

FOOD SERVICE DELIVERY, HYGIENE PRACTICE AND PASSENGERS SATISFACTION AT TRANSPORT TERMINAL: A CASE OF AKURE SOUTH, ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Food safety remains a pressing global public health concern, with the informal food sector playing a critical role in providing accessible meals, particularly in transit hubs such as motor parks. This study examines passengers' assessments of service quality and hygiene standards among food vendors in Akure's South motor parks, aiming to evaluate safety in food delivery. Using a quantitative survey approach, data were gathered via structured, closed-ended questionnaires from 167 randomly selected passengers from 3 motor parks. Results indicate that service delivery was generally satisfactory, with tangibility receiving the highest mean score (3.6048), followed by reliability, assurance, and responsiveness. However, empathy received the lowest score (3.3832), highlighting the need for improved attention to individual customer needs. In contrast, hygiene practices were perceived less favourably. Although many respondents agreed on some aspects of hygiene, the average mean score of 3.2827 and a mode of 4 reflect widespread dissatisfaction. Statistical analysis further supported this finding: a strong positive correlation ($R = 0.753$, $p = 0.000$) was observed between perceived hygiene practices and reported incidents of foodborne illness. This suggests that poor hygiene practices are significantly associated with higher reports of foodborne diseases among passengers. Regression analysis confirmed the model's robustness ($F = 301.336$, $p = 0.000$), with an R^2 of 78.6%, indicating that passenger perceptions of hygiene and service delivery strongly predict overall satisfaction. The study concludes that there is a significant relationship between food service delivery, hygiene practice and passenger satisfaction at transport terminals.

Keywords: Food service delivery, hygiene practice, passengers' satisfaction, food safety

1. | Introduction

Food forms an essential part of passengers' travel experiences, and these foods may include complete meals, snacks, fruits and beverages made available at the parks by various vendors and sellers. Important as the food is, the quality of service and the hygiene or safety in the consumption of the food, which in turn affects passengers' satisfaction. Globally, food safety remains a critical public

health concern, with records showing that over "600 million people fall ill each year due to consumption of contaminated food" (WHO, 2015). In developing countries such as Nigeria, the food service sector is largely dominated by informal vendors or street food sellers who provide customers with a variety of affordable meals, which are cheaply and most times prepared under unhygienic conditions (Salamandane *et al.*, 2023).

Street food vendors are essential in offering affordable and convenient meals, especially in busy areas like motor parks. However, research shows that in many urban settings, the consumption of street food is often associated with foodborne illness outbreaks, largely due to poor hygiene at vending locations and unsafe food handling and preparation practices (Rane, 2011; Alimi, 2016; Salamandane, 2023). Many street food vendors often do not meet basic food safety standards, and most times due to their level of educational exposure and less supervision, they handle ingredients in ways that can cause cross-contamination, leave cooked or perishable items out in unsafe conditions for too long, and skip crucial hygiene steps such as proper handwashing or cooking or cleaning their equipment (Negassa *et al.*, 2023; Luo *et al.*, 2021). Some vendors, in the name of cutting costs, providing cheap food and making a profit, even purchase spoiled food items and demonstrate poor hygiene practices, such as being unwilling to use sufficient water for washing, applying inadequate heat during cooking, or failing to maintain food at safe temperatures.

Eresia-Eke *et al.*, (2018) reported that “it is difficult to come up with specific strategic methods for sustained performance without understanding the quality of street food”. The quality of street food at motor parks can be evaluated based on passengers’ perceptions of hygiene practices and the standard of service delivery. Even when food is properly prepared, poor handling or serving practices can lead to contamination, thereby posing risks to passengers’ health. This necessitates the assessment of both the hygiene practices and food delivery quality. As reported by Yusof and Ramli (2025), service delivery quality and its evaluation are crucial for all providers, including street food vendors at motor parks, as this affects passengers’ satisfaction, and to an extent their travel experiences and revisit intentions.

Studies have highlighted the precarious hygienic and operational conditions under which many food

vendors operate. The study of Negassa., *et al.*, (2023) highlighted that some food vendors operate in conditions that not only compromise consumer health but also their satisfaction of quality-of-service delivery. It has been observed that passengers and commuters, who constitute a major share of the customer base at motor parks, often have limited time and options when choosing where and what to eat, making them more vulnerable to foodborne illnesses and poor-quality services. These observations underscore the importance of evaluating service delivery quality among street food vendors, as passengers’ perceptions of hygiene and service standards not only affect their immediate satisfaction but may also shape their future willingness to patronise such vendors, and even the motor parks if they have better alternatives (Yusof & Ramli, 2025).

Furthermore, while WHO (2025), reports show that the occurrence of foodborne diseases could be evidently linked to the consumption of street-vended food, there is a lack of systematic inquiry into the extent to which such health issues are experienced by consumers in motor park environments, particularly in Akure, and their relationship to their perception about hygiene practices. Previous studies have recommended that policymakers and public health officials implement interventions such as educating food vendors and monitoring and regulating their operations, so as to enhance food safety in public places (Palupi *et al.*, 2024; Soon *et al.*, 2012). While these recommendations are valuable, there remains a limited understanding of the actual quality of hygiene practices among vendors, making it difficult to determine which training initiatives are most relevant and effective. This gap is particularly pronounced in local contexts such as Akure South, where empirical evidence on hygiene practices is scarce. Another notable gap in the literature is the limited attention given to passengers’ perceptions of food service delivery quality at motor parks in Akure South. This is critical because passengers’ views on both food service delivery and hygiene practices

directly shape their travel experiences and overall satisfaction. Thus, this study seeks to achieve the following objectives: Appraise the service delivery of food vendors at motor parks in Akure and to evaluate passengers' perceptions of the adequacy and effectiveness of hygiene practices implemented by food vendors at motor parks in Akure.

2. | Literature Review

Edeme and Nkalu (2018) noted that food vending in Nigeria dates back to the colonial era, yet concerns about its safety have persisted for decades. Outbreaks of foodborne illnesses, among other factors, have often been traced to the consumption of contaminated or spoiled food, which is the result of poor hygienic practices during preparation, including the handling of raw materials, the use of utensils and water, and the overall cleanliness of the environment (Odonkor, 2011; Weiser *et al.*, 2016). Food safety is about making sure that food does not cause harm when it has been properly prepared, served and eaten the way it is meant to be. Therefore, implying the need for strict attention to hygiene and handling practices at every stage of food preparation and selling, as poor food handling practices among street vendors can cause contamination and foodborne diseases with serious health consequences (Zanin *et al.*, 2017). According to Samapundo *et al.*, (2016), the risk of exposure to foodborne illness is worsened due to “weak regulatory enforcement”, and thus Eresia-Eke *et al.*, (2020) highlighted the importance of understanding food quality and service delivery at motor parks as a basis for developing effective strategies that strengthen regulatory frameworks.

Effective service delivery among food vendors at motor parks extends beyond boosting vendors' sales or profit to enhancing passengers' experiences, which can attract repeat patronage and visits to a park even in the presence of other competitive alternatives. The “SERVQUAL” model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), comprising “tangibles, reliability, responsiveness,

assurance, and empathy” (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988), has been widely applied across industries to evaluate service delivery quality. These dimensions collectively create value that influences customer satisfaction and revisit intentions. Perceived value, defined as the consumer's assessment of benefits relative to costs, “plays a critical role in shaping satisfaction” (Seo & Lee, 2021). Satisfaction itself reflects the degree to which a service meets or exceeds consumers' related expectations, thereby influencing long-term loyalty (Oliver, 2010).

Empirical studies consistently highlight the importance of quality service delivery in shaping customer perceptions and behaviours within street food contexts. For instance, Seo and Lee (2021) found that quality food service delivery dimensions significantly influence both utilitarian and hedonic values, with service quality positively impacting repurchase intentions. Similarly, Morano *et al.*, (2018) observed that cleanliness enhances perceived healthiness, thereby reinforcing perceptions of product quality. Eresia-Eke *et al.*, (2020) further demonstrated a strong correlation between service quality dimensions and repeat patronage, although gaps in responsiveness and empathy were noted as areas of customer dissatisfaction. Complementing these insights, Joo *et al.*, (2015) identified sanitation as a critical determinant of customer satisfaction in Korea and Taiwan, where respondents expressed its importance but reported dissatisfaction with prevailing standards.

Furthermore, Nizame *et al.*, (2019) reported widespread deficiencies in food handling, noting limited access to water and soap in preparation areas and alarmingly poor handwashing practices among food handlers in both restaurants and street stalls. Similarly, Negassa *et al.*, (2023) found that only 31.5% of street food vendors demonstrated good hygiene practices, with education level and gender influencing outcomes, where better-educated food vendors, and males in particular, were found to practice higher standards of hygiene.

Although previous research highlights the role of food service delivery and hygiene practices in influencing customer satisfaction, there is limited empirical evidence on the quality of these practices within motor parks in Akure and their influence on passengers' satisfaction, hence this study.

Based on the review of the literature, the study formulated the following hypotheses:

H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between passengers' perceptions of hygiene practices among food vendors at motor parks and their reported incidence of foodborne illnesses.

H_{02} : Passengers' perception of hygiene practices and service delivery of food vendors has no significant impact on passenger satisfaction.

3. | Material and Methods

A quantitative survey research methodology is employed in this research study. The survey instrument used in this study is a structured questionnaire, which consists of closed-ended questions. Akure South Local Government Area, Ondo State, Nigeria, was chosen as the study area due to its economic and institutional viability, strong connectivity, and high level of population inflow and outflow. Based on findings from the pilot study conducted, Benin Garage Park records a monthly passenger influx of approximately 11,400; Ondo Park records a monthly passenger influx of approximately 6,600, and Federal University of Technology, Akure (FUTA) north gate park records a monthly passenger influx of 4,600. Using Taro Yamane (1967), the appropriate sample size was estimated to be 400. The study employed a simple random sampling technique to select passengers at the motor parks, using closed-ended questionnaires as the primary instrument for data collection.

A questionnaire was used as the research instrument. The questionnaire had two sections, the first targeting respondent demographic information and the second

section had observed variables that address latent variables such as satisfaction, food service quality, delivery, hygiene practices, and experiences with food-borne illnesses. Descriptive statistics such as mean and frequency distribution, along with inferential statistics such as Pearson product moment correlation and multiple linear regression, were used for the report and analysis.

4. | Results

4.1 | Service Delivery of Food Vendors at Motor Parks in Akure

Service quality delivery of food vendors at motor parks was measured using the five dimensions of the SERVQUAL model, which includes "Tangibility, Reliability, Assurance, Empathy and Responsiveness" (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1988). The result of the findings, as shown in Table 1, indicates that food service delivery quality at motor parks in Akure was generally perceived as moderately satisfactory across all SERVQUAL measures. Specifically, the result showed that tangibility had the highest score with a mean of 3.61, followed by reliability with a mean of 3.53. This suggests that passengers were moderately satisfied with the vendors' physical facilities, equipment, and appearance, as well as their ability to deliver services reliably and accurately. Furthermore, the result from the findings also showed that Assurance dimension had a mean of 3.51, and Responsiveness a mean of 3.47, with empathy being the least with a mean of 3.38.

4.2 | Evaluation of Passengers' Perceptions of Hygiene Practices

The descriptive insight into passengers' perceptions of the adequacy and effectiveness of hygiene practices implemented by food vendors at motor parks in Akure South is presented in Table 2. The results revealed that the five top most pressing hygiene concern was the failure of food vendors to properly separate raw and cooked food with mean

Table 1 | Assessment of service delivery quality using SERVQUAL dimensions

Dimensions	Questions Scale	Mean	Average mean
Tangibility	The food vendors provide adequate and comfortable seating for customers	3.70	3.61
	The food vendors and their sales person maintain a neat and tidy appearance	3.67	
	The food served by vendors looks fresh and well-presented	3.58	
	The environment of food vendors at park are comfortable for eating	3.57	
	Food vendors shops at motor parks are clean and attractive	3.52	
Reliability	The food vendors at the motor parks often serve customers what they ordered	3.71	3.53
	The food served are always fresh, and at appropriate temperature as I want	3.54	
	The quality of food and service at motor park are consistent	3.46	
	Food vendors promptly correct mistakes in food orders or service issues	3.43	
Assurance	Food vendors at motor parks demonstrate a good understanding of food safety and handling practices	3.40	3.51
	Food vendors ensure their food stalls are clean, safe, and secure for customers	3.58	
	I trust that the food vendors at motor parks prepare food that is safe, nutritious, and healthy	3.57	
	Food vendors at motor parks can provide clear and accurate information about their menu items	3.49	
Empathy	Food vendors at motor parks are flexible and can accommodate special customer requests	3.19	3.38
	Food vendors are supportive and provide assistance when customers face difficulties	3.41	
	Food vendors at motor parks listen to customer concerns and provide helpful responses	3.44	
	Food vendors treat all customers with courtesy and respect	3.50	
Responsiveness	I do not have to wait in long queues to buy food from motor park vendors.	3.90	3.47
	Food vendors at motor parks provide quick and efficient service	3.61	
	Food vendors are open to customer complaints and have staff available to address concerns promptly	3.25	
	Customers are informed in advance about changes in service, such as payment methods or food availability	3.13	

of 3.55, closely followed by unclean food preparation areas exposed to flies, rodents, and waste with mean of 3.50, then by inadequate supply of clean water for cooking and washing with mean of 3.44, the presence of insects and pests around food stalls with mean of 3.38, and the reusing of utensils without

proper washing with mean of 3.34. Overall, the average mean score across all hygiene indicators was 3.28, indicating that passengers generally perceived hygiene practices at motor parks in Akure South to be below satisfactory standards.

Table 2 | Descriptive Analysis of Perception of Hygiene Practices

Rank	Questions on passengers perception of hygiene practices	Mean	Average mean
1	Food vendors at motor parks do not separate raw and cooked food properly, increasing the risk of contamination.	3.55	
2	Food vendors leave their food preparation areas unclean, damp, or exposed to flies, rodents, and improperly disposed waste.	3.5	
3	Food vendors lack a sufficient supply of clean water for cooking and washing food or utensils.	3.44	
4	The food vendor premises have visible insects or pests.	3.38	
5	Food vendors leave their food uncovered and exposed to environmental contamination.	3.35	
6	Food vendors or their staff handle food despite having visible cuts, wounds, or signs of skin infections.	3.35	
7	Food vendors reuse utensils (plates, spoons, etc.) without properly washing them with dishwashing soap.	3.34	
8	Food vendors or their staff eat, chew gum, or drink while preparing or serving food.	3.32	3.2827
9	Despite showing signs of illness (such as coughing or sneezing), food vendors and their staff continue to prepare and serve food.	3.32	
10	Food vendors and staff do not maintain proper hand hygiene, such as washing hands regularly, keeping fingernails short, avoiding nail polish, or refraining from using artificial nails.	3.14	
11	Food vendors rarely wash their hands or fail to wear gloves and masks when necessary while serving food.	3.1	
12	Food vendors and staff do not properly dry their hands after washing, using unclean towels or other unhygienic drying methods.	3.07	
13	Food vendors lack proper handwashing facilities, such as sinks, portable stations, or hand sanitizers.	3.06	
14	Food vendors and staff do not wear hair covers and often leave their hair loose while handling food.	3.05	

4.3 | Test for Hypothesis

A Pearson Moment Correlation analysis was employed to examine the hypothesis. The two variables were defined as: X is passengers' perceptions of hygiene practices among food vendors at motor parks, and Y is passengers reported incidents of foodborne illnesses. The results, as presented in Table 3, show a strong positive correlation between passengers' perception of hygiene practices and their reported incidence of foodborne illnesses at a Pearson correlation coefficient of R is 0.753, which is significant at a P-value of 0.001. This indicates

that poor hygiene practices perceived by passengers are significantly associated with reported cases of foodborne illnesses. Given that the P-value is at 0.001, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternate which states that "there is a significant relationship between passengers' perceptions of hygiene practices among food vendors at motor parks and their reported incidence of foodborne illnesses", is accepted. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a statistically significant relationship between passengers' perceptions of hygiene practices and their reported incidence of foodborne illnesses at motor parks in Akure South.

Table 3 | Pearson moment correlation table

Correlations			
		Perception Hygiene practices (X)	Reported incident of illnesses (Y)
Perception_Hygiene_prac- tices (X)	Pearson Correlation	1	0.753**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	167	167
Reported_incident_illness- es (Y)	Pearson Correlation	0.753**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	167	167

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

This second hypothesis was tested statistically using the Multiple Regression Analysis, where variables were defined as: Y is Passengers' satisfaction (Dependent Variable), X₁ is Service delivery (Independent variable) and X₂ is Perception of hygiene practices (Independent variable). As presented in Table 4, it shows that the regression model yielded a strong correlation coefficient with R value of 0.887 and a high coefficient of determination (R-square) of 0.786, indicating that approximately 78.6% of the variance in passenger satisfaction is explained by service delivery and perception of hygiene practices. Furthermore, the ANOVA results presented in Table 5 indicate that the regression model is statistically significant, with an F-calculated value of 301.336, exceeding the F-critical value of 3.05 at a significance level of 0.001. This implies that both hygiene practices and service delivery together have a strong effect on passenger satisfaction.

The results of the regression coefficient presented in Table 6 show that both predictors make statistically significant contributions to passenger satisfaction. Service delivery recorded the strongest effect with a coefficient value of 0.710, and a P-value less than 0.001, suggesting it is the most influential predictor. Perception of hygiene practices also had a significant, though smaller, effect with a coefficient value of 0.230, P-value of less than 0.001. However, it should be noted that the constant term was negative at an intercept value of -0.504 and a P-value of 0.002. This implies that without the contributions of service delivery and hygiene practices, satisfaction levels would fall below average. Summarily, the findings reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis, which states that “Passengers' perception of hygiene practices and service delivery of food vendors have a significant impact on passengers’ satisfaction.”

Table 4 | Regression Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.887 ^a	0.786	0.783	0.5162

a. Predictors: (Constant), Perception of Hygiene Practices, Service delivery

Table 5 | ANOVA Table from Regression Analysis

ANOVA ^A						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	160.578	2	80.289	301.336	0.000 ^b
	Residual	43.697	164	0.266		
	Total	204.274	166			

a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Perception of Hygiene Practices, Service Delivery

Table 6 | Regression Coefficients Table

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	-.504	0.164		-3.079	0.002
	Hygiene_Percep_recode	0.230	0.050	0.230	4.555	0.000
	Service_delivery	0.888	0.063	0.710	14.063	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction

5. | Discussion

The study gives a clearer picture of the hygiene practices and quality of service delivery of food vendors at motor parks in Akure South, Ondo State. To begin, the quality-of-service delivery was measured using the SERVQUAL model. Among the five SERVQUAL measures, tangibility ranked the highest with a mean of 3.61, showing that passengers were most satisfied with the vendors' appearance, how the food was presented, and the general cleanliness. This agrees with the study of Parasuraman *et al.*, (1988) and Morano *et al.*, (2018), which pointed out that physical facilities and hygiene strongly influence how people judge service quality. Reliability, with a mean of 3.53, and assurance, with a mean of 3.51, ranked following the tangibility dimension, showing that while food was generally fresh and safe, consistency and effective communication remain weak, echoing the concerns raised by Seo and Lee (2021). Lastly, responsiveness and empathy, with means of 3.47 and 3.38, respectively, were the least rated and ranked

lowest. These findings are indicative of food vendors' inadequacies in handling and providing flexible and personalised services, which agrees with the earlier work by Eresia-Eke *et al.*, (2020) carried out in South Africa, underscoring the need for street food vendors at motor parks in Akure South to improve responsiveness and empathy dimension to strengthen passengers' satisfaction and loyalty.

Additionally, the result on passengers' perception of hygiene practices by food vendors at motor parks in Akure South Local Government Area (LGA), Ondo State, showed that passengers were merely satisfied with the hygiene practices of food vendors at motor parks, with an average mean score of 3.28 across all the measurement questions. A similar study carried out by Nizame *et al.*, (2019) in Bangladesh revealed that there is a major gap in hygiene and food handling practices among food vendors at motor parks. According to Negassa *et al.*, (2023) study in Ethiopia, the poor hygiene practices witnessed at motor parks could be attributed to the low-income level of the food vendors, poor government

policies and inconsistent regulations, inspection and standardisation of street food vendors' operations. In Nigeria, this as well could be attributed to corrupt practices, where government personnel in charge of public food inspection and controls fail to do their duties.

The hypothesis testing whether there is no significant relationship between passengers' perceptions of hygiene practices among food vendors and their reported incidence of foodborne illnesses was examined using Pearson correlation analysis. The results, which showed a strong positive relationship with $R = 0.753$ and significance at $p < 0.001$, imply that poor hygiene practices were strongly linked to cases of foodborne illnesses among passengers. The findings also revealed that passengers who had experienced foodborne illnesses held more negative views about the hygiene practices of food vendors at motor parks. This strong link stresses the need for high standards of cleanliness and food safety at motor parks. The negative views about food vendors' hygiene at motor parks in Akure are in line with the study of Negassa *et al.*, (2022), which found that almost half of street food vendors had poor hygiene knowledge and practices, with training, access to information, and lack of standard operational licensing playing key roles. Likewise, the reported cases of foodborne illnesses among passengers at motor parks in Akure South LGA agree with findings from Ile-Ife LGA, where food sold at motor parks was often exposed to contamination risks caused by poor facilities, bad waste management, and the presence of pests (Alimi *et al.*, 2016).

The results obtained from testing the hypothesis, "passengers' perception of hygiene practices and service delivery of food vendors have no significant impact on passenger satisfaction," show that both hygiene practices and service delivery clearly affect passenger satisfaction. This matches the findings of earlier studies, which showed that service quality and good hygiene practices strongly shape passenger satisfaction and decisions to buy again,

as they influence how people judge the healthiness of the food and the overall quality of services (Seo & Lee, 2021; Morano *et al.*, 2018). From the reports of Seo and Lee (2021), perceived value is how a consumer rates the usefulness of a service, based on the benefits they get compared to the cost or effort put into getting it. When this value meets or goes beyond expectations, the customer can be said to be satisfied, but when it is less, customers are said to be dissatisfied. Thus, food vendors must make sure that both their service delivery and hygiene practices meet passengers' expectations.

6. | Conclusion and Recommendations

This research examined food delivery services, hygiene practices, and passengers' satisfaction at motor parks in Akure South, Ondo, Nigeria. The findings showed that while food vendors had a satisfactory score from passengers in terms of service delivery, with strengths in tangibility, reliability, assurance, and responsiveness, they scored below passengers' satisfaction in areas such as empathy and hygiene practices. The findings also showed that there is a significant relationship between passengers' perceptions of hygiene practices and their reported incidence of foodborne illnesses. Furthermore, both hygiene practices and service delivery have a significant impact on passengers' satisfaction. Thus, the study recommends that food vendors at Motor Parks should prioritize maintaining good personal hygiene around their premises to attract and satisfy a broader customer base, government and related organisations should engage in educating food vendors and the public on the importance of hygiene, most especially as the population keeps increasing, and stakeholders such as park management should engage in periodic check and supervisions of food vendors to ensure they comply with both service and hygiene standards.

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