



A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE RESPONDENT'S PERCEPTION OF SELECTED TERMINALS RELATING TO ONLINE FOOD PURCHASES PRE AND POST-COVID INCEPTION

Monica Khaturia

Teacher- Delhi Public School

Udaipur

1.1 ABSTRACT:

- **Purpose** – The purpose of the study is to compare how respondents felt about eating meals online before and after the COVID issue.
- **Design/methodology/approach** – The primary data was collected from a sample of 58 participants residing in the urban locality of Udaipur. The researcher utilized non-experimental quantitative surveys, formulated structured questions, manually disseminated questionnaires, and carried out face-to-face interviews. Initially, a survey was administered to a sample of 70 individuals; however, only 58 responses were deemed pertinent for analysis. Consequently, a total of 12 responses were received that did not exhibit any signs of active engagement. The sample was selected through a random sampling technique from the overall population.
- **Findings** – The results indicate a notable disparity in the factors deemed essential for the procurement of food through online channels, along with a noteworthy impact of the Covid pandemic on the frequency of online food orders.
- **Research limitations/implications** – The data were collected randomly with limited sample size, solely from Udaipur. It is worth noting that the accuracy of the results could have been improved if the region of study had been expanded.
- **Practical implications** – The study investigates the significant change in participants' dietary habits during two distinct time frames, namely pre, and post-Covid, in relation to their online food consumption.

- **Originality/value** – The present article presents the responses of the participants to the formulated statements, which were rated on a five-point Likert scale. This methodology enabled us to identify the variations in viewpoints between the two distinct research periods.

- **Keywords:** ONLINE FOOD

1.2 INTRODUCTION:

The advent of the 21st century has been marked by the notable emergence of India's swift economic expansion. In the current era of advanced technologies and innovations, the youth of the nation exhibit exceptional abilities. The effective performance of working-class organizations is of utmost importance, and technology is a crucial factor in facilitating their success. The increasing usage of mobile applications can be attributed to various factors, such as the affordability of smartphones and internet data plans. The proliferation of mobile applications has facilitated users' increased familiarity with a diverse range of activities, such as conducting transactions on e-commerce platforms like Myntra or utilizing online food delivery services like Swiggy and Zomato. Online food delivery pertains to the process of delivering food through a web page or mobile application, which can be accessed remotely rather than solely within the confines of a restaurant or local food establishment. Consumers have the option to place an order for sustenance from their preferred dining establishments, select their desired cuisine, determine whether to retrieve the order or have it transported, and remit payment through various means such as cash upon receipt, debit card, credit card, or alternative mobile payment methods. The incorporation of technology and smartphones has brought about a significant transformation in our way of life. It is possible to indulge in culinary delights within the confines of one's own abode with minimal effort, thanks to the convenience of modern technology. This can be achieved by utilizing a few simple taps and swipes on popular streaming platforms such as Netflix, Prime, or Hotstar. In recent times, there has been a shift towards home-based dining as opposed to eating out with companions. This trend is largely attributed to the convenience it offers individuals who may have had a tiring day at work and are either too fatigued to cook or crave the comfort of a home-cooked meal. With the advent of technology, ordering food online has become effortless, requiring only a single tap on a smartphone. The Indian restaurant industry is experiencing rapid growth and is considered one of the fastest-expanding sectors of the economy. The introduction of ready-to-eat meals is anticipated to further increase revenues in the near future. The popularity of pre-cooked food has increased due to the phenomenon of rapid urbanization and significant migration of individuals to urban areas in pursuit of improved living standards and employment opportunities.

The correlation between the surge in online food purchases and the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic has been established. The latter is assumed to be widely recognized and therefore requires no further elaboration. In recent months, the economy has been exerting significant efforts, with the pandemic impacting all sectors, including the online food industry. This study examines the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the online food industry by analyzing and comparing data from both pre-and post-COVID periods.

1.3 REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

(Patel, Taneja, Kumari, & Shingle, 2020)¹ The study conducted by Patel, Taneja, Kumari, and Shingle in 2020 is referenced. The latest network extension has enabled volunteers to peruse, compare prices, and manually navigate online food services. The significance of meal location has led to the evolution of online ordering. The e-commerce platform of the food company has experienced a significant surge in popularity. The restaurant industry has been significantly impacted by technological advancements, which have continued to revolutionize the entire business system. The far-reaching impact of innovation on the industry has been noteworthy. (Petchiammal & Jeyakumari, 2020)² The rapid growth of the internet has boosted the e-commerce industry in countries like India. People who want food delivered to their door can now use online food ordering services thanks to advancements in e-commerce. The goal of this study was to look into customers' perceptions of online food ordering services.

(Chaturvedi & Karthik, 2019)³. The provision of sustenance is a fundamental requirement for the survival of the human species. Individuals have the ability to place food orders remotely via the Internet from the comfort of their own residences. The proliferation of internet usage in India has led to the emergence of a novel global trend, namely, the online ordering of food. The frequency of food ordering has increased. There has been a recent surge in online food ordering in urban regions of India. In order to enhance their performance, marketers such as Food Panda, Swiggy, Zomato, and Uber operating in rural areas should possess a thorough understanding of customer behavior. (Giri, 2019)⁴ A comparative study was conducted by two of the major online food services companies, Zomato and Swiggy, with 500 people in a selected sample area. In the study, the majority of respondents were aware of the availability of online food services. The overall comparison of the two diverse online food services shows that Swiggy is more attractive than Zomato to most respondents. The explanation was that Swiggy used promotion, promotion, and mobile applications better than Zomato.

(Saxena, 2019)⁵ The citation provided is attributed to Saxena in the year 2019. Startups in India have gained global attention and are a prominent topic of discussion in the business community. Adolescents generate innovative concepts for the uncontrolled user domain. Presently, the valuation of the digital food marketplace in India amounts to \$350 million. The provision of food through online applications is a component of the broader realm of food distribution.

(Ghosh & Saha, 2018)⁶ The authors Ghosh and Saha (2018) have been cited. The present study employed ANOVA as a statistical technique to examine the association between customers' demographic characteristics and variables related to online food businesses. Several factors have been analyzed to assess the impact of e-transaction processing in the realm of food delivery, as exemplified by Swiggy.

1.4 OBJECTIVES:

1. The present study aims to investigate the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on consumers' attitudes toward food consumed outside of the home.
2. Compare the consumer consumption behavior prior to and subsequent to the proliferation of the coronavirus.
3. The objective of this study is to examine the mindset of individuals with regard to their health subsequent to the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. To investigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on consumer faithfulness and loyalty.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The research primarily relies on primary data acquisition, which was gathered from a sample of 58 participants located in Udaipur. A set of 10 Likert statements were initially formulated, and subsequently, a pilot survey was conducted to collect data. Based on the results of the pilot survey, 7 key statements were selected for further analysis. This paper presents a comprehensive investigation into the perceptual disparities among participants before and after the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic. The statistical techniques employed for data analysis encompass measures such as mean, chi-square, one-sample t-test, and standard deviation. SPSS 21 was utilized as the software application.

1.6 ANALYSIS OF DATA:

1.6.1 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Table 1

Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents

		Count	Table N %
<i>Gender</i>	Male	46	79.31%
	Female	12	20.69%
	Total	58	100.00%
<i>Age</i>	20-25 Yrs.	20	34.48%
	25-30 Yrs.	14	24.14%

		Count	Table N %
	30-35 Yrs.	21	36.21%
	35-40 Yrs.	3	5.17%
	Total	58	100.00%
<i>Qualification</i>	Graduate	35	60.34%
	Post-Graduate	22	37.93%
	Professional	1	1.72%
	Total	58	100.00%
<i>Occupation</i>	Student	11	18.97%
	Teacher	4	6.90%
	Housewife	4	6.90%
	Govt. Job	17	29.31%
	Private Job	12	20.69%
	Software Eng.	2	3.45%
	Business	6	10.34%
	Self Employed	2	3.45%
	Total	58	100.00%

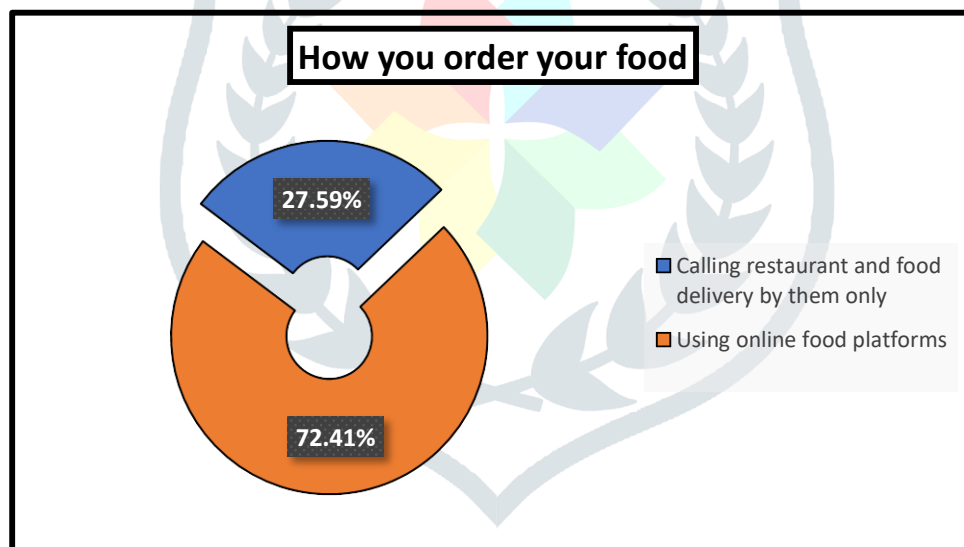
Table 1, depicted above, illustrates the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants based on four variables, namely gender, age, educational attainment, and occupation. A total of 58 participants were interviewed, and appropriate statistical methods were utilized. The initial criterion employed for categorization was the gender of the participants. The study sample consisted of 46 males (79.31%) and 12 females (20.69%). Thus, it can be inferred that the study was predominantly composed of male participants. The subsequent categorization was based on the variable of "age." The participants were divided into four distinct groups: those aged between 20-25 years, comprising 20 individuals (34.49%); those aged between 25-30 years, comprising 14 individuals (24.14%); those aged between 30-35 years, comprising 21 individuals (36.21%); and those aged between 35-40 years, comprising the smallest group of 3 individuals (5.18%). The age bracket of 30 to 35 years constituted the largest proportion of participants. Moreover, the participants were categorized into three groups

based on their educational background, namely Graduates (60.35%, n=35), Post-Graduates (37.94%, n=22), and Professionals (1.73%, n=1). Finally, the participants were categorized according to their respective occupations. The participants were categorized into eight distinct groups, namely Students (18.97%), Teachers (6.9%), Housewives (6.9%), Govt. Job employees (29.31%), Private Job employees (20.69%), Software Engineers (3.45%), Businessmen (10.35%), and Self Employed individuals (3.45%). The majority of the respondents belonged to the Govt. Job category, comprising 17 individuals.

1.6.2 HOW YOU ORDER YOUR FOOD

Table 2
How do you order your food?

	Count	Percentage
<i>Calling restaurants and food delivery by them only</i>	16	27.59 %
<i>Using online food platforms</i>	42	72.42 %



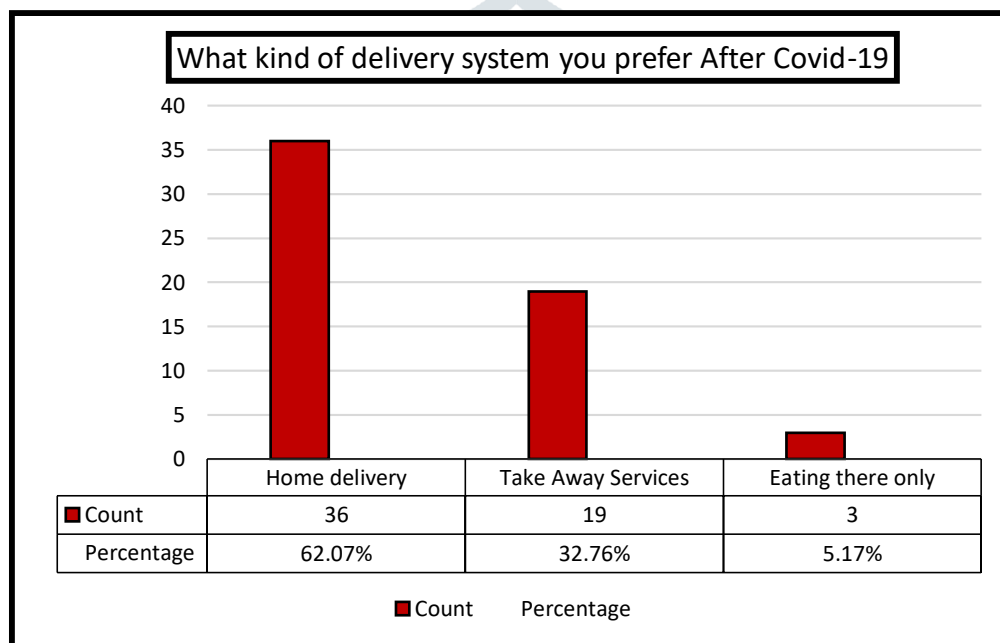
Source- Primary Data

Figure 1 How you order your food

The participants were surveyed regarding their preferred method of food ordering, with two alternatives presented: placing a phone call to the restaurant or utilizing online food platforms. The majority of respondents, specifically 72.42%, opted for the former choice, while only 27.59% of respondents chose to place their orders by calling the restaurant and having the food delivered by them exclusively. The utilization of digital food platforms appears to be widely prevalent and advantageous among the general populace.

1.6.3 WHAT KIND OF DELIVERY SYSTEM DO YOU PREFER AFTER COVID-19

<i>Table 3</i>		Count	Percentage
<i>What kind of delivery system do you prefer After Covid-19</i>	Home delivery	36	62.07%
	Take Away Services	19	32.76%
	Eating there only	3	5.17%
	Total	58	100.00%



Source- Primary Data

Figure 2 What kind of delivery system do you prefer After Covid-19

A distinct contrast in the respondents' perception before and after the Covid situation was observed, as indicated by the demarcation above in Table 3 and Figure 2. With regard to the post-Covid scenario, the participants were surveyed regarding their preferred mode of delivery following the pandemic. Out of the total respondents, 62.07% (n=36) opted for home delivery, 32.76% (n=19) preferred to take away services, and a mere 5.18% (n=3) chose to dine in. The category indicating a preference for home delivery exhibited a significantly higher proportion compared to the other two categories.

1.7 HAS COVID-19 AFFECTED YOUR HABIT OF OUTSIDE EATING?

<i>Table 4</i>	Count	Percentage
Yes	41	70.69%
No	17	29.31%
<i>Total</i>	58	100.00%

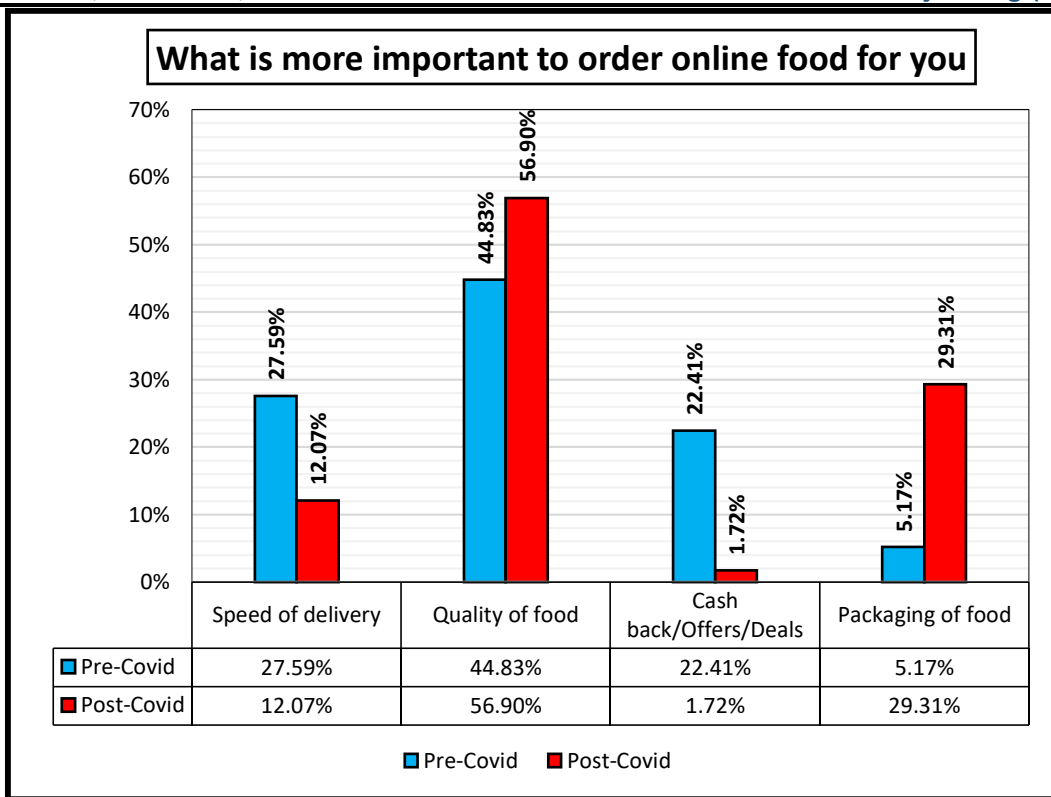
The respondents' thought patterns have undergone a significant shift due to the impact of Covid, as indicated in Table 4. Individuals who previously had a tendency to dine outside have refrained from doing so and have transitioned to consuming their meals indoors. Out of the total respondents, 41 individuals (70.69%) reported that their habits had been influenced by the Covid pandemic, while 17 respondents (29.31%) indicated that their habits remained relatively unaffected by the pandemic. The vast majority of participants have been impacted by the onset of the illness.

1.8 HYPOTHESIS TESTING

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in elements considered important for ordering food online in pre and post-Covid.

Respondents were asked what matters most when ordering food online. Speed, meal quality, offers, and packaging were compared between the two groups. Post-Covid reactions differed.

<i>Table 6</i>	Pre Covid		Post Covid	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
<i>Speed of delivery</i>	16	27.59%	7	12.07%
<i>Quality of food</i>	26	44.83%	33	56.90%
<i>Cash-back/Offers/Deals</i>	13	22.41%	1	1.72%
<i>Packaging of food</i>	3	5.17%	17	29.31%
<i>Total</i>	58	100.00%	58	100.00%



Source- Primary Data

Figure 3 What is more important to order online food for you

The participants were surveyed regarding their preferences, as illustrated in Table 6 and Figure 6. Prior to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, 16 respondents, accounting for 27.59% of the total, selected Speed of Delivery as their top priority. The quality of Food was chosen by 26 respondents, representing 44.83% of the total. Cash-back offers and deals were preferred by 13 respondents, accounting for 22.42% of the total, while Packaging of Food was the least preferred option, chosen by only 3 respondents, representing 5.18% of the total. In the context of the post-Covid era, a mere 7 individuals, constituting 12.07% of the sample, expressed a preference for expedited delivery. In contrast, a significant majority of 33 respondents, accounting for 56.9% of the sample, prioritized the quality of food. A negligible proportion of 1.73% of the sample opted for cash back, offers, or deals, while 17 individuals, comprising 29.31% of the sample, selected the packaging of food as their preferred factor. The perspective of the participants has undergone a significant shift over the course of time.

The researcher conducted a chi-square test to test the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the importance of elements for ordering food online before and after the Covid-19 pandemic. The results indicated a statistically significant difference, with a χ^2 value of 24.438 and a p-value of .00002, based on a sample size of 58. The statistical significance of the result is established at a level of $p < .05$. The researcher rejects the null hypothesis and concludes that there exists a significant difference in the elements that are deemed important for ordering food online between the pre and post-Covid periods.

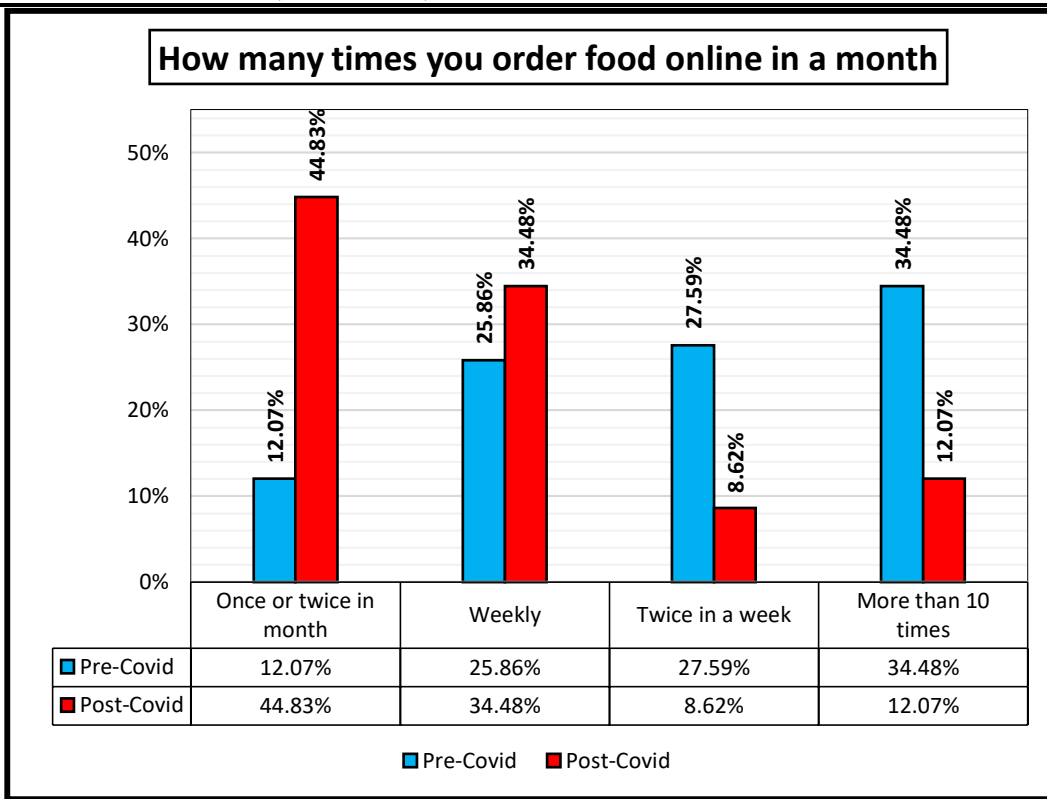
The aspect of seamlessness holds significant importance when it comes to placing orders for food through online platforms. The study selected four distinct parameters to evaluate and contrast the two groups of participants,

namely: delivery speed, food quality, promotional offers, and packaging. Observable variations were evident in the reactions prior to and following the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

H₀₂: There is no significant impact of Covid on the number of times respondents ordered food online in a month.

The participants were surveyed regarding their monthly frequency of online food ordering both prior to and subsequent to the Covid-19 pandemic. The study involved the categorization of classes into four groups based on their frequency of occurrence, namely once or twice a month, weekly, twice a week, and more than 10 times. The responses obtained from participants during these different periods were subsequently compared.

<i>Table 7</i>	Pre-Covid		Post-Covid	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Once or twice in a month	7	12.07%	26	44.83%
Weekly	15	25.86%	20	34.48%
Twice in a week	16	27.59%	5	8.62%
More than 10 times	20	34.48%	7	12.07%
Total	58	100.00%	58	100.00%



Source- Primary Data
month

Figure 4 How many times you order food online in a month

Table 7 and Figure 7 are referenced in the text. Regarding the pre-Covid era, a total of 58 participants were surveyed. Of these, 12.07% (7 individuals) reported ordering once or twice per month, 15.25% (15 individuals) reported ordering on a weekly basis, 27.59% (16 individuals) reported ordering twice a week, and a significant 34.49% (20 individuals) reported ordering more than 10 times. It is evident that a significant proportion of individuals placed orders exceeding 10 times in the period prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. The numerical values have undergone a complete reversal during the post-Covid era. The results indicate that a majority of the respondents, specifically 44.83%, ordered once or twice a month. A significant proportion of the respondents, accounting for 34.49%, ordered on a weekly basis. A small percentage of the respondents, comprising 8.62%, ordered twice a week. Additionally, a minority of the respondents, constituting 12.07%, ordered more than 10 times. The data indicates a significant decrease in the frequency of online food ordering since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In order to test the hypothesis that posits "There is no significant impact of Covid on the frequency of online food orders per month among respondents," a chi-square test was conducted. The results indicated that $\chi^2(3, N = 58) = 23.6748, p = .000$, which is significant at $p < .05$. As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected, and it was concluded that Covid has a significant impact on the frequency of online food orders per month among respondents.

1.9 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The key findings of the study are:

1. There exists a notable disparity in the factors deemed crucial for the process of ordering food online between the pre and post-COVID eras.
2. The frequency of online food ordering per month is significantly impacted by the COVID pandemic.
3. The prioritization of food quality has remained paramount, both prior to and following the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. There has been a noteworthy decrease observed in the cash-back feature, with respondents expressing minimal interest in it. Instead, their primary concern is focused on product quality.
- 4.



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