THE MEDIATING ROLE OF CONSUMER PERCEPTION ON FOOD SAFETY IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN E-SERVICE QUALITY AND CUSTOMER BEHAVIORAL INTENTION OF ONLINE FOOD DELIVERY

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Abstract

Issues of poor food quality, lack of trust, insufficient customer responsiveness, and unreliable service, significantly influence customer behavioral intentions toward online food delivery (OFD) services through social media in tourism-dependent regions like Samal Island, Philippines. This research analyzed the influence of e-service quality and perceptions of food safety on customer behavioral intentions regarding online food delivery platforms. Data were collected from 381 Samaleños utilizing a descriptive-correlational research design, employing both simple random and snowball sampling methods. The main method used to collect data was an adapted survey questionnaire. Mean, standard deviation, Pearson correlation, multiple regression, and the Sobel Z-test were some of the tests used to look at the data. The findings indicated significant positive correlations between e-service quality, perceptions of food safety, and customer behavioral intentions. Food safety perception significantly influenced behavioral intention and partially mediated the relationship between e-service quality and behavioral intention, consequently improving its overall effect. The results corroborate the Theory of Planned Behavior and highlight the necessity for OFD providers to implement customer-focused, digitally adaptable strategies. Staff training in hygiene and digital communication, transparent operations, and clear service recovery protocols are essential for enhancing trust, satisfaction, and loyalty in tourism-driven markets.

Keywords: *Business management, e-service quality, food safety perception, customer behavioral intention, Philippines,*

INTRODUCTION

The increasing popularity of online food delivery (OFD) demonstrates the essential influence of customer behavioral intention in promoting continuous acceptance. Elements include user-friendliness, hedonic motivation, and technology integration favorably affect customer behavioral intentions (Novita & Husna, 2020), but ongoing challenges impede consumer confidence and decision- making (Koenig-Lewis & Palmer, 2024). Trust issues, notably data security and privacy, continue to hinder customer behavioral intentions (Indajang et al., 2023).

Additionally, poor food quality, delayed deliveries, and inadequate packaging have a negative impact on the behavioral intentions of customers (Annaraud & Berezina, 2020). Also, inadequate communication and responsiveness, as noticed with Food Panda in

the Philippines, further erode trust (De Asis, 2024). Positive customer behavioral intentions are disrupted by the discrepancy between consumer expectations and service experiences (Tandon et al., 2021). As a result, improving reliability, trust, and operational efficiency is critical for sustaining market growth (Bihade, 2020).

Nonetheless, gaps persist especially in remote, tourism-centric places like Samal Island despite extensive research on e-service quality and customer behavioral intention. Other studies primarily concentrate on urban settings, neglecting the distinctive socio-economic, cultural, and logistical challenges of isolated regions. Examining these dynamics is made possible by Samal Island's expanding tourism industry. Methodological deficiencies persist, as several research neglect to consider localized characteristics such as limited technology access in food service via social media, confidence in digital platforms, and the significant role of food safety perception in influencing customer behavioral intentions. Furthermore, the mediating function of customer perception on food safety remains unexplored. Filling this gap can enhance scholarly conversations and provide practical insights.

E-service quality and customer behavioral intention

E-service quality significantly influences customer behavioral intention in online food delivery services. High-quality service increases perceived value and promotes good behavioral intention (Sjahroeddin, 2018; Oktaviani, 2024). Furthermore, consumer happiness and loyalty depend on e-service quality and food safety policies (Hoyos- Vallejo et al., 2023). Demonstrating the vital importance of perceived quality in motivating behavioral intentions, customers who see an efficient and dependable service are more likely to return and suggest the service to others. Key elements also include trust, time-saving advantages, simplicity of usage, and relevance (Dewi et al., 2023). Studies show how cost, delivery speed, and service consistency affect behavioral intentions including repeat purchases and favorable word-of-mouth (Oladoyin, 2024).

E-service quality and consumer perceptions of food safety

Operational transparency, regulatory compliance, and hygiene procedures among other things influence the relationship between e-service quality and consumer perceptions of food safety. E-service quality greatly influences customer views of food safety and general satisfaction (Xin et al., 2023). Consumer confidence in food safety is greatly improved by high standards in delivery box cleanliness, courier hygiene, and ingredient traceability (Liu et al., 2024). It emphasizes the fundamental importance of food biosafety policies in shaping views of e-service quality since they directly

impact consumer happiness, loyalty, and confidence in online food delivery systems (Chinelato & Hoyos-Vallejo, 2024).

Consumer perceptions of food safety and customer behavioral intention

In China, worries about food safety and nutrition greatly affect customers' behavioral intents to utilize OFD systems (Dai et al., 2022). Price, convenience, and food quality all affect consumer perception (Dsouza & Bhat, 2021). Building consumer confidence and loyalty in online food delivery businesses depends on rigorous food safety policies (Vallejo et al., 2024). Food safety is a major issue that affects customer behavioral intention since people only attach themselves to restaurants that maintain clean and hygienic kitchens (Chandrasekhar et al., 2019).

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative research design, specifically descriptive-correlational approach. According to Helmold et. al (2019), quantitative research methods are concerned with the systematic analysis of phenomena and their relationships using numbers and measurable variables. The purpose of these methods is to examine the relationships between these variables and to quantify the levels of consumer perception on food safety, e-service quality, and customer behavioral intention.

Additionally, descriptive- correlational research seeks to methodically convey the characteristics, behaviors, or conditions of a population or phenomenon without manipulating variables (Baker, 2017). This design was utilized to investigate the factors that influence the relationships between e-service quality (the independent variable), consumer perception of food safety (the mediating variable), and customer behavioral intention (the dependent variable) within the context of online food delivery (OFD) services.

Research Locale

This investigation was conducted in the Island Garden City of Samal (IGaCOS), an island in the province of Davao del Norte, located off the southeastern coast of Mindanao. The 2023 census indicates the city has approximately 116,771 residents, comprising 60,511 males (51.82%) and 56,260 females (48.18%). Interestingly, 62.85% of the population—73,391 people—are working-age 15–64, making them the main drivers of digital consumption also the elderly population aged 65 and above accounted for 7,706 (6.61%).

This study involved 381 respondents from a population of 116,771, as determined by the sample size calculator Raosoft. Respondents included residents of IGaCOS who were consumers of online food delivery (OFD) services accessed through social media. The study utilized a combination of simple random sampling and snowball sampling to guarantee a diverse and representative sample. Simple random sampling ensured all potential respondents had an equal opportunity for participation, while snowball sampling helped reach additional participants through referrals, particularly among frequent social media users of OFD platforms (Dosek, 2021). The study did not impose inclusion or exclusion criteria, allowing consumers to participate regardless of age, occupation, or background. This approach ensured that the findings reflected the general consumer behavior of IGaCOS residents who used OFD services, considering the island's tourism-driven economy and consumer dynamics.

Research Instruments

The first instrument which focused on customer behavioral intention was adapted from the study of Wen, Chao. (2012). This study had a high reliability score of 0.9, making it a strong tool for research. It had five indicators: channel preference, repurchase intention, recommendation, customer loyalty, and willingness to pay more. The indicator was assessed through specific questions: channel preference, repurchase intention, and recommendation have four questions each, customer loyalty has seven questions, and willingness to pay more includes three questions.

The second instrument which focused on e-service quality was taken from Swaid and Wigand (2009). This study had a high reliability score ranging from 0.828 to 0.889, making it a strong tool for research. It had six indicators: information quality, reliability responsiveness, assurance, website usability, and personalization. The indicator was assessed through specific questions: information quality and reliability have 6 question statements each, responsiveness has 5 question statements, assurance and website usability have 4 question statements each, and personalization has 3 question statements.

The third instrument which focused on consumer perception on food safety was taken from the study of Kasmani et al. (2022). This study had acceptable reliability score ranging from 0.76- 0.78. It had four indicators: perception of hygiene, perception of time-temperature abuse, perception of food contamination, and perception of foodborne illnesses. The indicator was assessed through specific questions: perception of hygiene and perception of time-temperature abuse have 4 question statements each, perception of food contamination has 3 question statements, and perception of foodborne illnesses has 6 question statements.

Result and Discussion

Status of Customer Behavioral Intention of Online Food Delivery

The data in Table 1 presents the status of customer behavioral intention of online food delivery, with an overall mean of 3.54. Furthermore, the standard deviation (SD) ranges from 0.87 to 1.06 indicates generally consistent responses, of which indicator 5 implies heterogeneity in customer behavioral intention. It is described as high, which means that the customer behavioral intention is oftentimes evident. This suggests that positive experiences with the quality, reliability, and ease of use of OFD services encourage users to continue using them and promote them to others.

The high level of customer behavioral intention validates the findings of Dela Cruz et al. (2022), which showed that service quality, convenience, and trust are reasons why customers use OFD platforms. Similarly, Prassida et al. (2024) highlighted that seamless user experiences and reliable service interactions enhance positive behavioral intentions.

Table 1

Status of Customer Behavioral Intention of Online Food Delivery

	Mean	SD	Description
Channel Preference			
1. Planning to continually order food using online food delivery services on social media	3.70	1.02	High
2. Recommending online food delivery services through social media.	3.65	1.01	High
3. Considering switching fully to online food delivery through social media	3.31	1.06	Moderate
4. Intending to use online food delivery through social media more often.	3.44	1.03	High
Category Mean	**3.52**	**.92**	**High**
Repurchase Intention			
1. Ordering food again through social media	3.62	1.00	High
2. Returning to an online food delivery service on social media for the next order	3.53	1.03	High
3. Continually ordering food through social media.	3.58	.99	High
4. Completing future food orders through social media.	3.47	.99	High
Category Mean	**3.55**	**.91**	**High**
Recommendation (Word of Mouth)			
1. Sharing positive experiences about ordering food online with others.	3.79	.95	High
2. Recommending to friends and family ordering food online from the restaurant	3.66	.98	High
3. Encouraging friends to order food online from the restaurant	3.58	.98	High
4. Recommending ordering food online to others	3.58	.99	
Category Mean	**3.65**	**.87**	**High**
Customer Loyalty			
1. Rarely considering switching to another restaurant for online orders.	3.45	.95	High
2. Suggesting the restaurant to others who ask for recommendations	3.77	.98	High
3. Preferring to order online from the restaurant over others.	3.41	.98	High
4. Considering the restaurant as the first choice for online food orders.	3.55	.99	High
5. Finding joy in ordering food from the restaurant through social media.	3.54	.87	High
6. Believing that the restaurant offers the best online food delivery service.	3.54	.97	High

Status of E-Service Quality Of Online Food Delivery

It is presented in Table 2 that the status of e-service quality of online food delivery reflects an overall mean of 3.78 described as high which means that e- service quality of online food delivery is oftentimes evident. A closer look at the data shows that the standard deviation ranges from 0.84 to 0.99 of which all indicators are homogenous suggests that ratings are closely clustered around the mean. This result confirms high e-service quality including correct information, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, usability, and personalization improves customer experience by providing seamless, efficient, and trustworthy service.

This discovery supports the views of Jeon and Jeong (2017), who highlighted that efficiency, system stability, and navigational ease are vital for enhancing the online consumer experience. Additionally, Kumar (2020) noted that optimized navigation and fewer interface distractions can improve digital engagement. Furthermore, Seo and Lee (2021) emphasized that safe, user-friendly interfaces are essential for boosting consumer satisfaction and retention on online food ordering platforms.

Table 2

Status of E-service Quality of Online Food Delivery

	Mean	SD	Description
Information Quality			
1. Accessing current and regularly updated information on social media	3.66	.96	High
2. Finding accurate and useful details, like menus and prices, on social media.	3.78	.98	High
3. Being provided with enough details, such as ingredients and delivery options, on social media.	3.62	.97	High
4. Using information that helps me make the right decisions when ordering food online.	3.87	.92	High
5. Navigating a clear and user-friendly layout of information on social media.	3.81	.89	High
6. Finding online food delivery simple because social media content is easy to understand	3.84	.89	High
Category Mean	**3.77**	**.81**	**High**
Reliability			
1. Receiving food delivery on time as promised through social media.	3.70	.98	High
2. Getting order confirmations and details promptly through social media.	3.81	.93	High
3. Processing and confirming within the stated time the order cancellations or refunds	3.64	.98	High
4. Receiving accurate orders when placing them through social media.	3.65	.99	High
5. Accessing updated tracking details until the food is delivered.	3.77	.95	High
6. Finding the restaurant's social media accessible and operational whenever placing an order	3.74	.869	High
Category Mean	**3.72**	**.82**	**High**
Responsiveness			
1. Receiving quick responses to inquiries through social media or customer support.	3.73	.89	High
2. Having complaints and questions efficiently handled through social media or text messages.	3.80	.92	High
3. Finding contact details and support options easily on social media.	3.86	.88	High
4. Getting clear, relevant, and helpful responses to issues.	3.78	.91	High
5. Experiencing genuine care when business problems like delays are being resolved.	3.83	.90	high
Category Mean	**3.80**	**.82**	**High**
Assurance			
1. Using the restaurant's social media, which ensures my data and payments are secure.	3.83	.90	High
2. Ordering from a restaurant with a good reputation in the market.	3.82	.86	High
3. Feeling confident in ordering through social media platforms.	3.67	.94	High
4. Finding the restaurant's social media reputable and reliable.	3.65	.91	High
Category Mean	**3.74**	**.78**	**High**
Website Usability			
1. Finding online food delivery through social media easy to navigate and use.	3.85	.85	High
2. Experiencing simple and intuitive browsing when viewing menus and placing orders through social media.	3.87	.87	High
3. Navigating the restaurant's social media account efficiently with minimal unnecessary scrolling.	3.84	.89	High
4. Seeing visuals on social media that enhance my online food delivery experience without distractions.	3.85	.84	High
Category Mean	**3.85**	**.78**	**High**
Personalization			
1. Experiencing online food delivery through social media that offers personalized recommendations and deals.	3.76	.88	High
2. Easily customizing orders through social media to meet my needs.	3.81	.91	High
3. Tailoring social media preferences for online food delivery to enhance overall experience.	3.82	.90	High
Category Mean	**3.79**	**.84**	**High**
Overall Mean	**3.78**	**.74**	**High**

Status of Consumer Perception on Food Safety

In Table 3, the status of consumer perception on food safety is presented. It shows an overall mean of 4.03 described as high which means that the consumer perception on online food delivery is oftentimes observed. The standard deviation range of 0.86 to 0.98 indicates generally consistent responses with values below 1.0 connotes the homogeneity of the responses. This insinuates consumer awareness of hygiene and trust indicators in online food delivery highlights the importance of visible cleanliness and accountability through social media, which affects food safety perceptions.

This finding aligns with studies emphasizing the importance of food safety in online food delivery by Mutaqin et al. (2023) and Aprilianti & Amanda (2020) highlight that the rapid expansion of OFD services, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, has introduced new food safety challenges. Additionally, Vallejo et al. (2024) state that strong biosafety regulations and confirmed handling methods help build customer trust and loyalty in online food delivery (OFD) platforms. In the Philippines, Cordero (2023) identifies inadequate food preparation and packing as significant issues, which are worsened by high order volumes, leading to problems such as overcooked or spoiled meals.

Table 3

Status of Consumer Perception on Food Safety

	Mean	SD	Description
Perception on Hygiene			
1. Paying attention to the food delivery rider's appearance, such as not smoking, being neat, and looking healthy.	4.09	.93	High
2. Ensuring that the food delivery rider practices good personal hygiene, such as wearing clean clothes, a helmet, and keeping nails clean.	4.15	.93	High
3. Enjoying providing feedback on the rider's hygiene and food safety through social media	4.16	.94	High
4. Believing that food hygiene ratings for restaurants should be shown on social media	3.93	.97	High
Category Mean	**4.08**	**.78**	**High**
Perception of Time-Temperature Abuse			
1. Making sure to consume food within 4 hours after delivery.	4.15	.91	High
2. Checking that food is delivered at the right temperature like hot food stays hot	3.89	.98	High
3. Ensuring that the food delivery rider uses an appropriate thermal bag to place the food	3.97	.91	High
4. Thinking the storage and reheating instructions should be included when food is delivered.	4.01	.91	High
Category Mean	**4.01**	**.79**	**High**
Perception of Food Contamination			
1. Preferring the food to be in proper containers during delivery	4.02	.90	High
2. Refusing to accept the food if the container is damaged or leaking	4.15	.89	High
3. Being Aware that cross-contamination can happen if extra containers touch the main food container	3.94	.92	High
Category Mean	**4.03**	**.77**	**High**
Perception of Foodborne Illnesses			
1. Experiencing food poisoning symptoms from food ordered online.	3.97	.89	High
2. Thinking it is necessary to check the food by looking, smelling, and tasting before eating food ordered online	3.93	.86	High
Valuing food safety and quality when ordering online.	4.16	.93	High
3. Having no problem ordering homemade food	3.73	.98	High
4. Providing feedback about the food service and quality through social media	3.99	.93	High
5. Reporting food poisoning incidents to health authorities	4.15	.88	High
Category Mean	**3.99**	**.65**	**High**
Over-all Mean	**4.03**	**.65**	**High**

Correlation between variables

In table 4, it is shown that e-service quality of online food service has a positive strong relationship towards consumer behavioral intention with r-value of .77 and it reflects a p-value of .00 which is less than the alpha set at .05. This finding means that the status

of consumers' behavioral intentions has a high correlation with the status of the e-service quality of the online service which indicates that improved e-service quality significantly enhances consumer behavioral intention, promoting ongoing use, loyalty, and referrals. The correlation between the variable's results validates the claims of Sjahroeddin (2018) and Oktaviani (2024) that e-service quality has a substantial influence on customer behavioral intentions, therefore reaffirming the ideas that service responsiveness, ease of use, and dependability promote loyalty and repeat business.

Moreover, e-service quality on food delivery service has a significant positive strong relationship towards consumer perception on food safety (r = 65, p < .05). It suggests that as the e-service quality on food delivery improves, so will consumer perceptions of food safety. This implies high-quality e-services, such as well-organized interfaces and fast service, increase consumer trust in food safety, implying that digital efficiency aligns with physical hygiene standards. This discovery aligns with Xin et al. (2023), showing that well-organized digital platforms enhance consumer confidence in food management and safety. Additionally, Liu et al. (2024) found that consumers' trust in food delivery safety is significantly impacted by good e-service quality, including accurate information, system reliability, and clear hygiene measures.

In similar manner, consumer perception on food safety reveals a significant positive moderate relationship with consumer behavioral intention (r = .56, p < .05). It shows that customer behavioral intention increases with food safety perception. This demonstrates that when consumers perceive food to be safe customer behavioral intentions improve, implying that food safety perception, reinforced by excellent e-service quality, encourages repeat patronage and favorable word-of-mouth. The results are consistent with a post-pandemic study conducted in Indonesia by Wijaya et al. (2024), which found that customer trust and acceptance of online food delivery services are significantly enhanced by perceptions of food safety supported by certifications and transparent practices. In China, food safety concerns strongly influence OFD platform involvement, supporting the idea that cleanliness and quality assurance promote behavioral intentions (Dai et al., 2022).

Table 4

Significance of Relationship of E-service Quality of Online Food Service, and Customer Behavioral Intention and Consumer Perception on Food Safety

	r	p-value	Remarks
E-service Quality of Online Food Service and Customer Behavioral Intention	.77	.00	Significant
E-service Quality of Online Food Service and Consumer Perception on Food Safety	.65	.00	Significant
Consumer Perception on Food Safety and Consumer Behavioral Intention	.56	.00	Significant

Mediation Analysis

A mediation analysis was conducted using JASP to assess the mediating role of Consumer Perception of Food Safety in the relationship between e-Service Quality and Consumer Behavioral Intention. Table 5 summarizes the direct, indirect, and total effects, as well as the path coefficients and model fit indicators.

Further, the direct effect of e-service quality on consumer behavioral intention was found to be β = 0.102, with a p-value of

0.037. This indicates a statistically significant but weak direct relationship, as the effect is small yet significant (p < 0.05). Although e-service quality does influence behavioral intention, its impact on its own is limited, suggesting the potential importance of mediating factors.

Table 5

Mediation Analysis of Consumer Perception on Food Safety on the Relationship between E-service Quality and Consumer Behavioral Intention

Independent Variable (IV) Dependent Variable (DV) Mediating Variable (MV)	E-service Quality Consumer Behavioral Intention Consumer Perception on Food Safety		
	Standardized Beta (β)	Standard Error	p-value
Direct Effects (IV → DV) E-service Quality on Customer Behavioral Intention	0.102	0.049	0.037
Indirect Effects (IV→ MV → DV) E-service Quality→ Customer Behavioral Intention → Customer Perception on Food Safety	0.347	0.041	<.000
Total Effects (IV → MV) E-service Quality → Customer Perception on Food Safety	0.449	0.034	<.000
Path Coefficients			
E-service Quality → Customer Behavioral Intention	0.491	0.054	<.000
E-service Quality → Consumer Perception on Food Safety	0.102	0.049	0.037
Consumer Perception on Food Safety → Customer Behavioral Intention	0.706	0.030	<.001

R-Squared
Customer Behavioral Intention   0.434
Consumer Perception on Food Safety 0.597

On the other hand, the indirect effect of e-service quality on consumer behavioral intention, mediated by consumer perception of food safety, was found to be β = 0.347 (p < .001). This suggests that consumer loyalty, reordering behavior, and service recommendations increase when the platform is viewed as trustworthy and safe in terms of hygiene and food handling. Thus, consumer perception of food safety is a crucial pathway through which high e-service quality enhances behavioral engagement, highlighting its role as a a significant partial mediator.

Meanwhile, the total effect of e-service quality on consumer behavioral intention was β = 0.449 (p < .001), indicating that the combination of direct and mediated pathways is significant and exceeds the direct effect. This is due to the mediating role of consumer perception regarding food safety. Enhanced e-service quality not only improves perceptions of food safety but also strengthens their influence on behavioral intentions. When users perceive digital platforms as reliable and hygienic, they are more likely to continue using the service and recommend it to others. This combined effect highlights the crucial role of food safety perception as a mediating factor in converting e-service experiences into consumer engagement.

Furthermore, path coefficients indicate that e-service quality significantly predicts consumer perception of food safety (β = 0.491, p < .001). Additionally, consumer perception of food safety significantly predicts consumer behavioral intention (β = 0.706, p < .001). The values indicate a strong sequential relationship within the model. Moreover, since the direct effect (0.102) is still significant, but the indirect effect (0.347) is much stronger. It implies that consumer perception on food safety has a significant

partial mediation between the relationship of e-service quality and customer behavioral intention.

Figure 3

The Path Plot of Consumer Perception on Food Safety as a Mediating Variable on the Relationship between E-service Quality and Consumer Behavioral Intention
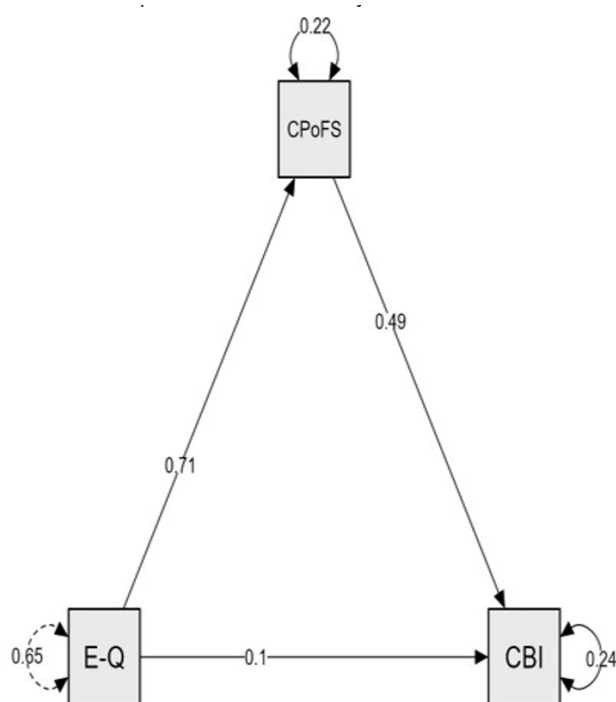
Legend:

CBI - Consumer Behavioral Intention
CPoFS - Consumer Perception on Food Safety
E-Q - E-service Quality

In addition, customer behavioral intention has an r-squared value of 0.434, indicating that the model explains 43.4 percent of the variation and 56.6 percent of components are unstudied. On the other hand, consumer perception on food safety explains 59.7 percent of variation with an r-squared of 0.597, excluding 40.3 percent of components from the analysis. This indicates that Consumer Perception of Food Safety accounts for a significant percentage of the variability in Customer Behavioral Intention, demonstrating a strong correlation.

Visually, Figure 3 shows that the path from E-Service Quality to Customer Behavioral Intention has a standardized coefficient of 0.10 (p > .05), meaning that for every one unit increase in the E-Service Quality, correspondingly Customer Behavioral Intention increases by 0.10 showing that E-Service Quality has a small direct impact on Customer Behavioral Intention. Since this effect is weak, E- Service Quality alone does not strongly determine Customer Behavioral Intention. Adding on, the path analysis indicates that a one-unit improvement in e-Service Quality results in a 0.71 increase in Consumer Perception of Food Safety, demonstrating a significant impact. This indicates that superior e-Service Quality significantly improves consumers' favorable opinions of food safety.

Meanwhile, the direct path from Consumer Perception on Food Safety has a standardized coefficient of 0.49 meaning that for

every one unit increase in the Consumer Perception on Food Safety, Customer Behavioral Intention increase by 0.49 and significant (p> .05) at 95 percent confidence level. It suggests that the moderate positive effect is significant which means that consumer perception of food safety significantly influences customer behavioral intention.

Moreover, The path plot indicates a partial mediation of consumer perception regarding food safety in the relationship between e-service quality and customer behavioral intention. This suggests that e-service quality improves consumer perception of food safety, which significantly influences behavioral intention; however, its direct effect on behavioral intention is limited, highlighting the importance of food safety perception in customer decision-making. This implies that businesses should prioritize improving both E-Service Quality and Consumer Perception on Food Safety to enhance Customer Behavioral Intention.

This study's findings support the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as proposed by Ajzen (1991). This theory states that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control contribute to the formation of behavioral intention. The significant positive correlation between e-service quality and customer behavioral intention, along with the mediating effect of food safety perception, illustrates the impact of perceived control and favorable assessments on user decision-making. These findings support TPB's claim that behavioral intention is a good predictor of actual consumer behavior in online food delivery.

Likewise, the findings confirm the proposition of Shao et al. (2020), emphasizes the idea that the e-service quality directly influences behavioral intention through perceived control and ease of use, particularly regarding the reliability of the service. Furthermore, consumers' perceptions of food safety significantly reinforce the role of subjective norms in hygiene awareness, influencing behavioral intention and highlighting the importance of social and safety-related perceptions (Hidayat, 2023). Similarly, the mediating role of consumer perception of food safety confirms Yeo et al.'s (2017) finding that hygiene awareness and social influences have a major impact on consumer decisions in digital food services.

CONCLUSION

The status of customer behavioral intention of online food delivery is high, suggesting that it is oftentimes evident. This indicates that consumers frequently utilize and promote OFD platforms, demonstrating strong repurchase practices, loyalty, and even a willingness to pay more for services they consider to be valued, accessible, and dependable. However, switching to full online delivery through social media garnered a moderate rating, interpreted as sometimes evident. Despite frequent use and satisfaction, some users are skeptical about using social media platforms for food delivery due to worries about consistency, legitimacy, and service transactions.

Moreover, the consistently high ratings (oftentimes evident) for e-service quality in online food delivery indicate that users have positive experiences with digital services that are efficient, reliable, and easy to use. This implies that strong performance in key areas—such as information quality, system reliability, responsiveness, assurance, usability, and personalization—demonstrates that consumers respond particularly well to platforms that offer secure, supportive, and tailored interactions.

Furthermore, the status of Consumer Perception on Food Safety is high, indicating that it is oftentimes observed. This result confirms that consumers are generally aware of food safety practices and expect reliable safety standards in online food delivery. This indicates that visible hygiene practices, secure packaging, and clear food handling procedures play a key role in shaping customer confidence when ordering food online.

Additionally, the study revealed significant relationships between all variables, with Consumer Perception of Food Safety showing a strong association with Customer Behavioral Intention. The mediation analysis indicated that although e-Service Quality has a minimal direct influence on behavioral intention, its effect is significantly enhanced when mediated by consumer perception of food safety. This indicates that customers are more inclined to exhibit loyalty, repurchase, and endorse services when platforms are regarded as sanitary and reliable. The findings suggest that Consumer Perception of meal Safety is essential for turning service quality into valuable consumer activities.

The study's findings confirm the relevance of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to online food delivery. The high relationship between e-service quality and customer behavioral intention, as well as the mediation function of consumer perception of food safety, indicates how important attitudes and perceived control are in decision-making. This means that consumers are more likely to interact with platforms that they believe to be hygienic and efficient, which is consistent with TPB's argument that positive evaluations and perceived ease of completing the activity influence intention.

RECOMMENDATION

Several recommendations may be considered to sustain and enhance customer engagement with online food delivery services through social media, based on the high results in customer behavioral intention. Entrepreneurs may invest in a user-centered mobile application to resolve dissatisfaction with social media as a channel preference. Concurrently, to foster repurchase intentions, service providers should consistently deliver high food quality and reliable service to enhance client confidence and satisfaction. Likewise, to justify premium pricing and sustain consumer confidence, restaurants may highlight the value of their services and uphold pricing transparency, as customers are more likely to spend more.

Moreover, considering the high evaluations in every aspect of e-service quality, businesses may improve their digital strategy by ensuring that social media information is current, precise, and concise to assist customers in making sound decisions. Timely and dependable order processing may increase consumer trust and fulfillment, while prompt customer care may promote responsiveness. Furthermore, consumer experience and loyalty may be augmented through tailored recommendations, adaptable ordering alternatives, and improvements in website usability and aesthetic appeal.

Given the customer perception of food safety, service providers may reinforce visible hygiene measures by ensuring delivery riders are clean and professional and showcasing these efforts on social media to create trust. Furthermore, transparency may be enhanced by promoting feedback on hygiene and displaying food safety ratings online. Furthermore, in a tourism-driven economy where consumer behavior is heavily influenced by trust and service quality, employees—particularly delivery riders—may benefit from specific training in soft skills, digital engagement, food safety, and hospitality to strengthen customer confidence.

Lastly, considering that the R² value represents certain percentages of the variance in customer behavioral intention and consumer perception on food safety, future researchers may consider exploring more technological or cultural aspects. They may also use qualitative or mixed methodologies to find underlying motivations and contextual aspects not accounted for in the existing model to better understand online meal delivery consumer behavior.

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