

A Comparative Analysis of Uber Eats, Bolt Food and Mr D: Evaluating the Services and User Experience

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Abstract

The attraction and retention of customers are vital for e-hailing fast food delivery service providers. Understanding customer requirements and influential factors in delivery app usage and preference decision-making is crucial for customer satisfaction and loyalty. This study conducted a comparative analysis of three popular food delivery platforms: Uber Eats, Bolt Food and Mr D. The objective was to evaluate their services and user experience, identify areas for improvement and provide actionable recommendations. Key aspects such as order placement, delivery time, menu variety, pricing, customer support, and overall user satisfaction were examined. Quantitative data was collected through surveys administered to users of these platforms. Statistical analysis, including descriptive statistics, was employed to compare platform performance across various aspects. The research provides insights into the strengths and weaknesses of Uber Eats, Bolt Food and Mr D, based on objective user data. These findings contribute to the existing knowledge in the food delivery industry and aid users in making informed choices. The study's outcomes shed light on the comparative performance of these food delivery platforms, offering valuable insights to users and industry stakeholders. Recommendations include improving brand recognition, incorporating the latest technologies, implementing competitive pricing strategies, enhancing user experience, focusing on differentiation, and improving customer feedback strategies.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The food delivery industry has witnessed substantial growth in recent years, primarily attributed to the rise of third-party platforms such as Uber Eats, Bolt Food, and Mr D (Choi, 2021). These platforms offer a convenient and user-friendly way for customers to order food from their preferred restaurants and deliver it to their doorstep. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated the industry's expansion as delivery services became a crucial lifeline for struggling restaurants (Meena & Kumar, 2022). Hence, evaluating these platforms' services and user experience is imperative to empower users to make informed decisions when selecting a food delivery platform.

However, it is essential to recognise that food delivery is more than just a one-size-fits-all solution for restaurants, as it depends on factors such as venue type, location, and customer preferences (McCann, n.d.). Therefore, assessing the services and user experience of food delivery services becomes paramount to ensure they meet customers' specific needs and expectations. Annaraud & Berezina (2020) identified factors influencing customer satisfaction in online food delivery, including food quality, control, customer service, and service fulfilment. To enhance the customer service experience, restaurants and food delivery apps can leverage data to measure and evaluate the delivery process, optimise the ease of ordering, and prioritise meeting customer expectations (Gell, 2021).

Additionally, e-service and food quality significantly contribute to customer satisfaction in the context of online food delivery services (Gell, 2021). Therefore, restaurants and food delivery service providers need to gather customer feedback and utilise it to improve their operations based on the insights gained from such feedback (Voicu, 2021). By collecting customer feedback and employing data-driven approaches to assess the delivery experience, restaurants, and food delivery services can enhance their operations and deliver exceptional customer experiences.

The study aims to evaluate the services and user experience of three popular food delivery platforms: Uber Eats, Bolt Food, and Mr D. The objective is to identify areas for improvement and provide actionable recommendations. The literature review summarises and evaluates existing research on the topic. It also identifies gaps in the literature and explains how the study will address those gaps. Research Methodology describes the methods used to conduct the study, including the sample, data collection procedures, and data analysis techniques. The results present the findings of the study, using tables, graphs, or other visual aids to help readers understand the data.

Key aspects such as order placement, delivery time, menu variety, pricing, customer support, and overall user satisfaction were examined. Implications discusses the practical implications of the study's

findings for customers and e-hailing platforms. Conclusions, limitations, and future research summarises the main findings of the study, discusses its limitations, and suggests directions for future research. Understanding customer requirements and influential factors in delivery app usage and preference decision-making is crucial for customer satisfaction and loyalty.

1.2. Problem Statement

The e-hailing fast-food delivery industry has become an essential aspect of daily life for many people who rely on services like Uber Eats, Bolt Food, and Mr D Food for convenient and accessible food options. However, the highly competitive nature of the industry requires service providers to continuously innovate and improve their operations to remain relevant and successful. Factors such as the quality of food and service, delivery speed, cost, and overall experience play a vital role in determining customer satisfaction and loyalty. The problem lies in the limited understanding of e-hailing services providers regarding the factors that draw customers towards utilising their delivery services, as well as the overall degree of satisfaction these services provide. The objective of this academic inquiry is to effectively bridge the existing gap in comprehension. Hence, the research conducted a comparative analysis of Uber Eats, Bolt Food and Mr D Food to evaluate the services and user experience.

The study aims to contribute to the existing literature on e-hailing fast-food delivery services by examining the relationships between the e-hailing food delivery service quality dimensions, such as app responsiveness, app reliability, food quality, and delivery speed. The study will also investigate the customer satisfaction levels towards e-hailing food delivery services during the Movement Control Order (MCO) period. The findings of this study will provide practical recommendations for service providers to enhance their operations and improve the overall customer experience.

1.3. Research objectives

The research objectives of the study were to:

- Evaluate the services and user experience of three popular food delivery platforms: Uber Eats, Bolt Food and Mr D.
- Identify areas for improvement in the delivery app usage and preference decision-making process.
- Examine key aspects such as order placement, delivery time, menu variety, pricing, customer support, and overall user satisfaction.

2. Literature Review

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the growth of e-hailing fast food delivery industry, as people were compelled to stay at home and limit their exposure to public spaces, resulting in increased demand for food delivery services (Tao, Sun, Liu, Tian, & Zhang, 2022). However, Perri (2023) identified that while the industry continues to grow, it is at a slower pace compared to the peak periods during the pandemic. Consequently, food delivery platforms must differentiate themselves from competitors and deliver added value to customers. With intensifying competition in the industry, it becomes imperative to assess the services and user experience these platforms provide. E-hailing fast food delivery services presents an innovative approach enabling customers to access an extensive selection of food choices through online platforms (Poon & Tung, 2022). The user experience of food delivery platforms is significantly influenced by their app design. A well-designed app that emphasises ease of use, navigation, and order tracking can improve user experience and foster customer loyalty (Rose-Collins, 2023). Customer satisfaction is further influenced by the perceived quality of product and service qualities and is moderated by expectations of the product and encourage future purchases. (Meena & Kumar, 2022).

Thus, forming partnerships with popular chain restaurants has emerged as a growth strategy for meal delivery companies, enabling them to offer a broader range of food options and attract a larger customer base (Perri, 2023). Customer satisfaction in online food delivery services is affected by the level of customer service provided. Factors identified in enhancing customer service levels and improving overall satisfaction are offering prompt and helpful responses to user queries and complaints (Annaraud & Berezina, 2020). Additionally, ensuring timely and accurate delivery of orders and maintaining food quality are contributing factors (Annaraud & Berezina, 2020).

Pricing is another crucial aspect of food delivery services; studies have indicated varying findings regarding the pricing comparison between Uber Eats, Bolt Food, and Mr D Food. One study found Mr D Food was cheaper than Uber Eats (Pholo, 2019); McKane (2020) highlighted that Uber Eats was slightly more expensive than Mr D Food due to its service fee. However, a more recent study by Labuschagne (2023) suggested that Mr D Food is more expensive than Uber Eats and Bolt Food. Therefore, by implementing these strategies and considering the essential aspects, food delivery platforms such as Uber Eats, Bolt Food, and Mr D Food can enhance their services and provide users with an improved overall experience.

2.1. Food delivery app

Designing a food delivery app requires a focus on user experience, features, and technologies (Sharma, 2022). A successful food delivery app focus on user satisfaction, convenience, user interface, and

features that address user needs and preferences. Considerations such as user familiarity, continuance intention, perceived security, and customer lifestyle compatibility to create a positive user experience. It is important to understand user behaviour and preferences to ensure continued usage of the app (Zhao & Bacao, 2020). A study by Choi (2020) on user familiarity and satisfaction with food delivery mobile apps found that features such as searching by food categories, ordering, and tracking, posting reviews, and accessing information contribute to user satisfaction. The app should provide a seamless ordering experience including convenience and accessibility (Buettner, Pasch, & Poulos, 2023). Perceived security and customer lifestyle compatibility are factors that influence user adoption and satisfaction with food delivery apps (Belanche, Flavian, & Perez-Rueda, 2020). A study comparing perceptions about food delivery apps between single-person and multi-person households identified convenience, design, trustworthiness, price, and various food-related attributes as important factors influencing user perceptions (Cho, Bonn, & Li, 2019).

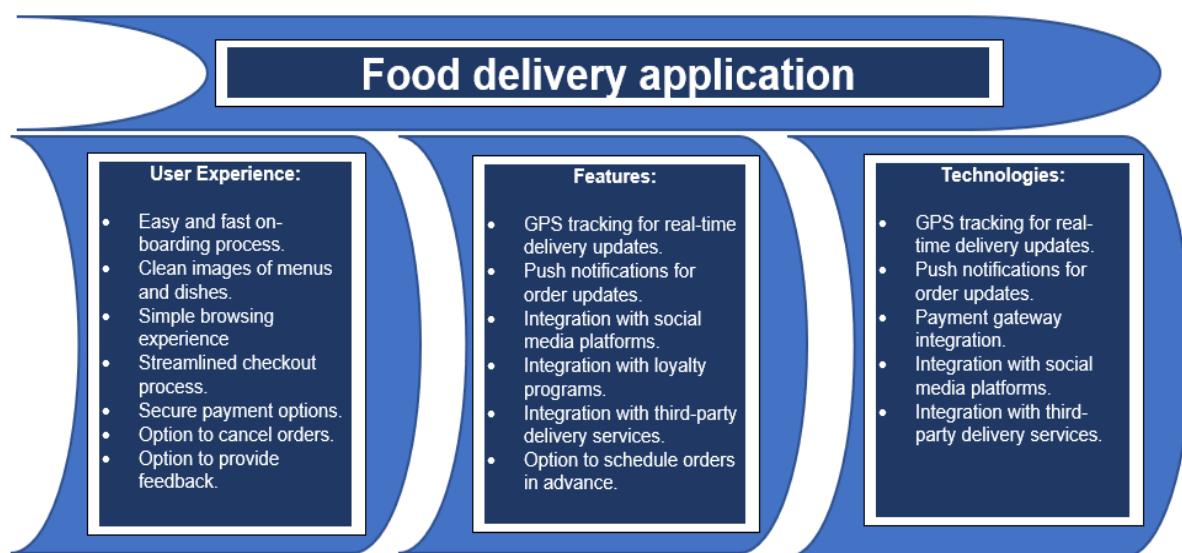


Figure 1: Food delivery Apps

Providing easy and fast onboarding, clean images of menus and dishes, and secure payment options are essential features to ensure customer satisfaction (Sharma, 2022). Furthermore, technologies such as GPS tracking, push notifications, and payment gateway integration can enhance the app's functionality (Sharma, 2022).

2.2. User Experience

One of the factors that play a significant role in shaping consumers' decisions when selecting an e-hailing service provider, is their past experience or expectations (Poon et al., 2022). According to various scholars, optimising the user experience in the onboarding process of a food delivery app should

prioritise simplicity (Cygan, n.d.) (Sharma, 2022). This can be achieved by enabling users to create profiles effortlessly and immediately start using the app (Sharma, 2022). To facilitate informed decision-making, it is recommended that food delivery apps prominently display clear images of menus and dishes (Dosa, 2020); (Ahuja, Chandra, Lord, & Peens, 2021). Furthermore, a streamlined and intuitive browsing experience is crucial for users to navigate menus and dishes seamlessly (Dosa, 2020); (Uzegbu, 2021).

Another imperative factor to be considered is an efficient checkout process which ensures prompt and hassle-free order placement (Cygan, n.d.) (Ahuja et al., 2021). Food delivery apps need to provide secure payment options to prioritise the security of users' financial information (Dosa, 2020); (Cygan, n.d.). Additionally, offering the flexibility to cancel orders is considered a necessary feature (Dosa, 2020); (Sharma, 2022). Users should also be allowed to provide feedback, as it enhances the app and the overall user experience (Dosa, 2020).

2.3. Features

According to Kaushal (2022), real-time GPS tracking in food delivery apps is imperative as it allows customers to monitor the current location of their food in real-time. Furthermore, Sharma (2022) suggests that push notifications are crucial in informing customers about their order status and delivery updates. In addition, offering the option to schedule orders in advance can assist customers in planning their meals and ensuring timely delivery (Solution Analysts, 2020). Integration with loyalty programs is also recommended, as it provides food delivery apps an opportunity to retain customers and enhance customer loyalty (Solution Analysts, 2020).

2.4. Technologies

Technology should provide a positive consumer experience by facilitating features that are easy to use. Karake (2021) conducted a study on consumers' perspectives on food delivery apps in Stockholm and found that convenience, speed, and variety of food options were important factors in their decision to use these apps. The study also found that factors such as ease of use, speed of delivery, and quality of food were important predictors of customer satisfaction and continued use of the app. Ramesh, Prabhu, Sasikumar, Devi, Prasath, and Kamala (2023) recommended that the ordering process should be simple and user-friendly, with clear menus, options, and payment methods. The study also suggested that the app should provide easy access to customer support, such as a chat or phone support, in case of issues or questions.

According to Sharma (2022), integrating a payment gateway is vital in food delivery apps to ensure customers can make secure and convenient payments directly. Incorporating these technologies is vital to ensure that food delivery apps deliver a superior user experience and fulfil the expectations of their

users. Moreover, meeting customer expectations requires considering factors such as the speed of delivery, quality of food, and the accuracy and completeness of orders.

2.5. Key aspects of customer service

Customer service in food delivery services, including timely delivery, menu variety, consideration of delivery and service fees, and responsive customer care services, collectively shape the overall customer experience. Customer service influence customers' satisfaction and intention to use online food delivery services. Customers' expectations play a role in their satisfaction with online food delivery services. Managing customer expectations can help improve service quality and increase customer loyalty (Bonfanti, Rossato, Vigolo, & Vargas-Sánchez, 2023). Service quality is a significant factor that affects customer satisfaction and loyalty. Online food delivery companies need to ensure that their services are reliable, timely, and meet customers' expectations (Koay, Cheah, & Chang, 2022). Delivery operations, such as delivery time, delivery fees, and delivery tracking, can significantly impact customers' satisfaction with online food delivery services (Meena & Kumar, 2022).

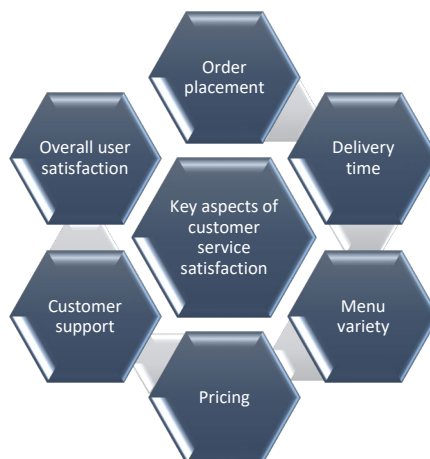


Figure 2: Key aspects of customer service satisfaction

2.6. Order Placement

Chan, Cheung, Choi, and Sheu (2023) describe the order placement process for a customer using a third-party food delivery platform as follows, the customer places an order through the third-party food delivery platform, the ordering details are then passed to the corresponding restaurant, the third-party food delivery platform arranges a driver to pick up the food from the restaurant which then provides delivery services to the customer. This process allows customers to conveniently order food from restaurants and have it delivered to their location. The third-party food delivery platform acts as an intermediary, connecting customers with restaurants and facilitating the delivery process.

Customers in the online food delivery industry have the flexibility to choose between third-party providers and direct ordering through restaurant websites or apps (Lavu, 2020). Consequently, the convenience of online ordering and delivery extends across various platforms, including websites, search engines, messaging apps, and SMS functionality (Lavu, 2020). Hence, simplifying registration and profile creation procedures is crucial in enabling customers to navigate the food ordering window swiftly, resulting in prompt food delivery (Taximobility, 2022). Providing a user-friendly interface that enables quick and seamless order placement has been recognised as an effective strategy for driving app engagement and promoting customer retention and loyalty (Meena & Kumar, 2022; Taximobility, 2022).

Moreover, incorporating special codes or bonuses within the order placement process has been found to heighten satisfaction levels and enhance the overall customer experience (Weiss, 2023). Businesses can effectively incentivise customers to place more orders by leveraging push notifications to inform them about discounts, special offers, and new deals (Taximobility, 2022). Additionally, companies can leverage technology and communication channels to engage customers and encourage repeat orders. Implementation of a comprehensive customer relationship management (CRM) system is essential for streamlining the entire ordering process, spanning from online placement to delivery. This integration enhances manual data accuracy, security, and overall operational efficiency (Patel, 2021).

By prioritising a user-friendly interface, efficient registration procedures, streamlined delivery networks, and comprehensive CRM systems, online food delivery services can establish strong customer relationships, drive sales growth, and achieve sustained success in the industry. Furthermore, optimising the order placement process and enhancing the customer experience is important for online food delivery services. Companies can attract and retain customers by focusing on user-friendly interfaces, seamless registration procedures, effective communication through push notifications, and robust CRM systems, ensuring long-term success in this competitive market.

2.7. Delivery Time

In the context of online meal delivery services, an order follows a sequential process until it reaches the customer. Initially, the order joins the processing queue at the restaurant, where the restaurant prepares the orders in a first come, first-serve manner (Weng & Yu, 2021). Given the dynamic nature and inherent randomness of the meal delivery problem, a framework that enables real-time decision-making becomes essential (Weng & Yu, 2021). Restaurants can implement strategies to enhance delivery times, such as optimising their menu offerings and streamlining their kitchen operations (McAuliffe and DeNisco Rayome, 2023).

The estimated duration of deliveries may vary based on the specific food delivery service and the geographical proximity between the restaurant and the customer (McAuliffe and DeNisco Rayome, 2023). Ensuring short delivery times remains a primary objective for food delivery services to guarantee the delivery of fresh and timely meals (Jahanshahi, Bozanta, Cevik, Kavuk, Tosun, Sonuc, Kosucu, & Başar, 2022). Delays in deliveries can result in negative reviews and a loss of business, underscoring the significance of delivery time in customer satisfaction and loyalty (Patel, 2023; Jahanshahi et al., 2022).

Thus, delivery time holds considerable importance in the food delivery industry, impacting customer satisfaction and loyalty. Service providers and restaurants can implement measures to ensure efficient and prompt delivery, enhancing the overall customer experience.

2.8. Menu Variety

The emergence of user-friendly apps and tech-enabled driver networks has led to the growth of online food delivery, making menu variety a key factor in attracting and retaining customers, catering to their preferences, maintaining competitiveness, and driving revenue growth (Ahuja, Chandra, Lord, & Peens, 2021). Melián-González's (2022) research reveals that 60% of consumers consider menu variety when selecting food delivery services. Additionally, Brewer and Sebby's (2021) study demonstrate that the level of menu informativeness significantly impacts consumers' perceived convenience in terms of online food ordering. McAuliffe and DeNisco Rayome (2023) further emphasise the convenience of having a wide range of food options delivered directly to customers' doorsteps. Hirschberg, Rajko, Schumacher, and Wrulich (2016) also note that consumers anticipate the same level of ease and seamless experience when ordering meals through apps or websites.

By offering an assortment of menus, food delivery services can provide customers with valuable information, alleviating uncertainty and saving time and effort. Consequently, prioritising menu variety plays a role in food delivery services as it contributes to the attraction and retention of customers, fulfilment of their needs, competitiveness in the market, and overall enhancement of business performance. Recognising the importance of menu variety and leveraging technology to provide diverse options, food delivery services can effectively cater to their customers' evolving preferences and expectations.

2.9. Pricing

Considering pricing is an important factor for customers. A comparative study conducted by Food Delivery Guru (n.d.) explored the pricing structures of five popular food delivery services and highlighted that rates can be influenced by factors such as the customer's location, the order size, the time of day, and the pricing policies set by individual restaurants. Oden (2022) offers insights into the

fees that third-party delivery platforms impose on restaurants. These fees typically include delivery, marketing, and onboarding fees, ranging from 15% to 30% of the order value. However, certain food delivery services provide subscription plans that eliminate delivery fees, while others allow individual restaurants to determine their own delivery fees.

The cost of food delivery services can vary depending on various factors, including the specific restaurant and customer location and the chosen food delivery platform. As a pricing and promotional strategy, UberEats provided promotional vouchers that included complimentary meals, discounts, and increased instances of free delivery as a strategy to attract and retain customers during the COVID-19 pandemic (Jia, Gibson, Ding, Allman-Farinelli, Phongsavan, Redfern and Partridge 2022).

2.10. Customer Support

Customer satisfaction relies on the prompt and responsive nature of customer care services provided by food delivery platforms. Feldman (2020) emphasises the significance of addressing customer service issues, such as timely and accurate deliveries, adherence to special instructions, and providing responsive customer support to meet customer expectations. Thus, Restro-Gyaan (2023) suggests effective strategies for enhancing restaurant service and creating exceptional guest experiences, including training staff to exceed basic service expectations by promptly attending to their needs and anticipating their requirements.

Moreover, ensuring the availability of responsive customer care services is imperative for food delivery services to address customer challenges, implement effective strategies to enhance restaurant service, adapt to changing consumer expectations, and offer maximum convenience and transparency to customers.

2.11. Overall User Satisfaction

The customer experience in e-hailing can vary between positive and negative. Factors such as inadequate delivery service, incorrect orders, and privacy breaches have the potential to diminish customers' willingness to participate in e-hailing delivery services (Poon et al., 2022). However, several studies have examined customer satisfaction with online food delivery services and identified various factors that contribute to customer satisfaction. Zhongcao (2022) found that perceived severity, perceived ease of use, and information quality positively contribute to customer satisfaction with food delivery apps. Furthermore, Koay et al. (2022) identified assurance, maintenance of meal quality and hygiene, reliability, security, and system operation as significant dimensions that impact online food delivery service quality and customer satisfaction.

It was reported that food quality significantly influences customer satisfaction with online food ordering (Annaraud & Berezina, 2020). Turaga, Turaga, Poojitha, & Salaka, (2021) found that design, content, functionality, and security are e-service quality parameters that influence customer satisfaction in online food delivery services. Furthermore, Jeneefa and Rajalakshmy (2019) emphasised convenience and ease of use as key factors that affect consumer satisfaction and preference towards online food ordering applications. Prasetyo, Tanto, Mariyanto, Hanjaya, Young, Persada, Miraja & Redi (2021) highlighted the importance of convenience in terms of time and effort in affecting customer satisfaction and loyalty during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was further identified that food availability, payment transaction options, and producer-consumer communication were key factors influencing customer satisfaction with food delivery services during the pandemic (Verdin, Vida, Maria & Madrilejos, 2022). Recognising the significance of these aspects and actively addressing them can lead to enhanced customer satisfaction, loyalty, and the long-term success of food delivery services in a competitive marketplace. Gustafsson and Yanzhuo (2021), emphasise that having a strong brand image is beneficial to increase consumer trust, purchase intention, and customer satisfaction. Furthermore, brand loyalty plays a significant role in customer satisfaction and future purchase decisions.

3. Research Methodology and Design

The research aimed to conduct a comparative analysis of three popular food delivery platforms: Uber Eats, Bolt Food, and Mr D. The most suitable research design for this study was evaluative and descriptive in nature. The objective was to evaluate their services and user experience, identify areas for improvement, and provide actionable recommendations. According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019), define evaluative research as a study focused on determining the effectiveness and value of programs, interventions, policies, or products. Additionally, evaluate involves collecting and analysing data to measure outcomes, comparing them with intended goals, engaging stakeholders, and informing decision-making. The study employed a descriptive quantitative survey research design to describe the characteristics of e-hailing fast-food delivery services. Descriptive study is defined as a research approach focused on providing a detailed and objective description of a phenomenon or group without manipulating variables (Saunders et al., 2019). Moreover, it involves direct observation or data collection, emphasising accuracy and detail.

The questions asked in the questionnaire were descriptive in nature for in-depth understanding of the critical aspects of food delivery services, including order placement, delivery time, menu variety, pricing, customer support, and overall user experience satisfaction. Furthermore, the study aimed to understand the strengths and weaknesses of Uber Eats, Bolt Food, and Mr D based on respondents from

users. To enhance understanding and ability to provide practical recommendations for these delivery services to improve on to enhance overall user experience. Hence, positivism was the most appropriate ideology. According to Saunders et al., (2019) positivism is a philosophical stance that prioritises empirical evidence and scientific methods to comprehend the world. Moreover, this philosophical advocates for objective observation, generalisable laws, and value neutrality in research.

A quantitative research design was used for this study. Quantitative research design is a structured approach for collecting and analysing numerical data to address research questions and hypotheses (Saunders et al., 2019). This type of research aims to uncover patterns, correlations, and causal relationships within a population. Additionally, it provides empirical evidence and statistical insights. A structured online questionnaire consisting of closed-ended questions was used as the survey instrument. The study focused on the general population of e-hailing delivery app users residing in Auckland Park. The criteria of the selected participants were people residing in Auckland Park Area who have utilised one or more of the delivery service apps in the last 6 months (between December 2022 – May 2023) to ensure relevancy.

Therefore, 200 participants were sample size of the study, and they were selected through purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique. The use of purposive sampling for appropriate for this study as it is a non-probability sampling technique that allows researchers to focus on individuals or cases that can provide valuable insights or represent certain characteristics (Saunders et al., 2019). Furthermore, purposive sampling is a research method where participants are intentionally chosen based on specific criteria aligned with the research objectives. This approach was efficient and useful for gaining in-depth understanding and diverse perspectives of the delivery service users.

Data Collection Techniques

The researchers used a structured online questionnaire consisting of closed-ended questions. The online questionnaire was created on google forms which the link was generated. The participants were required to fill in the questionnaire electronically, the link generated was distributed to the potential respondents through channels such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Surveys are a common method in descriptive research for gathering information from many people using a questionnaire. To avoid non-qualifying potential respondents, the questionnaire contained two screening questions such as “Are you based in Auckland Park?” and “Have you used the following fast-food e-hailing delivery services (UberEats, Bolt Food and Mr D) in the last 6 months?”. If a potential respondent selected “No” in one of the screening questions, the potential respondent could not continue with the rest of the questions in a questionnaire. Statistical analysis, including descriptive statistics, was employed to compare platform performance across various aspects. The research provided insights into the strengths and weaknesses of Uber Eats, Bolt Food, and Mr D, based on objective user data.

Data analysis

Data analysis for this study involved descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to analyse the collected data. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the characteristics of the e-hailing fast-food delivery services, including the quality of food and service, delivery speed, cost, and overall experience. The use of descriptive statistics is a common method in survey research for summarising and describing the characteristics of a population or sample. The software used to assess the validity and reliability of the data by conducting factor analysis to ensure construct validity and calculating Cronbach's alpha to measure internal consistency reliability.

3.1. Ethics

Ethical clearance form was completed and submitted to the Department of Transport and Supply Chain Management Ethical Committee at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa. The research ethics was approved by the committee and the ethical clearance code is 2023TSCM-0007. Participants were aware of their participation's purpose and implications. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained to protect participants' privacy. The study adhered to ethical guidelines governing research involving humans.

4. Results and Findings

Customers' repeat usage of e-hailing delivery service apps is influenced by several factors such as ease of app use, navigation, and accurate order tracking function. Furthermore, effective communication, prompt responses to user queries and complaints, reasonable delivery prices, speedy delivery, and maintenance of good food quality. Hence, e-hailing fast food delivery service providers must understand these influencing factors to improve their services and enhance overall customer satisfaction, which fosters repeat usage of the delivery app. To remain competitive, the delivery service providers must ensure they meet customer requirements by improving customers' overall experience from placing orders until receipt.

4.1. Preferred and frequently e-hailing Delivery App

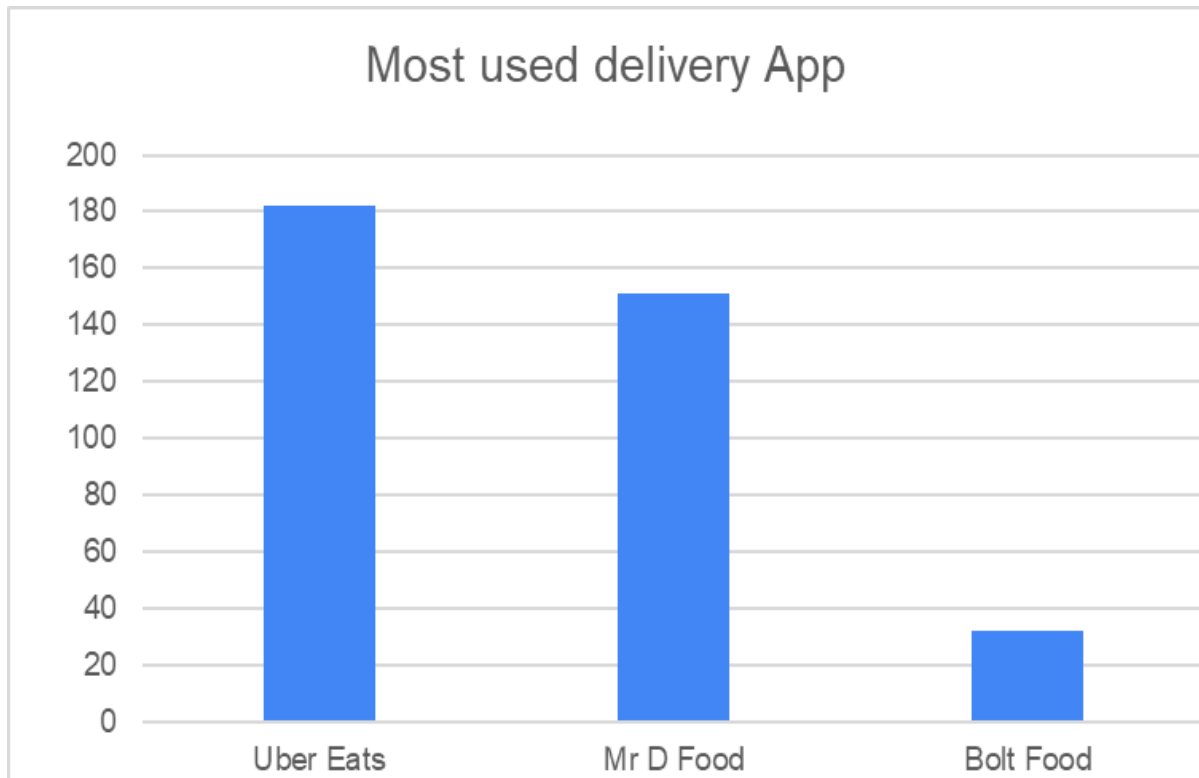


Figure 3: Most used delivery App

According to the survey results, Uber Eats is the most popular and frequently used delivery app, with 182 mentions, followed closely by Mr D food with 151 mentions. This indicates a tight competition between these two apps, as respondents reported occasionally switching between them based on factors like pricing and delivery speed. Bolt Food received the least mentions, with only 32, making it less competitive compared to the other two apps. Uber Eats has been found to be the most popular food delivery app on the App Store, and it generated more revenue from food delivery than from its ride-hailing platform in 2021. The app's revenue has grown significantly, putting it ahead of other food delivery services in overall revenues. Uber Eats charges a commission fee on each order fulfilled by the restaurant for clients using the app, which varies depending on the partner's preferred method of order delivery.

4.2. Influencing Factors on the Decision of Preferred and frequently used e-hailing Delivery Apps

In Table 1, respondents provided insights into their preferences for specific e-hailing fast food delivery applications and the reasons for favouring each app.

Table 1. Reasons for favouring the preferred e-hailing fast food delivery application

Uber Eats:	Mr D Food:	Bolt Food:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheaper delivery prices. Convenience of service. Effective handling of customer complaints. Greater variety of restaurants. Lower meal prices. User-friendly app interface. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordable meal prices. Availability of promotions and discounts. Being the first app introduced in South Africa. Competitive delivery prices. Convenient scooter-based delivery in busy areas. Diverse selection of restaurants. Easy-to-use app interface. Efficient resolution of customer complaints. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordable meal prices. Competitive delivery prices. User-friendly app interface. Wide range of restaurant choices.

The study collected data on respondents' preferences for specific e-hailing fast food delivery applications and the reasons for favouring each app. The findings were presented in Table 1, which outlined the reasons for app preference and the number of respondents who selected each reason. The most significant factor influencing app preference across all respondents was the availability of a greater variety of restaurants.



Figure 4: Overall reasons for delivery App usage

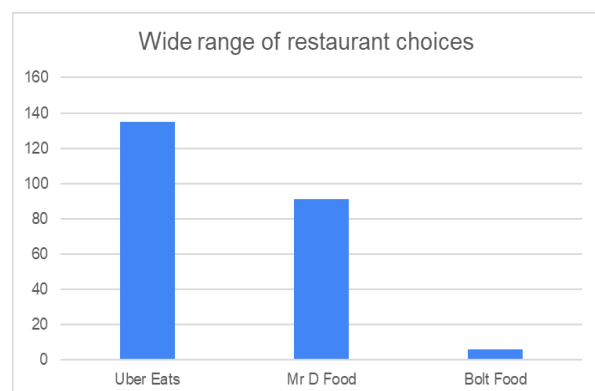


Figure 5: More variety of restaurants

Specifically, the study found that: 142 respondents selected the availability of a greater variety of restaurants as their reason for favouring a particular app. 109 respondents chose the user-friendly app interface as a reason for their app preference. 52 respondents considered lower meal prices as a factor in choosing their preferred delivery app. Only 37 respondents cited the effective handling of customer complaints as a reason for their app preference. Additionally, the study revealed that respondents who preferred Uber Eats were influenced by the app's effective handling of customer complaints and user-friendliness.

On the other hand, those who favoured Mr D Food were motivated by the availability of promotions, discounts, and convenient scooter-based delivery in busy areas. Lastly, some respondents selected Bolt Food due to its competitive delivery prices and affordable meal prices. These findings provide insights into the factors that drive consumer preferences for e-hailing fast food delivery applications and can be valuable for app developers and marketers in understanding and catering to customer needs and preferences.

4.3. E-hailing delivery Apps user experience

As mentioned previously, the app's user-friendliness is one of the common reasons respondents selected the preferred delivery app.

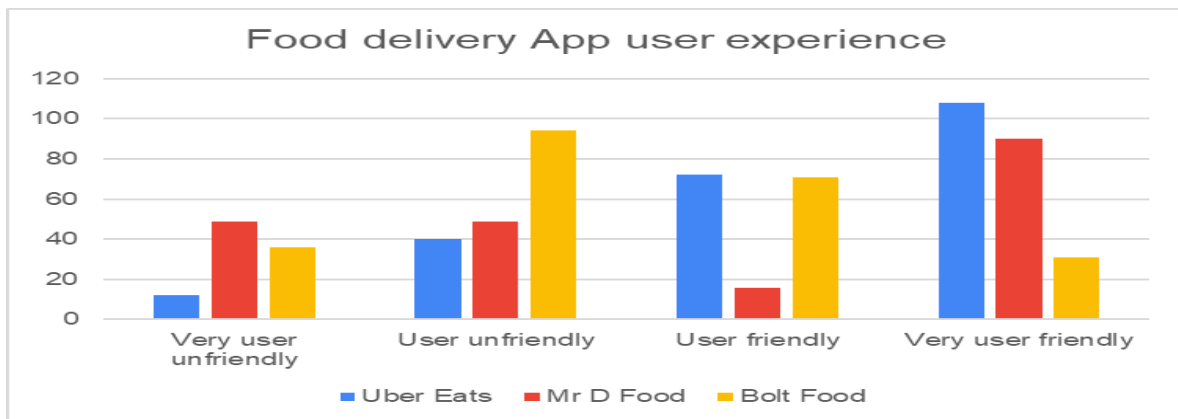


Figure 6: Delivery App user experience

The results, presented in Figure 6, indicate that Uber Eats was selected as "Very user-friendly" by 108 respondents and as "User-friendly" by 72 respondents, making it the most user-friendly delivery app. Mr D Food took second place in the "Very user-friendly" option with 90 respondents. However, 49 respondents deemed Mr D Food "Very user unfriendly," indicating a contrasting view. Bolt Food was considered user-unfriendly by 94 respondents, but 71 respondents still viewed it as user-friendly. The study highlights that the Uber Eats app provides the most exceptional user-friendliness experience, with features such as easy and fast onboarding, clean images of menus and dishes, and secure payment options. Technologies like GPS tracking, push notifications, and payment gateway integration further

enhance its user-friendliness. On the other hand, Mr D Food needs to improve its app's user-friendliness to retain and attract more customers. Similarly, Bolt Food needs significant improvements in its app's user-friend

4.4. E-hailing delivery Apps Technical issues experienced

The relationship between the user-friendliness of a delivery app and the technical issues it experiences is directly proportional. This is supported by Figure 7, which shows that Uber Eats has the lowest rate of technical issues experienced by customers.

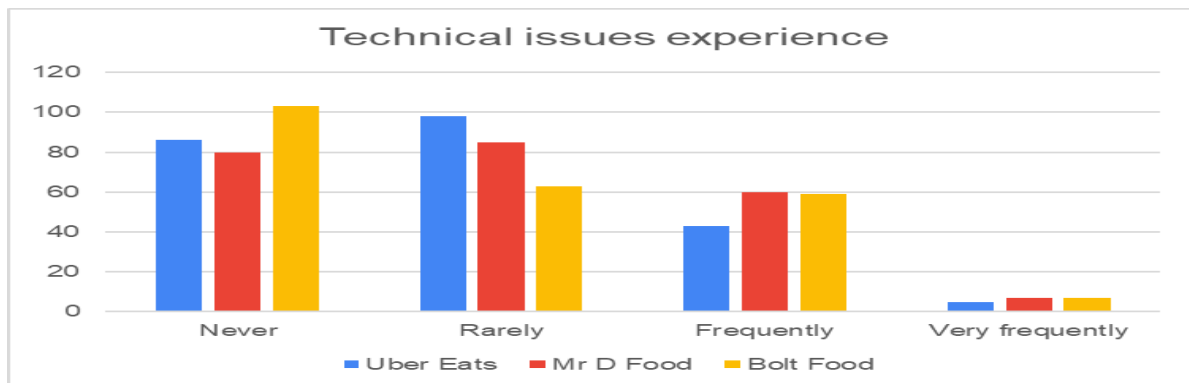


Figure 7: Technical issues experienced

Out of the respondents, only 5 reported experiencing technical problems "very frequently," while 43 reported experiencing them "frequently." Most respondents (86) claimed they had never experienced any technical problems, while 98 rarely experienced any. In contrast, Mr D Food and Bolt Food had a higher number of claims of "frequent" technical issues, with 60 and 59 mentions, respectively. Only 7 respondents reported experiencing technical issues "very frequently" for both apps. On the other hand, 103 respondents reported never experiencing any technical problems when using Bolt Food, and 80 respondents reported the same for Mr D Food.

Therefore, Uber Eats provides the most exceptional user-friendliness experience due to having the lowest rate of technical issues experienced by customers. The advent of appealing, user-friendly apps and tech-enabled driver networks, coupled with changing consumer expectations, has unlocked ready-to-eat food delivery as a major category. The success of food delivery apps depends on various factors, including market dynamics, legal and regulatory issues, system trust, convenience, design, and various food choices.

4.5. The easiness of order modification or making a special request

Customer order flexibility is an important factor that contributes to overall customer satisfaction in the food delivery industry. Delivery service providers should ensure their apps provide flexibility to adjust or make special requests as customers would in-store to ensure customer satisfaction. Incorporating modification options such as "no sauce" or "extra onions" can help customers order their meals just the

way they want it, making it more personalised and contributing to customer satisfaction (Forslund and Mattsson, 2021).

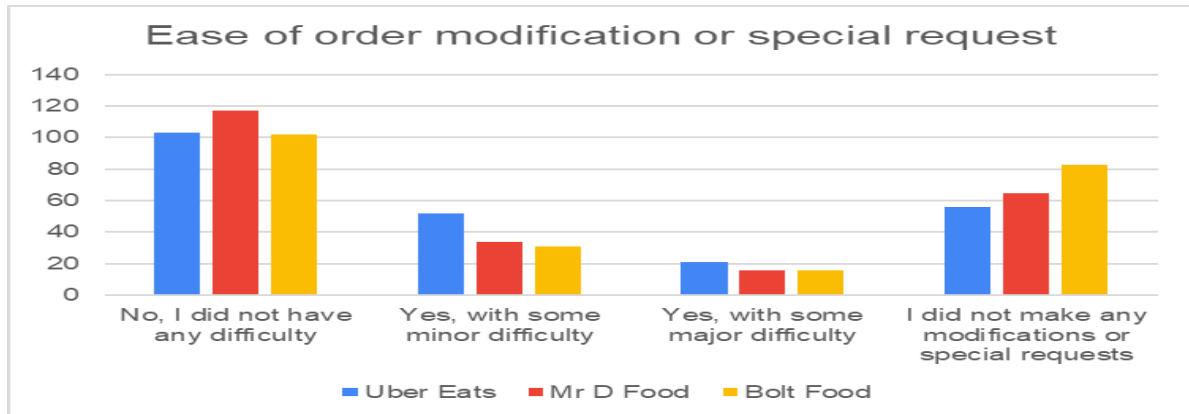


Figure 8: Ease of order modification or special request

According to a survey conducted by DoorDash in 2022, Mr D Food was the easiest when changing an order, with both Uber Eats and Bolt Food not as easy. Minor difficulty was experienced with Uber Eats as the highest, followed by Mr D Food and Bolt Food with a minor difference. Major difficulty was identified by 20 of the respondents with Uber Eats as the highest and Mr D Food and Bolt Food equally difficult. However, not all respondents make changes or have special requests as the apps provide an option to exclude or include ingredients.

4.6. The effectiveness of incorrect order handling queries

Incorrect orders can cause a negative experience for customers, leading to a lack of trust in e-hailing delivery services (Poon et al., 2022). To address this issue, it is crucial for delivery apps to handle such situations effectively and promptly, ensuring customer satisfaction.

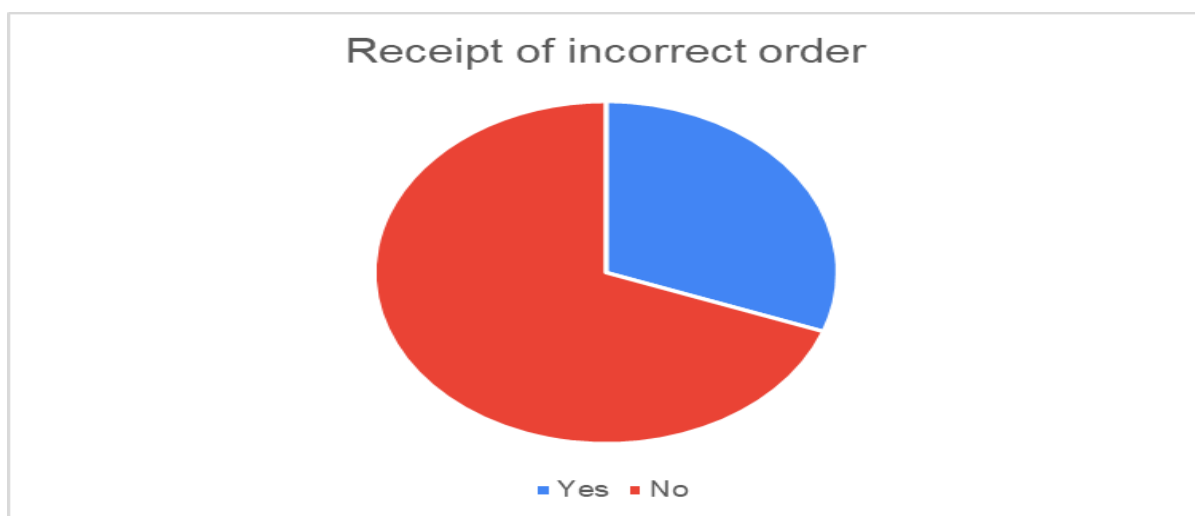


Figure 9: Receipt of an incorrect order

According to a survey, 31% of respondents reported receiving incorrect orders while using one of the three delivery service apps, potentially prompting users to switch to an alternative delivery service. The goal is to resolve such issues as quickly as possible and to the customers' satisfaction. The Uber Eats app received the highest level of satisfaction (43.78%) from customers when it came to handling incorrect orders, surpassing the performance of other delivery apps. Mr D Food app is deemed as offering the second highest (43.10%) level of satisfaction, and this figure is significantly close to the Uber Eats app rate. Bolt Food needs to improve its handling strategies to ensure customer satisfaction, as only 33.04% of respondents expressed satisfaction with how the app resolved issues related to incorrect orders.

Table 2. Customer satisfaction on handling incorrect order

Delivery Service	Percentage of "Dissatisfied" Responses	Percentage of "Satisfied" Responses
Uber Eats	22.74%	43.78%
Mr D Food	29.61%	43.10%
Bolt Food	47.39%	33.04%

According to the survey results, the Uber Eats app received the highest level of satisfaction (43.78%) from customers when it came to handling incorrect orders, surpassing the performance of other delivery apps. Additionally, 22.74% of respondents were dissatisfied with how the situation was handled. However, this percentage is still relatively low compared to other delivery apps. Followed by Mr D Food app is deemed as offering the second highest (43.10%) level of satisfaction and this figure is significantly close to the Uber Eats app rate.

The ‘dissatisfied’ responses for Mr D Food app (29.61%) were slightly higher than Uber Eats yet relatively lower than Bolt Food (47.39%). Bolt Food needs to improve its handling strategies to ensure customer satisfaction, as only 33.04% of respondents expressed satisfaction with how the app resolved issues related to incorrect orders. Uber Eats app shows effectiveness on handling such situation, but there is always a room for improvement. The goal is to resolve such issues as quickly as possible and to the customers satisfaction.

4.7. The overall order cycle time speed

Delivery time is one of the factors influencing customers to use or not use a particular delivery app. The longer the order cycle time, the less likely a customer will continuously use that delivery app.

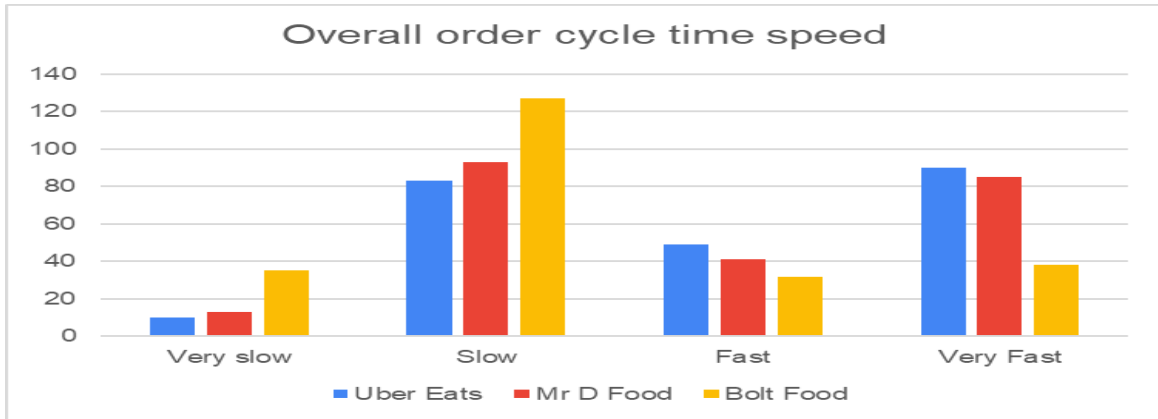


Figure 10. Order lead time

Uber Eats app appears to be the fastest compared to other delivery apps; on both “Fast” and “Very fast,” it has the highest score of 49 and 90 responses, respectively. Mr D Food is slightly behind Uber Eats app with 41 and 85 responses to “Fast” and “Very fast,” respectively. Hence, there is close competition between the two delivery apps, which is evident in the results of the customers' most preferred and used fast food delivery app. Bolt Food was ranked as being slow (127) and very slow (35) as a result, fewer customers are using this delivery app compared to the two mentioned above.

4.8. The effectiveness and ease of communication and customer service support

Effective communication and accurate information sharing are critical factors in attracting and retaining customers. In the context of delivery apps, customers have the option to connect with the customer support team telephonically. However, engaging with the support team can be challenging as they need to handle and respond to numerous calls and messages from customers. The effectiveness and ease of communication and customer service support are essential in ensuring customer satisfaction, trust, and loyalty towards the delivery app.

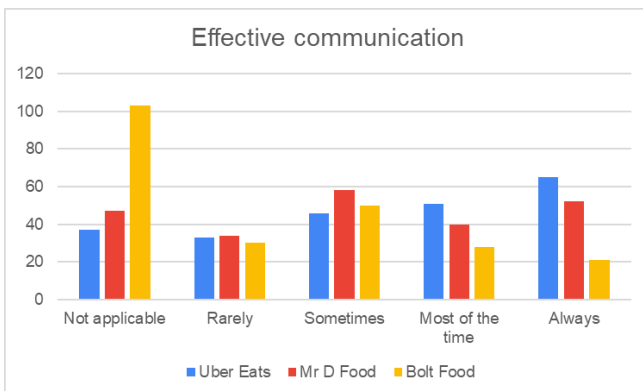


Figure 11. Effective communication

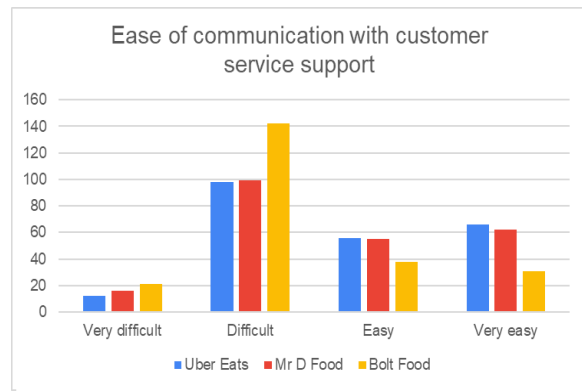


Figure 12. Ease of communication with customer service support

The results of a survey indicate that the Uber Eats app shows a relatively high ranking in providing the most effective communication compared to other delivery apps. Most respondents found it very easy to

contact the support team, while some respondents found difficulties in reaching the support team. Despite these results, the Uber Eats app is ranked at the top for offering effective communication to their users and ease of communication with the customer service support team. Effective communication and ease of contact with customer service support are crucial in ensuring customer satisfaction, trust, and loyalty towards delivery apps.

Customers have the option to connect with the customer support team telephonically when using a delivery service app. However, engaging with the support team can be challenging as they need to handle and respond to numerous calls and messages from customers. For instance, the driver is not communicating their arrival, inaccurate tracking function, the restaurant accepts the customer's order and then cancels it at a later stage, and misleading information such as the order has been delivered; however, the customer has yet to receive the order. All such incidents contribute to customer satisfaction, trust, and loyalty toward the delivery app.

4.9. Overall functionality of the delivery app

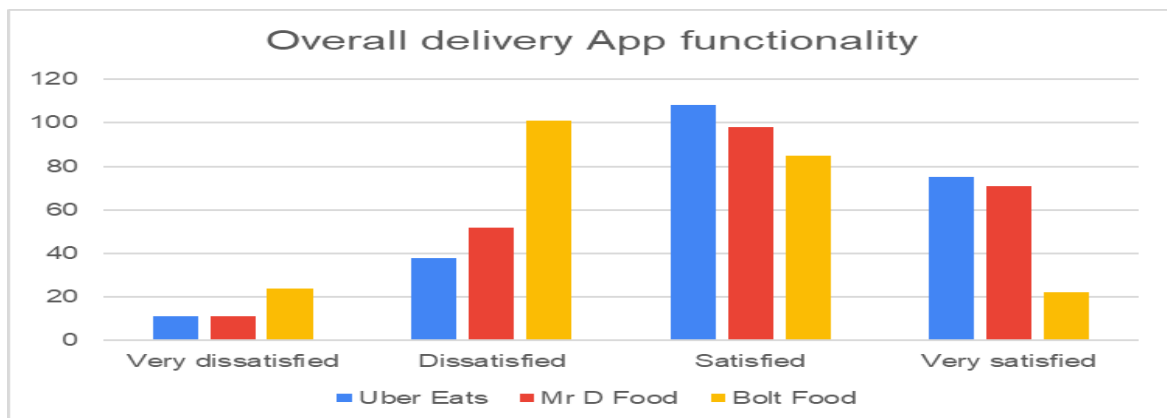


Figure 13: Overall delivery app functionality

All the aforementioned factors discussed above make substantial contributions to the overall functionality of a delivery app. Factors such as user-friendliness, ease of navigating the delivery app, effective communication, proper tracking function, features, and well-designed app all play a critical role in influencing usage of the delivery app and overall user experience. Hence, it is essential for delivery service providers to fully understand the factors influencing users' decision-making on which delivery app to use. Moreover, offering improved customer service is what will attract and retain users.

Based on the results in Figure 13, the Uber Eats app provides exceptional overall functionality to its users. While the delivery app received the highest rankings on both the "satisfied" (108) and "very satisfied" (75) scales, there is still room for improvement to ensure an exceptional user experience and functionality of the app. For instance, 38 respondents indicated that there are dissatisfied with the overall

functionality of the app. Bolt Food is ranked the least on the app's overall functionality, with 101 responses indicating that they are dissatisfied and 24 very dissatisfied. But other (85) respondents are satisfied with the app's functionality. Even though some respondents are satisfied with this delivery app, major improvement is still needed to ensure they become competitive in the market and meet the needs of their users. Mr D Food demonstrates a high level of competitiveness, securing the second position among delivery apps, following closely behind Uber Eats.

4.10. Findings discussion

This study conducted a comparative analysis of three e-hailing delivery apps, namely Uber Eats, Bolt Food, and Mr D, focusing on overall user experience, customer service, food quality, delivery speed, and ease of app use. The study found that a well-designed app improves user experience and encourages loyalty, which was consistent with recent research conducted by Rose-Collins (2023). Respondents mentioned that ease of navigating the app was one of the influential factors in deciding which e-hailing delivery app to use. Uber Eats was the mostly preferred delivery app due to its user-friendliness compared to the other platforms. Food quality and timely and accurate delivery of orders are imperative to customer satisfaction, as stated by Annaraud and Berezina (2020).

Order lead time was one of the contributing factors for delivery app selection, and it was identified that UberEats seemed to be faster followed by Mr D and the least was Bolt Food. Respondents indicated that they were satisfied with how Uber Eats handled incorrect orders, followed by Mr D, which demonstrated effective and prompt customer support. Respondents selected wide restaurant variety as the number one reason for using the selected delivery app, and UberEats was a leading delivery service app in providing more variety of restaurants for their customers, followed by Mr D. Respondents were not concerned about the prices of the meals and delivery fee.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made for each delivery service: Uber Eats must continue to prioritise effective handling of customer complaints, maintain, and enhance the user-friendly app interface, focus on providing a greater variety of restaurants, and ensure prompt and satisfactory resolution of incorrect orders. Mr D Food should capitalise on the availability of promotions, discounts, and convenient scooter-based delivery in busy areas, improve the user-friendliness of the app, and enhance communication and accurate information sharing with customers. Bolt Food should focus on competitive delivery prices and affordable meal prices, improve the user-friendliness of the app, and address technical issues promptly to ensure customer satisfaction and improve the overall user-friendliness of the app.

All delivery services can benefit from fostering strong customer relationships based on the quality of service to distinguish themselves from competitors, prioritising effective communication and ease of

contact with customer service support, implementing service delivery automation to optimise efficiency and reduce costs, planning and optimising delivery routes to ensure timely and accurate deliveries, tracking key metrics and gathering feedback from drivers and customers to identify areas for improvement, minimising errors and wasted time by prioritising orders and leveraging drivers' input, continuously evaluating and improving the user-friendliness of the app interface, and resolving incorrect orders promptly and to the satisfaction of customers.

E-hailing delivery service providers should ensure their apps provide flexibility to adjust or make special requests as customers would in-store to ensure customer satisfaction. Incorporating modification options such as "no sauce" or "extra onions" can help customers order their meals just the way they want it, making it more personalised and contributing to customer satisfaction. Effective communication and accurate information sharing are factors in attracting and retaining customers. By implementing these recommendations, delivery services can enhance their overall service quality, customer satisfaction, and competitiveness in the market.

5. Managerial Implications

Recommendations for each delivery service UberEats must continue to prioritise effective handling of customer complaints, as this was cited as a reason for app preference by respondents. Maintain and enhance the user-friendly app interface, as this was another factor that influenced app preference. Focus on providing a greater variety of restaurants to cater to the preference of respondents who selected this as their reason for favouring Uber Eats. Ensure prompt and satisfactory resolution of incorrect orders, as this was an area where Uber Eats received high levels of satisfaction from customers.

Mr D Food, capitalise on the availability of promotions, discounts, and convenient scooter-based delivery in busy areas, as these were factors that influenced app preference for respondents. Improve the user-friendliness of the app to retain and attract more customers, as some respondents found it "very user unfriendly." Enhance communication and accurate information sharing with customers to build trust and loyalty towards the app. Bolt Food focus on competitive delivery prices and affordable meal prices, as these were factors that influenced app preference for some respondents. Improve the user-friendliness of the app to attract more customers, as a significant number of respondents found it user-unfriendly.

Address technical issues promptly to ensure customer satisfaction and improve the overall user-friendliness of the app. All delivery services can benefit from the following: Foster strong customer relationships based on the quality of service to distinguish themselves from competitors. Prioritise effective communication and ease of contact with customer service support to ensure customer

satisfaction, trust, and loyalty. Implement service delivery automation to optimise efficiency and reduce costs. Plan and optimise delivery routes to ensure timely and accurate deliveries. Track key metrics and gather feedback from drivers and customers to identify areas for improvement. Minimise errors and wasted time by prioritising orders and leveraging drivers' input.

Continuously evaluate and improve the user-friendliness of the app interface. Resolve incorrect orders promptly and to the satisfaction of customers. General recommendations e-hailing delivery service providers should ensure their apps provide flexibility to adjust or make special requests as customers would in-store to ensure customer satisfaction. Incorporating modification options such as "no sauce" or "extra onions" can help customers order their meals just the way they want it, making it more personalised and contributing to customer satisfaction. Effective communication and accurate information sharing are factors in attracting and retaining customers. By implementing these recommendations, delivery services can enhance their overall service quality, customer satisfaction, and competitiveness in the market.

E-hailing fast food delivery service providers need to prioritise understanding customer requirements and influential factors affecting delivery app usage and preference decision-making. Customers consider several factors when choosing a delivery services provider, such as a well-designed app, ease of navigating the app, effective communication and care support, accurate information sharing, discounts and promotions, and reasonable prices. Therefore, delivery service providers need to focus on improving these aspects to attract and retain customers.

The recommendations include but not limited to continual improvement in brand recognition. This can be achieved by incorporating the latest technologies, implementing competitive pricing strategies, enhancing user experience, emphasising differentiation, and strengthening customer feedback strategies. These measures will contribute to the overall growth and success of the apps. Furthermore, delivery service providers need to focus on improving app navigation design and accurate information sharing to attract and retain customers.

6. Conclusions, Limitations and Future Research

Based on the responses received, customers tend to alternate between the two major delivery apps, Uber Eats and Mr D Food, due to close competition and similarity in services provided by these platforms. However, Uber Eats is widely regarded as the top delivery service app due to its exceptional user-friendliness, extensive restaurant selection, effective communication, and customer support, as well as overall app functionality. Mr D Food follows as the second preferred delivery app, primarily due to its attractive offerings such as discounts and promotions, along with overall functionality, resulting in an

outstanding customer experience. On the other hand, Bolt Food falls behind as the least preferred app, largely due to its requirement for improved app navigation design and more effective communication methods.

The study highlights the importance of understanding customer requirements and influential factors affecting delivery app usage and preference decision-making, as it significantly contributes to customer satisfaction and loyalty. Customers consider several factors when choosing a delivery services provider, such as a well-designed app, ease of navigating the app, effective communication and care support, accurate information sharing, discounts and promotions, and reasonable prices. The study also suggests that comprehensive marketing strategies will be required to reach a larger pool of customers, particularly for Bolt Food, which has limited exposure to the public. Continual improvement in brand recognition is necessary for all three delivery service apps. This can be achieved by incorporating the latest technologies, implementing competitive pricing strategies, enhancing user experience, emphasising differentiation, and strengthening customer feedback strategies. These measures will contribute to the overall growth and success of the apps.

The limitations of the study's findings are based on a specific sample of customers and may not be generalisable to the entire population. Additionally, the study only focuses on three specific delivery service apps and does not consider other apps or e-hailing delivery apps that deliver groceries. The study also does not take into account the impact of external factors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which has significantly impacted the food delivery industry. Finally, the study does not address the potential ethical concerns surrounding the use of third-party delivery services, such as the impact on restaurant profit margins.

In the future, researchers can study how various marketing strategies affect gaining and keeping customers, and how different pricing strategies influence how customers act. Additionally, studies could investigate using new technologies like artificial intelligence and blockchain to make the experience of ordering food and the process of delivering it even better. Another direction could be examining different things and concentrating on comparing different age groups and how they use these e-hailing delivery services. Exploring age-related adoption patterns further enriches the theoretical landscape. Overall, this topic's educational value lies in its potential to contribute across various academic disciplines, offering insights into service marketing, consumer behaviour, technology adoption, and digital transformation.

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