

Adaptation was a Big Requirement during Pandemic: Proved by Swiggy and Zomato (Popular among Indian Teens)

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KEYWORDS <i>Pandemic, Platform Industry, Freud Theory, and Indian Teenagers</i>	ABSTRACT Every sector was badly affected, and the platform economy was one of the worst affected sectors during pandemic. Even though some digital platforms did benefit from the pandemic and lockdown, most were severely affected. The range of items offered on the e-commerce platform rose, implying that the concentration of sales on niche products may rise as more customers were lured to online platforms. Well-known "food aggregators" like Zomato, Swiggy, Foodpanda, and Ubereats are economically supplying Indian cities with food via the internet. The study is concentrating on the industry and its strategy. The sample of the study was teenagers. The research worked on the Freudian model of human behaviour. The study was based on survey and deductive in context to approaches. The study analysed the impact of pandemic on the consumer buying behaviour with reference to the online food applications among the Indian Teenagers and the adaptation strategies of the platform industry during pandemic to achieve competitive advantage. The results of the study confirmed that pandemic has affected the purchase behaviour of the consumer and lead to a shift towards the online food industry. The study identifies the competitive excellence in the platform industry based on a situation and the adaptation of the players.
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1. INTRODUCTION

Despite the fact that overall consumer spending is dropping, consumers' willingness to pay in important areas is increasing. The emergence of E-commerce and its utility, which was powered mainly by teens and not by other groups of people, but pandemic, has changed the circumstances (Alkhunaizan, A. S., & Ali, A., 2022). The pandemic embarked the changes among the consumers at different levels. The pandemic has caused a significant shift in consumer behavior, both in terms of what people buy and how they shop, and these new routines are sticking (Gupta, A. S., & Mukherjee, J. 2022). Consumers had developed a certain pattern of consumption, information seeking, and trash disposal before that (Theodoridis, P. K., & Zacharatos, T. V. 2022). It has put customers under pressure to create utility through technologically enabled things and payment apps (Sharma, A., & Gandhi, A. V. 2024). Consumers are changing, becoming less loyal and more illogical (He, H., & Harris, L., 2020). Expect to spend less time with the product while gaining more experience. This form of traditional knowledge has been gaining popularity in the industry for a few years now. Consumers are witnessing a seismic shift. In the antecedent psychological components of consumer behaviour, observed somewhat distinct antecedents for requirements and non-necessities. Despite the fact overall consumer spending is dropping and willingness to pay in important areas is increasing (Cavallo, A. 2024). Food was deemed a vital service, and at first, several grocery stores and restaurants continued to operate. However, food delivery was practically nonexistent during the first two weeks of the lockdown due to constraints on movement and scheduling brought on by the curfew, the lack of time for restaurants to prepare, and concerns about the spread of illness. Online meal delivery enables clients to place orders for products and have them delivered right to their door (Chai, L. T., & Yat, D. N. C. 2019). The program selects restaurants and food alternatives so that customers may peruse a broad range of culinary specialties.



During the pandemic, every industry was severely impacted, with the platform economy being among the hardest while some digital sites benefited from the shutdown and epidemic, most suffered greatly (Parwez, S., & Ranjan, R. 2021). The expansion of the products available on the e-commerce platform suggests that as more people are drawn to online platforms, sales of niche products may become more concentrated. Prominent online "food aggregators" such as Zomato, Swiggy, Food Panda, and UberEats are profitably delivering meals to Indian cities. McKinsey (2016) reports that these meal delivery companies earn a profit of up to 30%.

Online shopping has become a major obsession for people, particularly for younger consumers (Kamal, B. M. & Shnarbekova, M. K. 2021). Indian youth's exposure to food marketing, including peer-group influence, internet advertising, cognitive, emotional, and commercial communication. Additionally, rather than being examined as a separate group, they are occasionally examined as a subset of the broader category of children. This client category now has the most purchasing power during this period of time (Nielson survey report, 2016). The behavioral vitality of teenagers is incredibly varied, and this segment offers opportunities to study their psychological characteristics (Müller-Pérez, J. et al. 2023). Generation Z is characterized by digital literacy, and with 253 million members in India, it is the largest generation—that is, one in five people—is a teen (Ravula, P. et al. 2024). In addition to purchasing for themselves, these youngsters are also giving their parents access to technology (Botkin, J. R., et al., 2015).

Teenagers are increasingly having an impact on family purchase decisions (Carvalho, Francisco, & Relvas, 2015). They frequently make judgments and form opinions based not just on their own evaluation but also on the assessment of others. A consumer's habit takes precedence over a strong attitude. It is critical for online food service providers to record consumer habits in their database in order to create convenience for repurchase by teenagers who are anxious and impulsive by nature.

In terms of online food applications, teenagers of all ages represent an untapped market (Mathur, P., & Mathur, V. K. 2023). Researching this market in connection to the platform business during the pandemic is therefore now possible. The industry and its strategy are the main subjects of the research and teenagers were our population to study.

Hypothesis:

H₀: Impact of Pandemic on Consumer buying behaviour has no influence on the Platform Industry

H_A: Impact of Pandemic on Consumer buying behaviour has an influence on the Platform Industry

Theoretical Contribution

According to the Freudian concept of human behavior, most psychological factors influencing an individual's behavior are unconscious, making it difficult for an individual to completely comprehend their own intentions (Freud, S. 2019). The hypothesis states that the human brain is composed of three parts: ID forms the "Partly Animal" part of the brain and is focused on instant reward. EGO matures into a responsible, mindful planning core where drivers' outlets are identified. The last component in the paradigm, SUPEREGO, is in charge of directing the innate motivations into socially acceptable channels so as to spare the agony of guilt and shame—also known as an Individual Conscience. The Freudian model's marketing implication is that buyers are driven by concerns for symbolic and economically-functional products.

This theory and its assumptions serve as the study's foundation because it explains how emotions related to pandemics directly affect consumers' purchasing decisions. Since following government regulations has become a societal obligation, we must organize our purchases appropriately and concentrate on needs. Therefore, purchasing prepared meals through online food applications has become their go-to behavior for comfort as opposed to cooking at home (ego), according to the rules, and even declaring the rules to the industry platform that they regard to be "Responsible Citizens" (superego).

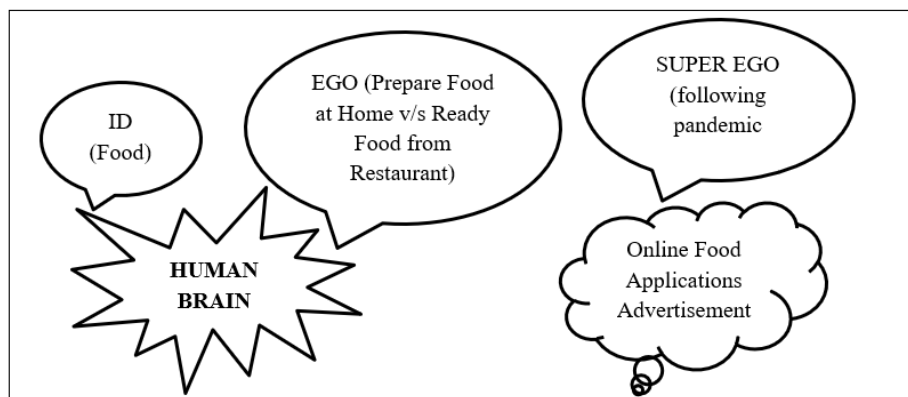


Figure 1: Theoretical Contribution to the study- Sigmund Freud Theory

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Due to the need for consumers to adjust to the online mutation, the pandemic has quickened the speed of digital



transformation and prioritized digital infrastructure (Vij, P., et al. 2023). Online shopping must give way to traditional retail methods and customer purchasing habits these days. The sole explanation for this is the vast array of options clients have at their disposal to select from throughout the globe (Kumar, R., & Mishra, I. 2021). Food trends, healthy eating, vegetarianism, food service, management operations, food, restaurant image development, and gastronomy tourism are only a few of the areas on which food research has been done (Okumus et al., 2018; Dirsehan, T., & Cankat, E. 2021). Teenagers, who are the most tech-savvy demographic and the ones that started using online food apps, should be the focus of an analysis of the study that examined how well online food applications performed throughout the pandemic. This group was never taken into consideration as potential family clients, but rather always studied as a beneficiary. Teenagers, or generation Z, were the most impacted by the unrest. The journey these generations are on is exhilarating (Jain, A. 2021). In addition to purchasing for themselves, these youngsters are also giving their parents access to technology (Botkin, J.R. et al. 2015). There is fierce competition between Swiggy and Zomato in the platform business, which is a red ocean market (Feix, T., & Feix, T. 2021).

Research Gap

Prior research has concentrated on brand development, customer perception, the effectiveness of online food apps, and how these factors affect consumers' purchasing decisions. Teens were not included in the research as consumers or customers in the context of marketing; instead, they were mostly studied in the healthcare business or in personality-related fields. The food applications on the internet The current study is focused on a unique pandemic scenario, evaluating user performance and finding the standout online food applications that thrive by adapting to the circumstances specifically among teenagers.

Objectives of the Study

To evaluate how the pandemic has affected Indian teenagers' online food apps and their purchasing habits.

Study and evaluate the platform service provider and their adaptation strategies towards the pandemic protocols to gain an edge over the competition.

Method

To carry out the study, the teenagers were clustered on the basis of place of study: School and College. The age group 13-18 years was denoted as school teens and 18-19 years were the first year under the graduation course was identified college teens.

Sampling Technique

Based on demographic criteria, the teens are grouped together. The place of study where the teenagers are studying was used as a criterion to classify them as school and college teens. Sample Size

The size of the sample taken for data collection and for analysis is 401 teenagers (including school and college teens). The sample size is calculated as per the Cochran Sampling Formula.

$$n = \frac{z^2 p(1 - p)}{d^2}$$

Where,

n = Sample Size

z = z statistic for a level of confidence

p = expected prevalence or proportion

d = Precision

When the sample size was estimated using a 95% confidence interval, 295 was the result. There are 243 million adolescents in India, making up around 21.4% of the nation's overall population (Radha, N., & Iyer, S. R. 2018). Since there are more than a million teens in the world, the population size of teenagers was 384 according to Table 1 at 95% confidence interval.

**Table 1: Sampling Table**

Source: Check Mart Website

	Confidence level = 95%			Confidence level = 99%		
	Margin of error			Margin of error		
Population size	5%	2,5%	1%	5%	2,5%	1%
100	80	94	99	87	96	99
500	217	377	475	285	421	485
1.000	278	606	906	399	727	943
10.000	370	1.332	4.899	622	2.098	6.239
100.000	383	1.513	8.762	659	2.585	14.227
500.000	384	1.532	9.423	663	2.640	16.055
1.000.000	384	1.534	9.512	663	2.647	16.317

Strategy

The study approach is descriptive in nature, outlining the causes and modifications to the teenagers' purchasing habits. The influence of online food applications, which changed the definition of "Fine Dine" from a restaurant to a home, is highlighted in the current study.

Data Collection Instrument

Since the study employed a survey methodology, a questionnaire with a margin of error was distributed to 500 teenagers. The completed, organized questionnaire came to 401 (college: 205; school: 196).

Statistical Tools and Software

Pie charts, probability plots, cluster analysis, correlation matrices, and descriptive statistics are all used for data analysis and SPSS 22.0 are utilized for analysis.

3. RESULTS

The socioeconomic background of the participants

Table 2: Teenagers' socioeconomic status based on age, gender, and their study place

Source: Authors Composition

Factors	Classifications	No. of Respondents
Age	13-14	51
	14-15	33
	15-16	44
	16-17	32
	17-18	34
	18-19	207
Gender	Female	170
	Male	231
Study in (Place of Study)	School	196
	College	205



Impact of Pandemic on Consumer buying behaviour

Pandemic affected the purchase behaviour among teenagers from the online food service providers.

Table 3: Pandemic affected the purchase behaviour among teenagers from the online food service providers

Source: Author Composition

S. No.	Pandemic affected the purchase behaviour among teenagers	Respondents (Total- 401)	
		Number	Percentage (%)
1.	Yes	312	77.88
2.	No	89	22.12
Total		401	

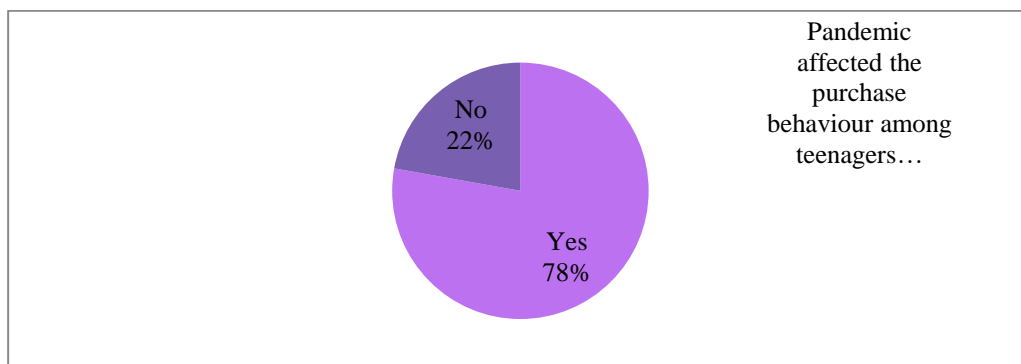


Figure 2: Pandemic affected the purchase behaviour among teenagers from the online food service providers

Source: Author Composition

Pandemic affected every country, society, and individual (Abodunrin, O. et.al. 2020). The purchase behaviour during that era was based on availability and accessibility. In the developing countries like India identified by youths affected the most and changed the buying patterns of them and their family behaviour (Verma, M., & Naveen, B. R. 2021). The 77.88% of the teenagers of India being affected and change their purchase behaviour. The 22.12% of the teenagers stated that purchase behavior was not affected by pandemic. The reasons could be interpreted as they were already online buyer before pandemic. Their wants were bought by the other family members or the physical retailers with delivery at the doorstep were accessible.

Pandemic affects the buying behaviour of teenagers in particular to food:

Table 4: Pandemic affects your buying from online food service providers

Source: Author Composition

Variables	Pandemic Affects your buying from online food service providers		
	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Mode of shopping for Food	.034	.491	401

The graph was identifying the bivariate correlation between the pandemic affect the buying from the online food service providers and the mode of shopping used for food. The correlation matrix was drawing the attention towards the shopping



mode used by the teenagers for food. The value of correlation was .034 and the significant value was .491. Hence, there was a significant correlation exist between the pandemic affect the buying from the online food service providers and the mode of shopping used for food as the value was between -1 and +1.

The online food application was used for ordering followed all the precautions stated to the online food applications during pandemic.

Table 5: Protocols to be followed by the online food applications during Pandemic- The data gathered on each of the protocols

Source: Author Composition

S.No.	Protocols during Pandemic to the online food applications	Respondents (Total- 401)	
		Number	Percentage (%)
1.	Double layered packaging of food	60	14.86
2.	Vaccination of the delivery personnel and wearing gloves	56	14.00
3.	Cashless payment	38	9.56
Total		154	

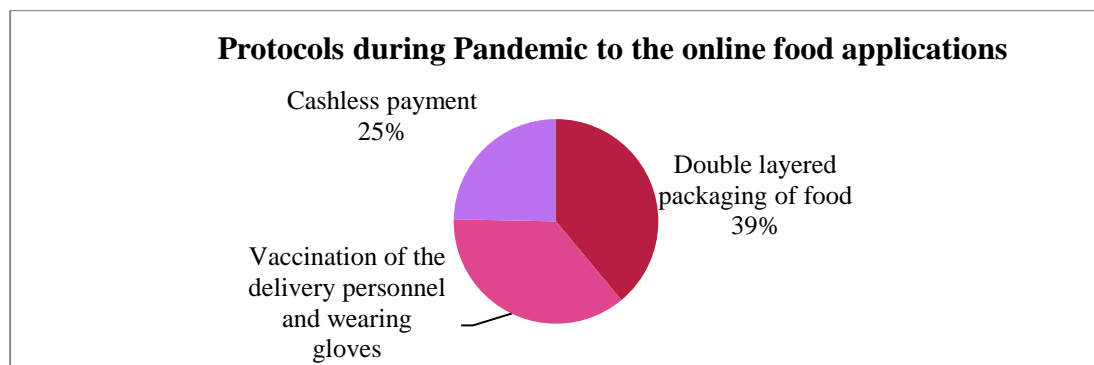


Figure 3: Precautions followed by the online food applications during pandemic

Source: Author Composition

The online food application was given protocols by the Government of India during pandemic (Pal, D. et. al. 2022). Those protocols were Double layered packaging of food so that quality should be maintained and not affected by the virus in air, Vaccination of the delivery personnel and wearing gloves and masks required for the safety of the delivery personnel and customers from spreading, and Cashless payment to remove the contact with the delivery personnel and emphasized on the contactless delivery.

The above graph showing that 38% teenagers had saw only one protocol to be implemented by the online food applications. The implementation of the protocols depends on the severity of the virus in a particular location and timing of order delivery.

Table 6: Protocols to be followed by the online food applications during Pandemic- The data gathered on all of the protocols

Source: Author Composition

S.No.	Protocols during Pandemic to the online food applications	Respondents (Total- 401)	
		Number	Percentage (%)



1.	All the protocols (Double layered packaging of food+Vaccination of the delivery personnel and wearing gloves+Cashless payment)	247	61.58
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The data was been sliced to show that majority of the teenagers stated their opinion that all the protocols were fulfilled by the online food application and constitutes 61.58% which estimates that online food applications were more concerned about their prospects and their delivery personnel to had highest satisfaction to create retention of the customers for future.

One Way Analysis of variance (One Way ANOVA)

The online food application was used for ordering followed all the precautions during pandemic.

Table 7: Analysis of Variance of among the Indian teenagers' study in school and college towards that the online food application was used for ordering followed all the precautions during pandemic

Source: Author Composition

Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.285	1	.285	.224	.636
Within Groups	507.710	399	1.272		
Total	507.995	400			

The above table denoting that the F value was less than the significant value. The variance with in group was high than the between the group. The F value was 0.224 and the significant value was 0.636. In this situation, null hypothesis rejected. Hence, the groups were agreed towards that the online food application was used for ordering followed all the precautions during pandemic.

Rankings of the most prominent online food applications by the Teenagers of India

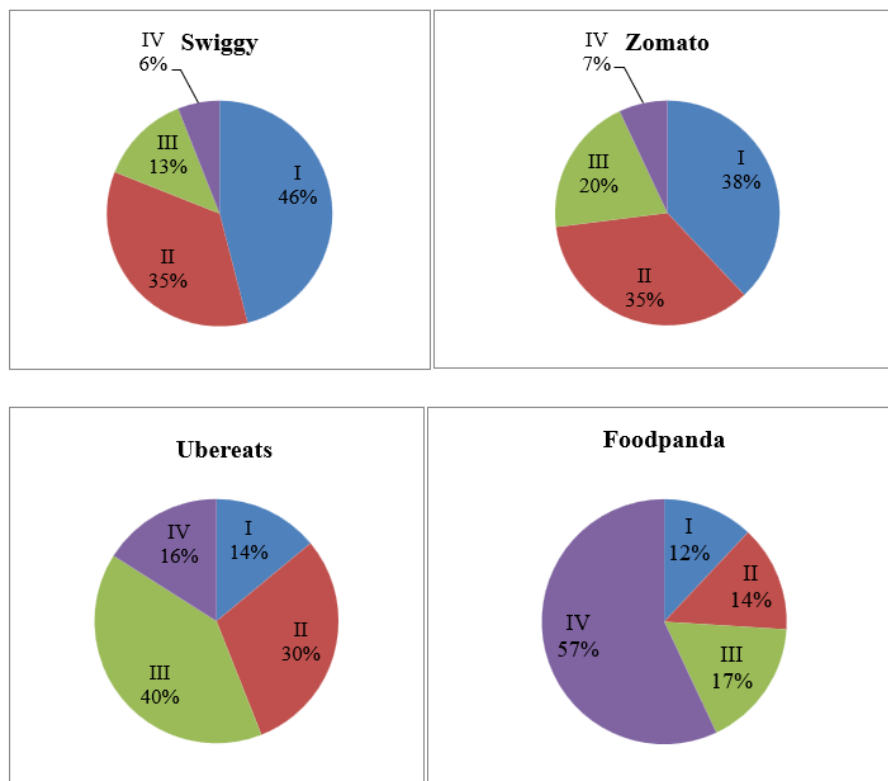


Figure 4 Ranking of the online food applications in the platform industry by the Teenagers of India

Source: Author Composition

**Table 8: Rankings of the most prominent online food applications by the Teenagers of India**

Source: Author Composition

Online Food Applications	Ranking on the basis of the graph among the teenagers of India (401 Respondents towards the particular position)
Swiggy	I (With 46.21% responses)
Zomato	II (34.60% responses)
Ubereats	III (39.60% responses)
Foodpanda	IV (57.21% responses)

The above table showing that Swiggy had the highest market share among the teenagers of India. The positioning on the benefits functional and emotional of Swiggy was more than any other brand in the online food delivery Industry. The above ranking based on the data collected from the teenagers across India, Swiggy being the leader, Zomato and Ubereats being the challenger, and Foodpanda being the follower in the market. The number of players is identifying the competition in the industry (Ford, J. B. 2020). The competitive scope of this industry is also high.

Ranking of the online food application with the following of the COVID Protocols

Table 9: Descriptive Statistics of the Ranks given to the online food application with the following of the COVID Protocols

Source: Author Composition

Descriptive Statistics									
OFDA	Covid Protocols	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min.	Max.
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Swiggy	I	52	1.8077	.81742	.11336	1.5801	2.0353	1.00	4.00
	II	75	1.6667	.87508	.10105	1.4653	1.8680	1.00	4.00
	III	42	1.7381	.88509	.13657	1.4623	2.0139	1.00	4.00
	IV	232	1.8707	.91671	.06018	1.7521	1.9893	1.00	4.00
	Total	401	1.8105	.89386	.04464	1.7227	1.8982	1.00	4.00
Zomato	I	52	2.1154	.98327	.13635	1.8416	2.3891	1.00	4.00
	II	75	2.1200	.89985	.10391	1.9130	2.3270	1.00	4.00
	III	42	2.0952	.98301	.15168	1.7889	2.4016	1.00	4.00
	IV	232	2.0129	.92339	.06062	1.8935	2.1324	1.00	4.00
	Total	401	2.0549	.93112	.04650	1.9635	2.1463	1.00	4.00
Ubereats	I	52	2.4038	1.0339	.14338	2.1160	2.6917	1.00	4.00
	II	75	2.4933	.94973	.10967	2.2748	2.7118	1.00	4.00
	III	42	2.5238	.94322	.14554	2.2299	2.8177	1.00	4.00
	IV	232	2.4741	.88235	.05793	2.3600	2.5883	1.00	4.00
	Total	401	2.4738	.91920	.04590	2.3836	2.5641	1.00	4.00



Foodpanda	I	52	3.0962	1.2249	.16986	2.7551	3.4372	1.00	4.00
	II	75	3.2933	1.1000	.12702	3.0402	3.5464	1.00	4.00
	III	42	3.4762	.94322	.14554	3.1823	3.7701	1.00	4.00
	IV	232	3.4009	.97971	.06432	3.2741	3.5276	1.00	4.00
	Total	401	3.3491	1.0357	.05172	3.2474	3.4508	1.00	4.00

*Covid Protocols:

Double layered packaging

Delivery person should be vaccinated and wearing gloves and masks

Cashless payment

All of above

*OFDA- Online Food Delivery Applications

Table 10: Analysis of Variances of the Ranks given to the online food application with the following of the COVID Protocols

Source: Author Composition

ANOVA						
Online Food Applications		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Swiggy	Between Groups	2.613	3	.871	1.091	.353
	Within Groups	316.983	397	.798		
	Total	319.596	400			
Zomato	Between Groups	.985	3	.328	.377	.770
	Within Groups	345.808	397	.871		
	Total	346.793	400			
Ubereats	Between Groups	.388	3	.129	.152	.928
	Within Groups	337.587	397	.850		
	Total	337.975	400			
Food Panda	Between Groups	4.860	3	1.620	1.516	.210
	Within Groups	424.262	397	1.069		
	Total	429.122	400			

The above tables relate to the descriptive statistics and analysis of variance of the online food applications on the basis of maintains COVID protocols. The COVID protocols considered were double layered packaging, delivery person should be vaccinated and wearing gloves and masks, and cashless payment. The online food service applications taken into consideration were Swiggy, Zomato, Ubereats, and FoodPanda. The ANOVA table stated above identifying that the F value of Swiggy and FoodPanda were higher which signifying the variation between sample means relative to the variation within the samples. The higher F- value, lower the corresponding p-value. But the p-value is not less than 0.05; we fail to reject the null hypothesis. This means we did not had sufficient evidence to say that the COVID protocols followed caused statistically significant difference in mean rank of Swiggy and Foodpanda. Zomato and Ubereats had low F value which signify a case where the group means were close together (low variability) relative to the variability within each group. As the p value is



not less than 0.05; we fail to reject null hypothesis. Hence, the COVID protocols followed by the online food application caused statistically significant difference in mean rank of Swiggy, Zomato, Ubereats, and Foodpanda among the Indian Teenagers.

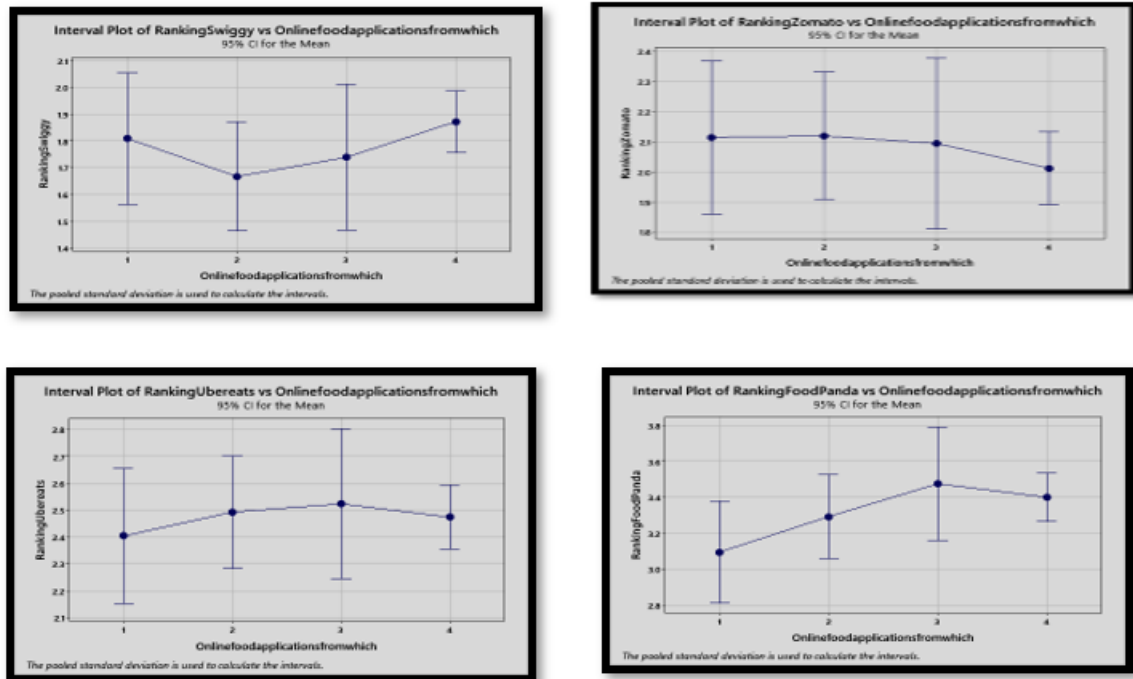


Figure 5: Interval plots identifying the ranks given to the online food application on the basis of following COVID Protocols used MINITAB

Source: Author Composition

The graphs (Figure 5) were identifying the ranking of the online food applications on the basis of the following Covid 19 protocols. Swiggy outperformed as the maximum respondents score them as following all the COVID protocols. Zomato emphasized on two protocols that were double layered packaging and delivery person vaccination and wearing gloves and masks. Ubereats and Foodpanda worked on cashless payments.

Cluster Analysis of the online food applications of India on the basis of maintaining Pandemic precautions

Table 11: Cluster Analysis of the online food applications of India on the basis of maintaining Pandemic precautions

Source: Author Composition

Initial Cluster Centers		
Ranking	Cluster	
	1	2
Swiggy	1.00	4.00
Zomato	1.00	4.00
Ubereats	4.00	1.00
FoodPanda	4.00	1.00
Iteration History ^a		
Iteration	Change in Cluster Centers	
	1	2



1	1.917	1.623
2	.069	.406
3	.071	.361
4	.103	.416
5	.065	.226
6	.056	.177
7	.015	.044
8	.000	.000
Final Cluster Centers		
	Cluster	
	1	2
Swiggy	1.72	2.09
Zomato	1.91	2.53
Ubereats	2.55	2.23
FoodPanda	3.87	1.66
Number of Cases in each Cluster		
Cluster	1	306.000
	2	95.000
Valid		401.000
Missing		379.000

The table shows the first cluster centers, which show the distance between the online food applications of India on the basis of maintaining COVID 19 protocols. Convergence achieved due to no or small change in cluster centers. The maximum absolute coordinate change for any center is .000. The current iteration is 8. The minimum distance between initial centers is 6.000.

The table shows how the cluster centers have changed. The ranking of the online food applications were on the basis of maintaining COVID protocols include- The cluster 1 had most similarity within the group on the Food Panda Online Food Application (3.87). The cluster 2 had similarity within the group on the Zomato Online Food Application (2.53). The above table denoting the no. of cases in cluster 1 was 306 and cluster 2 was 95. The total cases studied were 401.

4. DISCUSSION

Actually pandemic was a learning phase for everyone (Seale, J. 2023). Every age-group taken for consideration had given its confirmation regarding the behavioural change that they felt during and after the pandemic. The study emphasized on a particular age group characterised with their influencing power and technology usage behaviour- The Teenagers. The teens were taken for consideration with in the age group 13-19 years. For data collection the age group is bifurcated on the basis of place of study as school and college teens. The majority of the respondents were from the teenagers who had just entered the college. As the teenagers entered the college, they had more freedom in expressing their choices and preferences. As the teenagers are more digitally literate than other set of population, so usage rate is very high among the college teenagers in consideration to use online food applications. Male gender was more proactive in consideration to females in consideration to the impact assessment of online food application on the Indian Teenagers.

Pandemic impact on the purchase behaviour among teenagers in particular to food, the online food application was used for ordering followed all the precautions stated to the online food applications during pandemic, and ranking of the online food application with the following of the COVID Protocols. This had affected every country, society, and individual. The existing research only identified that the people start using online food applications but the situation specific study is lacked. The



purchase behaviour during that era was based on availability and accessibility (Tandon, A. et.al., 2021). In the developing countries like India identified by youths affected the most and changed the buying patterns of them and their family behaviour. The maximum teenagers as respondents were convinced with the statement that it has affected their purchase behaviour in context to food ordering from the online food applications. Hence, there was a significant correlation exist between the pandemic which has affected the buying from the online food service providers and the mode of shopping used for food. During that era, the online food application was given protocols by the Government of India- Double layered packaging of food, Vaccination of the delivery personnel and wearing gloves, and Cashless payment. The teenagers had given emphasis on packaging part of the food to be double layered so that food should not be infected. Then the vaccination of the delivery personnel and wearing gloves was a priority being given by the teenagers in context to the delivery of food by the online food application. Cashless payment was an automatic step being taken by the consumers to be virus free.

For the study, the major online food service applications identifying the industry were taken into consideration: Swiggy, Zomato, Ubereats, and Foodpanda. The existing literature was lacking in the analysis of the performance of the players in the platform industry on the basis of a particular situation Pandemic. The ranking of the players were done on the basis of Pandemic Protocols and Swiggy outperformed as the maximum respondents score them as following all the COVID protocols. Zomato emphasized on two protocols that were double layered packaging and delivery person vaccination and wearing gloves and masks. Ubereats and Foodpanda worked on cashless payments.

This study will help the consumers to identify their role as a dictator to state the requirements to the online food applications in every situation. The consumers will get to know the firms in the platform industry which were proactive during pandemic and fulfilled the mandate stated by the Government of India. The platform firms new and existing will get an insight regarding the expectations of the Indian Demographics.

Teenagers were taken into consideration for study and the study can be further enhanced by involving other generations. The sample size was 401 which could be enhanced. The place of study was used as a parameter and clusters were formed accordingly. Other parameter related to demographic and geographic can be used to enhance its scope.

Conflict of Interest

There are no known conflicts of interest associated with this publication

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