

NOMNOM STREET: A CHINESE STREET FOOD TRUCK INTERNATIONALIZATION CASE

Zijuan ZHANG¹², Felix H. ARION^{2#}

¹ L'Ecole supérieure des Agricultures. Master of Science Food Identity, 55 Rue Rabelais, 49000 Angers, France

² Department of Economic Sciences, University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Cluj-Napoca, 3-5 Mănăştur St., 400372, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Abstract

In an increasingly globalized food scene, NomNom Street is a street food truck brand aiming to introduce Chinese culinary culture—especially traditional snacks like jianbing and duck wraps—to European markets. Rooted in authenticity and mobility, the project explores international expansion through a structured methodology that incorporates SWOT, PEST, and CAGE analysis, as well as Business Model Canvas. The mobile format allows adaptability in foreign markets, and through visual branding, cultural adaptation, and event-based entry, the company positions itself to capitalize on Europe's appetite for experiential food. The study outlines a concrete milestone-based roadmap and resource estimation, highlighting both opportunities and critical risks in internationalisation.

Keywords: street food, food truck, Chinese cuisine, internationalisation, cultural branding

#Corresponding author: Felix H. ARION (felixarion@usamvcluj.ro)

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, food truck culture has transcended local novelty and become a flexible, scalable mode of culinary entrepreneurship. NomNom Street is a Romanian-based street food startup offering Chinese snacks such as jianbing and Beijing duck wraps. This paper presents a structured internationalization plan for the brand, focusing on expansion into Western European markets. Using business analysis frameworks, it evaluates readiness, strategic milestones, and environmental fit.

The European Street food market was valued at USD 13.9 billion in 2023 and is expected to grow at a CAGR of 6.3% through 2028 (Mordor Intelligence, 2024). Consumer trends indicate a rising interest in experiential food formats that combine convenience with authenticity. Particularly in countries like Germany, more than 52% of consumers report eating Asian food at least once a month, positioning the market as highly receptive (Statista, 2023).

MATERIAL AND METHOD

To analyze the internationalization strategy of NomNom Street effectively, this study employed several proven business planning tools and strategic frameworks. Each method serves a distinct purpose in

understanding both the internal structure of the company and the external market environment.

SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) is a tool used to evaluate the internal capabilities of a business and the external opportunities and threats it may face. It helps identify what the company does well, what needs improvement, and which external trends could affect success. This analysis was chosen to systematically understand NomNom Street's readiness for expansion and risk profile.

PEST Analysis (Political, Economic, Social, Technological) evaluates the macro-environmental factors that influence the market. It was used to examine the external conditions in France and Germany—two key entry markets—to assess regulatory impact, consumer behavior, and technological readiness. PEST helps align the brand's operations with each country's context.

Milestone-Based Planning involves breaking down the internationalization process into stages with clear objectives, KPIs, and deadlines. This structured approach ensures gradual, measurable progress and risk management. It is especially suitable for SMEs like NomNom Street with limited resources.

Desk Research on EU Food Truck Regulations and Consumer Behavior refers to

the collection of secondary data from legal databases, government publications, and market reports. This method was chosen due to its cost-effectiveness and relevance in understanding legal compliance, licensing needs, and consumption patterns in the target countries.

This study applies multiple strategic tools to analyze market fit and operational feasibility:

☐ SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats)

☐ PEST analysis (Political, Economic, Social, Technological)

☐ Milestone-based planning

☐ Desk research on EU food truck regulations and consumer behavior

Data was gathered through interviews with the NomNom Street team, desktop regulatory research, and market observations from regional street food events.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis demonstrates internal and external factors affecting the project's feasibility. Brand identity and food authenticity are major assets, but scaling internationally requires targeted investment and local adaptation.



Figure 1 SWOT analysis for NomNom Street

PEST analysis

France and Germany offer promising environments for cultural food businesses. Political entry barriers exist but are not insurmountable with legal guidance. Social and technological conditions are favorable for brand visibility and operational logistics. In Germany, over 85% of millennials discover new food spots via Instagram and TikTok (Nielsen IQ,

2023), which supports the planned use of digital marketing and online engagement (Table 1).

Table 1

PEST analysis for NomNom Street	
Factor	Key Issues
Political	Food safety regulations, street vendor licenses, visa/work permits
Economic	High purchasing power, stable consumer market, opportunity for premium pricing
Social	Interest in Asian cuisine, diverse urban populations, food festival culture
Technological	High social media penetration, mobile payment systems, online delivery integration

Milestone Plan

The internationalization of NomNom street is structured into six key milestones, each with clearly defined objectives, estimated budgets, and associated risks.

The first milestone focuses on defining the motivation for international expansion. internal discussions and vision-setting meetings are scheduled to result in a formal internationalization strategy draft by June 2025. estimated cost: €500–1,000 for consultation and documentation. risk: misalignment of vision; mitigated by internal workshops. The second milestone aims to align internal operations with the internationalization process. this includes identifying human resource needs, conducting staff training, and updating internal workflows to support cross-border operations. this alignment is planned for July 2025. estimated cost: €2,000–3,000 for training and process updates. risk: resistance to change; countered through participative planning.

The third milestone addresses product localization. by august 2025, the company will complete adaptations to food recipes to match local taste preferences and comply with allergen labeling and regulatory standards. this also involves translating menu content and updating packaging. estimated cost: €3,000–5,000. risk: delays in supplier adaptation or compliance errors; mitigated by legal consultation.

The fourth milestone is the development and execution of a market entry and communication strategy. the plan includes the creation of local branding elements, launching multilingual social media channels, and redesigning the website to suit European

consumers. these actions are targeted for completion in august

2025. estimated cost: €4,000–6,000. risk: ineffective branding in local context; mitigated via local focus groups.

The fifth milestone includes a test launch in two selected European markets—Germany and France—through participation in local food festivals. the aim is to gather customer feedback, test operations, and evaluate product reception. this test run is scheduled for September and October 2025. estimated cost: €10,000–15,000 (travel, logistics, fees). risk:

low turnout or poor feedback; reduced by pre-event promotion and local partnerships.

Finally, the sixth milestone involves identifying long-term business partners such as pop-up hosts, food halls, or franchise candidates. networking events and b2b outreach will be pursued in q4 2025 to establish sustainable collaborations. estimated cost: €2,000–3,000.

risk: lack of interest or delays in negotiation; addressed by pre-qualified lead generation and diverse outreach.

the publicly available data sources and international food policy organizations that supported the development of this paper.

CONCLUSIONS

NomNom Street's expansion plan demonstrates a viable path for cultural food brands to enter European markets via mobility, localization, and phased implementation. With a strong product identity and growing consumer interest in experiential food, the project aligns well with market trends. Addressing legal, linguistic, and operational gaps will be crucial for long-term sustainability.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to express sincere gratitude to the faculty and academic advisors at the University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine of Cluj-Napoca for their guidance throughout this research. Special thanks are extended to the NomNom Street project team for their cooperation and valuable insights, as well as to the event organizers and local food entrepreneurs in Germany and France who provided case-specific perspectives. Appreciation is also given to

REFERENCES

- Benzaghta, M. A., Elwalda, A., Mousa, M., Erkan, I., & Rahman, M. (2021). SWOT analysis applications: An integrative literature review. *Journal of Global Business Insights*, 6(1), 55–73.
- FAO. (2020). *The State of Agricultural Markets*. Food and Agriculture Organization.
- Goyal, A. (2020). Porter's Five Forces Model: Critical Analysis. *JETIR*, 149–152.
- Mordor Intelligence. (2024). *Europe Street Food Market – Growth, Trends, and Forecast (2024–2029)*.
- NielsenIQ. (2023). *Digital Food Trends in the European Millennial Market*.
- Statista. (2023). *Consumer Preferences for Asian Food in Germany*.
- UNWTO. (2024). *Global and Regional Tourism Performance Report*.
- World Bank. (2023). *Doing Business in the European Union: Food Services Edition*. Nottingham