ABSTRACT

Purpose: Street foods are enjoyed by all walks of life throughout the world. It offers a variety of delicacies, easily accessible and affordable. The street food industry in Bangladesh is of no exception. However, street food vendors in Bangladesh typically come from low socioeconomic backgrounds and lack appropriate understanding of good production methods resulting in poor sanitary standards. The purpose of this study is to examine the prospects for sustainability and growth in Bangladesh's street food business since this sector has great economic potential for the country.

Approach: Qualitative research approach was employed by interviewing ten street food vendors. The interviewees were asked on a wide range of questions including their history, understanding of quality management, understanding of customer relationship management, planning and delivery, and the regulatory frameworks under which business is conducted (18 questions in all).

Findings: The findings reveal that street food vendors are not well-versed in waste reduction, hygiene, or food quality. They have very limited knowledge on how to manage their customer interactions or develop any skills in this area. Formalization of street food business is observed as a key driver towards sustainability and growth for this sector.

Originality: This study brings to light the challenges of street food in Bangladesh arising from weakness in quality management and customer relationship management roadmap. Risk management, contingency planning, training, formal licensing, and audits are critical in order to improve industry sustainability.

KEYWORDS: Street food industry, quality management, customer relationship management and formal licensing of business.

INTRODUCTION

This study intends to examine the street food industry in Bangladesh and identify the essential elements needed to enhance its sustainability and expansion. Street food, as defined by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 1995), refers to ready-to-eat foods and beverages that are made and/or sold by vendors or hawkers, typically in streets and similar locations.

Street food customers were concerned about incorrect waste disposal, unclean cooking and storage tools, insufficient storage areas, poor-quality ingredients, particularly fats, and a lack of potable water. The aforesaid demonstrates the urgent need to formalize this industry in Bangladesh for healthy growth and sustainability.

Most material on street food formalization focuses on cleanliness and sanitary norms. Only Aghazadeh (2004) has highlighted logistics management as a formalization measure. As a formalization measure, they implemented information management systems to reduce waste. Illiterate or partially literate street food vendors cannot do this, but educated business owners who run informal enterprises with technology can.

Few researches have examined the relationship between street food customer enjoyment and retention. CRM extends beyond making sure brand loyalists and newcomers like their products, services, and jobs. This street food CRM notion represents a crucial research gap. Prior research has not established how street food vendors might improve quality control, even though sustainability is possible.

This study will employ qualitative interviews with street food vendors in Dhaka, Bangladesh in an endeavor to answer the following questions:

1. How does Quality Management (QM) aid in formalizing street food businesses?
2. How can Customer Relationship Management Strategies help formalize street food businesses?
3. How can street food businesses be long-term sustainable?

Dhaka's street food vendors face numerous challenges which can be addressed by formalizing this industry using Quality...
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Management and Customer Relationship Management, enabling them to integrate into the mainstream company and self-driven entrepreneur sectors.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Street food, as defined by the WHO (1996), is food and drink supplied by sellers in public spaces for immediate consumption. Analysis found that street food vendors market differently than restaurants. Sellers said speedier meal delivery and reduced costs drove street food demand. However, the client valued a handy location, flexible business hours, food options, and cooking demonstrations. Street food vendors offer economical food and self-employment to urban poor. These small firms need the numerous networks that enable this economy to succeed.

STREET FOOD INDUSTRY IN BANGLADESH: AN OVERVIEW
Population density is high in Bangladesh. Over 170 million people live in this country, 60% of whom are poor. Street food vendors are vital to Dhaka's food supply. Dhaka has hundreds of thousands of street food and restaurant businesses. Dhaka City street food vendors make a living from informal self-employment. Vendors sell several things from various vending machines. Their relationship with shops, kitchen units, and other food chain actors is crucial. Different customer groups eat street food differently. Official numbers understate the number of street food vendors because they are not taxpaying enterprises. Ahmed (2000) reports that Dhaka has 200,000 street food vendors, a number that is growing due to the 5% yearly urban population growth. Faruque et al. (2010) found that 25% of Dhaka street food vendors cannot write their names or have formal education. Most street food vendors (88%) were business owners because the sector required little money. They work 13–18 hours a day and earn up to TK 283,00, according to reports. Most vending machines (68%) were situated on sidewalks, 30% near drains, and 18% near sewage in all regions.

FORMALIZATION OF INFORMAL ENTERPRISES INCLUDING STREET FOOD BUSINESS
While informal enterprises contribute to economic circulation, their tax evasion techniques make tax assessment difficult, underlining the need to transfer them into the formal sector (Dzansi and Tasssin-Njike, 2014). Due to banks' preference for formal enterprises, informal ones must formalize to develop (Rolfe et al., 2010). Informal companies absorb socioeconomically disadvantaged people without formal education and resources, but their modest size limits the economy (Dzansi and Tasssin-Njike, 2014). Unregistered street food vendors may formalize due to social benefits such greater employment, tax contributions, and social responsibility, despite expected hurdles.

RESEARCH DESIGN
The researcher interviewed ten street food vendors to understand their quality management and customer service concerns about formalizing street food company. These interviews addressed the study questions “How Quality Management (QM) can support formalization of street food business?” and “How Customer Relationship Management (CRM) can support formalization?” The researcher intended to identify interview patterns and develop a street food formalization roadmap in Bangladesh. Methodological triangulation was used in addition to interviews and previous research.

According to Figure 3.1, this research will include four phases:
- In Phase-1, qualitative data is compiled into a formal database of interview transcripts. Based on the interviews taken, shortcomings and scopes of formalization via quality management and customer relationship management will be examined.
- In Phase-2, a new narrative will be created based on Phase-1 findings.
- In Phase 3, we suggest formalization steps for the street food business in Bangladesh.
- In Phase 4, the researcher will end the study and consider future research opportunities.
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Figure-1 Flowchart for the research framework

This study relies on organized qualitative interviews. The researcher met with participants individually. Purposive sampling was used to interview ten sellers in Dhaka at ten locations. A formal questionnaire was employed for interviews. The researcher held a casual conversation before the interview to calm them and get correct information. Most street food vendors are illiterate, so they agree verbally. The printed deed would also intimidate them into supplying accurate information. One question per seller. Ten street food sellers were questioned. They come from ten major Dhaka neighborhoods: Bou Bazar-Mirpur 14, Kochukhet, Pulpar, Gol Chottor-Mirpur 10, Agargaon, Shahbag, TSC, Tejgaon I/A, Shewrapara, and Kazipara. Interviews were place from November 10-16, 2022. All were interviewed while running the food cart so the researcher (interviewer) could observe their quality and customer management actions and verify their answers. The researcher formed a methodological triangulation and made a strong recommendation by matching their responses with actual observation and analysis of past South-Asian measurements. Planning and delivery, quality management and customer relationship management, and legal norms and economic activity structure were the researcher's questionnaire topics. Three subsections have 18 prepared questions. Each question was picked from mobile food seller research. The verbatim was written after taping the interviews live. A pleasant conversation before the interview helped them feel comfortable with the researcher and provide accurate information. Due to their illiteracy, most street food vendors did not need consent. Participants were encouraged to be honest. Their circumstances did not cause them to lie.

NARRATIVES ON QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

Question: How many employees are on your team? Is their work well-defined?
Two to three individuals manage each street food cart, dividing tasks among themselves. They prepare ingredients, cook, assemble food, take orders, serve customers, and handle payments. Additionally, they maintain cleanliness, restock supplies, and address customer inquiries and complaints. These helpers also assist in setting up and dismantling the cart and undertake other supportive activities for the seller.

Question: Are you intending to establish and manage a store?
A formal food shop was discussed with the suppliers. All expressed interest in opening a shop. Some are saving to rent a tiny shop. This sector needs formalization since no business can survive without it. Fortunately, two traders said they had opened formal shops in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and planned more. In addition to their formal shop, they wish to keep their food cart van, which is portable and profitable due to low investment.

Question: Do you have any plans to extend your current shop by increasing its size?
Two vendors want to expand their stores to serve more customers and offer more food. They see this as an opportunity to develop their firm, raise income, and create more jobs for peers. Most other sellers want a formal shop to expand their business. However, some vendors choose to keep their shop small and controllable and do not want to expand. They prefer a small firm to preserve quality and personalize client service.

Question: What actions have you implemented to uphold cleanliness standards for your customers?
Most street food sellers lack formal hygiene training, offering only basic handwashing facilities with unpurified water from nearby sources. Consequently, their shops often become unclean, deterring customers. Despite daily cleaning routines, this is insufficient. However, there is hope as all vendors express interest in receiving formal training on food hygiene and sanitation, signaling a positive step towards formalizing the sector.

Question: How do you ensure food quality is maintained?
They run the firm using self-learning, family learning, and experience. Vendors must be trained in food quality and preparation to run a formal company.
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Question: How do you plan to maintain the business if commodity prices continue to increase? What strategy would you propose to pay all expenses and maintain profits?
The vendor suggested adding more dishes with cheaper ingredients or less market volatility to their menu. Additionally, merchants may negotiate lower prices with current suppliers or find cheaper providers to satisfy their demands. The seller may need to raise prices to cover expenses and maintain profit margins, but they must do so carefully to prevent losing customers.

Question: Are you intending to cultivate strong and enduring ties with customers? What actions have you made in this regard?
They couldn't answer this question, demonstrating poor client relationship management. They cannot conceive of ways to improve customer service beyond ‘good behavior’ and ‘good food’. Local customers can 'eat now, pay later' from one vendor. Given the quick sell, it's a smart idea, but risky in the long run.

Question: How do you address client complaints regarding food quality or the environment?
Trial and error is their only food quality complaint response. Some provide replacement or pay back for food quality complaints. Not so for majority. This is how they lose consumers and fail to retain them, which is essential for a viable business. They overlook the importance of hygiene and cleanliness in consumer pleasure.

NARRATIVES ON PLANNING AND DELIVERY
Question: Would you be interested in receiving training on business ethics, cleanliness, healthy environment, and professionalism from the government or non-governmental organizations (NGO)?
All suppliers want proper training in sanitation, hygiene, customer service, and professionalism. No seller has disagreed. It shows they aim to build a sustainable business and join the mainstream.

Question: How do you minimize food waste?
No food waste reduction plan exists among vendors. They are oblivious of the issue. Most agreed that food waste is harmful but didn't know how to stop it.

Question: How do you handle surplus food at the end of the day?
Some vendors discount leftover food at the end of the day. Some say they take extra food home and feed the family. Stopping food waste benefits certain people. Interestingly, some owners have told their staff to give street kids extra food. Thus, unintentionally, their corporation engages in "Corporate Social Responsibility" (CSR), a demanding facet of formal business. Some admitted to throwing away non-perishable foods like Chow Mein and Pasta and freezing chicken and beef for the next day.

Question: How do you calculate the daily meal quantity to prepare?
Most vendors use their experience to determine how much food to prepare each day to minimize or eliminate waste. Ultimately, they squander a lot of food.

Question: How do you calculate the required amount of raw material to collect daily?
Street food sellers must stock food ingredients. Most said they buy raw materials and stock up based on assumption and experience. How much raw material to buy daily is unknown. Since the product is perishable, they cannot buy large quantities of raw ingredients. Some buy raw supplies based on minimum sale (to prevent wastage), but it often leads to food shortages and early curf pack, which costs money and threatens their corporate reputation.

Question: Do you want home delivery? By partnering with Food Panda, you may increase the number of orders you receive. Are you willing to seize this opportunity? Alternatively, would you rather opt for home delivery with a dedicated delivery person? Why do you not want to?
Due to labor shortages and economic constraints, all merchants have no home delivery system. However, they believed that if they could enhance their profit and Food Panda offered a fair price, they would accept home delivery. Because they believe it will boost sales and branding. Financial constraints and a lack of information about home delivery providers are the main issues.

Question: The cost of raw materials for all food items has now risen. What strategies do you have in place to maintain the business's profitability?
Since Bangladesh is in recession and food prices are higher than ever, vendors were asked about their contingency plans or risk management initiatives. The situation is awkward. The suppliers are already suffering from rising raw material prices, but they have no business plan in case prices rise further. Contingency plans are essential for formal businesses. This must be addressed and vendors taught in risk management plan development.
NARRATIVES ON LEGAL RULES AND STRUCTURE OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Question: If the government wishes to regulate street food business, they may give you a beautiful shop, easy financing for company expansion, and other services in exchange for a trade license and business taxes. What do you think?

All interviewed sellers were interested in government street food regulations. They believe that if the government regulates street food vendors and provides them with permits and proper training, they can build a viable business. Government monitoring will also protect them from police extortion. They all wanted to register with the local government and pay taxes for the subsidiary and security they wanted. Some want a government-supported 'model street food shop'.

Question: Do you want formal business training?

All street vendors want diverse training. Hygiene, food quality, product creation, and customer retention are examples. They accept NGO and private agriculture training. They accept regular audits but are suspicious-no customers or business should leave. They seek audit goals and methods. Their statement compels audit directory bodies and suppliers to keep audit proposals and outcomes.

Question: Would regular visits by NGOs or local governments enhance standards in your shops? If you disagree, why not?

Some street food vendors think NGOs or local governments visiting regularly would improve quality. They use such inspections to get comments on their food quality, hygiene, and customer service and learn about new rules and best practices that could enhance their business.

Other street food vendors doubt such visits' impact. They believe the regulatory framework is too confusing or that NGOs and local governments don't comprehend their difficulties. Some merchants believe the inspections are too rare or shallow to affect their business.

IDENTIFYING THEMES AND PATTERNS

Figure-2 Themes generated from the qualitative interview transcript

The research focuses on quality management and customer relationship management, as indicated in Figure-4.1. Formal training, waste reduction knowledge, hygiene gap, food quality knowledge gap, and licensing are quality management concerns. The interview transcript mentioned home delivery and formal customer service plans as customer relationship management difficulties.

FINDINGS

The first two research questions investigated how to formalize street food company through quality and customer relationship management. Formalization is the only method to sustain this sector, hence the third research question is about it.
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Quality Management (QM) training on food hygiene, waste reduction, and quality can help street food sellers formalize their business. Vendors can cut expenses and increase sales by reducing waste and ensuring food quality. Quality Management (QM) can also guarantee vendors get correct licensing and pass frequent audits to maintain a quality of service.

Aghazadeh (2004) advised assessing supply demands, accounting for supply chain elements, and reducing supply imbalances to reduce food waste and losses. Street food vendors may not be able to keep an exact database, but they can use customer habits and trends to forecast demand and prevent waste. This would lessen their reliance on guesswork and assumption and allow them to accurately estimate daily meal preparation and raw material storage. This Aghazadeh (2004) idea is feasible for street food vendors.

Cortese et al. (2016) advised improving food-handling education, government regulation, and infrastructure to maintain street food sanitation and quality. Rane (2011) stressed food safety when obtaining raw ingredients, transporting products to the vending area, preparing combined ingredients, cooking, storing, serving, sanitizing, and managing garbage. In summary, food preparation and storage require correct handling and hygiene, which starts with education, training, and awareness. Success in quality management and street food formalization depends on it.

According to Bekele and Ayana (2018), street food vendors could benefit from food safety and cleanliness efforts. Vendors could also receive food safety training on food storage and hand cleaning. Vendors should also be required to provide safe drinking water and store food at the right temperature. All of these actions are doable in Bangladesh, thus they would improve street food merchants' food safety and hygiene.

Nwankwo and Ogbodo (2019) recommended public awareness programs about street food safety and the risks of eating them. Financial incentives or support for street food vendors to invest in equipment and infrastructure to preserve food quality was another option.

According to Hejri and Malekizadeh (2019), food safety standards should be monitored and inspected periodically. Additionally, consumers should learn the importance of choosing street food sellers that handle and prepare food safely.

However, a CRM customer service plan can legitimize the street food industry. Most vendors are illiterate or barely literate and need help communicating with clients. With a CRM plan, vendors can keep and gain customers. This can improve their company's image and formalize it. Expert planning and organization for on-time delivery is the researchers' top recommendation. Products must be distributed efficiently, including storage and delivery. The above strategies can improve customer relationship management, reputation, and sector formalization for street food sellers.

Leadership, training, and supervision can help street food sellers focus on customers and build loyalty.

The study by Yuen and Karaman (2018) suggests many ways to improve customer happiness and loyalty to Bangladeshi street food sellers. They advised street food vendors to improve responsiveness, dependability, assurance, empathy, and tangibility. Street food vendors should also use promotions, discounts, and loyalty programs to keep customers. Street food vendors should also go online to allow customers to submit reviews and respond to negative feedback.

Lee and Shin (2019) proposed street food vendors teach their staff on food safety and customer service. They also advised street food vendors to use technology to improve service and food quality. Nian et al. (2019) advised street food vendors to improve food and service quality, pricing, and perceived risks to increase consumer satisfaction and loyalty. Alhaddad and Bakri's (2019) study suggests street food vendors offer high-quality meals at a reasonable price to boost consumer value and happiness.

Street food vendors should improve cuisine, service, and perceived value to maximize consumer satisfaction and loyalty, according to Zhan et al. (2021). Improving food taste and safety, service, and customer perception of value can achieve this. Food quality improves consumer happiness the most, thus vendors should prioritize it. Food quality, service quality, perceived value, and customer loyalty are mediated by customer satisfaction.

A structural study is needed to address Dhaka's street food vendors' issues like the lack of a permanent and sanitary food cart setup, law enforcement eviction and harassment, local political leader bribery, clean water, and food quality and safety information. This industry may compete with traditional and independent businesses with quality and customer relationship management.

NGOs and development groups can provide microcredit, street food nutrition, quality, and diversity, and vendor training. Social scientists can help street vendors, especially women entrepreneurs, by facilitating vendor-led participatory research and studying street food market structural and sociocultural concerns.

DISCUSSION

The investigation found that street food vendors lack waste reduction, hygiene, food quality, and license training. Quality Management (QM) can formalize street food sellers by teaching waste reduction, food hygiene, and quality. Suppliers can cut costs and boost sales while maintaining food quality by eliminating waste. QM helps vendors receive licenses and pass frequent audits to maintain service standards.

To reduce food waste and losses, Aghazadeh (2004) suggested assessing supply demands and correcting imbalances. While street
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food vendors may not have a precise database, they can use customer patterns and trends to predict demand and reduce waste. This method helps street food vendors plan their daily meals without guesswork.

Cortese et al. (2016) suggest food-handling education, government regulation, and infrastructure development to improve street food sanitation and quality. According to Rane (2011), food safety is critical during raw ingredient procurement, transportation, mixing, cooking, storage, service, cleanliness, and rubbish management. Street food formalization and quality management require knowledge, training, and awareness.

CRM can codify street food. Street food vendors require help reaching customers because they are generally uninformed. CRM plans help suppliers build long-term client relationships, enhancing their customer base and reputation. On-time delivery requires planning and organization. For fast product delivery, storage and distribution are necessary. These steps can help street food vendors improve customer relations, reputation, and industry formalization. Training, supervision, and leadership can make street food merchants more customer-focused, improving customer satisfaction and loyalty. Formalizing the street food sector may affect sellers, customers, and municipalities. The “formalization” of an unstructured industry creates conventions and processes.

RECOMMENDATION

LEGAL RULES AND STRUCTURE OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Faruque et al. (2010) did a great study on Dhaka street food vendors’ institutionalization. Along with other proposals to protect health safety and other aspects of street food vending, they offered the following legal rules for formalizing street food businesses.

Registration: Street food vendors must register with local government agencies and renew every three years for a charge and compliance with regulations.

Transparency: Since street food vending affects many underprivileged people and is tied to urban growth, current and future rules must be transparent.

Enactment of laws: Laws will be passed to assist merchants legally, financially, and socioeconomically and ensure public safety and nourishment. Supplier credit will be supported by microfinance and lending institutions without collateral.

Collaboration: Local governments, police, health departments, and street food vendors must work together. The relevant authorities and committees will record the number of registered vendors, the map of zones/plots allocated with the agreed day and time of vending, the fee collected, promotional/supportive activities, complaints registered and resolved, and supportive activity expenditures.

HYGIENE INFRASTRUCTURES

Hygienic methods are needed for delivering goods to the vending location, mixing ingredients, cooking, storing, serving, sanitizing, and rubbish management (Rane, 2011). Cortese et al. (2016) recommend better food-handling education, government oversight, and infrastructure for street food vendors. Most street vendors’ food handling contradicted international standards. To promote hygiene, it suggests industry-specific norms and supervision. There are minimal international restrictions on street food, thus local and federal law is needed.

REQUIRED EDUCATION AND SUPPORT

It is claimed that street food vending just requires fundamental skills, hence more education is not needed to boost performance. Policymakers can learn from formal schooling's insignificance when designing after-work programs for people or children with employment. To attract them, you must prove formal schooling is helpful. Street food vendors may be encouraged to attend formal schooling if NGOs and other organizations teach relevant skills.

Muzaffar et al. (2009) believed that recognizing and supporting this sector would benefit the industry's future. They identified four major difficulties faced by the street food vendor—company operations, business knowledge, extortion, and product and production. This sector would see new and energizing entrepreneurs if political stability, the rule of law, infrastructure facilities, corruptions like paying bribes to law enforcement officials were eliminated, education and training were provided, and financial assistance was provided (Chowdhury, 2007). Brand identification, location, accessibility, flavor, affordability, and quality of fast food dishes are crucial to Bangladeshi customers, according to a study (Islam and Ullah, 2010).

CONCLUSION

Based on the evidence supplied, formalizing Bangladesh's street food sector is an urgent concern. The investigation found substantial issues in quality management, waste reduction, hygiene, food quality, licensing, home delivery service, and customer relationship management. Proper training, information sharing, and sector formalization must solve these concerns.

The data shows that vendors want formal training and business licenses. They are oblivious of food quality, healthy ingredients, and customer relationship management, which are crucial to the sector. The street food industry needs quality management and customer connection management to survive. Addressing Bangladesh's economic condition requires risk management. Waste,
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inventory, and risk management systems are needed to avoid financial losses and sustain the street food industry. Quality management and customer relationship management can formalize and sustain Bangladesh's street food business. The government, commercial sector, and other players should solve the concerns and formalize Bangladesh's street food industry. Future research may study street food vendors in various Bangladeshi cities and regions to learn from their successes and failures. Further examination of street food company formalization effects such licensing, registration, taxation, and legal compliance. This will help understand how formalization affects street food sellers. Customers, politicians, and other stakeholders can be consulted. This will provide a more complete view of the obstacles and opportunities of formalizing street food companies from stakeholders' perspectives.

REFERENCES

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

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<th>QUESTIONS RELATED TO QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT</th>
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<td>The study by Rotaru et al. (2005), Trafialek et al. (2018), and Nirathron (2006) served as the basis for the questions on Quality Management (QM) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM).</td>
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<td>1. How many employees are on your team? Is their work well-defined?</td>
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7. Are you intending to cultivate strong and enduring ties with customers? What actions have you made in this regard?

8. How do you address client complaints regarding food quality or the environment?

QUESTIONS RELATED TO PLANNING AND DELIVERY
The questions about planning and delivery were taken from the research of Rane (2011) and Nirathron (2006).

1. Would you be interested in receiving training on business ethics, cleanliness, healthy environment, and professionalism from the government or non-governmental organizations (NGO)?
2. How do you minimize food waste?
3. How do you handle surplus food at the end of the day?
4. How do you calculate the daily meal quantity to prepare?
5. How do you calculate the required amount of raw material to collect daily?
6. Do you want home delivery? By partnering with Food Panda, you may increase the number of orders you receive. Are you willing to seize this opportunity? Alternatively, would you rather opt for home delivery with a dedicated delivery person? Why do you not want to?
7. The cost of raw materials for all food items has now risen. What strategies do you have in place to maintain the business's profitability?

QUESTIONS RELATED TO LEGAL RULES AND STRUCTURE OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES
Legal and economic structural questions were taken from Nirathron (2006) and Alimi (2016).

1. If the government wishes to regulate street food business, they may give you a beautiful shop, easy financing for company expansion, and other services in exchange for a trade license and business taxes. What do you think?
2. Do you want formal business training?
3. Would regular visits by NGOs or local governments enhance standards in your shops? If you disagree, why not?

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