

**Exploring Consumer Perspectives on Food Delivery Platforms: Insights into  
Local and National Choices<sup>1</sup>**

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## Extended Abstract

Food delivery platforms (FDPs) are transforming the landscape of food consumption, revolutionizing how individuals purchase and access food. These platforms provide convenient access to a wide array of culinary options from local producers and restaurants, reshaping consumer behaviors and preferences on a global scale (Malhotra & Makwana, 2021; Teo et al., 2024). As the adoption of FDPs has grown, so too has the interest in local delivery platforms (LDPs), which promote connections between consumers and local food producers, offering a sustainable alternative to national FDPs (Banerjee & Quinn, 2020; Kim & Huang, 2021). This study explores the development, usage patterns, and consumer perspectives of FDPs, specifically focusing on LDPs, in the context of evolving consumer interest in sustainable and local food consumption.

The article employs a comprehensive mixed-methods approach to understand the multifaceted relationship between consumers and food delivery services. The qualitative phase involved ten in-depth interviews with a diverse group of consumers aged 23 to 61, encompassing various professions and living arrangements. Additionally, two focus groups were conducted with 11 university students to gain insights into the younger demographic's attitudes toward food delivery platforms. These discussions provided qualitative data on consumer preferences, usage behaviors, and perceptions of both national and local delivery services. Complementing the qualitative analysis, an online questionnaire was administered, gathering responses from 152 participants. The survey aimed to quantify consumer habits regarding food consumption and FDP usage.

The findings reveal a complex landscape of consumer behaviors and preferences for FDPs. Supermarkets emerged as the preferred source of groceries for most consumers, primarily due to the convenience they offer. Despite the widespread awareness and utilization of national FDPs, concerns about delivery reliability and food quality persist, which continue to influence consumer choices (Farah et al., 2021). Many participants expressed a preference for traditional purchasing methods over FDPs, driven by skepticism about the consistency and quality of the food delivered. This trend underscores the importance of reliability in shaping consumer satisfaction with FDPs. The COVID-19 pandemic played a pivotal role in accelerating the adoption of FDPs, as lockdowns and social distancing measures heightened the demand for contactless delivery options (Dominici et al., 2021; Francioni et al., 2022). The study found that the pandemic-induced surge in FDP usage has persisted beyond the immediate crisis, indicating a lasting integration of these services into daily routines (Guru et al., 2023; Jiang et al., 2023; Liu & Fu, 2023). However, perceptions of the pandemic's impact varied among consumers, with out-of-town students highlighting a greater reliance on delivery services due to their living arrangements rather than the pandemic itself.

In exploring consumer awareness and usage of LDPs, the study uncovered significant gaps. While there is a growing consumer interest in local and sustainable food options (Tregear & Ness, 2005; Memery et al., 2015), LDPs remain underutilized and relatively unknown compared to their national counterparts. This presents a critical opportunity for LDPs to enhance their market presence by better communicating their value proposition and addressing the service consistency issues identified by consumers. The

research highlights that although some consumers appreciate the local connection and fresh produce offered by LDPs, the overall lack of awareness and perceived reliability issues serve as major barriers to wider adoption.

Ethical and environmental considerations also surfaced as relevant factors in consumer decision-making. The working conditions of delivery riders and the environmental footprint of delivery services were recognized by many participants as important issues (Reich et al., 2018). Yet, these concerns were often overshadowed by the primary drivers of convenience and variety, especially among younger consumers with a lower level of concern for these ethical aspects. This points to a need for increased consumer education and advocacy to raise awareness about the broader impacts of food delivery services, potentially influencing more conscientious consumer choices.

The study's findings contribute to the evolving literature on FDPs by providing nuanced insights into consumer behaviors, preferences, and the challenges associated with the adoption of delivery platforms. It highlights the ongoing tension between the convenience offered by FDPs and the ethical and environmental implications that accompany their use. For FDPs, the key challenge lies in maintaining service reliability and food quality to foster consumer trust and loyalty. For LDPs, the challenge extends to enhancing visibility and consumer education to bridge the gap between growing interest in sustainable food consumption and the actual usage of local platforms.

The research suggests that both FDPs and LDPs can benefit from addressing these consumer concerns through improved service offerings and targeted marketing strategies. Enhancing delivery tracking systems, ensuring consistent food quality, and communicating the ethical practices associated with their operations could help platforms align more closely with consumer values around sustainability (Megicks et al., 2012). Additionally, the study underscores the potential for LDPs to capitalize on the increasing consumer preference for local products by differentiating themselves from national competitors based on these attributes (Banerjee & Quinn, 2020).

To sum up, the integration of FDPs into everyday life is set to continue, driven by the enduring appeal of convenience and the diverse food options they provide. However, the balance between convenience, reliability, and ethical considerations will play a crucial role in shaping the future of consumer engagement with these platforms. For LDPs, particularly, there is a significant opportunity to grow by tapping into the rising consumer demand for local and sustainable food options. By addressing the identified challenges and enhancing their market presence, LDPs could better position themselves as viable and attractive alternatives to national platforms, ultimately fostering a more sustainable and locally oriented food delivery ecosystem.

**Keywords:** Food Delivery Services; Local Delivery Platforms; Online Food Ordering; COVID-19 Pandemic; Sustainable Food Consumption; Local Food Consumption.

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