UNDERSTANDING CONSUMER PREFERENCE TOWARDS FOOD DELIVERY APPS: A CASE STUDY IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT

Dr. B. Indira Priyadharshini, Assistant Professor Department of Commerce (E-Commerce) Nallamuthu Gounder Mahalingam College, Pollachi.

Abstract

This paper presents a comprehensive study conducted to analyze consumer preferences towards food delivery apps in Coimbatore District. With the rapid growth of the food delivery industry, understanding consumer behavior and preferences becomes crucial for both businesses and policymakers. For this purpose, primary data has been collected through structured questionnaire using Convenience sampling technique. A sample of 279 consumers has been selected. The collected data have been analysed by employing simple percentage analysis and weighted average ranking method. The findings reveal valuable insights into the factors driving consumer preference in Coimbatore District Consumer preference towards food delivery apps in Coimbatore District is primarily driven by competitive pricing, discounts, and overall satisfaction with the service.

Key words:
Online Food Delivery - Food Delivery Apps – Preferences- Price – Satisfaction

Introduction

The advent of technology has revolutionized the way people access goods and services, with food delivery apps emerging as a prominent example of this transformation. In recent years, the food delivery industry has witnessed exponential growth, fueled by the convenience, variety, and accessibility offered by mobile applications. Coimbatore District, situated in the southern part of India, has not been immune to this trend, experiencing a surge in the usage of food delivery apps among its residents. Understanding consumer preferences in this context is paramount for businesses operating in the food delivery sector and policymakers seeking to regulate this burgeoning market effectively. Coimbatore District, known for its diverse culinary landscape and vibrant food culture, presents a unique case for studying consumer preferences in the realm of food delivery apps. With a mix of traditional and modern food establishments catering to a diverse population, understanding the dynamics of consumer choices becomes imperative for businesses vying for a competitive edge in this thriving market.

Review of Literature

Preeta & Iswaraya (2019) conducted research in to analyze towards online order and delivery application, considering demographic as a part of its study. According to their study young person is mostly like are order to online restaurant delivery, using one of these services. According to their survey 63% of people between 18-29 years old have used a multi restaurant delivery website or app service in past 90 days,51% between 30-44-years old,29% between 45 to 60years old and just 14% between 60 & above.

Jyotishman Das (2018) the doorstep delivery is the most highly ranked factor of influencing the consumers to use the food ordering applications. The consumers are also often influenced by discounts and cash back they enjoy. On comparing the factors the most preferred service provider came out to be Zomato followed by Swiggy. But some negative influencer like bad past experience and, negative experience of friends and family also in some cases prevents the consumers on using the process

J. Das (2018) has studied, analyzed and compared the top 4 food delivery apps namely, Zomato, Swiggy, Foodpanda and Uber eats. Providing better discounts" and "better choices of restaurants", Zomato is positioned at the top by the customers. Zomato is also positioned at the top by the customers while considering delivery on time and good customer service. In both situations, customers ranked Uber eats in the last position.

H.S. Sethu & BhavyaSaini (2016) they aimed to investigate the student's perception, behavior, and satisfaction of online food ordering and delivery services. Their study reveals that online food purchasing services help the students in managing their time better. It is also found that ease of availability of their desired food at any time and at the same time easy access to the internet are the prime reasons for using the services.

Hong Lan, et al, (2016) an online food delivery market is immature yet; some obvious problems can be seen from consumers" negative comments. To solve these problems, we can neither rely merely on the self-discipline of online food delivery restaurants nor the supervision and management of online food delivery platforms. Only by taking laws as the criterion, with the joined efforts of the online food delivery platforms and restaurants, the government department's concerned consumers and all parties in the society, can these problems be solved and a good online takeaway environment can be created.

Objectives of the study
• To identify the primary factors influencing consumer preference towards food delivery apps in Coimbatore District.

Methodology
The methodology employed for this study involved the utilization of convenience sampling and questionnaire-based data collection methods to gather insights into consumer preferences towards food delivery apps in Coimbatore District. Convenience sampling was chosen due to its practicality and feasibility in accessing a diverse pool of respondents within the target population. A sample of 279 consumers has been selected. . The collected data have been analysed by employing simple percentage analysis and weighted average ranking method.

Analysis and Interpretation
a. Socio Economic Profile of Respondents
The sample consumers have been selected from different parts of the Coimbatore District, which is one of the major commercial cities in the state of Tamil Nadu, India. The description about the socio-economic profile of the sample consumers is as follows:

Table 1: Socio Economic Profile of Respondents

S. No	Variables	No. of respondents	Percentage
i.	**Gender** Male Female	 134 145	 48 52
ii.	**Age** Below 20 Years 21-30 Years Above 31 Years	 113 83 83	 41 30 30
iii.	**Marital Status** Unmarried Married	 123 156	 44 56
iv.	**Working Status** Student Service Home Business /Self- employed	 115 36 53 75	 41 13 19 27
v.	**Educational Qualification** Up to Higher Secondary Under Graduate Post Graduate	 79 150 50	 28 54 22

vi.	**Type of Family**		
	Nuclear	146	52
	Joint	133	48
vii.	**Annual Income**		
	Less than 1 lakh	153	55
	In between 1 lakh to 4 lakh	126	45
	TOTAL	**279**	**100**

i.   Gender:

Out of the 279 respondents surveyed, there were slightly more females (145) than males (134).This distribution indicates a relatively balanced representation of both genders in the sample.

ii.   Age:

The age distribution of respondents reveals that the majority belong to the age group of below 20 years (113), followed by the age group of 21-30 years (83), and above 31 years (83).This distribution suggests a diverse representation across different age brackets, with a significant portion of young adults participating in the survey.

iii. Marital Status:

The data shows that a higher proportion of respondents are married (156) compared to unmarried (123).This distribution reflects a mix of marital statuses within the sample, indicating potential variations in preferences based on marital status.

iv. Working Status:

Among the respondents, the largest group consists of students (115), followed by those engaged in business/self-employment (75), service (36), and homemakers (53).This distribution suggests a diverse mix of occupational statuses within the sample, which may influence preferences towards food delivery apps based on lifestyle and time constraints.

v.   Educational Qualification:

The majority of respondents (150) reported having an undergraduate degree, followed by those with up to higher secondary education (79), and post-graduate qualifications (50).

vi. Type of Family:

The data shows a nearly equal distribution between nuclear families (146) and joint families (133) among the respondents. This distribution suggests representation from both family structures, which may influence dining habits and preferences towards food delivery apps.

vii.   Annual Income:

The majority of respondents reported an annual income of less than 1 lakh (153), with a smaller proportion falling in the income bracket of 1 lakh to 4 lakhs (126). This distribution indicates a predominance of respondents with lower income levels, which could impact spending patterns and preferences towards food delivery apps.

b. Preferred Online Food Delivery Apps

Among the various food delivery apps, Zomato was the most popular choice among respondents (77), followed by Swiggy (97), Uber Eats (68), and Flyer eats (37). This distribution highlights the popularity of certain food delivery platforms over others among respondents in Coimbatore District, potentially influenced by factors such as app features, service quality, and promotional offers.

Table 2: Preferred Online Food Delivery Apps

Online Food Delivery Apps	No. of respondents	Percentage
Swiggy	97	35
Flyer Eats	37	13
Zomoto	77	28
Uber eats	68	24

c. Frequency of usage of online food delivery apps

The frequency of usage of online food ordering and delivery applications among respondents reveals varying patterns of engagement:

Table 3: Frequency of usage of online food delivery apps

Frequency	No. of respondents	Percentage
Daily	70	25.0
2 - 3 Days a week	86	31.0
Only during Weekend	42	15.0
Once a month	40	14.0
During special occasions	41	15.0

A significant portion of respondents, comprising 25.0% of the sample, reported using food delivery apps on a daily basis. This suggests a high level of dependence on these platforms for regular meal consumption, reflecting their convenience and reliability in meeting daily food needs. The majority of respondents, accounting for 31.0% of the sample, indicated using food delivery apps 2 to 3 days a week. This frequency suggests that a substantial portion of users relies on these apps for regular meal orders, but with some variability in usage based on factors such as weekday schedules and dining preferences. A smaller but notable proportion of respondents, comprising 15.0% of the sample, reported using food delivery apps exclusively during weekends. This pattern indicates that some users perceive these platforms as a convenient option for weekend indulgence or relaxation, possibly due to time constraints or a desire for convenience during leisure time.

d. Factors influencing consumer preference towards food delivery apps

The following table depicts the ranking provided for various factors affecting consumer preference towards inline food delivery apps:

Table 3: Factors influencing consumer preference towards food delivery apps

S.No	Factors	Rank
1	Pricing and discounts	**I**
2	Convenient	**VII**
3	Satisfaction	**II**
4	Easy to Access	**III**
5	References/Word of Mouth	**VI**
6	Flexibility	**IV**
7	Occasions	**V**
8	Delivery System	**VIII**
9	Online Payment interface	**IX**

Consumers prioritize pricing, discounts and overall satisfaction when making purchasing decisions, followed by the ease of accessing the product or service. Flexibility and occasion-specific relevance also matter, but to a lesser extent. Word of mouth, convenience, delivery systems, and the online payment interface, while still important, are not the primary drivers of consumer behaviour according to this ranking.

Conclusion

In conclusion, consumer preference towards food delivery apps in Coimbatore District is primarily driven by competitive pricing, discounts, and overall satisfaction with the service. The usage patterns indicate a high level of dependence on these platforms for regular and special occasion meals, with daily and frequent users constituting a significant portion of the market. While ease of access and flexibility are also important, other factors like word of mouth, convenience, delivery systems, and the online payment interface play secondary roles. These insights are valuable for food delivery companies aiming to enhance their services and better meet the needs of their customers in this region.

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