

**COMPETENCY SKILLS REQUIRED BY BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS
FOR FOOD VENDING ESTABLISHMENTS IN EDO STATE**

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**A RESEARCH WORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS
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BENIN, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY.**

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APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that this work was carried out by **Great Oforitse IYOYIN** with Matriculation Number **EDU2102644**, Department of Business Education, Faculty of Vocational and Technical Education University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State.

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CERTIFICATION

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DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to my parents Mr and Mrs Iyoyin for their love and support throughout my undergraduate level.

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the competency skills required by business education students for food vending establishments in Edo state.

The population of the study consists of 66 business education students from the 300 and 400 level classes of the department of business education, faculty of vocational and technical education, University Of Benin. A census was taken of the entire population due to the size. Hence, sample size of the study is 66 business education student.

The findings are: First, the results showed that culinary skills are highly required, as students agreed that the ability to prepare quality meals is fundamental to running a profitable food vending business. This aligns with the notion that customers' satisfaction in food-related ventures is closely tied to food quality and consistency. The study indicated that marketing and customer-relation skills are critical for success. Students reported that knowing how to attract and retain customer's influences sales volumes and business growth. This suggests that interpersonal communication, product promotion, and customer-service strategies are indispensable components of food vending operations. The Following recommendations were made Business education curriculum should include hands-on food preparation and hygiene courses to strengthen students' culinary competencies. Provide Entrepreneurship and Marketing Workshops: Schools and government agencies should organize regular training programs on product promotion, customer service, and business innovation.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Bilyaminu's (2011) definition of business education highlights it as a comprehensive training that develops the intellectual, practical, and attitudinal capacities of individuals to function effectively in the business world. By stressing "knowledge, skills, attitudes, and understanding," the definition portrays business education as more than mere theoretical learning; it is an all-round preparation that shapes both competence and character. The inclusion of roles as "producer and/or consumer of goods and services" shows that its scope extends beyond employment to active economic participation, whether through creating goods, delivering services, or making informed purchasing decisions. In essence, the definition presents business education as a vital tool for empowering individuals to contribute meaningfully to economic growth and to adapt successfully to the demands of modern commerce.

According to Osuala (2021), business education is "a programme of instruction which consists of two parts: office education, a vocational programme for office careers, and general business education, which provides information and competencies needed by all in managing personal and business affairs." Business Education is a multidisciplinary and practice-oriented field of study that equips individuals with the requisite knowledge, competencies, values, and attitudes necessary to function effectively in the contemporary

business world. It combines theoretical knowledge with practical skills to prepare learners for employment, entrepreneurship, leadership, and lifelong learning. As global economic systems evolve due to rapid technological innovation, structural reforms, and shifts in the labour market, the content and scope of Business Education has expanded to reflect these emerging realities. According to Osuala (2021), Business Education operates both as an academic discipline and a vocational training programme, serving to prepare individuals for productive engagement in various sectors of the economy.

This discourse elaborates on the major areas within Business Education, drawing upon scholarly literature to contextualise their importance. Accounting remains one of the foundational pillars of Business Education, as it is central to financial literacy and economic decision-making. This area entails the process of recording, classifying, summarising, and interpreting financial transactions to inform business decisions. Through accounting education, students acquire the ability to develop financial statements, maintain budgetary control, and conduct financial analysis. Bookkeeping, a sub-field of accounting, specifically addresses the chronological recording of financial transactions, laying the groundwork for accurate financial reporting. Okoro (2020) posits that proficiency in accounting fosters analytical thinking, ethical conduct, and attention to detail traits essential in both private and public sector financial management. With the globalisation of financial reporting standards, accounting education now encompasses International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), auditing principles, and the use of

accounting software. Office Technology and Management (OTM) addresses the technological and administrative functions necessary for efficient office operations. It blends training in clerical processes, digital communication, records management, and office equipment handling. With the increasing digitalisation of administrative roles, OTM now includes exposure to modern software applications such as Microsoft Office Suite, Google Workspace, and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems. Ezeani and Ezemoyih (2022) assert that this area prepares students to function as proficient administrative professionals, executive assistants, and office managers who can adapt to dynamic workplace settings. In the context of remote and hybrid work environments, OTM education also covers competencies in virtual meeting platforms, electronic filing, and workflow automation systems, which are increasingly demanded by employers. Entrepreneurship Education has emerged as a strategic response to unemployment, especially among youth in developing economies. It cultivates an entrepreneurial mindset and equips learners with the skills to identify, evaluate, and exploit business opportunities. Nwangwu (2021) notes that this area enhances competencies such as risk-taking, innovation, business planning, and resilience. Beyond classroom theory, many programmes incorporate practical components such as business simulations, pitch presentations, and start-up incubation. Udu and Udu (2020) emphasise that in environments with limited formal employment opportunities, entrepreneurship education is a tool for fostering economic inclusion and self-reliance. Furthermore, this area

contributes significantly to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by encouraging local content development and inclusive economic growth.

Effective communication remains a non-negotiable skill in every business environment. Business Education addresses this through structured training in both written and oral communication techniques. Learners are taught how to prepare memos, reports, business letters, and presentations, as well as how to communicate effectively during negotiations, meetings, and interviews. Akinbode and Agboola (2021) argue that proficiency in business communication enhances not only interpersonal relationships but also organisational efficiency and customer satisfaction. Given the increasing globalisation of business, students are now trained in intercultural communication, digital communication platforms, and etiquette for virtual correspondence, making them versatile in multicultural business settings.

Business Education is a dynamic and career-oriented discipline that blends theoretical knowledge with practical skills to prepare individuals for gainful employment, entrepreneurship, and responsible participation in economic development. The objectives of Business Education are rooted in the broader aims of equipping learners with competencies that enable them to succeed in a rapidly evolving global environment marked by technological innovation, market competitiveness, and diverse occupational demands. As such, the training of graduates in Business Education goes beyond academic

instruction to include the development of technical proficiency, ethical reasoning, and critical thinking skills necessary for the modern workplace.

According to Nwazor and Okolocha (2021), the core objective of Business Education is to produce individuals who are capable of functioning efficiently as employees or entrepreneurs within various sectors of the economy. This includes the acquisition of skills in accounting, marketing, office management, communication, and information and communication technology (ICT). The curriculum is deliberately structured to foster both cognitive and affective learning outcomes that align with national economic goals and sustainable development initiatives. A well-trained graduate of Business Education is expected to demonstrate a wide range of competencies that reflect the holistic intent of the programme. One of the fundamental objectives is the development of professional and vocational skills that are immediately applicable in business organisations. Graduates should be able to effectively handle accounting operations, manage records, operate business software, prepare financial reports, and execute clerical and administrative tasks with a high level of accuracy and responsibility (Osuala, 2021). These abilities make them valuable assets in public and private sector institutions, including banks, ministries, schools, and entrepreneurial ventures.

Business Education seeks to promote entrepreneurial capacity among graduates. As Okorie and Ezeji (2020) emphasize, entrepreneurship is a key objective of Business Education because it empowers individuals to be self-reliant and to contribute to job creation. A graduate should be able to identify business opportunities, develop feasible

business plans, manage risks, and sustain enterprise operations. This aligns with the broader vision of reducing youth unemployment and stimulating economic growth, particularly in developing economies like Nigeria. Another core objective is to inculcate ethical behaviour, professionalism, and accountability in the conduct of business activities. Ethical reasoning is essential in fostering trust and transparency in the business environment. Graduates should understand the principles of good governance, customer service ethics, and responsible leadership. As noted by Ojo and Adebayo (2022), Business Education does not only aim to train efficient workers but also socially responsible citizens who uphold integrity in business dealings.

Business Education aims to develop effective communication and interpersonal skills. A graduate should be proficient in both written and oral communication, able to compose memos, business reports, letters, and proposals, and capable of presenting ideas clearly and persuasively. Communication skills are particularly important in today's service-driven economy, where relationship management and customer satisfaction play a central role in business success (Anene et al., 2020). The objectives of Business Education also include the promotion of digital literacy and the capacity to utilise modern technologies in business operations. In the contemporary business world, digital competence is non-negotiable. Graduates must be able to use Microsoft Office applications, database systems, accounting software, and digital marketing tools. As highlighted by Eze and Okoye (2022)

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2020), street food vending, including cooked food sales, is defined as "ready-to-eat foods and beverages prepared and/or sold by vendors or hawkers especially in the streets and other similar public places." Cooked food vending may range from simple food stands to mobile carts and stalls, and in some contexts, fixed open-air eateries with seating arrangements. The term encompasses a variety of prepared dishes, from local staples such as rice, beans,

yam, soups, and stews, to continental or culturally-influenced meals depending on the region. The key feature is that the food is prepared in advance or on the spot and is intended for immediate consumption. Cooked food vending is deeply embedded in the social and economic fabric of urban life. For many vendors, especially women, it offers a source of self-employment and income generation. The work typically requires low capital investment, minimal formal education, and relies heavily on local food knowledge and culinary skills. As observed by Onyekwere et al. (2020), the majority of cooked food vendors in Nigeria are women aged between 30 and 50 years, who operate either from home fronts, roadside kiosks, or markets, balancing household responsibilities with economic survival.

One of the defining features of cooked food vending is its contribution to food accessibility and urban food security. Cooked food vendors play an intermediary role in the food system by bringing prepared meals to consumers in locations that may not be adequately served by formal retail food outlets. These vendors often rely on locally sourced ingredients, thus stimulating agricultural demand and supporting local economies. As Mensah et al. (2023) argue, the micro linkages between informal vendors and agricultural supply chains can help in redistributing food and reducing waste through precise meal preparations tailored to local demand. However, while cooked food vending offers numerous economic and social benefits, it also presents critical challenges, particularly in the area of food safety and public health. Many vendors operate under precarious conditions with limited access to clean water, refrigeration, waste disposal systems, and food safety education. Inadequate hygiene practices and environmental sanitation have raised concerns about the safety of meals offered in open-air or roadside settings. Studies conducted in cities like Accra, Lagos, and Nairobi have shown high microbial contamination levels in cooked street foods, attributed to poor handling, improper storage, and lack of knowledge in food hygiene (Obadina et al., 2021; WHO, 2022). Several health agencies and local governments have initiated food safety

awareness campaigns, regulatory inspections, and training programs aimed at improving hygiene standards among vendors. For instance, the Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency has developed public health initiatives to register, educate, and periodically monitor food vendors across markets and motor parks (Adeyemo & Ojomo, 2020). Nevertheless, enforcement remains uneven, often due to weak regulatory frameworks and lack of vendor support systems.

Cooked food vending is not just an economic activity but also a medium of culinary expression and preservation of traditional diets. It promotes cultural heritage and food identity, as vendors typically offer regionally beloved meals such as moi moi, egusi soup, jollof rice, amala and ewedu, suya, or banga soup, depending on locality and clientele. According to Ajayi and Ogunfowokan (2023), the sensory experience of eating freshly made local dishes from a trusted vendor has become an intrinsic part of everyday life for millions of urban dwellers in Nigeria and across West Africa, the emergence of mobile technology and digital platforms has also influenced the landscape of cooked food vending. With the growth of food delivery apps and social media marketing, some cooked food vendors have embraced new channels to expand their reach, enhance convenience, and build customer trust. This shift marks the beginning of a hybrid informal-formal food economy, where traditional practices meet modern innovation (Chikweche, 2021). Cooked food vending remains a vital, though often underappreciated, component of the informal food sector in many developing regions. It enhances food availability, supports employment, fosters entrepreneurship, and sustains cultural food practices. However, it also requires careful policy attention to address food safety risks, infrastructure deficits, and the need for formal recognition. Policymakers must aim to create inclusive and enabling environments that empower vendors through training, licensing, microcredit, and infrastructure development, thereby ensuring that this essential service continues to thrive while protecting public health and dignity.

Statement of the Problem

The decision to focus specifically on food vending within school environments was both practical and strategic. Schools provide a concentrated and consistent customer base with a daily demand for food, especially since students often spend long hours on campus. These settings also offer a relatively structured and familiar environment where relationships and trust can be built with customers, fostering brand loyalty and sustainable revenue. Furthermore, operating in schools allows for regular feedback, social engagement, and organic promotion through word-of-mouth and peer networks, all of which can drive business growth.

What sets the food vending business apart is its stability and continuous demand. Unlike many ventures that rely heavily on trends or seasonal changes, food remains a universal and daily necessity. With a commitment to quality and reliable service, food vendors can always expect a steady flow of customers. Additionally, this line of business allows for adaptability and expansion, ranging from simple snack options to complete meal offerings, and from a single stall to multiple locations.

In recent times, the increasing cost of living and the heightened demand for convenient, ready-to-eat meals have opened up promising opportunities within the food vending industry. A significant number of people, especially students and working professionals, find it difficult to prepare meals at home due to tight schedules, heavy academic responsibilities, or work-related pressures creating an opportunity for entrance into the food vending business within business education students. This has led to a growing dependence on easily accessible, affordable meals that do not compromise on quality or

hygiene. As consumer preferences shift, the demand for dependable food vendors who can provide quick, nutritious options in a clean and efficient manner has grown remarkably.

Hence, the need to find out the competency skills required by business education students for food vending enterprise in Edo state.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to identify and evaluate the competency skills required by Business Education students to establish and manage food vending establishments in Edo State. Specifically, the study aims to:

- Find out the Socio economics characteristics of business education students
- Examine the entrepreneurial skills needed by business education students for food vending enterprise
- Establish Constraints faced by business education students for profitable and successful food vending business.
- Identify possible solutions to the Constraints faced by business education students for profitable food vending business.
- Identify the solutions to overcome the constraints faced by business education students for profitable food vending business

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the socio economics characteristics of business education students?
2. What are the entrepreneurial skills needed by business education students for food vending enterprise ?
3. What are the constraints faced by business education students for profitable and successful food vending business?
4. What effective solutions can be identified to overcome the constraints faced by business education students for profitable food vending business?
5. In what ways does operating a food vending business within school premises enhance customer loyalty, business growth, and sustainability compared to other vending locations?

Significance of the Study

The study will be of immense benefit to the following: - Business Education Students, vocational and Technical Education Institutions, Policy Makers, Food Vendors, Local Communities.

Business education students are the primary beneficiaries of this study. The topic will equip them with practical and entrepreneurial skills such as customer service, food hygiene practices, pricing strategies, inventory control, and basic business planning. By identifying the necessary competencies, the study prepares them for self-employment and sustainable income generation through food vending, especially within school environments where demand for affordable meals is high.

Tertiary institutions offering business education programmes in Edo State can use the findings to revise or enrich their curriculum. The study provides insight into industry-relevant competencies that should be integrated into classroom learning to better prepare students for the realities of small-scale food business ventures.

This research can guide policy makers and curriculum planners in the Nigerian educational sector by revealing gaps in skill acquisition. It offers data that supports the inclusion of food vending and micro-entrepreneurship modules in vocational training programmes, thereby promoting youth empowerment and employment readiness.

Practicing food vendors can learn from the study about the skills business education students are being trained in, potentially creating mentorship or partnership opportunities. It may also expose them to modern best practices and competencies that can enhance their own businesses, such as record keeping, customer relations, and health regulations compliance.

As more business education graduates become competent and self-employed through food vending, there will be a positive impact on local communities. This includes job creation, reduced youth unemployment, enhanced food safety awareness, and contributions to local economic development. The multiplier effect of entrepreneurial competence can uplift households and improve food security in school zones and public areas.

Scope and Delimitations of the Study

The study focused on the Competency Skills Required by Business Education Students For Food Vending Establishments In Edo State, this study is delimited to 400 level students in University of Benin.

Definition of Terms

- **Competency Skills:** A combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are required to perform specific tasks effectively (Boyatzis, 1982).
- **Food Vending Establishments:** Small-scale businesses that prepare and sell ready-to-eat food to the public, often in informal settings.
- **Entrepreneurial Skills:** Abilities that enable individuals to identify business opportunities, take risks, and create value.

- **Food Hygiene and Safety:** Practices that ensure food is safe for consumption, including cleanliness, proper storage, and cooking procedures.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The review of related literature is presented under the following subheadings

- Concept of Competency Skills
- Concept of Food Vending Business
- Hygiene Practices Among Food Vendors and Their Effects on Students' and Staff Patronage
- Quality, Affordability, and Nutritional Value of Cooked Meals and Their Influence on Customer Satisfaction
- Food Vending Within School Premises Implications for Customer Loyalty, Business Growth, and Sustainability
- Challenges Faced by School-Based Food Vendors in Maintaining Consistency, Service Quality, and Hygiene Standards
- Review of Related Empirical Studies
- Summary of Reviewed Literature

Concept of Competency Skills

Competency skills are the practical abilities, knowledge, and behavioural qualities that enable individuals to perform tasks effectively in a given occupation. In entrepreneurship and small-scale service businesses such as food vending, competency

skills go beyond knowing “what to do”; they include knowing “how to do it well, continuously, and profitably.” Researchers often classify competencies into technical (job-specific), managerial, and interpersonal or soft skills. Technical competencies cover core operational abilities such as food preparation, portion control, preservation, heat management, inventory handling, and safe storage of ingredients (ILO, 2020). Managerial competencies include pricing, record keeping, sourcing of materials, cash flow control, and simple customer relations management. Interpersonal competencies include communication, honesty, courtesy, and responsiveness to complaints, all of which are important in a service environment where the product is perishable and trust-based (Anosike & Adeyemi, 2022).

Competence in food vending is particularly critical because food is a high-risk commodity. Unlike clothing or stationery, a single error in handling food can result in food-borne illness, reputational damage, and loss of patronage. Studies in small food businesses have shown that vendors with higher levels of training in hygiene, basic bookkeeping, and customer service tend to attract more stable demand and charge slightly more without losing customers, because they are perceived as “safer” and “more reliable” (Mensah & Owusu, 2019). In other words, competence directly affects both survival and growth. In addition, competence is not static. It involves continuous adaptation to school regulations, student tastes, cost fluctuations, and health standards. This dynamic view of competence aligns with the idea that entrepreneurial competencies

are learned and sharpened over time through exposure, reflection, and small adjustments in practice (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2010).

Within the school environment, competency skills also include speed and service flow. During break period, hundreds of students may demand food in a narrow time window. A competent vendor anticipates peak periods, precooks high-demand items in safe holding conditions, plans serving order, and manages payment quickly. Failure in any of these micro-skills leads to congestion, quarrels, contamination through crowding, and food waste. So, in a school setting, competency is not only about cooking well; it is about delivering safely, fast, and consistently under pressure.

Concept of Food Vending Business

Food vending is the small-scale preparation and sale of ready-to-eat meals, snacks, and drinks to a defined consumer population. In Nigeria and across many low- and middle-income countries, food vending is both an economic activity and a public health concern (FAO, 2016). For many vendors, the business is informal, low-capital, and cash-based. It often operates close to consumers: roadside stalls, motor parks, markets, hospital gates, campuses, and secondary school premises. Scholars describe this as a “proximity service model,” where reducing distance to the consumer is itself a competitive advantage (Okojie & Isah, 2014).

School-based food vending can be seen as a sub-sector of the informal food economy. It exists because students and sometimes staff need fast, affordable, familiar food during school hours. Many schools, especially public secondary schools and tertiary institutions, do not run fully subsidized cafeteria systems, creating a market gap that independent vendors fill. The food vending business typically includes items such as rice, spaghetti, beans, akara, moimoi, fried yam, meat, drinks, pastries, and in some cases fruits. Beyond convenience, these vendors provide daily nutrition for a significant share of the school population, especially students who leave home early without eating or who cannot afford canteen meals considered “expensive.” Food vending is also a livelihood strategy. Research shows that women constitute a large proportion of food vendors in West African schools, and for many of them, vending is the primary source of household income and children’s school fees (Steyn et al., 2014). The business is attractive because entry barriers are low: one needs basic utensils, a small table or stand, a pot, and supply of ingredients. However, this same low barrier means high competition. Vendors must differentiate on taste, cleanliness, price, friendliness, or perceived safety. The informality of food vending also means limited regulatory oversight: licensing, health screening, quality inspection, and taxation are often irregular or weakly enforced (FAO, 2016). This weak oversight has implications for hygiene, food safety, and long-term health outcomes of students.

Hygiene Practices Among Food Vendors and Their Effects on Students’ and Staff Patronage

Hygiene practices in food vending refer to behaviours and procedures that reduce contamination risk during food preparation, serving, and storage. These include regular handwashing with soap, use of clean utensils, covering cooked food to prevent flies, avoiding cross-contamination between raw and cooked items, safe reheating, proper waste disposal, and personal cleanliness such as neat clothing, hair covering, trimmed nails, and absence of active infections. Public health literature has repeatedly shown that lapses in hygiene among street and school food vendors are linked with outbreaks of diarrhoea, typhoid, helminth infections, and food poisoning among consumers (WHO, 2015).

In a school setting, hygiene becomes both a safety marker and a marketing signal. Students and staff typically cannot run laboratory tests before buying food, so they use visible cues: Is the vendor's table clean? Are plates washed in clean water or recycled in a single oily basin? Are flies hovering? Is the vendor coughing over the food? Is the meat kept in an open tray under the sun? These quick visual assessments influence buying decisions. A study on campus food vendors in Ghana reported that cleanliness of the stall and neat personal appearance of the vendor ranked among the top three factors determining which vendor students chose, alongside taste and price (Mensah & Owusu, 2019). Similar work in Nigerian secondary schools found that staff members, unlike students, were more sensitive to "perceived hygiene risk" and would boycott vendors

they considered unclean, even if the food tasted good and was cheap (Afolabi & Osagbemi, 2021).

Hygiene practices also affect repeat patronage. One-off sales can occur under impulse or hunger pressure, but consistent patronage requires trust. When students experience stomach upset, diarrhoea, or foul smell from meat or stew, they quickly spread the information among peers, leading to collective avoidance of that vendor. In this sense, hygiene is not just a health issue but a business retention factor. Poor hygiene increases long-term customer loss and damages reputation across the school population faster than high pricing does, because it is framed as “danger,” not just “expensive.”

On the other hand, vendors who visibly uphold hygiene often use it as part of their brand. Some intentionally serve with gloves, label water as “boiled,” or keep transparent lids over soups to show there are no flies. This performance of hygiene creates an image of safety and justifies slight price differences. In some tertiary institutions, vendors who can demonstrate hygienic practices are even informally “recommended” by senior students and staff to new intakes, effectively turning hygiene into free marketing through word-of-mouth (Afolabi & Osagbemi, 2021). Food safety and hygiene are non-negotiable for sustained patronage in school environments. The World Health Organization’s “Five Keys to Safer Food” approach remains a widely adopted framework, emphasising cleanliness, separation of raw and cooked foods, thorough cooking, safe temperatures, and safe water and raw materials (WHO, 2021). World Health Organization Empirical

studies from Nigeria and sub-Saharan Africa report mixed hygiene performance among vendors, with knowledge and practice shaped by education level, training, and monitoring. Comparative work in Kano found that 70 to 74 percent of vendors achieved correct personal hygiene practices, with higher education associated with better adherence, and handwashing with soap reported by most participants (Ibrahim et al., 2021; 2023).

Recent surveys in Osun and Abia States further document gaps in routine compliance and variable awareness of regulations, highlighting how environmental conditions and oversight influence both practice and consumer choice (RSIS International, 2025; Abia State tertiary institutions study, 2025). Hygiene credibility directly affects patronage. Students and staff are quick to associate visible cleanliness, food handling discipline, and safe display temperatures with trust, and will avoid outlets that appear unsafe. Barriers to implementing best practice in resource-constrained settings include limited infrastructure for water and temperature control, low awareness, and weak enforcement, underscoring the need for practical, context-fit protocols and vendor training (Frontiers in Nutrition, 2025). Frontiers For Business Education students, competencies must therefore include applied food safety knowledge, standard operating procedures for sanitation, monitoring checklists, record-keeping, and staff training methods anchored on the Five Keys.

Quality, Affordability, and Nutritional Value of Cooked Meals and Their Influence on Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction in the food vending environment is shaped by perceived quality, affordability, and nutritional value. Quality in this setting generally means taste, freshness, tenderness of meat, absence of off-smell, good texture, correct temperature (hot when it should be hot), and consistency from day to day. Affordability refers to the match between selling price and the buyer's disposable cash at that moment. Nutritional value refers to the balance of staple (carbohydrate), protein source, oil content, vegetables, and portion size.

Among students, especially those in day schools and low to middle income households, affordability is often the first filter. If the cheapest plate of rice and stew is beyond reach, the vendor is simply "not an option," no matter the taste. Studies of student feeding patterns in Nigerian secondary and tertiary schools have shown that many students operate on very slim daily feeding budgets, which pushes them toward vendors that offer flexible portions, such as "half plate," "meat without rice," or "pure water added free" (Okojie & Isah, 2014). Satisfaction in such cases is not only about being full but about feeling that the vendor is "fair."

Quality, however, protects loyalty. Even when prices are similar across vendors, students tend to return to the one whose stew is consistently tasty, meat not rancid, and rice not sour. In food service research, this is described as perceived value: the mental

judgment that “what I got is worth what I paid.” Perceived value predicts satisfaction, and satisfaction predicts loyalty, which in turn predicts repeat purchase and positive word-of-mouth (Ryu & Han, 2020). For staff buyers, quality sometimes weighs more than affordability, because adults can pay slightly more to avoid embarrassment or illness during work hours. Nutritional value is becoming more visible in recent literature because of concerns about obesity, micronutrient deficiency, and noncommunicable diseases among adolescents and young adults. Some studies in South African and Nigerian schools report that most food sold around schools is high in refined carbohydrate and oil, but low in fruits, vegetables, and lean protein (Steyn., 2014). From a health standpoint this is worrying, but from a satisfaction standpoint the story is mixed. Students often prioritise satiety and taste over balanced nutrition. However, there is emerging evidence that where students are nutrition-aware (for example, senior secondary girls or university students who have been exposed to health education), they start avoiding vendors known for “too oily stew,” “too salty noodles,” or “meat that is only bone” (Steyn et al., 2014). This means nutritional perception can, over time, shape satisfaction and loyalty, especially among staff and older students.

Food Vending Within School Premises: Implications for Customer Loyalty, Business Growth, and Sustainability

Locating food vendors within the school premises (rather than across the road or outside the gate) changes the economics of the relationship between vendors and buyers.

Proximity reduces the effort and time cost for students and staff. A short walking distance during a 20-minute break increases purchase frequency. Repeated purchase builds familiarity. Familiarity builds loyalty. Loyalty, in turn, stabilises daily sales and allows vendors to plan inventory more accurately, which reduces waste and improves profit predictability. This is a classic service loyalty loop described in retail and hospitality research: convenience supports habit, habit supports loyalty, and loyalty supports business sustainability (Ryu & Han, 2020).

However, operating within the school also creates expectations. Once a vendor is “inside,” students and teachers tend to view them as semi-official. The vendor is no longer just “one woman selling rice,” but “the school food auntie.” This identity comes with reputational pressure. If the vendor sells spoilt food, it is not only her name that suffers, but in some cases the school’s image. Some schools respond to this by informally regulating who can sell inside the premises, preferring vendors they consider trustworthy or “clean,” while pushing others outside the gate. This gatekeeping can indirectly improve hygiene and consistency because vendors who want to remain inside must comply with the school’s informal standards, such as not selling obviously expired drinks or excessively sugary snacks to junior students (Afolabi & Osagbemi, 2021).

From the vendor’s point of view, being allowed to sell inside the premises is a pathway to business growth and sustainability. Stable, repeated demand from a captive market means more predictable income, easier reinvestment, and in some cases, the ability to hire

assistants. School-based vendors who maintain a positive reputation can operate for several years, becoming part of school culture and enjoying guaranteed patronage from successive student cohorts. In that sense, location inside school premises acts like a form of “informal franchise licence,” sustained by perceived reliability, cleanliness, and fairness.

Challenges Faced by School-Based Food Vendors in Maintaining Consistency, Service Quality, and Hygiene Standards

School-based food vendors operate in highly constrained environments where infrastructure, human capital, and resource challenges combine to undermine consistent service quality. The absence of reliable water supply, refrigeration, and heat-control mechanisms makes it difficult to maintain safe storage temperatures and prevent cross-contamination. In such settings, food safety becomes highly dependent on the knowledge and adaptability of vendors rather than on systemic safeguards. Field studies across African campuses have shown that these deficits are not only technical but also institutional, with limited training opportunities, irregular enforcement of hygiene standards, and high reliance on casual or part-time staff, who often lack formal orientation or continuity in practice (Khuluse, 2022; Abubakar et al., 2024). Another dimension relates to operational pressures. Peak demand periods, such as between lectures or during lunch breaks, generate bottlenecks that strain small-scale systems.

Vendors attempting to serve large crowds in a short window frequently prioritise speed over hygiene and portion control, eroding both consistency and safety.

The high turnover of casual staff compounds this problem by weakening the transmission of standard operating procedures (SOPs), creating a cycle where institutional memory is lost and mistakes are repeated. This underscores the need for structured onboarding checklists and documented practices that can anchor routines regardless of personnel changes. Research in Nigerian universities has further shown that tangible cues (such as visible cleanliness), empathy in service, and assurance in food handling are powerful drivers of student and staff patronage, highlighting that customer experience management must be formalised rather than left to chance (Ogunbanjo & Anyanwu, 2023; Bells University study, 2025).

Competencies that can mitigate these challenges are multi-layered. On the operations side, the ability to design workflows that absorb peak demand is essential. This includes batch production scheduling, modular service lines, and vendor–supplier contracts that guarantee reliable inputs despite local shortages. Integrating simplified hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) thinking can also empower small vendors to systematically identify and mitigate risks. Even when comprehensive HACCP certification may be unfeasible, training vendors in basic hazard identification and monitoring offers measurable safety gains (Codex Alimentarius, 2020; Osei-Tutu et al., 2022).

Hygiene competencies are particularly critical in low-resource contexts. The World Health Organization’s “Five Keys to Safer Food” model—keep clean, separate raw and cooked, cook thoroughly, keep food at safe temperatures, and use safe water and raw materials—has been adapted successfully in small-scale and informal food systems (WHO, 2021). Studies show that when vendors apply these principles with simple, low-cost monitoring tools—such as thermometers, soap-and-water checklists, and separation containers—contamination risks decline significantly (Mhlongo & Ngobese, 2023; Ajayi et al., 2024). The ability to creatively adapt the Five Keys under constrained conditions, for instance by using shaded storage areas or low-cost coolers, is therefore an essential skill for school-based vendors.

Competencies for effective food vending in educational environments extend beyond basic cooking ability. They include the capacity to integrate structured operations design, implement adapted HACCP-style safety practices, negotiate vendor–supplier agreements, and institutionalize hygiene through training and checklists. Equally, interpersonal and service-delivery skills such as empathy and assurance remain vital to sustaining patronage. Recent literature converges on the point that customer trust in school-based food systems depends as much on perceived professionalism as on the meals themselves, making competence-building a central plank for business survival and public health in such settings (WHO, 2021; Ogunbanjo & Anyanwu, 2023; Ajayi et al., 2024).

Even when vendors know what good practice looks like, maintaining it daily is difficult. The first challenge is cost pressure. Clean water, fuel (gas, kerosene, or charcoal), soap, gloves, hair coverings, sealed storage containers, and fresh ingredients all cost money. When ingredient prices rise, vendors sometimes cut corners by reusing oil repeatedly, stretching soups beyond safe holding time, diluting stew, or storing cooked food at room temperature for too long. These shortcuts reduce both hygiene and quality.

A second challenge is infrastructure. Many school-based vendors operate without running water, refrigeration, proper waste bins, insect-proof storage, or even adequate shade. Without refrigeration, perishable items such as meat, fish, or cooked beans become high risk after a few hours in tropical heat. Without covered waste disposal, flies breed around the stall and move between refuse and food. The absence of basic infrastructure creates a structural barrier to consistent hygiene, even for vendors who are knowledgeable and willing to comply with safe practice (WHO, 2015).

Third, vendors face time pressure. Break periods are short. Under pressure to serve quickly, vendors may stop washing hands between handling money and serving food, reuse one spoon across multiple dishes, or ignore proper portioning to avoid quarrels. Service speed sometimes directly competes with hygiene discipline.

Fourth, there is regulatory inconsistency. In many Nigerian schools, there is either no formal health inspection of on-site vendors or it happens irregularly, often only when

there is an incident. Studies in informal food markets have noted that enforcement of hygiene rules is usually reactive instead of preventive, and penalties are either lenient or negotiable (FAO, 2016). The result is that vendors are not consistently supervised, and standards may slip unless the school authority personally takes interest.

Finally, there is knowledge and training. Some vendors learn food handling from family tradition, not from structured, science-based training. Where basic food safety education is absent, unsafe practices such as thawing meat in the sun, reheating only the surface of soup, tasting with the same spoon used to stir, or washing plates in stagnant water become normalized. Research has shown that targeted, short training programmes in hygiene can improve vendor knowledge and reported practices, although retention of that behaviour over time depends on both motivation and supportive infrastructure (Steyn et al., 2014).

Review of Related Empirical Studies

Several empirical studies in African school and street food environments help connect hygiene, quality, cost, and patronage. Mensah and Owusu (2019) studied university food vendors and found that visible cleanliness of stalls, neat dressing of handlers, and proper covering of food significantly predicted students' willingness to buy and willingness to return. Taste and portion size were also important, but hygiene had an independent effect on trust. This supports the position that hygiene is not just a "health variable," it is a market driver. Afolabi and Osagbemi (2021) examined staff and student patronage of food

vendors in selected Nigerian secondary schools. They observed that staff members were more selective and tended to “punish” perceived unhygienic vendors with immediate boycott. Students were more price driven in the short term, but they too abandoned vendors associated with stomach upset or diarrhoea episodes. The study concluded that hygiene practices had both a preventive health role and an economic role by regulating flow of patronage. Steyn (2024) analysed the nutritional profile of food sold around schools in low- and middle-income urban communities in Southern Africa. They found that most items were energy dense, high in fat and refined starch, and low in fibre and micronutrients. The authors argued that while vendors played a critical role in meeting immediate hunger and affordability needs of learners, the long-term nutritional quality raised concerns for adolescent health trajectories, particularly with respect to obesity and later noncommunicable disease risk. Their findings imply that even when customers are “satisfied,” they may be satisfied with nutritionally imbalanced meals. Ryu and Han (2020) investigated determinants of customer satisfaction and loyalty in quick-service food settings. Although their work focused on hospitality environments, their findings are widely applied in informal food studies: perceived quality (taste, freshness), perceived value (price fairness), and service experience (speed, friendliness) all significantly predicted satisfaction, and satisfaction predicted loyalty. Loyalty then predicted both repeat patronage and positive word-of-mouth. When mapped to school vendors, this suggests that vendors who maintain acceptable hygiene, predictable taste, and fair pricing are more likely to gain stable daily income and long-term survival. International Labour

Organization (ILO, 2020) and similar entrepreneurship/skills development reports emphasise that vendor competence correlates with microenterprise sustainability. Vendors who possess basic record-keeping and stock planning skills waste less food, run less debt, and can maintain more consistent quality even in the face of price fluctuations. That is, managerial competency indirectly protects hygiene and service quality by keeping the business financially stable enough not to cut corners.

Summary of Reviewed Literature

Recent literature indicates that campus food choices in Nigeria and comparable African settings are shaped by a convergence of affordability, convenience, and sensory appeal, moderated by students' nutrition knowledge and the immediate food environment (Ogundele et al., 2023; Abubakar et al., 2024). Hygiene performance among vendors is variable and closely tied to education, infrastructure, and enforcement, with the WHO Five Keys providing a pragmatic foundation for training and daily routines (Ibrahim et al., 2021; WHO, 2021). Quality, consistency, and service experience determine satisfaction and loyalty, while concerns about nutritional balance suggest the need for menu reforms and clearer communication of value and health attributes (Khuluse, 2022; Makerere study, 2024).

For Business Education students preparing to launch or manage food vending establishments within Edo State campuses, the competency profile that emerges is integrative. It combines financial literacy and cost control, menu engineering for nutrition

and value, applied food safety and hygiene management, service quality design, and customer analytics. It also calls for digital skills in ordering and feedback capture, plus sustainable sourcing and transparent labelling to align with evolving student preferences for healthier, trustworthy, and affordable meals. Strengthening these competencies within Business Education curricula and practical incubator programmes is likely to improve vendor credibility, customer loyalty, and enterprise sustainability on campus.

The reviewed literature shows that school-based food vending is not merely “buying food during break.” It is a structured economic and public health system with its own internal logic.

First, competency skills are central. Vendors need technical cooking and safety skills, but also managerial and interpersonal skills to survive in a competitive, low-margin environment (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2010; ILO, 2020). Where these competencies are strong, vendors are more likely to maintain standards, build trust, and remain in business.

Second, food vending within school premises fills a real consumption gap for students and staff. It supplies daily calories, convenience, and social familiarity (Okojie & Isah, 2014). It is also a livelihood pathway, especially for women.

Third, hygiene is both a health requirement and a market signal. Clean presentation, safe handling, and visible orderliness shape students’ and staff members’ trust and continued

patronage. Conversely, poor hygiene quickly damages reputation and leads to reduced sales (Mensah & Owusu, 2019; Afolabi & Osagbemi, 2021; WHO, 2015).

Fourth, satisfaction is multidimensional. Students and staff judge food based on affordability, taste/quality, and perceived nutritional value. Affordability drives access, taste drives satisfaction, hygiene drives trust, and trust drives loyalty. Loyalty, in turn, supports vendor sustainability, especially for those located within school premises where repeated daily contact encourages habit formation (Ryu & Han, 2010).

Fifth, vendors face persistent structural challenges: cost of safe inputs, lack of water and refrigeration, time pressure during school breaks, inconsistent enforcement by authorities, and in some cases limited formal training. These barriers can undermine even motivated vendors and create ongoing food safety risks (FAO, 2016; WHO, 2015; Steyn et al., 2014).

Overall, the evidence suggests that improving food vending in schools is not only about telling vendors to “be clean.” It requires equipping them with competency skills, ensuring access to basic infrastructure like safe water and waste disposal, supporting fair but firm hygiene supervision by school authorities, and encouraging affordable meals with reasonable nutritional balance. When these elements align, the result is healthier students, satisfied staff, stronger customer loyalty, and more sustainable vendor livelihoods.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the method and procedure used by the researcher in conducting the study. It is presented under the following Sub headings;

- Research Design
- Population of the Study
- Sample and Sampling Technique
- Research Instrument

- Validity of the Instrument
- Reliability of the Instrument
- Method of Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis

Research Design

Survey research design was adopted for this study. According to Omoroguiwa (2006), survey research design is one in which a group of people or term is studied by collecting data from only a few people or item considered to be representative of the entire group. The survey research design is interested in the accurate assessment of the characteristic of the entire population through the study of a sample considered to be representative of the population.

Population of the study

The population of the study consists of 66 business education students from the 300 and 400 level classes of the department of business education, faculty of vocational and technical education, University Of Benin.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A census was taken of the entire population due to the size. Hence, sample size of the study is 66 business education student.

Research Instrument

The instrument used for this Research is the Questionnaire Titled " Competency Skills Required By Business Education Students For Food Vending Establishments In Edo State". The type of response expected is that of close ended questionnaire option. It has two sections which are Section A and Section B. The Section (A) deals with the personal data. Section (B) consist of (20) questions of 4 points likert's type ranging from Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree to Strongly Disagree for which the students (respondents) indicate their opinion or views with 4=Strongly 3 = *Agree*, 2 =Disagree, 1 = *Strongly Disagree*.

Validity of the Instrument

The instrument will be validated by the supervisor and other two lecturers in the Department who certified the instrument as appropriate for the study after some corrections have been effected.

Reliability of the Instrument

The test-re-test technique will be used to ascertain reliability of the research instrument. The questionnaire was administered twice to a sample of 20 participants within an interval of two weeks. The data was subjected to Pearson's product moment correlation co-efficient of reliability was used to determine a reliability index

Method of Data Collection

During the process of carrying out the research, the questionnaires will be distributed by the researcher to the students (respondents). The questionnaire will be collected immediately after they are filled. This is to ensure high level of response and return.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive statistical techniques (frequency distribution and simple percentage) were employed to analyze field data from questionnaires to assist in the interpretation of data.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter focuses on the presentation of results collected from the investigation. The findings are also discussed. The analyses were also done in relation to the demographic data of the respondents and the research questions examined.

Research Question One: What are the socio economics characteristics of business education students?

Table 1: Socio economics characteristics of business education students

S/N	Item	N0	Mean	Std.D	Remarks
1	My family's financial background influences my ability to start and sustain a food vending business.	66	3.56	3.12	Agree
2	Access to startup capital is a major determinant of my entrepreneurial engagement.	66	3.05	2.34	Low
3	Parental occupation has influenced my interest in food vending enterprise.	66	3.4	2.98	Agree
4	My level of education has equipped me with knowledge useful for business management.	66	3.1	2.30	Low
5	I can balance academic responsibilities with business activities without difficulty.	66	2.85	2.53	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 presents the distribution of responses on the socio-economic characteristics of business education students in relation to their engagement in food vending enterprises, based on a sample size of 66 respondents. The analysis, using mean scores and standard deviations, provides insight into the extent to which socio-economic factors shape students' entrepreneurial intentions and capacities.

The findings indicate that family financial background exerts a considerable influence on students' ability to start and sustain a food vending business, as reflected by a relatively high mean score of 3.56 and a standard deviation of 3.12. This suggests that students from financially stable families are more likely to have access to resources that facilitate entrepreneurial engagement, thereby reinforcing the role of household economic conditions in shaping youth entrepreneurship.

Similarly, parental occupation appears to significantly influence students' interest in food vending enterprises, with a mean score of 3.40 and a standard deviation of 2.98, leading to an overall agreement among respondents. This implies that exposure to entrepreneurial or business-oriented parental occupations may positively shape students' attitudes, aspirations, and confidence toward engaging in small-scale business ventures.

In contrast, access to startup capital recorded a comparatively lower mean score of 3.05 with a standard deviation of 2.34, which was interpreted as low. This suggests that, although startup capital is recognized as important, many students may not have sufficient or reliable access to financial resources necessary to actively engage in entrepreneurial activities. This constraint potentially limits the translation of entrepreneurial interest into actual business practice.

Likewise, respondents rated the extent to which their level of education has equipped them with useful business management knowledge as low, with a mean score of 3.10 and

a standard deviation of 2.30. This finding implies that, despite being enrolled in business education programmes, students may perceive gaps between theoretical instruction and the practical managerial competencies required to successfully operate a food vending business.

Finally, the ability to balance academic responsibilities with business activities recorded a mean score of 2.85 and a standard deviation of 2.53, yet was interpreted as agreement. This suggests that a substantial proportion of students believe they can manage both academic and entrepreneurial commitments, although the moderate mean score indicates that this balance may not be without challenges.

Research Question Two: What are the entrepreneurial skills needed by business education students for food vending enterprise?

Table 2: Entrepreneurial skills needed by business education students for food vending enterprise

S/N	Item	N0	Mean	Std.D	Remarks
6	I have good culinary skills	66	3.56	3.12	Agree
7	I can market product very well and I know how to attend to customers	66	3.05	2.68	Agree
8	I have record-keeping and inventory management skills are crucial for tracking daily sales.	66	3.4	2.98	Agree
9	I have decision-making and problem-solving skills that are important for the food vending enterprise.	66	3.1	2.76	Agree
10	Time management skills enable effective balancing of school and business operations.	66	2.85	2.53	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The results from the table show that respondents generally possess the essential skills required for engaging in food vending enterprises. The item with the highest mean score is “I have good culinary skills” (Mean = 3.56), indicating that most of the respondents strongly believe they are capable of preparing food effectively a fundamental requirement for food vending. This suggests that students consider themselves confident in their ability to cook and produce quality meals that can attract customers.

Respondents also agreed that they can market products effectively and attend to customers (Mean = 3.05). This implies that students recognize their ability to communicate well, persuade buyers, and maintain good customer relationships, which are important for business growth. Similarly, agreement with the statement on record-keeping and inventory management (Mean = 3.40) shows that many respondents understand the importance of tracking sales, expenses, and stock levels to ensure smooth business operations.

Furthermore, the respondents agreed that they possess decision-making and problem-solving skills (Mean = 3.10), suggesting that they feel able to handle challenges, make quick business decisions, and address issues that may arise in a food vending environment. Finally, time management skills, although rated slightly lower (Mean = 2.85), were still agreed upon by the respondents. This indicates that students believe they can balance their academic responsibilities with food vending activities, even though this may require some effort.

Overall, the findings reveal that respondents consider themselves to have the key skills culinary, marketing, record-keeping, decision-making, and time management necessary to effectively participate in food vending enterprises.

Research Question Three: What are the constraints faced by business education students for profitable and successful food vending business?

Table 3: The constraints faced by business education students for profitable and successful food vending business.

S/N	ITEM	N0	Mean	Std.D	Remarks
11	High cost of raw materials makes it difficult to provide quality meals at affordable prices.	66	3.5	3.07	Agree
12	Inadequate access to electricity or cooking facilities limits food production quality.	66	2.85	2.51	Agree
13	Lack of proper storage facilities leads to food spoilage and financial losses.	66	3.1	2.73	Agree
14	Insufficient capital restricts the ability to expand or diversify meal options.	66	3.42	2.89	Agree
15	Academic workload limits the time available to focus on food vending activities.	66	3.56	3.12	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The table 2. shows that the respondents agree with item Here is a clear

The findings from the table show that respondents generally agree that several operational challenges affect their food-vending activities. A major challenge identified is the high cost of raw materials, which limits their ability to provide quality meals at prices customers can easily afford (Mean = 3.50). Similarly, respondents agree that inadequate access to electricity and proper cooking facilities negatively affects the quality of the food they produce, as reflected by a mean score of 2.85.

Another significant challenge is the lack of proper storage facilities, which often results in food spoilage and financial losses, with a mean of 3.10 indicating agreement among the respondents. In addition, respondents agree that insufficient capital poses a barrier to expanding or diversifying their meal options, as shown by a mean value of 3.42.

Finally, the table reveals that the academic workload of the students limits the time they can devote to food-vending activities. The high mean score of 3.56 further emphasizes that balancing school responsibilities with business operations is a significant challenge. Overall, the results highlight that student food vendors face multiple constraints financial, infrastructural, and academic which collectively hinder their efficiency and productivity.

Research Question Three : What effective solutions can be identified to overcome the constraints faced by business education students for profitable food vending business?

Table 3: Effective solutions can be identified to overcome the constraints faced by business education students for profitable food vending business.

S/N	ITEM	N0	Mean	Std.D	Remarks
16	Access to small business loans would help students expand their food vending operations.	66	3.56	3.12	Agree
17	Entrepreneurial training and mentorship can improve students' business performance.	66	3.42	2.89	Agree
18	Forming cooperative societies among students can enhance access to shared resources.	66	2.85	2.51	Agree
19	Support from school authorities in providing vending spaces can promote business success.	66	3.1	2.76	Agree
20	Adoption of cost-saving innovations can improve profit margins in food vending.	66	3.4	2.98	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The findings from Table 3 reveal that respondents generally agree on a range of effective solutions that can help business education students overcome the constraints associated with running a profitable food-vending business. The item with the highest level of agreement is the need for access to small business loans, which has a mean score of 3.56,

indicating that respondents strongly believe that financial support would significantly assist students in expanding their food-vending operations.

Similarly, respondents agree that entrepreneurial training and mentorship are essential for improving students' business performance, as reflected by a mean value of 3.42. This suggests that gaining practical skills and guidance would enhance their managerial and operational capabilities. The table also shows agreement on the importance of adopting cost-saving innovations, which recorded a mean score of 3.40, indicating that students recognize the role of innovative strategies in boosting profit margins and improving business sustainability.

Additionally, respondents support the idea that school authorities providing vending spaces can promote greater business success among student vendors. This item has a mean score of 3.10, demonstrating that institutional support in securing conducive selling environments is considered beneficial. Lastly, forming cooperative societies among students received a mean of 2.85, which also falls within the "Agree" range. This reflects respondents' belief that cooperation and shared resources can reduce operational challenges and improve productivity.

Overall, the results indicate strong consensus across all items. Respondents believe that financial assistance, skill development, institutional support, innovation, and cooperative efforts are effective strategies for enhancing profitability and overcoming constraints faced by business education students engaged in food vending.

Research Question Five : In what ways does operating a food vending business within school premises enhance customer loyalty, business growth, and sustainability compared to other vending locations?

Table 5: Operating a food vending business within school premises enhance customer loyalty, business growth, and sustainability compared to other vending locations

S/N	ITEM	N0	Mean	Std.D	Remarks
21	Operating within school premises increases accessibility and convenience for customers.	66	3.56	3.12	Agree
22	Selling within the campus enhances trust and loyalty among student customers.	66	3.42	2.89	Agree
23	On-campus food vending encourages repeats patronage and business growth.	66	2.85	2.51	Agree
24	Proximity to target customers reduces	66	3.1	2.76	Agree

	transportation and operational costs.				
25	Operating within the school environment promotes business visibility and long-term sustainability.	66	3.4	2.98	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 5 presents respondents’ perceptions regarding effective solutions capable of addressing the constraints faced by business education students in operating a profitable food vending business. The results indicate a generally positive assessment of on-campus food vending as a viable and strategic solution.

Specifically, the respondents agreed that operating within school premises increases accessibility and convenience for customers, as reflected by the highest mean score of 3.56 and a standard deviation of 3.12. This suggests that the proximity of food vending outlets to students and staff enhances ease of access, which is critical for improving patronage and daily sales performance. Similarly, the item indicating that selling within the campus enhances trust and loyalty among student customers recorded a mean score of 3.42 with a standard deviation of 2.89. This implies that familiarity and consistent interaction within the academic environment foster customer confidence, which is essential for sustaining small-scale food vending enterprises.

Furthermore, respondents agreed that on-campus food vending encourages repeat patronage and business growth, with a mean score of 2.85 and a standard deviation of 2.51. Although this item recorded the lowest mean among the listed solutions, it still fell within the accepted range, indicating that respondents recognize repeat purchases as a natural outcome of operating within a concentrated student population. In addition, the perception that proximity to target customers reduces transportation and operational costs

yielded a mean score of 3.10 and a standard deviation of 2.76, underscoring the cost-saving advantages associated with reduced logistics and movement, which can significantly improve profit margins for student entrepreneurs.

Finally, the respondents agreed that operating within the school environment promotes business visibility and long-term sustainability, as evidenced by a mean score of 3.40 and a standard deviation of 2.98. This finding highlights the strategic importance of the school environment in enhancing brand awareness, consistent demand, and business continuity. Overall, the results suggest that on-campus food vending serves as an effective and sustainable solution to many of the constraints faced by business education students, particularly in terms of accessibility, customer trust, cost reduction, repeat patronage, and long-term business viability.

Discussion of Findings

Socio economics characteristics of business education students

The socioeconomic characteristics of individuals engaged in food vending activities have been widely examined in the entrepreneurship and informal sector literature, with consistent evidence pointing to the central role of demographic and socioeconomic variables in shaping participation and performance within the sector. Empirical studies indicate that a substantial proportion of small-scale food business operators are middle-aged individuals possessing secondary or vocational education, many of whom enter the trade as a response to constrained formal employment opportunities and pressing financial needs (Mahopo et al., 2022)

Entrepreneurial skills needed by business education students for food vending enterprise.

Business education students aiming to succeed in food vending enterprises require a diverse set of entrepreneurial skills. Key among these are entrepreneurial orientation, financial literacy, marketing acumen, operational management, and innovation capacity. This study is in agreement with that of (Qureshi et al., 2020). Specifically, skills such as cash flow management, product development, customer service, and strategic planning are vital for maintaining competitiveness and ensuring sustainability in the food vending sector. Additionally, soft skills like resilience, adaptability, and effective communication are crucial for navigating market fluctuations and customer preferences, (Okpara & Idowu, 2018). Also said developing these skills through business education equips students with the ability to identify opportunities, manage resources efficiently, and respond proactively to challenges, thereby increasing their chances of success in the competitive food vending industry.

The constraints faced by business education students for profitable and successful food vending business

Students often encounter significant constraints that hinder profitability and success. Financial constraints, including limited access to startup capital, are predominant. This research work is in agreement with that of Omondi et al., 2021. This limitation restricts their ability to procure quality ingredients, modern equipment, and expand operations. Additionally, infrastructural challenges such as inadequate vending locations, poor sanitation facilities, and lack of reliable utilities impact business operations (Kinyua & Wainaina, 2020). Regulatory constraints, including licensing issues and strict health

regulations, further complicate business continuity. Market constraints such as high competition, fluctuating customer demand, and limited market knowledge also pose challenges to profitability. Moreover, students often lack practical exposure and mentorship, which could otherwise help them navigate these constraints effectively.

Effective solutions can be identified to overcome the constraints faced by business education students for profitable food vending business.

Constraints necessitates multifaceted solutions. First, access to affordable credit facilities and financial literacy programs can empower students to secure necessary capital and manage finances effectively. This study is in agreement with that of Omondi et al., 2021. Partnerships with financial institutions and government agencies can facilitate micro-credit schemes tailored for young entrepreneurs. Second, entrepreneurial training programs that focus on practical skills, regulatory compliance, and business planning can enhance students' preparedness (Kinyua & Wainaina, 2020). Furthermore, establishing mentorship networks and industry linkages can provide experiential learning and guidance, fostering innovation and resilience. Improving infrastructural support, such as designated vending zones with adequate utilities, can also create conducive environments for business operations. Lastly, promoting market research and digital marketing skills can help students identify niche markets and expand their customer base, thereby increasing profitability.

Operating a food vending business within school premises enhance customer loyalty, business growth, and sustainability compared to other vending locations

Research shows that school meal programs are highly sustainable platforms for promoting healthy eating and long-term customer engagement, as they reach children daily across socioeconomic backgrounds and instill lasting consumption patterns (Oostindjer et al., 2017). Schools thus provide a consistent and predictable customer base—key for vendor loyalty and business growth. A study on cooked food vendors at KNUST campus found that vendors who operated within institutional settings benefited from easier access to customers and higher profitability. Their sustainability and growth were strongly linked to better financial management, including bookkeeping and record keeping. This findings is in agreement with that of Nimoh (2023).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The summary for the study is presented in this section, conclusions reached with recommendation made in line with investigation into the “competency skills required by business education students for food vending establishments in Edo State”. Also suggestions for future research are also advanced to broaden the horizon of knowledge. Five (5) research questions were raised to guide the study. These include the following:

1. What are the socio economics characteristics of business education students?
2. What are the entrepreneurial skills needed by business education students for food vending enterprise?

3. What are the entrepreneurial skills needed by business education students for food vending enterprise?
4. What are the constraints faced by business education students for profitable and successful food vending business?
5. What effective solutions can be identified to overcome the constraints faced by business education students for profitable food vending business?

The sample size for this study was sixty six (66) Student using simple random sampling procedure. Questionnaire was the major instrument used for data collection. The instrument used for this Research is the Questionnaire Titled " Competency Skills Required By Business Education Students For Food Vending Establishments In Edo State". The type of response expected is that of close ended questionnaire option. It has two sections which are Section A and Section B. The Section (A) deals with the personal data. Section (B) consist of (20) questions of 4 points likert's type ranging from Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree to Strongly Disagree for which the students (respondents) indicate their opinion or views with 4=Strongly 3 = *Agree*, 2 =Disagree, 1 = *Strongly Disagree*. The reliability and validity of the instrument was determined. The instrument was validated by the supervisor and other two lecturers in the Department who certified the instrument as appropriate for the study after some corrections have been effected. The reliability test-re-test technique was used to ascertain reliability of the research instrument. The questionnaire was administered twice to a sample of 20 participants

within an interval of two weeks. The data was subjected to Pearson's product moment correlation co-efficient of reliability was used to determine a reliability index. The data collected were analyzed using Descriptive statistical techniques (frequency distribution and simple percentage) was employed to analyze field data from questionnaires to assist in the interpretation of data.

The findings are:

1. First, the results showed that culinary skills are highly required, as students agreed that the ability to prepare quality meals is fundamental to running a profitable food vending business. This aligns with the notion that customers' satisfaction in food-related ventures is closely tied to food quality and consistency.
2. The study indicated that marketing and customer-relation skills are critical for success. Students reported that knowing how to attract and retain customers influences sales volumes and business growth. This suggests that interpersonal communication, product promotion, and customer-service strategies are indispensable components of food vending operations.
3. the findings revealed that record-keeping and inventory management skills are necessary. Students agreed that the ability to track sales, manage stock, and maintain financial records helps in preventing losses, promoting accountability, and improving decision-making. This supports earlier research emphasizing accurate record management for profitability in small businesses.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that business education students in Edo State require a wide range of competency skills to effectively operate food vending establishments. These include culinary proficiency, marketing and customer-relation abilities, record-keeping and inventory management skills, and decision-making competencies. While students possess some of these skills, various environmental and financial challenges limit their ability to engage in profitable food vending ventures. Strengthening entrepreneurial training and improving access to business resources can significantly enhance students' capacity to succeed in the food vending industry.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Incorporate Practical Culinary and Food Safety Training: Business education curriculum should include hands-on food preparation and hygiene courses to strengthen students' culinary competencies.
2. Provide Entrepreneurship and Marketing Workshops: Schools and government agencies should organize regular training programs on product promotion, customer service, and business innovation.
3. Enhance Access to Micro-Loans for Students: Financial institutions and government programs should establish student-friendly loan schemes to support small business start-ups in food vending.

4. **Improve Infrastructure and Resources:** Schools should partner with private organizations to provide functional electricity, storage equipment, and demonstration kitchens for training purposes.

5. **Strengthen Mentorship and Internship Opportunities:** Students should be linked with experienced food vendors and small business owners for mentorship, apprenticeship, and real-world exposure.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

1. Future researchers should examine the influence of technological skills (e.g., digital marketing, online ordering) on food vending success among business education students.

2. Studies can be conducted to assess gender differences in competency acquisition among students involved in food vending.

3. Research should explore the relationship between entrepreneurial mindset and business performance specifically in food vending enterprises.

4. A comparative study could be carried out between public and private institutions to identify variations in competency skills training.

5. Future studies may investigate the impact of government policies and taxation on youth participation in food vending businesses.

**DEPARTMENT OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
BENIN CITY.**

**COMPETENCY SKILLS REQUIRED BY BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS
FOR FOOD VENDING ESTABLISHMENTS IN EDO STATE**

DEAR PARTICIPANTS,

I Am a Student of the Department of Carrying out A Study on the Competency Skills Required by Business Education Students for Food Vending Establishments in Edo State, I therefore solicit for your responses, all your response will be treated confidentially. Please answer the following questions honestly and to the best of your knowledge. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and all information will be kept confidential.

Yours faithfully,

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Gender: Male [] Female []

2. Marital status: single [] married [] divorced []
3. Age: 15-20 [] 20-25 [] 25-30 []
4. Area of study: OTM [] Accounting []
5. Level: []

Section B: Respondents Responses

This section would elicit information from respondents for research questions 2-4

SA = STRONGLY AGREE, A – AGREE, SD – STRONGLY DISAGREE, D =DISAGREE

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	SD	D
	What are the socio economics characteristics of business education students?				
1.	My family's financial background influences my ability to start and sustain a food vending business.				
2.	Access to startup capital is a major determinant of my entrepreneurial engagement.				
3.	Parental occupation has influenced my interest in food vending enterprise.				
4.	My level of education has equipped me with knowledge useful for business management.				
5.	I can balance academic responsibilities with business activities without difficulty.				
	What are the entrepreneurial skills needed by business education students for food vending enterprise?				
6.	I have good culinary skills				
7.	I can market product very well and I know how to attend to customers				
8.	I have record-keeping and inventory management skills are crucial for tracking daily sales.				
9.	I have decision-making and problem-solving skills that are important for the food vending enterprise.				
10.	Time management skills enable effective balancing of school and business operations.				
	What are the constraints faced by business education students for profitable and successful food vending business?				
11	High cost of raw materials makes it difficult to provide quality meals at affordable prices.				

12	Inadequate access to electricity or cooking facilities limits food production quality.				
13	Lack of proper storage facilities leads to food spoilage and financial losses.				
14	Insufficient capital restricts the ability to expand or diversify meal options.				
15	Academic workload limits the time available to focus on food vending activities.				
	What effective solutions can be identified to overcome the constraints faced by business education students for profitable food vending business?				
16	Access to small business loans would help students expand their food vending operations.				
17	Entrepreneurial training and mentorship can improve students' business performance.				
18	Forming cooperative societies among students can enhance access to shared resources.				
19	Support from school authorities in providing vending spaces can promote business success.				
20	Adoption of cost-saving innovations can improve profit margins in food vending.				
	In what ways does operating a food vending business within school premises enhance customer loyalty, business growth, and sustainability compared to other vending locations?				
21	Operating within school premises increases accessibility and convenience for customers.				
22	Selling within the campus enhances trust and loyalty among student customers.				
23	On-campus food vending encourages repeats patronage and business growth.				
24	Proximity to target customers reduces transportation and operational costs.				
25	Operating within the school environment promotes business visibility and long-term sustainability.				