

A STUDY ON CUSTOMERS BUYING BEHAVIOUR TO ORDER FOOD THROUGH ON-LINE DURING COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

All sectors across the worldwide have been impacted by the outbreak of the deadly coronavirus in 2020. Food industry is not an exception to this. E-commerce has altered the way the approach of On-line food delivery to a greater extent. The Purchasing behaviour of the consumer was influenced massively by online food applications. The primary reason for evaluating customer perception towards the food delivery application is to give the application operators a simple overview to optimize the factors responsible for enhanced customer interaction. The main objective of the research is to define the key driving factors for customers to order food online during the pandemic and evaluate the socio-economic status of the consumer.

KEYWORDS: Purchasing behavior, On-line food delivery, Customer Perception.

INTRODUCTION

Retail food delivery is a courier service in which food is distributed to a client by a restaurant, supermarket, or independent food Delivery Company. Usually, an order is made either via website or phone of a restaurant or grocery, or through a food ordering business. The promotional codes and word of mouth were the two most significant influencing factors that determined the perception and willingness of the customer as opposed to factors such as menu choices and payment options, venue, quality, door step delivery, and good customer service. The number of people buying food online has risen from 1.32 billion in 2014 to 6 billion in 2020. Previous research indicates that with an improved growth rate of 20 to 25 percent utilization of food delivery applications and the plethora of applications a consumer switching rate was considerably high. Meanwhile the US food delivery market has 90% under the control of five players with Uber Eats valued at 20B USD, with Door Dash closing behind 13B USD. Digitization reduces the time involved due to the lack of human interaction. A study concludes that 55% of people prefer ordering food without interacting with human beings. The study of customer buying behaviour corresponds to how people decide to spend their available resources on consumption-related items, such as time, money, and effort. It involves studying what they are buying, why they are buying, when they are buying, where they are buying, how often they are buying and how they are buying. Therefore, the underlying source of demand is a model of how customers behave. There is a set of preferences and values for the individual consumer whose decision lies beyond the field of economics. The goal of the consumer is to select the package of products that, as the consumer defines it, offers the greatest degree of satisfaction.

The study is used to define the customer's needs and preference for formulating strategies to improve the customer's buying trend during a pandemic. The factors considered while designing the strategies by the Online food delivery applications are based on -

- How do we attract a greater number of customers?
- How do we set the best price for the product?
- How do we increase the amount of our customers spend to buy the product?
- How do we enhance our customer service?

Although the expectations and needs of particular customers are often difficult to define and may occasionally be impractical, all the orders have the following five points. An optimum balancing of these five points are very necessary for a food aggregator platform to establish optimal brand loyalty.

- Service satisfaction
- Price elasticity
- Quality
- Support satisfaction
- Promotion benefits for the customer

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study by Devipriya JP, Aswathy A, Mohan, Jishnu, Gowda, Anil B (2020) on “The influence on various factors on online food delivery services”. The online ordering and distribution system offer a wide range of restaurants for customers to choose from. An appealing choice is the choice of comparing food menus, prices and decisions based on customer feedback. The possibility of getting food delivered at a lower price from your favorite restaurant within a fixed time at your doorstep excites the customers more and tempts them to take up the offer. These businesses provide customers with a convenient app for browsing. Once the restaurant accepts the order, customers can track all other activities, such as the time for food preparation, the delivery agent's food pick-up, the delivery agent's route, etc. The company's supply chain plays a significant role in supplying customers with reliable services. The delivery agents are the essential factor that makes the process of delivery smooth. More or less, the prompt distribution of these agents aids in the retention of customers.

As per Li Charlene, Mirosa Miranda, Bremer Phil (2020), Review of Online Food delivery Platforms and their impacts on Sustainability. The rise of online food delivery across the globe has changed the way many consumers and food suppliers interact, and the sustainability impacts of this shift defined by the three pillars of economic, social and environmental. In the broader sense of online food delivery apps act as they enable food to be ordered through mobile apps. It is possible to identify food distribution companies as either restaurant-to-consumer distribution or platform-to-consumer delivery operations. People are normally trained

in skilled delivery, and at least part of their salary is guaranteed, while a portion is commission-based. Food waste is also correlated with businesses that set a 'minimum price' standard due to online FD, which suggests that customers pay for more food than they need or attempt to order food with roommates to fulfil the 'minimum price' for free delivery services.

Gao Xuwen, Shi Xinjie, Guo Hongdong, Liu Yehong (2020) in their article, "To buy or not to buy food online: The impact of Covid 19 epidemic on the adoption of E-commerce in China. This paper explores the effect of COVID-19 on the online food buying behavior of consumers in the short term, drawing on a recent on-line survey combined with city-level results. It was found that the proportion of reported cases of COVID-19 increased the likelihood for customers to purchase food online. Also, it was evident from the study that, young people with a lower perceived risk of online transactions and living in big cities intended to make more purchase in the recent times.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To understand the demographic profile of customers ordering food online.
- To study the customer buying behavior towards ordering food online during COVID-19

METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted is descriptive in nature. The study completely relied on the primary data. The sample of the study consists of primary data collected from 140 respondents. Non probability – Convenience sampling method was employed in collecting the data. The tools used for the study are simple percentage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

CATEGORY	CLASSIFICATION	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Gender	Male	74	52.8
	Female	66	47.2
Age	Below 20 years	12	8.6
	20-30	65	46.4
	30-40	21	15
	Above 40	42	30
Occupation	Self-employee	29	20.7
	Private employee	60	42.9
	Government employee	15	10.7

	Business	15	10.7
	Student	21	15
Number of members in family	2	7	5
	3	25	17.9
	4	68	48.6
	More than 5	40	28.5
Monthly Income	BelowRs.20,000/-	23	16.4
	Rs.20,000–Rs.30,000	29	20.7
	Rs.30,000–Rs.40,000	21	15
	Above40,000/-	67	47.9

Source: Primary Data

It is inferred from the above table that Majority of the customers are male. Most of them are in the age group of 20 – 30 years, private employees and earn a monthly income of more than Rs 40,000/-. They seem to have 4 members in their family.

TABLE 2:BUYING PATTERN OF CONSUMERS

CATEGORY	CLASSIFICATION	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Willingness to order food online	Yes	74	52.8
	No	66	47.2
Frequency of ordering	Daily	5	3.6
	WeeklyOnce	43	30.7
	MonthlyOnce	35	25
	Rarely	57	40.7
Mode of payment	CashOnDelivery(Cod)	50	35.7
	CreditCard	29	20.7
	DebitCard	30	21.5
	NetBanking	31	22.1
Preferred device for ordering food	Mobile App	73	52.1
	Tablet App	24	17.1
	PC/website	43	30.8
Reasons for ordering food	Lack of time to cook/prepare food	52	37.1
	Convenient to experience variety without physically going to the restaurant	46	32.9
	Ordering food online is	15	10.7

	economical and more convenient		
	Many offers/discounts/coupons available	27	19.3

Source: Primary Data

From the above table it is evident that Majority of the customers are willing to order food online. Most of them seem to order food rarely in this pandemic situation. Most of them use Cash on deliver as their mode of payment followed by net banking. Majority of them use Mobile App for ordering the food. They have expressed that it is due to lack of time to cook and Convenient to experience variety without physically going to the restaurant are the reasons for ordering food online.

CONCLUSION

The study emphasizes on the convenience and non availability of time for cooking for the customers to prefer ordering food online. The younger generation customers are more tech savvy and would like to do things that yield instantaneously. They are motivated and excited to explore things within their immediate reach rather than waiting in queues and visiting a restaurant.

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