

An Empirical Study on Customer Expectations and Perceptions on Service Quality of Food Delivery Apps (With Special Reference to Coimbatore City)

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Abstract

Customer satisfaction and perception of food delivery apps in Coimbatore City are influenced by key factors such as service quality, affordability, reliability, and user experience. This study aims to evaluate the expectations and actual perceptions of consumers regarding food delivery services, focusing on aspects like order accuracy, delivery time, app usability, pricing, and customer support. A structured survey was conducted among food delivery app users in Coimbatore to analyze their experiences with popular platforms. The research examines the influence of brand reputation, service responsiveness, and technological advancements on consumer choices. Findings reveal significant trends, including the growing reliance on digital food delivery services, the demand for timely and efficient deliveries, and the impact of user reviews and word-of-mouth recommendations. The study provides valuable insights for food delivery service providers to enhance service quality, improve customer satisfaction, and build stronger consumer trust. Addressing customer concerns and improving service transparency can lead to better user retention and overall growth in the online food delivery sector.

Keywords: Customer Expectations, Perceptions, Service Quality, Food Delivery Apps, Coimbatore, Consumer Satisfaction.

I.INTRODUCTION

The rapid evolution of technology and the increasing use of smartphones have significantly transformed the food and beverage industry. Food delivery apps have emerged as a convenient solution, bridging the gap between restaurants and customers. Apps such as Swiggy, Zomato, and Uber Eats have gained widespread popularity, offering users a seamless way to order food from the comfort of their homes. In this digital age, customer satisfaction has become the cornerstone of success for food delivery platforms. Understanding and meeting customer expectations and perceptions of service quality is critical for retaining users and building brand loyalty. Factors such as ease of use, timely delivery, food quality, pricing, and customer support play pivotal roles in shaping customer experiences. This study aims to examine the expectations and perceptions of customers in Coimbatore city regarding the service quality of food delivery apps. By identifying the gaps between what customers expect and what they experience, the study seeks to provide valuable insights into improving service delivery and enhancing user satisfaction. Coimbatore, known for its vibrant culture and growing tech-savvy population, serves as an ideal location to conduct this empirical study, reflecting the broader trends and challenges

in the food delivery ecosystem. Through this research, businesses and stakeholders can better align their services with customer needs, fostering long-term growth and success in the competitive food delivery market.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the customer level of satisfaction with food delivery apps in Coimbatore city.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

A null hypothesis has been framed to test the significance of socio-economic factors influencing consumer perception towards food delivery apps in Coimbatore City.

(H₀): There is no significant relationship between consumer perception and socio-economic factors (Age, Gender, Income, Occupation, Education, Marital Status, and Annual Income) influencing consumer perception towards food delivery apps in Coimbatore City.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Parasuraman et al. (1988) introduced the SERVQUAL model, which emphasizes five key dimensions of service quality—tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy all of which are crucial in evaluating customer satisfaction with food delivery apps. The model suggests that the gap between customer expectations and perceived service quality significantly impacts overall satisfaction and brand loyalty.

Mehta & Sharma (2021) studied customer expectations in online food delivery services, highlighting that factors such as order accuracy, delivery speed, pricing, and customer service efficiency play a crucial role in shaping user satisfaction. Their findings suggest that timely deliveries and seamless app experiences enhance customer trust and retention.

Nguyen et al. (2018) emphasized the importance of delivery efficiency and user-friendly app interfaces in ensuring customer loyalty. They found that customers are more likely to remain loyal to a service that guarantees fast, reliable, and accurately timed deliveries while offering a smooth ordering experience with minimal technical glitches.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative research approach using structured questionnaires to collect primary data from consumers in Coimbatore who use food delivery apps. A mixed-method approach is adopted to analyze

the factors influencing consumer perception and expectations toward food delivery services. A quantitative survey will be conducted using a structured questionnaire, targeting frequent users of food delivery apps such as Zomato, Swiggy, and Uber Eats.

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES USED

The analysis has been made through the questionnaire.

- Simple Percentage Analysis
- Chi-Square Analysis

SIMPLE PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

Simple percentage analysis is a statistical technique for interpreting data that involves calculating the proportion of responses in various categories. It helps in determining developments, preferences, and distributions within a dataset.

$$\text{Simple percentage analysis} = \frac{\text{Number of respondents}}{\text{Total number of respondents}} \times 100$$

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS

The chi-square test is used to determine whether there is a significant difference between the expected frequencies and the observed frequencies in one or more categories. The chi-square test is an important test amongst the several tests of significance developed by statisticians. Chi-square, symbolically written as χ^2 is a statistical measure used in the context of sampling analysis for comparing a variance to a thecal variance.

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

χ^2 = the test statistic \sum = the sum of
O = Observed frequencies E = Expected frequencies

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is geographically limited to Coimbatore City, restricting the generalizability of the findings to a broader population, as consumer behavior and service expectations may vary across different regions. Additionally, the sample size of 147 respondents may not fully represent the diverse demographics, preferences, and spending behaviors of the larger population, potentially affecting the overall applicability of the results. Moreover, customer expectations and usage patterns of food delivery apps are constantly evolving due to

technological advancements, competitive market trends, and economic shifts, which may impact the long-term relevance of the findings.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Factors	LEVEL OF PREFERENCE		Total
Age	Low level of preference	High level of preference	
Below 20	45	6	51
21–30	52	12	64
31–40	7	1	8
41–50	1	2	3
Total	105	21	126
Gender			
Male	65	14	79
Female	40	7	47
Total	105	21	126
Education			
High School	22	4	26
Diploma	18	4	22
Undergraduate	54	11	65
Postgraduate	10	2	12
Others	1	0	1
Total	105	21	126
Occupation			
Unemployed	41	5	46
Employed	43	8	51
Self-Employed	19	7	26

Homemaker	1	0	1
Retired	1	1	2
Total	105	21	126
Income			
Below 10,000	31	8	39
10,001–30,000	53	9	62
30,001–50,000	11	3	14
Above 50,000	10	1	11
Total	105	21	126

The analysis of consumer preference for food delivery apps reveals that young adults (21–30 years) form the most engaged user group, with 64 respondents, of whom 12 show a high level of preference, indicating their strong reliance on these services. The below 20 age group also contributes significantly (51 respondents, 6 with high preference), though their preference levels vary. Older age groups (31 and above) show minimal engagement, suggesting that food delivery apps are less favored by older consumers. Males (79 respondents, 14 with high preference) dominate the user base, indicating a greater inclination towards food delivery services, possibly due to convenience needs and work schedules, whereas females (47 respondents, 7 with high preference) also actively use these platforms, though at a lower rate. Undergraduates (65 respondents, 11 with high preference) are the largest consumer segment, highlighting students and young professionals as key users. Occupation-wise, employed individuals (51 respondents, 8 with high preference) and self-employed individuals (26 respondents, 7 with high preference) show strong engagement, while homemakers and retirees exhibit minimal interest. Income levels also play a crucial role, with middle-income groups (₹10,001–₹30,000) forming the largest segment (62 respondents, 9 with high preference), whereas higher-income individuals show lower preference levels, possibly favouring dining out or premium services. The findings suggest that food delivery apps should focus on affordability, personalized promotions, and improved service reliability to cater to students, working professionals, and middle-income consumers, who are the primary users of these platforms.

Further it is intended to test null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between Socio economic profile and factors influencing consumer perception towards Big Basket using chi-square.

PEARSON'S CHI-SQUARE				
Factors	Value	df	Significance	Result
Age	6.582 ^a	3	.086	Accepted
Gender	.170 ^a	1	.680	Accepted
Education	.270 ^a	4	.992	Accepted
Occupation	4.918 ^a	4	.296	Accepted
Monthly Household income	1.305 ^a	3	.728	Accepted

The Pearson's Chi-Square test results indicate that age ($p = 0.086$), gender ($p = 0.680$), education ($p = 0.992$), occupation ($p = 0.296$), and monthly household income ($p = 0.728$) do not have a statistically significant influence on consumer preference for food delivery apps, as all p -values are greater than 0.05. This suggests that food delivery app usage is consistent across different demographic groups, with no specific age, gender, education level, occupation, or income group showing a distinct preference pattern. The findings highlight that both males and females engage similarly with food delivery platforms, and individuals across various educational and income backgrounds use these services without major variation. Furthermore, occupation does not significantly impact preference, indicating that students, employed professionals, self-employed individuals, and retirees exhibit similar engagement levels with food delivery apps. Since income also does not influence preference, it suggests that food delivery services are widely used across all economic segments, emphasizing the importance of factors such as service quality, affordability, and convenience rather than demographic characteristics. Given these insights, food delivery platforms should focus on improving universal service aspects, including faster delivery, better promotions, enhanced customer support, and app usability, to cater to a broad consumer base rather than targeting specific demographic groups.

SUGGESTIONS

- **Enhanced Delivery Efficiency:** Food delivery apps should focus on improving delivery speed and reliability by optimizing logistics, reducing delays, and ensuring accurate real-time tracking to enhance customer satisfaction.

- **Personalized Marketing Strategies:** Customized promotions, loyalty programs, and app-based recommendations based on user preferences and order history can increase customer engagement and retention.
- **Food Quality Assurance:** Implementing strict quality control measures, ensuring hygienic packaging, and maintaining consistent food standards can build consumer trust and improve overall service quality.

CONCLUSION

The study reveals that convenience, affordability, and service quality are the primary factors shaping consumer preferences for food delivery apps in Coimbatore. Young adults, particularly those aged 21–30, emerge as the most active users, highlighting the increasing reliance of tech-savvy consumers on digital food ordering platforms. Customer satisfaction is largely influenced by delivery efficiency, food quality, pricing, and a user-friendly app interface, making seamless navigation and order accuracy crucial aspects of consumer engagement. While the overall response to food delivery apps is positive, addressing service gaps such as delivery delays, incorrect orders, and customer support inefficiencies can further enhance user satisfaction. By focusing on personalized recommendations, faster delivery services, and improved customer support, food delivery platforms can strengthen customer loyalty and stay competitive in Coimbatore's growing online food service market. Strengthening these aspects will not only boost brand trust but also ensure long-term growth by adapting to evolving consumer expectations and industry trends.

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