Impact of Online Food Delivery Apps on Students' Lifestyle

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Abstract- Online Food Delivery (OFD) applications have rapidly transformed how students select and consume meals. Platforms such as Swiggy, Zomato, and Uber Eats offer convenience, variety, and fast delivery, making food accessible with minimal effort. This study integrates existing literature with data collected from 200 students to understand how OFD apps influence eating habits, financial behavior, health, and social interactions. Using the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), the study identifies key motivators such as convenience, discounts, and ease of use. Results show that 68% of students order food at least once a week, and 45% report increased fast-food consumption due to app usage. While OFD apps offer time-saving benefits, they also contribute to impulsive ordering, increased expenses, and reduced preference for home-cooked meals. The study highlights the need for nutritional awareness and controlled digital behavior among students to promote healthier lifestyles. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated OFD adoption as lockdowns restricted access to restaurants and increased reliance on digital consumption. However, constant exposure to app notifications, offers, and instant availability of fast food has led to increased impulsive ordering, unhealthy eating habits, and overspending. OFD apps have also influenced social behaviour, reducing group dining and encouraging solitary eating. Since lifestyle habits adopted during student life shape long-term behaviour, it is crucial to study their impact. This paper investigates how OFD apps affect students' eating habits, health, finances, and social interactions using literature analysis and primary survey data.

Index Terms— Food delivery apps, eating habits, student lifestyle, online ordering, Theory of Planned Behaviour

I. IDENTIFY, RESEARCH AND COLLECT IDEA

Online Food Delivery (OFD) applications have significantly changed the eating patterns of students by offering fast, convenient meal options accessible anytime and anywhere. Apps such as Swiggy, Zomato, Uber Eats, Grab, and Go Food allow students to browse numerous restaurants, compare prices, and receive food within minutes. For students managing busy schedules—lectures, projects, part-time jobs—these apps save time and reduce the effort needed for cooking or dining out.

In the digital era, where smartphones and high-speed internet have become essential tools for academic and social life, OFD platforms fit seamlessly into students' daily routines. The ease of ordering with just a few taps, combined with secure digital payment systems, has made these apps a preferred alternative to traditional dining options. Students today often prioritize flexibility, speed, and comfort, and online delivery services perfectly align with these expectations. The constant availability of food—whether early morning or late at night—has created a culture of impulsive food consumption, where cravings can be instantly satisfied without any physical effort.

The growing dependency on OFD apps is also linked to lifestyle transformations within college environments. Hostels and student accommodations often lack proper cooking facilities, which further encourages the use of delivery services. Additionally, attractive features such as real-time order tracking, personalized recommendations, cashback offers, and festival discounts motivate students to order more frequently. These app-driven conveniences not only influence food choices but also shape broader lifestyle habits.

However, this increasing reliance on online food delivery brings several concerns related to health, finances, and social interactions. With fast food being the most promoted and easily available option, students are more likely to choose calorie-dense meals over nutritious alternatives. Frequent consumption of such foods can contribute to weight

gain, digestive issues, and long-term health risks. On the financial side, even small but repeated purchases can accumulate into significant monthly spending, especially for students on tight budgets. Moreover, as students opt to eat alone while studying, gaming, or browsing digital content, traditional group meals and social dining experiences are gradually declining.

The COVID-19 pandemic further reinforced the role of OFD apps in students' lives. During lockdowns, when physical access to restaurants and canteens was restricted, these apps became a vital source of food. Even in the post-pandemic period, many ordering habits established during that time have continued, leading to a sustained dependence on digital food services.

Given these rapid changes in student behaviour, it becomes essential to understand the multidimensional impact of OFD apps on students' lifestyle patterns. Their influence extends beyond mere convenience—they shape eating behaviour, financial decisions, social interactions, and overall well-being. Therefore, this study aims to explore how online food delivery applications are reshaping the lifestyle of students, using insights from existing research and primary survey data to examine both the benefits and challenges associated with their use.

III. WRITE DOWN YOUR STUDIES AND FINDINGS

A. Bits and Pieces Together
Information from previous studies and survey data was combined to form the structure of the research paper. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) was used to analyse student behaviour toward OFD app usage.

• Information from existing literature, market reports, and previous research studies was carefully reviewed to identify patterns, gaps, and relevant findings related to Online Food Delivery (OFD) app usage among students.

Survey data collected from 200 students was integrated with these findings to create a comprehensive dataset that reflects both theoretical and practical aspects of OFD usage.

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) was applied as the analytical framework to understand student behaviour. This included evaluating.

• Attitudes: Students' personal evaluation of using OFD apps, including convenience, time savings, and variety of food choices.
• Subjective norms: Influence of peers, family, and social expectations on ordering decisions.
• Perceived behavioural control: Ease of ordering, access to apps, digital payment convenience, and personal control over usage.

By combining both secondary and primary data, the study was able to establish relationships between app usage frequency, motivations, health impacts, and spending patterns.

This "bits and pieces together" approach ensured that the research paper was structured logically, connecting theoretical constructs with real-world student behaviour for a well-rounded analysis.

B. Jump Start Approach
Guidance from academic sources and peers helped refine the questionnaire, survey methodology, and interpretation of results.

The Jump Start Approach involved leveraging guidance from academic mentors, subject-matter experts, and experienced peers to improve the overall quality of the research.

Feedback from experts helped refine the survey questionnaire, ensuring that questions were clear, unbiased, and aligned with the objectives of the study. This included.

Revising question wording for clarity and simplicity. Ensuring all relevant aspects of OFD usage, such as motivations, spending, health impacts, and social behaviors, were adequately covered.

Incorporating the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) constructs into survey items to measure attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control accurately.

Guidance also supported survey methodology improvements, such as Choosing an appropriate sample size (200 students) and ensuring diversity across age, academic level, and residential status.

Selecting a mixed-mode data collection approach (online and offline) to maximize participation.

Structuring the questionnaire logically to reduce respondent fatigue and improve data reliability

Peer and mentor input was instrumental in interpreting preliminary results, providing expert insights into patterns, trends, and anomalies observed in the survey data.

Overall, this approach accelerated the research process, strengthened the reliability of findings, and ensured that the study produced meaningful, actionable insights into student behavior regarding OFD app usage.

C. Use of Software Tools
Descriptive statistics and graphical tools were used to analyze collected data and generate meaningful insights.

IV. GET PEER REVIEWED

The draft report was reviewed by academic peers and mentors to ensure clarity, accuracy, and alignment with research expectations. Comments received were used to improve explanation depth and structure.

V. IMPROVEMENT AS PER REVIEWER COMMENTS

Revisions were made based on feedback, including reorganizing sections, adding data interpretation details, and refining conclusions. Additional references and literature were included to strengthen findin

RESEARCH ELABORATIONS

Objectives of the Study
1. To identify motivations behind students' use of OFD apps.
2. To examine changes in eating habits due to OFD usage.
3. To assess the financial impact of frequent online food ordering.
4. To analyse behavioural factors such as convenience and promotional influence.
5. To study OFD's effects on students' physical health.
6. To evaluate the role of app marketing elements.
7. To explore COVID-19's impact on OFD dependence.
8. To understand psychological and social effects of frequent OFD use.
9. To compare preferences across different student groups.
10. To recommend awareness strategies for healthier usages

Literature Review
Prior studies highlight rapid expansion of OFD services driven by smartphone penetration, digital payments, and promotional marketing. Research shows increased consumption of high-calorie fast food among students using OFD apps (Buettner et al., 2023). Studies using TPB indicate that convenience and perceived control strongly influence usage intentions, while subjective norms are weaker predictors. Pandemic-era research identifies long-term behavioural changes in ordering habits, including greater reliance on delivery for routine meals.

Research shows that the rapid growth of Online Food Delivery (OFD) services is driven by increased smartphone usage, reliable internet access, and easy digital payment systems. Studies indicate that OFD apps have become especially popular among students due to convenience, quick delivery, and frequent promotional offers. Prior research also highlights that students tend to order calorie-dense fast food more often, leading to unhealthy eating patterns and reduced consumption of home-cooked meals.

Studies using the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) reveal that convenience and perceived ease of use are the strongest factors influencing OFD usage, while social influence plays a smaller role. Pandemic-era research further shows that COVID-19 accelerated students' dependence on OFD apps, with many continuing the habit even after restrictions ended. Overall, the literature suggests that OFD apps significantly affect students' dietary behaviour, financial spending, and lifestyle choices.

Research Methodology

Design:
A mixed-method approach was used combining literature review with primary survey data. TPB served as the theoretical framework.

Sample:
A convenience sample of 200 university students.

Instrument:
A structured questionnaire covering demographics, usage patterns, spending, behavioural attitudes, and health impact. A 5-point Likert scale captured attitudinal responses.

Data Collection:
A combination of online and paper-based surveys was conducted.

Data Analysis:
Descriptive statistics and charts analysed frequency, spending patterns, and behavioural trends. Qualitative responses provided deeper insights.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Demographics:
Majority were aged 18–24, with urban students forming the largest group.

Usage Patterns:
Peak ordering times included dinner and late-night hours. Weekly ordering was common.

Motivators:
Convenience, discounts, food variety, and digital payments were top motivators.

Financial Impact:
Most spent ₹200–₹500 per order, with monthly expenses varying significantly. Discounts encouraged more frequent orders.

Eating Habits:
Fast food dominated orders. Nutritional awareness was low; many ordered impulsively due to notifications.

Social Effects:
Reduced group dining; increased solitary eating. Students living alone relied more heavily on OFD.

Health Implications:
Increased calorie intake, irregular eating schedules, and reported weight gain were common.

VI. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1.Convenience is the key driver of OFD use.
2.Promotional offers significantly influence ordering behaviour.
3.TPB analysis shows attitudes and perceived control strongly predict usage.
4.OFD promotes consumption of calorie-dense foods.
5.Frequent ordering strains students' limited budgets.
6.Social dining patterns have shifted toward solitary eating.
7.Pandemic-driven habits continue post-COVID.

VII. CONCLUSION

Online Food Delivery (OFD) applications have become an integral part of students' daily routines, providing unparalleled convenience, quick access to a wide variety of cuisines, and time-saving benefits. These platforms have effectively transformed how students approach meal planning, enabling them to balance academic, personal, and social commitments more efficiently. The ability to order food anytime, coupled with attractive promotions and easy digital payments, has made OFD apps a preferred choice for many students.

However, the increasing dependence on these apps has several noteworthy implications. Frequent usage often encourages impulsive purchases and higher monthly expenditures, particularly among students with limited budgets. Nutritionally, the tendency to order calorie-dense, fast-food items over home-cooked or balanced meals poses health risks, including irregular eating habits and potential weight gain. Socially, OFD apps have altered traditional dining patterns, reducing family meals and group interactions, which were once central to students' social lives.

To mitigate these challenges, awareness campaigns and educational programs emphasizing digital discipline, healthy food choices, and budget management are essential. Additionally, app developers can play a proactive role by designing interventions such as highlighting nutritious meal options, providing portion-size recommendations, and promoting healthier alternatives through discounts or nudges. By fostering responsible usage and integrating such measures, students can continue to enjoy the convenience and variety offered by OFD platforms while maintaining financial stability, balanced nutrition, and social well-being.

In summary, while OFD applications enhance convenience and cater to the fast-paced lifestyle of students, their long-term benefits depend on mindful

usage, informed decision-making, and supportive digital design strategies that promote health and responsible consumption

VIII. SUGGESTIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the positive impact of Online Food Delivery (OFD) apps while mitigating potential negative effects on students' lifestyles:

1.Promote Healthier Menu Options through App Filters and Nudges
OFD platforms can incorporate features that highlight nutritious or balanced meal choices. Filters such as "Healthy Choice," "Low-Calorie," or "Balanced Meal" can guide students toward better food options. Behavioral nudges, such as reminders to select a healthier item, can reduce impulsive ordering of fast-food items.

2.Provide Discounts for Nutritious Food Items
Discounts and promotional offers strongly influence students' ordering behavior. Encouraging app developers and restaurants to offer deals on healthier meals can create positive incentives for better dietary choices without reducing convenience or variety.

3.Include Clear Nutritional Information for Meals
Displaying calorie counts, macronutrient composition, and portion sizes for each menu item can help students make informed decisions. Transparent nutritional labeling increases awareness and encourages more responsible consumption, aligning with public health goals.

4.Conduct Awareness Programs on Nutrition and Budgeting
Universities should implement workshops and campaigns to educate students on balanced nutrition, meal planning, and managing expenses related to OFD. Awareness programs can also emphasize the risks of impulsive ordering and the benefits of home-cooked meals.

5.Implement App-Based Alerts for Excessive or Late-Night Ordering
OFD apps can integrate behavioral interventions, such as notifications when a student repeatedly orders late at night or exceeds a certain frequency of high-calorie meals. These prompts can encourage mindful decision-making and reduce negative health impacts.

6.Support Food-Insecure Students with Affordable Campus Food Options
Institutions should ensure that students with limited financial resources have access to affordable and nutritious food alternatives, such as subsidized meal plans or community kitchens. This support reduces dependency on calorie-dense delivery meals while maintaining convenience.

7.Conduct Longitudinal Studies to Assess Long-Term Impacts
Further research is recommended to track the long-term effects of OFD usage on students' health, dietary habits, financial management, and social behavior. Longitudinal studies will help evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and inform policy-making for healthier digital food ecosystems.

APPENDIX
(Include survey questionnaire or additional tables if needed.)

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