

A Study on Customer Perception and Satisfaction on Zomato Service (With Special Reference to Salem City)

Dr.N.Sathiya*

Research Supervisor and Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Sona College of Arts and Science, Affiliated to Periyar University, Salem-5

*Corresponding Author

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2026.1306000530>

Received: 04 July 2026; Accepted: 09 July 2026; Published: 24 July 2026

ABSTRACT

Online food ordering and delivery have emerged as a transformative business model within the rapidly evolving landscape of e-commerce. In recent years, this innovative approach has paved the way for numerous online ventures, captivating the interest of a diverse range of stakeholders, including consumers, entrepreneurs, and investors. The allure of online food delivery lies in its unique ability to seamlessly connect restaurants with consumers, making it a highly sought-after service in today's fast-paced world.

These digital platforms bridge the gap between culinary establishments and hungry customers, leveraging the convenience of mobile applications. This ecosystem thrives on sophisticated mobile technology integrated with real-time location services, ensuring a swift, efficient, and seamless ordering-to-delivery process. Since its inception, Zomato has grown exponentially, expanding its global footprint to over twenty-four countries.

Keywords: Customer, Zomato, Satisfaction, Service.

INTRODUCTION

One prominent player in this growing industry is Zomato, a trailblazing food ordering and delivery service co-founded by Pankaj Chaddah and Deepinder Goyal. Zomato embarked on its journey with a clear objective: to provide urban food enthusiasts with a comprehensive, hassle-free ordering experience. Over the years, the platform has metamorphosed into a dynamic online food delivery giant with a unique competitive edge.

Unlike many of its competitors, Zomato utilizes its own dedicated delivery fleet, reflecting its deep commitment to prompt and efficient service. Furthermore, Zomato stands out by eliminating conventional minimum order requirements, thereby prioritizing customer accessibility and freedom of choice.

An essential aspect of Zomato's operational model is its unwavering dedication to timely deliveries. By employing a streamlined approach that assigns delivery personnel to handle only one order at a time, Zomato ensures that each customer's meal reaches its destination promptly and in pristine condition. This meticulous attention to detail has contributed significantly to the platform's enduring popularity.

Ultimately, the advent of online food ordering and delivery has ushered in a new era of convenience and accessibility for both consumers and restaurants alike. Zomato's remarkable journey, from a humble start-up to a global food delivery powerhouse, perfectly exemplifies the transformative potential of this innovative digital business model.

Importance Of the Study

Understanding consumer perception and satisfaction regarding Zomato's services is of paramount importance, particularly in localized markets like Salem. Analyzing these factors offers critical insights that are essential for several reasons:

- **Enhancing Service Quality & UX:** Identifying what customers' value and where they experience friction allows Zomato to continuously refine its user interface, service delivery, and overall customer experience.
- **Customer Retention and Brand Loyalty:** Satisfied customers are significantly more likely to remain loyal to the platform, securing stable, long-term revenue in a highly volatile market.
- **Organic Growth through Advocacy:** Positive consumer perceptions drive organic word-of-mouth recommendations, which serve as a powerful and cost-effective tool for acquiring new users.
- **Sustaining Competitive Advantage:** By keeping a finger on the pulse of local consumer preferences, Zomato can adapt to changing market trends swiftly and stay ahead of emerging competitors.
- **Operational Efficiency and Resource Allocation:** Insights from this study can help Zomato allocate its logistical and human resources more effectively, focusing investments on areas that matter most to local consumers.
- **Optimizing Marketing and Product Alignment:** Understanding local demographics, perceptions, and behaviors guides tailored marketing campaigns and inform future app features that resonate directly with Salem's customer base.

Statement Of The Problem

The core problem of this study revolves around understanding consumer perception and satisfaction levels regarding the services offered by Zomato, a leading food delivery and restaurant discovery platform. This issue is crucial because consumer sentiments directly impact Zomato's brand reputation, market share, and long-term business sustainability, particularly in rapidly growing tier-2 cities like Salem.

While "consumer perception" encompasses how users view Zomato's service quality, reliability, pricing, and overall app experience, "customer satisfaction" specifically measures whether the actual service meets or exceeds user expectations. Factors such as delivery latency, order accuracy, food packaging quality, and the responsiveness of customer support play critical roles in this evaluation. To address this problem, this research investigates the primary drivers of consumer perception and satisfaction, pinpointing service gaps and pain points. By identifying these areas of friction, the study aims to provide actionable insights that can help Zomato enhance customer loyalty, improve service delivery, and maintain its competitive edge in the local market.

Objectives Of The Study

1. To analyze the key factors influencing consumer perception and purchasing decisions when using Zomato in the study area.
2. To identify and evaluate the specific problems and challenges faced by customers while ordering through Zomato.
3. To assess the overall level of customer satisfaction with Zomato's services in Salem City.

Hypotheses

This study assumes that critical service dimensions—such as price, promotional discounts, food quality, and delivery speed—directly influence consumer purchasing behavior. Additionally, it posits that application usability, peer reviews, and customer support responsiveness are vital determinants of overall customer satisfaction.

Null Hypothesis

In simpler terms, the null hypothesis essentially means "no effect" or "no difference. It's the idea that whatever you're testing doesn't have any meaningful impact or doesn't produce any noticeable change.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between a consumer's monthly income and their frequency of using Zomato.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between a consumer's occupation and their average spending per order on Zomato.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a **descriptive research design** to analyze and describe customer perception and satisfaction regarding Zomato's services. A descriptive approach is ideal for this study as it systematically profiles the characteristics, opinions, and behaviors of the target consumer base in Salem City without manipulating the variables. The methodology encompasses the sampling design, data collection instruments, and analytical tools used to interpret the findings.

Sources Of Data

To ensure a comprehensive and reliable analysis, the study relies on both primary and secondary sources of data.

1. Primary Data

Primary data refers to original, first-hand information collected directly by the researcher specifically for this study. This data is highly relevant, current, and tailored to address the research objectives.

- **Method of Collection:** Primary data was gathered using a structured questionnaire distributed to Zomato users in Salem City.
- **Advantage:** It ensures high accuracy and provides specific, first hand insights into local consumer experiences, preferences, and pain points.

2. Secondary Data

Secondary data consists of information that has already been collected, analyzed, and published by other researchers or organizations for alternative purposes.

- **Method of Collection:** This data was compiled from academic journals, textbook literature, industry magazines, research reports, and official websites.
- **Advantage:** It provides essential background context, helps frame the theoretical foundation of the study, and supports the primary findings with historical industry trends.

Area Of The Study

Salem City has been specifically selected as the geographic location for this study due to its diverse and heterogeneous consumer demographic. As a rapidly growing tier-2 city in Tamil Nadu, Salem represents a dynamic

mix of students, working professionals, and families, making it an ideal urban micro-market to evaluate changing consumer perceptions and online food delivery habits.

Sampling Technique

A sample is a representative subset of the population selected for investigation, allowing the researcher to draw meaningful conclusions about the entire target group. For this study, the target population consists of active Zomato users residing within Salem City.

The sampling method employed is **non-probability sampling**, specifically utilizing the **convenience sampling technique**. This method was selected because it allows the researcher to collect data efficiently from easily accessible respondents who are active users of the platform, ensuring quick and practical data gathering within the local limits.

Sample Size

The sample size dictates the number of individual respondents surveyed for the study. While larger sample sizes generally yield more statistically dependable outcomes, practical constraints such as limited time and resources necessitated a focused sample size. Therefore, a sample of **101 active Zomato users** of various age groups and backgrounds in Salem City was selected and surveyed for this research.

Tools For Analysis

In this study the primary data collected from the respondents were computerized and programmed to get logically consistent interferences. The data were tabulated keeping in view of the objective of the study.

Simple Percentage Analysis.

Simple percentage analysis is a statistical tool used to interpret primary data in a clear and simple way. It helps in converting raw data into percentages for easy understanding and comparison. In this study, the data collected through questionnaires is classified and tabulated. Each response is then converted into percentage form using a standard formula.

The formula used for percentage analysis is:

$$\text{Percentage} = (\text{Number of Respondents} / \text{Total Number of Respondents}) \times 100$$

This method helps to identify patterns, preferences, and trends among Zomato users regarding their usage, satisfaction, and behavior. Simple percentage analysis makes the data more meaningful and easy to present through tables and charts.

Chi- Square Test

The chi-square test is an important test among the several of significant developed by statisticians. It is a non-parametric test. It can be used to determine if categorical data shows dependency or if the two classifications are independent. It can also be used to make comparison between theoretical population and actual data categories.

Chi-Square Test

$$(X) \sum (O - EP)^2$$

E

$$\text{Degrees of freedom} = (1-1) (c-1)$$

O Observed frequency

Whereas, E=Expected frequency

R= Number of rows

C=Number of columns

REVIEWS

Rusha Mudgal & Pooja Rana(2023), Modern technology-driven online food ordering services have revolutionized how people choose restaurants and order their preferred meals. Advancements in technology, widespread internet access, and the increasing use of smartphones paved the way for these services. Zomato, founded by Mr. Pankaj Chaddha and Mr. Deepender Goyal, introduced the concept of browsing restaurant menus, placing online orders, and having food delivered to one's doorstep in India. This innovative idea, initially known as Foodie Bay, gained rapid popularity, starting in Delhi NCR in 2008 and quickly expanding to cities like Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, and Bengaluru within 9 months. In 2012, Zomato ventured into international markets, including the UAE, UK, Sri Lanka, and the Philippines. Over time, Zomato evolved from a food directory to include features like online table reservations and restaurant discovery. Zomato and Swiggy stand as successful examples in the online food ordering industry due to their adaptability and resilience.

Roshnan Baa (2023)", Zomato and Swiggy are prominent food delivery apps in India, each offering unique features and garnering strong brand loyalty. As entrants, necessitating continuous innovation. Analyzing their marketing strategies provides insights into effective branding, customer acquisition, and retention. This research focuses on determining the preferred online food delivery company between Zomato and Swiggy, as perceived by Ranchi residents. It investigates the key factors influencing consumer decisions and examines the mobile apps used for food orders. Gathering preferences between Zomato and Swiggy allows for conclusive findings. The study aims to gather responses from a diverse background of respondents, aiming for results applicable to a wider population.

Shekhar and Venugopal (2025)", conducted a bibliometric analysis to examine the relationship between social marketing and consumer behavior. The study reviewed previous research to identify trends, key themes, and research gaps in consumer behavior studies. The findings revealed that social marketing strategies significantly influence consumer attitudes, perceptions, and decision-making processes. The study also emphasized that understanding consumer behavior helps marketers design effective marketing strategies and improve customer engagement in competitive markets.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Zomato, a prominent online platform that has revolutionized the way people discover and engage with dining establishments, has a fascinating origin story. Established in 2008 by the visionary duo of Deepinder Goyal and Pankaj Chaddah, the seeds of this innovative enterprise were sown during their tenure as management consultants. Their frustration at the limited dining choices in their local area served as a pivotal moment that kindled Their entrepreneurial spirit and propelled them into action.

Consumer Perception

Consumer perception refers to the way individuals interpret and form opinions about a service based on their experiences and available information. In the case of Zomato, perception is influenced by factors such as app design, ease of navigation, variety of restaurants, pricing, and customer reviews. Consumers often rely on ratings and feedback from other users to make decisions, which significantly shapes their perception. Visual appeal and transparency in information also play an important role in forming positive attitudes. A good perception increases the likelihood of usage, while negative experiences can reduce trust. Perception acts as the first stage in the

decision-making process and directly impacts satisfaction. Therefore, managing consumer perception is essential for improving service acceptance.

Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is the measure of how well a service meets or exceeds the expectations of consumers. In the context of Zomato, satisfaction depends on timely delivery, food quality, correct orders, and efficient customer service. The Expectation-Confirmation Theory explains that customers compare their expectations with actual performance to determine satisfaction. If the service performs better than expected, satisfaction increases significantly. Dissatisfaction occurs when there are delays, poor quality, or incorrect deliveries. Customer satisfaction is important because it influences repeat purchases and customer retention. A satisfied customer is more likely to recommend the service to others. Thus, maintaining high satisfaction levels is crucial for long-term success.

Service Quality

Service quality refers to the overall excellence of the service provided to customers. For Zomato, service quality includes reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles as defined by the SERVQUAL model. Reliability means delivering the correct order consistently, while responsiveness involves quick handling of complaints. Assurance relates to trust in transactions and delivery processes. Empathy focuses on understanding customer needs, and tangibles include packaging and app interface. High service quality enhances both perception and satisfaction among consumers. Poor service quality can lead to dissatisfaction and loss of customers. Therefore, continuous improvement in service quality is essential.

Perceived Value

Perceived value is the consumer's evaluation of the benefits received compared to the cost incurred. In Zomato, perceived value is influenced by discounts, offers, convenience, and time-saving benefits. Customers tend to prefer platforms that provide better deals and overall experience at a reasonable price. Functional value includes convenience and accessibility, while emotional value includes enjoyment and satisfaction. When consumers feel they are receiving good value for their money, their satisfaction increases. Low perceived value can discourage usage even if the service quality is good. Therefore, enhancing perceived value is important for attracting and retaining customers. It also plays a key role in building loyalty.

Trust And Reliability

Trust is a critical factor in online services where transactions are conducted digitally. In Zomato, trust is built through secure payment systems, reliable delivery services, and accurate information about restaurants. Customers expect transparency and honesty from the platform. Reliability ensures that services are delivered consistently without errors. If customers trust the platform, they are more likely to use it frequently. Lack of trust can lead to hesitation and reduced usage. Building trust requires maintaining data security and delivering promises effectively. Therefore, trust and reliability are essential for sustaining customer relationships.

Chi Square Test

H_{01} = There is no significant relationship between a consumer's monthly income and their frequency of using Zomato

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Table No.1

CROSS TABULATION					
Monthly Income	All	dining Review	Food Ordering	Offers & Discounts	Total
₹20,000-₹40,000	4	5	9	6	24
₹40,001-₹60,000	3	1	4	2	10
Above- ₹60,000	0	0	2	2	4
Upto ₹20,000	15	2	38	8	63
TOTAL	22	8	53	18	101

(Source: Primary Data)

Chi-Square Test

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance 2-sides
Pearson Chi-Square	14.841	9	.095
Likelihood Ratio	14.327	9	.111
N of Valid Cases	101		

a. 10 cells (62.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is.32.

Interpretation

The above table no. 1 shows the relationship between monthly income and purpose of using Zomato. The analysis value 0.095 is greater than the table value 0.05 so it means the **null hypothesis is accepted**.

Chi Square Test

H_{02} = There is no significant relationship between a consumer's occupation and their average spending per order on Zomato.

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Table No. 2

CROSS TABULATION					
OCCUPATION	₹200-500	₹500-₹1000	ABOVE ₹1000	BE-LOW ₹200	TOTAL
BUSINESS	2	3	4	4	13
EMPLOYEE	20	8	2	10	40
HOMEMAKER	2	1	1	2	6
STUDENT	20	9	1	12	42
TOTAL	44	21	8	28	101

(Source: Primary Data)

Chi-Square Test

	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance 2-sides
Pearson Chi- Square	14.590a	9	.103
Likelihood Ratio	12.269	9	.199
N of Valid Cases	101		
a .9 cells (56.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 48			

Interpretation

The above table shows the relationship between the selected variables using the chi-square test. The calculated significance value (0.103) is greater than the table value (0.05), which indicates that there is no significant relationship between the variables. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

FINDINGS

- **Age Distribution:** A significant majority (**68%**) of the respondents belong to the youth demographic of **18–25 years**, whereas the lowest representation (**7%**) is from individuals aged **above 35 years**.
- **Gender Profile:** The sample is predominantly female, constituting **63%** of the total respondents, while male respondents account for
- **Educational Background:** The largest segment of respondents (**42%**) consists of postgraduates, whereas the smallest group (**9%**) represents school-level students
- **Monthly Income:** The majority of the respondents (**62%**) earn a monthly income of **up to ₹20,000**, while a marginal **4%** of the respondents earn **above ₹60,000**.
- **Marital Status:** A vast majority (**78%**) of the respondents are single, whereas only **22%** are married.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the empirical findings, the following strategic suggestions are proposed to enhance Zomato's service quality, market penetration, and customer retention in Salem City:

- **Tailor Pocket-Friendly Pricing & Student Discounts:** Since the majority of the respondents are young (18–25 years), single (78%), and fall into the lower income bracket of up to ₹20,000 (62%), Zomato should actively introduce pocket-friendly combo meals, subscription micro-plans, and student-specific discount campaigns to drive order volumes.
- **Enhance Hyper-Personalization:** To optimize user engagement, Zomato should refine its algorithm to offer personalized food recommendations based on a user's past ordering history, local culinary preferences in Salem, and overall app browsing behavior.
- **Streamline Delivery Operations:** To address delivery friction, Zomato must improve coordination with local delivery executives. Restructuring logistics to minimize transit times and ensure high order accuracy will directly elevate customer satisfaction.
- **Targeted Promotional Campaigns:** Zomato should deploy hyper-local, creative social media marketing campaigns to capture the attention of occasional users and non-users, thereby expanding its active customer base in Salem.

- **Optimize Value Proposition of Membership Services (Gold):** Revamping subscription benefits—such as offering low-cost entry points, free delivery on short-distance orders, and high-value reward points—can incentivize price-sensitive consumers to subscribe, driving long-term retention.
- **Simplify App Usability:** The mobile application interface should be continually optimized to remain lightweight, intuitive, and highly responsive, ensuring that users across all age brackets can navigate and place orders with zero friction.
- **Strengthen Dispute Resolution Support:** Zomato should implement a swifter, more empathetic customer support system. Rapid resolution of disputes regarding delivery delays, order mismatches, or refunds is essential to build and maintain consumer trust.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, consumer perception and satisfaction play a pivotal role in dictating the market success and brand equity of Zomato within the online food delivery landscape. This study reveals that the majority of respondents in Salem City hold a highly favorable view of Zomato's offerings, particularly highlighting its operational efficiency, delivery velocity, and intuitive application performance. The platform has successfully carved out a robust consumer footprint locally, driven by its user-friendly interface, consistent adherence to delivery schedules, and the convenience of integrated digital payment options.

While a minor segment of respondents reported occasional service bottlenecks, the overarching satisfaction index remains remarkably high. This demonstrates Zomato's strong capability in meeting, and often exceeding, the daily expectations of its target demographic. Ultimately, by continually addressing localized consumer pain points, optimizing value-driven pricing, and maintaining high service standards, Zomato is well-positioned to sustain its competitive edge and foster long-term customer loyalty in Salem's growing market.

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