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The Impact of Importance of Online Platform Food Delivery Selection Attributes on Satisfaction and Repurchase Intention*

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Abstract

This qualitative study explores the impact of online food delivery platform attributes on customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions. Employing a phenomenological approach, we conducted in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with 15 participants to gain rich insights into user experiences. Thematic analysis revealed key factors influencing satisfaction and loyalty: service quality dimensions (efficiency, reliability, fulfillment, privacy), expectation disconfirmation, perceived usefulness and ease of use, multi-level customer value, relationship quality, electronic word-of-mouth, value co-creation, and phased loyalty formation. Our findings extend customer behavior theory in digital platforms, offering a comprehensive framework for understanding the complex mechanisms underlying user satisfaction and repurchase decisions. The study provides valuable implications for platform operators, highlighting the importance of exceeding customer expectations, enhancing user experience, building trust, leveraging user-generated content, and fostering co-creation processes. Methodologically, we demonstrate the efficacy of qualitative approaches in uncovering nuanced insights in digital service contexts. While acknowledging limitations in generalizability, this research establishes a solid foundation for future investigations into the rapidly evolving domain of online food delivery services. The integrated theoretical approach offers a robust model for analyzing customer behavior in emerging digital service environments, contributing significantly to both academic understanding and practical application in the field of digital service provision and platform management.

Keywords: Online Food Delivery Platforms, Customer Satisfaction, Repurchase Intention, Service Quality Attributes, Digital Consumer Behavior

Major Classification Code: M31, M39, L66

1. Introduction

The rapid growth of online platform-based food delivery services has emerged as a significant phenomenon in modern society. This explosive expansion can be attributed

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to various factors, including the changing lifestyles of busy urbanites, technological advancements, and the recent global pandemic situation. However, despite the sector's dramatic growth, there remains a lack of in-depth understanding of the specific factors influencing customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions.

This study aims to explore in depth the impact of key attributes of online food delivery platforms on customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions through qualitative research methods. Specifically, we seek to identify the service attributes that customers consider most important and analyze how these translate into overall satisfaction and repurchase decisions.

By adopting a qualitative research methodology, this study will provide a rich and contextualized understanding of customer experiences and perceptions. Through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, we aim to gain an insider's perspective on customers' decision-making processes, satisfaction evaluation criteria, and factors that promote repurchase behavior. This approach is expected to uncover complex customer behaviors and psychological factors that are often difficult to capture in conventional quantitative studies.

The findings of this research are anticipated to offer significant implications both academically and practically. From an academic standpoint, this study will extend customer behavior theory in the context of online platform-based services and provide new insights into the formation of customer satisfaction and loyalty in the food delivery service context. From a practical perspective, it will offer valuable guidelines for online food delivery platform operators in improving service quality and developing customer retention strategies.

Furthermore, by contributing to the understanding of consumer behavior changes in the rapidly evolving digital economy era, this study will aid in predicting and preparing for future developments in the online-based service industry. Ultimately, this research is expected to lay the groundwork for sustainable growth and customer-centric innovation in online food delivery services.

The literature review synthesizes current knowledge on online food delivery platforms, customer satisfaction theories, and repurchase behavior models. We critically examine seminal works and recent empirical studies, identifying key constructs and theoretical frameworks relevant to our research. Particular attention is given to the multi-dimensional nature of service quality in digital platforms, the role of customer expectations in shaping satisfaction, and the complex interplay between satisfaction and loyalty in the context of repeat purchase decisions.

Our methodological approach is grounded in the interpretivist paradigm, acknowledging the subjective and socially constructed nature of customer experiences. We

employ a multi-method qualitative design, combining in-depth phenomenological interviews with thematic focus group discussions. This approach allows for methodological triangulation, enhancing the credibility and transferability of our findings.

Participant recruitment follows a purposive sampling strategy, ensuring a diverse representation of online food delivery platform users across demographic and behavioral segments. We aim to achieve theoretical saturation, with an initial target of 30 individual interviews and 5 focus groups, each comprising 6-8 participants.

Data collection protocols are meticulously designed to elicit rich, contextual data. Semi-structured interview guides are developed, informed by the literature review and pilot tested for clarity and effectiveness. Focus group moderation techniques are carefully selected to facilitate dynamic group interactions while maintaining focus on the research objectives.

For data analysis, we adopt a rigorous iterative coding process, combining elements of grounded theory with thematic analysis. Initial open coding is followed by axial and selective coding, allowing for the emergence of conceptual categories and their interrelationships. Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) is utilized to manage the large volume of textual data and facilitate the identification of patterns and themes.

To ensure the trustworthiness of our findings, we implement several strategies. These include member checking, where preliminary interpretations are shared with participants for validation; peer debriefing, involving regular discussions with colleagues not directly involved in the study; and the maintenance of a detailed audit trail documenting all methodological decisions and reflections throughout the research process.

Ethical considerations are paramount, with particular attention paid to informed consent, confidentiality, and data protection. All procedures are designed in compliance with institutional ethical guidelines and relevant data protection regulations.

This methodological approach is designed to yield nuanced insights into the lived experiences of online food delivery platform users, uncovering the subtle mechanisms through which service attributes influence satisfaction and repurchase intentions. By employing rigorous qualitative methods, we aim to contribute rich, contextually grounded theoretical propositions to the field, advancing both scholarly understanding and practical application in this rapidly evolving domain of digital service provision.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Service Quality Theory

Service Quality Theory underscores the critical role of service quality in shaping customer satisfaction and loyalty. The foundation of this theory lies in the SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988). This model proposes a multidimensional approach to measuring service quality, encompassing five dimensions: Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy. These dimensions provide a comprehensive framework for understanding and evaluating service quality across various industries. As the digital landscape evolved, researchers recognized the need to adapt service quality models to the unique characteristics of online environments. In response, Parasuraman et al. (2005) developed the E-S-QUAL model. This adapted framework specifically addresses the nuances of electronic service quality, focusing on four key dimensions: Efficiency, System Availability, Fulfillment, and Privacy. The E-S-QUAL model has proven particularly valuable in assessing service quality in e-commerce and digital platform contexts.

In the specific context of online food delivery platforms, Suhartanto et al. (2019) further refined these models, proposing a set of dimensions tailored to the unique aspects of food delivery services. Their framework includes Efficiency, which relates to the ease of use of the website or app and the speed of the ordering process; Reliability, which concerns the consistent and accurate provision of promised services; Fulfillment, encompassing the accuracy of food orders and timely delivery; Privacy, addressing the protection of customer information and secure payment systems; Responsiveness, reflecting the platform's ability to quickly and effectively address customer inquiries or complaints; and Compensation, which involves the provision of appropriate remedies in cases of service failure.

These dimensions have been carefully adapted to reflect the specific characteristics of online food delivery services. Importantly, the impact of each dimension on customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions can vary. For instance, research by Kapoor and Vij (2018) found that Efficiency and Fulfillment had the most significant influence on customer satisfaction in online food delivery services. Further expanding on this, Lee et al. (2019) explored the relative importance of these service quality dimensions in different stages of the customer journey. They found that while Efficiency was crucial during the initial ordering phase, Reliability and Fulfillment became more important during and after the delivery process. This nuanced understanding of how service quality perceptions evolve throughout the customer experience provides valuable insights for platform operators seeking to optimize their services at each touchpoint.

The application of Service Quality Theory to online food delivery platforms continues to evolve, with researchers exploring new dimensions and refining measurement

techniques. For example, recent studies have begun to incorporate elements such as food quality and variety into service quality models, recognizing the unique role that these factors play in the overall satisfaction of food delivery customers. As the online food delivery industry continues to grow and innovate, Service Quality Theory provides a robust framework for understanding and enhancing customer experiences. By focusing on these key dimensions of service quality, platform operators can develop targeted strategies to improve customer satisfaction, foster loyalty, and ultimately drive repurchase intentions in this highly competitive market.

2.2. Expectation Disconfirmation Theory

Expectation Disconfirmation Theory (EDT), a cornerstone in understanding customer satisfaction, was originally proposed by Oliver in 1980. This theory offers a valuable lens through which we can examine the formation of customer satisfaction in the context of online food delivery platforms. At its core, EDT suggests that customer satisfaction is not merely a result of service quality, but rather emerges from the interplay between a customer's prior expectations and their actual experience with a service. In the realm of online food delivery, customers approach the service with a set of expectations. These expectations might be shaped by various factors: previous experiences with similar services, the platform's marketing messages, or even recommendations from friends and family. A customer might, for instance, expect their food to arrive within a certain timeframe, for the order to be accurate, and for the food to maintain its quality during transit.

When the customer uses the service, they inevitably compare their actual experience against these pre-formed expectations. This comparison can result in one of three outcomes. If the service aligns closely with what the customer expected, we see confirmation. If the service surpasses expectations, we have positive disconfirmation. Conversely, if the service falls short, negative disconfirmation occurs. Each of these outcomes plays a crucial role in determining the customer's overall satisfaction with the service. The application of EDT to online contexts was significantly advanced by Bhattacharjee in 2001. His work extended the theory to explain continued usage of information systems, a concept highly relevant to online food delivery platforms. This extension helps us understand not just how satisfaction is formed, but how it influences a customer's intention to continue using a platform for future food orders.

Further insights into the relevance of EDT in online environments came from Hsu and colleagues in 2006. Their research into online shopping behavior revealed a strong link between positive disconfirmation, satisfaction, and

repurchase intentions. For online food delivery platforms, this suggests that consistently exceeding customer expectations could be a powerful driver of repeat business. In 2017, Yeo and his team brought EDT directly into the food delivery arena. Their study highlighted how both the quality of the food and the delivery service played crucial roles in either confirming or disconfirming customer expectations, thereby influencing overall satisfaction with the service. Understanding EDT in the context of online food delivery allows platform operators to take a more strategic approach to managing customer experiences. By carefully setting and then meeting or exceeding customer expectations, these platforms can cultivate higher levels of satisfaction. This satisfaction, in turn, has the potential to foster increased customer loyalty and drive repurchase intentions. As we apply EDT to our study of online food delivery platforms, we gain a crucial framework for understanding the intricate process of how customer satisfaction is formed in this unique service context. This understanding will guide our analysis of how various platform attributes influence customer satisfaction and, ultimately, their intention to use the service again in the future.

2.3. Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), originally proposed by Davis in 1989, provides a fundamental framework for understanding how users come to accept and use new technologies. In the context of online food delivery platforms, TAM offers valuable insights into the factors that drive customer adoption and continued use of these digital services. At its core, TAM posits that two primary factors influence an individual's intention to use a technology: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Perceived usefulness refers to the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance their performance or outcomes. In the case of online food delivery platforms, this might relate to the efficiency of ordering, the breadth of restaurant choices, or the convenience of home delivery. Perceived ease of use, on the other hand, pertains to the degree to which a person believes that using the system would be free of effort. For food delivery apps, this could involve the intuitiveness of the user interface, the simplicity of the ordering process, or the ease of tracking deliveries.

As technology has evolved, so too has the TAM. Venkatesh and Davis introduced an extended version, TAM2, in 2000. This model incorporated additional constructs, including social influence processes (subjective norm, voluntariness, and image) and cognitive instrumental processes (job relevance, output quality, result demonstrability, and perceived ease of use). These

extensions provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing technology acceptance. In the context of online food delivery platforms, social influence processes could manifest in how users perceive the popularity or social status associated with using certain platforms. Cognitive instrumental processes might relate to how well the platform aligns with users' dining needs, the quality of the ordering and delivery experience, and the tangible benefits users can articulate from using the service.

Recent research has further adapted TAM to specific technological contexts. For instance, Jung and Cha (2022) applied an extended version of TAM, the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2), to examine consumer attitudes toward restaurant service robots. Their findings highlight the importance of considering factors such as performance expectancy, effort expectancy, and hedonic motivation in understanding technology acceptance in food service contexts. As we apply TAM to our study of online food delivery platforms, we gain a structured approach to analyzing how the design and functionality of these platforms influence user acceptance and satisfaction. By examining aspects such as the intuitiveness of the ordering process, the efficiency of delivery tracking, and the overall usefulness of the service in meeting users' dining needs, we can better understand the technological factors that drive customer satisfaction and repeated use of these platforms. Moreover, considering the social and cognitive factors introduced in TAM2 allows us to explore how broader contextual elements, such as social norms around food delivery or the perceived quality of the platform's service, might influence user attitudes and behaviors. This comprehensive approach provides a robust framework for analyzing the complex interplay between technological features, user perceptions, and ultimately, customer satisfaction and loyalty in the online food delivery ecosystem.

2.4. Customer Value Theory

Customer Value Theory, particularly as articulated in Woodruff's (1997) customer value hierarchy model, provides a multifaceted framework for understanding how consumers perceive and evaluate the benefits they receive from products or services. In the context of online food delivery platforms, this theory offers valuable insights into the various levels of value that influence customer satisfaction and drive repurchase intentions. Woodruff's model proposes a hierarchical structure of customer value, consisting of three interconnected levels: attribute value, consequence value, and goal value. Each level builds upon the previous, creating a comprehensive picture of how customers derive value from their experiences with a service.

At the foundational level, attribute value refers to the

specific features or characteristics of the service. In the realm of online food delivery, this might include the user interface design of the app, the range of restaurant options available, or the accuracy of delivery time estimates. These attributes form the basic building blocks of the customer's interaction with the service. Moving up the hierarchy, consequence value encompasses the outcomes or benefits that customers experience as a result of using the service. For online food delivery, this could involve time savings, convenience, or the ability to enjoy restaurant-quality meals at home. Cha and Shin (2019) explored this concept in their study of O2O (Online to Offline) service usability and reliability, finding that these consequential values significantly influenced purchase intentions.

At the apex of the hierarchy lies goal value, which represents the ultimate objectives or end-states that customers seek to achieve through using the service. In the context of food delivery, this might include maintaining a desired lifestyle, achieving work-life balance, or enhancing social connections through shared meals. These higher-level values often have a profound impact on overall customer satisfaction and loyalty. Cha and Shin (2021) further examined the application of customer value theory in the food delivery context, focusing on how emotional responses to delivery food services influence repurchase intentions. Their findings underscore the importance of considering not just the functional aspects of the service, but also the emotional and goal-oriented values that customers derive from their experiences. By applying Woodruff's customer value hierarchy to online food delivery services, we can gain a nuanced understanding of how different levels of value contribute to customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions. For instance, while attribute-level values like a user-friendly app interface or prompt delivery times are important, they may not be sufficient on their own to drive long-term customer loyalty. Instead, it's often the consequence-level values (such as time savings or stress reduction) and goal-level values (like maintaining a desired lifestyle) that have the most significant impact on overall satisfaction and repeat usage.

This hierarchical approach to customer value allows us to analyze the complex interplay between various service elements and customer perceptions. It provides a framework for understanding why certain features or aspects of online food delivery services may be more impactful than others in shaping customer behavior. Moreover, it offers insights into how service providers can strategically enhance different levels of value to improve customer satisfaction and foster long-term loyalty. As we apply this theory to our study, we aim to uncover how online food delivery platforms can optimize their services across all levels of the value hierarchy. By aligning service attributes with customers' desired consequences and ultimate goals, these platforms

can create a more compelling and satisfying user experience, potentially leading to higher levels of customer retention and increased repurchase intentions.

2.5. Relationship Marketing Theory

Relationship Marketing Theory, pioneered by Berry (1983) and further developed by Morgan and Hunt (1994), offers a valuable perspective for understanding the dynamics between online food delivery platforms and their customers. This theory shifts the focus from transactional exchanges to the cultivation of long-term relationships, emphasizing the importance of trust, commitment, and mutual benefits in fostering customer loyalty and satisfaction. Berry's seminal work in 1983 introduced the concept of relationship marketing, suggesting that businesses should not merely aim to attract new customers, but also concentrate on maintaining and enhancing relationships with existing ones. In the context of online food delivery platforms, this approach underscores the importance of viewing each customer interaction not as an isolated event, but as part of an ongoing relationship.

Morgan and Hunt's (1994) commitment-trust theory further refined the concept of relationship marketing. They proposed that relationship commitment and trust are central to successful relationship marketing. In the online food delivery context, commitment might manifest as a customer's loyalty to a particular platform, while trust could relate to the reliability of the service, the accuracy of orders, and the protection of personal information. Applying these theories to online food delivery platforms reveals several key areas of focus. Trust, for instance, plays a crucial role in the digital environment where customers cannot physically interact with the service provider. Platforms must consistently deliver on their promises, ensure food quality and safety, and maintain transparent communication to build and maintain trust.

Commitment, another cornerstone of relationship marketing, can be fostered through personalized services, loyalty programs, and consistent quality. By demonstrating a commitment to meeting customer needs and preferences, platforms can encourage reciprocal commitment from their users. Relationship benefits, as highlighted by Cha and Seo (2019) in their study on brand trust in home meal replacement online shopping, are also crucial. These benefits might include convenience, time savings, or access to exclusive offers. When customers perceive these benefits as valuable, they are more likely to develop a strong, lasting relationship with the platform. The quality of these relationships significantly influences customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions. A strong, trust-based relationship can lead to increased tolerance for occasional service failures, higher customer retention rates, and positive word-

of-mouth recommendations.

Moreover, in the digital age, relationship marketing extends beyond the dyadic relationship between the platform and individual customers. It also encompasses the broader network of relationships, including those among customers (e.g., through reviews and recommendations) and between customers and restaurants on the platform. As we apply Relationship Marketing Theory to our study of online food delivery platforms, we aim to uncover how these platforms can effectively build and maintain quality relationships with their customers. This involves examining strategies for building trust, fostering commitment, and delivering meaningful relationship benefits. By understanding these dynamics, platforms can create more satisfying customer experiences, potentially leading to increased loyalty and higher repurchase intentions.

Furthermore, this theoretical lens allows us to explore how the quality of relationships influences customer perceptions of service attributes and overall satisfaction. It provides a framework for analyzing how strong relationships might buffer against minor service failures or enhance the perceived value of the service. Relationship Marketing Theory offers a rich perspective for understanding the complex interactions between online food delivery platforms and their customers. By focusing on building strong, trust-based relationships, these platforms can create a sustainable competitive advantage in an increasingly crowded market.

2.6. Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) Theory

Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) Theory, as articulated by Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), provides a crucial framework for understanding the impact of customer-generated content in digital environments. In the context of online food delivery platforms, this theory offers valuable insights into how customer reviews and ratings influence the decision-making processes of potential customers. Hennig-Thurau and colleagues defined eWOM as "any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet." This definition underscores the broad reach and potential influence of customer opinions in the digital age. In online food delivery platforms, eWOM typically manifests as customer reviews, ratings, and sometimes photos of delivered meals. These user-generated content pieces serve as a form of social proof, helping potential customers form expectations about the quality of food, delivery service, and overall experience with both the platform and individual restaurants. The impact of eWOM on customer behavior is multifaceted. Firstly, it plays a crucial role in expectation formation. When browsing an

online food delivery platform, potential customers often rely on reviews and ratings to set their expectations for the service. Positive reviews can create high expectations, potentially leading to higher satisfaction if these expectations are met or exceeded. Conversely, negative reviews might lower expectations or deter customers from using the service altogether. Secondly, eWOM significantly influences purchase decisions. In the competitive landscape of online food delivery, where numerous options are available at the click of a button, customer reviews often serve as a decisive factor in choosing between restaurants or even between different delivery platforms. High ratings and positive reviews can significantly boost a restaurant's visibility and appeal on the platform. The credibility of eWOM is another crucial aspect to consider. Unlike traditional advertising, eWOM is perceived as more trustworthy because it comes from fellow consumers who have no vested interest in promoting the service. This perceived authenticity makes eWOM a powerful tool in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviors. Moreover, the interactive nature of eWOM on online platforms allows for a dynamic exchange of information. Customers can ask questions, share experiences, and even engage in discussions about specific aspects of the service. This interactivity enhances the richness and perceived value of the information. For online food delivery platforms, managing eWOM becomes a critical aspect of customer relationship management. Encouraging satisfied customers to leave positive reviews, addressing negative feedback promptly and effectively, and leveraging positive eWOM in marketing strategies can significantly impact a platform's success. As we apply eWOM Theory to our study of online food delivery platforms, we aim to understand how different types of eWOM (e.g., star ratings, text reviews, photos) influence customer expectations and decision-making processes. We'll explore how the volume, valence, and variance of reviews affect customer perceptions and behaviors. Furthermore, we'll examine how platforms can effectively harness the power of eWOM to enhance customer satisfaction and drive repurchase intentions. This might involve strategies for encouraging authentic reviews, effectively displaying customer feedback, and using eWOM data to improve service quality. WOM Theory provides a valuable lens through which to analyze the complex dynamics of customer interactions and influence in the digital marketplace of online food delivery. By understanding the mechanisms and impacts of eWOM, platforms can better leverage this powerful form of customer communication to build trust, manage expectations, and ultimately drive customer satisfaction and loyalty.

2.7. Service-Dominant Logic (S-D Logic)

Service-Dominant Logic (S-D Logic), a paradigm-shifting concept introduced by Vargo and Lusch in 2004, offers a revolutionary perspective on value creation in service ecosystems. This framework is particularly relevant to the study of online food delivery platforms, where value emerges through complex interactions between multiple actors. At its core, S-D Logic posits that service, rather than goods, is the fundamental basis of exchange. In this view, value is not embedded in products but is co-created through the application of resources by various actors, including the service provider and the customer. This perspective marks a significant departure from traditional goods-dominant logic, which viewed value as something produced by firms and consumed by customers. In the context of online food delivery platforms, S-D Logic provides a rich framework for understanding the multifaceted process of value co-creation. The platform itself is not merely a conduit for transactions but a facilitator of service exchange between restaurants, delivery personnel, and customers. Each actor in this ecosystem contributes to the overall value creation process. Customers, for instance, co-create value not just through their purchasing decisions, but also through their interactions with the platform interface, their communication with restaurants and delivery personnel, and their contributions to the platform ecosystem through reviews and ratings. Restaurants co-create value by offering their culinary expertise and adapting their offerings to suit delivery contexts. Delivery personnel play a crucial role in value co-creation through their timely and courteous service. The platform itself co-creates value by orchestrating these interactions, providing a user-friendly interface, ensuring smooth transactions, and continuously improving its services based on user feedback and data analytics. This collaborative process of value co-creation aligns closely with the tenth foundational premise of S-D Logic, which states that "value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary." Applying S-D Logic to online food delivery platforms also highlights the importance of operant resources - knowledge, skills, and competencies. The success of these platforms relies heavily on their ability to effectively integrate and leverage the operant resources of all actors in the ecosystem. This includes the culinary skills of restaurant chefs, the logistical expertise of delivery personnel, and the platform's technological capabilities.

Furthermore, S-D Logic emphasizes the contextual nature of value. In online food delivery, the value derived by a customer might vary significantly depending on factors such as their immediate needs (e.g., convenience during a busy workday versus a desire for a special dining experience), their location, or even their mood. Understanding these contextual factors is crucial for

platforms seeking to enhance customer satisfaction. As we apply S-D Logic to our study, we aim to uncover how the process of value co-creation influences customer satisfaction in online food delivery platforms. We'll explore how different actors contribute to value creation and how the platform can facilitate more effective value co-creation processes.

Moreover, we'll examine how the principles of S-D Logic can inform platform design and management strategies. This might involve creating more opportunities for customer involvement in service design, fostering stronger relationships between different actors in the ecosystem, or developing new ways to integrate and leverage the diverse resources of all participants. Service-Dominant Logic provides a powerful lens for analyzing the complex dynamics of value creation in online food delivery platforms. By understanding service as the fundamental basis of exchange and recognizing the collaborative nature of value creation, platforms can develop more holistic strategies for enhancing customer satisfaction and fostering long-term relationships with all actors in their ecosystem.

2.8. Loyalty Formation Theory

Loyalty Formation Theory, as conceptualized in Oliver's (1999) seminal work, provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the complex process through which customers develop loyalty to a product, service, or brand. In the context of online food delivery platforms, this theory offers valuable insights into how users progress from initial adoption to becoming loyal, repeat customers. Oliver's loyalty phase model proposes that loyalty formation occurs in four sequential stages: cognitive, affective, conative, and action loyalty. Each stage represents a deeper level of commitment and a stronger predictor of continued patronage.

The first stage, cognitive loyalty, is based primarily on the customer's belief about the brand or service attributes. In the context of online food delivery platforms, this might involve a user's perception of the platform's efficiency, the variety of restaurant options, or the accuracy of delivery time estimates. At this stage, loyalty is relatively shallow and based largely on functional benefits. Affective loyalty, the second stage, develops as customers accumulate satisfying experiences with the platform. This emotional attachment goes beyond mere cognitive preference and involves positive feelings towards the brand. For online food delivery users, this might manifest as a sense of reliability, trust, or even enjoyment associated with using the platform. Factors such as consistently good experiences, positive customer service interactions, or the platform's ability to meet emotional needs (like providing comfort food during stressful times) can contribute to affective loyalty. The third stage, conative loyalty, represents a behavioral intention. It's

characterized by a deep commitment to repurchase from the brand. In the online food delivery context, this could be seen in users who consistently choose one platform over others, even when presented with competitive offers. This stage is crucial as it bridges the gap between positive attitude and actual repurchase behavior. The final stage, action loyalty, is where the motivation to act is transformed into readiness to act. This is the strongest form of loyalty, where customers overcome obstacles to use the service. For online food delivery platforms, action loyal customers might be those who continue to use the service even when faced with minor inconveniences or when cheaper alternatives are available.

Applying this theory to online food delivery platforms, we can analyze how different platform attributes and experiences contribute to each stage of loyalty formation. For instance, a user-friendly interface and reliable service might foster cognitive loyalty, while personalized recommendations and loyalty rewards programs could help develop affective and conative loyalty. Furthermore, understanding this loyalty formation process can guide platforms in developing targeted strategies to move customers through each loyalty stage. For example, platforms might focus on highlighting functional benefits to new users (cognitive stage), creating emotional connections through personalized experiences for regular users (affective stage), and implementing loyalty programs to reinforce the commitment of frequent users (conative stage).

It's important to note that in the digital age, the loyalty formation process can be both accelerated and more fragile. The abundance of options and ease of switching between platforms mean that online food delivery services must work continuously to maintain and strengthen customer loyalty at each stage. As we apply Loyalty Formation Theory to our study, we aim to understand how different aspects of online food delivery platforms contribute to each stage of loyalty. We'll explore how platform attributes, user experiences, and marketing strategies influence the progression from cognitive to action loyalty, and how this loyalty translates into repurchase intentions.

Moreover, we'll examine how the loyalty formation process interacts with other theoretical frameworks in our study. For instance, how does the value co-creation process (from Service-Dominant Logic) influence affective loyalty? How do trust and commitment (from Relationship Marketing Theory) contribute to conative and action loyalty? Oliver's Loyalty Formation Theory provides a structured approach to understanding the development of customer loyalty in online food delivery platforms. By analyzing how users progress through different loyalty stages, platforms can develop more effective strategies for fostering long-term customer relationships and driving sustainable business growth.

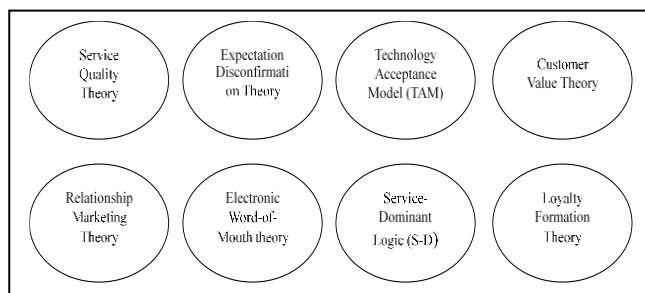


Figure 1: Unifying theories applied to online food delivery platforms

3. Research Method

This study employs a qualitative research methodology to delve deeply into the impact of online food delivery platform attributes on customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions. Our approach is grounded in the interpretive paradigm, utilizing a phenomenological lens to capture the nuanced, subjective experiences of platform users.

We employed purposive sampling to recruit 15 participants, ensuring a diverse representation across demographic characteristics and usage patterns. Data collection continued until we reached theoretical saturation, providing a comprehensive view of user experiences.

Our data collection strategy was twofold. First, we conducted in-depth, one-on-one interviews, each lasting between 20 to 30 minutes. These interviews followed a semi-structured format, allowing for both consistency across interviews and the flexibility to explore unique insights as they emerged. Second, we organized three focus group discussions, each comprising 3-5 participants and lasting 30-45 minutes. These group sessions provided a valuable platform for participants to interact, stimulating discussions that revealed shared experiences and contrasting viewpoints.

For data analysis, we adopted Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis method. This rigorous, six-step process involved familiarization with the data, systematic coding using NVivo software, theme development, review, definition, and finally, report production. This approach allowed us to identify recurring patterns and themes within the data, providing a rich, contextualized understanding of user experiences.

To ensure the trustworthiness of our findings, we implemented several strategies. We used triangulation, comparing data from different sources to verify consistency. Member checking involved sharing our interpretations with participants to confirm their accuracy. We also engaged in peer review, collaborating with experienced qualitative researchers to scrutinize our analysis process and results. Throughout the study, we maintained a reflexive stance,

explicitly acknowledging and documenting our own preconceptions and potential biases.

Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the research process. We obtained informed consent from all participants, providing comprehensive information about the study's purpose, procedures, and potential implications. To protect participant confidentiality, we used pseudonyms and removed any identifiable information from our data. All collected data was securely stored on encrypted devices to ensure data security.

This methodological approach, combining in-depth interviews with focus group discussions and employing rigorous analysis techniques, enables us to provide a comprehensive, nuanced understanding of how online food delivery platform attributes influence customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions. By prioritizing the lived experiences of users, we aim to contribute valuable insights to both the academic literature and practical application in this rapidly evolving digital service domain.

4. Results

An in-depth analysis of the impact of key attributes of online food delivery platforms on customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions yielded several important findings. First, in terms of service quality, efficiency, reliability, fulfillment, and privacy emerged as crucial factors. In particular, order accuracy and adherence to delivery times were found to significantly influence customer satisfaction.

Second, based on expectation disconfirmation theory, the gap between customers' prior expectations and actual experiences was proven to play a vital role in satisfaction formation. When the service provided by the platform exceeded customer expectations, it tended to lead to high satisfaction levels.

Third, from the perspective of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the perceived usefulness and ease of use of the platform were found to positively affect customer acceptance and satisfaction. Notably, intuitive user interfaces and personalized recommendation systems contributed to enhancing the perceived value of the platform.

Fourth, drawing on customer value theory, it was confirmed that value provided at various levels - attribute value, consequence value, and goal value - acted in complex ways on customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions. In particular, the consequence values of time-saving and convenience were highly appreciated.

Fifth, from the relationship marketing theory perspective, trust and commitment between the platform and customers were found to play crucial roles in forming long-term relationships and repurchase intentions. The quality of customer service and problem-solving abilities were key

elements in building this trust.

Sixth, according to electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) theory, customer reviews and ratings on the platform were found to have a considerable impact on other customers' expectation formation and purchase decisions. Feedback from actual users, especially regarding food quality and delivery service, was being utilized as an important source of information.

Seventh, from the Service-Dominant Logic (S-D Logic) perspective, the value co-creation process between customers and the platform was confirmed to contribute to improved satisfaction. Platforms' efforts to actively accept customer feedback and reflect it in service improvements were highly valued.

Finally, based on loyalty formation theory, a gradual development process of cognitive, affective, and behavioral loyalty was observed. The accumulation of continuous positive experiences was found to lead to strong brand loyalty and repurchase intentions.

These research findings extend customer behavior theory in the context of online platform-based services and provide new insights into the formation of customer satisfaction and loyalty in food delivery services. By applying various theoretical perspectives in an integrated manner, this study presents a comprehensive framework for understanding the complex mechanisms of customer behavior.

5. Conclusions

This study offers significant implications for both practitioners and academics while also acknowledging certain limitations that warrant consideration. The findings provide valuable insights for online food delivery platform operators, illuminating key areas for strategic focus and improvement. Primarily, the research underscores the critical importance of core service quality elements, particularly emphasizing the need for impeccable order accuracy and punctual delivery. Platform operators are advised to not merely meet but exceed customer expectations through the provision of differentiated value propositions, thereby fostering higher levels of satisfaction and loyalty.

The study also highlights the pivotal role of user experience in digital platforms, suggesting that continuous enhancement of platform usability and personalization can significantly impact customer satisfaction. Operators should prioritize the development of intuitive interfaces and sophisticated recommendation systems to augment the perceived value of their services. Furthermore, the research emphasizes the paramount importance of trust-building and relationship management in the digital service context.

Platforms are encouraged to invest in robust customer service infrastructures and efficient problem-resolution mechanisms to cultivate long-term customer relationships.

Another key implication derived from this study is the substantial influence of user-generated content, particularly reviews and ratings, on customer decision-making processes. Platform operators should strategically leverage this electronic word-of-mouth, recognizing its potential to shape expectations and influence purchasing behaviors of prospective customers. Additionally, the research underscores the value of co-creation processes in enhancing customer satisfaction, suggesting that platforms should actively solicit and incorporate customer feedback into their service improvement initiatives.

From a theoretical perspective, this study makes significant contributions to the existing body of knowledge on customer behavior in digital service environments. By integrating multiple theoretical frameworks, including service quality theory, expectation disconfirmation theory, and the technology acceptance model, among others, the research provides a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of satisfaction and loyalty formation in the context of online food delivery platforms. This integrated approach offers a robust framework for future research in the rapidly evolving field of digital services.

Methodologically, the study demonstrates the efficacy of qualitative research methods in uncovering deep insights into customer experiences and perceptions within digital service contexts. The combination of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions proved particularly effective in capturing the complexity and richness of customer interactions with online food delivery platforms. This methodological approach may serve as a model for future qualitative investigations in similar digital service domains.

However, it is imperative to acknowledge the limitations of this study. The qualitative nature and limited sample size inherently restrict the generalizability of the findings to broader populations or diverse geographical contexts. The research was conducted within a specific cultural and market context, and as such, the results may not be universally applicable across all markets or cultural settings. Furthermore, given the rapid pace of technological advancement in the digital service industry, some findings may have limited temporal relevance and may require regular updating to remain pertinent.

The study's focus on food delivery platforms, while providing depth, may limit the direct applicability of findings to other types of digital platforms or service contexts. Additionally, despite rigorous efforts to maintain objectivity, the interpretive nature of qualitative research introduces the potential for researcher bias, which must be acknowledged as a limitation.

Future research directions should address these

limitations by conducting large-scale quantitative studies to statistically validate the findings across diverse populations and contexts. Cross-cultural comparisons would be particularly valuable in understanding how cultural factors may moderate the relationships identified in this study. Longitudinal research designs could offer insights into the evolution of customer perceptions and behaviors over time in this dynamic digital landscape. Moreover, investigations into the impact of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality on customer experiences in online food delivery platforms could provide valuable foresight for both academics and practitioners.

In conclusion, while acknowledging its limitations, this study makes substantial contributions to our understanding of customer behavior in online food delivery platforms. It provides actionable insights for platform operators and establishes a solid foundation for future research in this rapidly evolving domain of digital services.

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