

Review of: "A Study on Consumers' Perception of Food Delivery Platforms"

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Dr. Liu's paper – "A Study on Consumers' Perception of Food Delivery Platforms" – provides a concise but comprehensive overview of the recent use of food delivery apps in the restaurant and hospitality sector. This sector – as well as the technology supporting it – has changed greatly since the COVID-19 pandemic, and so the time was ripe to review consumer behavior and opinion about the various food delivery applications available to them.

What sets Dr. Liu's paper apart from most academic research articles is the practicality of its findings and recommendations to those in the industry. Oftentimes, academic papers provide no practical insight or use for commercial enterprises. This paper not only discovers what app features that consumer users value most, but it ranks them as to their importance to consumers. Industry experts might already know anecdotally what app features customers most like, dislike, or get frustrated with. But they are unlikely to know the ranking of those features and which ones fall within the top three of consumer satisfaction.

Restaurant industry practitioners will appreciate the clear and crisp language used in the writing of this paper, which is surely one of its strengths. Restaurant, hospitality, and digital "jargon" is kept to a minimum. (Although I do have a small number of rewording suggestions below for greater clarity.) The statistics provided in the article are understandable and important. The "background" information provided adequately informs any reader of the genesis and evolution of this sector over the past 10 years – both pre-Covid and post-Covid.

Here are a few suggestions for rewording that I think would improve its comprehension and reduce any undue confusion:

1. On Page 3 under the section titled "Motivation," second sentence: it currently reads "Consumers are no longer limited to dining out or making phone calls for food delivery." I would suggest changing the term "dining out" to "carry out." The author is clearly referencing dine-at-home options which would encompass both delivery and carry-out services. The term "dining out" typically means dining AWAY from home by eating INSIDE a restaurant. This same confusion over the term "dining out" can be found elsewhere in the paper.
2. On Page 4 under the section titled "Research Contribution," first sentence: the same confusion occurs with the phrase "eating in" when the sentence reads "Using food delivery platforms has become an alternative option for people to dine, in addition to eating in or takeout." Even in the context of this sentence, it is unclear if the term "eating in" is used by the author to mean eating IN A RESTAURANT or else eating AT HOME (i.e., a home-cooked meal). Whichever it is, the author should change that phrase to provide greater clarity.

3. On Page 5 under the section titled “Food Delivery Platforms,” the same ambiguity occurs near the end of the first sentence where it currently reads “...a significant increase in the number of people dining out, food delivery platforms have risen rapidly.” In that context, the phrase “dining out” should probably be changed to “ordering out” (via telephone or use of an app). Once again, the term “dining out” usually means dining IN a restaurant which would not be the purpose of this paper.
4. On Page 7 under the section “Research Result: Occupation,” the author writes that the most prevalent occupation of the survey respondents was “service industry, accounting for the majority at 26.6%.” No – 51% is a majority; 26.6% is not. The word “majority” should be deleted and replaced with “plurality,” “mean,” or other appropriate term. The author could also delete the expression altogether having already established that the group of respondents with 26.6% was the largest responding group.
5. On Page 9 under the section “Recommendations, #3. Establish a Lenient Refund Mechanism,” the opening line states “The most common consumer complaints in online food platforms” The preposition “in” should be replaced with either “about” or “with.”

It is unfortunate that this paper was unable to focus specifically on the use of food delivery apps by senior citizens (people over age 65 or so). On Page 6 in the second paragraph of the section titled “Current Status of Food Delivery Market in Taiwan,” the author states “... the pandemic has driven the rise of the ‘stay-at-home economy’ and completely changed people's dining habits.” One could argue that the elderly have led the way with the “stay-at-home economy” even pre-pandemic. However, clearly not enough respondents to the survey fell within this age demographic to draw any meaningful conclusions. Moreover, the elderly may be less likely to use apps in the first place. But if their current food delivery method involves use of the telephone, a savvy researcher might want to explore what would need to be done to get more senior citizens to use food delivery apps on their mobile devices. This clearly could be a another avenue of research.

In conclusion, the author finds that the three most important aspects for (young) consumers of food delivery apps to be (in order): Diverse Payment Options; Promotions offered to Consumers; and Lenient Refund Mechanisms. While managers in the industry may be aware of these features, they very well likely did not know that these three features were the most important. This article advances the research in consumer adoption of food delivery platforms and hopefully will be taken seriously by the industry.