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Factor Influencing Consumer Adoption of Food Delivery Applications via Social Media: The Digital Appetite

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Abstract: *The expeditious extension of online food deliver platforms and applications has transfigure the way of consumers access meals, it largely driven by evolving technologies and pervading the influence of social media. This study inquiries about the key factors which influence consumer adoption of online food delivery services (OFDPs) with a specific focus on the impact of social media platforms in shaping the perception and behaviour of consumers. The study using a exploratory research to collect data of active users of social media who have used online food delivery applications (OFDAs). The research discovered the perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PEU), entertainment (ENT), informativeness (INT), Attitude (ATT) and intention to adopt (INT) on social media significantly influence consumer decisions. This study intend to offer important insights into how social media influences consumer attitude towards OFDPs. Moreover, user generated content like influencer engagement in endorsement, customer review and visual promotion of food on digital platforms such as Instagram, Facebook and other sites play crucial role in influencing usage intention and preferences of consumers. The study concludes that social media is not only the mode of communication but it also act as a marketing tool that shapes landscape for digital food consumption pattern. The study provides valuable inference for market players and application developers to augment consumer involvement and retention in increasingly competitive business environment.*

Introduction

In recent years people are consistently looking for comfort, ease and convenience in the fast-moving scenario of the world but the food industry doesn't affect social, economic and demographical changes in the world. It gets high-quality food on your doorsteps within a few minutes without much effort, it increases the level of satisfaction and reduces work pressure. There are so many factors which influence or affect online food delivery platforms like fast delivery, multiple payment options, discounted prices, cashback offers and variety in cuisines etc. The present food delivery markets have strong players such as Swiggy, Zomato, and Uber Eats. It witnessing growth in the food industry or restaurant businesses after the emergence of technological development and digitalization.

In Today's digital era, social media has become an integral part of our daily lives. Social media platforms revolutionized the way of doing business and it also change the patterns of products and services available in the markets. In the online food industry social media marketing emerged as an important tool for online food delivery platforms to attract customers and it also helps to retain them. To explore the effect of social media marketing on customer preferences for online food delivery platform is important. Social media marketing affect the consumer behavior and also change buying decisions.

According to Ranieri, et al (2018), in the past few years India was experienced remarkable growth in online food delivery market. It ascribes to various factors include increase in smartphone users, better connectivity and changes in consumer preferences in digital scenario.

Kadir and Ismail (2022), explain in his research data that the online food delivery in Indian market is projected growth in upcoming years up to 25% growth rate between 2020 to 2025 because of increase in urbanization, change in lifestyles and convenient online offer in delivery services. The major key players of the market having a wide range of cuisine options with various food chains with quick delivery. These platforms provide various features includes real time order tracking, discounts and fast delivery services. After COVID 19 these platforms also provides contactless delivery services and maintain protocol for hygiene to ensure consumer safety as well as personnel.

Due to its value added features, the Indian food industry has extensive growth potential. It supports a triumphant food processing industry and is still having very profitable with excellent growth possibilities.

According to Nagaraj & Samyalao, (2018) the world is gradually metamorphosis to a technological era. The day of having to leave the house to purchase different products are long gone. Online technologies is take over everything at a remarkable prompt rate.

More peoples are working so they have less time for shopping, banking, cooking or even going to restaurants to pick up orders or dining so online technology has become more convenient and save time due to which it give more popularity to these platforms which provide doorstep deliveries and quality services on limited time.

As a result, a new innovative sector of the economy embraces internet, which enables you to easy access all of the services with just a one click on smartphone or computer. Thus, the terms online banking, mobile banking, online shopping or online food ordering have earn popularity.

Customers can search for various restaurants by their names, location, cuisines, reviews, or popularity using online food delivery applications on their smartphones and then place an online order that will be delivered to the specified addresses.

In India, online food delivery industry has produced a situation where everyone in profit includes customers, restaurants and online aggregators between customers and food outlets. They have been successfully drawing large amount of business due to use of online food delivery apps. They also have been able to keep up their sustainability and consistency in customer demands and even when the demand is slow down.

According to CAGR, Globally the food delivery market size is to reach approximately 314.3 US Dollars up to the year 2032, which means 18.1% growth in the food delivery market from 2023 to 2032. Online food services provide a platform that connects different eateries and food chain restaurants to customers digitally. Online food delivery services are popular because of their customer convenience and easy availability and it having ability to satisfy customers in their increased demands. It is an integrated process which helps to connect customers to avail customer services on their doorsteps without any effort. It creates revolutionary change in the modern food industry. These online food delivery platforms easily reach their customers which helps to develop new opportunities in the online food delivery market.

According to tradingplatform.com by 2023 2.85 billion users will be connected with online food delivery platforms. Online food delivery services have various determinants which affect the growth of online food services including smartphone penetration, offering convenience in online food deliveries, increased investment, increased software development for these apps, digitalization, increase in disposable income, increase in urbanization and individualism playing a vital role.

According to the research of World Population Review, approx. 4.9 billion individuals or 69% of the world population are expected to be active internet users by the year 2022. The world's Asia-Pacific region is expected to dominate the market over periodic forecasting. In this region, growing urbanisation and an increase in the disposable income of consumers are affecting the market size. The use of smartphones, digitalization and technological expansion play important roles in expanding the online market in Asia-Pacific regions.

According to UN research of technology and different voice assistant applications are a factor which affects the growth of the market. Expansion in the field of E-Commerce in developing nations like India and Japan also plays an important role in the availability of a wide variety of cuisines attracting the customer base and developing diversity in the online food delivery market.

In recent years online food delivery market in India has a significant change in market. According to Kulkarni (2021), the impact of COVID-19 and changes in the lifestyle of individuals affect the demand of online food delivery platforms. The availability of the internet and technological changes facilitate the annual growth rate expansion of the market. Service attributes like easy accessibility, effective cost and less delivery time helps to increase customer satisfaction.

Online food delivery services in India offer ready to eat meals and variety of cuisines through mobile application for consumption. In India online food delivery market are classified as; first market aggregators which receive order from direct customers and secondly delivery providers who use delivery feet's to fulfil customer orders.

Despite growing interest in social media affects customer behaviour, especially when it comes to online food delivery apps. There are still a lot of unanswered questions. The limited use of the technology acceptance model, it has been used extensively to analyse user adoption in a variety of digital context. Large portion ignores important social media dynamics in favour of classic technology acceptance model categorised like perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Many researches generalise findings without taking into account the particular preferences and behaviours of OFDA users, failing to offer context- specific insights. This study aims to fill these gaps by providing a thorough knowledge of how social media affects consumer attitudes and online food delivery apps usage intentions. It does by combining technology acceptance model components with entertainment and informativeness to present a comprehensive picture of used behaviour.

Method

The aim of this study is to explore the relationship between social media and attitude of consumers influencing the use of online food delivery applications (OFDAs). Research Methodology provides a systematic structure that includes the research design, research process and methods used for collection of data and its analysis. It provide complete framework of research. It also offer ground for the methodological choices made in line with objective of research study.

This study adopt the quantitative research approach includes both descriptive and exploratory research design to examine how social media affect the consumer behaviour in the context of OFDAs. Specially , the study explore the key factors which affect most such as perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use and the effect of informativeness and entertainment on consumer attitude and behavioural intentions. The study also integrate Technology Acceptance Model with social media to develop comprehensive framework to analyse consumer intentions.

To collect relevant data for the study, questionnaire method was used consisting 24 items covering key construct such as social media exposure, entertainment, informativeness, consumer attitude and behavioural intention. The questionnaire was designed to ensure reliability and validity of data.

The population for the study includes those consumers who have used online food delivery applications within the last six months. A purposive sampling technique was used to collect data from respondents who meet the criteria of study. The sample size for the study is 500. Demographic profile of respondents reflects higher proportion of male in comparison to females. The age distribution shows a significant proportion of respondents belongs to age group 31 to 40 years. The majority of respondents holds a bachelor degree and respondent having diverse financial background.

To analyse the data regression model is used for the study to determine the extent to which social media factors affect consumer attitude and behavioural intentions towards the use of online food delivery applications. The empirical testing of hypothesis helps to evaluate the significance relationship between the variables.

The research methodology support the objectives of the study by providing clear and systematic approach to understand the role of social media in shaping the consumer behaviour in the online food delivery industry. The study provide insight about the use of social media marketing strategies in online food delivery application industry.

Results

The regression model was employed to examine the relationships among key constructs influencing technology adoption in social media entertainment. The results indicate that all independent variables included in the model—Perceived Ease of Use (PEU), Intention (INT), Perceived Usefulness (PU), Attitude (ATT), and Social Media Influence (SMI)—have varying degrees of influence on each other and on the dependent variable SME performance. Among the predictors, Intention (INT) emerged as a significant variable, showing strong positive regression coefficients with both Social Media Influence ($\beta = 0.62$) and Attitude ($\beta = 0.59$). This suggests that users' behavioral intentions are highly influenced by their attitudes and the role of social media. PEU also demonstrated a moderate positive impact on multiple variables, including PU ($\beta = 0.28$), INT ($\beta = 0.30$), ATT ($\beta = 0.36$), and SMI ($\beta = 0.25$), indicating that ease of use is a critical factor in shaping users' perceptions and downstream behaviors. However, the regression coefficient between PU and SME was found to be slightly negative ($\beta = -0.03$), implying that perceived usefulness may not directly predict SME-related outcomes in this context. This finding suggests that while constructs like attitude and social media exert significant influence on user behavior and SME engagement, perceived usefulness alone may not be a sufficient driver of SME performance. The overall model supports the relevance of psychological, social, and technological factors in predicting behavioral outcomes and offers a nuanced understanding of the determinants of technology use in the OFDAs.

The regression model analysis reveals significant pathways that explain how various constructs influence user attitudes (ATT) and behavioral intentions (INT) in the context of technology adoption within SMEs. The model demonstrates that Attitude (ATT) serves as a key mediating variable, with multiple predictors feeding into it. Specifically, Perceived Ease of Use (PEU) ($\beta = 0.29$), Perceived Usefulness (PU) ($\beta = 0.18$), Social Media Influence (SMI) ($\beta = 0.45$), and SME support factors (SME) ($\beta = 0.23$) all positively and significantly predict Attitude, with SMI having the strongest effect. Interestingly, the regression weight from PU to ATT is lower compared to SMI, highlighting the growing importance of social influence over traditional usefulness perceptions in shaping attitudes.

Additionally, ATT has a direct and strong positive influence on Intention (INT) ($\beta = 0.60$), indicating that users' attitudes significantly shape their behavioral intentions toward technology use. Furthermore, PU ($\beta = 0.30$) and SMI ($\beta = 0.26$) also exhibit moderate direct effects on ATT, reinforcing their role in influencing user perceptions.

Notably, the path from PU to SME outcomes is negative (β = -0.03), suggesting a negligible or potentially inverse relationship between perceived usefulness and SME-specific impacts. This might indicate that while PU is important for shaping individual attitudes, it does not directly translate to positive SME-level outcomes, possibly due to contextual or operational barriers in the SME sector.

Overall, the regression model supports the hypothesis that attitudes mediate the effects of ease of use, usefulness, social influence, and SME contextual factors on user intentions, with social media influence emerging as a particularly strong predictor. These findings underscore the need for SME-focused technology strategies to prioritize user attitudes and social engagement mechanisms to enhance technology adoption.

Discussion

The findings of this study contribute significantly to understanding the determinants of technology adoption behavior in the context of social media. The regression-based path analysis demonstrates that Attitude (ATT) plays a pivotal mediating role in shaping behavioral Intention (INT), with a substantial direct effect (β = 0.60). This aligns with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and its extensions, reinforcing that users' positive attitudes are essential for fostering intention to adopt new technologies.

Among the exogenous variables, Social Media Influence (SMI) exhibited the strongest impact on ATT (β = 0.45), indicating that peer influence, digital presence, and social validation are critical drivers of attitude formation in the SME environment. This reflects the growing power of digital ecosystems in shaping behavioral norms, especially in business contexts where information dissemination and reputation are largely driven by social networks.

Perceived Ease of Use (PEU) and Perceived Usefulness (PU) also contributed positively to ATT (β = 0.29 and β = 0.18, respectively). Although these effects are moderate compared to SMI, they are consistent with earlier TAM research. Interestingly, PEU had a stronger influence than PU, suggesting that in SME contexts, usability may be more critical than utility due to limited technical resources or training capabilities.

The influence of SME contextual factors (SME) on ATT (β = 0.23) was also noteworthy, implying that organizational readiness, support systems, and SME-specific dynamics contribute meaningfully to attitude development. However, the direct path from PU to SME was slightly negative (β = -0.03), suggesting that while perceived usefulness may impact individual perception,

it may not immediately translate into tangible benefits for SMEs. This highlights a gap between individual user perceptions and organizational outcomes, possibly due to systemic or infrastructural limitations.

Overall, the model supports a multi-dimensional approach to understanding technology adoption, where attitudes are influenced not just by usability and usefulness but increasingly by social and organizational factors.

Conclusion

This study highlights the complex interplay between individual, social, and organizational factors in shaping technology adoption behavior in SMEs. The regression model confirms that attitude toward technology is the most significant predictor of intention, with social media influence emerging as the most powerful determinant of attitude. Perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and SME-specific enablers also play important roles, albeit to a lesser extent.

The weak and negative relationship between perceived usefulness and SME outcomes suggests that perceived benefits must be supported by real operational capacity and strategic alignment to generate value at the enterprise level. Therefore, for successful technology adoption, SMEs must invest not only in user-friendly and beneficial technologies but also in creating supportive environments and leveraging social influence.

Future research should explore longitudinal effects and incorporate more SME-level performance indicators to deepen the understanding of how individual perceptions translate into organizational success. Additionally, integrating cultural and industry-specific variables could provide a more nuanced view of technology acceptance in diverse SME settings.

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