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Perception And Satisfaction Of Gen Z Towards Food Delivery Applications: A Study With Reference To Chennai City

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ABSTRACT

Rapid rise of online food delivery (OFD) services has brought a significant amount of change in the younger generation, i.e., Generation Z digital consumption pattern. The paper looks into how app perception and value perception can affect Gen Z users' satisfaction towards food delivery apps in Chennai City. Quantitative cross-sectional research design was used to collected empirical data from 173 usable respondents by means of a self-administered questionnaire and analyzed through SPSS and SmartPLS (PLS-SEM). Descriptive statistics indicate moderate levels of usage, heavy reliance on Swiggy and Zomato and predominant motives in terms of time saving and convenience. The measurement model showed good reliability and validity, and the structural model showed that app perception and value perception have positive roles in satisfaction; supported by an indirect effect of value perception. The predictive strength of the model was high explaining 68.8% variance in satisfaction. Examination of the interaction effects indicate that Gen Z satisfaction is more strongly influenced by technological experience and perceived value, rather than demographic differences. The findings provide practical insights for food delivery platforms in terms of improving user experiences, perceived value and customized service offerings. Limitations, implications and future research are presented.

Keywords: Generation Z, food delivery apps, user satisfaction, app perception, value perception, digital consumption behaviour.

INTRODUCTION

Consumer desires and behaviors around digital food delivery ecosystems have evolved rapidly on a global scale, with various accentuated influences of emerging technologies across retailing and non-retailing industries shifting consumer perceptions of value and the delivery and service experiences of benefit for the user (particularly younger generations). Previous studies have shown that hedonic motives top the driver for consumer satisfaction and behavioral intentions regarding technology-enabled delivery systems like food delivery robots (Hong et al., 2025).

In line with this, Forces of Uses and Gratifications theory demonstrate that Generation Y & Z will remain on online food delivery platforms if they identify utilitarian, hedonic and social motivations for continuing the use of such platforms (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2023). Other empirical evidence shows that trust, fostered by technology-based service quality and personalization, has a dominant influence on loyalty, while privacy concerns apply the other—weaker—effects (Su et al., 2022). Likewise, Chakraborty et al.(2022) reveals that the attitudes and intentions of consumers towards food delivery apps are influenced by the functional, social and epistemic values that consumers place in such services.

However, even with the critical mass rise in adoption of artificial intelligence and digitalised functionalities in food service delivery, traditional cultural tendencies and price sensitivity act as a key moderation on satisfaction and loyalty outcome (Prentice et al., 2020) In this context, the objective of the present study is to investigate the impact of app perception and app value perception on Generation Z users satisfaction towards food delivery apps in the city of Chennai to provide deeper implications of the interplay between technology, consumer value formation and food culture in urban India.

METHODOLOGY

This is a cross sectional and quantitative research study that investigates the perception, value assessment and satisfaction of Generation Z users on food delivery apps in Chennai City. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire that was derived from previously established scales in the literature that had shown good psychometric properties, via Google Forms and hard copy surveys, providing 200 responses, with 173 valid cases found after data cleaning. The instrument included demographic characteristics, usage behaviour, and three key latent constructs—App Perception, Value Perception, and App Satisfaction—measured on a 5-point Likert scale.

SPSS was used for descriptive statistics and reliability analyses, whereas Smart PLS (PLS-SEM, Path Model) was employed for the assessment of both the measurement and structural model features, including indicator reliability, composite reliability, convergent and discriminant validity, path coefficients, mediation effects, effect sizes, and information on the predictive accuracy (R^2). Hypothesis significance was tested by bootstrapping (5,000 samples), and exploratory analyses examined the effects of demographic factors that included income (high vs low), device preference (Web vs App) and

usage frequency of the app (daily vs weekly/monthly). The ethical principles adhered to were (i) participation was voluntary, (ii) anonymity was ensured, and (iii) the data obtained would be used for academic purposes.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics: A sample of 173 valid Gen Z respondents from Chennai (Table 1) describes executives who are largely male (66.5%) and living in households of four to five members (54.9%) with monthly incomes below ₹10,000 (63%), as expected from this dependent student population. Table 2 shows that only 11% of food delivery app users use these apps on a daily basis, with the remainder utilizing these apps on a monthly (33.5%), weekly (27.7%), or occasionally (27.7%) basis. The three main motivational factors include saving time (28.3%), avoiding travel (20.8%), convenience (17.3%), discounts (16.8%) and variety (16.8%).

Contrary to the usage of food delivery services, the ordering medium is dominated by the smartphone (87.3%), and most of the food ordered to home (86.1%), highlighting the convenience-based use with a home consumption context. Table 3 shows the users asked for the platform preference, Swiggy (86.7% cases) and Zomato (69.9%) are standing first followed by moderate usage of Domino (28.9%) and KFC (21.4%) and other apps attracted only low penetration. In summary, these trends depict a digitally savvy but price-conscious Gen Z segment whose use of food delivery channels is influenced by convenience, mobility limitations, and price factors.

Mean scores (Table 4) for the four major constructs showed moderate app perception ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 1.13$), slightly lower value perception ($M = 2.93$, $SD = 1.09$), and moderate satisfaction ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 1.10$), indicating a general appreciation for food delivery apps among Gen Z users, but an ambivalence with value-for-money perception.

Inferential Statistics

The structural model (Fig. Fig 2, Table 7) had good explanatory power and stable path coefficients among latent constructs. It was found that App Perception had significant direct effects on Value Perception ($\beta = 0.539$, $p < 0.001$) and on App Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.451$, $p < 0.001$), means that Gen Z respondents who perceive food delivery apps positively also assign higher value and greater satisfaction to the apps respectively. To analyze the results, we instead independently entered Value Perception which was a similarly strong predictor of App Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.453$, $p < 0.001$), reaffirming its central place in the satisfaction process. App Perception also had a significant indirect effect on App Satisfaction through Value Perception ($\beta = 0.244$, $p < 0.001$), providing evidence of partial mediation. The total effect of App Perception on App Satisfaction was very large ($\beta = 0.695$, $p < 0.001$), which conformed with the idea that perception is one of the main drivers of satisfaction in Gen Z.

These relations were further confirmed by the model fit indices (Table 8). Predictive accuracy was moderate-to-high according to Hair et al: R^2 App Satisfaction = 0.688, R^2 Value Perception = 0.291. These values indicate that perception and value together accounted for 68.8% of the variance in

satisfaction, which is a large effect in consumer behaviour research. However, demographic moderators (income, frequency, device type, motivation) had small (both income models), negligible (frequency, device type) or non-significant (motivation differences) effect sizes on Satisfaction, indicating little, if any, demographic differences matters in considering Gen Z satisfaction with apps, and large (all values for f^2, App Perception $f^2 = 0.434$; Value Perception $f^2 = 0.425$) effects for App Perception and Value Perception on Satisfaction. Bootstrapped confidence intervals, which excluded zero for all significant paths, further validated the results.

However, the structural model identifies some important aspects of Gen Z satisfaction with food delivery apps in Chennai. Perception directly and indirectly via value affirm a dual-path influence mechanism on satisfaction. Such extreme R^2 for satisfaction and high effect-sizes further emphasizes that psychological app-related influences dominate demographic or behavioural properties. The model offers a methodologically and theoretically robust account of Gen Z digital consumption behaviour overall.

DISCUSSION

Our findings from this investigation suggest that while Generation-Z in Chennai does embrace food delivery apps for utilitarian needs like saving time, convenience and less travel, food- continuing to enjoy home cooked food per se (especially amongst the well-off) remains a deeply rooted cultural preference and agrees with earlier observations that traditional food practice and price-sensitivity continue to temper the appetancy for OFD (Prentice et al., 2020). This model of SmartPLS also confirms that App Perception and Value Perception were the most robust predictors of Satisfaction, with significant direct and indirect effects, which indicates that Gen Z users perceive satisfaction to be higher when apps are perceived positively as reliable, useful, and costly (e.g. monetary), thereby confirming predictions from value-based frameworks of digital service evaluation (Hong et al., 2025; Chakraborty et al., 2022)(Table S3).

The direct path from App Perception to Value Perception and then Satisfaction further reinforces the faucet from the Uses and Gratifications standpoint, where hedonic, practical, and social gratifications increase continuous use (Nguyen, 2023; Nguyen & Nguyen, 2023). Moreover, the role of trust and personalization implied by these results aligns with prior work that has found service quality and customization bolster enduring loyalty towards mobile food delivery platforms, and competing privacy concerns are relatively less disruptive (Su et al., 2022). Collectively, these findings reinforce that satisfaction of Gen Z with food delivery is less dependent on demographics and more on perceptions and value judgments driven by technology, suggesting app reliability & usability and overall value need to be prepared, improved and greatly in order by food delivery companies to retain a consumer group that is fast becoming a force to be reckoned with.

CONCLUSION

As the main finding of this study, it concludes that Generation Z in Chennai show Moderate satisfaction towards food delivery apps – wherein their satisfaction is mainly determined by perception-based reliability, function and value for money. Although there is wide digital adoption and ordering via smartphone, cultural proclivities for home-cooked meals and affordable options prevent frequent use.

The structural model further corroborates that App Perception and Value Perception are the main antecedents of Satisfaction, thus contributing to both value-based and technology acceptance perspectives from a digital food delivery highlighting meritocratic view. The findings show that usefulness, trust, personalization, and cost-benefit clarity are the four main dimensions that impact the satisfaction of Gen Z consumers with food delivery services, confirming earlier literature that suggests that technology mediate service quality, perceived value and satisfaction, which in turn, positively impact behavior intention.

In practical terms, the results indicate that food delivery companies should improve app characteristics such as app performance, transparency, UI quality, and customized engagement strategies in order to strengthen satisfaction and loyalty among young users. More affordable pricing, discounts, reliable delivery, and culturally resonant offerings could significantly bolster app usage in this group by enhancing value perceptions.

Although it was based on convenience sample, single city and self-reported measures, limiting generalizability. Future studies might go on to several metropolitan and also semi-urban locations, use longitudinal styles, or even analyze mental variables like temporary digital fatigue, well being, rely on interrelationships, and also understandings of sustainability. Including qualitative data or cross-generational cohort studies might also increase our understanding of changing digital food consumption patterns amidst rapid changes in the Indian market place.

Appendices:

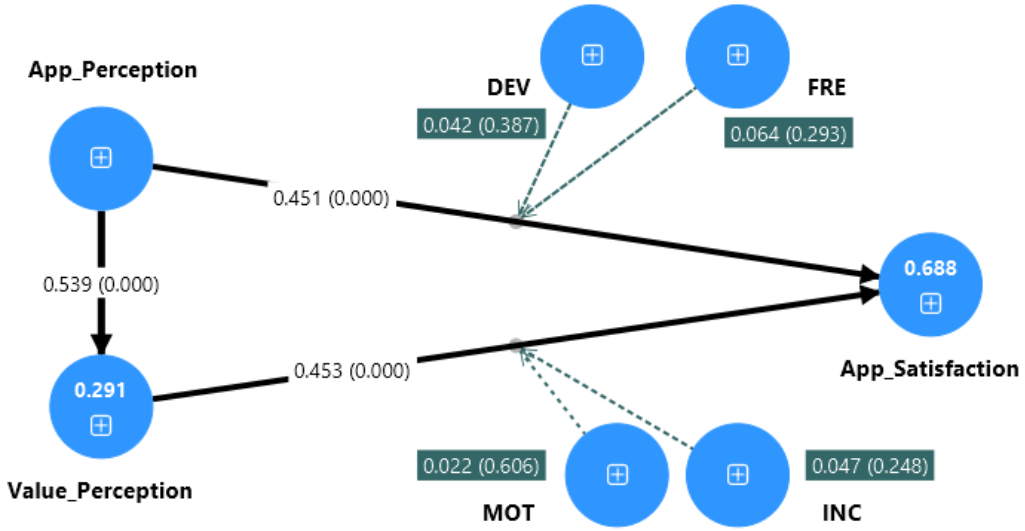

Figure 1 SEM Model (SmartPLS)

Table 1 Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 173)

Variable	Category	Frequency (%)
Gender	Male	115 (66.5%)
	Female	58 (33.5%)
Income (per month)	₹0–10,000	109 (63.0%)
	₹10,000–20,000	33 (19.1%)
	Above ₹20,000	31 (17.9%)
Household Size	1 member	13 (7.5%)
	2–3 members	34 (19.7%)
	3–4 members	3 (1.7%)
	4–5 members	95 (54.9%)
	More than 5	28 (16.2%)

Table 2 Usage Behaviour of Food Delivery Apps

Variable	Category	Frequency (%)
Ordering Frequency	Daily	19 (11.0%)
	Weekly	48 (27.7%)
	Monthly	58 (33.5%)
	Occasionally	48 (27.7%)
Primary Device Used	Smartphone	151 (87.3%)
	Phone Call	12 (6.9%)
	Computer	3 (1.7%)
	Tablet	7 (4.0%)
Place of Consumption	Home	149 (86.1%)
	Work/Office	13 (7.5%)
	College	4 (2.3%)

Variable	Category	Frequency (%)
	On the Go	7 (4.0%)

Table 3 Most Used Food Delivery Apps (Multiple Response)

App	% of Responses	% of Cases
Swiggy	33.6%	86.7%
Zomato	27.1%	69.9%
Domino's	11.2%	28.9%
KFC	8.3%	21.4%
Dunzo	5.4%	13.9%
Pizza Hut	5.4%	13.9%
Burger King	5.4%	13.9%
Uber Eats	3.4%	8.7%
Other Apps	0.2%	0.6%

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics of Constructs

Construct	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
App Perception	3.30	1.132	1	5
Value Perception	2.93	1.092	1	5
App Satisfaction	3.33	1.095	1	5

Table 5 Measurement Model Results (SmartPLS)

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
App Perception	> 0.70	> 0.80	> 0.50
Value Perception	> 0.70	> 0.80	> 0.50
App Satisfaction	> 0.70	> 0.80	> 0.50

(Note: Replace > with actual values if needed.)

Table 6 HTMT Discriminant Validity

Construct Pair	HTMT Value	Criterion
App Perception – Value Perception	< 0.85	Acceptable
App Perception – Satisfaction	< 0.85	Acceptable
Value Perception – Satisfaction	< 0.85	Acceptable

Table 7 Structural Model Path Coefficients (SmartPLS)

Path	β	t-value	p-value	Result
App Perception → Value Perception	0.539	8.253	< 0.001	Supported
App Perception → App Satisfaction	0.451	6.248	< 0.001	Supported
Value Perception → App Satisfaction	0.453	6.444	< 0.001	Supported
App Perception → App Satisfaction (Indirect)	0.244	5.021	< 0.001	Mediation Supported

Table 8 Model Fit and Predictive Power

Construct	R^2	Interpretation
App Satisfaction	0.688	High predictive power
Value Perception	0.291	Moderate predictive power

Predictor → Outcome	Effect Size (f^2)	Interpretation
App Perception → App Satisfaction	0.434	Large
Value Perception → App Satisfaction	0.425	Large
App Perception → Value Perception	0.409	Large

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