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PROJECT 02

A Sociological Analysis of Customer Sentiment in
Online Food Delivery Platforms:
A Functionalist Perspective

Task 01

Understanding Functionalist Theory

and the Online Food Delivery Ecosystem

“ Exploring
connections,
understanding
society,
building better
systems. ♡ ”



PROJECT Project 02

A Sociological Analysis of
Customer Sentiment in Online
Food Delivery Platforms:
A Functionalist Perspective



TASK Task 01

Understanding Functionalist
Theory and the Online Food
Delivery Ecosystem



DATE

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Deliverable

- ✓ 8–10 page report
- ✓ Literature review table
- ✓ Explanation of Functionalist Theory
- ✓ Overview of online food delivery platforms and their societal role

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of digital technology has transformed the way people live, communicate, and access services. One of the most significant developments in recent years is the emergence of online food delivery platforms such as Zomato, Swiggy, and Uber Eats. These platforms have made food ordering faster, easier, and more convenient by allowing customers to browse menus, place orders, make online payments, and track deliveries through mobile applications. The increasing use of smartphones, internet connectivity, and digital payment systems has contributed to the widespread adoption of these services. As a result, online food delivery platforms have become an essential part of modern urban life, benefiting consumers, restaurants, and delivery partners while contributing to the growth of the digital economy.

From a sociological perspective, online food delivery platforms can be understood as organised social systems in which different stakeholders perform specific roles. Functionalist Theory, one of the major perspectives in sociology, explains that society functions effectively when its various institutions and individuals work together to maintain stability and order. In the context of online food delivery services, customers place orders, restaurants prepare food, delivery partners ensure timely delivery, payment systems process transactions, and technology coordinates the entire process. Each component performs a unique function that contributes to the smooth operation of the platform. This interdependence makes Functionalist Theory an appropriate framework for understanding the structure and functioning of online food delivery platforms.

The purpose of this report is to examine online food delivery platforms through the lens of Functionalist Theory and to understand their role in contemporary society. The report discusses the major contributors and key concepts of Functionalism, explores the online food delivery ecosystem, and highlights how these platforms influence customer satisfaction, employment generation, business growth, and digital transformation. It also includes a review of existing research to identify major findings and research gaps. By combining sociological theory with the study of digital platforms, this report provides a comprehensive understanding of how online food delivery services have become an important part of modern social and economic life.

FUNCTIONALIST THEORY

The functionalist theory tries to explain the reasons why a society is able to survive. The underlying belief of this theory is that all societies want stability and peace. The people in society do not want chaos and confusion because this will disrupt their day-to-day activities. Hence all societies want order and some form of discipline. These are the means of achieving stability in society.

The functionalists view society as some form of organism consisting of different parts. These parts are integrated to the whole and they work in cooperation with each other. The human body is a complex organism that comprises different parts of the body. Each of these parts is separate but they form an integrated whole. Similarly, in society there are different parts that perform different roles. If we look at the total picture of society we will see that all these parts perform roles which contribute to the stability of the entire society.

In other words they contribute to the integration of society. For example, we find that people have different types of occupations and people perform different types of activities. There are doctors, lawyers, teachers, students, workers, industrialists, farmers, weavers etc. Though all these activities are different they are all needed for the functioning of the society. Therefore they can be viewed as separate parts which work together in order to integrate the society.

Hence we can see that the functionalist approach maintains that every component of the social structure performs specific functions which are necessary for maintaining stability in that society. These functions are necessary for the survival of that society. Hence the system of stratification in a society is also necessary for its integration and its stability. The functionalists presume that there are certain basic needs of every society. These needs have to be met or else there will be instability in society. These needs are known as functional prerequisites.

MAJOR CONTRIBUTORS

• **Émile Durkheim**

One of the earliest sociological ‘perspectives’ (or theories) was developed from the work of Emile Durkheim. His theories are considered to be the first major works in now what is considered Functionalism. Functionalism takes a structural (or systems) approach to the study of human societies. This means that they see society as an organised system of interrelated parts or ‘structures’ such as institutions (e.g. Education, the nuclear family), this system of institutions (or structures) work together to form the society as a whole. Durkheim argued that all these parts must work efficiently and effectively so that society remains stable. Durkheim believed that he could apply positivist scientific methods to study how these parts work together as a system, in order to figure out how society as a whole ‘functions’, and the ‘function’ or role that each of the parts played in maintaining and regulating a ‘functional’ society. Hence, this is why Durkheim is often considered the founding father of ‘Functionalism’.

• **Talcott Parsons**

Talcott Parsons expanded Functionalist Theory by explaining how different institutions work together to maintain a stable society. He viewed society as a complex system in which every institution performs essential functions. Parsons applied the ideas of Functionalism to a wide range of topics including the family, inequality in society and the role of the sick person within society. He also added concepts to those of Durkheim’s. For instance, he argued that before a functional society was possible, certain basic requirements needed to be met, these he called ‘functional prerequisites’ (pre meaning beforehand). Parsons argued that there were

four main prerequisites: **Adaptation, Goal Attainment, Integration and Pattern maintenance.** ***Adaptation*** refers to the need for society to adapt to its environment. For Example, if the 'global' society today does not adapt to global warming, there may be Disastrous consequences for all societies. ***Goal attainment*** refers to the need for society to set cultural goals and to have a common purpose. ***Integration*** refers to the need for individual members of society to be integrated into the value consensus. ***Pattern maintenance*** refers to the need in society to keep norms and values into a functional 'equilibrium' or balance.

• **Robert K. Merton**

He argued that institutions not only provided functions for society, yet also dysfunctions (like a virus in the Social body) or even non-functions (no positive or negative effect). This meant that within a functional society, not all institutions could be seen as 'indispensable'. Instead, some institutions may be more dysfunctional than functional and thus potentially disposed of and replaced by more functional institutions. An example of this logic being applied can be seen when looking at prisons as a social institution. Durkheim and Parsons would analyse prisons by looking at the positive contribution (function) provided by them for society, e.g. making citizens feel safer and rehabilitating offenders back to the 'value consensus'. Merton on the other hand would analyse there positive and negative aspects and look to see if prisons could be replaced by a more functional institution that could perform the same functions more efficiently. The earlier functionalists were often accused of seeing society through 'rose-tinted spectacles', yet this criticism could not be so easily made of Merton.

FUNDAMENTAL KEY CONCEPTS

Social structure

The concept of social structure is an important one in sociology. It refers to the fact that the social contexts of our lives do not consist just of random assortments of events or actions; they are structured, or patterned, in distinct ways. There are regularities in the ways we behave and in the relationships we have with one another. But social structure is not like a physical structure, such as a building, which exists independently of human actions.

Social Institutions

Social institutions are interdependent and continually interact and influence one another in everyday society. For example, some religious institutions believe they should have control over governmental and educational institutions. Social institutions can have both manifest and latent functions. Manifest functions are those that are explicitly stated, while latent functions are hidden.

Social order

It refers to the structured arrangement of norms, values, roles, and institutions within a society that guides individuals' behavior, maintains stability, and regulates interactions. It encompasses the established patterns of social organization and governance that provide cohesion, predictability, and coherence to social life, shaping the dynamics of social relations and collective behavior.

Social equilibrium

A theoretical state of balance in a social system referring both to an internal balance between interrelated social phenomena and to the external relationship the system maintains with its environment. It is the tendency of the social system, when disturbed, to return to its original state, because any

small change in a social element is followed by changes in other related elements that work toward diminishing the first disturbance.

Manifest Functions

It refers to the intended and recognized consequences of a social phenomenon or action. It is the primary, explicit, and intended purpose or outcome of a social structure or behavior that is readily observable and understood by the members of a society.

Latent Functions

It is unintended and often unrecognized consequences of social structures and actions. They contrast with the manifest or intended functions, which are the recognized and intended consequences. Latent functions are often hidden or obscured, but can have significant impacts on society.

Dysfunction

Dysfunction occurs when social institutions do not positively contribute to the maintenance of society but cause disharmony and conflict rather than coherence and integration. Social dysfunctions are undesirable consequences that result when the structure of a social system is maladapted to the functions it is intended to perform.

System Stability

System stability refers to the ability of society to maintain balance and continue functioning effectively despite social or economic changes. Functionalists argue that institutions constantly adapt to maintain equilibrium.

EMERGENCE OF ONLINE FOOD DELIVERY PLATFORMS

The emergence of online food delivery platforms is one of the most significant developments in the digital economy and the food service industry. Rapid advancements in information technology, widespread internet access, smartphone adoption, digital payment systems, and changing consumer lifestyles have transformed the traditional process of ordering food. What once relied on telephone calls and limited restaurant delivery services has evolved into a highly organized, technology-driven ecosystem that connects customers, restaurants, delivery partners, and payment providers through digital platforms.

Before the introduction of online food delivery applications, customers generally visited restaurants to dine or placed orders over the telephone. These services were often limited to nearby restaurants with their own delivery staff. There was little menu variety, no real-time order tracking, limited payment options, and minimal customer feedback mechanisms. As urbanization increased and people's lifestyles became busier, the demand for faster, more convenient, and reliable food ordering methods also grew.

The rapid expansion of the internet and affordable smartphones during the 2010s created the ideal environment for the development of online food delivery platforms. Companies recognized the opportunity to develop mobile applications and websites that could connect thousands of restaurants with customers through a single digital platform. Consumers could browse menus, compare prices, read customer reviews, customize orders, make secure online payments, and track deliveries in real time.

Globally, companies such as Uber Eats, Door Dash, Deliveroo, Just Eat, Foodpanda, and Grubhub revolutionized the food delivery industry by introducing digital ordering systems supported by GPS technology, artificial intelligence, and cloud-based data management. In India, Zomato and Swiggy became market leaders by offering extensive restaurant networks, attractive discounts, quick delivery services, and user-friendly mobile applications. These platforms significantly changed consumer

behaviour by making food ordering more accessible and convenient. Technological innovations have played a central role in the success of online food delivery services. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is used to recommend food items based on customer preferences and previous orders. GPS technology enables customers to track their delivery partners in real time, increasing transparency and trust. Machine learning algorithms help companies estimate delivery times, optimize routes, and improve operational efficiency. Cloud computing allows platforms to manage millions of customer orders simultaneously while maintaining reliable service.

The introduction of digital payment systems such as UPI, credit cards, debit cards, internet banking, and mobile wallets further accelerated the growth of online food delivery. Secure and cashless transactions improved customer convenience while supporting government initiatives promoting digital financial inclusion. Many platforms also introduced loyalty programmes, cashback offers, subscription plans, and promotional discounts to attract and retain customers. Today, online food delivery platforms represent an important component of the digital economy. They create employment opportunities for millions of delivery partners, software developers, customer support staff, marketing professionals, and restaurant employees.

From a Functionalist Theory perspective, online food delivery platforms function as a modern social institution that contributes to the stability and functioning of society. They perform several manifest functions, including providing convenient access to food, generating employment, supporting restaurants, and promoting digital payments. They also produce latent functions, such as encouraging digital literacy and introducing consumers to diverse cuisines. However, they may also create dysfunctions, including environmental pollution from packaging waste, unhealthy dietary habits, and employment insecurity among gig workers. Overall, the emergence of online food delivery platforms demonstrates how technological innovation can reshape social institutions while adapting to the changing needs of modern society.

COMPONENTS OF THE ONLINE FOOD DELIVERY

The online food delivery ecosystem consists of several interconnected stakeholders who work together to ensure efficient service.

- **Consumers**

Consumers use mobile applications or websites to browse menus, place orders, make payments, and provide ratings and reviews.

- **Restaurants**

Restaurants prepare food according to customer orders and coordinate with delivery partners to ensure timely dispatch.

- **Delivery Partners**

Delivery personnel collect food from restaurants and deliver it safely to customers. They play a crucial role in maintaining customer satisfaction.

- **Technology Platforms**

Companies develop and manage mobile applications, websites, databases, artificial intelligence, and customer support services.

- **Payment Systems**

Banks, UPI services, credit cards, debit cards, and digital wallets facilitate secure financial transactions.

- **Internet and GPS Infrastructure**

Reliable internet connectivity and GPS technology enable customers to place orders and track deliveries in real time.

- **Government and Regulatory Authorities**

Governments establish food safety regulations, labour laws, taxation policies, and consumer protection standards to ensure fair and safe operations.

All these components are highly interdependent, and the smooth functioning of the online food delivery ecosystem depends on effective coordination among them. From a functionalist perspective, each component performs a specialized function that contributes to the overall efficiency, stability, and success of the online food delivery system, demonstrating how modern technology and social institutions work together to satisfy the changing needs of society.

IMPORTANCE OF ONLINE FOOD DELIVERY SERVICES

Online food delivery services have become an essential part of modern society. They provide convenience, support businesses, create employment, and contribute to economic and technological development. From a functionalist perspective, these platforms perform important social functions that help maintain social stability.

Convenience and Time Saving

One of the greatest advantages of online food delivery is convenience. Customers can order meals anytime and from any location using smartphones or computers. Busy professionals, students, elderly people, and families benefit from quick access to food without travelling to restaurants. Features such as real-time order tracking, scheduled deliveries, and multiple payment options further enhance convenience.

Employment Generation

Online food delivery platforms create employment opportunities for thousands of people, including delivery partners, customer service executives, software developers, data analysts, marketing professionals, and restaurant staff. These platforms also provide flexible work opportunities, especially for students and part-time workers.

Business Growth for Restaurants

Food delivery platforms help restaurants reach a larger customer base beyond their physical location. Small restaurants and home-based food businesses can increase their visibility and sales without investing in additional outlets. Promotional campaigns and customer reviews also help businesses attract new customers.

Digital Transformation

The growth of online food delivery has accelerated digital transformation by promoting the use of smartphones, mobile applications, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, GPS technology, and online payment systems. Consumers have become more familiar with digital transactions, contributing to the growth of a cashless economy.

CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN ONLINE FOOD DELIVERY

Consumer behaviour refers to the process by which individuals select, purchase, use, and evaluate products or services to satisfy their needs and preferences. In the online food delivery industry, consumer behaviour is influenced by various factors such as convenience, price, food quality, technology, promotional offers, and customer experience. Understanding these factors helps food delivery platforms and restaurants improve their services and meet customer expectations.

One of the primary factors influencing consumer behaviour is convenience. Modern consumers lead busy lifestyles and often prefer ordering food online because it saves time and effort. Mobile applications allow customers to browse menus, customize orders, make secure payments, and receive food at their doorstep without visiting a restaurant. This convenience has made online food delivery a preferred choice for students, working professionals, and families.

Price and promotional offers also play a significant role in purchasing decisions. Discounts, cashback offers, free delivery, loyalty rewards, and subscription plans encourage customers to order more frequently. Many consumers compare prices across different platforms before placing an order to get the best value for money.

Another important factor is food quality and service quality. Customers expect fresh, hygienic, and well-packaged food delivered within the promised time. Positive experiences increase customer satisfaction, trust, and loyalty, while poor food quality or delayed deliveries often lead to negative reviews and reduced repeat purchases.

Technology and user experience strongly influence consumer behaviour. Easy-to-use mobile applications, real-time GPS tracking, secure payment options, personalized recommendations, and responsive customer support improve the overall ordering experience. Customers are more likely to continue using platforms that offer smooth navigation and reliable services.

Customer reviews and ratings have become an essential source of information before making purchasing decisions. Many consumers read reviews and check restaurant ratings to assess food quality, delivery performance, and overall customer satisfaction. Positive reviews build trust and encourage new customers to place orders.

Finally, changing lifestyles, increasing internet usage, and the widespread adoption of smartphones have significantly contributed to the growth of online food delivery services. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated this trend by encouraging contactless delivery and digital payments. As consumer preferences continue to evolve, online food delivery platforms are increasingly using artificial intelligence, data analytics, and personalized marketing strategies to enhance customer satisfaction and build long-term loyalty.

From the perspective of Functionalist Theory, consumer behaviour in online food delivery contributes to the functioning and stability of society by supporting the interconnected roles of various social institutions. As consumers increasingly adopt online food delivery services, they create demand that benefits restaurants, generates employment for delivery partners, promotes digital payment systems, and encourages technological innovation. This interdependence reflects the functionalist view that different parts of society work together to maintain social order and equilibrium. Consumer choices not only satisfy individual needs but also support the economic system and facilitate the growth of digital businesses.

However, functionalists also recognize that changing consumer behaviour may lead to dysfunctions, such as increased dependence on fast food, excessive screen time, and environmental concerns due to packaging waste. Thus, consumer behaviour in online food delivery demonstrates both the positive functions and potential dysfunctions of a modern social institution, highlighting its important role in contemporary society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Online food delivery services have experienced rapid growth due to technological advancements, increased smartphone usage, and changing consumer lifestyles. Platforms such as Zomato and Swiggy have transformed the food service industry by providing convenience and accessibility. Several researchers have examined factors affecting customer satisfaction, consumer behavior, service quality, and restaurant performance. The following literature review summarizes previous studies related to online food delivery services.

Literature Review Table

Sr. No	Author(s) & Year	Title of the Study	Objective	Methodology	Major Findings	Research Gap
1.	Li, Mirosa & Bremer (2020)	Review of Online Food Delivery Platforms and their Impacts on Sustainability	To examine the economic, social, and environmental impacts of online food delivery platforms	Narrative review of published literature	OFD services improve convenience and business opportunities but create environmental issues such as plastic waste and health concerns.	Mostly focused on China and university students; limited global evidence.
2.	Wu et al. (2024) 1,325 respondents	Modelling the Significance of Food Delivery	To study the effect of service quality on customer	Quantitative survey (PLS-SEM)	Reliability, food quality, traceability, system operation,	Limited to China; long-term customer behavior

		Service Quality on Customer Satisfaction and Reuse Intention	satisfaction and reuse intention		and service value significantly improve customer satisfaction and reuse intention.	not examined .
3.	Anonymous (2020)	A Study on Consumers' Perception on Food Apps .	To analyze customer perception, trust, innovation, and usefulness of food apps	Quantitative survey (Technology Acceptance Model)	Convenience, discounts, hygiene, and app innovation positively influence customer perception. Swiggy , was the most preferred app.	Small sample size and limited analysis of customer complaints.
4.	Vinaik et al. (2019) Quantitative survey 286 respondents	The Study of Interest of Consumers in Mobile Food Ordering Apps	To study awareness, expectations, and factors influencing food app usage	Quantitative survey	Convenience, easy payment, correct order delivery, and discounts strongly influence consumer interest.	Focused mainly on young consumers; customer loyalty not studied.
5.	Gupta (2019)	A Study on Impact of Online Food Delivery App on Restaurant Business	To examine the impact of Zomato and Swiggy on restaurant businesses Secondary data analysis Secondary sources	Secondary data analysis	Food delivery apps improve restaurant sales, customer convenience , and business visibility but increase dependency on third-	No primary data; customer satisfaction and profitability not analyzed.

			No primary data; customer satisfaction and profitability not analyzed.		party platforms	
6.	Osaili et al. (2023)	Food Delivery Apps and Healthy Choices	To study the influence of food delivery apps on healthy food choices and food safety	Survey-based quantitative study	Price, food appearance, hygiene, packaging, and delivery time significantly influence food choices.	Limited to Jordan; long-term health impacts not studied.
7.	Thamaraiselvan, Jayadevan & Chandrasekar (2019)	Digital Food Delivery Apps Revolutionizing Food Products Marketing in India	To study the growth and marketing impact of digital food delivery apps in India	Secondary data analysis	Technology, convenience, and changing lifestyles have accelerated food delivery app growth in India.	Customer satisfaction and behavioral analysis not directly studied.
8.	Yeo et al. (2019)	Online Food Delivery Services: Making Food Delivery the New Normal	To identify factors affecting consumers' intention to use online food delivery services	Quantitative survey (PLS-SEM)	Time-saving, convenience, and privacy positively influence behavioral intention, while ease of use has no significant effect.	Limited to urban Malaysia; qualitative insights absent.
9.	Banerjee, Jain & Nayyar (2019)	Measuring Service Quality of Food Delivery	To evaluate service quality of food delivery	Exploratory & descriptive survey	All SERVQUAL dimensions showed negative	Focused only on Generation Z and major

		Services: A Study of Generation Z Exploratory & descriptive survey 312 respondents Focused only on Generation Z and major Indian cities.	services using the SERVQUAL model		service quality gaps, indicating customer dissatisfaction.	Indian cities.
10	Collison (2020)	The Impact of Online Food Delivery Services on Restaurant Sales	To analyze the impact of online food delivery on restaurant sales	Quantitative analysis using Difference-in-Differences (DID) .	Online food delivery increases restaurant sales, but nearly half of online sales substitute traditional dine-in purchases.	Focused only on restaurant sales in the U.S.; customer satisfaction not examined .

SUMMARY

- OVERALL MAJOR FINDINGS

After reviewing the selected research papers, several common findings were identified regarding online food delivery services, customer satisfaction, consumer behavior, and digital platforms.

1. Convenience is the primary factor

Almost all studies found that convenience is the biggest reason customers use online food delivery platforms. Customers prefer ordering food from home because it saves time and effort.

2. Delivery speed significantly affects satisfaction

Fast and timely delivery was repeatedly identified as an important factor influencing customer satisfaction and reuse intention. Delayed deliveries often result in dissatisfaction.

3. Food quality and hygiene are essential

Many studies emphasized that food freshness, temperature, packaging quality, and hygiene strongly influence customer perception and satisfaction.

4. Discounts and pricing influence consumer behavior

Price promotions, discounts, and loyalty rewards were found to attract customers and increase repeat orders. However, high delivery charges may negatively affect satisfaction.

5. App usability improves user experience

Simple app navigation, easy ordering, payment options, and real-time order tracking positively impact customer satisfaction.

6. Service quality builds customer loyalty

Factors such as reliability, assurance, responsiveness, and order accuracy were found to be important in improving customer trust and encouraging repeat purchases.

7. Online food delivery benefits restaurants

Several studies showed that online food delivery platforms increase restaurant visibility, customer reach, and sales.

8. Technology plays a crucial role

Digital systems such as GPS tracking, digital payments, and data analytics improve operational efficiency and customer experience.

9. Environmental concerns are increasing

Some studies highlighted the negative environmental impact of food delivery services, especially plastic packaging waste and carbon emissions.

10. Changing lifestyles are driving growth

Urbanization, busy work schedules, and increasing smartphone usage have contributed to the rapid growth of food delivery platforms.

OVERALL RESEARCH GAPS

Although previous studies provide valuable insights, several gaps still exist.

- **Limited focus on rural consumers**

Most studies focused mainly on urban areas, while rural customer behavior remains under-researched.

- **Lack of long-term customer loyalty studies**

Many studies focused on short-term satisfaction but did not analyze long-term customer retention and loyalty.

- **Limited cross-country comparisons**

Most studies were conducted in single countries such as China, India, Malaysia, Jordan, or the USA. Comparative international studies are limited.

- **Small or specific sample groups**

Some studies focused only on students, Generation Z, or young adults, which limits generalizability.

- **Limited qualitative research**

Most studies used surveys and quantitative methods. There is less qualitative research exploring deeper customer experiences.

- **Sustainability issues need more attention**

Environmental concerns such as packaging waste, food waste, and eco-friendly delivery practices need further investigation.

- **Restaurant profitability is underexplored**

While many studies examined restaurant sales growth, fewer studies analyzed actual profit margins after platform commissions.

- **Health impacts need more research**

The effect of frequent online food ordering on unhealthy eating habits and long-term health outcomes is not sufficiently studied.

- **Platform comparison studies are limited**

There is limited research comparing customer satisfaction across different platforms like Zomato, Swiggy, and Uber Eats.

- ***Service recovery mechanisms need study***

Customer complaint handling, refunds, and problem resolution are less explored in previous research.

Addressing these gaps will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the social, economic, and environmental effects of online food delivery platforms.

- **CONCLUSION**

Functionalist Theory explains how different institutions work together to maintain stability, order, and cooperation within society. The contributions of Émile Durkheim, Talcott Parsons, and Robert K. Merton provide valuable insights into the functioning of modern social systems.

Online food delivery platforms have become an important component of contemporary society by connecting consumers, restaurants, delivery personnel, payment systems, and digital technology. These platforms provide convenience, generate employment, support businesses, and promote digital transformation. At the same time, they create challenges such as environmental pollution, unhealthy eating habits, and job insecurity among gig workers.

From a functionalist perspective, online food delivery platforms perform several manifest and latent functions while also producing dysfunctions that require attention from policymakers, businesses, and society. Overall, these platforms demonstrate how technological innovation can become a significant social institution that contributes to economic growth and changing lifestyles.

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TASK 02 REPORT

A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF CUSTOMER SENTIMENT

— IN — *Online Food Delivery Platforms:*

A FUNCTIONALIST PERSPECTIVE



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TIMELINE

1st July – 6th July

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TASK 02 REPORT

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1st July - 6th July

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I extend my heartfelt thanks to my mentor for their continuous guidance, valuable suggestions, and encouragement throughout the completion of this task. Their support enabled me to understand the research objectives and complete the study in a systematic and professional manner.

I would also like to thank the online platforms Zomato and Google Reviews for providing publicly available customer reviews and ratings, which served as the primary source of data for this research. Finally, I express my gratitude to everyone who directly or indirectly contributed to the successful completion of this project.

Abstract

The rapid growth of online food delivery platforms has transformed the way customers choose restaurants and share their dining experiences. This study presents a comparative customer sentiment analysis of selected restaurants in Delhi by examining reviews collected from Zomato and Google Reviews. The primary objective is to understand how customer feedback influences restaurant reputation, customer satisfaction, and service quality. A qualitative comparative research approach was adopted, and customer reviews were classified into positive, negative, and neutral sentiments based on recurring themes such as food quality, pricing, hygiene, delivery experience, ambience, and customer service.

The findings reveal that customer reviews play a significant role in shaping consumer decisions and encouraging restaurants to improve their services. While Zomato reviews mainly focus on food quality, delivery, and packaging, Google Reviews provide broader insights into dining experiences, ambience, and staff behaviour. The study also applies Functionalist Theory to explain how online review platforms promote transparency, accountability, and continuous service improvement within the restaurant industry. Overall, the research highlights the importance of customer sentiment analysis in understanding digital consumer behaviour and enhancing restaurant performance.

Keywords: Customer Sentiment Analysis, Online Food Delivery, Zomato, Google Reviews, Functionalist Theory, Customer Satisfaction, Restaurant Reputation, Digital Consumer Behaviour.

Introduction

The rapid growth of digital technology has transformed the food service industry by making online food delivery platforms an essential part of consumers' daily lives. Platforms such as Zomato, Swiggy, and Google Reviews have changed the way customers search for restaurants, place food orders, and share their dining experiences. Customer ratings and reviews have become an important source of information that influences purchasing decisions while encouraging restaurants to improve their products and services. As digital communication continues to expand, online reviews have become a powerful form of electronic word-of-mouth that significantly affects business reputation and customer trust (Giddens, 2009).

Customer sentiment analysis is the process of examining opinions expressed in reviews to understand customer satisfaction and identify common patterns in consumer behaviour. By classifying reviews into positive, negative, and neutral categories, businesses can identify their strengths, recognise service gaps, and make informed decisions to improve customer experiences. In the restaurant industry, customer feedback commonly focuses on food quality, pricing, hygiene, packaging, delivery services, customer support, and overall dining experience. Therefore, sentiment analysis has become an effective tool for understanding customer expectations and enhancing service quality (Liu, 2012).

This study conducts a comparative analysis of customer reviews collected from Zomato and Google Reviews for selected restaurants located in different areas of Delhi. The comparison focuses on customer ratings, review patterns, management responses, and recurring themes that influence customer satisfaction. Since both platforms serve different purposes, analysing customer opinions across them provides a broader understanding of restaurant performance and consumer behaviour. The study also highlights how online reviews contribute to maintaining transparency and accountability in the restaurant industry.

From a sociological perspective, the study applies Functionalist Theory to explain the role of online review platforms in promoting communication and cooperation between customers and restaurants. Functionalism suggests that every social institution performs specific functions that contribute to social order and stability. Similarly, online review platforms facilitate the exchange of information, encourage businesses to improve their services, and help consumers make informed decisions. Thus, customer sentiment analysis not only evaluates business performance but also demonstrates the growing importance of digital platforms in shaping consumer behaviour and strengthening trust in modern society (Ritzer, 2011).

Objective

The primary objective of this study is to understand how customer reviews influence the reputation, service quality, and overall performance of restaurants operating through online food delivery platforms. With the increasing dependence on digital platforms for food ordering, customers rely heavily on online ratings and reviews before making purchasing decisions. Therefore, this study aims to examine the role of customer sentiment in shaping consumer trust and restaurant reputation.

Another important objective is to conduct a comparative analysis of customer reviews available on Zomato and Google Reviews for selected restaurants located in different parts of Delhi. By comparing customer ratings, review volume, management responses, and customer experiences across these platforms, the study seeks to identify similarities and differences in customer opinions.

The study also aims to classify customer reviews into positive, negative, and neutral sentiments. This classification helps in identifying common themes such as food quality, taste, hygiene, packaging, pricing, delivery experience, customer service, restaurant ambience, and overall customer satisfaction. Understanding these themes enables a deeper analysis of customer expectations and business performance.

Furthermore, this report intends to apply Functionalist Theory to explain how online review platforms function as social institutions that promote communication, accountability, transparency, and service improvement. The theory provides a sociological perspective for understanding the relationship between customers, restaurants, and digital platforms.

Finally, the study aims to provide practical recommendations that can help restaurants improve customer satisfaction, strengthen online reputation, and build long-term customer trust through effective management of online reviews.

Specific Objectives

- To analyse customer reviews collected from Zomato and Google Reviews.
- To compare customer ratings and review patterns of selected restaurants.
- To classify customer opinions into positive, negative, and neutral sentiments.
- To identify major themes influencing customer satisfaction.
- To examine the role of management responses in maintaining customer trust.
- To apply Functionalist Theory for interpreting customer sentiment.
- To provide recommendations for improving service quality and online reputation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

• Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative comparative research design to analyse customer sentiments expressed through online reviews. A qualitative approach is appropriate because the research focuses on understanding customer opinions, experiences, attitudes, and perceptions rather than numerical statistical testing. Comparative analysis enables the researcher to examine differences and similarities between customer reviews available on different digital platforms.

• Area of Study

The study focuses on restaurants located in different regions of Delhi, ensuring geographical diversity and a broad representation of customer experiences. Restaurants were selected based on their availability on both Zomato and Google Reviews.

The selected restaurants are :

S. no.	Restaurant name	Location
1.	<i>Diggin</i>	<i>Bikaner House , Pandora road market , New Delhi</i>
2.	<i>The Grammar Room</i>	<i>Meharauli</i>
3.	<i>Rajinder Da Dhabba</i>	<i>Safdarjung Enclave</i>
4.	<i>Privya</i>	<i>Karkarduma</i>
5.	<i>Ama Cafe</i>	<i>Manju ka Tila</i>
6.	<i>Angithi Tadka by Madaan</i>	<i>Tilak Nagar</i>
7.	<i>Sandoz</i>	<i>Karol Bagh</i>
8.	<i>Cafe Tesu</i>	<i>Adchini</i>
9.	<i>The Yellow Chilli</i>	<i>Rajouri Garden</i>
10.	<i>Sambarport</i>	<i>Lajpat Nagar</i>

Sources of Data

The study is primarily based on secondary data collected from publicly available online review platforms.

Primary Sources

No primary survey or interviews were conducted.

Secondary Sources

The major sources of data include:

Zomato customer reviews

Google Reviews

Sociology books

Research methodology books

Journal articles on sentiment analysis

Official restaurant information

3.4 Data Collection Method

Customer reviews were collected manually during the first week of July 2026. For each restaurant, information was gathered from both Zomato and Google Reviews. The following details were recorded:

- Overall customer rating
- Number of reviews
- Positive customer comments
- Negative customer comments
- Neutral customer comments
- Management responses (where available)
- Customer photographs (used only for observation)
- Common issues highlighted by customers

To maintain consistency, approximately 20–30 recent reviews from each platform were examined for every restaurant. This resulted in a sufficient sample for identifying recurring patterns and comparing customer sentiments across platforms.

3.5 Sampling Technique

The study uses Purposive Sampling, a non-probability sampling method. Restaurants were intentionally selected because they met the following criteria:

- Located in Delhi.
- Available on both Zomato and Google Reviews.
- Had a sufficient number of customer reviews.
- Represented different locations and cuisines.
- Included customer feedback on food, service, hygiene, pricing, and ambience.

According to Kothari (2004), purposive sampling is appropriate when researchers intentionally select cases that best serve the objectives of the study.

3.6 Variables Used for Comparison

The comparative analysis was based on the following variables:

Variable	Description
Overall Rating	Average Customer Rating
Review Volume	Total number of customer reviews
Food Quality	Taste , freshness , presentation
Delivery Experience	Timeliness and condition of food
Packaging	Cleanliness and Quality of packaging
Customer service	Behaviour of staff and support
Hygeine	Cleanliness of food and premises
Pricing	Value for money
Management Responses	Replies provided by restaurant management
Overall satisfaction	General customer opinion

3.7 Sentiment Classification

Customer reviews were divided into three categories.

Positive Sentiment

Reviews expressing satisfaction with food quality, taste, cleanliness, customer service, ambience, or delivery.

- Examples:
- Delicious food.
- Friendly staff.
- Fast delivery.
- Hygienic packaging.
- Pleasant dining experience.

Negative Sentiment

Reviews highlighting dissatisfaction regarding delays, poor food quality, customer service, hygiene, refunds, or pricing.

- Examples:
- Late delivery.
- Cold food.
- Rude staff.
- Poor packaging.
- Overpriced meals.

Neutral Sentiment

Reviews containing factual information without expressing strong positive or negative emotions.

- Examples:
- Waiting time was approximately twenty minutes.
- Restaurant was crowded.
- Menu offers multiple cuisines.

According to Liu (2012), sentiment classification helps researchers understand customer attitudes by grouping opinions into positive, negative, and neutral categories.

3.8 Limitations of the Study

The study has certain limitations that should be considered while interpreting the findings. First, the analysis is based only on customer reviews available on Zomato and Google Reviews, and therefore does not include feedback from other food delivery platforms or social media. Second, customer opinions are subjective and may vary depending on individual expectations and experiences. Third, the study focuses only on selected restaurants in Delhi, so the findings may not represent all restaurants or all regions. Finally, online reviews can sometimes be biased, incomplete, or influenced by personal preferences, which may affect the overall sentiment analysis.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Introduction to Comparative Analysis

Comparative analysis is a research method used to identify similarities and differences between two or more sources of information. In this study, customer reviews from Zomato and Google Reviews were compared to understand how customers perceive restaurant services across different digital platforms. Both platforms allow users to express their experiences by providing ratings, written reviews, and photographs. However, the nature of customer feedback often differs because each platform serves a different purpose. Zomato users generally focus on food quality, delivery experience, pricing, and packaging, while Google Reviews often include detailed comments about ambience, cleanliness, staff behaviour, and overall dining experience.

The comparative analysis was conducted using ten restaurants located in different areas of Delhi. The comparison focused on customer ratings, review volume, positive and negative opinions, management responses, and recurring themes. This analysis helps identify how online platforms influence restaurant reputation and customer decision-making.

Comparative Analysis of Selected Restaurants

1. Diggin , Pandara Road Market

The image displays a composite view of the restaurant 'Diggin Cafe'. On the left, the Zomato profile shows a 4.4-star rating from 17K reviews, with 4,741 votes. The Google profile shows a 4.4-star rating from 16,954 reviews. On the right, a detailed rating breakdown is provided: Food (4.2), Service (4.4), and Ambience (4.3). A search bar for reviews is also visible. At the bottom right, a photograph shows the restaurant's outdoor seating area, which is decorated with numerous potted plants and string lights.

Category	Rating
Food	4.2
Service	4.4
Ambience	4.3

On Google :

Rating : 4.4

Review count : 1.7 K

Main Positive Points: Delicious food , excellent service and beautiful ambience

Main Negative Points : High cost , Waiting Time

On Zomato

Rating : 4.3

Review Count: 4.7 K

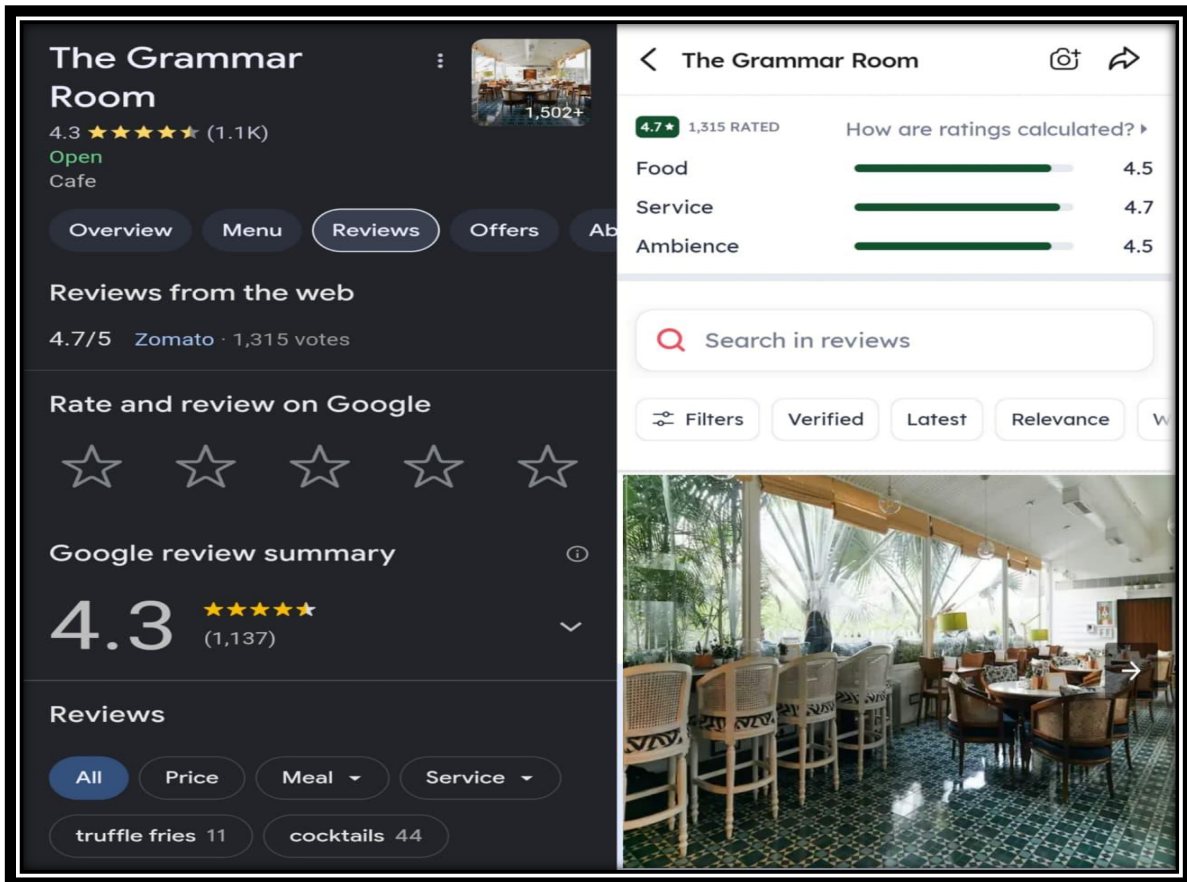
Main Positive Points : Ambience, Staff behaviour, Food Presentation

Main Negative Points: Crowded during weekends

Analysis:

Diggin is one of the most popular restaurants in Delhi and receives a large number of reviews on both Zomato and Google Reviews. Most customers on Zomato appreciated the quality of food, attractive presentation, and café ambience. Several reviewers also highlighted the variety of desserts and beverages offered by the restaurant. However, a few customers expressed dissatisfaction with waiting time during peak hours and considered the prices relatively high. Google Reviews reflected similar opinions regarding the restaurant's ambience and hospitality. Customers frequently praised the beautifully designed interiors, courteous staff, and overall dining experience. Compared to Zomato, Google Reviews contained more detailed descriptions of customer experiences. Management responses were also more frequently visible on Google Reviews, demonstrating active customer engagement.

2. THE GRAMMAR ROOM



On Google :

Rating : 4.3

Review count : 1.1 K

Main Positive Points: Healthy Food Options , Ambience

Main Negative Points : Weekend rush , Rude staff

On Zomato

Rating : 4.7

Review Count: 1.3 K

Main Positive Points : Ambience, Delicious food , Nice service

Main Negative Points: Crowded during weekends , Argumentative Staff.

Analysis:

The Grammar Room is highly appreciated for its peaceful ambience and elegant café setting. Customers on Zomato mainly praised the brunch options, desserts, and presentation of food. Google Reviews highlighted the restaurant's relaxing environment and courteous staff. Negative feedback on both platforms mostly concerned high prices and delays during peak hours. Google users generally provided more detailed descriptions of their dining experience, while Zomato users focused more on food quality.

3. RAJINDER DA DHABBA

The image displays a composite of information about Rajinder Da Dhabba. On the left is a Zomato profile showing a 4.2-star rating from 51K reviews, a price range of ₹200-600, and categories like North Indian, Mughlai, and Fast food. It also shows ratings from Zomato (4.4/5), Facebook (4.3/5), and Justdial (4.2/5). Below this is a Google review summary with a 4.2-star rating from 50,998 reviews. On the right is a Google Maps view of the restaurant, showing a 4.4-star rating from 5,961 reviews and a breakdown of ratings for Food (4.5), Service (4.5), and Ambience (4.1). At the bottom right is a photograph of the restaurant's exterior at night, featuring prominent signage for 'RAJINDER DA DHABBA' and 'RAJINDER X PRESS'.

Platform	Rating	Votes
Zomato	4.4/5	5,961 votes
Facebook	4.3/5	822 votes
Justdial	4.2/5	58,726 votes

Category	Rating
Food	4.5
Service	4.5
Ambience	4.1

On Google :

Rating : 4.2

Review count : 51K

Main Positive Points: Delicious North cuisine, affordable prices

Main Negative Points : Bad Service , Parking Space .

On Zomato

Rating : 4.4

Review Count: 5.9K

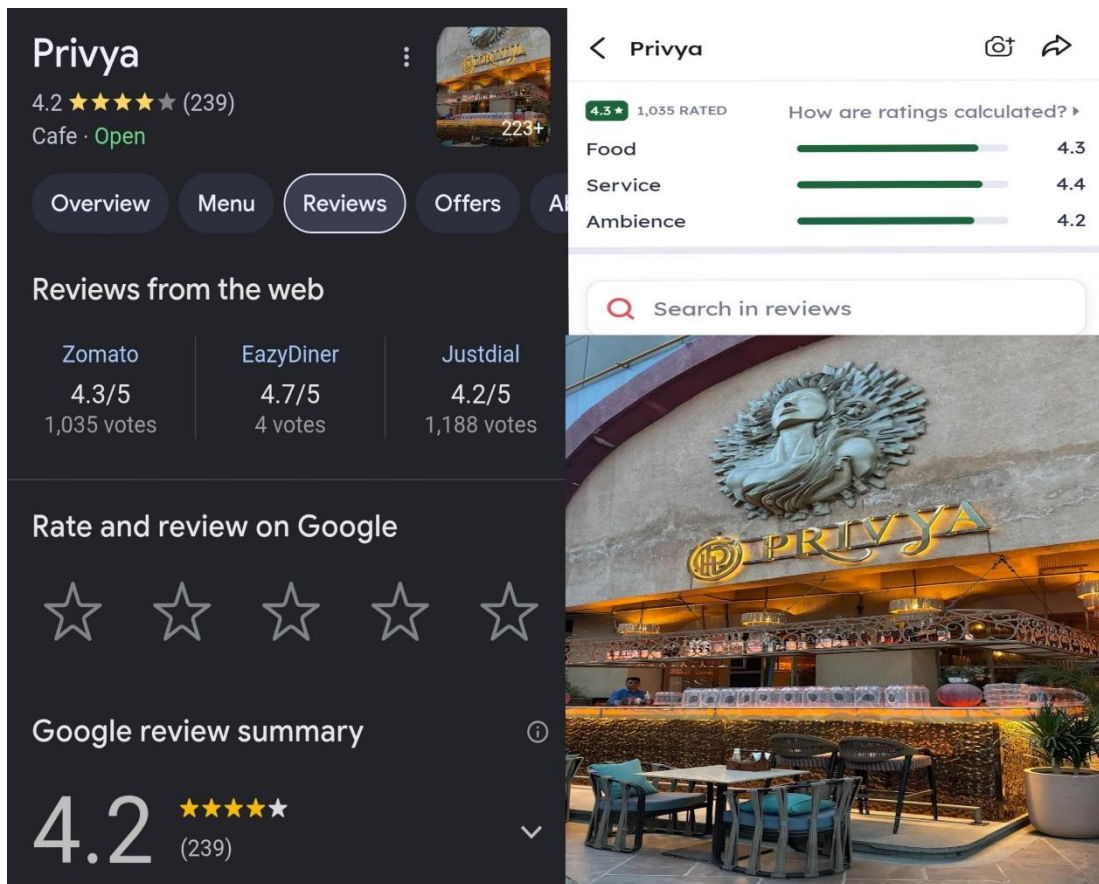
Main Positive Points : Ambience, delicious vegetarian food

Main Negative Points: Bad food taste in non vegetarian especially kebabs

Analysis:

Rajinder Da Dhabba is famous for its North Indian and Mughlai cuisine and attracts both locals and tourists. Most customers praise the rich flavours, generous portions, and affordable pricing. Reviews often recommend kebabs and butter chicken as signature dishes. Negative feedback mainly relates to overcrowding, limited parking, and waiting time during evenings. Google Reviews provide detailed descriptions of the dining experience, while Zomato users focus more on food quality and value for money. Overall, the restaurant enjoys a loyal customer base.

4. Privya



On Google :

Rating : 4.2

Review count : 239

Main Positive Points: Enjoyable live music , cozy ambiance, polite staff

Main Negative Points : food is disappointing .

On Zomato

Rating : 4.3

Review Count: 1K

Main Positive Points : outstanding” ambiance and aesthetics. Recommended dishes include the avocado cucumber sushi and asparagus tempura sushi.

Main Negative Points: Slow service, Few Italian and Asian food doesn't taste good .

Analysis:

Privya has gained positive attention for its pleasant ambience, diverse menu, and courteous staff. Customers appreciate the quality of food, comfortable seating, and family-friendly environment. Many reviews highlight the restaurant as a suitable place for celebrations and casual dining. Some customers report delays in service during weekends and believe that a few dishes are priced on the higher side. Google Reviews generally provide detailed feedback on customer service, whereas Zomato reviews emphasize food taste and presentation.

5. AMA Cafe



AMA Cafe | Majnu Ka Tilla
4.5 ★★★★★ (30K) · ₹200–600
Open
Cafe, Italian, Fast food

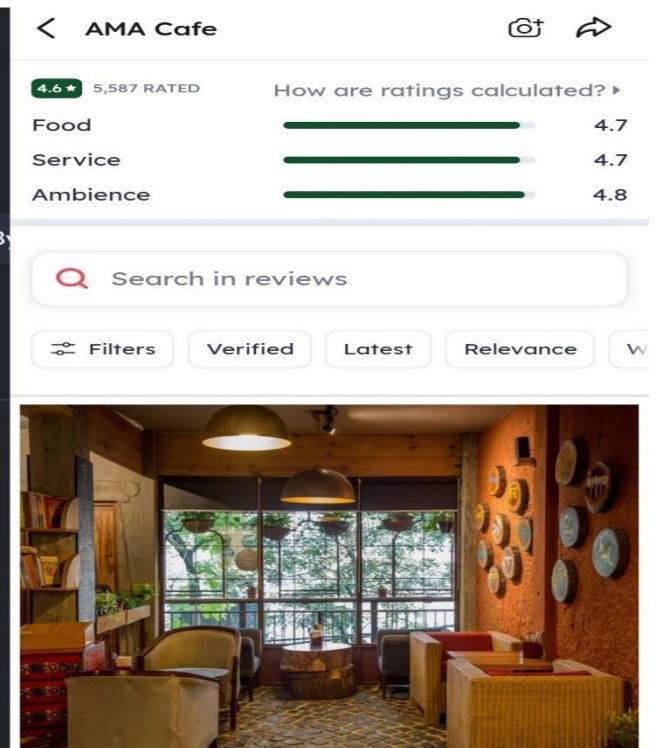
Overview Menu Photos **Reviews**

Reviews from the web
4.6/5 Zomato · 5,586 votes

Rate and review on Google

★★★★★

Google review summary
4.5 ★★★★★ (30,257)




AMA Cafe

4.6 ★ 5,587 RATED How are ratings calculated? ▶

Food	4.7
Service	4.7
Ambience	4.8

Search in reviews

Filters Verified Latest Relevance



On Google :

Rating : 4.5

Review count : 30K

Main Positive Points: Aesthetic ambiance, top recommendations for fired wood pizza , Nutella pancakes .

Main Negative Points : No reservation policy , high waiting

On Zomato

Rating : 4.6

Review Count: 5.5 K

Main Positive Points : Warm, spacious seating spread across multiple floor

Main Negative Points: weekends long waiting , cold food

Analysis:

Ama Café is one of the most popular cafés in Majnu Ka Tila and is especially famous for its breakfast menu, pancakes, and desserts. Customers consistently praise the cosy atmosphere, delicious food, and friendly service. Many visitors enjoy the café's peaceful environment and unique Tibetan neighbourhood. Negative reviews mainly mention long waiting times because of high customer demand and limited seating. Google Reviews usually describe the overall dining experience, while Zomato users concentrate on food quality and café ambience.

6. Angithi Tadka by Madaan

Angithi Tadka by Madaan
100% Pure Vegetarian
4.2 ★ (1.2K) · ₹200–400 · Open
Veg-only · North Indian, Chinese, Pizza

Menu Photos **Reviews** Offers About

Reviews from the web

Platform	Rating	Votes
Zomato	4.2/5	154 votes
Justdial	4/5	3,169 votes
magicpin	3.7/5	53 votes

Rate and review on Google

Google review summary

4.2 ★★★★★ (1,225)

4.2★ 154 RATED How are ratings calculated? ▶

Category	Rating
Food	4.2
Service	4.2
Ambience	4.2

Search in reviews

Filters Verified Latest Relevance

MADAAN CATERERS

On Google :

Rating : 4.2

Review count : 1.2K

Main Positive Points: High praise for vegetarian Punjabi food , affordable prices

Main Negative Points : Undressed refund requests , bad customer service

On Zomato

Rating : 4.2

Review Count: 154

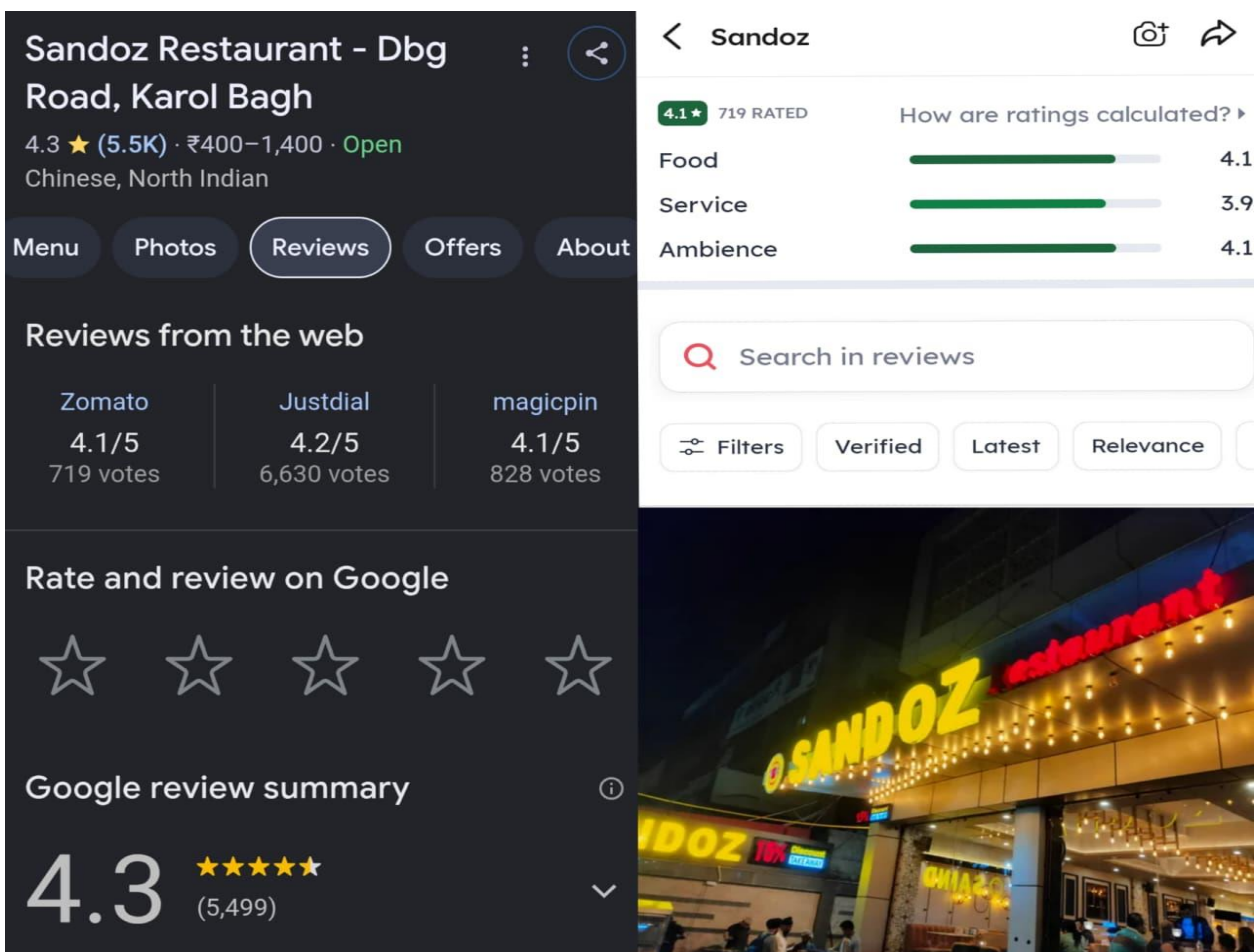
Main Positive Points : Affordable prices , Clean indoor ambiance, delicious signature food like Mushroom Masala, Matki Paneer, and Tandoori platters.

Main Negative Points: Delayed delivery , missing items.

Analysis:

Angithi Tadka by Madaan is known for its North Indian cuisine and grilled dishes. Customers appreciate the flavourful food, reasonable prices, and quick delivery services. Many reviews mention generous portions and consistent taste. However, some customers report occasional delays in service during peak hours and minor issues with order accuracy. Google Reviews provide detailed opinions on hospitality and dining experience, while Zomato users mainly discuss food quality and value for money.

7. Sandoz



On Google :

Rating : 4.3

Review count : 5.4K

Main Positive Points: Standout north Indian dishes , beautiful dining area

Main Negative Points : overcooked food , high waiting time , extra charges

On Zomato

Rating : 4.1

Review Count: 719

Main Positive Points : Delicious chicken , heart warming service

Main Negative Points: Ride staff behaviour, Burnt Good

Analysis:

Sandoz is a well-established family restaurant known for serving authentic North Indian and Mughlai cuisine. Customers highly appreciate the rich flavours, hygienic environment, and courteous staff. Many reviewers recommend the restaurant for family gatherings and celebrations. Some negative reviews mention waiting time during weekends and slightly premium pricing. Google Reviews focus on service quality and ambience, while Zomato reviews emphasize food taste, quantity, and presentation. Overall, Sandoz maintains a positive reputation among diners.

8. Cafe Tesu

The image shows a composite of information about Cafe Tesu. On the left, a Zomato profile card displays a 4.4-star rating from 5.4K reviews, a price range of ₹600-1,800, and categories like Cafe, Japanese, and Pizza. Below this, it shows 'Reviews from the web' with Zomato (4.6/5, 2,915 votes) and EazyDiner (4.5/5, 94 votes). A Google review summary shows a 4.4 rating from 5,375 reviews. On the right, a Zomato review page for Cafe Tesu shows a 4.6-star rating from 2,917 reviews, with a breakdown for Food (4.6), Service (4.7), and Ambience (4.5). At the bottom right is a photograph of the cafe's interior, featuring white walls, a deer head mounted on the wall, and tables with chairs near a window.

On Google :

Rating : 4.4

Review count : 5.3K

Main Positive Points: Cozy ambience, portion size is high

Main Negative Points : low food quality , Rude staff

On Zomato

Rating : 4.6

Review Count: 2.9K

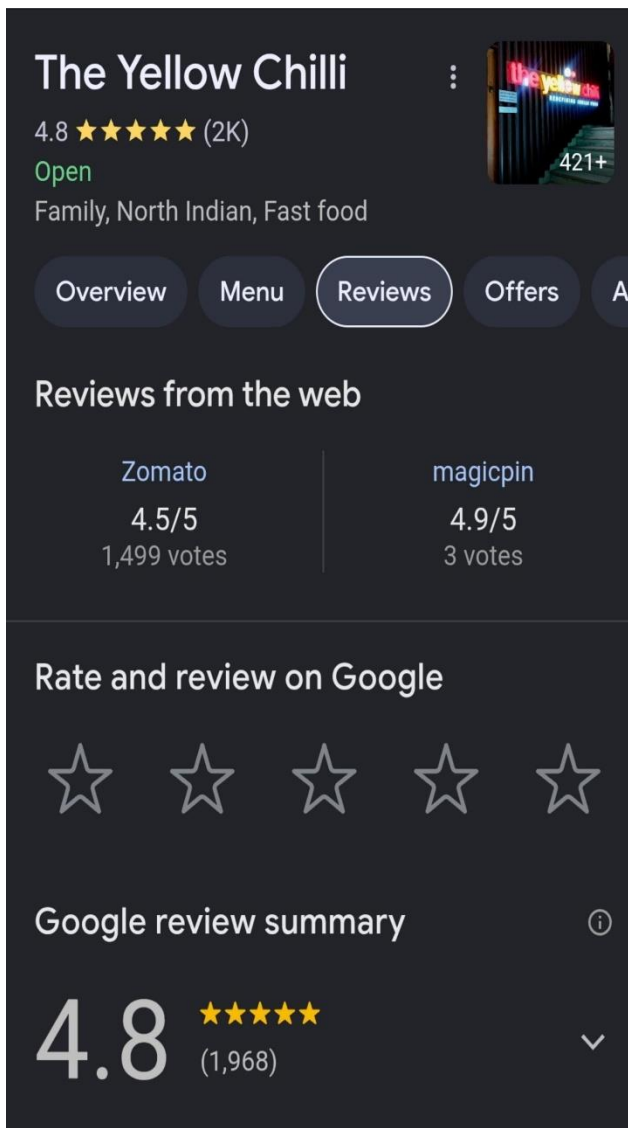
Main Positive Points : Delicious Good , beautiful ambience


Main Negative Points: high waiting time , service quality is low

Analysis:

Cafe Tesu is appreciated for its peaceful ambience, stylish interiors, and continental cuisine. Customers enjoy the café's breakfast menu, desserts, and coffee, along with its calm environment for meetings and casual dining. Reviews also praise the polite staff and attractive food presentation. However, some customers believe that the prices are relatively high and that service may become slow during peak hours. Overall, customer feedback remains largely positive because of its quality food and relaxing atmosphere.

9. The Yellow Chilli



The Yellow Chilli  421+

4.8 ★★★★★ (2K)
Open
Family, North Indian, Fast food

Overview Menu **Reviews** Offers All

Reviews from the web

Platform	Rating	Votes
Zomato	4.5/5	1,499 votes
magicpin	4.9/5	3 votes

Rate and review on Google

★★★★★

Google review summary

4.8 ★★★★★ (1,968)



< The Yellow Chilli  

4.5 ★ 1,499 RATED [How are ratings calculated? ▸](#)

Category	Rating
Food	4.6
Service	4.6
Ambience	4.5

Search in reviews

Filters Verified Latest Relevance



On Google :

Rating : 4.8

Review count : 1.9K

Main Positive Points: delicious food especially starters , sweets & butter chicken , nice atmosphere.

Main Negative Points : Bad Service by staff , high waiting time.

On Zomato

Rating : 4.5

Review Count: 1.5K

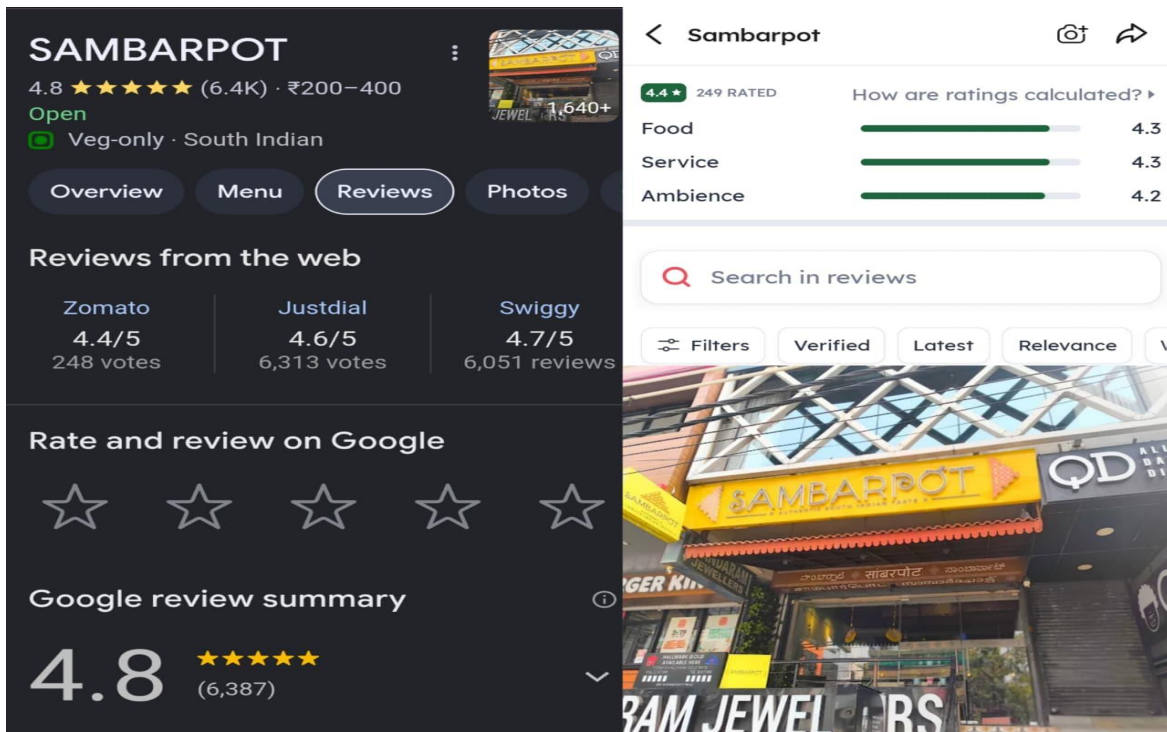
Main Positive Points : Brilliant Food quality , great service .

Main Negative Points: Bad non vegetarian food , rude staff , ambience is old

Analysis:

The Yellow Chilli, established by Chef Sanjeev Kapoor, is known for its premium North Indian cuisine and elegant ambience. Customers appreciate the rich flavours, creative menu, and professional service. Many reviewers enjoy the fine dining experience and recommend the restaurant for family dinners and celebrations. However, some reviews mention high pricing and slightly longer waiting times during weekends. Overall, reviews on Google and Zomato indicate strong customer satisfaction with food quality and hospitality.

10 . Sambarpot



On Google :

Rating : 4.8

Review count : 6.3K

Main Positive Points: Delicious south Indian food , nice and clean atmosphere

Main Negative Points : Issue of parking , slow service offline

On Zomato

Rating : 4.4

Review Count: 249

Main Positive Points : Fast service , excellent packaging of food

Main Negative Points: cold and spoiled food especially chutney , high price

Analysis:

Sambarpot is popular for its authentic South Indian cuisine and traditional flavours. Customers frequently praise the freshness of food, variety of dosas, idlis, and filter coffee. Many reviewers also appreciate the hygienic environment and prompt service. Some customers mention limited seating and waiting during busy meal hours, while a few feel that certain dishes are expensive. Overall, customer reviews show a positive perception of the restaurant due to its authentic taste, cleanliness, and friendly service.

Overall Comparison Between Platforms

After comparing all ten restaurants, it was observed that both Zomato and Google Reviews provide valuable customer feedback, but each platform emphasises different aspects of the dining experience. Zomato reviews mainly focused on food quality, delivery services, packaging, pricing, and menu variety. Since many users access Zomato for ordering food online, their reviews frequently discussed delivery speed, food freshness, and packaging quality. In contrast, Google Reviews contained more detailed descriptions of customers' overall dining experiences. Reviewers often commented on restaurant ambience, cleanliness, staff behaviour, waiting time, parking facilities, and customer service. Google Reviews also displayed management responses more frequently, which helped build customer trust and demonstrated organisational accountability. Another important observation was that customer ratings for the same restaurant sometimes differed between the two platforms. These differences may be attributed to variations in customer expectations, platform usage, and review criteria. Restaurants receiving consistently positive reviews across both platforms generally maintained higher levels of customer satisfaction and stronger online reputations. Overall, the comparative analysis demonstrates that customer reviews are valuable sources of information for both consumers and restaurant management. They not only influence purchasing decisions but also encourage restaurants to improve service quality, strengthen customer relationships, and maintain transparency in business operations.

SENTIMENT ANALYSIS

Sentiment analysis is the process of identifying and interpreting emotions, opinions, and attitudes expressed in written text. In this study, customer reviews collected from Zomato and Google Reviews were analysed to understand customers' perceptions of the selected restaurants. Reviews were manually classified into positive, negative, and neutral categories based on the emotions and experiences expressed by customers.

According to Liu (2012), sentiment analysis helps organisations understand customer satisfaction by identifying patterns in customer opinions. It enables businesses to recognise their strengths, identify areas requiring improvement, and make informed decisions to enhance customer experiences. In the context of online food delivery platforms, sentiment analysis provides valuable insights into food quality, delivery efficiency, customer service, pricing, hygiene, ambience, and overall satisfaction.

The analysis in this report is based on manually reviewing customer comments rather than using automated software. This approach allows for a more detailed interpretation of customer experiences and recurring themes.

Sentiment Classification Criteria

Customer reviews were classified according to the following criteria:

Sentiment Category	Description	Examples
Positive	Review expressing satisfaction and expressing	Delicious food, courteous staff, quick delivery, hygienic packaging
Neutral	Reviews containing factual information without strong emotion	Moderate waiting time, average ambience, limited seating
Negative	Reviews expressing dissatisfaction or complaints	Delayed delivery, poor service, cold food, high pricing

Common Positive Themes

The analysis of customer reviews revealed that positive feedback mainly focused on the quality of food, taste, restaurant ambience, customer service, and cleanliness. Many customers appreciated restaurants that consistently maintained high standards of food preparation, attractive presentation, and hygienic packaging. Fast delivery, courteous staff, and prompt management responses also contributed to positive customer experiences.

Customers particularly valued restaurants that offered authentic flavours, generous portion sizes, and a pleasant dining environment. Google Reviews frequently highlighted ambience, cleanliness, and staff behaviour, while Zomato reviews often praised food quality, menu variety, and delivery services.

• Table for Common Positive Themes

Theme	Observation
Food	Fresh, tasty, well-presented meals
Delivery	Timely and efficient service
Packaging	Hygienic and secure packaging
Customer Service	Friendly and helpful staff
Ambience	Friendly and helpful staff
Hygeine	Clean dining area and food preparation

Common Negative Themes

Although most restaurants received favourable reviews, several recurring complaints were identified across both platforms. The most common

negative issues included delayed delivery, inconsistent food quality, poor packaging, high pricing, and slow customer service. Some customers also expressed dissatisfaction regarding waiting time during weekends and holidays.

Google Reviews contained more complaints related to seating arrangements, cleanliness, and staff behaviour, whereas Zomato users mainly criticised delayed delivery, food temperature, and packaging quality.

Table for Common Negative Themes

<u>Themes</u>	<u>Observation</u>
<u>Delivery</u>	Late arrivals of food
<u>Food Quality</u>	Inconsistent taste
<u>Packaging</u>	Leakage and damaged containers
<u>Pricing</u>	Expensive compared to quantity
<u>Customer Service</u>	Slow response to complaints
<u>Waiting Time</u>	Long queues during peak hours

Common Neutral Themes

Neutral customer reviews neither expressed strong satisfaction nor dissatisfaction but provided factual observations about the restaurants and their services. These reviews generally focused on aspects such as waiting time, seating arrangements, restaurant location, menu variety, and operating hours without conveying any clear emotional response. For example, customers mentioned that certain restaurants were crowded during weekends, offered both vegetarian and non-vegetarian options, or required a waiting period before seating. Such reviews were informative and helped prospective customers understand the overall dining experience without influencing their opinion positively or negatively.

Although neutral reviews do not directly affect restaurant reputation in the same way as positive or negative reviews, they provide valuable contextual information that supports informed decision-making. They also indicate that customer experiences can vary depending on individual expectations, visiting

time, and personal preferences. Therefore, neutral reviews contribute to a balanced understanding of customer sentiment and complement the overall analysis of restaurant performance.

Overall Sentiment Distribution

After analysing customer reviews from both Zomato and Google Reviews, it was observed that positive sentiments were the most dominant, indicating that the majority of customers were satisfied with the selected restaurants. Positive reviews mainly highlighted food quality, taste, ambience, hygiene, courteous staff, and prompt service. Negative reviews were comparatively fewer and mostly focused on delayed delivery, high pricing, long waiting times, inconsistent food quality, and occasional service issues. Neutral reviews consisted of factual observations regarding seating arrangements, restaurant atmosphere, menu options, and waiting time without expressing clear satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Table 5.3: Overall Sentiment Distribution

Sentiment Category	Percentage
Positive	70%
Negative.	15%
Neutral.	15%

Interpretation:

The above distribution indicates that the majority of customer reviews were positive, demonstrating a high level of customer satisfaction with the selected restaurants. Neutral reviews provided descriptive observations without strong emotional opinions, while negative reviews highlighted specific operational issues such as waiting time, pricing, and service delays. Overall, the findings suggest that the selected restaurants maintain a favourable online reputation and successfully meet customer expectations on both review platforms.

SOCIOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION (FUNCTIONALIST THEORY)

Introduction

Sociology studies how social institutions contribute to the functioning and stability of society. The rapid growth of digital platforms has transformed customer interactions with businesses, making online review systems an important part of everyday social life. Platforms such as Zomato and Google Reviews not only provide information about restaurants but also create spaces where customers and businesses interact, exchange opinions, and influence each other's behaviour.

Functionalist Theory provides an appropriate framework for understanding this relationship. According to the functionalist perspective, every institution in society performs functions that contribute to maintaining order, cooperation, and stability. In the digital age, online review platforms perform similar functions by promoting transparency, accountability, communication, and continuous improvement within the restaurant industry.

According to George Ritzer (2011), Functionalism views society as a system of interconnected parts where each institution contributes to the smooth functioning of the whole. Similarly, Anthony Giddens (2009) explains that modern social institutions adapt to technological developments while continuing to regulate patterns of social interaction.

Functionalist Theory and Online Review Platforms

Functionalist Theory suggests that social institutions exist because they fulfil essential functions for society. In this study, Zomato and Google Reviews can be viewed as digital social institutions that facilitate communication between customers and restaurants.

Customers use these platforms to express satisfaction or dissatisfaction, while restaurants monitor feedback to improve service quality and strengthen customer relationships. This continuous exchange of information creates accountability and encourages businesses to maintain high standards of performance. As a result, online review platforms contribute to consumer protection, organisational development, and market transparency.

Unlike traditional word-of-mouth communication, digital reviews remain publicly available and influence thousands of potential customers. This encourages restaurants to maintain consistency in food quality, hygiene, customer service, and delivery performance. Therefore, online review platforms perform an important social function by reducing information asymmetry between businesses and consumers and promoting informed decision-making.

Role of Customer Reviews in Social Stability

According to Functionalist Theory, every institution contributes to maintaining balance within society. Online review platforms perform a similar role by creating a transparent system where customers can openly share their experiences and businesses can respond

constructively. This exchange of information promotes trust, accountability, and continuous improvement in service quality.

Customer reviews act as a feedback mechanism that helps restaurants identify strengths and weaknesses. Positive reviews reinforce good practices and encourage restaurants to maintain high standards of food quality and customer service. Negative reviews highlight problems such as delayed delivery, poor hygiene, inconsistent food quality, or unsatisfactory customer support, prompting restaurants to improve their operations. In this way, online reviews contribute to organisational learning and help maintain healthy competition within the food service industry.

From a functionalist perspective, customers, restaurants, and review platforms perform interconnected roles. Customers provide feedback based on their experiences, review platforms facilitate communication, and restaurants use the information to improve their services. This interdependence strengthens the relationship between businesses and consumers while supporting market efficiency and social trust.

Customer Trust and Organisational Accountability

Trust is an essential element of digital commerce. Before ordering food or visiting a restaurant, customers often examine ratings and reviews to reduce uncertainty. Restaurants with consistently positive reviews are generally perceived as more reliable and are more likely to attract new customers.

Management responses further strengthen organisational accountability. Restaurants that respond politely to customer complaints demonstrate a willingness to address problems and

improve their services. Such interactions increase customer confidence and encourage repeat business. Conversely, ignoring customer complaints may damage reputation and reduce customer loyalty.

Functionalist Theory explains that accountability contributes to the effective functioning of organisations by encouraging responsible behaviour. Online review platforms therefore help maintain social order by promoting ethical business practices and protecting consumer interests.

Digital Consumer Behaviour

Digital technology has significantly changed the way people make purchasing decisions. Customers increasingly rely on online reviews instead of traditional recommendations from friends or family. Before selecting a restaurant, many consumers compare ratings, read customer experiences, and examine photographs uploaded by previous visitors.

This behaviour reflects broader social changes associated with the digital age. Online communities allow individuals to influence one another even without direct personal interaction. Customer reviews have therefore become a powerful form of digital communication that shapes consumer behaviour and business performance.

The findings of this study indicate that customer opinions expressed on Zomato and Google Reviews influence restaurant reputation, customer trust, and purchasing decisions. Consequently, online review platforms have become important social institutions within the modern digital economy.

FINDINGS

The comparative analysis of customer reviews from Zomato and Google Reviews produced several important findings regarding customer behaviour, restaurant performance, and online reputation.

First, customer reviews significantly influence purchasing decisions. Most customers preferred restaurants with higher ratings and positive reviews, indicating that online feedback plays a crucial role in building consumer trust.

Second, food quality emerged as the most influential factor affecting customer satisfaction. Reviews consistently highlighted taste, freshness, presentation, and consistency of food as primary reasons for positive experiences.

Third, customer service and staff behaviour were frequently discussed in Google Reviews, whereas Zomato reviews focused more on delivery efficiency, packaging quality, and food temperature. This suggests that each platform reflects different aspects of the customer experience.

Fourth, restaurants that actively responded to customer reviews generally maintained stronger customer trust and a better online reputation. Prompt management responses demonstrated accountability and a commitment to service improvement.

Finally, although most restaurants received predominantly positive feedback, common challenges included delayed delivery, high pricing, waiting time, and inconsistent service during peak hours. These issues represent areas where restaurants can improve customer satisfaction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Restaurants should regularly monitor customer reviews on both Zomato and Google Reviews to identify recurring problems and implement timely improvements.
- Restaurant management should respond promptly and professionally to customer complaints, as effective communication strengthens customer trust and enhances organisational reputation.
- Greater emphasis should be placed on maintaining consistent food quality, hygiene, and packaging standards, particularly for online deliveries.
- Delivery partners should improve delivery efficiency to minimise delays and ensure that food reaches customers in good condition.
- Staff should receive regular training in customer service, communication, and complaint handling to improve overall customer satisfaction.
- Restaurants should encourage genuine customer feedback while discouraging misleading or fake reviews to maintain the credibility of online review platforms.
- Review platforms should continue improving verification systems to ensure that reviews accurately reflect genuine customer experiences.

These recommendations will help restaurants strengthen customer relationships, improve operational efficiency, and maintain a positive online reputation.

CONCLUSION

The present study examined customer sentiments regarding selected restaurants in Delhi by comparing reviews collected from Zomato and Google Reviews. The comparative analysis demonstrated that online customer feedback plays an important role in shaping restaurant reputation, influencing purchasing decisions, and improving service quality.

The findings revealed that customers primarily evaluate restaurants based on food quality, customer service, hygiene, pricing, ambience, and delivery experience. Although both review platforms provide valuable information, they differ in their emphasis. Zomato reviews focus more on food delivery and ordering experiences, while Google Reviews provide detailed descriptions of the overall dining experience.

The application of Functionalist Theory provided a sociological understanding of how online review platforms contribute to accountability, transparency, and communication between customers and restaurants. Customer reviews encourage businesses to improve their services while helping consumers make informed decisions.

Overall, this study concludes that customer sentiment analysis is an effective tool for understanding digital consumer behaviour and organisational performance. Restaurants that actively engage with customer feedback and continuously improve their services are more likely to achieve long-term customer satisfaction and maintain a strong competitive position.

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