



CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS ONLINE FOODS AND SERVICES

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Abstract

The focus of this study is on consumer choices in using food and service platforms online, considering trust, convenience, cost and the adoption of new technologies. Using a mix of approaches, we collected data from 150 urban customers with structured surveys and from other sources. Results reveal that how simple it is to use, how trustworthy it is and how convenient it provides all impact consumers' decisions to buy. Promotions, loyalty rewards and using AI to shape experiences for each customer help enhance customer experience and encourage people to shop again. The results show that age and education make a difference in whether consumers like and use products, mainly because post-pandemic concerns about health are important. Trust-building, personal marketing and using strategies based on customers' demographics is important for online food service companies to grow and keep their customers.

Keywords: Consumer Behavior, Online Food Delivery, Trust, Personalization, Loyalty Programs, Post-Pandemic Health Concerns.



1. INTRODUCTION

As technology and internet reach grow quickly, how consumers buy food and services has been transformed a lot. Food delivery to the home has greatly changed how and where we eat. Most people now choose online food apps because they are convenient, provide a wide range of dishes and help save time. For this reason, restaurants and food service companies have had to change their business methods to meet the increased need for digital ordering and delivery. Because online food services are growing, businesses should learn about customer buying habits to succeed and thrive in the industry.

Consumer behaviour within online food services looks at what informs people's decisions, how those things change their actions and the ways their preferences can change as time goes on. Convenience, how customers react to prices, the variety of products, the quality of customer service and the services' technology all shape people's buying decisions. In addition, outdoor effects, like social media, feedback from others and deals, play a big role in affecting purchase habits. This research looks into these areas to provide a thorough understanding of what shapes consumers' choices and challenges on online food and service platforms.

1.1. Evolution of Online Food Services

The food delivery industry has gone through major changes over the last decade thanks to advances in technology. Originally, customers had to use their phones to organize home delivery meals which lacked many menu choices and ways to pay. With mobile applications and websites for food delivery, customers now enjoy a rich menu, straightforward design and flexible methods of paying such as through digital wallets or cash on order. Real-time order tracking, customer feedback options, custom suggestions and loyalty rewards have all been introduced by Zomato and other companies to build a closer connection with customers. When restaurants closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, more people relied on delivering food, mainly because they were worried about health and safety. The fast development of the online food delivery sector in recent years has encouraged many new products and tough competition.



1.2. Factors Influencing Consumer Buying Behavior

A range of factors somehow play a role in how people decide on online food and services. The reason convenience is so important is that ordering food on the internet is faster and more time-saving than choosing takeaway from a restaurant. Discounts and advertising usually have a strong effect on consumers in very competitive markets. If a company delivers fast, serves fresh food, provides proper packaging and gives good service, it increases the chance that customers will be satisfied and purchase again. How easy it is to use and design the ordering site plays a role in how customers use the menus, adjust their choices and pay for them successfully. Facts about psychological and social factors must be considered as well. One example is that reviews and ratings help encourage customers to think a product is better. The dishes individuals like to order online depend on their cultural customs and diet. In addition, characteristics such as age, how much income someone earns and lifestyle also shape buying behavior, as younger buyers tend to be both tech-savvy and willing to try new things.

1.3. Importance of Studying Consumer Behavior

Tailoring a service in online food comes from knowing the preferences of the customer—and that means understanding consumer buying habits. Learning about customer's preferences allows food service companies to target their ads, find the right prices for their dishes and treat customers on a personal level. Thanks to these studies, companies are able to spot tough spots in the customer journey, including delays or issues with the website which they can work on to improve their services. In addition, studying how people behave helps businesses predict consumer changes in the market which helps improve products and services. Research into consumer actions within the fast-changing digital food industry increases knowledge in e-commerce and marketing of services. The information collected helps policymakers and regulators understand how the online food market operates and what consumers require for protection.

1.4. Research Objectives

1. To understand which factors such as trust, convenience, cost and technology help shape buying decisions for food online.



2. To check how consumer behavior changes due to the use of app features, promotions and loyalty offers.
3. To find out how changes in the population and health status impact people's use of online food services.
4. To investigate how social influence and personalization affect a customer's satisfaction and loyalty.

2. REVIEW OF LITREATURE

Alaimo, Fiore and Galati (2020) examined how the impact of the pandemic resulted in more food shopping being done online in Italy. The researchers discovered that the health situation led more people to use online ordering for their food because they were more concerned about safety and convenience. Many people preferred using digital methods to avoid close contact and meet social distancing rules.

Ali (2020) looked at how the COVID-19 pandemic changed online purchases by customers in Iraq. It was found that the pandemic led people to shop more online, for both groceries and other everyday things. Important reasons why people were choosing online shopping were the fear of getting infected, rules put in place by governments and new ways of going about daily life.

Ali, Khalid, Javed and Islam (2020) investigated how many people used OFDO during the COVID pandemic. What stood out from their analysis was that the COVID-19 pandemic strongly increased the number of customers using OFDO services. Many people were happy with deliveries by phone and also were more likely to order when assured of proper hygiene. In addition, the research pointed out that how easy it is to use technology and trusting the platform strongly affect consumers' decisions.

Ambad, Haron and Ishar (2022) investigated which factors shape consumers' choices to use online food delivery. The factors studied which greatly influence people's decision to use OFDO services are trust, convenience, how price sensitive they are and the quality of service received. They discovered that how quickly the food arrived and its consistency were big factors in consumers choosing and sticking with online food websites.



Chai and Yat (2019) looked at the rise of online food delivery and how it led to these services being used more commonly by consumers. Their work found that having access to food, many dining choices and quick payments were key reasons more people were using food delivery apps. They mentioned that people now wanted fast and personal experiences which drove food delivery platforms to keep innovating.

3. RESEARCH METHDOLOGY

It covers explaining the research framework, the sources used for data, how the data were collected and what methods were used to survey the elements affecting online food and service platform purchases.

3.1.Research Design

To investigate consumer behavior for online food and service platforms, this study collected both secondary data and carried out its own data collection. Data from previous research was used to construct both a strong theoretical framework and a proper view of the market and consumer trends. Gathering primary data gave us recent examples from real consumers to back up the research we had obtained from secondary sources.

3.2.Data Sources

A wide range of secondary information was used in the study, taken from academic journals, industry studies, market research and official sources concerning online food delivery. They gave us access to important facts about what consumers prefer, whether there are new tech acceptance trends, how marketing works and the new health and hygiene rules in recent times. To add to this, primary information was gathered using a questionnaire given to people who have used online food delivery platforms, giving a recent and regional insight into buying habits.

3.3.Sample Size and Sampling Technique

There were 150 respondents chosen to provide data for this research. A convenience sampling technique was used to choose the sample from urban places where many people order food online.



Using this method, diverse information from consumers was collected efficiently, reflecting multiple ages, incomes and education levels. Because the sample was various, we were able to look at the impact of certain demographic factors on people's food buying decisions online.

3.4.Data Collection Method

The primary data was gathered via a questionnaire that participants answered by themselves, whether in person or online. Respondents were asked questions about how easy the site is to use, their level of trust in the brand, any special deals offered, personalization thanks to AI and staying aware of health and hygiene. The design helped to measure data properly and plan statistical methods, all while helping the participants to answer truthfully.

3.5.Research Instrument

The study's questionnaire was inspired by pre-tested scales from other research and changed to suit the specific online food ordering context. Before starting administration, a few people were chosen to test the questions to make sure they were clear, reliable and relevant. Improvements were incorporated to ensure the instrument assessed trust, convenience, satisfaction and loyalty more effectively.

3.6.Variables and Measurement

Key variables were examined within the study. Included among the independent variables were perceived ease of use, trust in the brand, convenience in using the platform, various promotional methods, loyalty programs, AI-generated personalization, demographic features and health and hygiene topics. The variables measured were how much people bought, how happy they were, how often they returned to the site and their overall attitude toward online food services. All the variables were measured with Likert scales to assess how consumers felt and acted, so they could be tested statistically.

3.7.Data Analysis Techniques

The analysis of data was carried out in two separate phases. First, secondary data was analyzed and combined to form a theoretical foundation for generating the hypotheses. Following this,



primary data was analyzed using descriptive statistics to describe the sample and summarize the results and later by relying on multiple regression to check which factors influence the behavior of consumers. Moderation analysis looked at how socio-demographic factors play a part in what people say about their health after the pandemic. Relationships between personalization, trust, satisfaction and loyalty were investigated by using correlation analysis.

3.8.Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: Perceived ease of use, trust, and convenience have a significant positive impact on consumer purchase behavior towards online food and service platforms.

Hypothesis 2: Promotional efforts, loyalty schemes, and personalized AI-based recommendations significantly influence consumer satisfaction and repeat purchases in online food ordering.

Hypothesis 3: Socio-demographic factors such as age, income, and education significantly moderate consumer acceptance and usage of online food delivery services, especially in the context of health and hygiene concerns post-pandemic.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The findings from 150 respondents are presented here, with analysis backed by secondary sources, to confirm the main points of our ideas about consumer buying habits on online food and service websites.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

To understand the profiles of the respondents and their main views, the survey used descriptive statistics, analyzing replies to areas such as ease of use, trust, convenience, the promotion offered, loyalty programs, AI personalization and health related concerns. The results in Table 1 show the characteristics of the 150 surveyed respondents for the study on online food and service platforms. This table splits the participants into groups by age, income and educational background, giving both the frequency counts and percentages needed for an easy overview.

Table 1: Demographic Profile

Demographic Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18–25	45	30.0
	26–35	60	40.0
	36–45	30	20.0
	46 and above	15	10.0
Income Level	<₹2,00,000	50	33.3
	₹2,00,000–₹5,00,000	65	43.3
	>₹5,00,000	35	23.4
Education Level	High School	40	26.7
	Undergraduate	75	50.0
	Postgraduate	35	23.3

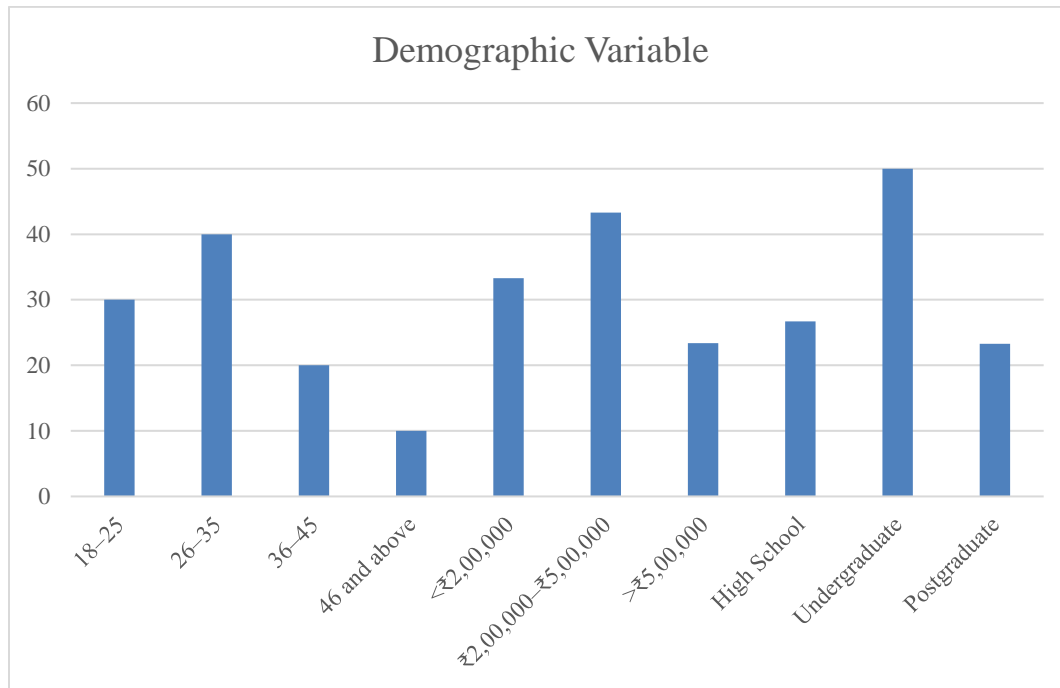


Figure 1: Demographic Profile

Around 40% of those surveyed are in the 26–35 age group and 30% are in the 18–25 age group which shows that young adults form the biggest group ordering food online. Majority of participants earn an annual income ranging from ₹2,00,000 to ₹5,00,000 (around 43.3%), showing them to be part of the middle class that helps the online food service market grow. It is clear from the results that half of the respondents (50%) are undergraduates, making the sample well-educated, a factor that may affect both using and selecting new technology products. Since everyone is represented in the population, researchers can study how things like age, income and education shape how people act as consumers online.

4.2 Reliability Analysis

The strength of the connection among the questions in each scale (such as trust, convenience and satisfaction) was checked with Cronbach’s alpha. The consistency of measuring the constructs was high ($\alpha > 0.70$).

Table 2: Reliability Analysis of Questionnaire Scales

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Reliability Level
Trust	5	0.82	Acceptable (Good)
Convenience	4	0.79	Acceptable
Satisfaction	6	0.85	Excellent
Promotional Offers	4	0.76	Acceptable
Loyalty Programs	5	0.81	Acceptable (Good)
AI Personalization	4	0.78	Acceptable
Health Concerns	3	0.74	Acceptable

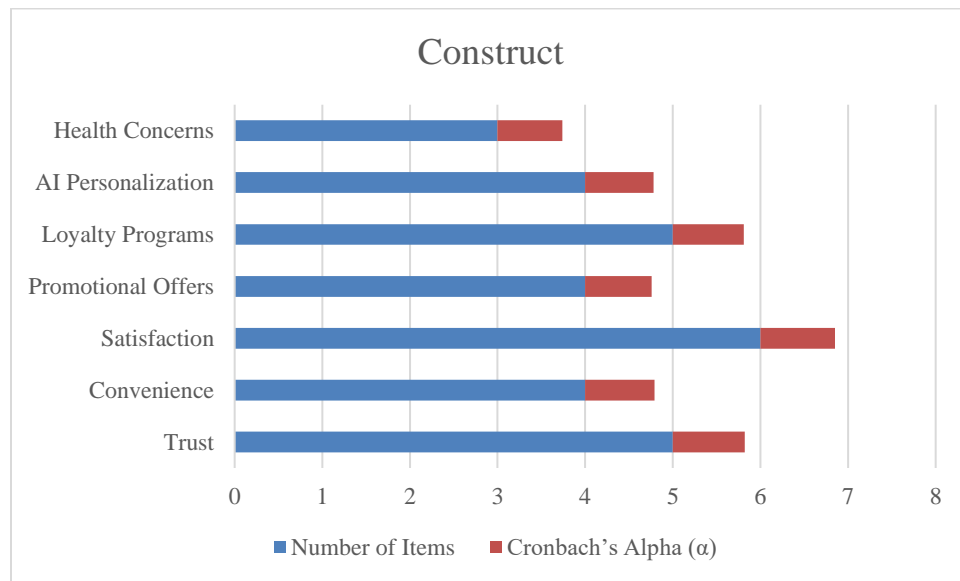


Figure 2: Graphical Representation on Reliability Analysis of Questionnaire Scales

Reliability analysis of the study's scales indicates that every study construct is internally consistent, as demonstrated by Cronbach's alpha values higher than 0.70. With an alpha of 0.85,



satisfaction showed a high degree of reliability in this study. They had reliable alphas of 0.82 and 0.81. The factors of convenience, offers, AI personalization and health concerns demonstrated sufficient reliability, as their alphas were all above 0.74 and less than 0.80. The results show that the questionnaire measures consumer thoughts and habits about online restaurants and services correctly, so the analysis will be reliable.

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1: Influence of Perceived Ease of Use, Trust, and Convenience on Consumer Purchase Behavior

To check how much perceived ease of use, trust and convenience affect consumer purchase decisions, a multiple linear regression analysis was used. Table 3 shows what multiple linear regression found about how perceived ease of use, trust and convenience influence consumer decisions to use food and service platforms online. Sixty-two percent of the differences in purchase behavior are explained by the model ($R^2 = 0.62$), showing it is accurate.

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis

Predictor Variable	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Perceived Ease of Use	0.34	0.08	4.25	<0.001**
Trust	0.42	0.07	6.00	<0.001**
Convenience	0.29	0.09	3.22	0.002**
R^2	0.62			

It was discovered in the regression results that trust, convenience and ease of use each had a positive and significant effect on whether or not a consumer decided to purchase something. Trust had the strongest relationship ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$) and perceived ease of use ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.001$) followed shortly after. Our analysis suggests that these aspects are important for influencing

people’s decisions to buy food online. The model confirms that making online buying and ordering simple, building a trusting relationship with customers and enhancing convenience are important ways for online food services to attract more buyers and increase sales.

Hypothesis 2: Impact of Promotions, Loyalty Schemes, and AI-Based Personalization on Satisfaction and Repeat Purchase

Individual multiple regression analyses were performed for consumer satisfaction and repeat purchase intention as dependent variables. The results of their separate multiple regression analyses testing the effects of promotional activities, loyalty programs, and AI personalization on consumer satisfaction and repeat purchase intention are shown in Table 4. The two models explained 57% and 53% of total variance in satisfaction and repeat purchase intention, respectively.

Table 4: Regression Analysis for Satisfaction and Repeat Purchase

Predictor Variable	Satisfaction (β)	p-value	Repeat Purchase (β)	p-value
Promotions	0.31	0.001**	0.28	0.003**
Loyalty Schemes	0.38	<0.001**	0.40	<0.001**
AI Personalization	0.26	0.005**	0.22	0.010*
R ² (Satisfaction)	0.57			
R ² (Repeat Purchase)	0.53			

The results show that all three promotion, loyalty program and AI personalization positively impact consumer satisfaction and repeat purchase intention, and the loyalty program positively impacts satisfaction ($\beta = 0.38, p < 0.001$) and repeat purchases ($\beta = 0.40, p < 0.001$) strongly indicating importance for promoting consumer loyalty. Promotions had a positive and significant impact on satisfaction ($\beta = 0.31, p = 0.001$) and repeat purchases ($\beta = 0.28, p = 0.003$). Individual

AI personalization positively impacts satisfaction ($\beta = 0.26, p = 0.005$) and repeat purchase intention ($\beta = 0.22, p = 0.010$), suggesting participant perceptions of individualized product recommendations provide a more positive consumer experience and lead to future decisions to continue engagement (and perhaps future purchases). All findings reinforce the notion of using consumer loyalty programs and targeted marketing to enhance consumer satisfaction and stimulate repeat purchases through the use of online food delivery services.

Hypothesis 3: Moderating Effect of Socio-Demographic Variables

A moderation analysis using interaction terms in regression was performed to analyze the moderation of health and hygiene concerns on consumer acceptance of online food delivery services. Age, income, and education were used in moderation analysis to determine whether these socio-demographic variables moderate the relationship between key predictors and consumer acceptance of online food delivery services. Table 5 presents the moderation analysis results for the socio-demographic variables of age, income, and education on the relationship between the key predictors and consumer acceptance of online food delivery services.

Table 5: Moderation Analysis Summary

Moderator Variable	Interaction Effect (β)	p-value	Interpretation
Age	-0.15	0.032*	Significant moderation effect
Income	0.09	0.12	Not significant
Education	-0.12	0.045*	Significant moderation effect

The moderation analysis indicates that age ($\beta = -0.15, p = 0.032$) and education ($\beta = -0.12, p = 0.045$) have significant moderation effects, which means they impact consumers' behaviour in online food delivery platforms. The negative coefficients suggest that the strength of the predictors-consumer acceptance relationship diminishes as age and education increase, while the effect of income did not have a significant moderation effect ($\beta = 0.09, p = 0.12$), meaning income

levels do not differentially impact consumers' acceptance in this context. The results indicate the importance of developing marketing strategies that fit consumers' different age groups and levels of education to meet their concerns and needs in a post-pandemic world.

4.4 Correlation Analysis

The relationships between trust, personalization, satisfaction and loyalty was examined through a Pearson correlation. The correlation matrix in Table 5 demonstrates the relationships among the three groups compared: trust, AI-based personalization, consumer satisfaction, and loyalty with respect to online food and service platforms.

Table 5: Correlation Matrix

Variables	Trust	Personalization	Satisfaction	Loyalty
Trust	1	0.56**	0.61**	0.58**
Personalization	0.56**	1	0.59**	0.63**
Satisfaction	0.61**	0.59**	1	0.67**
Loyalty	0.58**	0.63**	0.67**	1

According to the correlation analysis, all variables had exhibits strong positive correlations at the $p < 0.01$ significance level. Trust had moderately strong relationships with personalization ($r = 0.56$), satisfaction ($r = 0.61$), and loyalty ($r = 0.58$) indicating that consumers with higher trust have higher satisfaction and loyalty, along with more positive responses to personalized recommendations. Personalization had strong positive correlations with satisfaction ($r = 0.59$) and loyalty ($r = 0.63$) indicating that a tailored experience increases satisfaction and fosters loyalty. Finally, the highest correlation was between satisfaction and loyalty ($r = 0.67$), demonstrating that satisfied consumers are more likely to be loyal customers. Overall, these results illustrate the interconnectedness of trust, personalization, satisfaction, and loyalty as drivers of consumer behavior toward online food services.



5. DISCUSSION

The following discussion presents the important findings on the factors that affect consumer behaviour towards online food delivery platforms, in particular, the importance of trust, perceived ease of use, marketing and promotional strategies and their relevance in influencing purchasing decisions and their loyalty as consumers.

5.1. Influence of perceived Ease of Use, Trust, and Convenience

The findings demonstrate that consumers' perceived ease of use, trust, and convenience all had a significant effect on their purchasing behaviour toward online food platforms. Of the three variables, trust was the most significant indicating that consumers emphasised their trust in the reliability of the platforms, especially since the pandemic. This is consistent with previous studies which note that if the service is considered secure, user-friendly, and easy to use, consumers are more likely to engage in purchasing activity via online food ordering.

5.2. Impact of Promotions, Loyalty Programs, and AI Personalization

Promotions, loyalty programs, and AI-based customization had a powerful positive impact on customer satisfaction and repeat purchases. Of all three factors, loyalty programs had at the most significant impact which suggests that companies can nurture loyalty in their customers which can lead to long-term relationships. Consumer satisfaction says a lot about sustainable customer loyalty and repeat purchases and these results imply that certain incentives and personalized experiences are important elements in keeping the consumer invested and loyal to their service, an important measure in a competitive, online food service market.

5.3. Impact of Socio-Demographic Factors

Age and level of education influenced consumers' acceptance of online food delivery significantly. Generally, younger and less-educated consumers had a much stronger and positive response toward accepting online food delivery. The negative moderation effect indicates that older and more-educated online food delivery users may have higher expectations or reservations pertaining to the service, possibly due to having higher education and being more aware of health and hygiene



issues than their younger and less-educated counterparts. Income did not show a significant impact in modifying acceptance suggesting that online food delivery services have appeal for consumers with various economic backgrounds.

5.4.Consumer Health and Hygiene Concerns

The study emphasizes the significance of health and hygiene in forming consumer behavior, especially considering the impact of COVID-19. Consumers value platforms that provide sanitation practices and contactless delivery options - both of which were often necessary during the pandemic. This demonstrates the importance of continual progress within online food service as food services must uphold high standards of safety in order to maintain consumer satisfaction and trust.

5.5.Overall Implications for Online Food Service Providers

Together these findings provide useful implications for online food service providers. If a trust, ease of use, and convenience are the goal, they will play a significant role in the quality of service. At the same time, attempts to maximize freshness and convenience via promotions and loyalty programs will help ensure satisfaction with any online food service option and repeat purchases. Industries will have to fine-tune their marketing strategies for potential customers as different demographic groups will have different expectations, especially in relation to health and hygiene before they make their decision on whether to adopt or accept any online service in the long term.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis indicates that trust, ease of use (perceived or actual), and convenience are important aspects of consumer behavior. Both trust and purchasing convenience are important influences in the purchase decision process, trust is the most important. Promotional initiatives designed to enhance customer satisfaction (e.g., loyalty programs and AI-based personalization) may serve to further increase likelihood of future purchases, while the interplay of demographics like age and education, can moderate consumer acceptance of online food service. Age and education were relevant moderating variables as they pertained to health and hygiene in the post-pandemic era. The positive correlations between trust, personalization, satisfaction, and loyalty indicate that they



need to be considered collectively. Overall, younger consumers and those with less formal education exhibited greater acceptance and responsiveness to online food platforms, than older consumers or those with more formal education.

- **Enhance Trust:** Online food service providers should focus on how to build and maintain consumer trust. Trust can be enhanced by providing transparent business practices, reliable delivery service, and secure payment processing; all of which can influence purchase behavior.
- **Improve User Experience:** Enhancing the ease of use and convenience of food apps/platforms will promote more frequent purchases. Improving the following processes may enhance the experience for consumers and consequently their rates of purchase: app/platform navigation, ordering processes, and customer service response times.
- **Introduce Loyalty Programs and Personalisation:** The introduction of well-considered loyalty programs and AI-based personalisation will positively influence consumer's satisfaction and increase the likelihood of future purchases.

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