
<b>4. Trainings, Seminars, and Skills Development</b>	<p>1. "The local government should provide training to all...street food vendors."</p> <p>2. "Dapat hikayatin din natin silang matutong lumahok sa mga programa ng gobyerno sa mga propaganda sa mgapagproseso ng pagsusuri ng mga pagkain o pwedeng pangkabuhayang pagkikitaan sa food industry"</p> <p>3. "The government can offer free seminars and training about food safety, cleanliness, and proper handling of ingredients so that the food we sell is safe for the public..."</p>	3	6.67%
<b>5. Economic and Governance Concerns</b>	<p>1. "Paunlarin ang gobyerno natin."</p> <p>2. "Sana bumaba ang mga bilihin kasi sobrang naapektohan ang aming konting negosyo sana stop corruption sa ating gobyerno"</p>	2	4.44%
<b>6. Provision of Equipment and Materials</b>	<p>1. "Give out free "karitons" for street vendors to start"</p>	1	2.22%
<b>7. Personal Attitude and Perseverance</b>	<p>1. "Ang aking mapapayo ay wag silang sumuko sa araw na wala silang benta"</p>	1	2.22%
	<b>Total</b>	45	100%

Table 20 presents the suggested forms of support from street food vendors for the local government. As can be seen, the most requested support is designated and safe vending spaces (24.44%). This means that vendors value secure and organized areas to sell their goods. Additionally, financial assistance and capital support (20.00%) is also highly requested. This indicates that vendors require resources to sustain or expand their businesses, highlighting economic vulnerability and the need for financial relief programs. Finally, affordable and fair permits, fees, and taxes (15.56%) are another key request. This shows that costly regulatory requirements remain a burden, suggesting the importance of policy interventions to make compliance fair and accessible. Overall, the data highlight that vendors primarily seek structural and systemic support rather than individual-level interventions.

These results imply that vendors perceive their challenges as systemic and require government action to ensure stability and protection. Prioritizing safe vending spaces, financial support, and fair regulation reflects their need for livelihood security, economic survival, and reduced vulnerability to fines or displacement.

According to Eya et al. (2025), formalizing street vending through secure, regulated zones enhances vendors' livelihoods while promoting public order in urban areas. Additionally, financial assistance and reduced permit costs enhance street vendor resilience by easing financial burdens and supporting sustainable business operations in urban economies (Arif, 2024). Furthermore, fair and supportive regulation, grounded in ethical conflict management principles, upholds vendors' dignity and minimizes disputes by ensuring transparency, equity, and avenues for feedback (Hyatt & Gruenglas, 2023). Together, these studies support that structural reforms, including safe vending areas, financial support, and fair regulatory practices, are essential to strengthen the street vending sector.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusion

This study examined the level of adaptability of street food vendors to various challenges and the perceived level of effectiveness of their coping mechanisms in Bayombong and Solano, Nueva Vizcaya. Findings revealed that vendors exhibited a high level of adaptability across all domains, including interpersonal and family dynamics, educational aspirations and awareness, financial vulnerability, market competition, operational challenges, supply chain dependency, health and labor conditions, and regulation and enforcement. Their strong adaptability reflects their capacity to remain resilient despite limited resources, uncertain environments, and minimal government support.

Among the coping mechanisms, emotional resilience, adaptation to regulation, and operational adaptation were rated as the most effective in sustaining their livelihoods. These strategies demonstrate the vendors' capacity for persistence, discipline, and creativity in addressing daily business challenges. By maintaining optimism and flexibility, vendors are able to adjust to policy changes, sustain operations despite restrictions, and continue generating income under uncertain conditions. However, while these mechanisms effectively support short-term survival, they remain insufficient to ensure long-term stability or protection against structural challenges such as displacement, economic shocks, and health risks.

These findings highlight that street food vendors serve as indispensable contributors to local economies and inclusive urban growth, yet remain among the most vulnerable informal workers. Their resilience underscores the need for structural and institutional government interventions that recognize, formalize, and protect their contributions. Strengthening policy frameworks, improving access to social protection, and providing capacity-building programs will not only enhance the welfare of vendors but also promote sustainable community development aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals.

### Recommendations

While existing national and local laws already provide a framework for regulating street food vending, their implementation often falls short of addressing vendors' long-term sustainability and empowerment. Therefore, this study proposes a transformative but feasible approach that redefines street food vending from a regulated informal activity into a recognized and empowered microenterprise sector that contributes to inclusive and sustainable urban development.

For the government, both national and local authorities should move beyond enforcement and towards institutional support. Local governments are encouraged to establish inclusive and well-planned vending zones that ensure safety, sanitation, and accessibility without displacing vendors. To make policy interventions both impactful and attainable, local governments should begin with phased and community-based improvements rather than large-scale infrastructure projects. Establishing designated vending areas with basic yet essential amenities such as shared water access points, proper waste disposal bins, and shaded stalls can significantly improve hygiene and organization without requiring major capital investment. Over time, these sites may be upgraded through partnerships with local businesses, cooperatives, and local community groups.

For most municipalities, they already maintain vendor registration, sanitation monitoring, and local coordination mechanisms, but these processes are often inconsistent, underfunded, or poorly enforced. Enhancing these existing systems through regular coordination meetings, updated vendor databases, and clear accountability structures can greatly improve efficiency and fairness in enforcement. Providing barangay officials and market administrators with training in vendor management and basic record-keeping will also help professionalize these functions while ensuring that policies are applied consistently.

Financial empowerment can also be pursued gradually through existing mechanisms. Local governments can collaborate with Negosyo Centers under the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), local cooperatives, and accredited microfinance institutions to provide financial literacy, bookkeeping, and entrepreneurial competency training tailored to vendors' actual business conditions. These initiatives can be implemented through barangay-based seminars or community workshops in partnership with nearby colleges and universities. Strengthening vendors' entrepreneurial competencies including innovation, customer service, and business planning will enable them to transition from subsistence operations to sustainable microenterprises, reinforcing self-sufficiency and competitiveness while remaining feasible for local governments.

For the vendors, self-organization and active participation are essential for long-term success. Vendors are encouraged to form or strengthen associations and cooperatives that foster skill-sharing, collective advocacy, and access to shared resources. Engaging in capacity-building programs that develop both technical and entrepreneurial skills such as product innovation, marketing, customer relations, and financial management can enhance business performance and consumer confidence. Embracing affordable technologies, including digital payments and social media promotion, can further expand market reach. Compliance with food safety and sanitation standards should be viewed as an integral part of entrepreneurial professionalism and business credibility.

For the community, inclusive support and cooperation are vital in creating a thriving business environment for street food vendors. Residents and consumers should recognize the important role that vendors play in ensuring food accessibility, preserving local culture, and supporting the local economy. Local community groups, educational institutions, and local businesses can collaborate with vendors through community-based entrepreneurship programs, mentorship initiatives, and local food fairs that celebrate safe, sustainable, and innovative street food practices. Encouraging mutual respect and accountability between vendors and the community will foster cleaner, safer, and more dynamic public spaces that benefit all stakeholders.

Lastly, for future researchers, it is recommended to broaden the scope of inquiry by including additional municipalities or regions to develop a more comprehensive understanding of vendors' adaptability and entrepreneurial competency across diverse contexts. Future studies may explore correlations between demographic characteristics, entrepreneurial skills, and adaptability levels, as well as the long-term impacts of government interventions on vendors' economic stability. Longitudinal and mixed-method studies can provide deeper insights into how coping mechanisms and entrepreneurial capacities evolve amid changing economic, technological, and environmental conditions. Moreover, investigating emerging factors such as the influence of digitalization, tourism, and climate change can yield valuable implications for designing responsive policies.

By implementing these multidimensional recommendations, stakeholders can collectively transform street food vending into a model of inclusive and entrepreneurial development that empowers individuals, strengthens local economies, and supports sustainable urban growth. Enhancing vendors' entrepreneurial competencies through innovation, partnership, and protection will not only uplift their quality of life but also advance the nation's broader goals of equity, resilience, and sustainable progress.

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