

# Factors influencing Customers' Decisions to Use Online Food Delivery Services in Muscat, Oman

Raja Tumati<sup>1</sup>, Bianca Zaloumis<sup>2</sup>, Numaira Al Bulushi<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Faculty, Oman Tourism College, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman

<sup>3</sup> Student, Oman Tourism College, Muscat, Oman

Email: [raja.tumati@otc.edu.om](mailto:raja.tumati@otc.edu.om), [bianca.zaloumis@otc.edu.om](mailto:bianca.zaloumis@otc.edu.om), [numairaalbulushi77@gmail.com](mailto:numairaalbulushi77@gmail.com)

**Citation:** Tumati, R., Zaloumis, B. & Al Bulushi, N. (2024). Factors influencing Customers' Decisions to Use Online Food Delivery Services in Muscat, Oman. *International Journal of Research in Entrepreneurship & Business Studies*, 5(4), 1- 14.  
<https://doi.org/10.47259/ijrebs.541>

**Received on** 20<sup>th</sup> Jul. 2024  
**Revised on** 12<sup>th</sup> Sep. 2024  
**Published on** 11<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2024

**Copyright:** © 2024 by the authors.  
Licensee: Global Scientific Publications, Oman.

## Publishers Note:

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/). This is an open-access journal and the articles published in this journal are distributed under the terms of CC-BY-SA.



## Abstract

**Purpose:** This study examines the factors that influence customers' choice of online food delivery services and assesses customer experience with the quality of e-services, personal characteristics of delivery staff, and perceived food quality.

**Design/methodology/approach:** This study employed a quantitative approach and adopted an explorative research design employing a snowball sampling technique and collected the data using a questionnaire. The sample size in this study was 163. The Gretl program was used to extract questionnaire data with greater accuracy and statistical analyses like percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, ranking, and Correlation measures were used to analyze the data.

**Findings:** Talabat was the most popular online food delivery service in Muscat. The results of the study revealed that the three primary factors that drive customers to place online food orders are affordability, variety, and excellent cuisine. Every respondent places at least one online food order every month, and the majority place three or more orders, primarily using a mobile device. Furthermore, the professional behaviour of the delivery staff, food quality, and website design affect consumer satisfaction. However, there is a weak positive correlation between timely delivery and customer satisfaction. Most of the respondents responded that they would order food again because of their pleasant experiences.

**Research limitations/implications:** To attract more clients, food delivery services can boost social media presence and work with influencers. Most respondents utilize food delivery services between once and three times each month. Thus, firms should implement loyalty programs to retain clients. Improving mobile app functioning should be the primary goal, given that most customers prefer to order food using their phones. Businesses should evaluate food order accuracy and prioritize effective food delivery to clients. Despite the lack of a link between customer satisfaction and delivery timing, timely delivery is critical for customer satisfaction.

**Social Implications:** Online food delivery services serve persons with hectic schedules and mobility challenges. Many individuals who own restaurants and small entrepreneurs working from home may now access a large consumer base and greater visibility can boost their sales. These enterprises allow individuals to try the cuisine of other nations, which was previously impossible, thus broadening the culinary experiences.

**Originality / Value:** Online food delivery companies expanded rapidly during and after the pandemic in response to rising demand. While expanding in popularity, no study of online food delivery services has been conducted in Oman. Therefore, the results of this study will immensely benefit online food delivery companies, and the people engaged in this industry.

**Keywords:** Online Food Services, Customer Experience, Customer Satisfaction, Food Delivery Factors, Delivery Staff, Food Delivery Applications.

## Introduction

An online food delivery service is the act of placing an order for food directly from a nearby restaurant such as McDonald's, Pizza Hut, or KFC, or through a restaurant middleman using a mobile app or food delivery website, such as Food Panda, UberEATS, and Zomato (Chai & Yat, 2019). Food is delivered

as quickly as possible to target clients via intermediary organizations that use mobile applications to connect with numerous restaurants, hotels, food courts, and catering services across the globe ([Singh & Kaur, 2020](#)). Correspondingly, in the food industry, technology has advanced rapidly, which has enabled middlemen to run their operations more extensively ([Salunkhe et al., 2018](#)).

Owing to the COVID-19 epidemic and increased social isolation in many nations, there have been significant shifts in consumer behavior ([Kumar & Shah, 2021](#)). Customers can enjoy safe services and high-quality food from multiple restaurants without having to physically visit the restaurants because of online food delivery services, which have shown to be quite beneficial for both linked businesses and consumers ([Mehroliya et al., 2020](#)). The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on restaurants and delivery services, causing them to reinvent themselves and switch to online delivery services. As a result, the future of food delivery employing contemporary technologies is promising ([Jun et al., 2021](#)). Additionally, several businesses in Western nations are attempting to employ drones to reach all locations, including rural ones, to increase the scope of delivery and serve a larger number of clients efficiently and economically ([Cavusoglu, 2019](#)). Furthermore, [Els \(2024\)](#) remarked that the concept of robot delivery has also been adopted in certain countries to ensure sustainable food delivery.

[Ashok \(2020\)](#) described restaurants in Oman starting to offer takeout services during COVID-19 as they could not serve food at their locations, and the most widely used applications these days are those related to food such as Talabat and Akeed. These companies are associated with a large number of restaurants, hotels, food service providers, and other businesses, as all of them specialize in food ([Kumar et al., 2022](#)). Additionally, people choose these delivery companies because they are convenient and economical, and most importantly, they help people receive food ([Pigatto et al., 2017](#)). Additionally, during COVID, home delivery was a practical choice, and as regulations tightened, there had been a sharp increase in the demand for food delivery services ([Ebuen, 2020](#)). Furthermore, online food delivery applications in Oman had a significant impact on the food industry during the COVID-19 pandemic ([Al Busaidi et al., 2021](#)). The adoption of food delivery applications by restaurant owners helped them increase their sales, and customer feedback allowed them to make improvements to all aspects of their business, including food quality and service.

According to [Statista \(2024\)](#), the online food delivery business in Oman is expected to generate US \$360.00 million in sales by 2024. From 2024 to 2029, the market is anticipated to increase at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 10.96%, with an anticipated market size of US\$605.40m by that time. By the end of 2024, the market for grocery delivery services is expected to have a user penetration rate of 18.4%, and the market for online meal delivery in Oman is expanding rapidly as consumers' inclination towards ease and contactless transactions grows ([ECDB, 2024](#)). Talabat Oman, a leading Oman food delivery platform, won the Most Trusted Brand Award of 2023 for the second consecutive year in the Home Delivery (food category), thanks to innovative technology and a vast partner network ([Khan, 2024](#)).

Customers will benefit more from an increased number of enterprises entering the online food delivery sector. Besides, customers have a greater selection of service providers when an increasing number of applications and websites offer online food delivery services. Therefore, the main aim of this study was to examine the factors that influence consumers' choices of online meal delivery services in Muscat, Oman. Restaurants and online food delivery services would greatly benefit from the findings of the study, as they would be able to identify the factors that affect customers' decisions to utilize online meal services, as well as the factors that affect their happiness with such services in Oman.

### Statement of the Problem

The online food delivery market has expanded at a never-before-seen pace since COVID-19. Due to increased demand and strict secrecy measures, online food delivery services have grown quickly both throughout and following COVID-19, and have continued to do so ever since. Although online food delivery services are becoming more popular in Oman and other countries, little research has been conducted on them. In particular, there has been no research on online food delivery services in Oman. As a result, this study was considered imminent, and restaurants, online meal delivery services, and others working in this sector would greatly benefit from its findings.

### Research Questions

1. What factors influence customers' choices of online food delivery services?
2. How can consumer experience with the quality of e-services, delivery worker personal traits, and perceived food quality be assessed?

### Research Objectives

1. To analyze factors that influence customers' choices of online food delivery services.
2. To assess customer experience with the quality of e-services, professional behaviour of delivery staff, and perceived food quality.

### Review of Literature

The schedules of the people are becoming more hectic, leaving them little time to dine out or make something to eat at home (Saad, 2021). Conversation in person is transitioned into online shopping in place of involvement via mobile phone apps and online communication tools, such as chat, email, SMS, and business sites (Yapp & Kataraiian, 2022). The following significant factors are observed to influence consumers' decisions to use online meal delivery services.

#### *Service Quality*

Customer satisfaction with online food delivery services is greatly influenced by service quality, which includes the dependability, reliability, security, and performance of the system (Koay et al., 2022). Online food delivery services provide food from various eateries using various websites and apps (Pigatto et al., 2017). However, in certain situations, food delivery delays may result from operational issues, such as order fulfilment, heavy traffic, and delays in communication (Saad, 2021). Therefore, food delivery companies are expected to pay closer attention to reliability, assurance, and responsiveness in order to provide the utmost service quality (Koay et al., 2022). Similarly, Suhartanto et al. (2018) claimed that businesses must view service quality as a top priority and develop specialized plans and strategies to uphold and enhance it; if they fail to do so, they risk losing their market share.

#### *Perceived Ease of Use*

According to Davis (1989), perceived ease of use refers to how simple a user thinks a technology app is to be used. A greater perceived convenience of use is associated with a higher likelihood of adopting online food delivery services (Ray et al., 2019). Research has also shown that consumer behavioural intentions, such as placing another order, are positively influenced by perceived ease of use and there is no apparent connection between purchase intention and perceived ease of use (Hong et al., 2021). According to Ray et al. (2019), the most crucial elements of the simplicity of using food delivery systems are ease of placing an order; simplicity in sorting restaurant and food options; and convenience in order tracking, payment processing, cancellations, and reorders (Yapp & Kataraiian, 2022). Furthermore, clients may decide not to adhere to the company platform and may choose to associate with other firms if they experience any problems with the aforementioned.

#### *Convenience*

According to Chandrasekhar et al. (2019), people prefer to purchase food online because it allows them to perform multiple tasks and saves both time and cash by utilizing a variety of platforms and applications. Besides, Pillai et al. (2022) stated that the ability of restaurants to provide 24-hour food delivery services is one of the primary explanations for why ordering food online has been successful. Moreover, customers can relish their food without waiting in a queue or ordering takeaway, and they can make good use of the waiting time by performing other tasks around their house or at the office (Yapp & Kataraiian, 2022). This is another advantage of online meal delivery services. Therefore, a key factor in deciding whether consumers will employ online meal delivery services is perceived as easy. Correspondingly, a study conducted by Francioni et al. (2022) concluded that ordering food is more popular among respondents than dining outside because it saves time, and dining outside is viewed as a luxury and time-consuming activity. Furthermore, according to Pillai et al. (2022), ordering food is now more fashionable and enjoyable, and it provides ease and convenience as well as control over technology to have their preferred dish at any time.

#### *Delivery Time*

According to Ray et al. (2019), in online business, whether it is retail or food, delivery time is an important factor in customer happiness, retention, and thus, business success. Besides, Rajesh (2019) stated that many consumers prefer Internet shopping as it takes less time than traditional offline shopping because they do not have to travel. Owing to the short time between placing orders and getting purchased items, delivery has

become increasingly crucial, especially when buying food items (Ganapathi & Abu-Shanab, 2020). Additionally, Kedah et al. (2015) stated that people often order online food because they are busy at work. After ordering food, customers use live tracking technologies to monitor their orders and expect on-time delivery, and any delivery delays are unsatisfactory as they need to transition between tasks (Francioni et al., 2022). However, any delivery delay that extends the scheduled arrival duration irrespective of traffic issues or weather conditions lowers customer satisfaction. To ensure timely delivery, online delivery companies must comprehend all possible routes (Kedah et al., 2015). Similarly, Rajesh (2019) stated that the restaurant's promised delivery time may be delayed due to traffic conditions; in such cases, it would be preferable if businesses rewarded customers by providing complementary coupons, and customers are happy and will forgive them the late delivery if they receive coupons and other benefits (Dospinescu et al., 2020).

#### ***Consumer satisfaction with the quality of e-services***

Yeo et al. (2017) mentioned that customer satisfaction is the belief that service leads to positive experiences during the purchasing process, influencing future purchases and loyalty. The quality of electronic services significantly impacts satisfaction and influences the intention of online shoppers to repeat purchases and website revisits (Ganapathi & Abu-Shanab, 2020). Shroff et al. (2022) highlighted the increasing trend of online food ordering, which allows people to order from various restaurants through different applications. This trend is particularly prevalent in urban areas and work settings, with some customers opting for delivery or ordering directly from restaurants' websites (Adithya et al., 2017). Parasuraman et al. (2004) identified four key e-service variables that impact customer satisfaction with online food delivery viz. efficiency, fulfilment, system availability, and privacy. Furthermore, the layout of the website, order tracking, confidentiality of data, and navigation are key factors in determining consumer satisfaction with e-service quality (Suhartanto et al., 2018). Most customers buy food online using a mobile device; as a result, one of the things that every user must contend with is the ease with which an online food delivery program operates (Yusra & Agus, 2019). Rita et al. (2019) insisted that there should be a variety of dining options, and smooth payments through online meal delivery services using a variety of methods, including internet banking and pay-on-delivery. Another appealing element of the system is the 'schedule later' feature, which allows users to postpone their delivery till they are ready to dine, and reordering is supposed to be straightforward, allowing users to order their favourite foods with minimum effort (Rajesh, 2019). Additionally, Talabat's platform offers intuitive navigation and innovative solutions, including drone delivery and Talabat AI, enhancing the customer experience with ChatGPT-powered AI grocery shopping assistants (Khan, 2024).

#### ***Consumer satisfaction with personal characteristics of delivery staff***

The need for reliable and safe delivery personnel has increased in tandem with the rise in online food ordering (Yeo et al., 2017). The delivery person must bring quality food to customers in a timely, polite, and safe manner, and they are expected to check purchase orders and invoices for accuracy before delivery (Singh & Kaur, 2020). Before delivery starts, the individual who delivers needs to get in touch with the customers to verify delivery details, such as the exact location of the items to be picked up and the pickup time (Yusra & Agus, 2019). Effective communication is one of the most important qualities that delivery employees should possess because it leads to customer happiness (Zhong & Moon, 2020). Furthermore, both oral and written communication are important because delivery personnel are expected to receive orders and interact with consumers about various issues such as address, traffic issues, and others (Sahni & Mohsin, 2017). Personal responsibility, client relations, strong communication, and maintaining customer confidentiality are qualities that every delivery person should possess (Yusra & Agus, 2019). If delivery employees can build and maintain outstanding relationships with consumers, it may boost their willingness to purchase again and continue to choose the same online food delivery services (Zhong & Moon, 2020).

#### ***Consumer satisfaction with perceived food quality***

The main factor driving customers to use online food delivery services is the quality of the food, which has a significant impact on their willingness to buy again (Kedah et al., 2015). Suhartanto et al. (2018) found that for food delivery via internet services, consumer happiness, and repurchase intention are directly correlated with food quality. Additionally, Annaraud & Berezina (2020) stated that food quality has a significant impact on customer satisfaction, making it a crucial issue in food service. Customers expect extensive menus, wholesome selections, and prompt delivery, and their happiness is affected by preserving meal quality and hygiene, and food quality drives the decision-making factors for online ordering (Koay et al., 2022). Consumers judge the quality of food during the purchasing process because apps display images of the food, which buyers study to determine the colour and shape of the food (Kumari, 2019).

Consumers are increasingly interested in ordering food from outside restaurants, and when the food arrives, consumers like to compare what they ordered to what they received if they match, they perceive the quality of the food to be high, and if they do not, they are dissatisfied (Zhong & Moon, 2020). Food quality affects customer satisfaction as consumer behaviour varies, with intrinsic quality (taste, colour, freshness) often being more important than extrinsic factors (price, brand, and packaging) (Petrescu et al., 2022). On the contrary, Koay et al. (2022) stated that consumers prioritize high-quality, excellent taste, and appearance over extrinsic factors, such as brand and price, during the purchase process. Talabat caters to the Omani market's unique needs by understanding local tastes and incorporating cultural nuances into its brand identity and customer experiences (Khan, 2024).

### Research Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative research approach to examine the factors influencing consumers' choice of online food delivery services. Creswell (2003) stated that the main goal of quantitative research is to test ideas and hypotheses and analyze them using statistical analysis and mathematics which mostly take the form of tabular, pictorial, and numerical representations that summarise closed problems. According to Kothari (2004), research topics that had not been thoroughly examined before were investigated using an exploratory research design. Therefore, the research design used in this study was explorative. It is frequently employed when researching a novel topic or developing a broad concept into a more focused research question.

According to Saunders et al. (2019), snowball sampling first involves choosing a small number of respondents to participate in the survey. Participants can then recommend or nominate other people who fulfil the criteria or have similar traits. However, they must also consider their restrictions and other distinctions. One of the main benefits of using the snowball method is that it narrows the research focus to individuals of specific interest. This study employed a snowball sampling method to obtain data from the participants. Purposive and snowball sampling, according to Mukherjee (2019), are both helpful methods for quantitative research because they enable the selection of participants offering rich and pertinent data for study. Thus, it was considered to collect 163 samples using snowball technique from the population of those who used online food deliver services earlier to the survey.

The survey data-gathering technique described by Teddlie & Yu (2007) is reasonably inexpensive. Thus, a questionnaire-based survey approach was used to gather information from the respondents. In particular, for both online and smartphone surveys, the cost per respondent was relatively low. Similarly, Bryman (2012) reported that respondents can obtain survey data through a range of channels, including email, WhatsApp, and other social media platforms. In addition to the ease of collecting data, surveys can be dispatched very easily to participants who can complete them at their own leisure time (Creswell, 2003). The questionnaire was divided into five sections. The respondent profile was described in the first section. Online food delivery service details were in the second section. The third section featured the factors that encourage consumers to select online food delivery services. The fourth section addressed how satisfied customers are with online food delivery services. Section five highlighted the customers' experience with online food delivery services. The Gretel program was used to extract questionnaire data with greater accuracy and detail once the data had been collected. Statistical analyses like percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, ranking, and Correlation measures were used to analyze the data.

### Findings

**Table 1. Demographic Details**

Description	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	99
	Female	64
Nationality	Omani	122
	Non-Omani	41
Age	18-29	37
	30-39	43
	40-49	57
	50 & above	26
Education	School	28
	Diploma	109
	Bachelors	18

	Masters & above	8	5.1
Income (optional)	500 & below	29	17.8
	501 to 1000	98	60.1
	1001 to 2000	21	12.8
	2001 & above	15	9.3
Profession	Student	33	20.2
	Employed	61	37.4
	Business	55	33.7
	Retired	6	3.6
	Unemployed	8	5.1

Table 1 presents that 60.7% of respondents were men, while 39.3% were women. Of the respondents, 74.8% were Omanis and the remaining 25.2% were not from Omanis. Besides, 34.9% of the respondents were between the ages of 40 and 49, 26.3% were between the ages of 30 and 39, 22.7% were between the ages of 18 and 29, and 16.1% were between 50 & above. 66.8% of respondents were diploma holders, 17.1% were school certificate holders, 11% were bachelor's degree holders, and 5.1% had a master's degree or higher. 60.1% of the population earned between 500 & 1000 Omani rials per month, 17.8% earned 500 and less, 12.8% earned between 1001 & 2000, and 9.3% earned 2001 & more Omani rials per month. 37.4% were employed; business owners made up the next group with 33.7%, followed by students (20.2%), unemployed people (5.1%), and retirees (3.6%).

**Table 2. Customers Views on Online Food Delivery Services**

Customers' Views	Frequency	Percentage
1. Did you use online food delivery services in the last six months?		
Yes	128	78.5
No	35	21.5
2. How often do you generally use the services within a month?		
1– 3 times	86	52.7
4 –7 times	62	38.0
8 and more	15	9.3
3. Where did you hear about online food delivery services? Through		
Social media influencers	35	21.4
Family & friends	50	30.6
Colleagues	14	8.5
Word of mouth	5	3.0
Social media	48	29.4
Brochures	3	1.8
Others	8	5.3
4. Which food delivery services did you use?		
Talabat	122	74.8
TM done	20	12.2
Akeed	5	3.0
Geeb	5	3.0
Mojeeb	3	1.8
Others (Daleel 1010, Rafeeq Oman)	8	5.2
5. Do you think that ordering online is better than visiting a restaurant or hotel?		
Yes	91	55.8
No	52	31.9
Not sure	20	12.3
6. What is your favourite way to order food?		
Website	25	15.3
Mobile app	124	76.0
Phone call	14	8.7
Others	0	0

7. Do you support the introduction of more online food delivery services in Oman?		
Yes	127	77.9
No	19	11.6
Not sure	17	10.5

The choices of the respondents regarding online food delivery services were presented in Table 2. Of the respondents, 78.5% responded that they had utilized online food delivery services compared to 21.5% who had not. 52.7% of the respondents reported using online food services once to three times per month, compared to 38% who used them four to seven times, and 9.3% had used for more than eight times. 30.6% of respondents opined that they learned about online food delivery services from friends and family whereas 8.5% heard from co-workers, 21.4% from social media influencers, and 29.4% from social media sites. The remaining respondents learned about it through Google advertisements, TV, radio, word-of-mouth, and brochures. In total, 50.8% of the participants learned about online food delivery services from social media influencers and social media platforms.

74.8% of the respondents ordered their food through Talabat Company; 12.2% through TM Done, and 5.2% from others, indicating that they ordered either directly from restaurants or from other places such as Rafeeq Oman, Daleel 1010, and the remaining 7.8% used Akeed, Geeb, and Mojeeb. Moreover, 55.8% of respondents believed that placing an order online is preferable rather than going to a restaurant or hotel in person, while 31.9% disagreed indicating that they preferred to visit in person. 12.3% were not sure. 76% of the respondents stated that they preferred to order food using mobile applications; 15% claimed ordering online was better and 8.75% indicated ordering over the phone was better. Thus, it was clear that these three methods were more prevalent. 77.9% of the customers were in favour of more online food delivery services being offered in Oman, while 11.6% were against it, and 10.5% were not sure.

**Table 3. Factors Influencing People to Choose Online Food Delivery Services**

Preferred Factors	Mean	S. D.	Rank
Convenience: Enjoying a meal at home, work, or other places with loved ones	4.47	1.205	1
A variety of food options are available	4.38	1.204	2
Quality of food: The food arrives fresh and hot	4.23	0.987	3
The payment system is secured and easier	4.23	0.956	3
Time constraints - Cannot cook every day as am busy working	4.17	1.119	5
Recommended by my social media influencers	4.12	1.158	6
Reliable and trustworthy services with consistency	4.09	0.995	7
Recommended by family and friends	4.02	1.078	8
Fast delivery	3.97	0.798	9
The food delivery staff are very professional and well-mannered	3.88	1.236	10
Easy to use and offers a better user experience	3.72	0.978	11
Better customer service, soft-spoken people, and quick reply	3.72	1.198	11
Ease of returns and refunds	3.61	1.115	13
Easy to track my order	3.42	0.962	14
Low prices, offers, and discounts	3.31	1.205	15
The delivery company supports local businesses and the community	2.97	0.898	16
Apps have various features - live chat, order scheduling, and the contact information of the delivery person	2.84	1.312	17
Provides information on the ingredients and nutritional contents of food	2.76	1.328	18
Reviews and ratings are available and consistent	2.61	0.818	19
Delivery staff members do not expect extra money or tips	2.54	1.404	20
Accuracy of information reg. Products, price, timings, etc.	2.38	1.150	21

Table 3 presents the factors influencing people's decision to use online food delivery services. The item 'Convenience: Enjoying a meal at home, work or other places with loved ones' had the highest mean score (4.47), followed by 'A variety of food options available' (4.38), 'Quality of food: the food arrives fresh and hot' (4.23), 'The payment system is secured and easier' (4.23), and 'Time constraints: Cannot cook every day as am busy at work' (4.17). Two items recorded the third place with the same mean scores. These were

all the significant factors in an individual's decision-making process. Social media influencers recommended (4.12), Reliability and trustworthiness with consistency (4.09), and being recommended by family and friends (4.02) were other significant factors that inspired consumers to order food online.

The lowest mean score of the factors that influence people to choose online food delivery services seemed to be the factor - 'Accuracy of information reg. Products, price, timings, etc.' with a mean score of 2.48. This suggested that the customers were not satisfied with the accuracy of information on prices, items, schedules, etc. provided by the apps. Other lowest mean scores included Delivery staff do not expect extra money or tips' (2.54), 'Reviews and ratings are available and consistent' (2.61), and 'Provides information on the ingredients and nutritional contents of the food' (2.76). This suggested that the respondents were not particular about the delivery personnel receiving more money or tips; whether reviews and ratings readily available were reliable or not, and details of the food's ingredients and nutritional value offered.

**Table 4. Customer Experience with Online Food Delivery Services**

Statements on the experience	Mean	S.D.	Rank
<b>Online services</b>			
Placement of an order is very easy and convenient	4.20	1.076	1
The user interface and navigation of the application are easy	4.06	1.190	2
Payment procedures are easy and secured	3.73	0.961	3
Whenever any technical issues faced during usage of e-services were resolved quickly	3.34	1.327	4
The availability of information - menus, prices, and offers were clear	2.86	0.896	5
<b>Delivery Staff</b>			
The delivery staff adheres to the protocols and standards of the services	4.18	0.999	1
The staff looks very professional with uniforms, name badges, etc.	4.12	1.076	2
Communication of the delivery persons was clear, easy to understand, and knowledgeable	3.79	0.859	3
The delivery always arrived at the promised times	3.58	1.118	4
The delivery staff is always courteous, friendly, and helpful	3.07	1.304	5
<b>Food quality</b>			
The food was hot, fresh, and tasty	4.13	1.313	1
The food is well presented, has a great texture, and is in good portions	4.09	1.112	2
The quality of the food I received was good, properly sealed, and well-protected	3.68	0.892	3
The food is well-cooked, smells nice, and money worth	3.32	1.070	4
The delivered food was the same as the ordered one and there was no discrepancy	3.06	0.988	5

Table 4 shows customer experience with online food delivery services. The highest mean score for customer experience for online services was observed to be 'Placement of an order is very easy and convenient' (4.20), and the lowest recorded was 'the availability of information - menus, prices, and offers were clear' (2.86). The highest mean score of the customer experience related to delivery staff was that 'the delivery staff adhered to protocols and standards of services' (4.18), and the lowest mean score was that 'the delivery staff is always courteous, friendly, and helpful' (3.07). The highest mean score of the customer experience with perceived food quality was that 'the food was hot, fresh, and tasty' (4.13) whereas the lowest mean score was that 'The delivered food was the same as the ordered one and there was no discrepancy' (3.06). This implied that customers were happy with the following: the convenience with which they were able to place an online food order, the fact that the delivery staff adhered to protocols and quality standards, and the fact that the food was brought hot, fresh, and delicious.

**Table 5. Correlation between website/app design and Customer Experience with online food delivery services**

Variables		Website/APP design	Customer Experience
	Pearson's r Correlation	1	.716**
Website/App design	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	163	163
	Pearson Correlation	.716**	1
Customer Experience	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
		163	163

\* Correlation significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

According to Table 5, Customer experience with online food delivery services in Oman was positively and significantly correlated with the website/app design. The acquired Spearman's coefficient of 0.716 and p-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ , suggested that the value of  $r$  that is close to 1 indicates that customer satisfaction rises in tandem with food quality and vice versa. This implied that the food delivery company's website or app design, including aesthetics, purchase process, and others, leads to better customer experience.

**Table 6. Correlation between Professional Behaviour of the Delivery Staff and the Customer Experience with online food delivery services**

Variables		Professional behaviour of the delivery staff	Customer Experience
	Pearson's r Correlation	1	.872**
Professional behaviour of the delivery staff	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	163	163
	Pearson Correlation	.872**	1
Customer Experience	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
		163	163

\* Correlation significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

According to Table 6, Customer Experience with online food delivery services in Oman was positively and significantly correlated with the professional behaviour of the delivery team. The acquired Spearman's coefficient of 0.872 and p-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ , which implied that the value of  $r$  that is close to 1 indicated that if delivery staff exhibit professional behaviour, customer satisfaction tends to increase.

**Table 7. Correlation between Food Quality and Customer Experience with online food delivery services**

Variables		Food quality	Customer Experience
	Pearson's r Correlation	1	.904**
Food quality	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	163	163
	Pearson Correlation	.904**	1
Customer Experience	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
		163	163

\* Correlation significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The results in Table 7 indicated a strong positive correlation between Customer Experience with online food delivery services in Oman and Food Quality. The obtained p-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$  and Spearman's coefficient of 0.904 indicated this. The value of  $r$  is close to 1, which means that when food quality increases, so does customer experience, and vice versa. This suggested a direct correlation between Food Quality, such

as when food received was hot, fresh, tasty, well presented, had a great texture, and customer satisfied experience.

**Table 8. Correlation between Timely Food Delivery and Customer Experience with online food delivery services**

Variables		Timely Food Delivery	Customer Experience
	Pearson's r Correlation	1	.134**
Timely Food delivery	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	163	163
	Pearson Correlation	.134**	1
Customer Experience	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
		163	163

\* Correlation significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 8 shows a correlation coefficient of  $r = 0.134$  indicating a weak positive relationship between Timely Food Delivery and Customer Experience. A value of  $r$  close to 0 suggested that the association between these two variables was weak. This suggested that there is no significant association between Customer Experience and Timely Food Delivery, which advocated that Timely Food Delivery was not translated into the satisfied experience of the customers.

## Discussion

*Objective 1: To analyze factors that influence customers' choices of online food delivery services*

The most significant factor (Table 3) in consumers ordering food online is convenience: the ability to enjoy food at home with loved ones while saving time and effort. These findings are in line with the findings by [Chandrasekhar et al. \(2019\)](#), [Pillai et al. \(2022\)](#), [Yapp & Kataraiian \(2022\)](#), and [Francioni et al. \(2022\)](#), all of whom indicated that convenience is one of the main motives that people buy food online. Besides, other factors (Table 3) that influenced people to order food online were the variety of food options available, the quality of food, and the easy and secure payment system. These findings are similar to those reported by [Yapp & Kataraiian \(2022\)](#), [Kumari \(2019\)](#), [Suhartanto et al. \(2018\)](#), [Annaraud & Berezina \(2020\)](#), [Koay et al. \(2022\)](#), [Ray et al. \(2019\)](#), [Rita et al. \(2019\)](#), and [Yusra & Agus \(2019\)](#), who stated that food variety, quality, and digital payments affect people ordering food online.

*Objective 2: To assess customer experience with the quality of e-services, professional behaviour of delivery staff, and perceived food quality*

The findings for customer experience with online food delivery services (Table 4) include that placing an order was very easy and convenient, the delivery staff adhered to protocols and standards of service, and the food was hot, fresh, and tasty. Besides, the findings in Tables 5, 6, and 7 demonstrate a strong positive correlation between website/app design and customer satisfaction; a strong positive correlation between delivery staff professional behaviour and customer satisfaction; and a strong positive correlation between food quality and customer satisfaction. These findings are in line with those of [Zhong & Moon \(2020\)](#), [Sahni & Mohsin \(2017\)](#), [Rajesh \(2019\)](#), [Saad \(2021\)](#), [Pigatto et al. \(2017\)](#), [Suhartanto et al. \(2018\)](#), [Petrescu et al. \(2022\)](#), [Koay et al. \(2022\)](#), and [Annaraud & Berezina \(2020\)](#), which indicated that placing an order should be extremely simple and convenient for customer satisfaction and that delivery personnel should follow protocols and standards of service because doing so directly contribute to customer satisfaction. Additionally, the food must be hot, fresh, and delicious when it reaches the customer; otherwise, it causes dissatisfaction.

Table 8 revealed a weak positive correlation between timely food delivery and customer satisfaction, indicating that timely delivery may not necessarily lead to customer satisfaction. However, these results are not in line with those of [Ray et al. \(2019\)](#), [Rajesh \(2019\)](#), [Ganapathi & Abu-Shanab \(2020\)](#), [Kedah et al. \(2015\)](#), and [Francioni et al. \(2022\)](#), who claimed that delivery time was crucial for customer satisfaction and business success in online businesses, particularly in food-related businesses. Consumers prefer online food orders because of the short time between placing orders and receiving items. Live tracking technologies help customers monitor their orders, and delays can lower satisfaction. Online delivery companies must understand all possible routes to ensure timely delivery.

## Conclusion

Based on the above results, the following conclusions were constructed:

Talabat is the most popular online food delivery servicing company in Muscat, and most respondents order food online at least once to three times per month. Most people order food through their mobile phones and know about online food delivery apps or websites through social media or influencers. The most influential factors that encouraged customers to choose online food delivery services were enjoying food at home/work/other places with family & loved ones; the wide range of foods available and the quality of food - fresh and hot. The ease and convenience of ordering satisfied the customers. They were pleased with the hot, fresh, delicious food received, and the delivery team for their following protocols and standards of service. In short, the three primary factors that drive customers to place online food orders are affordability, variety, and excellent cuisine. Most of the participants stated that they would most likely place online food orders in the near future.

Nonetheless, the general level of customer satisfaction with online food delivery services remains low, indicating a need for greater improvement. It is encouraging that respondents would like to suggest online food delivery services to their friends and family. Therefore, businesses should offer top-notch services to draw more clientele. Although Talabat Company is the industry leader in Oman, the data show that there is room for new food delivery businesses. Entrepreneurs should take note of this and consider entering this market. In addition, customer satisfaction and website/app design, customer contentment, and professional demeanor of delivery personnel, as well as customer satisfaction and food quality, are strongly correlated. Conversely, a marginally positive correlation exists between the punctuality of food delivery and client satisfaction, which suggests that timely food delivery might not translate into customer satisfaction.

## Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations were derived:

1. Food delivery businesses are urged to increase their social media presence and engage social media influencers who can promote their services, as the majority of customers prefer to receive updates via social media and influencers.
2. As most of the respondents were using food delivery apps, it was advised that delivery companies should provide discounts, promotions, loyalty programs, and other perks to entice customers to stay with them and use their services more often.
3. As most people order food from their mobile devices, improving the functionality and usability of mobile device applications is preferred.
4. Delivery team members should avoid expecting tips or extra cash from the customers which is vital failing which customers will switch to other companies.
5. Keeping an eye on the accuracy of information about food items on company websites and apps is essential because respondents do not seem to be happy with the information offered.
6. Food delivery companies must closely monitor customer orders and deliveries as there are reported deficiencies.
7. Though customers are generally satisfied with online food delivery services, more improvements must be made in order to enhance customer convenience and contentment.
8. Food delivery servicing companies should ensure and prioritize timely delivery because it will enhance customer delight.

## References

1. Adithya, R., Singh, A., Pathan, S., & Kanade, V. (2017). Online Food Ordering System. *International Journal of Computer Applications*, 180(6), 22-24. <https://doi.org/10.5120/IJCA2017916046>
2. Al Busaidi, K., Al Hamhami, R., Al-Mudhaffar, T. & Al Hinai, M. (2021). Exploring Restaurant Owners Acceptance of Online-Food Delivery Apps in Oman During Covid-19 Pandemic. *International Journal of Innovation in Computational Science and Engineering*, 2(1), 68-75. <https://journalapp.utas.edu.au/pages/volume/2/?article=9>
3. Annaraud, K., & Berezina, K. (2020). Predicting satisfaction and intentions to use online food delivery: What really makes a difference? *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 23(4), 305–323. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15378020.2020.1768039>

4. Ashok, R. (2020, Jul. 21). *COVID-19: Online food delivery services booming in Oman*. *Gulf News*. <https://gulfnews.com/world/gulf/oman/covid-19-online-food-delivery-services-booming-in-oman-1.72719072>
5. Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods*. (4th ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
6. Cavusoglu, M. (2019). An analysis of technology applications in the restaurant industry. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, 10(1), 45-72. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTT-12-2017-0141>
7. Chai, L. T., & Yat, D.N.C. (2019). Online food delivery services: Making food delivery the new normal. *Journal of Marketing Advances and Practices*, 1(1), 62-77. <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Teck-Chai-Lau-2/publication/334050513>
8. Chandrasekhar, N., Gupta, S., & Nanda, N. (2019). Food delivery services and customer preference: A comparative analysis. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 22(4), 375-386. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15378020.2019.1626208>
9. Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
10. Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use, and User Acceptance of Information Technology. *MIS Quarterly*, 13(3), 319–340. <https://doi.org/10.2307/249008>
11. Dospinescu, N., Dospinescu, O., & Tatarusanu, M. (2020). Analysis of the Influence Factors on the Reputation of Food Delivery Companies: Evidence from Romania. *Sustainability*, 12(10), 4142. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12104142>
12. Ebu, Y. (2020, Mar. 24). COVID-19: your next food delivery can be contactless. *Oman Daily Observer*. <https://www.omanobserver.om/article/14400/CORONAVIRUS/covid-19-your-next-food-delivery-can-be-contactless>
13. ECDB (2024). eCommerce revenue development in the Food market in Oman. Market Development. <https://ecommercedb.com/markets/om/food>
14. Els, S. (2024, Jul. 5). *Robotic food delivery: The next big thing in convenience*. *Technology, Locate2U, Business News*. <https://www.locate2u.com/technology/robotic-food-delivery-the-next-big-thing-in-convenience/>
15. Francioni, B., Curina, I., Hegner, S. M., & Cioppi, M. (2022). Predictors of continuance intention of online food delivery services: Gender as moderator. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 50(12), 1437–1457. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJRDM-11-2021-0537>
16. Ganapathi, P. & Abu-Shanab, E. A. (2020). Customer Satisfaction with Online Food Ordering Portals in Qatar, *International Journal of E-Services and Mobile Applications*, 12(1), 57-79. <https://doi.org/10.4018/IJESMA.2020010104>
17. Hong, C., Choi, H. H., Choi, E.K.C., & Joung, H.W.D. (2021). Factors affecting customer intention to use online food delivery services before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 48, 509-518. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2021.08.012>
18. Jun, K., Yoon, B., Lee, S., & Lee, D. S. (2021). Factors Influencing Customer Decisions to Use Online Food Delivery Services during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Foods*, 11(1), 64. <https://doi.org/10.3390/foods11010064>
19. Kedah, Z., Ismail, Y., Haque, A., & Ahmed, S. (2015). Key success factors of online food ordering services: An empirical study. *Malaysian Management Review*, 50(2), 19-36. <http://ur.aeu.edu.my/529/1/Key%20Success%20Factors%20of%20Online%20Food%20Ordering%20Services-2-19.pdf>
20. Khan, G. A. (2024, Apr. 21). Talabat: Shaping the future of food delivery in Oman. INTERVIEW: Oman's Most Trusted Brand – Talabat. <https://www.muscatdaily.com/2024/04/21/talabat-shaping-the-future-of-food-delivery-in-oman/>
21. Koay, K. Y., Cheah, C. W., & Chang, Y. X. (2022). A model of online food delivery service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty: A combination of PLS-SEM and NCA approaches. *British Food Journal*, 124(12), 4516–4532. <https://doi.org/10.1108/BFJ-10-2021-1169>
22. Kothari, C.R. (2004). *Research Methodology, 2nd Edition*, New Delhi: New Age International Publishers.
23. Kumar, S. S., Al Tamimi, H., Al Handhali, M., Al Khanjari, A., Al Rawas, A., & Al Jahdhami, M. (2022). An analysis of the Customer Satisfaction Level of the Online Food Delivery Services in Muscat during the Pandemic situation. *Journal of Research in Business and Management*, 10(10), 36-45. <https://www.questjournals.org/jrbm/papers/vol10-issue10/10103645.pdf>

24. Kumar, S., & Shah, A. (2021). Revisiting food delivery apps during COVID-19 pandemic? Investigating the role of emotions. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 62, 102595. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2021.102595>
25. Kumari, V. K. (2019). An Impact of Customer Behaviour Towards Online Food Services. *International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering*, 8(1), 497-499. <https://www.ijrte.org/portfolio-item/a10820581c219/>
26. Mehroliya, S., Alagarsamy, S., & Solaikutty, V. M. (2020). Customers response to online food delivery services during COVID-19 outbreak using binary logistic regression. *International journal of consumer studies*, 45(3), 396-408. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12630>
27. Mukherjee, S. P. (2019). *A Guide to Research Methodology: An Overview of Research Problems, Tasks and Methods*. CRC Press, Boca Raton, New York. <https://doi.org/10.1201/9780429289095>
28. Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V., & Malhotra, A. (2004). E-S-Qual: A Multiple-Item Scale for Assessing Electronic Service Quality. *Journal of Service Research*, 7(3), 213-233. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094670504271156>
29. Petrescu, D. C., Vermeir, I., Burny, P., & Petrescu-Mag, R. M. (2022). Consumer evaluation of food quality and the role of environmental cues. A comprehensive cross-country study. *European Research on Management and Business Economics*, 28(2), 100178. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iemeen.2021.100178>
30. Pigatto, G., Machado, J.G.D.C.F., Negreti, A.D.S., & Machado, L. M. (2017). Have you chosen your request? Analysis of online food delivery companies in Brazil. *British Food Journal*, 119(3), 639-657. <https://doi.org/10.1108/BFJ-05-2016-0207>
31. Pillai, S. G., Kim, W. G., Haldorai, K., & Kim, H. S. (2022). Online food delivery services and consumers' purchase intention: integration of theory of planned behaviour, theory of perceived risk, and the elaboration likelihood model. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 105, 103275. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2022.103275>
32. Rajesh, R. (2019). Evaluating Customer Satisfaction of Online Consumers in Chennai Area. *International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews*, 6(2), 81-89. [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Rupali-Rajesh/publication/334291055\\_Evaluating\\_Customer\\_Satisfaction\\_of\\_Online\\_Consumer\\_in\\_Chennai\\_Area/links/5d231e3892851cf4406f5662/Evaluating-Customer-Satisfaction-of-Online-Consumer-in-Chennai-Area.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Rupali-Rajesh/publication/334291055_Evaluating_Customer_Satisfaction_of_Online_Consumer_in_Chennai_Area/links/5d231e3892851cf4406f5662/Evaluating-Customer-Satisfaction-of-Online-Consumer-in-Chennai-Area.pdf)
33. Ray, A., Dhir, A., Bala, P. K., & Kaur, P. (2019). Why do people use food delivery apps (FDA)? A uses and gratification theory perspective. A Uses and Gratification Perspective. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 51, 221-230. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2019.05.025>
34. Rita, P., Oliveira, T., & Farisa, A. (2019). The impact of e-service quality and customer satisfaction on customer behaviour in online shopping. *Heliyon*, 5(10), e02690. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2019.e02690>
35. Saad, A. T. (2021). Factors affecting online food delivery service in Bangladesh: an empirical study. *British Food Journal*, 123(2), 535-550. <https://doi.org/10.1108/BFJ-05-2020-0449>
36. Sahni, S. & Mohsin, F. (2017). Factors Influencing the Selection of Fine Dining Restaurant in Delhi and NCR: An Empirical Study. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, 1(4), 16-22. <https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/55867614/16-22-libre.pdf?1519268284>
37. Salunkhe, S., Udgir, S., & Petkar, S. (2018). Technology Acceptance Model in Context with Online Food Ordering and Delivery Services: An Extended Conceptual Framework. *Journal of Management*, 5(5), 73-79. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.31138.27849>
38. Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2019). *Research methods for business students* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Harlow, Essex: Pearson Education.
39. Shroff, A., & Shah, B.J. & Gajjar, H. (2022). Online food delivery research: a systematic literature review. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 34(8), 2852-2883. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-10-2021-1273>
40. Singh, M., & Kaur, D. (2020). A Study of Customer Perception Towards Online Food Delivery with respect to Age and Gender. *Asian Journal of Management*, 11(3), 334-338. <https://doi.org/10.5958/2321-5763.2020.00052.9>
41. Statista (2024). Online Food Delivery - Oman. Market Insights, eCommerce, Statista. <https://www.statista.com/outlook/emo/online-food-delivery/oman>
42. Suhartanto, D., Ali, M. H., Tan, K. H., Sjahroeddin, F. & Kusdibyo, L. (2018). Loyalty toward online food delivery service: the role of e-service quality and food quality. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research*, 22(1), 81-97. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15378020.2018.1546076>
43. Teddlie, C., & Yu, F. (2007). Mixed methods sampling: A typology with examples. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(1), 77-100. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689806292430>



44. Yapp, E. H. T., & Kataraiian, S. (2022). Key Determinants of Continuance Usage Intention: An Empirical Study of Mobile Food Delivery Apps among Malaysians. *Proceedings 2022*, 82(1), 15. <https://doi.org/10.3390/proceedings2022082015>
45. Yeo, V.C.S., Goh, S.K., Rezaei, S. (2017). Consumer experiences, attitude, and behavioral intention toward online food delivery (OFD) services. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 35(10), 150-162. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2016.12.013>
46. Yusra & Agus, A. (2019). The Influence of Online Food Delivery Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction and Customer Loyalty: The Role of Personal Innovativeness. *Journal of Environmental Treatment Techniques*, 8(1), 6-12. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339551642>
47. Zhong, Y., & Moon, H. C. (2020). What drives customer satisfaction, loyalty, and happiness in fast-food restaurants in China? Perceived price, service quality, food quality, physical environment quality, and the moderating role of gender. *Foods*, 9(4), 460. <https://doi.org/10.3390/foods9040460>