

An Empirical Study on the Factors Influencing Consumer Behaviour towards Online Food Delivery Applications in Delhi NCR Region

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Abstract- Our manner of ordering food has revolutionized in the past few years, and the change is more apparent in major cities such as those in the Delhi NCR. The fact that applications such as Zomato, Swiggy, and Uber Eats are already a part of the daily life of the city, people seem to switch between them, or sometimes even switch to their rivals, made it feel necessary to learn why people choose these services in the first place or why they keep returning to the same apps. The study aimed at considering the main factors that influence consumer behaviour to online food delivery applications (OFDAs) within the area of Delhi NCR.

In particular, I was interested in understanding the influence of such factors as convenience, price, promotional campaigns, application design, delivery time, diversity of restaurants, customer rating with other platforms, and digital payment credibility on frequency of orders and platform loyalty. A calculated survey was conducted on the locality of Delhi NCR and the analysis was done through normal statistical methods. What came out was relatively a clear image wherein convenience and saving time was the reason people used to turn to the food delivery apps in the first place.

I. INTRODUCTION

Food ordering would typically require picking up the phone and calling a local restaurant -or, more commonly, cooking at home. That world feels distant now. The image of Zomato and Swiggy has radically transformed the way a significant segment of urban India is eating and the transformation has been even more noticeable in metros such as the Delhi NCR where the long hours of work, heavy traffic, and increased disposable incomes have made food delivery services virtually essential.

The positive experience that has taken place during several weeks may be reversed by a late delivery, a cold meal, or even a discrepancy in the bill. The consumer behaviour within this area is influenced by a truly complex combination of factors. The technology contributes to it - the people desire apps that are user-friendly, quick and dependable. The discounts system coupled with the structure of the various delivery fees are going to exert a direct influence in the ordering decisions, as the Indian market is very sensitive when it comes to price matters. The COVID-19 pandemic fast-tracked the adoption by a certain degree that would never have been predicted by the best estimates of 2018 or 2019.

Although restrictions in the pandemic period were eased, most behaviour changes were persistent - ordering food online turned out to be a routine among millions of households.

- ✓ How does one remain loyal to Swiggy despite having been offered a better discount by Zomato this week?
- ✓ How significant is the delivery time as compared to the quality of the food?
- ✓ Do the old consumers act differently as compared to the younger ones? It is such types of questions that this study is trying to answer.

II. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Online food delivery channels have spread fast in the areas of Delhi NCR, although the image of the factors that actually drive the consumer decisions and those that weaken them is incomplete. On the one hand, the suggestion made by these apps appears quite simple:

you just have to press a few buttons, and your food will come to your door.

The real experience that the consumers get is a lot less predictable, however. Some users use the application every day, and they are loyal to it; there are users who tried a service one time and failed in a certain situation, and cannot open the application again. However, not every one of these efforts gives rise to actual customer retention. It is helpful, both in practice and in theory, to know what factors it is specifically drive the needle.

Certain aspects (undisclosed delivery fees, inconsistent food quality, delays in delivering orders without a supportive explanation, and data security concerns) have been identified as the causes of negative customer feedback on numerous occasions, although extensive empirical research on these problems within the frame of the Delhi NCR neighbourhood is scant. This research will aim to address this gap.

The main research question that would lead to the development of the paper is as follows:

What are the main factors that affect consumer behaviour in using online food delivery apps in the Delhi NCR area, and what impact they have on consumers being satisfied, using them regularly, and remaining loyal to the platform?

III.NEED FOR THE STUDY

The food delivery market is among the most competitive and one of the fastest-growing industries of the digital economy of India. The study of consumer behaviour in this space is not an academic exercise, as it has first-hand implications to the way these businesses expand, the way they maintain customers, and also the way they enhance their services.

One of the reasons why such a study is a timely and even necessary one is several. Changing Consumer behaviour: Urban Indians, especially the ones in metros, are becoming convenience-oriented. What is now a delicacy is now a routine way for most families to handle meals. It is actually beneficial to research as to why and how these habits have become what they are, as well as what makes them continue to exist.

- High Competition in the Market: Zomato and Swiggy are also in severe competition with each

other. It is not easy to comprehend the reasons why a certain person remains loyal to a specific platform instead of a different promotional deal, or because a person left a particular site and decided to settle on another one.

- Service Quality Intensifications: Understanding what consumers truly believe in (see, faster delivery, better packaging, more accurate orders, etc.) provides platforms with tangible dimensions to invest in and not conjecture. After COVID-19, Hygiene, contactless delivery, and Trust in digital payment acquired a different value. It would be of interest to explore empirically whether and to what extent these concerns continue to influence consumer decisions.
- Development of Marketing strategies: Companies require real information in order to come up with effective promotions, price projection, and service customisation. When you are on a large scale, guesswork is costly
- Academic Contribution: The majority of available works on the topic of digital consumer behaviour in food delivery are based on international contexts. The current study provides support for the study that is based on the unique characteristics of the Indian culture, economy, and lifestyle within an urban environment.

Scope of the Study

The study is aimed at explaining consumer behaviour in relation to online food delivery websites in the Delhi NCR community.

This geographic area is deliberately chosen as it is located in Delhi NCR, where it will be possible to find a high concentration of a diverse and technologically active population of consumers, which is why it is an excellent place to study the issue of digital food consumption.

The analysis focuses on the perceptions of the consumers in many aspects: convenience, price, of promotional incentives, design and functionality of the apps, speed of delivery, service quality, variety of restaurants, reviews left by the users and trust in the digital payment systems

One aspect that this study fails to achieve is to look into the logistics or operational aspect of food delivery

- the operations of restaurant management, delivery fleet management and supply chain is not in the focus of this study. The emphasis is put on the consumer approach.

IV.LITERATURE REVIEW AND GAP ANALYSIS

An analysis of the literature is one of the sources that can give a solid background to develop the proposed research, as well as to show the areas in which the gaps still exist, according to the specific situation in India in the city environment.

The authors aimed to use the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to understand the adoption of food delivery apps and discovered that perceived usefulness, ease of use, social influence, and trust were all effective predictors of the initial transportation as well as frequent use (Tsai, 2023). This framework is extensively referred to, and the applicability of the framework to the context in Delhi NCR is among the aspects that this study aims to provide a test. A previous research paper in 2017 concentrated on the experience and attitude of consumers towards internet-based food delivery services, and the research revealed convenience, time-saving, hedonic pleasure, prices, and quality of services as the principal factors resulting in consumer intention. Although the results are still applicable, the environment, in terms of both technologies and society, has changed significantly since then.

Farhans and Ridanasti (2023) discovered that convenience and time efficiency were the core elements in repurchase intentions, and trust was a known mediating element. This is consistent with the results of Kumar and Kumar (2023) who specifically focused on the price sensitivity, app usability and the promotional strategy as good predictors of consumer behaviour under the Indian special case context.

Iyer (2019) also focused on demographics, stating that younger age groups and consumers with busy workloads were much more willing to use the services of a food delivery service.

In later research, Darji (2024) identified the speed of delivery, the quality of packaging, and features of the platform as the most important factors influencing the satisfaction rate and the desire to use it again.

The picture is rounded off by a number of other studies. According to Ruyani and Sonjaya (2023), trust

and repeat usage depended heavily on the past experience and benefits in terms of time.

Chahal and Bishnoi (2022) have concluded that the major drivers of adoption were convenience, offers on payment, and increased lifestyle change.

As Hsu and Le (2021) emphasized, fair prices, the presence of service reliability, and privacy of data are needed to maintain satisfaction and loyalty.

A study conducted by Hwang and Choe (2019) revealed that e-service quality, food quality, and trust determined the attitudes and repurchase intentions, which are also worth reconsidering in the post-pandemic setting.

More recently, Teo (2024) found the three factors mentioned in the list of most effective sustaining forces include habit formation, satisfaction, and perceived value to continue using the app.

According to a meta-analytic review of 2024, performance expectancy, perceived risk, and social influence were found to contribute significantly to consumer behaviour, whereas usefulness, ease of use, trust, and perceived risk were considered key determinants of adoption according to Vinish et al. (2021).

In a study of the sentiments on social media around the COVID-19, it was shown that hygiene, safety, and prompt communication were particularly crucial in consumer confidence at that time.

Gap Analysis

Gap Analysis As one reads through this body of literature, one can identify a number of patterns, both those that have been researched and those that have not. The current literature of existence is based in most cases on international markets, East and Southeast Asia and the West-based scenario. There are few studies in comparison which specifically focus on Delhi NCR or the Indian metros at large, and even those that exist about India lack the complexity of this market.

The second gap is that it strongly depends on the models of technology adoption with the TAM. Though these frameworks are truly useful in the context of comprehending initial uptake, they become less applicable in circumstances of expounding what occurs after adoption, which is the quality of actual

service provision, the role of customer service, and the effect of recurring good or bad experiences.

The attention should be paid to post-adoption behaviour. In previous studies there is also the tendency to test either one of the factors, functional (convenience, app usability) or emotional factors (satisfaction, trust) without having a combined test. As a matter of fact, consumer choices are seldom this straightforward.

One user may accept a user interface that works poorly because the quality of the food always is maintained and another user may drop technically refined app after a couple of bad delivery experiences. Relatively low attention has been given to customer loyalty and long-term usage as opposed to first adoption. In the majority of studies, the question about the usage of an app is analyzed; a lesser proportion of studies considers the question if a person will continue using it along six months; not a single study questioned why.

The question of price sensitivity which is quite critical in the context of the developing economy in India too has not been well tackled, at least with respect to other aspects such as service quality and trust.

Last, but most likely, detailed post-pandemic research about the current consumer expectations remains thin on the ground. The change in behaviour that has taken place since the year 2020 has not been well documented or analysed especially in the case of Delhi NCR. Collectively, these gaps lead to the fact that a thorough, regionally focused, post-pandemic study is required, which will study several factors at the same time. This is what this paper tries to do.

Research Design

In this research, quantitative and descriptive methodology will be used to investigate the parameters that influence consumer behaviour in online food delivery applications in Delhi NCR. The reason why a descriptive design was selected is that the objective is to establish a systematic documentation or comprehension of consumer perceptions, inclinations, and consumption behaviours as opposed to incurring experimentation cause-and-effect connections.

The study is qualitative as it is based on primary data obtained through right sources and that is among the individuals who frequently use food delivery services such as Zomato and Swiggy. The main data collection tool is a structured questionnaire, which is aimed at gathering measurable data regarding the attitude of consumers, influencing factors, and outcomes of the behaviour.

It follows a cross-sectional design, i.e. data is obtained at one point of time of a certain group of respondents. Statistical techniques such as frequency analysis, mean scores, correlation and regression analysis are also used to investigate the relationship between independent variables, e.g., convenience, pricing, functionality, and quality of services with the dependent variables such as satisfaction, order frequency, and loyalty.

This method is quite suitable to be able to define the tendencies and statistics of the proportionality of various factors on the choice of consumers in the Internet type of food delivery market.

V.OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To determine the key variables that affect consumer behaviour as far as the online food delivery application is concerned in the Delhi NCR area.
2. To discuss how the convenience and time-saving advantages contribute to the desire of consumers to use online food delivery services.
3. To examine how pricing, discounts, and promotion offers affect consumer ordering decisions.

1. Hypotheses of the Study

- H1: Convenience plays a significant or positive role in the intention of consumers to utilize online food delivery services.
- H2: Perceived ease of use has a significant positive impact on the attitude of consumers towards online food delivery websites.
- H3: Perceived usefulness plays a significant role in the intention of consumers with regard to ordering food via online delivery services.

- H4: Consumers are using promotional discounts and offers to make higher purchase frequency.
- H5: Service quality: The overall customer satisfaction largely depends on service quality in terms of timely delivery, accuracy of order, and the state of food upon delivery.
- H6: Customer satisfaction has a positive relationship with customer loyalty to online food delivery applications.
- H7: On line reviews and ratings have a major influence in the decision that consumers make when selecting a restaurant.
- H8: Platform trust, which is secured payment, privacy of information, and healthy service provision, has a positive effect on the subsequent use.
- H9: Delivery costs have a detrimental influence on the willingness of consumers to make an order online.
- H10: Customer satisfaction mediates the correlation between customer loyalty and the service quality.

2. Conceptual Framework

This paper builds on an integration of various existing theoretical models, which are modified to meet the online requirements of food delivery in Delhi NCR. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) forms the basis of the knowledge of the acquisition of adoption intent through perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness.

Variables about reliability, responsiveness, and the performance of delivery are the variables that are more applicable in the context of the E-Service Quality Model.

Independent Variables: Convenience, Perceived Ease of Use, Perceived Usefulness, Discounts and Offers, Service Quality, Delivery Charges, Online Reviews and Ratings, Trust. Mediation Variable: Customer Satisfaction.

Dependent Variables: Curriculum Intention, Customer loyalty, Repeat purchase Behaviour. The theoretical reasoning is simple: the combination of app-related and service-related variables influences the satisfaction of customers, and as a result, results in customer loyalty and eventual usage.

Loyalty will come where the level of satisfactions remains high. Where it fails, e.g. through poor delivery, inadequately explained price to the customer or trust failures, so do retention.

3. Research Area

The research is carried out in the Delhi NCR area comprising of Delhi, Gurugram, Noida, Ghaziabad and Faridabad. The city of Delhi NCR has been selected due to several simple reasons. The area boasts of high personal phone and internet penetration rates, significant amount of working population with hectic schedules, and wide usage of all the leading food delivery sites.

Due to the demographic mix as it includes students, young professionals, families, and retirees, it is possible to consider how the involvement of various types of consumers into these services takes place.

4. Sampling Design

The entire population of all people in the Delhi NCR that have made at least one purchase using an online food delivery application within three months before the survey.

Unit of Sampling: Each sample was an individual user who had the recent experience using food delivery platforms. Sample Size: 100 participants - which is enough to have regression, factor analysis and structural equation modelling (SEM).

Sampling Method: Non-probability convenience sampling and screening on usage experience aptness. There is also no list of food delivery apps users in Delhi NCR which is comprehensive, which makes probability sampling logistically impractical.

The data collection process can easily be carried out on real users with the help of convenience sampling, which is also used in well-established behavioural research work of this genre. The screening criteria took care of the fact that every participant had actual experience with the platforms under study in the recent past.

5. Data Collection Methods

Primary Data

Primary Data A questionnaire was created in a structured form and was sent through different methods digitally (using Google Forms, WhatsApp,

Instagram, and email) and in person to students and professionals all through the NCR.

The questionnaires contained closed-ended questions and a 5 -point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree Strongly Agree), which were structured into five sections:

1. App usage habits
2. Impression of service quality.
3. Pricing and promotional power.
4. Perception of trust and safety.
5. Satisfaction and loyalty

There are some practical reasons as to why the questionnaire method of approach was adopted; a large and diverse pool of respondents can be collected, statistical analysis of collected data becomes easy and the questionnaire is suitable in collecting attitudes and perceptions in a uniform manner. It is also time-saving and comparatively cheap - both of which matter regarding a field-based research.

Secondary Data

The theoretical framework and the contextualisation of the findings were built with the help of secondary sources. These were the published studies on e-commerce and food delivery behaviour, industry articles on the online food delivery market in India, company reports on Zomato and Swiggy, and news and market analysis.

VI. THEORETICAL VIEW: ISSUES THAT INFLUENCE CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

There is no single factor that would guide the consumer behaviour of online food delivery apps in Delhi NCR. It consists of a combination of the several interacting forces that include, technological, economic, social, and psychological. The preparation of the way these factors act separately and in combination is the basis of this research.

1. Convenience

Among the models that were considered in this study, the convenience had the greatest occurrence as a driving factor. The ability to order food whenever, wherever, without the need to travel or cook, this is an extremely attractive offer to people who have a hectic

urban life. Individuals who cannot finish their work in time and have to travel two hours to get to the office, students who need to balance their busy lives, and West families will discuss a case when both partners work full-time and can afford to hire a driver to deliver the food to their homes and ensure their comfort. The time component of food delivery is not insignificant in a city, such as Delhi, where getting to the office can take several hours of an individual.

2. Perceived Ease of Use

An easy to access service must still be convenient.

Design of apps is important - not shallowly. The users demand easy navigation, searching and filtering functionalities, easy checkout and a secure payment processing system. As an application provides such things, it is easy to use.

Even a very convenient service can become a pain, when it fails to do so, when menus are incompatible, payment process is cumbersome, or it becomes difficult to correct mistakes.

This consideration is especially pertinent in the market such as the one in Delhi NCR where the digital literacy level of the user base is rather diverse. The application deployed to a 25-year old software engineer must also be functional to a 50-year old first-time smartphone user as well.

3. Service Quality

Covers all aspects of timely food delivery to whether the packaging is clean and sanitary. Practically, consumers assess service quality in relatively small number of dimensions that include punctuality, accuracy of order, food condition upon delivery, and packaging.

Lack of service quality in the form of a cold meal, being given the wrong order, an hour-long late delivery is the source of negative reviews, platform-switching, and the breakdown of the goodwill developed over months of positive interactions.

The quality of services is likely to be the most crucial element of retention in the competitive market where users can change the platform within seconds

4. Online Reviews and Ratings

Consumers are using digital word-of-mouth as a significant element of their food delivery app

navigation. Star ratings, textual reviews, user-friendly images all impact restaurant choice, at times to a large extent.

What is intriguing about this aspect is that it is slightly independent of the personal experience of a consumer?

A first-time user of a platform who has never been to a restaurant would have to depend practically solely on the accumulated opinion of the community.

5. Delivery Speed and Efficiency

Speed is important in an urban fast-paced world. The time expected by the consumers who order food online is usually between 30 to 45 minutes.

Deliveries that are fast and efficient will bring about satisfaction. Slowness or predictability is frustrating and multiple delays are a sure indicator that a platform will be abandoned. This has been handled in part by real-time order tracking which gets the expectations in check more than shortening the delivery time inevitably.

The fact that your order is 10 minutes away is bearable as opposed to no idea whether it has even left the restaurant.

6. Work and Urban Culture Lifestyle.

Fixed working hours, a high commuting time, a growing share of two-income families, and the growing number of young professionals living alone are the rhythms of life, established in Delhi NCR, that have resulted in the creation of a structural demand for food delivery services.

To most of the people living in this area, online ordering of food is not really a luxury, but a way of reacting to the time demands that cannot be met in the home cooking facilities

7. Social Influence

The consumers will not make the decisions in an empty room. Suggestions made by peers and friends, trends that have been promoted on social media, and promotions encouraged by influencers can all contribute to the influence on which platforms individuals attempt to use and to which restaurants they place orders.

New users form their preferences on the platform, only to be particularly susceptible to social influence.

VII.LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Any empirical study is constrained, and the present empirical study is no exception. It is significant to be transparent about these limitations in order to draw the relevant conclusions about the findings.

- Geographical area: The research is limited to the area of NCR, Delhi. The results might not accurately apply to smaller cities, rural areas, or areas with dissimilar infrastructures and lifestyle trends.
- Convenience sampling: Since there is no large sampling frame of food delivery users, convenience sampling was utilized. This gives the opportunity for biases in selection - various demographic groups can be either over- or underrepresented.
- Sample size: A hundred respondents will suffice for the analytical tools applied, whereas it will not be sufficient to make strong generalisations regarding the large population of Delhi NCR food delivery users.
- Self-reported data: Questionnaire responses are related to the honesty and self-interest of participants. The problem of social desirability bias and imperfect recall may also be identified as a source of distortion.
- Market forces: The online delivery of food market is dynamic - there are new features, new offers, new competitors. The results indicate the attitudes of consumers during the period when the data was taken, and it should not be treated as a final understanding. Variable selection

The study is made on a specified set of factors. Other factors that may have influenced the results, such as the perception of the brand due to advertising, emotional association, and ecological awareness, were not explored in depth.

VIII.INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

The information collected in the survey has relatively specific directions of several major conclusions.

The most common reasons why people use food delivery apps are convenience and time-saving. This did not come as a surprise, because these factors come out strongly and uniformly throughout the literature, but what is notable is the robustness of the result in the Delhi NCR scenario, since this area experiences specific pressure in lifestyle. The issue of pricing sensitivity does exist and is acute, especially among younger users.

Promotions and deals affect the frequency and timing of ordering. However, they, in themselves, do not dictate in the long run who a person orders. Customers who tried several platforms continuously reported that service quality and reliability were the key in choosing the eventual platform.

Service quality - holding to time, right orders, food in good condition came out strongly as an indicator of satisfaction. And satisfaction, in its turn, was the best predictor of the loyalty and repeat purchase behaviour. It is a more clean piece of findings that has come out as a result of the data that is referring to this mediating role of satisfaction. Another recurring theme was trust to safety of payments and reliability of the platform. Customers, especially those who had been failed in a payment or had an issue on a complaint they had not received, became significantly more skeptical about making another order with that site. When trust is lost, it takes time to be restored. The effect of online reviews on the decisions of the users to visit a restaurant was higher than many appeared to recognize. The patterns of behaviour in the data indicated that unfamously high-rated restaurants were disproportionately assigned orders, other factors being approximately equal.

The general impression that makes itself viewed is that lower prices will bring the consumers into the premises, but service quality and overall good experiences that will make them return again. The sites that pay attention to the basics such as consistent delivery, correct order, prompt customer services have higher chances of developing long term customer relationships as opposed to the sites depending on promotions.

IX.CONCLUSION

This research was aimed at knowing what consumer behaviour is, based on online food delivery apps in

Delhi NCR - and what the results say are comforting, and informative to the businesses in the same field.

The choice of a food delivery application in the first place is often made by convenience and some perceived value the feeling that order placement online is quicker, more convenient, and worth the money than the others. Short-run effect would be promotions and discounts on the orders frequency.

However, the determining factors of a user staying loyal to a platform when it comes to months and years are different: stable quality of service, availability of delivery, the security of payment processes and a feeling that the platform is able to fulfil what they promise they will do.

In a city as competitive and vibrant as Delhi NCR, food delivery has not been a new thing anymore. It is a normal eating routine to a great majority of population. Such a change not only opens a space, but also a duty to the platforms themselves: the possibility to establish truly dependent relationships with customers, and the duty to provide a service quality that would allow consumers to trust it.

The gaps, which are noted herein, especially on post-adoption behaviour, demographic segmentation and the engagement between the emotional and functional factors imply that there are efficient avenues of further research.

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