THE INFLUENCE OF PEER REVIEWS AND RATINGS ON GEN Z'S FOOD ORDERING DECISIONS OF ZOMATO IN BHOPAL

Insha Mirza[1], Dr. Rasmeet Kaur Malhi[2]

[1]Faculty, Department of Commerce, Institute for Excellence in Higher Education, Bhopal, India.

[2]Associate Professor, Department of Management, The Bhopal School of Social Sciences, Bhopal.

Abstract: In this study we investigate how peer reviews and ratings affect the food ordering decisions of Generation Z (GenZ) in Bhopal considering Zomato Food delivery app. As most Generation Z turn to an online platform for dinner ideas, the study seeks to determine how much influence peer reviews and ratings have on Gen Z behaviour on the app. The study utilizes a mixed-methods approach to combine quantitative data employing 96 surveyed respondents with qualitative insights derived from open-ended questions. According to the report, peer reviews influence food ordering behavior substantially and with more than 75% of those surveyed changing their order based on a poor review. To test this hypothesis, chi-square test was applied to the data collected and results show strong relationship between reviews and consumers behavior. The results highlight how essential it is for a restaurant to keep its online reputation intact if it hopes to appeal the digitally connected breadwinner. In addition, the study offers a clear insight of digital engagement and consumer behaviours in Bhopal for Gen Z & how important is reliable reviews/ rating which will impact their dining experience. The study recommends that a restaurant owner should focus on its quality improvement and customers satisfaction, at the same time control over guest reviews to gain maximum benefit of peer customer influence.

Keywords- Zomato, Generation Z, Peer reviews, Food ordering.

INTRODUCTION

In Bhopal, the changing food habits of Generation Z are characterized by an increasing demand for convenience and variety with a growing digital preference towards ordering. This generation ranges from late 1990s to early 2010s and are incredibly tech-savvy usually being glued to smartphones as a means of navigating through the web, this is no different for ordering food. In Bhopal upsurging city rich in its cultural heritage and illustrious lifestyle, a more significant population of Gen-Z is making market dynamics leading to newly born demands as per the preferences brought by their own behavior.

The food delivery app Zomato has created a history in Bhopal and it is changing the way people order as well consume their foods. Zomato is a food discovery website that acts as know-all guide for diners to make an informed decision based on whatever type of restaurants they are looking at. The India-based startup was founded in 2008 and offer services including browsing through menus, user reviews etc., which help them

place their orders with the nearby restaurant or take away outlet easily. The customer-friendly app has a real-time tracking feature along with extensive collection points and payment options, which is why it has become the favourite of Bhopal's youth. Food delivery apps are a crucial part of Gen Z culture, the ability to get different kinds of cuisine delivered directly to their front door.

Food delivery apps Zomato in Bhopal are growing at steady rate with more and more restaurant now coming toward making their presence over these platforms to tap customer base area, want u order then they deliver it easy as that. These apps are considered Bring to deliverer app in the market because of its ability from city dynamic and most fast Gen Z population is accessing everything faster, so why not ordering foods. The study areas to explore how reviews and ratings on Zomato by peer's influence Gen Z for food ordering in Bhopal leading the light towards their digital engagement & consumer behavior patterns.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To investigate the features and promotional strategies of the Zomato food delivery app.

2. To understand Gen Z's food ordering habits when ordering food through Zomato.

3. To quantitatively evaluate the influence of peer reviews and ratings on the food ordering preferences of Generation Z (Gen-Z) on Zomato in the Bhopal area.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

H_0- Peer reviews and ratings does not influence food ordering choices of Gen Z while ordering food from 'Zomato'.

H_1- Peer reviews and ratings influence food ordering choices of Gen Z while ordering food from 'Zomato'.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A mixed-methods approach will be used in the process, combining primary and secondary data sources with both quantitative and qualitative data gathering techniques.

Primary Data

- **Questionnaire:** Google Forms will be used to create a self-administered questionnaire. About ten closed- and open-ended questions will make up the questionnaire, which will collect information on the following topics both quantitatively and qualitatively
- **Sampling:** A convenient sampling strategy will be used. The survey will be distributed via Bhopal's Gen Z student population's regular usage of university networks and social media sites. A total of 96 responses were received.
- **Data Analysis:** Chi-Square test was used for testing the hypothesis.

Secondary Data

• **Academic literature**: Relevant research articles and academic publications will be examined to determine how online reviews and ratings affect customer behavior, especially when it comes to online meal ordering platforms.

• **The Zomato website and app**: Data on the platform's review and rating system, together with the user demographics of reviewers in Bhopal (where accessible), will be gathered.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In India, restaurants face high real estate costs and food prices as operators struggle to find new sites while contending with competition for skilled labor and customer acquisition. Leveraging these reviews, and other machine learning models such as SVM can help restaurants understand its customer sentiments - allowing them to identify the areas which will make their products / services better based on regular feedback (implicit requirements) given by the customers (Deepak Abhang, Deepak Bailurkar, Shailesh Save, Dilip Ingale, & Yashwant Patekar, 2023).

In contemporary dining where consumers have moved away from food consumption to a holistic experience with multiple aspects restaurants are reviewed as an opinion source on driving customer choice. Our study demonstrates even one favorable online review per restaurant a month can lead to an increase of 5-9% in the number of customers - indicating just how vital establishing and maintaining your business's positive reputation is. The paper highlights the importance for restaurants of monitoring and answering reviews in Zomato or other similar platforms to contribute overall attractiveness by potential customers (Vajjhala & Ghosh, 2021). India's Online Food Ordering Market is growing with increasing internet penetration and rise in smartphone users being largest causes behind the growth of market. Market Position of various online food delivery services via Perceptual Mapping (Greater Noida Users) was done. The study reinforces the increasing trend and public acceptance of ordering food digitally, while highlighting how convenience along with trust amongst other desires factors into shaping future consumer views in this evolving market. The results indicate an increasing market that has a lot of room to continue developing especially as consumers demand more effective and dependable approaches to their needs (Srivastava, Malhotra, Bhatt, & Srivastava, 2021).

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Distribution of Gender

Female
Male
Prefer not to say

27.1%
2.08%
70.8%
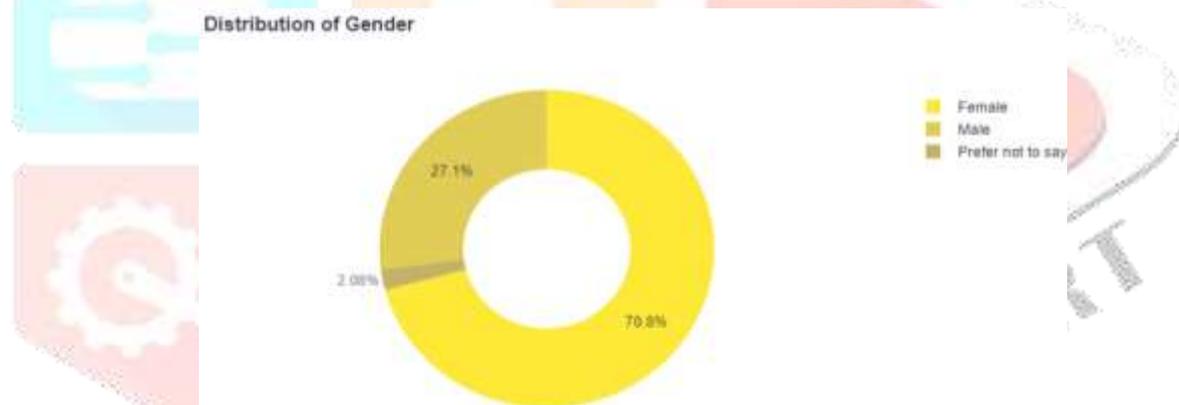
The percentage of respondents who identified as female was 78%. This means that there were a lot of young ladies in the sample. Men made up the second largest category after women, yet the proportion of men among respondents was 27.1%. Bhopal's female Gen Z customers would be more represented in the study's results, according to the gender breakdown. According to the substantial bias in favor of female respondents, food delivery applications and comparable surveys appear to be more popular among young women.

Distribution of Age-

2003 - 2007
1997 - 2002
2008 - 2012

38.5%
53.1%
8.33%
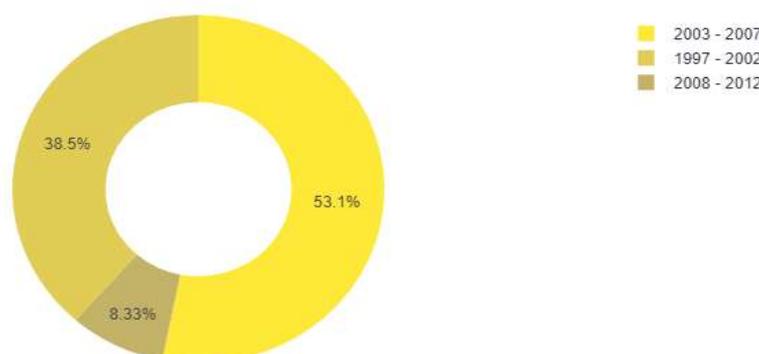
This age distribution may provide the following insights: Since over 90% of participants were 21 years of age or younger, the survey mostly covers the viewpoints of younger members of Generation Z. Strong presence of teens and very young adults is in line with Generation Z's overall demographics. Given the underrepresentation of the younger Gen Z group (ages 22 to 27), it may be more challenging to forecast how their eating preferences will change when they become adults and enter the workforce. The study's inclusion of the 2008–2012 group implies that preteens and early adolescents are covered, which may offer fresh insights into the ways in which resource constraints and parental supervision affect food ordering behaviors.

Distribution of In your opinion, how reliable are peer reviews and ratings on Zomato?
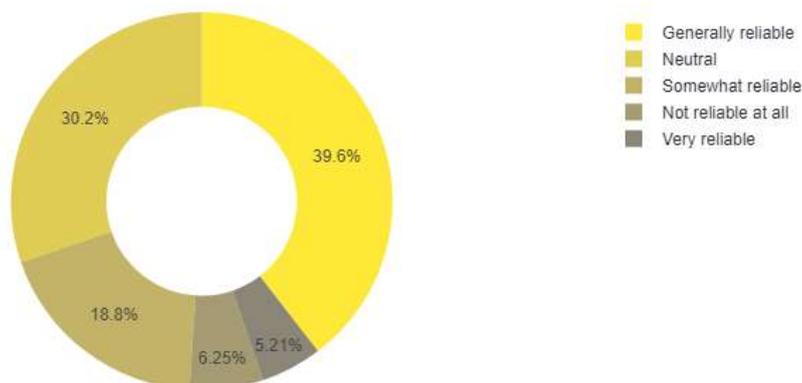
Overall, 44.81% of responses are good, with respondents rating their reliability as "generally reliable" and "very reliable." Only 6.25% of those surveyed feel that the information is "not reliable at all." Many users are unsure or unable to identify, as seen by the large neutral group (30.2%) who perceive both dependability and unreliability. Combining the somewhat, typically, and extremely dependable categories reveals that most respondents (63.69%) believe the reviews to be at least somewhat reliable.

This distribution indicates that the general inclination to accept Zomato reviews is accompanied with a discernible degree of neutrality or skepticism. Zomato ratings seem to be quite accurate, yet a significant percentage of users have concerns or limitations regarding them, based on the data.

How much weight do you give to the average star rating of a restaurant on Zomato when making an order decision?


Distribution of How much weight do you give to the average star rating of a restaurant on Zomato when making an order decision?
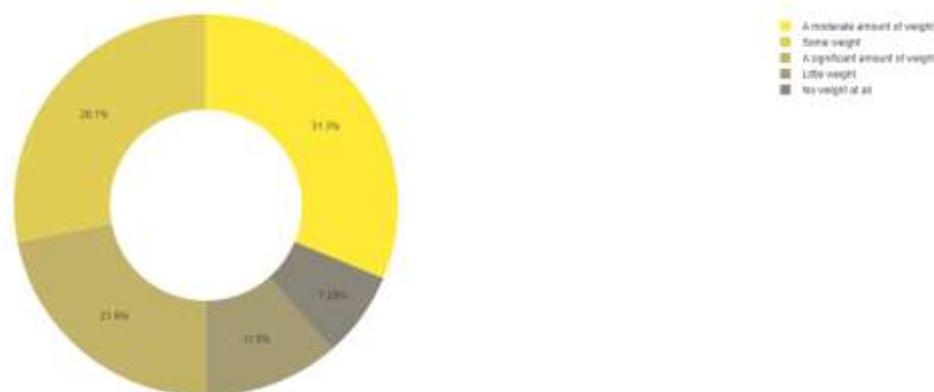
Of the respondents, just 18.79% assign the star ratings little or no weight. Most users (53.2%) assign the ratings a moderate or considerable weight.

This distribution implies that consumers' decision-making while placing restaurant orders is significantly influenced by Zomato's star ratings. The data unequivocally demonstrates that most users consider these assessments to some extent, notwithstanding individual differences in the weight individuals give them. This emphasizes how crucial it is to keep restaurants' ratings high on the platform and how user reviews affect the decisions of prospective clients.

Distribution of How often do you order food online using Zomato in Bhopal?
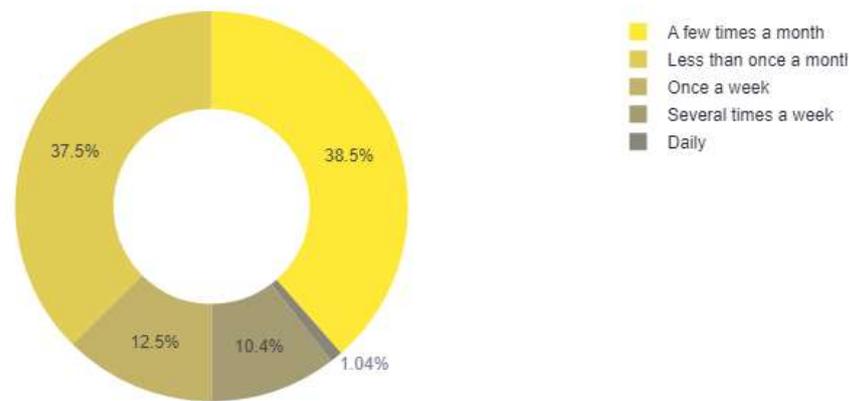
Of the customers, 76% place an order once a month or less often. With at least one use per week, 23.94% of the respondents consider themselves regular users. Only 11.44% of people use the site frequently (daily or frequently in a week).

According to research, Zomato is a well-liked meal delivery service in Bhopal, although most consumers don't use it frequently—that is, not every day or quite often. A moderate level of acceptance and usage is indicated by the statistics, which shows a larger base of infrequent users and a smaller core of very frequent users. Restaurants in Bhopal looking to get the most out of Zomato's platform visibility may find this information helpful for their marketing strategies.

**Have you ever changed your mind about ordering from a restaurant based on negative reviews or ratings on Zomato?**

According to 78.1% of respondents, "Yes" meant they had reconsidered placing an order from a restaurant because of unfavorable Zomato evaluations or ratings. 21.9% of respondents gave the "No" response, indicating that they haven't changed their minds in response to criticism. More than 75% of respondents were influenced by unfavorable reviews on Zomato, demonstrating the evident impact of such feedback on customer behavior. This data highlights the significance of a restaurant's online reputation and amply illustrates the influence that internet reviews have on dining decisions.

In conclusion, the data depicts that a sizable majority of users consider unfavorable Zomato reviews when choosing where to eat, demonstrating the platform's important influence on patron behavior in the restaurant sector.

Distribution of Do you read specific comments or reviews left by other users before placing an order?
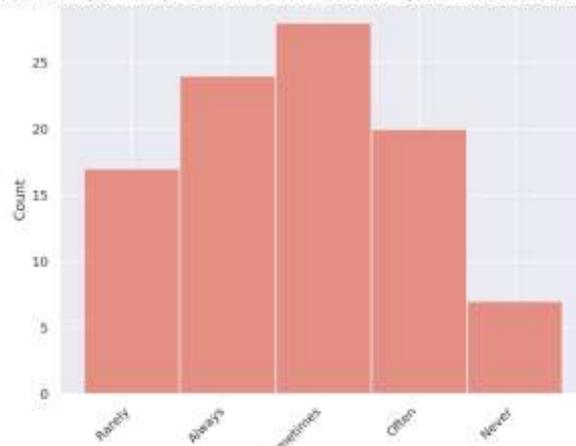
Do you read specific comments or reviews left by other users before placing an order?

The most frequent answer is "sometimes" (20). The ads for "Often" (15), "Rarely" (10), "Never" (5), and "Always" (5) come next. Therefore, most participants i.e., 35 respondents said they "Sometimes" or "Often" look up comments or reviews left by past clients before making a purchase. This suggests that a significant majority of the respondents respected online reviews, even though they were not always the determining factor in their decision-making process.

Distribution of When considering a new restaurant on Zomato, how important are peer reviews in your decision to order food from there?
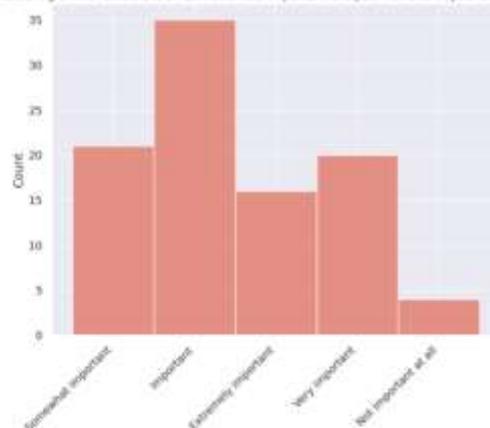
When considering a new restaurant on Zomato, how important are peer reviews in your decision to order food from there?

Peer reviews are of some significance by most participants. Slightly less than 4%, or 4 out of 96 respondents, claim to be totally irrelevant. Of course, the middle-range options are better. More than half of the responses are categorized as "Important" or "Somewhat important." There is an excess of both "Very important" and "Extremely important." This suggests individuals may not rely exclusively on peer reviews, even though they are useful.

Peer ratings are not the only thing that influences a Zomato user's decision when making an order at a new restaurant, but most of them do believe that they play a big part.

What type of information from peer reviews and ratings do you find most helpful in making your decision? (Select all that apply)
96 responses
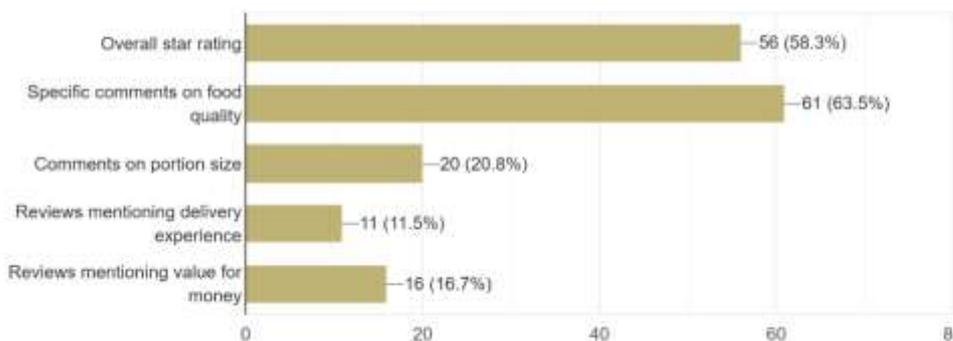
Specific comments on food quality are the most valuable information, as viewed by 63.5% of respondents. However, 58.3% of respondents believe that overall star ratings are helpful. This implies that consumers highly value concise, objective reviews and quantitative assessments of food. Examples of secondary considerations are value for money (16.7%), delivery experience (11.5%), and portion size (20.8%), demonstrating that while these are significant, they are not as significant when making judgments. Customers typically consider a range of review elements when choosing restaurants, as seen by the abundance of options available to them.

Our multimodal approach to review interpretation demonstrates that users demand precise and comprehensive information to assist them in making informed eating decisions. It highlights the important aspects of eating out while heavily emphasizing the standard of the meal and overall ratings.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

The hypothesis testing is done by chi-square distribution
The sample is multiplied by 5 to draw more accurate results.
So, the sample size is N= 480.
Chi-square: - $\sum (O_i - E_i)^2 / E_i$

Table for Observed Frequency- O_i

PARTICULARS	Peer reviews and ratings (A)	No Peer reviews and Ratings (a)	OBSERVED FREQUENCY (O_i)
Influence on Food Ordering choices of Gen Z (B)	AB = 360	Ab = 40	B = 400
Does not Influence on Food Ordering choices of Gen Z (b)	Ab = 30	Ab = 50	b = 80
TOTAL	A = 390	a = 90	N = 480

Table for Expected Frequency- E_i

PARTICULARS	Peer reviews and ratings (A)	No Peer reviews and Ratings (a)	EXPECTED FREQUENCY (O_i)
Influence on Food Ordering choices of Gen Z (B)	AB = 325	Ab = 75	B = 400
Does not Influence on Food Ordering choices of Gen Z (b)	Ab = 65	Ab = 15	b = 80
TOTAL	A = 390	a = 90	N = 480

Degree of Freedom = (2-1) * (2-1) = 1

The table value of chi-square at the degree of freedom 1 and 5% level of significance is 3.841, whereas the computed value is 120.59 which is larger than the tabulated value.

Thus, 120.59 > 3.841

Therefore, we reject our null hypothesis (H$_0$) and accept our alternate hypothesis (H$_1$).

This research illustrates the significance of internet reviews and ratings in shaping young consumers' food ordering behaviours. To attract and retain Gen Z customers, it underscores the importance of eateries continuing to receive positive reviews and top ratings on platforms like Zomato. These statistics show that there is a major emphasis on peer feedback causing an impact upon the dietary decision of generation Z, and suggesting to us how much they appreciate what other users did or went through.

CONCLUSION

The study significantly highlights the fact that how much Gen Z's meal ordering decisions are influenced by ratings and peer reviews. If they saw a negative review, over 75% of respondents said they would reconsider their order. Many users rely on Zomato reviews, and their statistics influence their food ordering choices. Even though fewer people use reviews overall than some other features, those who do use them rely on this information when choosing where to eat using it as a reference slightly more frequently than general listing details or photos and for that reason, restaurants that want to stay in a favourable position online need to pay attention to their reviews. Although individuals do value comments about both excellent and terrible food quality, the research also emphasizes the significance of third-party delivery apps since these evaluations have a greater influence on customer decision making than feedback. The study's findings imply that peers have an impact on consumers' opinions and decisions, underscoring the necessity for restaurateurs to concentrate on offering high-quality food and services to receive favourable online evaluations and ratings.

End Notes on Response Rates for Surveys

Based on the survey response rates, female and-younger Gen Z users are engaging with Bhopal. These results demonstrate a significant impact from peer reviews and ratings on food ordering decisions, particularly when star ratings based upon the menu items ordered as well as specific customer comments around polite staff were deeply appreciated. The quite low usage of Zomato in a week indicates that there may be high base users and underuse regular users. This high level of negative ratings goes to show that as a restaurant on Zomato, it is very critical to have good positive online reviews. Altogether the response rates offer us a sound knowledge about variables for food orders in Gen Z of Bhopal.

SUGGESTIONS

1. **Strengthen the Review Process-**
   By encouraging real reviews from customers, restaurants should focus on the variety and accuracy of their evaluation process. The review process can be strengthen by applying validating procedures and offering some discounts and coupons for genuine reviews.

2. **Enhance the Client Experience-**
   To ensure that you receive any feedback, focus on consistently serving high-quality food and service. One strategy to address this and raise perfect score ratings would be to move swiftly to provide a positive response to criticism.

3. **Interact with Clients-**
   Zomato Keep an eye on Zomato reviews and reply to them to show that you value their opinions. All of it increases client loyalty and pleasure, to put it briefly.

4. **Encourage transparency-**
   Additionally, restaurants may evaluate the food's quality, portion sizes, and financial worth. Better Decisions & A Better Customer Experience: Detailed and unambiguous information not only helps consumers spot mistakes in their decisions, but it also greatly enhances their whole experience.

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