

Exploring the Role of Hedonic Motivation in Customer Satisfaction with Online Food Delivery: An AHP Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of hedonic motivation in customer satisfaction with online food delivery services using the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP). Hedonic motivation refers to the pursuit of pleasure and enjoyment, which includes factors such as the enjoyment of the ordering process, visual appeal of food, variety, novelty, and instant gratification. Through a detailed AHP analysis, this research evaluates how these hedonic factors influence customer satisfaction and identifies which online food delivery platforms best cater to these desires. The study finds that Zomato ranks highest in satisfying hedonic motivations due to its diverse food options, visually appealing presentations, and novel offerings. Swiggy excels in convenience and the enjoyment of the ordering process but falls short in novelty and variety. Uber Eats is identified as needing improvement in several hedonic aspects to enhance customer satisfaction. The findings provide actionable insights for managers aiming to enhance service quality and competitive positioning in the online food delivery market.

Keywords: Hedonic Motivation, Customer Satisfaction, Online Food Delivery, Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP), Service Quality, Consumer Behavior, Food Presentation, Novelty, Variety, Convenience

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the online food delivery market has experienced rapid growth, driven by increasing consumer demand for convenience and a diverse range of dining options. Alongside this functional motivation, hedonic motivation—the desire for pleasurable experiences—has become a significant factor influencing customer behavior in online food delivery services. Hedonic motivations include the enjoyment of the ordering process, excitement from trying new dishes, and visual appeal of food, all of which play a crucial role in shaping customer satisfaction (Babin et al., 1994). As competition in the online food delivery industry intensifies, understanding how these hedonic factors affect customer satisfaction can provide platforms with a competitive edge.

Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) is an effective decision-making tool that allows for the systematic evaluation of multiple criteria, making it well-suited for analyzing how hedonic motivations impact customer satisfaction. AHP enables the prioritization of various factors based on customer preferences, providing valuable insights for platforms looking to enhance their services (Saaty, 1980). By applying AHP to evaluate online food delivery platforms, this study aims to explore the role of hedonic motivations in driving customer satisfaction and identify which platforms perform best in catering to these desires.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The online food delivery industry has evolved significantly, with hedonic motivations playing an increasingly critical role in consumer decision-making. Hedonic motivation refers to the pursuit of pleasure and enjoyment, which often transcends functional needs and influences consumer satisfaction and loyalty. This literature review examines the role of hedonic

motivation in online food delivery services, supported by various studies that highlight its importance in consumer behavior.

Hedonic motivation has been widely studied in the context of consumer behavior, emphasizing the emotional and sensory experiences that drive purchasing decisions. Babin, Darden, and Griffin (1994) introduced the concept of hedonic and utilitarian shopping value, noting that hedonic motivations are tied to the emotional satisfaction derived from the shopping experience. Similarly, Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) explored how hedonic consumption involves the pleasure derived from engaging in an activity, which is pertinent to online food delivery services where sensory enjoyment plays a significant role. In the context of online food delivery, hedonic motivations include the enjoyment of the ordering process, excitement from trying new and diverse food options, and the visual appeal of food. Research by Lu et al. (2015) demonstrates that visual aesthetics and novelty significantly impact consumer satisfaction in online food platforms. Additionally, Kim and Kim (2019) found that users are drawn to platforms that offer unique and visually appealing food options, enhancing their overall hedonic experience.

The visual appeal of food is a crucial component of hedonic motivation. Research by Ryu and Jang (2008) indicates that the presentation of food significantly influences customer satisfaction and perception of quality. This finding is supported by Zhang et al. (2020), who argue that high-quality images and descriptions enhance the sensory appeal and attractiveness of online food offerings, making them more appealing to customers seeking pleasurable experiences. The variety and novelty of food options also play a significant role in hedonic motivation. Research by Lee et al. (2013) shows that diverse food choices and innovative offerings can enhance customer satisfaction by providing new and exciting experiences. Similarly, He et al. (2021) highlight that platforms offering trendy and unique food items cater to consumers' desire for novelty, which is a key driver of hedonic motivation.

Convenience and instant gratification are important factors in online food delivery services. According to Zhang et al. (2018), ease of use and quick delivery times contribute to the overall satisfaction of users by fulfilling their desire for convenience and immediate pleasure. This aligns with the findings of Lim and Kim (2020), who note that the speed and efficiency of the delivery process can enhance the hedonic experience by minimizing wait times and maximizing satisfaction. Hedonic motivation not only influences customer satisfaction but also impacts loyalty and repeat patronage. Research by Choi et al. (2019) shows that customers who experience high levels of hedonic satisfaction are more likely to develop brand loyalty and engage in repeat purchases. This is supported by the work of Chang and Tseng (2021), who found that positive hedonic experiences significantly increase customer retention in the online food delivery sector.

The Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) is a valuable tool for evaluating complex decision-making criteria, including hedonic motivations. Saaty (1980) established AHP as a method for prioritizing multiple criteria and making informed decisions. In the context of online food delivery, AHP can help identify which hedonic factors are most influential in customer satisfaction, as demonstrated by recent studies such as those by Kuo et al. (2019) and Wang et al. (2021), who applied AHP to assess various service attributes and their impact on customer preferences. Understanding the role of hedonic motivation in online food delivery services has important managerial implications. As highlighted by Choi et al. (2020), integrating hedonic factors into service design and marketing strategies can enhance customer satisfaction and competitive advantage. Managers should focus on improving visual appeal, offering diverse and innovative food options, and ensuring a pleasurable ordering experience to meet the hedonic needs of consumers.

PROPOSED MODEL

The proposed model in this study integrates hedonic motivation factors into an evaluation framework for online food delivery services, using the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) to systematically assess their impact on customer satisfaction. This model is designed to capture the multifaceted nature of hedonic motivation, encompassing key attributes such as the enjoyment of the ordering process, visual appeal of food, variety of food options, novelty and trendiness, and convenience and instant gratification.

In this model (Figure 1), each attribute is assigned a weight based on its relative importance, derived from pairwise comparisons made through AHP. These weights reflect how much each factor contributes to the overall hedonic experience. The model evaluates different online food delivery platforms against these attributes, providing a quantitative assessment of their performance in meeting customer desires for pleasurable experiences.

The proposed model aims to offer a comprehensive understanding of how hedonic factors influence customer satisfaction. By identifying which platforms excel in delivering on these hedonic motivations, the model provides valuable insights for service providers to enhance their offerings. It also assists in strategic decision-making by highlighting areas where improvements can be made to better align with customer preferences and enhance overall satisfaction.

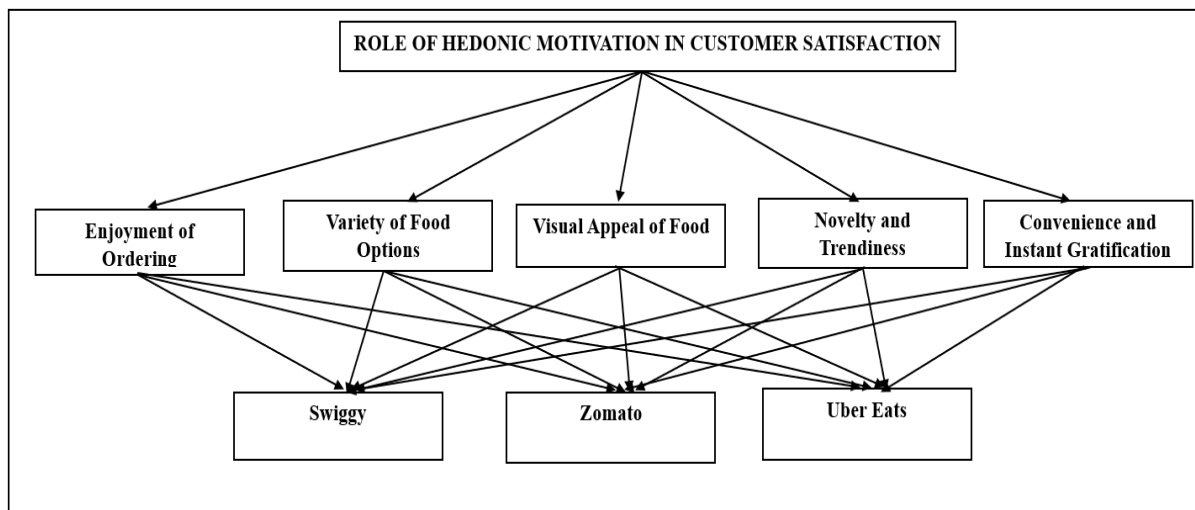


Figure 1: Proposed Model for the study

AHP ANALYSIS

The pairwise comparison matrix for attributes reveals the relative importance of each hedonic factor in determining customer satisfaction. Among the attributes, Variety of Food Options (VFO) holds the highest weight at 0.337, indicating that consumers place significant importance on the diversity and range of food choices available. This is followed by Enjoyment of Ordering Process (EOP) and Convenience and Instant Gratification (CIG) with weights of 0.211 and 0.209, respectively, suggesting that the pleasure derived from the ordering experience and quick, convenient service are also crucial. Visual Appeal of Food (VAF) and Novelty and Trendiness (NT) have lower weights, at 0.141 and 0.102, respectively, showing that while these factors contribute to the hedonic experience, they are less critical compared to variety and convenience.

Attributes	EOP	VFO	VAF	NT	CIG	Priority (Weights)
Enjoyment of Ordering (EOP)	1	1/2	2	3	4	0.211
Variety of Food Options (VFO)	2	1	3	4	5	0.337
Visual Appeal of Food (VAF)	1/2	1/3	1	2	3	0.141
Novelty and Trendiness (NT)	1/3	1/4	1/2	1	2	0.102
Convenience and Instant Gratification (CIG)	1/4	1/5	1/3	1/2	1	0.209

When comparing the alternatives based on each attribute, Uber Eats stands out in the Enjoyment of Ordering Process (EOP) with the highest priority of 0.460, reflecting its superior user experience. In Variety of Food Options (VFO), Zomato leads with a priority of 0.513, indicating that it offers the most diverse food choices. For Visual Appeal of Food (VAF), Zomato

again performs best with a priority of 0.558, suggesting that its food presentation is the most appealing. In terms of Novelty and Trendiness (NT), Zomato also excels with a priority of 0.564, demonstrating its strong appeal in offering trendy food options. Finally, for Convenience and Instant Gratification (CIG), Zomato has the highest priority of 0.531, indicating it provides the most convenient and quick service among the alternatives.

(i) Enjoyment of Ordering Process (EOP)

Alternatives	Swiggy	Zomato	Uber Eats	Priority
Swiggy	1	2	1/2	0.333
Zomato	1/2	1	1/3	0.207
Uber Eats	2	3	1	0.460

(ii) Variety of Food Options (VFO)

Alternatives	Swiggy	Zomato	Uber Eats	Priority
Swiggy	1	1/2	3	0.333
Zomato	2	1	4	0.513
Uber Eats	1/3	1/4	1	0.154

(iii) Visual Appeal of Food (VAF)

Alternatives	Swiggy	Zomato	Uber Eats	Priority
Swiggy	1	1/2	2	0.307
Zomato	2	1	3	0.558
Uber Eats	1/2	1/3	1	0.135

(iv) Novelty and Trendiness (NT)

Alternatives	Swiggy	Zomato	Uber Eats	Priority
Swiggy	1	1/3	2	0.260
Zomato	3	1	4	0.564
Uber Eats	1/2	1/4	1	0.176

(v) Convenience and Instant Gratification (CIG)

Alternatives	Swiggy	Zomato	Uber Eats	Priority
Swiggy	1	1/2	3	0.355
Zomato	2	1	4	0.531
Uber Eats	1/3	1/4	1	0.114

Based on the AHP analysis, Zomato emerges as the most preferred online food delivery service in terms of customer satisfaction driven by hedonic motivation, with an overall priority score of 0.465. This suggests that Zomato performs well across most of the hedonic motivation criteria, particularly in terms of offering a variety of food options, visual appeal, and novelty. Swiggy follows with a score of 0.326, excelling in convenience and enjoyment of the ordering process. Uber Eats, although competitive in some aspects, ranks lowest with an overall score of 0.210, indicating it may not fulfill hedonic motivations to the same extent as the other platforms.

Alternatives	EOP (0.211)	VFO (0.337)	VAF (0.141)	NT (0.102)	CIG (0.209)	Overall Priority
Swiggy	$0.333 \times 0.211 = 0.070$	$0.333 \times 0.337 = 0.112$	$0.307 \times 0.141 = 0.043$	$0.260 \times 0.102 = 0.027$	$0.355 \times 0.209 = 0.074$	0.326
Zomato	$0.207 \times 0.211 = 0.044$	$0.513 \times 0.337 = 0.173$	$0.558 \times 0.141 = 0.079$	$0.564 \times 0.102 = 0.058$	$0.531 \times 0.209 = 0.111$	0.465

Alternatives	EOP (0.211)	VFO (0.337)	VAF (0.141)	NT (0.102)	CIG (0.209)	Overall Priority
Uber Eats	$0.460 \times 0.211 = 0.097$	$0.154 \times 0.337 = 0.052$	$0.135 \times 0.141 = 0.019$	$0.176 \times 0.102 = 0.018$	$0.114 \times 0.209 = 0.024$	0.210

OBSERVATION

The AHP analysis reveals that Zomato ranks highest in satisfying customer expectations driven by hedonic motivations in online food delivery services. This platform's strengths lie in offering a diverse variety of food options, visually appealing food presentations, and its ability to offer trendy and novel dishes, which significantly contribute to the overall customer experience. Customers appear to value the excitement and sensory pleasure that comes with exploring new and appealing food options, making these factors pivotal in determining satisfaction. They stand out in terms of convenience and instant gratification, allowing customers to enjoy a seamless, pleasurable experience while ordering food.

Swiggy ranks second, showing solid performance in areas like the enjoyment of the ordering process and the overall convenience of its services. While it may not offer the same level of novelty or variety as Zomato, its strong points come from providing an intuitive, enjoyable ordering experience and prompt service, which customers appreciate for its simplicity and reliability. However, its lower ranking in aspects such as visual appeal and trendiness suggests that while it meets functional expectations well, it might not cater as effectively to customers seeking more hedonic, or pleasure-driven, motivations like exploring new or visually enticing meals.

Finally, Uber Eats ranks the lowest in this analysis. Though it performs decently in certain areas like the enjoyment of the ordering process, it falls behind in terms of food variety, novelty, and visual appeal. These factors are essential for customers seeking an engaging, hedonic experience when ordering food. Uber Eats's relatively low score in convenience and instant gratification also impacts its overall performance. This suggests that the Uber Eats should improve its hedonic appeal by enhancing its variety, visual experience, and responsiveness to customer needs for new, exciting food options, and quicker service delivery.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION

The findings from this AHP analysis provide several managerial implications for online food delivery platforms, particularly in enhancing customer satisfaction through hedonic motivation. Zomato, which ranks the highest, demonstrates the importance of offering a wide variety of food options, trendy and novel dishes, and visually appealing food presentations. Managers in this sector should focus on curating diverse menus that appeal to customers' desires for exploration and excitement. Additionally, investing in high-quality visuals and descriptions of food on their platforms can further enhance the sensory experience, attracting more customers driven by hedonism.

For Swiggy, which performs well in terms of the enjoyment of the ordering process and convenience, managers can further capitalize on these strengths by streamlining the user interface and maintaining fast, reliable delivery services. However, to compete more effectively with competitors like Zomato, managers should consider expanding their offerings with more unique and visually appealing food options. They can also introduce marketing campaigns that emphasize novelty and exclusive offerings to draw in customers who are seeking new experiences, not just convenience.

Uber Eats, which ranks lowest, has significant opportunities for improvement. Managers should focus on enhancing the visual and sensory appeal of the platform, perhaps by collaborating with restaurants to improve food presentations and descriptions. Additionally, investing in expanding the variety of food choices, especially trending or exotic items, can help Uber Eats better meet the hedonic expectations of its customer base. Lastly, improving the convenience and speed of delivery could make the platform more competitive, appealing to customers who seek both functionality and enjoyment in their food delivery experiences.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the AHP analysis highlights the critical role that hedonic motivation plays in shaping customer satisfaction in online food delivery services. Zomato emerged as the most preferred choice due to its ability to deliver a diverse range of food options, visually appealing dishes, and novel offerings that enhance the overall customer experience. Swiggy follows, excelling in convenience and the enjoyment of the ordering process, but has room for improvement in areas that cater to hedonic desires such as variety and trendiness. Uber Eats, ranking lowest, needs significant enhancements in both hedonic and functional areas to meet customer expectations, particularly in food variety, visual appeal, and speed of service. For managers, these insights emphasize the importance of not only fulfilling practical needs but also catering to the sensory and emotional desires of customers to remain competitive in the online food delivery market.

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