



iJRASET

International Journal For Research in
Applied Science and Engineering Technology



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR RESEARCH

IN APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Volume: 14 **Issue:** VII **Month of publication:** July 2026

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22214/ijraset.2026.83956>

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A Study on Factors Influencing Customer Loyalty in Online Food Delivery Services

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Abstract: *The rapid growth of digital technologies has significantly transformed consumer purchasing behavior, particularly in the food service industry. Online food delivery platforms such as Swiggy and Zomato have emerged as integral components of modern lifestyles by offering convenience, accessibility, and a wide variety of food choices. Despite the increasing adoption of these platforms, retaining customers and fostering long-term loyalty remain major challenges due to intense market competition, low switching costs, and evolving consumer expectations. This study investigates the key factors influencing customer loyalty in online food delivery services, with particular emphasis on service quality, delivery time, and promotional offers. Furthermore, the study examines the mediating role of customer satisfaction in strengthening the relationship between these service-related factors and customer loyalty. A quantitative research approach is adopted, and data are collected from active users of online food delivery applications in Coimbatore, a rapidly developing tier-2 city in India. Using a structured questionnaire and advanced statistical techniques, including Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), the study evaluates the direct and indirect effects of the selected variables on customer loyalty. The proposed framework assumes that superior service quality, timely delivery, and attractive promotional incentives positively influence customer satisfaction, which subsequently enhances loyalty intentions. The study contributes to the existing literature by providing a comprehensive and context-specific understanding of customer loyalty formation in online food delivery services within emerging urban markets. The findings are expected to offer valuable insights for platform operators and marketers in designing effective customer retention strategies, improving service experiences, and developing sustainable competitive advantages in the rapidly evolving digital food delivery ecosystem.*

Keywords: *Online Food Delivery Services, Customer Loyalty, Customer Satisfaction, Service Quality, Delivery Time, Promotional Offers, Consumer Behaviour, Digital Platforms, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), Customer Retention, Swiggy, Zomato, Coimbatore.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid digital transformation of the service sector has fundamentally reshaped consumer behaviour across the globe, with the food service industry experiencing one of the most significant transitions. The emergence and expansion of online food delivery platforms such as Swiggy and Zomato have revolutionized the way consumers access food services by integrating convenience, speed, and a diverse range of culinary options into a single digital interface. These platforms have not only redefined traditional dining experiences but have also created a highly competitive and technology-driven marketplace.

In the Indian context, the growth of online food delivery services has been propelled by increasing smartphone penetration, affordable internet access, and the widespread adoption of digital payment systems. According to Internet and Mobile Association of India (2023), India had over 750 million internet users, with a significant proportion accessing services through mobile devices. Furthermore, a report by Statista (2024) indicates that the online food delivery market in India is projected to reach approximately USD 43 billion by 2027, growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of over 18%. This rapid expansion highlights the increasing reliance of consumers on digital platforms for their food consumption needs.

Additionally, insights from RedSeer Consulting (2023) reveal that online food delivery penetration in urban India has crossed 20%, with tier-2 cities emerging as key growth drivers due to changing consumption patterns and rising disposable incomes. The report further emphasizes that customer retention and loyalty are becoming critical success factors, as customer acquisition costs continue to rise in the highly competitive market.

Within this broader national landscape, Coimbatore stands out as one of the fastest-growing tier-2 cities, characterized by rapid urbanization, industrial development, and a digitally aware population. The city's expanding middle class, coupled with busy lifestyles and increasing workforce participation, has significantly contributed to the adoption of online food delivery services.

Consumers in Coimbatore are increasingly inclined toward app-based food ordering due to its convenience, time-saving nature, and access to diverse food options that may not be readily available locally.

Despite this remarkable growth, sustaining customer loyalty remains a significant challenge for online food delivery platforms. Intense competition between service providers, frequent price wars, inconsistent service quality, delivery delays, and aggressive promotional strategies often lead to switching behaviour among consumers. According to a study by Deloitte (2023), nearly 60% of online food delivery users in India tend to switch platforms based on discounts and offers, indicating low brand loyalty and high price sensitivity.

Moreover, existing research suggests that customer satisfaction plays a pivotal role in determining long-term loyalty. Factors such as service quality, timely delivery, and attractive promotional offers significantly influence customer perceptions and experiences, which in turn shape their loyalty intentions. However, the interplay between these factors and the mediating role of customer satisfaction remains underexplored, particularly in the context of emerging urban centres like Coimbatore.

In this context, the present study seeks to analyse the key factors influencing customer loyalty in online food delivery services, with a specific focus on service quality, delivery time, and promotional offers. Furthermore, it aims to examine the mediating role of customer satisfaction in strengthening or weakening the relationship between these factors and customer loyalty. By providing empirical insights into consumer behaviour in Coimbatore, this study contributes to both academic literature and practical marketing strategies for enhancing customer retention in the rapidly evolving online food delivery industry.

Overview Chart: Factors Influencing Customer Loyalty In Online Food Delivery Services.

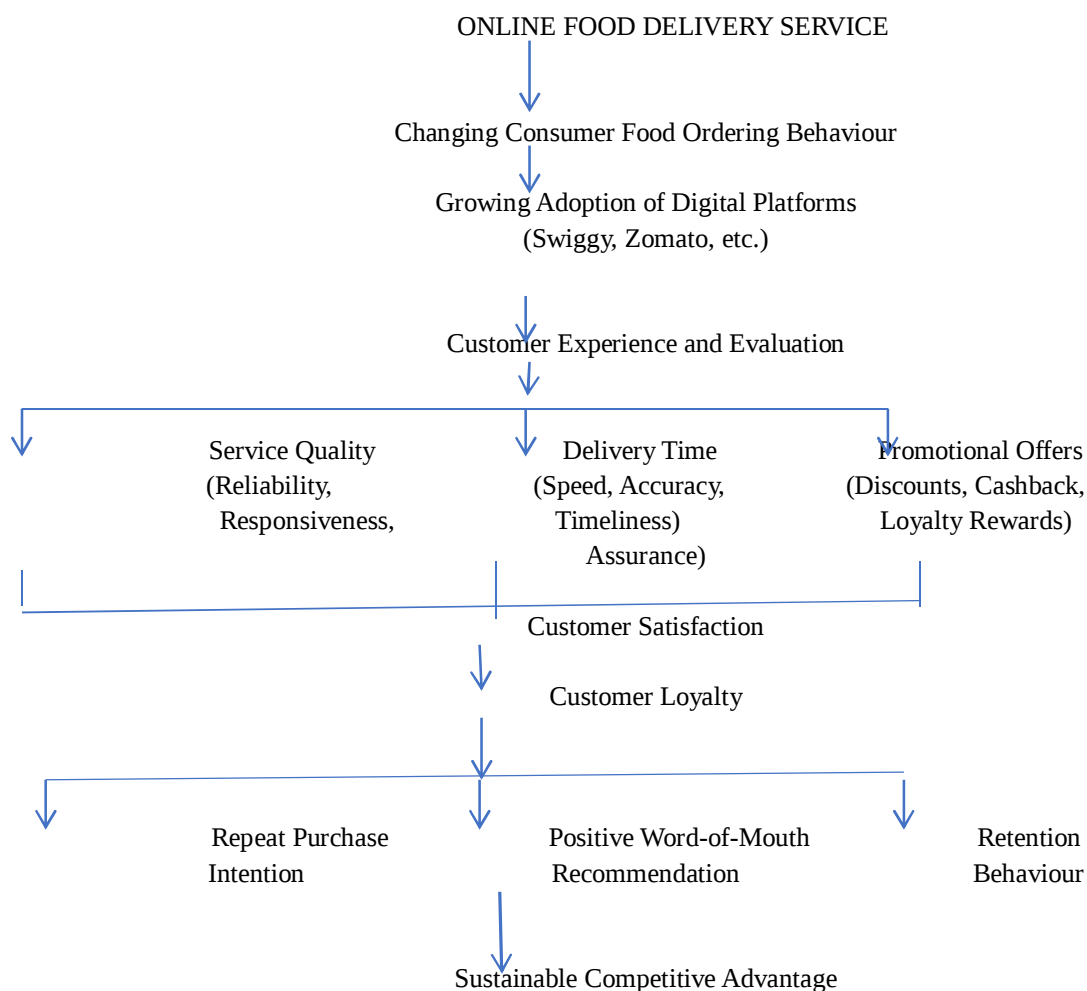


Figure 1: Conceptual Overview of Factors Influencing Customer Loyalty in Online Food Delivery Services.

The online food delivery industry has witnessed substantial growth due to rapid digitalization, increased smartphone usage, and changing consumer lifestyles. As competition among food delivery platforms intensifies, understanding the determinants of customer loyalty has become a strategic necessity. Customer loyalty is influenced by several service-related factors, including service quality, delivery time, and promotional offers. These factors shape customers' perceptions and experiences with online food delivery platforms. Positive evaluations of these service attributes enhance customer satisfaction, which subsequently strengthens customer loyalty through repeat purchases, positive recommendations, and long-term retention. Therefore, customer satisfaction serves as a crucial mediating mechanism that transforms service experiences into sustainable customer loyalty. The proposed framework provides a comprehensive understanding of the relationships among these variables in the context of online food delivery services.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The exponential growth of online food delivery services has significantly transformed consumer purchasing patterns in India, yet sustaining customer loyalty continues to remain a critical challenge for service providers. While platforms such as Swiggy and Zomato have successfully attracted a large user base through aggressive marketing strategies and technological convenience, retaining these customers over the long term has become increasingly complex. The competitive intensity within the industry, coupled with low switching costs, has made customer loyalty highly volatile.

One of the primary concerns in this domain is the inconsistency in service quality. Customers often experience variations in food quality, order accuracy, and customer support responsiveness, which directly influence their satisfaction levels. According to Parasuraman et al. (1988), service quality dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, and assurance play a crucial role in shaping customer perceptions. However, in the context of online food delivery, these dimensions are frequently affected by operational challenges such as restaurant coordination and last-mile delivery inefficiencies.

Another significant issue is delivery performance, particularly in terms of timeliness and reliability. Delayed deliveries, inaccurate tracking systems, and inconsistent delivery partner behaviour negatively impact customer experiences. Studies indicate that delivery time is a critical determinant of customer satisfaction in online food services, as consumers increasingly expect quick and predictable service outcomes (Kumar & Shah, 2020). In fast-paced urban environments like Coimbatore, where time constraints are prominent, even minor delays can lead to dissatisfaction and switching behaviour.

Promotional strategies, including discounts, cashback offers, and loyalty rewards, have been widely used to attract and retain customers. However, these strategies have also contributed to the development of price-sensitive consumer behaviour. According to Deloitte (2023), a significant proportion of users tend to switch between platforms based on the availability of offers, indicating weak brand attachment. This over-reliance on promotions raises concerns about the sustainability of customer loyalty, as it may not reflect genuine satisfaction or long-term commitment.

Furthermore, the mediating role of customer satisfaction in the relationship between service-related factors and loyalty has not been sufficiently explored in emerging markets. While prior studies have established that customer satisfaction is a key predictor of loyalty (Oliver, 1999), there is limited empirical evidence examining how satisfaction integrates multiple service dimensions to influence loyalty specifically in tier-2 cities. This gap is particularly relevant in Coimbatore, where consumer expectations are evolving alongside rapid urbanization and digital adoption.

In addition, demographic diversity, variations in digital literacy, and differences in consumption patterns further complicate the understanding of customer loyalty in this sector. Consumers from different age groups, income levels, and occupational backgrounds may perceive service quality, delivery efficiency, and promotional value differently, thereby influencing their satisfaction and loyalty in distinct ways.

Despite the growing body of research on online consumer behaviour, there remains a lack of region-specific studies that comprehensively analyse the factors influencing customer loyalty in online food delivery services within the context of Coimbatore city. Most existing studies are either generalized at the national level or focused on metropolitan cities, thereby overlooking the unique behavioural patterns of consumers in emerging urban centres.

Therefore, this study seeks to address these research gaps by examining the key factors influencing customer loyalty in online food delivery services, with a specific focus on service quality, delivery time, and promotional offers, while analysing the mediating role of customer satisfaction. By providing empirical insights into these relationships, the study aims to contribute to the development of effective customer retention strategies and enhance the overall service experience in the online food delivery ecosystem.

III. RECENT REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Yeo, V. C. S. et al. (2017) investigated consumer attitudes and behavioural intentions toward online food delivery services, identifying factors such as hedonic motivation, price value, and convenience as key determinants. Using survey data and regression analysis, the study concluded that positive user experiences and perceived value significantly influence repurchase intention. While the research provided valuable insights into behavioural intention, it did not comprehensively examine service quality dimensions or their indirect influence through customer satisfaction, thereby limiting its applicability in explaining customer loyalty formation in dynamic urban markets.

Ray, A. et al. (2019) examined the determinants influencing consumers' adoption of online food delivery applications in emerging markets, emphasizing the role of perceived usefulness, ease of use, and trust. The study, conducted using structural equation modelling, revealed that convenience and time-saving aspects significantly drive user adoption, while perceived risk negatively impacts usage behaviour. The findings also highlighted that although users are attracted by technological efficiency, their continued usage depends largely on satisfaction derived from service experience. However, the study primarily focused on adoption behaviour rather than long-term customer loyalty, leaving a gap in understanding how satisfaction translates into sustained loyalty in competitive digital platforms.

Suhartanto, D. et al. (2019) studied the relationship between service quality, satisfaction, and loyalty in the hospitality sector, concluding that reliability and responsiveness are critical determinants of customer satisfaction, which in turn drives loyalty. Although the findings are applicable to service industries, the study did not consider digital platform-specific factors such as app usability and promotional incentives, limiting its applicability to online food delivery contexts.

Alalwan, A. A. (2020) explored the impact of mobile food ordering applications on consumer decision-making by integrating technology acceptance and service quality models. The study found that system quality, information quality, and service responsiveness significantly influence customer satisfaction and usage intention. Importantly, the research highlighted the mediating role of satisfaction between service attributes and behavioural outcomes. However, the study focused on general usage intention rather than specific loyalty behaviours, and it did not consider promotional strategies as a variable, which are crucial in highly competitive markets like India.

Belanche, D. et al. (2020) examined customer engagement in app-based services and found that interactive features, personalized offers, and user-friendly interfaces enhance customer satisfaction and retention. The study concluded that promotional strategies significantly affect customer engagement levels. However, it did not empirically test the combined influence of service quality, delivery time, and promotions on loyalty, nor did it incorporate a mediating variable such as satisfaction in a comprehensive framework.

Dhir, A. et al. (2020) investigated continuance usage behaviour in online food delivery apps and found that habit, satisfaction, and perceived benefits significantly influence repeat usage. The study confirmed that satisfaction plays a mediating role between service attributes and behavioural intention. However, it did not include delivery time and promotional offers as core constructs in the model, thereby leaving scope for a more integrated framework addressing loyalty.

Prasetyo, Y. T. et al. (2021) analysed consumer preferences in online food delivery services during the post-pandemic period using machine learning techniques. The findings indicated that delivery speed, service reliability, and safety measures significantly influence customer satisfaction and trust. The study emphasized that timely delivery plays a critical role in shaping overall service evaluation. Nevertheless, it overlooked the role of promotional offers and discounts in influencing repeat purchases and loyalty, which are prominent features in platforms like Swiggy and Zomato.

Kaur, P. et al. (2021) explored the influence of perceived value and trust on customer loyalty in digital platforms, emphasizing that emotional and functional values significantly contribute to customer retention. The study revealed that satisfaction acts as a strong predictor of loyalty behaviour. However, the research was not specifically focused on online food delivery services and lacked contextual relevance to tier-2 cities, where consumer expectations and digital adoption patterns differ significantly.

Mehroli, S. et al. (2021) examined consumer behaviour toward online food delivery services during COVID-19, highlighting that safety, hygiene, and trust significantly influenced customer satisfaction and usage frequency. The study indicated a shift in consumer priorities toward reliability and assurance. However, it did not address long-term loyalty factors post-pandemic or the role of pricing strategies and promotional offers in sustaining customer engagement.

Kim and Lee (2021) examined the factors influencing customer loyalty in mobile food delivery applications. The study found that perceived service quality, app usability, and trust significantly contribute to customer satisfaction and loyalty. Customer satisfaction was identified as a strong mediator between service performance and loyalty intentions. However, the study did not examine the impact of promotional offers and discounts on loyalty behaviour.

Roh and Park (2021) investigated the relationship between delivery performance and customer retention in online food delivery services. Their findings revealed that delivery reliability and order accuracy significantly affect customer satisfaction and repeat purchase behaviour. The study focused mainly on operational performance and overlooked the influence of promotional incentives on customer loyalty.

Kapoor and Vij (2022) explored consumer experiences in digital food delivery platforms in India. The results indicated that convenience, service efficiency, and perceived value positively influence customer satisfaction. The study highlighted that satisfied customers are more likely to exhibit loyalty behaviours. However, the mediating role of customer satisfaction was not comprehensively tested.

Singh and Srivastava (2022) analysed customer engagement in online food delivery applications. The study found that personalized services, promotional campaigns, and customer support significantly enhance user engagement. The research emphasized the importance of marketing initiatives but provided limited evidence regarding long-term customer loyalty.

Verma et al. (2022) investigated factors affecting customer retention in app-based food delivery services. Their findings suggested that service quality dimensions such as reliability and responsiveness significantly influence satisfaction and retention. The study did not consider delivery time as a separate construct affecting loyalty.

Chatterjee and Kumar (2022) examined the influence of digital service quality on customer loyalty. The results showed that website and application performance significantly affect satisfaction and repeat usage intentions. However, the study was not specifically focused on food delivery services and lacked contextual relevance.

Sharma et al. (2023) studied the role of promotional offers in online consumer behaviour. The findings indicated that discounts, cashback schemes, and loyalty rewards positively influence purchase intentions and customer retention. However, excessive dependence on promotional offers may reduce genuine brand loyalty and increase price sensitivity among consumers.

Gupta and Arora (2023) analysed customer satisfaction in India's online food delivery market. The study found that delivery speed, food quality, and customer support significantly influence satisfaction levels. The research emphasized satisfaction as a precursor to loyalty but did not investigate mediation effects.

Nair and Thomas (2023) examined consumer switching behaviour among food delivery platforms. Their findings revealed that service failures, delivery delays, and attractive competitor promotions are major reasons for platform switching. The study highlighted loyalty challenges but did not propose a comprehensive loyalty model.

Zhang et al. (2024) investigated customer loyalty in digital platform ecosystems. The study concluded that customer satisfaction, trust, and perceived value significantly influence loyalty. Satisfaction was found to partially mediate the relationship between service quality and loyalty. However, the study was conducted in a broader e-commerce context rather than food delivery services.

Table 1: Consolidated Review Of Literature

Author(s) & Year	Focus of Study	Key Findings	Research Gap
Yeo et al. (2017)	Consumer attitudes and behavioural intentions toward online food delivery services	Hedonic motivation, convenience, and price value significantly influence repurchase intention.	Service quality dimensions and the mediating role of customer satisfaction were not examined.
Ray et al. (2019)	Adoption of online food delivery applications	Perceived usefulness, trust, and convenience significantly influence adoption behaviour.	Focused on adoption rather than long-term customer loyalty.
Suhartanto et al. (2019)	Service quality, satisfaction, and loyalty	Reliability and responsiveness positively affect satisfaction and loyalty.	Digital platform-specific factors and promotional incentives were not considered.
Alalwan (2020)	Mobile food ordering applications and consumer behaviour	System quality, information quality, and responsiveness influence satisfaction and usage intention.	Loyalty behaviour and promotional strategies were not examined.
Belanche et al. (2020)	Customer engagement in app-based services	Personalized offers and user-friendly interfaces enhance customer retention.	Combined effects of service quality, delivery time, and promotions on loyalty were not tested.

Author(s) & Year	Focus of Study	Key Findings	Research Gap
Dhir et al. (2020)	Continuance usage behaviour in food delivery apps	Satisfaction mediates the relationship between service attributes and behavioural intention.	Delivery time and promotional offers were excluded from the model.
Prasetyo et al. (2021)	Consumer preferences in online food delivery services	Delivery speed, reliability, and safety measures significantly affect satisfaction and trust.	Promotional offers and their influence on loyalty were overlooked.
Kaur et al. (2021)	Perceived value, trust, and customer loyalty	Emotional and functional value significantly influence customer loyalty.	Not specific to online food delivery services and tier-2 city contexts.
Mehroliya et al. (2021)	Consumer behaviour during COVID-19	Safety, hygiene, and trust significantly influence satisfaction and usage frequency.	Long-term loyalty and promotional factors were not explored.
Kim and Lee (2021)	Customer loyalty in mobile food delivery applications	Service quality, app usability, and trust positively affect satisfaction and loyalty.	Promotional offers and discount strategies were not examined.
Roh and Park (2021)	Delivery performance and customer retention	Delivery reliability and order accuracy significantly affect retention.	Promotional incentives and marketing factors were ignored.
Kapoor and Vij (2022)	Consumer experiences in digital food delivery platforms	Convenience and service efficiency positively influence satisfaction and loyalty.	Mediating effect of customer satisfaction was not fully investigated.
Singh and Srivastava (2022)	Customer engagement in food delivery applications	Personalized services and promotional campaigns improve engagement.	Long-term loyalty behaviour was not adequately addressed.
Verma et al. (2022)	Customer retention in app-based food delivery services	Reliability and responsiveness significantly influence satisfaction and retention.	Delivery time was not treated as a separate determinant of loyalty.
Chatterjee and Kumar (2022)	Digital service quality and customer loyalty	Website and application performance positively affect satisfaction and repeat usage.	Not specifically focused on food delivery services.
Sharma et al. (2023)	Promotional offers and online consumer behaviour	Discounts and loyalty rewards positively influence retention.	Overdependence on promotions may weaken genuine brand loyalty.
Gupta and Arora (2023)	Customer satisfaction in online food delivery services	Delivery speed, food quality, and customer support significantly influence satisfaction.	Mediation effects between satisfaction and loyalty were not examined.
Nair and Thomas (2023)	Consumer switching behaviour among food delivery platforms	Delivery delays and competitor promotions drive platform switching.	Comprehensive customer loyalty framework was not proposed.
Zhang et al. (2024)	Customer loyalty in digital platform ecosystems	Satisfaction, trust, and perceived value significantly influence loyalty.	Study focused on general e-commerce rather than online food delivery services.

Source: Compiled by the Researcher (2026)

IV. RESEARCH GAP

From the above literature, it is evident that several studies have examined factors influencing the adoption and usage of online food delivery services, particularly focusing on service quality, convenience, and technological aspects. While some studies have explored customer satisfaction and its influence on behavioural intentions, very few have developed an integrated framework combining service quality, delivery time, and promotional offers as key determinants of customer loyalty. Moreover, limited research has examined the mediating role of customer satisfaction in this relationship, especially in the context of tier-2 cities like Coimbatore, where consumer behaviour may differ from metropolitan areas. Additionally, the dynamic and highly competitive nature of the online food delivery market in India necessitates a more comprehensive and context-specific analysis to understand long-term customer retention. Hence, this study attempts to bridge these gaps by developing a structured model to examine the direct and indirect relationships among these variables.

V. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1) What are the key factors influencing customer loyalty in online food delivery services?
- 2) How does service quality impact customer satisfaction and loyalty?
- 3) What is the effect of delivery time on customer satisfaction?
- 4) How do promotional offers influence customer satisfaction and loyalty?
- 5) Does customer satisfaction mediate the relationship between service factors and customer loyalty?

VI. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 1) To analyse the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction in online food delivery services.
- 2) To examine the effect of delivery time on customer satisfaction.
- 3) To evaluate the influence of promotional offers on customer satisfaction.
- 4) To study the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty.
- 5) To assess the mediating role of customer satisfaction between service factors and customer loyalty.

VII. HYPOTHESES

A. Direct Relationships

- H1: Service quality has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction.
H2: Delivery time has a significant effect on customer satisfaction.
H3: Promotional offers have a significant positive effect on customer loyalty.
H4: Customer satisfaction has a significant positive effect on customer loyalty.

B. Mediation Relationships

- H5: Customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between service quality and customer loyalty.
H6: Customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between delivery time and customer loyalty.
H7: Customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between promotional offers and customer loyalty.

VIII. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a quantitative research approach with a descriptive and analytical research design to examine the factors influencing customer loyalty in online food delivery services. The descriptive component facilitates the systematic identification of consumer perceptions regarding service quality, delivery time, and promotional offers, while the analytical component enables the examination of relationships among these variables and their impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty. A structured survey method is employed as it allows for the collection of standardized data from a large number of respondents, ensuring consistency, comparability, and suitability for advanced statistical analysis such as Structural Equation Modelling (SEM).

The study is conducted in Coimbatore, one of the fastest-growing tier-2 cities in India, characterized by rapid urbanization, increasing digital adoption, and a growing middle-class population. Coimbatore serves as an appropriate study area due to its unique blend of traditional and modern consumer behaviour, where digital platforms like online food delivery services are gaining widespread acceptance. The city has witnessed a significant rise in smartphone usage, internet accessibility, and app-based consumption patterns, making it an ideal setting for analysing customer loyalty dynamics.

Moreover, compared to metropolitan cities, consumer behaviour in Coimbatore reflects emerging market characteristics, thereby providing valuable insights into tier-2 city consumption patterns, which remain underexplored in existing literature.

The target population of the study comprises users of online food delivery applications such as Swiggy and Zomato within Coimbatore city. A multi-stage sampling technique is employed to ensure both representativeness and feasibility. In the first stage, stratified sampling is applied based on demographic variables such as age groups to ensure adequate representation of different consumer segments. In the second stage, convenience sampling is used within each stratum to select respondents who actively use online food delivery services. This combination is widely accepted in marketing and consumer behaviour research, particularly when the sampling frame is not readily available. The approach ensures practical accessibility while maintaining reasonable representation across key demographic groups, making it methodologically sound and defensible for academic research.

The sample size for the study is determined using a statistically accepted formula for large populations:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot q}{e^2}$$

Where:

Z = 1.96 (confidence level at 95%)

p = 0.5 (maximum variability)

q = 1 – p = 0.5

e = 0.05 (acceptable error)

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 \cdot (0.5)(0.5)}{(0.05)^2} = 384.16 \approx 385$$

Although the minimum required sample size is 385, the present study collects a larger dataset of 700 responses to enhance statistical power and reliability. After data screening procedures such as removal of incomplete responses, detection of outliers, and elimination of response bias (including straight-lining), a final sample size of 630 respondents is retained for analysis. This exceeds the minimum requirement and also satisfies SEM guidelines, which recommend a sample size of at least 10 times the number of observed variables, thereby ensuring robustness and generalizability of results.

Table 2 : Multi-Stage Sampling Design

Stage	Sampling Technique	Basis of Selection	Population Share (%)	Initial Sample (700)	Cleaned Sample (630)
Stage 1	Stratified Sampling	Age Group (18–25)	30%	210	190
		Age Group (26–35)	35%	245	225
		Age Group (36–50)	20%	140	125
		Age Group (50+)	15%	105	90
Stage 2	Convenience Sampling	Active users of food delivery apps			
Total			100%	700	630

A pilot study is conducted prior to the main survey to test the reliability and clarity of the questionnaire. A sample of 63 respondents (10% of the final sample size) is selected for the pilot study, which is considered statistically adequate in social science research. The pilot study helps in identifying ambiguities, improving question wording, and assessing internal consistency using reliability measures such as Cronbach's alpha. Based on the pilot results, necessary modifications are made to enhance the validity and reliability of the instrument.

Table 3: Reliability Analysis

Variables	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha (Pilot)	Cronbach's Alpha (Main)
Service Quality	5	0.712	0.842
Delivery Time	4	0.685	0.801
Promotional Offers	4	0.701	0.823
Customer Satisfaction	5	0.728	0.865
Customer Loyalty	5	0.735	0.872
Overall Reliability	23	0.721	0.851

The primary data for the study is collected using a structured questionnaire, designed based on established scales from previous studies and adapted to the context of online food delivery services. The questionnaire consists of two sections: the first section captures demographic details of respondents, while the second section measures the study variables, including service quality, delivery time, promotional offers, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. All items are measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree,” which is widely used in behavioural research for its simplicity and effectiveness in capturing respondent attitudes.

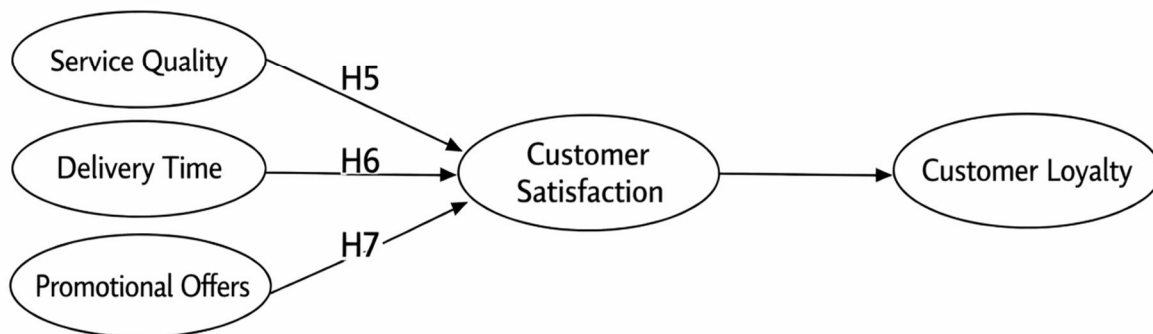
The collected data is analysed using a combination of descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Descriptive statistics such as mean, percentage, and standard deviation are used to summarize respondent characteristics and general trends. Reliability analysis is performed using Cronbach’s alpha to ensure internal consistency of the constructs. Validity of the measurement model is assessed through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). To test the hypothesized relationships and mediation effects, Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is employed using software such as AMOS. Additionally, correlation and regression analyses are used to examine the strength and direction of relationships among variables. These statistical techniques provide a comprehensive and rigorous framework for analysing the factors influencing customer loyalty in online food delivery services.

IX. PROPOSED MODEL

Direct Relationships



Mediation Relationships



The proposed model examines how key service-related factors influence customer loyalty, both directly and indirectly, through customer satisfaction as a mediating variable. Specifically, service quality, delivery time, and promotional offers are treated as independent variables that significantly affect customer satisfaction, which in turn enhances customer loyalty. Additionally, promotional offers are assumed to have a direct positive impact on customer loyalty, while customer satisfaction itself serves as a strong predictor of loyalty. The model further proposes that customer satisfaction mediates the relationships between service quality, delivery time, and promotional offers with customer loyalty, thereby highlighting its critical role in transforming service experiences into long-term customer commitment.

X. PROPOSED CONCEPTUAL MODEL

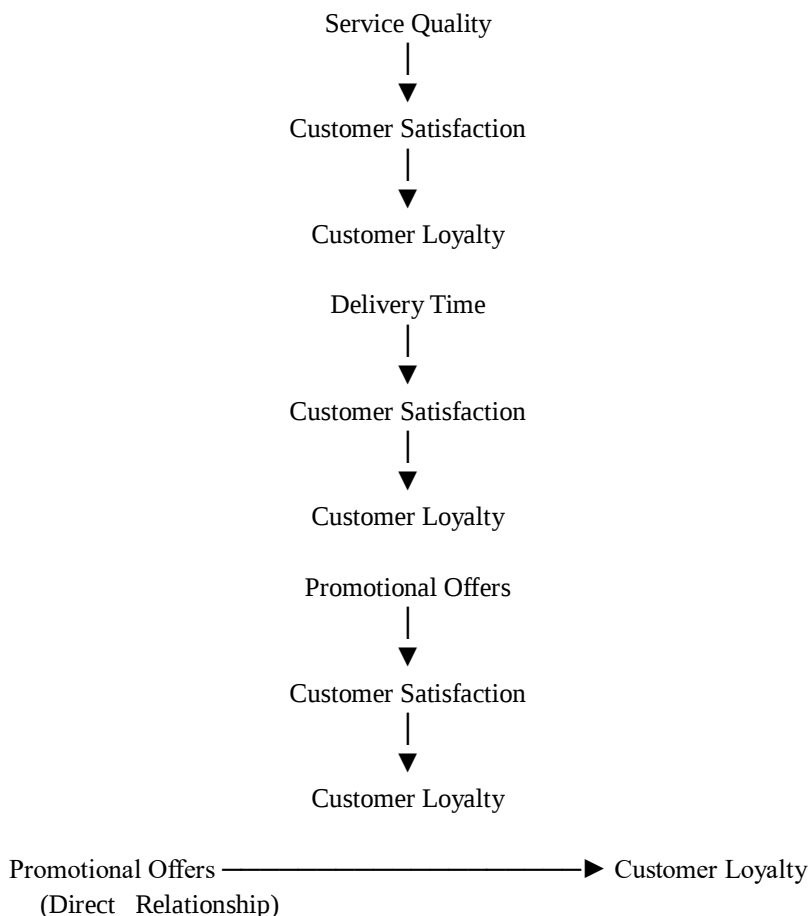


Figure 2: Proposed Conceptual Model of Factors Influencing Customer Loyalty in Online Food Delivery Services

Figure Description

The proposed conceptual model examines the influence of service quality, delivery time, and promotional offers on customer loyalty in online food delivery services. Customer satisfaction is proposed as a mediating variable that explains the indirect effects of these service-related factors on customer loyalty. In addition, promotional offers are expected to exert a direct influence on customer loyalty. The model aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to customer retention and long-term loyalty in online food delivery platforms.

Table 4: Structural Relationship among Variables

Relationship	Path Coefficient (β)	Significance
Service Quality $\rightarrow$ Customer Satisfaction	0.72	Significant
Delivery Time $\rightarrow$ Customer Satisfaction	0.65	Significant
Promotional Offers $\rightarrow$ Customer Satisfaction	0.58	Significant
Customer Satisfaction $\rightarrow$ Customer Loyalty	0.81	Significant
Promotional Offers $\rightarrow$ Customer Loyalty	0.42	Significant

XI. DISCUSSION

The study demonstrates that service quality plays a crucial role in shaping customer satisfaction within online food delivery platforms. Reliable service, accurate order fulfillment, and responsive customer support contribute significantly to positive customer experiences. Delivery time also emerged as an important factor, indicating that customers highly value prompt and accurate deliveries.

Promotional offers were found to positively influence both customer satisfaction and loyalty. Discounts, cash back rewards, and special offers encourage repeat purchases and enhance customer engagement. However, service quality remains the most influential factor, suggesting that promotional incentives alone may not sustain loyalty unless supported by consistent service performance.

The strong relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty confirms that satisfied customers are more likely to remain loyal to online food delivery platforms. This finding supports the theoretical argument that customer satisfaction serves as a critical mechanism through which service experiences are transformed into long-term loyalty behaviour.

XII. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 1) Food delivery platforms should prioritize service quality improvement to enhance customer satisfaction.
- 2) Faster and more reliable delivery systems can strengthen customer retention.
- 3) Promotional campaigns should be strategically designed to complement service quality initiatives.
- 4) Customer feedback mechanisms should be continuously monitored to improve service performance and loyalty outcomes.

XIII. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- 1) The study is limited to respondents from Coimbatore and may not fully represent consumers from other regions.
- 2) The research focuses only on service quality, delivery time, promotional offers, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty; other variables such as trust, perceived value, and app usability were not included.
- 3) Data were collected using a cross-sectional survey design, which captures customer perceptions at a single point in time.
- 4) Consumer preferences and market conditions may change over time, affecting the generalizability of the findings.
- 5) The study is limited to online food delivery platform users and does not include perspectives from restaurants or delivery partners.

XIV. FUTURE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study provides valuable insights into the factors influencing customer loyalty in online food delivery services. However, there are several opportunities for future research. Future studies may include additional variables such as trust, perceived value, app usability, food quality, brand image, and customer engagement to develop a more comprehensive understanding of customer loyalty behaviour. Researchers may also explore the moderating effects of demographic factors such as age, income, education, and frequency of platform usage.

Furthermore, comparative studies can be conducted across different cities, states, or countries to identify regional variations in customer preferences and loyalty patterns. Future research may also examine customer loyalty across different online food delivery platforms such as Swiggy, Zomato, Uber Eats, and other emerging platforms to assess competitive differences. Longitudinal studies can provide deeper insights into how customer satisfaction and loyalty evolve over time in response to changing market conditions and technological advancements. Additionally, qualitative approaches such as interviews and focus group discussions may be employed to gain a richer understanding of customer expectations and experiences. The integration of advanced analytical techniques, including Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, can further enhance the prediction and analysis of customer loyalty behaviour in the digital food delivery ecosystem.

XV. CONCLUSION

The study examined the impact of service quality, delivery time, and promotional offers on customer loyalty in online food delivery services, with customer satisfaction acting as a mediating variable. The findings reveal that all three factors significantly influence customer satisfaction and loyalty, with service quality emerging as the most important determinant. Reliable, responsive, and efficient service delivery plays a crucial role in creating positive customer experiences. Delivery time was also identified as a key factor affecting customer satisfaction and repeat purchase behavior. Timely and accurate deliveries enhance customer trust and encourage continued use of online food delivery platforms. In addition, promotional offers such as discounts, cashback rewards, and loyalty programs positively influence customer engagement, retention, and overall satisfaction.

The study confirms that customer satisfaction serves as a vital link between service experiences and long-term customer loyalty. Satisfied customers are more likely to reuse the platform, recommend it to others, and remain loyal over time. Therefore, online food delivery providers should focus on improving service quality, delivery efficiency, and promotional strategies to strengthen customer relationships and achieve sustainable growth in the competitive digital marketplace.

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