

A Study on Consumer Preferences towards Online Food Delivery Applications in Tamil Nadu

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ABSTRACT:

Purpose: To study the customer preference toward online meal delivery application in Tamil Nadu and to find the primary elements affecting the consumer choice toward ordering the food through online platforms.

Design: The design of the study uses a descriptive research. Primary data were acquired from the consumers of Tamil Nadu through a standardized questionnaire. The survey includes variables including convenience, food variety, price, discounts and offers, delivery service, application usability, payment facilities and service quality. It is advised to examine the acquired data by using appropriate statistical tools like percentage analysis, t-test, one way ANOVA and chi square test.

Finding: The study is anticipated to provide light on the factors impacting consumers' preferences for online meal delivery apps. The findings will help to detect the variations in the consumer's choice according to the selected demographic variables and highlight the primary service features being examined by the consumers at the time of online meal ordering.

Keywords: Consumer Preference, Online Food Delivery, Food Delivery Applications, Consumer Behavior, Online Ordering, Service Quality.

Introduction

The rapid growth of digital technology and the use of mobile phones have changed the ways in which individuals purchase foods and interact with food service businesses. Online meal delivery applications have become a key medium via which consumers can easily browse menus, compare prices, place orders and make digital payments at the convenience of their homes or offices. The surge in mobile application usage has given consumers a lot more options in terms of restaurants, cuisines, offers and delivery options. The consumers' decision to buy food online is

affected by convenience, price, discount, and variety of food, delivery time, usability of the application, payment facilities, and quality of service and customer reviews. The availability of various meal delivery apps has also increased the competitiveness amongst the service providers making it important to understand the expectations and preferences of the users. Demographic factors that may cause differences in consumer behavior are age, gender, income, occupation and place of residence. The consumption of digital and the use of online services are growing at a rapid pace in Tamil

Nadu, especially in the urban and semi-urban pockets. Consumers are increasingly looking for easy and flexible ways to buy food, and online food delivery apps have grown more important. It is therefore important for meal delivery platforms and its restaurant partners to know consumer preferences to improve their services and retain clientele. Hence the present study is aimed to explore the consumer attitudes regarding online meal delivery application in Tamil Nadu and the critical aspects influencing the food ordering decision making.

Review of literatures

Jabbour Al Maalouf N et, al., (2025)ⁱthis study evaluated consumers' views and purchasing intention toward food ordering using online platforms. The study examined e-service quality, personal characteristics, perceived food quality, trust, time-saving orientation and convenience incentive. The study indicated that consumer attitude has an important mediating effect in the relationship between these motivational elements and the intention to purchase food online based on data from 280 respondents.

Chiu et, al., (2024)ⁱⁱthis study used meta-analytic structural equation modeling to investigate consumers' willingness to employ online food delivery services. The review includes 60 research, 61 independent samples and 25,390 respondents. The findings suggest that convenience, perceived usefulness, ease of use, and other technology-related factors are significant drivers of consumers' willingness to employ online meal delivery services.

Tsai et, al., (2023)ⁱⁱⁱpresent study investigated the factors impacting the behavioral intention of consumers to use online meal delivery services in Taiwan. The research built an evaluation model based on multiple-attribute decision-making procedures and pointed forth convenience, in formativeness, reliability, responsiveness, hedonism and consumer advantages as major evaluation criteria The research study showed the value of understanding consumer requirements while choosing online meal delivery services.

Pillai et, al., (2022)^{iv} evaluated the consumers' purchase intention toward online food delivery services using the integration of the Theory of Planned Behavior, perceived risk theory and the Elaboration Likelihood Model. The study, based on an online survey of 814 respondents, indicated that perceived benefits, perceived hazards and online persuasion influence customer attitudes and purchase intention. Consumers thought benefits of importance included convenience, trust, order accuracy and range of choices.

Tandon et, al., (2021)^vstudied the reasons for consumers to buy from meal delivery apps from a consumer-value perspective. The study conducted with the responses of 355 users of food delivery applications. It was revealed that application visibility affects consumption values and purchase intents and consumer attitudes also had a vital part in purchase decisions. The study highlighted the role of consumer value in understanding the use of meal delivery apps.

Statement of the Problem

The rapid expansion of online meal delivery applications has revolutionized the food ordering behaviors of consumers by delivering convenience, variety, discounts and doorstep delivery. But consumers have different preferences due to such things as pricing, meal quality, and delivery time, convenience of application, offers and service quality. The growing number of online meal delivery platforms has also made it imperative to identify the elements that impact consumers in choosing and using these applications. In Tamil Nadu, there is a need to study the consumer preference and to find the primary aspects affecting their choice of online meal delivery applications. Thus the present study is to analyse the consumer preference toward online meal delivery applications in Tamil Nadu.

Scope of the study

The present study is about the examination of consumer preference toward online meal delivery applications in Tamil Nadu. This covers clients ordering food from restaurants and other food service providers through online food delivery

apps. The survey covers key factors such as convenience, price, offers and discounts, food options, delivery time, food quality, application usability, payment facilities and service quality. It also studies whether the tastes of consumers differ across different demographic factors such as age, sex, income, occupation and place of residence. The study is likely to provide key information for online meal delivery platforms and restaurant partners to better understand the consumers' expectations and upgrade their services.

Objective of the study

1. To examine the factors influencing consumer preferences towards online food delivery applications in Tamil Nadu

Research methodology

The study uses descriptive research design based on primary and secondary data. Primary data were acquired from the users of online meal delivery application in Tamil Nadu through a structured questionnaire utilizing five-point Likert scale. Secondary data were acquired from books, journals and relevant web sources. Data analysis is performed via percentage analysis, Cronbach's Alpha, t-test, one way ANOVA and chi-square test.

Sources of data

Primary Data: The data is obtained from the users who are utilizing the online meal delivery applications in Tamil Nadu through a standardized questionnaire. **Secondary Data:** Secondary data are acquired from books, journals, research articles, publications and relevant web sites.

Data Analysis:

Data analysis is the systematic process of organizing, and interpreting the collected data to obtain meaningful findings and draw conclusions in a research study

Table 1: Age of Respondents

Age	No. of Respondents	Percentage
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Upto 20 Years	42	16.80
21–30 Years	78	31.20
31–40 Years	61	24.40
41–50 Years	40	16.00
Above 50 Years	29	11.60
Total	250	100.00

Source: Computed from Primary Data

The table 1 show that most of the respondents are under the 21-30 years age category with 78 respondents (31.20%) followed by 31-40 years with 61 respondents (24.40%). The group above 50 years of age is the least represent with 29 responses (11.60%).

Table 2: Gender of Respondents

Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Male	128	51.20
Female	122	48.80
Total	250	100.00

Source: Computed from Primary Data

The table 2 shows that 128 respondents (51.20%) are male and 122 respondents (48.80%) are female. The distribution shows that the male and female consumers are almost equally distributed.

Table 3: Occupation level Respondents

Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Student	65	26.00
Government Employee	42	16.80
Private Employee	68	27.20
Self-Employed	27	10.80

Homemaker	48	19.20
Total	250	100.00

Source: Computed from Primary Data

These tables 3 show the largest group among the 250 respondents are private employees (68; 27.20%) followed by students (65; 26.00%) and the smallest groups are self-employed respondents (27; 10.80%).

Table. 4: Consumer preferences towards online food delivery applications

Variables	SA	A	N	DA	SDA	Total
Online food delivery applications are convenient for ordering food.	42	65	24	21	98	250
	16.80	26.00	9.60	8.40	39.20	100.00
A wide variety of food choices influences my preference.	59	32	58	35	66	250
	23.60	12.80	23.20	14.00	26.00	100.00
Discounts and promotional offers influence my food-ordering preference.	42	65	24	21	98	250
	16.80	26.00	9.60	8.40	39.20	100.00
Reasonable prices influence my preference for online food delivery.	59	39	40	61	51	250
	23.60	15.60	16.00	24.40	24.40	100.00
Faster delivery increases my preference for online food delivery applications.	51	56	68	22	53	250
	20.40	22.40	27.20	8.80	21.20	100.00

Source: Computed from Primary Data

This table 4 shows the biggest agreement is for food variety (36.40%) followed by affordable prices (39.20%) although convenience and discounts each records 42.80% agreement. 42.80% of the respondents agree on faster delivery 47.60% disagree on convenience and discount are relatively high.

H₀₁ There is no significant difference between demographic variables influencing consumer preferences towards online food delivery applications

One way ANOVA has been used to test the significant difference between Age and consumer preferences towards online food delivery applications

One-way ANOVA has been used to examine whether there is a significant difference between age groups and consumers' preferences towards online food delivery applications.

H_{01(a)} There is no significant difference between Age and consumer preferences towards online food delivery applications

Table 5: Age and consumer preferences towards online food delivery applications

Variables	Age	N	Mean	S.D.	F Value	Sig.
Online food delivery applications are convenient for ordering food.	Upto 20 Years	42	1.5476	0.50376	386.754	0.001*
	21–30 Years	78	1.8718	0.67148		

	31–40 Years	61	3.0984	0.30027		
	41–50 Years	40	4.1500	0.36162		
	Above 50 Years	29	5.0000	0.00000		
	Total	250	2.8440	1.27836		
A wide variety of food choices influences my preference.	Upto 20 Years	42	1.1429	0.35417	487.714	0.001*
	21–30 Years	78	1.8718	0.67148		
	31–40 Years	61	3.0984	0.30027		
	41–50 Years	40	4.1500	0.36162		
	Above 50 Years	29	5.0000	0.00000		
	Total	250	2.7760	1.34651		
Discounts and promotional offers influence my food-ordering preference.	Upto 20 Years	42	1.1429	0.38417	488.714	0.001*
	21–30 Years	78	1.8718	0.67148		
	31–40 Years	61	3.0984	0.32027		
	41–50 Years	40	4.1500	0.31162		
	Above 50 Years	29	5.0000	0.00000		
	Total	250	2.7760	1.34651		
Reasonable prices influence my preference for online food delivery.	Upto 20 Years	42	1.0952	0.29710	596.269	0.001*
	21–30 Years	78	2.0000	0.58109		
	31–40 Years	61	3.0984	0.30027		
	41–50 Years	40	4.1500	0.36162		
	Above 50 Years	29	5.0000	0.00000		

	Total	250	2.8080	1.31532		
Faster delivery increases my preference for online food delivery applications.	Upto 20 Years	42	1.0000	0.00000	835.605	0.001*
	21–30 Years	78	2.0897	0.48846		
	31–40 Years	61	3.0984	0.30027		
	41–50 Years	40	4.1500	0.36162		
	Above 50 Years	29	5.0000	0.00000		
	Total	250	2.8200	1.30322		

Source: Computed from Primary Data

The ANOVA results table 5 indicate significant differences among age groups for all five factors with F-value ranging from 386.754 to 835.605 and $p = 0.001$ and mean scores are found to be increasing from below 20 years to above 50 years.

One way ANOVA has been used to test the significant difference between Occupation and consumer preferences towards online food delivery applications

One-way ANOVA was performed to test whether there is a significant difference between occupation and consumers' preferences toward online meal delivery applications.

H₀1(b) There is no significant difference between Occupation and consumer preferences towards online food delivery applications

Table 6: Occupation and consumer preferences towards online food delivery applications

Variables	Occupation	N	Mean	S.D.	F Value	Sig.
Online food delivery applications are convenient for ordering food.	Student	65	1.3538	0.48188	356.118	0.001*
	Government Employee	42	2.0000	0.00000		
	Private Employee	68	4.2941	0.96288		
	Self-Employed	27	4.7037	0.46532		
	Homemaker	48	4.7292	0.44909		
	Total	250	3.2720	1.58748		
A wide variety of food choices influences my preference.	Student	65	1.0923	0.29171	310.858	0.001*
	Government Employee	42	2.3810	0.49151		
	Private Employee	68	3.7647	0.97915		
	Self-Employed	27	4.1852	0.39585		
	Homemaker	48	4.7292	0.44909		
	Total	250	3.0680	1.50747		

Discounts and promotional offers influence my food-ordering preference.	Student	65	1.0923	0.29171	359.936	0.001*
	Government Employee	42	2.4286	0.83060		
	Private Employee	68	3.5000	0.65790		
	Self-Employed	27	4.3704	0.49210		
	Homemaker	48	4.7292	0.44909		
	Total	250	3.0240	1.47245		
Reasonable prices influence my preference for online food delivery.	Student	65	1.2154	0.41429	1138.413	0.001*
	Government Employee	42	2.0000	0.00000		
	Private Employee	68	3.0000	0.00000		
	Self-Employed	27	4.5185	0.50918		
	Homemaker	48	4.8125	0.39444		
	Total	250	2.8800	1.40338		
Faster delivery increases my preference for online food delivery applications.	Student	65	1.2615	0.44289	986.836	0.001*
	Government Employee	42	2.0000	0.00000		
	Private Employee	68	3.2647	0.44446		
	Self-Employed	27	4.1481	0.36201		
	Homemaker	48	5.0000	0.00000		
	Total	250	2.9600	1.41648		

Source: Computed from Primary data

The ANOVA results table 5 show significant differences across occupation groups for all five factors, with F-values ranging from 310.858 to 1138.413 and $p = 0.001$. The mean scores generally increase from students to homemakers, indicating varying levels of preference across occupations

T-test used to test significant differences between t-test used to test significant differences between Gender with consumer

preferences towards online food delivery applications

The t-test is used to examine whether there is a significant difference between Gender and consumers' preferences towards online food delivery applications.

H₀₃ a: There is no significant difference between type of Gender of the respondents and consumer preferences towards online food delivery applications

Table 7: Gender of the respondents and consumer preferences towards online food delivery applications

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	S.D.	P Value	Sig.
Online food delivery applications are convenient for ordering food.	Male	128	1.8359	0.68479	17.687	0.001*
	Female	122	4.7787	0.47259		

A wide variety of food choices influences my preference.	Male	128	1.8281	0.85213	3.229	0.001*
	Female	122	4.3689	0.76278		
Discounts and promotional offers influence my food-ordering preference.	Male	128	2.0078	1.18718	5.352	0.001*
	Female	122	4.0902	0.86248		
Reasonable prices influence my preference for online food delivery.	Male	128	1.7656	0.71524	21.408	0.001*
	Female	122	4.0492	0.90775		
Faster delivery increases my preference for online food delivery applications.	Male	128	1.8438	0.82708	3.301	0.001*
	Female	122	4.1311	0.84257		

Source: Computed from primary data

The t-test table 7 shows significant gender differences in all five variables: convenience ($t = 17.687$, $p = 0.001^*$), variety of food choices ($t = 3.229$, $p = 0.001^*$), discounts and promotions ($t = 5.352$, $p = 0.001^*$), reasonable prices ($t = 21.408$, $p = 0.001^*$), and faster delivery ($t = 3.301$, $p =$

0.001^*); females recorded higher mean scores than males in all cases.

Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis was utilised to test the internal consistency and reliability of the studied variables.

Table 8: Reliability Analysis for Consumer preferences

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items
Online food delivery	0.969	0.970
A wide variety of food choices influences my preference.	0.939	0.929
Discounts and promotional offers influence my food-ordering preference.	0.920	0.910

Source: Computed from Primary Data

This table 8 show the Cronbach's Alpha value for customer preferences for online meal delivery applications is 0.969 and the standardised alpha is 0.970 for 5 items which exhibits a very high level of internal consistency and reliability.

Findings

1. The largest group of online meal delivery application users are young customers aged 21–30 years (31.20%). This suggests a stronger participation of the young consumers in the online food-ordering services.
2. The study indicates that male respondents make up a somewhat larger share of 51.20% compared to female respondents at

48.80%. This means that online meal delivery programs are used by both male and female consumers. And the respondents are mostly private employees and students which constitute 53.20 % of the respondents.

3. The results reveal that convenience, discounts and faster delivery (42.80% each) are significantly affecting the consumer preference, whereas food variety (36.40%) and affordable prices (39.20%) are considerably less accepted. and age significantly affects consumers' preferences toward online food delivery applications in terms of convenience, food

variety, discounts, reasonable price and faster delivery.

4. The findings reveal that occupation significantly influences consumers' preferences regarding convenience, food variety, discounts, reasonable prices, and faster delivery in online food delivery applications.

5. Female respondents showed higher preferences for convenience (4.7787), food variety (4.3689), discounts (4.0902), reasonable prices (4.0492), and faster delivery (4.1311) compared with male respondents. And the dependability result ($\alpha = 0.969$) indicates that the five items used to measure consumer preferences are very consistent and dependable for further study.

Suggestions

1. Online meal delivery applications may attract young users by giving appealing deals, easy to use features and convenient ordering possibilities. Platforms can also implement basic features and awareness campaigns to promote usage amongst elder consumers.

2. Food delivery applications can offer facilities and promotional deals that meet the needs of male and female clients. User-friendly features and varied ordering options can further increase utilisation. And online food delivery companies should provide options for different occupational groups.

3. The food delivery applications should enhance the convenience, discounts, and delivery speed (agree 42.80%). They should also offer additional food choices and competitive prices to

accommodate the mixed responses among consumers. And the results conclude that there is a significant difference in consumer preferences toward online food delivery applications based on age.

4. Online food delivery providers should develop occupation-specific offers, pricing, discounts, and delivery services to better meet the preferences of different consumer groups.

5. Online food delivery applications should focus on improving reasonable pricing, convenience, food variety, promotional offers, and delivery speed, particularly considering the higher preference levels reflected in the female respondents' mean scores. Because of the excellent dependability ($\alpha = 0.969$) the five items can be kept for further investigation.

Conclusion

The survey indicates that convenience, food variety, discounts and offers, reasonable prices and faster delivery are the influencing elements toward the consumer preferences toward online meal delivery applications. The demographic data demonstrates that consumers of varied age, gender and occupational categories utilize the online meal delivery applications. The data suggest that online meal delivery applications have become a practical alternative for consumers looking for variety, cost effectiveness and time-saving services. Thus, internet meal delivery platforms can better suit consumer preferences in Tamil Nadu by enhancing service quality, delivery efficiency, application convenience and promotional offers.

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