



## **INFLUENCES OF RIDER PRACTICES AND ONLINE FOOD DELIVERY SERVICES ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Purpose:** This study investigates the influence of rider practices on customer satisfaction in online food delivery (OFD) services within the Accra Metropolis, Ghana.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** The study was conducted using a survey. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were employed to select 120 participants who frequently use OFD services. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics, focusing on the OFD-SERV dimensions: system operation, traceability, reliability, meal maintenance quality, hygiene, assurance, and security.

**Findings:** Customers valued system operation, traceability, and meal maintenance, while assurance and security dimensions received lower satisfaction ratings. Rider politeness, neat appearance, and the use of protective gear were found to influence customer satisfaction significantly. However, issues such as food mishandling and late deliveries were identified as key concerns that negatively impacted customer experiences.

**Research Limitation:** One major limitation encountered was difficulty obtaining the sampled respondents to whom the questionnaire was to be administered.

**Practical Implications:** Improving rider training, especially in communication and hygiene practices, could enhance customer satisfaction and retention in the OFD industry.

**Social Implications:** The study has the potential to help marketing managers develop strategies that enhance service quality. This would strengthen the business brand and boost overall sales, improving customer satisfaction and economic growth.

**Originality/Value:** This study contributes to the limited literature on OFD services in Ghana by addressing service assurance and security gaps that could further strengthen customer trust and loyalty.

**Keywords:** *Consumer. efficiency. online food delivery. rider practices. satisfaction*



## **INTRODUCTION**

In the restaurant industry, outstanding customer service is becoming more crucial than ever in this competitive environment (Yfantidou et al., 2019). With the rise of e-commerce, many online businesses specialise in food delivery and ordering. According to Mehrolia et al. (2021), a growing trend has facilitated more excellent connectivity between consumers and restaurants. Mobile phone apps allow customers to conveniently search for available food items and cuisines and place orders for delivery. The system relies on a smartphone application that utilises the customer's location to ensure seamless food ordering and delivery.

In Ghana, motorbikes are primarily utilised to deliver food orders. The customer's satisfaction with the meal delivery service hinges mainly on the appearance and hygiene of the food deliverer, which is vital for marketing purposes. Because the food items are already cooked and prepared, they are susceptible to damage if mishandled, such as by dropping, tilting, or allowing them to sit out for an extended period. As a result, meal delivery necessitates specialised technology and attention. Food is often kept warm during delivery using thermal bags made of vinyl, nylon, or Cordura (Davis & Haddon, 2020). The bags are designed to hold heat, but their effectiveness depends on the customer's ability to receive the food package promptly. How well the thermal bags work may affect the quality of the food and customer satisfaction.

Ensuring customer satisfaction and high-quality service are crucial to measuring a business's success. The SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman et al. is a widely accepted approach that utilises five dimensions - reliability, tangibles, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy - to evaluate service quality. In the context of online food delivery services, Cheng et al.'s (2021) OFD-SERV six-dimension scale includes reliability, maintenance of meal quality and hygiene, assurance, security, system operation, and traceability measures of service quality and customer satisfaction. Food delivery services are a convenient option for people who prefer to enjoy their meals from their homes. However, there are some challenges and risks associated with this service, such as food contamination, unsanitary practices, mishandling of food, technical issues, and dissatisfied customers. While there are benefits to using food delivery services, it is vital to understand the potential dangers. Therefore, this study aims to assess the practices of delivery riders and their impact on customer satisfaction provided by the OFD-SERV.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

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## **Concept of Food Delivery Services**

Leroy et al., 2022 defined food as things that individuals or animals consume. An organism consumes the material, which is then absorbed by the organism's cells to supply energy, support life, or promote growth. Diverse animal species have different feeding habits that meet the demands of their distinct metabolisms, frequently evolving to occupy a particular ecological niche in certain geographic situations (Mukhopadhyay, 2020).

Food delivery is a courier service where consumers receive food from a restaurant, shop, or independent food delivery business. A popular way to place an order is through a food delivery service, a restaurant or grocery store's website, or a mobile app. In many nations, online ordering is possible; some stores even offer online ordering and menus. Customers can place orders for food from neighbouring restaurants that have collaborated with the service through the company's interfaces, which have existed since 1995. Since the food products are already cooked and prepared and can easily be ruined if dropped, tilted, or left out for an extended time, meal delivery requires specific technology and care. Food is frequently kept warm using hot bags. They are thermal bags that passively retain heat and are often made of vinyl, nylon, or Cordura. (Davis & Haddon, 2020).

## **Relationship Between Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction**

According to Lee (2018), customers will not hesitate to go to another restaurant if a current one does not offer high-quality service because there are so many options. He adds that a restaurant's ability to provide perceived high-quality service depends on its ability to understand its patrons' expectations and manage its staff to meet and fulfil those demands. The general excellence or superiority of the service in the eyes of the clientele is what is meant by perceived quality service. They contend that because the concept of quality service varies depending on the individual, the location, and the time, service evaluation is typically subjective because it depends on comparing the individual's expectations and perceived performance. Parasuraman et al. (1988) created the "SERQUAL" tool in response to subjectivity in evaluation. This instrument measures the difference between what clients expect from a service and what they receive. The instrument has five service dimensions: assurance, responsiveness, reliability, and tangibles.

The tangibles comprise the outward appearance of the buildings, furnishings, staff, and materials employed in customer communications. The dimensions of the tangibles include things like orderliness, area, mood, look of service, and location. Speed, responsiveness, correctness, and dependability are indicators of responsibility and reliability. An employee's knowledge about other employees and their abilities to inspire faith and confidence is called assurance. Empathy means showing consideration and care for each unique consumer.



## **The Relationship between Food Delivery Service and Customer Satisfaction**

Ahmad et al. (2018) have listed the variations between meal delivery service and satisfaction. They say that while enjoyment depends on a number of factors that are both directly and indirectly related to the service's delivery, the characteristics of good service are noticeably or directly connected with the service's rendering.

Customers do not base how well a service is provided on their interactions with the service provider or the environment in which it is provided. Contrarily, the assessment of satisfaction is grounded in the past. Additionally, it is thought that quality is supposed to be determined by exterior cues like price and reputation. In contrast, satisfaction is believed to be ignited by intangible signs like equity and remorse. Lately, awareness about spending and value for money has led customers to demand high-quality food and services which would meet their satisfaction. The most critical factors in the literature are customer satisfaction, expectations and impressions, and service quality (Becker et al., 2020).

Consumer perceptions play a vital role in the assessment of service quality and in generating customer satisfaction. The phrase "perceived service quality" is used rather than service quality due to its abstract structure. To understand "perceived service quality" and how it functions, examining the relationship between customer expectations before the service and the actual service performance is helpful. As a result, for the perceived level of service quality to be satisfying, the service package offered should live up to consumer expectations. It is a deliberate circumstance since the quality is on par with or exceeds expectations (Kian Yeik et al., 2022).

## **Theories Underpinning Study**

Two theoretical fields studied and tested by researchers underpin the study. This study will, therefore, have deployed the equity theory and the expectancy theory.

### **Equity Theory**

According to equity theory, customers are more likely to report feeling very satisfied when they believe that the value of a product or service outweighs the resources (such as money and time) used to purchase it (Davicik et al., 2015). According to earlier research, customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions across various businesses strongly correlate with service quality (Jiang & Zhang, 2016). The premise is that when consumers are treated fairly by receiving more outstanding service quality from OFD service providers, they tend to demonstrate high levels of pleasure, which results in high levels of loyalty. This is consistent with other studies.



## **Expectancy Theory**

According to Miner (2015), a person would choose to act or perform in a specific way because they are motivated to do so over other options by what they anticipate the outcome of that performance to be. The behaviour has been chosen because the result is desirable. According to the expectation theory, the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction will depend on the client experience.

## **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework clarifies the fundamental procedure used to direct this investigation. From the standpoint of an online food delivery service, the OFD-SERV scale is used to assess service quality. The same dimensions are used to measure customer satisfaction in food delivery services because it is assumed that it is an improved version but related to Parasuraman et al. SERVQUAL model for customer satisfaction, which is an antecedent of service quality. Therefore, for this study Cheng et al., (2021) OFD-SERV is utilised. The six-dimension scale is discussed below:

## **Reliability**

The regularity and dependability of the service performance are referred to as "reliability" (Bolton et al., 2013). Reliability in the context of OFD refers to the ability of deliverymen to accurately and correctly carry out the promised services. Delivery personnel interact with consumers in person while doing their duties (Yusra & Agus, 2020). Therefore, how deliverymen conduct themselves may affect how customers view the quality of the service. Service reliability is greatly influenced by the deliverymen's demeanour and attitude toward their customers. Customers will see deliveries that do not meet their needs as unreliable. Deliverymen who maintain a professional manner, keep their appearances clean, and provide courteous service are more likely to give customers the impression that the OFD service provider provides more incredible service performance. Reliable service delivery promotes client trust, increasing customer satisfaction (Mehroliya et al., 2021). Previous studies in the food and beverage service sector have shown a favourable correlation between dependability and client satisfaction (Gopi & Samat, 2020). Furthermore, it was found that reliability in the context of OFD significantly improved customer satisfaction (Banerjee et al., 2019; Cheng et al., 2021).



### **Maintenance of Meal Quality and Hygiene (MMQH)**

The ability to correctly maintain meal quality and hygiene during OFD service is called Maintenance of Meal Quality and Hygiene (MMQH) (Cheng et al., 2021). Meal quality is a broad concept that encompasses the food's flavour, aroma, presentation, and temperature. It is widely acknowledged as essential to ensuring restaurant patrons' happiness.

Although delivery is the primary offering in this sector, the food quality should not be overlooked. Delivery personnel are responsible for maintaining meal quality throughout delivery. In an OFD setting, meal quality becomes more crucial. The food quality issue has a considerable impact on clients' decisions about which OFD service provider to select, according to Saad (2020) and Kian Yeik et al. (2022). Annaraud and Berezina (2020) also noted that meal quality significantly impacts customers' satisfaction with buying food online. Customers are worried about OFD services' hygiene and food quality, particularly during the COVID-19 epidemic (Mehroliya et al., 2020). For instance, deliverymen must wear gloves and a facemask when delivering meals. According to research by Al Amin et al., food delivery hygiene significantly predicts customers' intention to use OFD services and actual utilisation of OFD services (2021). As a result, delivery personnel should be trained to maintain hygiene standards when making deliveries (Mehroliya et al., 2020).

### **Assurance**

In the service sector, the ability of staff members to inspire confidence and trust, as well as their competence and courtesy, are all considered aspects of assurance (Parasuraman et al., 1988). In the context of OFD, assurance refers to "the capacity to earn consumer trust during the OFD service" (Cheng et al., 2021).

Customers assess the level of assurance based on the speed with which deliverymen can bring the ordered food, the accuracy of the meal's quantity and quality, and the reasonableness of the fees. Once the orders have been accepted, deliverymen are supposed to bring the food on time, just as the consumers ordered it, with no cancellations. By providing precise ordering and delivery services with quality assurance, OFD service providers ensured that food delivery performance met consumer expectations during the COVID-19 epidemic (Zhao & Bacao, 2020).

Furthermore, it is important to ensure that there are no unreasonable delivery fees and that the prices are reasonable and fair. Customers are much more likely to feel confident when they receive the meals they ordered on schedule, in the proper quantity, and at an affordable price (Annaraud





& Berezina, 2020). Customer satisfaction with OFD services was discovered to be significantly influenced by assurance (Banerjee et al., 2019).

### **Security**

This study defines security as the capacity to safeguard customer data during the OFD service (Cheng et al., 2021). Consumers are worried about how their data will be handled, kept, and used (Libaque-Saenz et al., 2021). For instance, security is one major problem deterring consumers from utilising an e-wallet (Andrew et al., 2019).

Customers are concerned about technology flaws that can result in data breaches, including personal or credit card information (Cheng et al., 2021; Chopdar et al., 2018; Pigatto et al., 2017). Previous studies have shown that customers' willingness to use e-service systems and mobile payment services is positively impacted by their perceptions of security (Kim et al., 2020). (Sharma et al., 2019). As a result, in the context of OFD, security and privacy protection play a key role in influencing customers' purchase intentions (Chang et al., 2005; Wang et al., 2019) and customer satisfaction (Valdez-Juarez et al., 2021). OFD service providers must tightly control the ordering and payment systems. If users are happy with the service and feel secure using the systems, they are more inclined to purchase meals through online food ordering systems.

### **System Operation**

System operation often refers to the technical operation of technology (Parasuraman et al., 2005). This study describes the capability to supply clients with good system quality and functions while ordering OFD (Cheng et al., 2021).

Customers can use the ordering system to place, pay, and track their orders' progress. If the operating instructions are clear, customers may find identifying the desired meals simpler and placing orders with the OFD apps.

High levels of customer satisfaction are more likely to be experienced by customers when the ordering system features quick load times and straightforward online payment methods (Cheng et al., 2021; Kang & Namkung, 2019). Additionally, customers are more likely to acquire trust in OFD apps when they find them to be simple to use (Kang & Namkung, 2019). Pal et al. (2021) state that the OFD apps' visual and informational designs greatly influence users' pleasure and loyalty. Likewise, consumers' opinions of OFD services were significantly influenced by the quality of the information they received (Allah Pitchay et al., 2021). According to a different study by



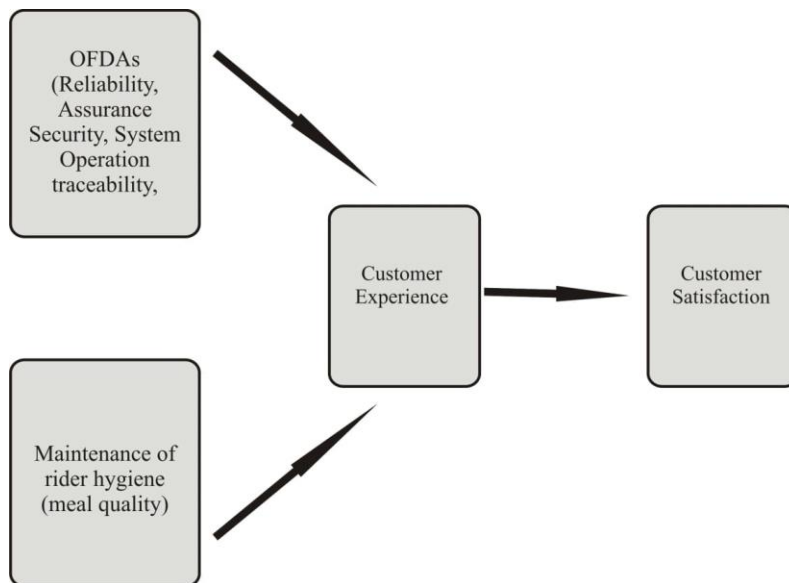
Wen et al. (2021), customers show higher degrees of perceived behavioural control and a higher inclination to utilise food delivery apps when they find the applications simple.

### **Traceability**

Online tracking is a location-based service that uses a global positioning system to send precise positions (Shugan, 2004). Traceability is the capacity to "know the delivery progress and location during the OFD service" (Cheng et al., 2021). Customers can interact with the deliverymen during the delivery process if there are any issues and learn the anticipated delivery time from an online tracking system (Gutierrez et al., 2019).

Online shoppers do so because they believe it to be more time-effective than offline. However, customers will be dissatisfied if the delivery takes longer than expected (Roy et al., 2010).

For instance, Saad (2021) discovered that the delivery time significantly influences consumers' decisions to choose an OFD service provider. Furthermore, according to Alalwan (2020), online tracking positively affects customer satisfaction and a user's intention to keep using mobile food delivery apps.



*Figure 1: Conceptual Model*





## **METHODOLOGY**

The research was quantitative and utilised a cross-sectional design, the most commonly used research design for social science research. This type of design involves identifying the research question, selecting the population, choosing a sample or using the entire population, and gathering data from respondents (Lee et al., 2021; Mehroliia et al., 2021). The study population was customers who use online food delivery apps (OFDAs) and food delivery services in Accra Technical University. A total of one hundred and twenty (120) respondents was anticipated as the sample size to participate in this research work.

Purposive and convenient sampling techniques were employed to select the initial customers, targeting individuals with prior experience with food delivery services. The snowball method was utilised to identify additional participants, with the assistance of existing customers willing to participate in the study. This approach has been successfully employed in previous studies by Bolton et al. (2013), Cheng et al. (2021), and Kian Yeik et al. (2022).

For this research study, 120 participants were invited, with a projected non-response rate of 30%. A meticulously crafted online survey utilising Google Forms focused on individuals who frequently use their phones for food delivery orders and other online activities. Descriptive analysis was conducted using SPSS version 26, employing percentile, mean, and standard deviation techniques. The results were thoughtfully presented through clear and visually appealing charts and tables.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

This section provides the demographic information of respondents.



*Table 1. Socioeconomic Characteristics of Respondents*

Variables		Frequency (N)	Percent (%)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Gender	Male	49	37.1		
	Female	83	62.9		
	Total	132	100.0		
Age	Below 18	1	.8	3.27	0.83
	18-20years	15	11.4		
	21-30years	76	57.6		
	31-40years	30	22.7		
	41-50years	8	6.1		
	51-60years	2	1.5		
	Total	132	100.0		
Educational level	Primary	4	3.0	2.92	0.42
	Secondary	5	3.8		
	Tertiary	120	90.9		
	No formal education	3	2.3		
	Total	132	100.0		
Employment status	Employed	59	44.7	2.03	1.00
	Unemployed	14	10.6		
	Student	55	41.7		
	Casual	4	3.0		
	Total	132	100.0		
Income	Less than Gh¢500	52	39.4	2.19	1.25
	Gh¢ 500- Gh¢ 1000	33	25.0		
	Gh¢ 1001- Gh¢ 2000	27	20.5		



	Gh¢ 2001- Gh¢ 4000	10	7.6		
	Above Gh¢ 4000	10	7.6		
	Total	132	100.0		
Marital status	Single	101	76.5	1.23	0.43
	Married	31	23.5		
	Total	132	100.0		
Medium used in ordering food	Telephone	9	6.8	1.94	0.27
	Mobile Phone	122	92.4		
	Laptops/Computer	1	.8		
	Total	132	100.0		
Patronage of online food delivery platform in a week	1x	62	47.0	2.15	1.57
	2x	35	26.5		
	3x	12	9.1		
	4x	12	9.1		
	5x	4	3.0		
	6x	2	1.5		
	7x	5	3.8		
	Total	132	100.0		
Duration in patronizing online food delivery services	Less than six months	46	34.8	2.04	0.93
	six months - one year	43	32.6		
	two years - three years	35	26.5		
	Above four years	8	6.1		
	Total	132	100.0		
OFD platforms frequently used	Freelance	14	10.6	2.92	1.00
	Jumia	19	14.4		
	Bolt food	73	55.3		
	Glovo	16	12.1		



	Hubtel	10	7.6		
	Total	132	100.0		
Location frequently ordered from	Home	60	45.5	1.81	0.91
	Work	44	33.3		
	School	23	17.4		
	Church	3	2.3		
	Mosque	2	1.5		

*Source: Mensah et al., 2022.*

Respondents who participated in this study came from various occupational backgrounds, but 47 students (35.6%) dominated as a single variable; nevertheless, 18(13.6%) failed to disclose their occupational background.

Findings indicate that education, among other background characteristics, plays a key role in making requests and purchasing food online. This finding agrees with the study finding of Ali et al. (2020), which indicated that education is a crucial indicator of consumer adoption of online food delivery. Additionally, concerning the respondents' employment status, findings indicated that 59 (44.7%) were employed, while 14 (10.6%) were unemployed. Furthermore, 55 (41.7%) of the respondents were studying, implying a slightly lower level than the employment status, whilst a difference of 3%, and only 4 (3%) were identified as casual workers. Regarding marital status, 76.5% of the 101 respondents identified as single/unmarried, while 23.5% were married. This suggests that individuals not in a committed relationship are more inclined to utilise online food delivery services. This study found, however, contrasts that of Cho et al. (2019), which indicated that married persons predominantly patronise food delivery apps.

Understanding the contest's dynamics, which centre around online food delivery services, requires a keen awareness of the respondents' income sources. Income influences the use of these services in a significant way (Saad, 2020). Out of the 127 respondents, the majority, 50 or 39.4%, earn less than Gh¢ 500, suggesting that they may be students or have a similar employment status. Additionally, 33 respondents (25%) earn between Gh¢ 500 - Gh¢ 1000, 27 respondents (20.5%) receive an income between Gh¢ 1001- Gh¢ 2000, while 10 respondents (7.6%) each earn Gh¢ 2001- Gh¢ 4000 and above Gh¢ 4000. All respondents fall under average-income earners who can comfortably afford online food delivery services.



Additionally, a vast majority of the participants (92.4%) utilised their mobile phones to place food orders online, while only a tiny percentage opted for telephone (6.8%) or computer (0.8%) ordering methods.

Of the 132 respondents, 62(47%) patronise online delivery platforms at least once every week, whereas 35(26.5%) patronise online food delivery platforms twice a week. The mean 2.15 (slightly above 2) score affirms that twice a week on the platform is more significant than the other variables because it was coded 2. Nevertheless, some respondents visited the online platforms 3 and 4 times, 12(9.1%) respectively, while others also visited six times, 2(1.5%), and 5(3.8%) patronised online delivery services seven times a week.

Concerning the duration of patronage of online delivery services, 46(34.8%) respondents revealed that they have been patronising the services for less than six months, while 43(32.6%) have been using the services between six months and one year. On the other hand, 35(26.6%) have been engaged with online delivery services between two and three years, and 8(6.1%) have patronised them for over four years.

The most frequently used online platform is Bolt Foods 73(55.3%); this indicates the prominence and authority Bolt Foods has in the Ghanaian online delivery services fraternity. Jumia Food is followed by 19(14.4%) in descending order. 16 (12.1%) respondents patronise Glovo Foods, while 14 (10.6%) utilise freelance services and Hubtel trails 10 (7.6%) respondents. Again, the mean 2.92(near 3) score was congruent with the high patronage of Bolt Food.

Table 1 also discloses the location from which respondents frequently order food. It is intriguing that almost 60(45.5%) order food from home while 44(33.3%) order from workplaces. It was, however, interesting to note that 3(2.3%) and 2(1.5%) ordered food from the church and mosque, respectively. Respondents that participated in this study ranged from various occupation backgrounds, but 47 students (35.6%) dominated as a single variable; nevertheless, 18(13.6%) failed to make known their occupation background.

Upon examining the user base of online food delivery services in Ghana, it is evident that a significant opportunity exists for expansion. This is because these services are especially favoured among students and young individuals. They will likely continue utilising such services as they progress in their careers and earn higher incomes. Furthermore, they may remain loyal indefinitely if they receive outstanding customer service and enjoy a positive experience. Ultimately, this may



motivate future generations to follow suit, indicating that Ghana's online food delivery industry has the potential for consistent, long-lasting progress.

### **Indicators for Selecting Online Services and Products**

Table 2 shows that respondents prioritised convenience when selecting online services and products. For online restaurants, 31.1% of respondents chose convenience as their top criterion, while 51.5% preferred online food delivery services and online food for the same reason. Some respondents also considered brand names, with 17.5% selecting an online restaurant based on this factor. However, reasonable prices were only a priority for 15.9% of respondents, while proximity, popularity, and referrals were relatively unimportant factors. The study performed by Roy (2016) in New Zealand disagrees with this finding. Based on Roy's Study findings, local food purchasing decisions are made based on the popularity and proximity of the food. This difference in result can be related to cultural bias as the culture of Ghana is different from that of New Zealand.

For online food delivery services, convenience was the most significant factor, with 51.5% of respondents selecting it as their top criterion. Less than 14% of respondents selected the other criteria, indicating their low importance.

*Table 2. Indicators for online services and products*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Convenience (%)</b>	<b>Brand (%)</b>	<b>Proximity (%)</b>	<b>Referrals (%)</b>	<b>Popularity (%)</b>	<b>Price (%)</b>
<b>Online Restaurants</b>	31.1	17.4	12.9	10.6	12.1	15.9
<b>Online food delivery services</b>	51.5	13.6	9.1	5.3	6.8	13.6
<b>Online food</b>	51.5	13.6	9.1	5.3	6.8	13.6

*Source: Mensah et al., 2022*





### **Influence of Rider Practices on Customer Satisfaction**

*Table 3. Rider practices and its influence on customer satisfaction.*

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>
The rider is polite and up to the task.	3.11
A rider is always in his Protective Equipment.	3.17
The rider always looking neat in appearance influences my satisfaction.	3.05
Rider exhibits trust during delivery.	3.27
Rider exhibits confidence during delivery	3.26
The rider’s vehicle is neat.	3.15
The rider communicates well throughout the delivery process.	3.33
The rider often mixes up the order.	2.62
The rider arrives on time.	3.07
The rider's thank you influenced my satisfaction positively.	2.93
The rider greetings influence my satisfaction positively.	3.14
The rider’s neat uniform influenced my satisfaction positively	3.02
The rider's smiles influence my satisfaction positively.	3.20
Rider apologizes for the wrong delivery and assures you of rectify	2.80
Spillage of food is observed during the delivery.	2.80
Rider exhibits good personal hygiene.	3.10
Security with Rider.	3.02
Exhibits of food being mishandled.	2.75
Rider's response to questions is professional.	3.10

*Source: Mensah et al., 2022*

In assessing rider practices and the influence it has on customer satisfaction, a five (5) point Likert scale on value was adopted, where 1 – Very Low (VL), 2 – Below Average (BA), 3 – Average(A), 4 - Above Average (AA) and 5 – Very High (VH). The results were presented based on the mean



scores of the various statements. The mean score was analysed such that the average mean is 3.0. Thus, a score lower than the average indicates less influence, while a higher score indicates a strong influence on customer satisfaction with food delivery.

Table 4.6 reveals that riders are generally perceived as polite and competent, with a mean score slightly above average (3.11). This indicates that politeness and task competence positively influence customer satisfaction. This finding is similar to the conclusions of studies by Hong et al. (2021) and Mat Nayan & Hassan (2020). A positive delivery experience can encourage customers to order again, while an unpleasant one can discourage repeat business. Additionally, customer perception is shaped by the reliability of the meal delivery service.

Another aspect that concerns the respondents is the protective equipment worn by the riders during food delivery. The mean score (3.17) suggests that riders frequently wear protective equipment, which is crucial for safety. This score reflects a positive adherence to safety protocols and highly influences customer satisfaction. Furthermore, the neat appearance of riders positively influences customer satisfaction, with a mean score just above average (3.05). This highlights the importance of maintaining a professional appearance. Trust is a critical factor in delivery services, and the high mean score indicates that customers generally trust riders during deliveries, significantly influencing satisfaction.

Table 3 shows that Riders exhibit confidence during deliveries, which reassures customers and enhances their overall experience (mean 3.26), showing a great influence on satisfaction. Moreover, feeling secure with the rider is crucial, and the mean score (3.02) indicates that customers generally feel safe. Also, the table established that effective communication throughout the delivery process is highly valued by customers, as reflected by the highest mean score (3.33) in the table. This suggests that clear and consistent communication is key to customer satisfaction. The study further indicated that professional responses to customer questions are valued, with a mean score of 3.10 indicating that riders generally handle inquiries well. These findings align with Uzir et al. 's (2021) findings, which indicated that communication ability and a caring attitude toward delivery influence customer satisfaction.

Another significant factor indicated by customers is arriving on time. The mean score (3.07) suggests that riders are generally punctual, though there is room for improvement. Aside from being punctual, greetings from riders were established to positively influence customer satisfaction, suggesting that courteous interactions are important (mean 3.14). A neat uniform contributes to a positive impression, with a mean score (3.02) indicating that this is generally well-maintained.



Good personal hygiene of riders was also important to customers, with a mean score (3.10) reflecting general satisfaction in this area. Also, the study found that smiling riders positively influence customer satisfaction (mean 3.20), highlighting the importance of friendly interactions.

Order mix-ups are a relatively frequent issue that negatively impacts customer satisfaction, as reflected in the lower mean score of 2.62. This aligns with the study of Nieminen (2022) and Worku (2020). This highlights the need for focused efforts to minimise such errors. This area requires attention to reduce errors. The act of thanking customers has a moderate positive (mean 2.93) influence on satisfaction, indicating that while appreciated, it may not be a significant factor for all customers. Apologising for wrong deliveries and assuring rectification has a moderate impact on satisfaction (mean 2.80), suggesting that while important, it may not fully mitigate the negative experience of a wrong delivery (Gannon et al., 2022). Observing food spillage during delivery negatively impacts satisfaction (mean 2.80), indicating a need for better handling practices. This finding aligns with Khan et al (2023) and Tan (2024). Exhibits of food being mishandled negatively impact satisfaction (mean 2.75), suggesting a need for improved handling procedures.

### **Customer Satisfaction with The Online Food Delivered**

*Table 4. Customer satisfaction with online food delivery.*

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>
The food delivered matches the menu.	3.58
The temperature of the food is appreciated.	3.61
The packaging matches the advertisement.	3.51
The presentation matches the advertisement.	3.28
The delivery time is accurate.	3.47
The taste of food is appreciated	3.49
The quantity of food is appreciated.	3.55
The aroma is appreciated.	3.53
Provision of cutlery.	3.50
The services meet the value of the price.	3.49
I am assured the meal quality is well maintained during the delivery process.	3.53



Exhibits of food contamination.	3.06
Exhibits of food spoilage.	3.20
Overall service delivery.	3.64

*Source: Mensah et al., 2022*

The table presents a comprehensive analysis of customer satisfaction across various aspects of food delivery services, with the mean scores indicating the level of satisfaction among customers. The average mean score across all statements is approximately 3.0, which serves as a crucial threshold: scores above this value suggest that customers are generally satisfied, while scores below indicate dissatisfaction.

Notably, statements such as "The temperature of the food is appreciated" and "The food delivered matches the menu" received mean scores of 3.61 and 3.58, respectively. This indicates a strong level of satisfaction in these areas, highlighting the importance of maintaining food quality and accuracy in menu representation, as indicated by Prihantini and Shamsudin (2023) and Behnke et al. (2024).

Conversely, certain statements reflect lower satisfaction levels, particularly regarding "Exhibits of food contamination," which garnered a mean score of 3.06. This score, while above the average threshold, suggests that there are concerns regarding food safety that could impact overall customer trust and satisfaction (Wang & Alexander, 2018; Wang et al., 2021). Similarly, the statement "The presentation matches the advertisement" received a mean score of 3.28, indicating that while customers are somewhat satisfied, there is significant room for improvement in how food is presented compared to its advertised appearance. These insights suggest that addressing specific areas of concern could enhance the overall customer experience.

Moreover, the analysis reveals a consistent theme: while many aspects of the service are satisfactory, critical areas require attention to boost overall customer satisfaction. For instance, statements about food quality and delivery timing received favourable ratings, suggesting effective operational practices. However, the lower scores in areas like food contamination and presentation indicate potential weaknesses that could detract from customer loyalty. By focusing on these areas for improvement, food delivery services can enhance customer satisfaction and foster a more positive brand reputation in a competitive market.



## Mean Ranking and Ratings of Consumer Satisfaction Based on the OFD-Serv Scale

*Table 5. Mean ranking and ratings of consumer satisfaction on the OFD-SERV scale.*

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>MoM</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>System Operation</b>	Chance to cancel or edit order.	4.72	4.81	0.17
	The apps are user-friendly.	4.97		
	Variety of payment options.	4.92		
	Clear instructions on how to use an app.	4.62		
<b>Traceability</b>	Tracking order and delivery process.	4.86	4.09	1.08
	The rider communicates well throughout the delivery process.	3.33		
<b>Reliability</b>	The rider arrives on time.	3.07	3.68	0.57
	The delivery time is accurate.	3.49		
	Availability of food on the menu	4.42		
	The food delivered matches the menu.	3.73		
<b>MMQH</b>	The temperature of the food is appreciated.	3.63	3.45	0.24
	The meal quality is maintained during the delivery process.	3.53		



	The taste of food is appreciated	3.55		
	Rider exhibits good personal hygiene.	3.10		
<b>Assurance</b>	Rider exhibits confidence during delivery.	3.26	3.34	0.13
	Rider apologizes for the wrong delivery and assures you of rectify	3.20		
	The rider communicates well throughout the delivery process.	3.33		
	Rider exhibits trust during delivery.	3.27		
	The services meet the value of the price.	3.41		
	The packaging matches the advertisement.	3.57		
<b>Security</b>	Security of e-wallet or credit card details	3.62	3.24	0.28
	Wrongful deductions on payments	3.03		
	Security with Rider.	3.02		
	Rider suspicion during delivery.	3.27		

Source: Mensah et al., 2022

The OFD-SERV scale by Cheng et al. (2021) was ranked by accumulating variables under each scale and finding the mean of means (MoM) according to respondents' responses. The MoM was then ranked from the highest to the lowest to ascertain what scale consumers rate most when engaging in online food delivery.





According to Table 5, system operation (4.81) was highly ranked among the six dimensions, indicating that consumers prefer ordering from user-friendly platforms and are comfortable with the technical manoeuvrability of the apps. Traceability (4.09) was ranked second by respondents; consumers are concerned with tracking their order by location in arriving on time and the interaction between the deliveryman of where the order has reached; it also indicates that consumers are time-conscious with their order. Reliability (3.68) was ranked third; meeting set standards is a priority for the consumer, the availability of the food on the menu, the order meeting the expectation of the consumer as well as accuracy in the time of delivery are all factors that the consumer is looking out for and needs to be met.

A recent survey has shown that consumers prioritise Meal Maintenance Quality and Hygiene (MMQH) when placing online food orders (Suri et al., n.d), with a score of 3.45, placing it fourth in importance. This underscores the significance of taste, aroma, temperature, and hygiene factors in the consumer's meal experience. Food delivery services can help enhance this experience by providing options for reheating or adding condiments. According to the survey, Assurance scored 3.34, ranking fifth in importance, indicating that service providers must build trust with consumers by delivering on time, communicating effectively, and providing good value for money. Lastly, Security was ranked the lowest, with a score of 3.24.

Consumers are highly concerned about the safety of personal data during online food delivery. They are particularly uneasy about how e-wallet and credit card information is stored, handled, and used. Additionally, customers worry about wrongful deductions, cyber threats, and physical Security, such as location attacks and theft. This finding aligns with that of Khan et al. (2018) study, which established that consumers of the Internet of Things (IoT) are becoming highly alert to the threat of technology to their security and privacy. However, these concerns do not discourage them from using IT tools and platforms (Wagner & Strulak-Wojcikiewicz, 2020).

This study indicates that system operation and traceability are crucial for the smooth functioning of online food delivery services, with ease of use following closely behind. The findings of this study are similar to that of Cheng et al. (2021), which indicated that system operation and reliability positively impact customer satisfaction. Interestingly, security received the lowest score, indicating that customers feel relatively secure and do not fear data breaches when using these apps. This is a positive development for the industry, as it reflects customers' confidence in the Security of online platforms for their food delivery needs. A similar result was presented by James and Sudha (2024) in their study concerning trust and reliability in online food and grocery delivery.



Their findings indicated that data privacy measures are among the lowest ranks for factors influencing the trust of customers.

The smooth operation of the online food delivery system is critical to its success. Therefore, technological failures resulting in app outages can harm the industry. Furunes and Mkono's (2019) study established a similar finding, stating that customers from all companies reported technological problems with online food apps.

Industry players, particularly food vendors, must have a robust risk management system to ensure business continuity in case of significant system failures, such as internet service interruptions from telecommunications companies. By taking these steps, the online food delivery space can continue to thrive with the same confidence enjoyed thus far.

To attract a broader user base, online food delivery companies may consider partnering with telecommunications companies to offer a food ordering application that does not incur data charges. This presents a valuable opportunity for the industry to explore.

## **CONCLUSION**

The popularity of online meal ordering and delivery services has surged due to the increased use of the internet and evolving lifestyles. Customers in this study valued the safety of their orders since they maintained constructive practices such as a tidy appearance and wearing protective equipment. Additionally, delivery time, service quality, and the riders' demeanour were vital to customer satisfaction. Despite minor obstacles, consumers in Ghana express contentment with the services offered and admire the professionalism of the delivery riders.

To boost customer satisfaction, OFD service providers focus on:

- Improving the quality and variety of their menus and ensuring prompt and reliable delivery.
- Delivery personnel receive proper training to execute these services well.
- Explore diverse groups of respondents, considering demographic factors such as age, occupation, and workplace setting.
- Explore qualitatively customers who order food online and industry experts to identify crucial characteristics that drive growth in the industry.



## **Practical Implications**

The findings of this study provide actionable insights for online food delivery (OFD) service providers to enhance customer satisfaction. Service providers can address key customer concerns by emphasising training programs for delivery personnel and improving delivery reliability. Additionally, incorporating customer feedback into menu variety and service quality improvements can significantly enhance the user experience. These steps are instrumental in building brand loyalty and expanding market share in a competitive industry.

## **Social Implications**

The study highlights the evolving consumer behaviour influenced by technology and changing lifestyles. It underscores the importance of professional conduct and safety measures in fostering customer trust and satisfaction. Furthermore, OFD providers contribute to a more inclusive and responsive service environment by ensuring high-quality services and addressing demographic needs. The results also emphasise the broader societal trend towards convenience and efficiency in service delivery, reflecting shifting priorities in modern urban lifestyles.

## **Recommendation**

To boost customer satisfaction, the current study recommends that online food delivery (OFD) service providers focus on improving both the quality and variety of their menus and ensuring prompt and reliable delivery. It also suggests that delivery personnel receive proper training to execute these services well. The study proposes conducting further comprehensive research that includes a diverse group of respondents, considering demographic factors such as age, occupation, and workplace setting. This research could identify differences in customer preferences across various demographic groups. Qualitative research could be conducted with regular customers who order food online and industry experts to identify crucial characteristics that drive growth in the industry.

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