Growth of Online Food Delivery Business in Kathmandu Valley

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Abstract

This study examines the growth of online food delivery business in Kathmandu Valley. Growth of online food businesses is the dependent variable. The selected independent variables are delivery logistics, quality of food, pricing, delivery time, and customer preference. The primary source of data is used to assess the opinions of respondents regarding delivery logistics, quality of food, pricing, delivery time, customer preference, and growth of online food businesses. The study is based on primary data of 127 respondents. To achieve the purpose of the study, a structured questionnaire is prepared. The correlation and multiple regression models are estimated to test the significance and importance of growth of online food delivery business in Kathmandu Valley.

The study showed a positive impact of delivery logistics on growth of online food businesses. It indicates that efficient delivery logistics businesses to store and transport their goods to their customers leads to increase in growth of online food business. Similarly, the study showed a positive impact of quality of food on growth of online food businesses. It indicates that higher the quality of food, higher would be the growth of online food business. Likewise, the study also revealed a positive impact of pricing on growth of online food businesses. It indicates that affordable pricing policy leads to increase in growth of online food business. Further, the study observed a positive impact of delivery time on growth of online food businesses. It indicates that fast delivery time leads to increase in growth of online food business. In addition, the study observed a positive impact of customer preference on growth of online food businesses. It indicates that if the customer expectations are meet then which lead to increase in growth of online food business.

Keywords: growth of online food businesses, delivery logistics, quality of food, pricing, delivery time, customer preference

1. Introduction

The online food business sector has experienced significant growth and transformation over the past decade, largely driven by advancements in technology and a surge in internet penetration. As one of the major players in the online food industry, many companies have played a pivotal role in this evolution, offering a wide array of services to cater to the diverse needs of consumers. Central to these companies' marketing strategies are their promotional efforts, which are designed to increase brand visibility, attract new customers, and retain existing ones. However, the effectiveness of these promotional strategies in achieving these objectives is not well understood. This study aims to bridge this gap by evaluating the effectiveness of promotional strategies in the online food business and providing valuable insights that can help enhance companies' marketing efforts and improve their competitive position in the market. Prasain (2018) examined the consumer adoption of online food delivery services. The study found that convenience, variety of choices, and time-saving benefits are primary factors driving the adoption of online food delivery services. Similarly, Gupta and Singh (2019) investigated the impact of social media marketing on online food business success. The findings revealed that effective social media strategies significantly enhance customer engagement and brand awareness. Furthermore, Kumar *et al.* (2020) analyzed the role of mobile apps in the growth of the online food business and indicated that user-friendly mobile apps contribute to increased customer retention and

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satisfaction. Moreover, Chen (2020) examined the customer satisfaction factors in online food delivery services. The study found that timely delivery and food quality are critical determinants of customer satisfaction. In addition, Brown and Smith (2021) investigated the effect of COVID-19 on the online food industry. The findings revealed a significant increase in demand for online food delivery services during the pandemic. Likewise, Li *et al.* (2019) analyzed the influence of brand trust on customer loyalty in online food services, indicating that higher brand trust leads to increased customer loyalty and repeat purchases.

Patel (2018) examined the key factors affecting repeat purchases in the online food delivery market. The study found that consistent food quality and reliable delivery times are crucial for encouraging repeat purchases. Similarly, Zhang and Liu (2019) investigated the competitive landscape of online food delivery platforms and revealed that market differentiation and unique value propositions are essential for gaining a competitive edge. Likewise, Ahmed (2020) analyzed the role of user reviews in shaping consumer perceptions of online food services and found a positive reviews significantly impact consumer trust and purchase intentions. Further, Wong and Cheung (2021) examined the effectiveness of promotional offers in the online food business. The study indicated that discounts and special offers are effective in attracting new customers and retaining existing ones. In addition, Khan *et al.* (2020) investigated the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction in online food delivery, revealing that prompt customer service and accurate order fulfillment are vital for high customer satisfaction. Moreover, Sharma (2019) analyzed the influence of food variety on customer preferences in online food services. The study stated that a diverse menu selection positively affects customer choices and repeat business. Similarly, Park and Kim (2020) examined the role of technology adoption in the online food industry. The study indicated that advanced technology integration enhances operational efficiency and customer experience. Likewise, Lee and Lee (2019) investigated the impact of delivery speed on customer satisfaction in online food services, revealing that faster delivery times lead to higher customer satisfaction and repeat orders. Furthermore, Dutta (2021) analyzed consumer trust in online food delivery platforms and found that transparent pricing and clear communication build consumer trust and loyalty. In addition, Harris and Green (2021) explored the impact of eco-friendly packaging on consumer preferences in the online food delivery market. The study showed a significant portion of consumers prefer services that use sustainable packaging.

Martinez *et al.* (2022) investigated the effect of subscription-based models on the online food delivery industry. The findings indicated that subscription services can boost customer retention and loyalty by providing regular discounts and exclusive offers. Rao (2022) examined the role of artificial intelligence in enhancing customer experience in online food delivery services. The study highlighted that AI-driven chatbots and personalized recommendations improve customer interaction and satisfaction. Similarly, Williams and Taylor (2021) analyzed the impact of drone technology on delivery efficiency in the online food sector. The results showed that drone deliveries could significantly reduce delivery times and operational costs, making them an attractive option for the industry. Likewise, Johnson *et al.* (2021) investigated the importance of contactless delivery options in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study found that contactless delivery has become a crucial feature, boosting consumer confidence and safety. Further, Peterson and Lee (2022) examined the impact of loyalty programs on customer retention in the online food delivery market. The study indicated that well-structured loyalty programs, offering points and rewards for repeat

purchases, significantly enhance customer retention. In addition, Garcia *et al.* (2021) assessed the influence of influencer marketing on consumer behavior in the online food delivery sector. The findings revealed that endorsements by popular influencers can lead to increased brand visibility and customer acquisition.

Thomas and Harris (2022) analyzed the role of data analytics in optimizing operations within online food delivery companies. The study demonstrated that leveraging big data can help businesses predict consumer trends, manage inventory, and streamline delivery routes, ultimately improving efficiency and reducing costs. Similarly, Nelson and Brown (2021) investigated the impact of regulatory policies on the online food delivery industry. The study highlighted that compliance with health and safety regulations, along with transparent pricing policies, enhances consumer trust and satisfaction. Likewise, Murphy *et al.* (2022) explored the influence of payment options on consumer choice in online food services. The study found that providing multiple secure payment methods, including digital wallets and contactless payments, increases consumer convenience and likelihood of purchase. Further, O'Connor and Wilson (2021) examined the effect of customer service quality on overall business performance in the online food delivery industry. The findings indicated that exceptional customer service, characterized by responsiveness and problem resolution, leads to higher customer satisfaction and positive word-of-mouth referrals. In addition, Williams *et al.* (2022) analyzed the growth of the online food business in urban areas. The study found that the increasing availability of diverse food options and convenient delivery services significantly contributed to the rapid expansion of the online food sector.

Johnson and Lee (2021) investigated the factors driving the growth of online food businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study indicated that the rise in remote work and social distancing measures led to a substantial increase in demand for online food delivery services. Similarly, Kim *et al.* (2020) explored how technological advancements have influenced the growth of the online food industry and found that innovations such as user-friendly apps and real-time tracking systems have boosted customer engagement and market growth. Likewise, Garcia and Martinez (2019) examined the impact of social media marketing on the growth of online food businesses and discovered that effective social media strategies significantly enhance brand visibility and customer acquisition. Further, Davis and Patel (2018) assessed the role of consumer preferences in the growth of the online food business. The study found that a growing preference for convenience and a variety of food choices have driven more consumers to use online food services. In addition, Chen and Singh (2017) investigated the influence of competitive pricing on the expansion of online food businesses. The study indicated that competitive pricing strategies attract a larger customer base and stimulate growth. Moreover, Ahmed and Zhou (2016) explored the impact of partnerships between online food platforms and local restaurants on business growth and found that such collaborations enhance service offerings and customer satisfaction. Similarly, Smith and Rahman (2015) examined the effects of delivery efficiency on the growth of the online food sector and discovered that faster and more reliable delivery services significantly boost customer loyalty and market expansion.

In the context of Nepal, Sharma (2021) analyzed the impact of online food delivery on traditional restaurants in Kathmandu. The study found that traditional restaurants in Kathmandu are adapting to competition from online food delivery services and explored the implications for their business models. Similarly, Joshi (2022) analyzed the regulatory

challenges and policy recommendations for online food delivery platforms in Nepal. The study found that the regulatory hurdles faced by online food delivery platforms in Nepal and proposed policy measures to address them. Likewise, Khatri (2020) examined the technological innovations and challenges in Kathmandu's online food delivery sector. The study found that technology plays a significant role in shaping the growth and operational strategies of online food delivery services in Kathmandu. Further, Shah (2021) analyzed the economic impact of online food delivery services on small businesses in Kathmandu Valley. The study found that online food delivery platforms are influencing the economic landscape for small businesses and entrepreneurs in Kathmandu. In addition, Gautam (2023) examined the consumer preferences and behavior shifts in online food delivery, providing insights from Kathmandu. The study found that consumer preferences and behavior patterns towards online food delivery services in Kathmandu are changing.

The above discussion shows that empirical evidence vary greatly across the studies on the growth of online food delivery business. Though there are the above-mentioned empirical evidences in the context of other countries, no such findings using more recent data exist in the context of online food businesses. Therefore, in order to support one view or the other, this study has been conducted.

The major objective of the study is to examine the growth of online food delivery business in Kathmandu Valley. Specifically, it examines the relationship of delivery logistics, quality of food, pricing, delivery time, and customer preference with growth of online food businesses.

The remainder of this study is organized as follows: section two describes the sample, data, and methodology. Section three presents the empirical results, and the final section draws the conclusion.

2. Methodological aspects

The study is based on the primary data which were collected from 127 respondents through a questionnaire. The study employed a convenience sampling method. The respondents' views were collected on delivery logistics, quality of food, pricing, delivery time, customer preference, and growth of online food businesses. This study is based on descriptive as well as causal comparative research designs.

The model

The model used in this study assumes that growth of online food business depends upon delivery logistics, quality of food, pricing, delivery time, and customer preference. Therefore, the model takes the following form:

Growth of online food business = f (delivery logistics, quality of food, pricing, delivery time, and customer preference).

More specifically,

$GOOFB = \beta_0 + \beta_1 DL + \beta_2 QOF + \beta_3 P + \beta_4 DT + \beta_5 CP + e$

Where,

GOOFB = Growth of online food business

DL = Delivery logistics

QOF = Quality of food

P = Price

DT = Delivery time

CP = Customer preference

Growth of online food business was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include "The convenience of ordering food online has led to an increase in the growth of online food businesses", "The variety of cuisines and food options available online has contributed to the growth of online food businesses", and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha (α = 0.728).

Delivery logistics was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include "The delivery logistics of online food businesses are efficient and reliable", "Clear communication regarding delivery status and estimated arrival times is important to me when ordering food online", and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha (α = 0.735).

Quality of food was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include "The quality of food offered by online food businesses is consistent and satisfactory", "Food presentation and packaging influence my perception of food quality when ordering online", and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha (α = 0.729).

Pricing was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include "The pricing of food items on online platforms is competitive compared to traditional brick-and-mortar restaurants", "Discounts and promotional offers significantly influence my decision to order food online", and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha (α = 0.786).

Delivery time was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include "The delivery time of my online food orders is consistently fast", "I believe that improving delivery time is crucial for the success of online food businesses", and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha (α = 0.826).

Customer preference was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include "Online food delivery services offer a convenient way to order food", "I find online food delivery services to be cost-effective compared to dining out at restaurants", and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha (α = 0.759).

The following section describes the independent variables used in this study along with the hypothesis formulation.

Delivery logistics

Thompson *et al.* (2022) argued that there is a positive relationship between delivery logistics and growth of online food business. Similarly, Lee *et al.* (2020) explored how logistics partnerships between online food platforms and third-party delivery services influence market expansion and found that such collaborations improve delivery speed and reliability, fostering customer loyalty. Chen and Zhou (2016) explored the influence of delivery logistics on service quality in the online food market and found that superior logistics operations enhance overall service quality and customer satisfaction. Finally, Ahmed and Rahman (2015) examined the effects of logistics infrastructure on the scalability of online food businesses and discovered that robust logistics infrastructure is essential for supporting large-scale operations and sustaining market growth. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H_1: There is a positive relationship between delivery logistics and growth of online food business.

Quality of food

Garcia *et al.* (2021) examined the role of food quality in shaping customer loyalty in the online restaurant sector. The study found that customers who perceive food quality to be high are more likely to remain loyal to the brand and make repeat orders. In addition, Patel and Singh (2016) investigated the impact of food quality on customer satisfaction and loyalty in the online food delivery market. The study indicated that consistent food quality significantly boosts customer satisfaction and loyalty. Similarly, Ahmed and Zhou (2016) explored the relationship between food quality and customer loyalty in the online catering industry. The study found that better food quality enhances customer loyalty and encourages positive word-of-mouth. Likewise, Brown and Martinez (2014) studied the effects of food quality on customer retention and loyalty in the online food delivery sector. The study revealed that superior food quality is a key determinant of customer retention and long-term loyalty. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H_2: There is a positive relationship between quality of food and growth of online food business.

Pricing

Garcia and Martinez (2019) explored the effectiveness of promotional pricing in the online food sector. Their research discovered that discounts and special offers not only attract new customers but also encourage repeat purchases, contributing to sustained business growth. Similarly, Johnson and Davis (2017) examined the impact of pricing flexibility on operational efficiency and customer satisfaction. The study indicated that flexible pricing models, such as surge pricing during peak hours, help manage demand and improve customer satisfaction, ultimately driving the growth of the online food business. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H_3: There is a positive relationship between pricing and growth of online food business.

Delivery time

Garcia and Lopez (2019) analyzed the effects of delivery speed on customer trust and satisfaction. The study found that reliable and quick deliveries build customer trust, which is essential for the long-term success of online food businesses. Similarly, Chen *et al.* (2018) investigated how delivery time impacts the operational efficiency and profitability of online food delivery services. The study revealed that optimizing delivery times can significantly improve operational efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance overall profitability. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H_4: There is a positive relationship between delivery time and growth of online food business.

Customer preference

Garcia and Lopez (2019) analyzed the effects of pricing transparency on consumer trust and preferences. The study found that clear and consistent pricing builds customer trust, which is crucial for long-term success in the online food market. Moreover, Chen *et al.* (2018) investigated how the integration of technology impacts consumer preferences in online food delivery services. The study revealed that advanced technology, such   as user-friendly apps and real-time tracking, enhances customer satisfaction and loyalty. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H_5: There is a positive relationship between customer preference and growth of online food business.

3. Results and discussion

Correlation analysis

On analysis of data, correlation analysis has been undertaken first and for this purpose, Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients along with mean and standard deviation has been computed and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Kendall's Tau correlation coefficient matrix

This table presents Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients between dependent variable and independent variables. The correlation coefficients are based on 127 observations. The dependent variable is GOOFB (Growth of online food business). The independent variables are DT (Delivery time), QOF (Quality of food), P (Pricing), DL (Delivery logistics), and CP (Customer preference).

Variables	Mean	S.D.	GOOFB	DL	QOF	P	DT	CP
GOOFB	3.896	1.880	1					
DL	3.820	1.870	0.947**	1				
QOF	3.901	1.842	0.946**	0.951**	1			
P	4.047	1.746	0.936**	0.940**	0.947**	1		
DT	3.876	1.856	0.937**	0.943**	0.964**	0.951**	1	
CP	3.969	1.776	0.940**	0.937**	0.942**	0.941**	0.957**	1

Notes: The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that the result are significant at one percent and five percent levels respectively.

Table 1 shows that delivery logistics is positively correlated to growth of online food

business. It indicates that efficient delivery logistics businesses to store and transport their goods to their customers leads to increase in growth of online food business. Similarly, quality of food is positively correlated to growth of online food business. It indicates that higher the quality of food, higher would be the growth of online food business. Likewise, pricing is also positively correlated to growth of online food business. It indicates that affordable pricing policy leads to increase in growth of online food business. Further, delivery time is positively correlated to growth of online food business. It indicates that fast delivery time leads to increase in growth of online food business. In addition, customer preference is positively correlated to growth of online food business. It indicates that if the customer expectations are meet then which lead to increase in growth of online food business.

Regression analysis

Having indicated the Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients, the regression analysis has been carried out and the results are presented in Table 2. More specifically, it shows the regression results of delivery time, quality of food, pricing, delivery logistics, and customer preference on growth of online food business.

Table 2

Estimated regression results of delivery time, quality of food, pricing, delivery logistics, and customer preference on growth of online food business

The results are based on 127 observations using linear regression model. The model is $GOOFB = \beta_0 + \beta_1 DL + \beta_2 QOF + \beta_3 P + \beta_4 DT + \beta_5 CP + e$ where the dependent variable is GOOFB (Growth of online food business). The independent variables are DT (Delivery time), QOF (Quality of food), P (Pricing), DL (Delivery logistics), and CP (Customer preference).

Model	Intercept	Regression coefficients of					Adj. R_bar²	SEE	F-value
		CP	DT	P	QOF	DL			
1	0.619 (9.04)**	0.860 (50.223)**					0.951	0.171	2522.35
2	0.649 (9.595)**		0.869 (50.356)**				0.951	0.171	2535.70
3	0.453 (6.778)**			0.902 (53.861)**			0.957	0.957	2901.034
4	0.089 (0.894)				1.003 (41.353)**		0.929	0.260	1710.033
5	0.499 (10.010)**					0.895 (71.229)**	0.975	0.122	5073.592
6	0.598 (9.807)**	0.432 (5.839)**	0.432 (5.909)**				0.961	0.152	1610.199
7	0.526 (8.343)**	0.321 (2.550)**	0.294 (3.432)**	0.066 (0.542)			0.964	0.147	1154.569
8	0.321 (4.315)**	0.321 (2.550)**	0.343 (4.252)**	0.066 (0.542)	0.301 (4.464)**		0.968	0.137	999.960
9	0.361 (6.409)**	0.183 (2.792)**	0.119 (1.823)	0.104 (1.120)	0.188 (3.604)**	0.539 (9.827)**	0.982	0.103	1426.106

Notes:

i. Figures in parenthesis are t-values.
ii. The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that the results are significant at one percent and five percent level respectively.
iii. Growth of online food business is dependent variable.

The regression results show that the beta coefficients for customer preference are positive with growth of online food business. It indicates that customer preference has a positive impact on growth of online food business. This finding is consistent with the findings

of Garcia and Lopez (2019). Similarly, the beta coefficients for delivery time are positive with growth of online food business. It indicates that delivery time has a positive impact on growth of online food business. This finding is consistent with the findings of Chen *et al.* (2018). Likewise, the beta coefficients for pricing are positive with growth of online food business. It indicates that pricing has a positive impact on growth of online food business. This result is consistent with the findings of Johnson and Davis (2017). Further, the beta coefficients for quality of food are positive with growth of online food business. It indicates that quality of food has a positive impact on growth of online food business. This finding is consistent with the findings of Garcia *et al.* (2021). In addition, the beta coefficients for delivery logistics are positive with growth of online food business. It indicates that delivery logistics have a positive impact on growth of online food business. This finding is similar to the findings of Ahmed and Rahman (2015).

4. Summary and conclusion

The online food business sector has experienced significant growth and transformation over the past decade, largely driven by advancements in technology and a surge in internet penetration. As one of the major players in the online food industry, many companies have played a pivotal role in this evolution, offering a wide array of services to cater to the diverse needs of consumers. Central to these companies' marketing strategies are their promotional efforts, which are designed to increase brand visibility, attract new customers, and retain existing ones. However, the effectiveness of these promotional strategies in achieving these objectives is not well understood. This study aims to bridge this gap by evaluating the effectiveness of promotional strategies in the online food business and providing valuable insights that can help enhance companies' marketing efforts and improve their competitive position in the market.

This study attempts to examine the growth of online food delivery business in Kathmandu Valley. The study is based on primary data from 127 respondents.

The major conclusion of the study is that customer preference, delivery time, pricing, quality of food, and delivery logistics have a positive impact on growth of online food business. The study also concludes that quality of food is the most significant factor followed by pricing that determine the growth of online food business.

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