

# CUSTOMER PREFERENCE TOWARDS ONLINE FOOD APPS IN KERALA

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## Abstract:

Kerala has been witnessing a drastic technological change and this has even been reflected in the basic necessities of our life too. Food ordering apps are replacing our kitchens and it is the need of the hour to debate on the changing life style and the reasons for the changes. The researcher has focussed on the customer preference as well as the factors that influence the people towards food ordering apps and the problems faced by them on online food ordering apps. The hypotheses were tested by using Friedman test and Kruskal Wallis test. The results show convenience and time as the most critical factors of influence. Moreover it shows that consumer preference towards the apps is high.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Online food ordering apps are gaining popularity among the customers in Kerala especially among the new generation. The busy life schedule, peoples longing for a change and the easiness of ordering through a fingertip and many more are the reasons for a shift to food apps. Online food ordering is the method of ordering the food through either through mobile apps or through the websites. The food will be from a home, restaurant or other groups of similar kind who are running the business. Generally people prefer downloading the food apps in their mobile than purchasing through the online. As the food industry now has become a challenging one, the apps are competing with each other in terms of their features too. The most popular food apps are Uber Eats, Zomato, Foodpanda and Swiggy. The customers in the food industry are mainly of two categories; one is the group which wanted to know the best food and the best place to have food whereas the second category of the customers are those who knows exactly what food they want and where they will get the same. The food app works best for those customers in the second category as it increases the loyal relationship with the customer and the restaurant.

The customers only need to create an account either in the website or they can download and application and register themselves. The payment is also in electronic mode hence the difficulty of carrying cash, the transportation charges and other hurdles are solved through the app. Generally

the apps are downloaded or preferred based on the services they offer, price, promotions and the customer reviews. Eventhough the online services are gaining momentum the social space of the customer, the ambience of the restaurant, the experience of being in a society etc are pausing as major challenges in the society.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

*Sonali Jadhav (2018)* in the study titled Food ordering mobile applications-A new wave in food entrepreneurship, has analysed the benefits and challenges of food delivery apps for customers and the restaurants and has established the gaining popularity of the apps among the customers.

*Karthika et.al (2018)* in their study titled A study on the various food ordering apps based on consumer preference, opined that the online food ordering apps need to improve their restaurants sites and menus to satisfy the customers in a better way.

*Mathews Joao Choreneukar (2014)* in the study titled A study on the customer perceptions of electronic food ordering highlighted that young customers always give preference to convenience and time saving or speed features and they consider accuracy as one of the important features of food apps;hence they prefer mobile apps for ordering foods.

## 3. OBJECTIVES

- ✓ To analyse the customer preference towards online food apps in Kerala
- ✓ To identify the factors that influence the customers towards online food shopping apps
- ✓ To identify the problems related to online food shopping apps

## 4. METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted primary and secondary sources for collecting the data and analysing the results. Primary data is collected through questionnaire and secondary data is collected through published articles, journals and online sources. The researcher adopted a well-structured questionnaire for analysing the data. Population of the study is the customers of online food apps in Kerala. A sample of 60 respondents is selected from selected districts of Kerala such as Thiruvananthapuram, and Ernakulam. Snowball sampling technique is adopted for the study and the questionnaire is send to the respondents through email. The data is analysed through SPSS and is represented in a tabular form. The important tools for analysis are Friedman test and Kruskal Wallis test .

## 5. HYPOTHESES

H0: There is no significant difference in the factors that influence the customers towards online food shopping apps

H0: There is no significant difference in the customer perception on the problems of online food shopping apps in Kerala on the basis of a) gender and b) locale

## 6. SCOPE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The food industry is flourishing in Kerala and in every nook and corner, restaurants in small and large size are trying to come out with their best to satisfy the customer. The study titled “*Customer Preference towards Online Food Apps in Kerala*” is relevant as food industry business is coming up with innovative idea that is according to the customer requirement. It may be in the form of a lunch box, ready to cook, half cooked etc. Apart from the requirement, they add up technology to make the things smarter and easier. The busy life of the customer with his requirement for a personal space and sometimes a need for a change may lead to the option for online food app. The preference or choice of the apps always is based on the image of the company, quality of service and the order. Quality of food is not compromised by the customer at any cost. The study is having a greater scope and significance as we are witnessing a shift from our own kitchen to the technology in our finger tips. The emotional and social values and other associated elements are replacing at an alarming rate by the technology which needs to be researched. On the one side there is a lot of scope for startups and the other dark side is the emotions attached to the traditional kitchen and togetherness is missing.

## 7. LIMITATIONS

1. The respondents were taken from selected districts in Kerala. So the results may not be generalised to all the districts.
2. Only limited variables were taken for the analysis and there are more variables which are left behind due to paucity of literature.
3. The inherent limitations of statistical tools also affected the study.

## 8. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The hypotheses were tested by means of independent sample t test, Friedman test and Kruskal Wallis test. The results of the test are;

**H0: There is no significant difference in the factors that influence the customers towards online food shopping apps**

Table 1  
Factors that influence the customers

Factors	Mean Rank
Discounts and offers	3.22
Convenience	1.92
Time saving	2.63
Loyalty rewards	3.72
Cost effective	5.75
Quality food	6.22
Ease of pay	6.95
Accuracy in dealings	7.45
Status Symbol	7.15

Test Statistics

N	60
Chi-Square	291.244
df	8
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. Friedman Test

The hypothesis is tested by means of Friedman test and it has been found that convenience is the most important factor that influences the customer for preferring the food shopping app. The factor convenience has the lowest mean value (1.92) in the matrix followed by time saving (2.63) for online food shopping consumers. Variable having rank one should have the lowest mean. Therefore it may be concluded that Convenience and time saving are the most critical factors that motivate the consumers towards online food shopping apps. Hence it can be concluded that there is significant difference in the factors that influence the customers towards online food shopping apps.

**H0: There is no significant difference in the customer perception on the problems of online food shopping apps in Kerala on the basis of a) gender and b) locale**

Table 2  
Customer perception on the problems of online food apps

Problems	Chi square value		df	Assymp. sig		Result
	Gender	Locale		Gender	Locale	
Difficult technology	.717	.454	1	.37	.500	H0 Accepted
Lack of quality food	1.002	.326	1	.317	.568	H0 Accepted
Lack of sociability	.128	.929	1	.721	.335	H0 Accepted

Wastage of food	.319	.352	1	.572	.553	H0 Accepted
Irreversible order	.141	.204	1	.707	.651	H0 Accepted
Over spending	1.390	.003	1	.238	.953	H0 Accepted
Price discrepancy	.816	.342	1	.366	.559	H0 Accepted
Higher Commission	5.188	.132	1	.023*	.717	*H0 Rejected H0 Accepted
Addiction	.312	.929	1	.576	.335	H0 Accepted
Lack of technical skills of the employees	.421	.155	1	.516	.693	H0 Accepted
Lack of emotions	.117	1.376	1	.733	.241	H0 Accepted
Mechanization	.107	.598	1	.743	.409	H0 Accepted

### Mean value of higher commission on the basis of Gender

Problem	Gender	N	Mean Rank
Higher Commission	Male	34	26.18
	Female	26	36.15
	Total	60	

The hypothesis is tested by means of Kruskal wallis test and it has been found that of the twelve problems listed, all of them are equally accepted by the consumers irrespective of their gender and locale. In case of gender based analysis female are more affected by the higher commission demanded through the online apps. The mean rank through Kruskal Walis test shows a high mean value (36.15) compared to men. As all the problems except higher commission with respect to gender based analysis showed a parity it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in the customer perception on the problems of online food shopping apps in Kerala on the basis of gender and locale.

### Other Observations:

- The demographic profile of the customers made it clear that majority of the male customers who are single are opting for a food ordering app whereas female customers consider it as a means of saving time.
- Almost customers from all age groups equally prefer food ordering apps.
- The income groups that mostly prefers food ordering apps is from Rs 3 lakhs to 5 lakhs and above.
- Ease of payment and cashless payment is a major attraction for almost all the customers irrespective of their gender, marital status, locale and income.
- The apps are popular among almost all the customers and many of them are of the opinion that it is a threat for socialisation and emotional value.

- Customers are ready to go for food ordering apps as they need a break from their work pressure.

## 9. CONCLUSION

The food ordering apps are gaining importance due to a lot of factors such as scope for new startups, hike in income, increase in the working population, awareness about women's rights and the sudden boom of technology. Kerala is becoming an investor's hub especially in the food industry hence the restaurants are also forced to cater to the needs of the customers. The researcher has given a list of problems and the influencing factors for the option for food apps which are researchable by other researchers. The paper concludes with the suggestion that every business has growth potential but that growth potential should not be at the cost of our social and emotional well-being.

## REFERENCES:

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