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CONSUMER CHALLENGES IN OMNI-CHANNEL FOOD ORDERING: A STUDY OF QUICK SERVICE RESTAURANTS IN INDIA

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Abstract
Purpose: The study explores the barriers Indian customers face when using different food ordering channels at Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs). It is particularly important to understand what customers find challenging in the era of fast-growing online food delivery and ordering. **Design/Methodology:** A total of 30 QSR consumers who regularly use both the online and the offline channels were interviewed in semi-structured interviews. People were interviewed about their experiences with different ordering options to find out what common problems existed. **Findings:** Among the main problems, the study says, are technical issues (such as error-filled apps and inaccurate updates on order tracking), a disconnect between online and offline methods (including differences in what is available and at what price and not recognising loyalty status), challenges in getting customer service to resolve issues and not including consumer preferences on all the different platforms. Many consumers were happy with online ordering but became frustrated when transitions between the online and brick-and-mortar experiences were not easy. **Practical Implications:** The research recommends that QSR operators address these issues: improve the stability of ordering apps, integrate order and pickup processes (for a consistent menu and usable coupons) and strengthen customer service and loyalty programmes. **Originality/Value:** The research shares in-depth details about the problems consumers have in using multi-channel food services in India which is not widely explored. It fills a hole in omnichannel retail research by examining the QSR sector and provides useful tips for enhancing customer service.

Keywords: Omni-channel, Quick Service Restaurants (QSRs), Consumer experience, Multi-channel Integration, Smart technologies.

Introduction

In the past few years, quick service restaurants (QSRs) in India have been transformed by the fast increase in digital food order and delivery services (NRAI, 2021; Statista, 2024). Today, consumers can use different channels to order food – QSR apps, delivery aggregator sites like Swiggy and Zomato, websites, phone calls or office kiosks – so food purchasing is available in many channels. An omni-channel approach describes using every online and offline channel together to create one smooth experience for the customer (Verhoef et al., 2015; Beck & Rygl, 2015). According to some experts, effective omni-channel practises should enable customers to use different channels without difficulty (Rigby, 2011; Piotrowicz & Cuthbertson, 2014). As an example, someone could place a customised order on their phone and get it at the restaurant or earn the same benefits and see the same items on the menu no matter which way they order. Still, making all channels of a service interact freely so customers find it easy to shift between them is difficult for most businesses (Neslin et al., 2006; Bell et al., 2014). The challenges under review can be observed clearly in the Indian QSR market. Rising smartphone use and the enthusiasm of younger people for online services have helped make this one of the world's fastest-growing food markets (Singh & Puri, 2024; Khan & Maqbool, 2024). A growing number of people in India now rely on apps to get their meals fast. Major QSRs like McDonald's, Domino's, Burger King, KFC, Pizza Hut and local brands are present

on aggregators and have built their own mobile ordering apps. Using various channels in this ecosystem is convenient and allows more opportunities, though it also means customers have to deal with more challenges. Preliminary findings and first reports indicate that Indian consumers experience inconsistent availability of menus and pricing when using different online methods, trouble using offers on various apps and inconvenience due to technology problems (NRAI, 2021; Choudhary, 2019). In addition, engaging and retaining customers in all channels is challenging because people now expect services to happen quickly and efficiently (Cheah et al., 2020; Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). Even adding a few seconds to a customer's experience – a glitch in the app during checkout or staff unable to locate an item they already paid for – can cause customers to be displeased and likely to switch to a competitor. If we want to improve omni-channel strategies, we have to pay attention to these problems as seen by the consumer (Parasuraman et al., 2005).

Literature Review

Omni-channel retail is noted by the way it provides shoppers with the same experience from any touchpoint (Verhoef et al., 2015). If you use multiple channels, each one is separate, but omni-channel means you share one account and consistent service with customers everywhere. According to studies, using current technologies, setting up separate company departments and blending data are the main difficulties in integrating all channels (Neslin et al., 2006; Anvari & Norouzi, 2016). Customers become annoyed when the different channels do not work well together. An offer on a mobile app might be worthless in a store and orders you place online might not actually be available when you get to the store (Selvan et al., 2021; Babu & Arthy, 2019). Omni-channel services that most QSR businesses offer include making orders with their app, at self-serve kiosks, over the internet or by standing in a line at the counter. Food service technology techniques are distinct from those used in retail. Since QSR deals are fast and products can only stay fresh for a short time, any delays can badly influence customer opinions. Placing online orders means delivering information about ordering, making changes and when the food will be served. Researchers observed in the past that convenience, reliability and speed are the most important factors for people who use food delivery services (Yeo et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2019). Should a website or app load slowly or keep crashing, many consumers might stop using it (Babu & Arthy, 2019). That's why correct and on-time order monitoring is so key; when the details don't match with your experience or are late, it might cause customers to choose your competitors in the future. Literature also discusses how data from customers and loyalty can be combined in systems that support all sales channels.People are happy when stores remember their past purchases, what theylike and their rewards on different platforms (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). A loyal customer might hope that a drink pass gained through the app can be redeemed at the in-store kiosk. A disconnect happens if a customer's profile benefits are only accessible through a single platform which can lead to frustration (Parasuraman et al., 2005; Cheah et al., 2020). In many places, research into the fast-food industry has found that keeping channels separate tends to reduce both customer interactions and loyalty (Cheah et al., 2020). People look for a smooth process that lets them buy things on their phone and manage or cheque their orders in stores without needing to begin from zero (Verhoef et al., 2015; Anvari & Norouzi, 2016). The current research also explores the difficulties customers face in using multiple channels for service. When an order issue occurs, like a payment problem, a missing product or a delay, many consumers will contact the seller using different methods (chatting on the app, making a call or visiting in person). Poor coordination among customer support teams can cause consumers problems getting their issue resolved (Capito & Pergelova, 2023). Food services rely on quick replies and solutions since the product must be served quickly (Malik et al., 2024). Titus et al. (2023) discovered that giving customers several choices and effective service makes them more likely to use digital food ordering. On the flip side, failing to attend to problems or respond slowly stops more people from using the app again (Khan & Maqbool, 2024). Extra details about these issues are available in India-specific studies and reports. Findings from the industry indicate that

Indian users find food apps useful because of their offers and easy ordering, but they also have issues with seeing menu prices change, not using normal coupons on the apps and occasional errors when picking up orders (NRAI, 2021; Iyengar & Venkatesh, 2024). Selvan et al. (2021) pointed out that with more people ordering online, traditional dining restaurants must match the online interest with their kitchen production. Meanwhile, according to Choudhary (2019), the presence of both online orders and people waiting in the restaurant at once can cause these establishments to mix up orders or make customers wait longer. These problems with operations lead directly to problems that consumers face in an omni-channel world. Based on the research: consumers trust that omni-channel systems will be dependable, quick and always the same.According to Verhoef et al. (2015), Lemon and Verhoef (2016) and Cheah et al. (2020), technology dependability (safe apps and precise data), consistent integration of channels (same menus and cost across platforms), strong customer service (rapid support and error correction) and personalization (simplified ordering with information from personal data) are the main dimensions. The literature supports our analysis by providing a standard to compare what we find with the QSR customer experiences reported from India. This research adds to the existing literature by investigating these challenges from the point of view of consumers in a market that is growing fast.

Research Gap: While the food service industry has not received the same attention in academic literature as apparel or general merchandise (Verhoef et al., 2015; Anvari & Norouzi, 2016), there are still few major studies on it in places like India. People who eat fast food expect to get their food accurately and consistently in a short time (Kimes, 2011; Malik et al., 2024). A difference between what is ordered and what is actually served, both via the app and at collection, may directly reduce customer satisfaction at the time of eating. Studies on online food delivery have examined why people start using the service and their behaviour when buying food online (Yeo et al., 2017; Buettner et al., 2023; Venkatesh et al., 2012), while exploring the unique challenges people notice when using several services at once is not common. Specifically, this study focuses on: What problems do consumers encounter when ordering from QSRs that provide omni-channel service in India?

Objectives: The goal is to highlight and study the main difficulties and hurdles that customers run into when ordering food online from quick service restaurants (QSRs). It also explores how these issues influence what consumers think about their shopping experience and what adjustments they would like to see. Concentrating on issues mentioned by customers allows the research to direct attention to important areas that should be worked on.

Methodology

In this study, we looked into consumer challenges by using a qualitative approach for omni-channel food ordering. As our questions focused on exploration, we thought that in-depth interviews would let us hear about people's real experiences and annoyances. This study included 30 participants from a sample of 18 men and 12 women recruited by purposive sampling. People were invited to join the study if they were experienced QSR customers, having both used QSR's online and offline services in urban India. Young adults and people ages 45 and below were chosen as participants to mirror the group involved in rising online food orders in India (Khan & Maqbool, 2024). Most of the participants came from two metropolitan areas to study how they use fast food and delivery.

Data Collection: Every semi-structured interview took about 30 to 45 minutes. An interview guide was created to guarantee similarity in the questions. We covered the following topics in the interviews: their last few orders placed through apps or kiosks, any problems with the process, how ordering compared online to in the store, delivery troubles, any trouble using customer support and what could be better. Probing questions were asked to gather more information such as asking customers to define what happened during a crash or how they received their online order at pickup. Participants chose whether to be interviewed in Hindi or English and these interviews were later translated into English for analysis. Everyone joined the study by giving consent and their identities were always kept private.

Data Analysis: We looked for themes and patterns among the data using the thematic analysis method. Once the transcription was complete, two researchers independently studied the transcripts to identify examples of challenges mentioned by participants. Beginning codes such as app issues, payment issues, offers for use offline not allowed, frustration with support and mix-ups with orders, were all grouped as higher-order themes. The research team talked over and updated their findings until they came to the main challenges faced by consumers when ordering at QSRs through any channel. Reliability was maintained by making the two researchers' codebooks consistent by discussion and agreement. Since the data is qualitative, we saved snippets of people's words for each theme that can be used in presenting our results.

Validity Considerations: After doing the initial analysis, we informed a group of 5 participants about the main problems the research identified and asked them if their understandings were similar. Because of their feedback, we became more precise about what unfolded (recognising that live tracking was the key area causing problems). We collected information from customers online and on social media which revealed that the problems we found are commonly shared by users (confirming our themes). What we found works well for our study is the qualitative approach and sample size, as they let us discover the main details of customer experiences, but they might not capture every aspect of all QSR customers. The findings, therefore, make it clear that additional research can be done with surveys or larger data groups.

Findings

It became clear from the interviews that there are a number of typical issues consumers experience with ordering from QSRs using various means. This problem outweighed the simple approach of digital platforms and frustrated customers, often that affected their overall experience. Each main theme is briefly described below:

1. Technical Glitches and Platform Reliability: Many individuals said they had run into technical problems with digital ordering at some stage. Customers experienced crashing apps, failed payments and sometimes inconsistent order updates (during busiest service times and promotions). An example from a participant was that they put in an order on the app, saw that they'd paid and then the app got stuck. I didn't know if my order was successful until I phoned customer service. Such things meant customers had to work harder (e.g., call helplines or cancel and order again) which reduced how much they trusted the app. Many people always pointed out how inaccurate shipment tracking was. Some testing participants indicated that tracking orders on aggregator apps occasionally shows outdated information (such as an order that seems to be out for delivery hours after it was delivered). Though these problems weren't as severe as paying, they still led to anxiety or uncertainty. Those participating said they want the technology to function well, considering how much they rely on it in ordering. If it comes up, it is as if a large annoyance is standing right there.

2. Online–Offline Disconnect: It was also a major challenge that the online experience didn't always line up with what happened in restaurants. The participants pointed out several ways this divide was shown.

- **Menu and Pricing Discrepancies:** Some of the combo deals and items in the store were missing on the app (and the other way around). Some interviewed users realised that at times, the in-store price was higher than what the app listed for the same thing – but excluding any delivery charges. A user shared: *"I spotted a special flavor of a burger inside the outlet, but it doesn't appear on the app."* When I asked, the workers told me you can only order at the restaurant if you're visiting in person which I didn't understand. At the same time, app-only promotional items left many people confused when they went to the counter to buy them.
- **Coupon and Loyalty Limitations:** Many people taking part are enrolled in loyalty programmes, whether from the QSR or an aggregator service. Several people noticed they could not use offers or coupons from one channel on another. "I had a free dessert coupon in my app, but the store

cashier said they couldn't apply it in-store. It felt like I was penalized for coming in-person." Coming in to the restaurant had its own set of problems, as one customer realized. Likewise, when delivering a phone number in-store, loyal points earned through online shopping were not acknowledged occasionally.

- **Order Coordination Issues:** Some people who relied on "order online and collect in store" received their purchases late and sometimes found the outlet hadn't properly received their order. One person who used the online order for takeaway came to the store to discover his order was not there, confirming there was a communication problem between the online ordering and the store.

This theme demonstrates that customers assume each of a brand's channels will be linked. When something breaks that assumption, it can make the business process inconvenient and broken organisation may seem not professional (Verhoef et al., 2015). According to participants, they often faced confusion and decided to cheque or question things in order to complete their transactions, contrasting with what omni-channel's smoother shopping should offer.

3. Customer Service and Support Gaps: When something goes wrong and consumers want help, communicating with them becomes a problem. The feedback from participants on customer service varied in an omni-channel setting. A number of customers chose to talk with the support team at the aggregator (using chat or the phone) as their order from a QSR was being delayed or incorrect, but they noticed the help was slow and directed only by scripts. The chat team responded to me with simple messages that didn't answer my questions. I was short something in my order and all they offered was a ₹50 coupon after going back and forth with them, another said. contacted the restaurant directly, we would be passed back and forth between the restaurant and the app's team. An interviewee learned that the restaurant manager told him to mention the missing item on the app, yet the app itself suggested he contact the restaurant. If someone wanted to address an online shopping issue at the store, there was a good chance staff would not know how to handle it. When a participant faced overcharging through the app, they went to the outlet, only to be given a number to call customer service. Since customer service is separated between the platforms, customers have to work harder to get support and many won't make the effort. It's important that solutions for food orders arrive quickly – letting days pass before resolving a problem reduces the value of your efforts. A number of participants revealed that they may not use the same channel again, since unresolved difficulties make them consider other companies.

4. Switching and Coordination Difficulties: Although omni-channel means companies should be flexible, participants said it was usually difficult to transfer seamlessly between channels during an order. Some noted times when they were on the app (browsing the menu and adding items), but realised they'd be quicker to visit the outlet to order instead. But the app didn't allow them to buy the item there and then as an in-store purchase. Customers had to end their mobile order and place it again by standing in line at the counter or using a kiosk. A suggestion from one participant was, "It's great to be able to order ahead for dine-in from the app and then it's ready as soon as I enter the restaurant." Furthermore, those who shop by using a mix of channels at the same time (such as ordering part of their shopping instore and part on their app) found that things don't match up well. A customer recalled writing down the number for her dessert at a kiosk while picking up her burger that had been pre-ordered, though she was told the food couldn't be put together as they were made at different counters. It was tough to get delivery sometimes because there were two pickup points and order details had to be entered twice by mistake. They indicate that the merging of channels isn't happening enough – the channels still look separate to the consumers.

5. Lack of Personalization and Preference Recognition: Participants still felt that their personal likes or dislikes were not important to the content they received, even with all the data being gathered. Several complained that QSR apps will show their previous orders and suggestions, but swapping to a kiosk or a call will reset the information. Whenever I go to order, I have to mention what I don't want (again, like mayo). The app has my order in memory, but the staff in store doesn't,

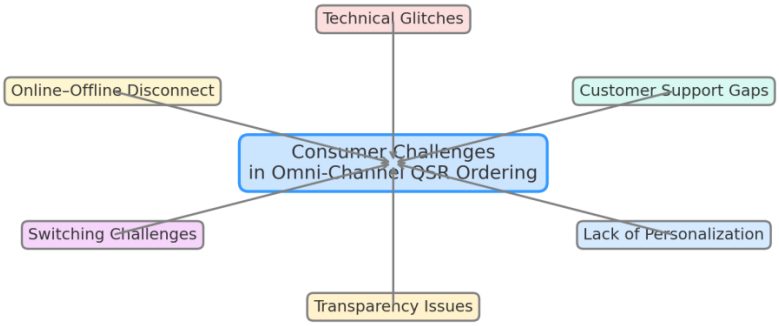
one noticed. Being unable to show past customer details often means customers have to repeat their choices and can make a mistake now and then (for example, not getting their dietary restriction noted when the online system doesn't remind them). People taking part in the study hoped to see larger, more frequent loyalty rewards. When I was looking at disconnections, loyalty was mentioned, but here it was about personalization: "If they see I'm a regular, they could occasionally give me a surprise offer, wherever I place the order." The idea is for brands to integrate omni-channel data to ensure loyal customers receive the same benefits from each channel, instead of allowing it to get fragmented. A number of interviewees pointed out that international brands elsewhere can link their loyalty points from one app when they order in stores, but this is not available in India. The consequence is that consumers realise the platform differences and see the company as giving them lower priority.

6. Perceived Fairness and Transparency Issues: A difficulty that came up in some interviews is that consumers disagreed with pricing differences or varied terms between channels. This issue grew larger since it touched on their perceptions about honesty. As an example, delivery apps usually charge higher prices and extra fees which delivery people recognised as normal for the convenience. Yet, if one type of deal was different depending on the platform, customers wondered why and chose one form of payment over the other. When I realised I could get a discount online, I thought it was unfair to pay the same amount I did for the meal in the store. It ought to be exactly the same, said one of the interviewed. These feelings may decrease people's trust in a brand. Likewise, those taking part said they wanted honest information about both wait times and availability. People pointed out that allowing app orders when things were busy or soon before closing led to many cancelled orders that caused dissatisfaction to customers. Alternatively, if a store's inventory is low, someone at the store can inform in-person visitors before online customers learn this during their checkout. Because of these gaps, customers thought that one channel received more attention than the other.

Theme	Description	Sample Quote
Technical Glitches	Issues with app crashes, payment failures, and incorrect order tracking.	"The app crashed right after I paid – super annoying."
Online–Offline Disconnect	Mismatched menu items, loyalty program inconsistencies, and pricing differences across platforms.	"I couldn't use my coupon in-store – that felt unfair."
Customer Support Gaps	Difficulty resolving issues due to disjointed support between apps and in-store staff.	"I kept getting redirected between app and outlet."
Switching Challenges	Inability to shift orders across channels seamlessly, leading to redundant steps.	"Had to cancel app order and redo it at the counter."
Lack of Personalization	No recognition of preferences or past orders when switching between digital and physical modes.	"App knows my order, but kiosk doesn't."
Transparency Issues	Unclear pricing structures and discrepancies between channels reducing perceived fairness.	"I paid more in-store for the same deal I saw online."

Table 1: Summary of Themes and Illustrative Quotes

Figure 1: Thematic Map of Key Consumer Challenges



All in all, the research shows that people like the convenience, diverse options and discounts of omni-channel food ordering but still have to deal with early problems. Most of these difficulties are related: they are all mainly caused by how well people integrate or don't. If technology fails, channels do not share data properly or support fails to coordinate among departments, the consumer notices these as holes in their linked services. Although there were obstacles, lots of people kept utilising omni-channel options, suggesting that the convenience is simply more important to them than the difficulties, though their loyalty isn't rock solid. Various respondents said they would immediately look for a better QSR if another business solved these difficulties, reflecting how necessary it is for QSRs to pay attention to these issues.

Discussion

The research results outline where the ideal for omni-channel service is not achieved in the Indian QSR sector and supports as well as goes beyond existing studies on the subject. In all our results, we found that having well-integrated technology was essential which is consistent with challenges reported by researchers before us (Neslin et al., 2006; Piotrowicz & Cuthbertson, 2014). But our study clearly illustrates how those integration faults happen, including an app that gives out during the checkout process (tech problem) and a loyalty coupon meant for offline that breaks down in the store (problem with different systems). They prove the main point of Verhoef et al. (2015) that being successful in omni-channel commerce relies on tight backend systems and a focus on the customer. Customers treat any technical problem with a brand as a failure of the entire business, not just one part. Suppose a failure to complete a payment somewhere in the app; this isn't only about unsupported technology but reflects on a customer's experience of not getting their ordered meal quickly and easily, something the QSR guarantees. There is a clear interest in exploring the impact of channel inconsistency on a brand's reputation. Any gaps in pricing or offer prompted participants to express that things felt unfair, highlighting the idea of justice in service delivery (Parasuraman et al., 2005). Because of omnichannel, people who interact with the restaurant in various ways assume they will be treated in the same way (Singh & Puri, 2024). Should a channel offer a better price than another for the same product, some consumers might grow dissatisfied for picking that channel. It offers a new advantage for omnichannel strategy – ensuring the value offered is consistent across every channel. It's essential for QSR managers to either keep pricing and promotional strategies similar among all channels or to sincerely show any differences (such as branding certain promotions as "app-exclusive").

The problems identified here fit into the larger body of studies on service quality in a multi-channel environment.Researchers Cheah and others have pointed out that insufficient support reduces fans'

involvement and commitment. The struggles of our participants show that when a support team only operates in their restricted area, the resolution becomes more difficult. It seems that QSRs and delivery platforms require better ways to coordinate their operations. If something goes wrong with a delivery, it's better for one person to own the resolution, instead of having the customer contact both parties. Adding aggregator data to their CRM systems allows some brands to see all orders in one place which could help frontline employees solve problems on any channel. According to this discussion, managers should equip employees in all customer-related roles (at the call centre or in stores) to handle complaints no matter where the order was placed. A further topic is how omni-channel services use personalised approaches and data in their operations. The research (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016) points out that personalising customer experiences through data is a key feature of digital channels. Our results showed that consumers realise this potential is not being realised – their indicated preferences for one service are not transferring to another. This gap means missing an opportunity to thrill the customer. When you have customers who often skip a certain item, the system could detect this on the point-of-sale screen right as their loyalty ID is input, therefore avoiding errors. The wish for specific personalization in the food network assures us that current consumers understand how recording their preferences could be of advantage to them and realise whether it is successfully occurring (Capito & Pergelova, 2023). This requirement is in line with worldwide trends of personalising retail, but trying to achieve it in QSR multi-channel operations involves very close IT system coordination. Even so, if a QSR masters this, it can stand out in customer satisfaction and attract returning customers.

We have found that choosing among many channels can be complicated. There are many ways for consumers to order, but they don't want to deal with the complications that result (Buettner et al., 2023; Titus et al., 2023). Basically, customers hope an omni-channel system will function seamlessly, leaving the hard part to the provider. Whenever participants had to address small challenges (such as re-ordering after an error or checking an offer), it reduced the convenience omni-channel should provide. This proves that easy-to-use and attractive experiences should play a key role in every omni-channel effort.Following Venkatesh et al., if learning to use a system is too much work, people will not use it as much. To be successful, QSRs should help reduce the confusion and the number of steps needed from customers: they can do this by making which coupons are valid clear, offering instant refunds and by giving customers an option to use their app to order food in the restaurant. Compared to other areas, running an omni-channel strategy in food service has some special difficulties. Because you get your food immediately, any error shows up right away and affects the whole dining experience (a bad order spoils what you're about to eat). That's likely why relatively minor problems (for example, a side dish left out) led to bad behaviour from customers in our survey. It also points out that being reliable matters more here than in many clothing apps, because customers may become upset with a delay that could ruin their event. Because of these results, prioritising operation excellence is crucial for QSRs operating in various channels. It's more than a matter of technology or promotion; it's about how kitchens, inventory supplies, deliveries and the front-of-house staff can be connected with digital interfaces (Selvan et al., 2021; Choudhary, 2019). The solution requires managers in operations management, IT and marketing to join forces and help resolve what's causing the problems.

It's also important to recognise the boundaries of this discussion and how much it applies to different cases. What we found fits with issues well known in omnichannel theory which means it may be relevant for everyone. The nature and consequences of each challenge depend on who the customer is or the brand. In this case, youth who are familiar with technology may overlook minor app issues but want personalised services, but older people may want more from loyalty points and get upset if there isn't somebody to answer their questions. These results are based on urban India; however, smaller cities may face weaknesses in their delivery processes and less use of technology. Next, researchers could estimate how many organisations face these challenges and which new

solutions or improvements are most satisfying to customers. All in all, the conversation shows that many consumer challenges result from issues arising as QSRs try to implement omni-channel approaches. The most important idea is still: keep your accounting simple and regular in use. Every step in the customer journey should maintain the value you advertise and behind the scenes, your systems should make everything easy for customers. Following these ideas can help a brand build stronger customer ties in the competitive world of food service.

Key Contributions: The research we conducted adds value to theories as well as to effective management practises. It contributes to the field of omnichannel retail by highlighting that the way fast-food services are delivered can change the overall omnichannel experience. We found that what works in different areas (such as integration and the use of same data) can be applied to this field with slight but important adjustments (especially the key importance of timely order accuracy and coordination with outside delivery providers). In practise, the study helps QSR managers in India (and similar emerging markets) to cheque how well they are catering to customers' needs. Keeping track of all the main stages (including ordering and after-service) allows our insights to show us what can be improved the most. If more resources are put into app infrastructure and systems and if there is constant synchronisation with in-store processes, this could help resolve many technical and integration problems.Teaching staff to manage questions across channels and enabling one centre to handle issues from all sources, helps your company recover better after issues arise.

Recommendations: Based on our findings, QSR companies should consider the following steps:

- **Technological Upgrades:** Make sure peak load situations are simulated and tested with both mobile apps and kiosks. Use systems that automatically retry payments or store offline orders with special attention to sudden internet blackouts, so customers do not have to deal with the problems.
- **Unified Systems:** Adopt or create order management systems that link orders made through aggregators, through the brand app and in store.This will guarantee that menus and prices are the same across the chain, as well as let loyalty programmes match each other. While you may not achieve full integration at first, try to synchronise your inventory and follow the same pricing rules on all channels to avoid making your customers confused.
- **Customer Support Integration:** Establish a system where restaurant customer service and delivery platform help work closely together. A direct line to aggregator support could be provided by the restaurant, so that any complaints about orders from that platform can be resolved immediately (or vice versa). The purpose is for customers to get assistance regardless of how they reach out.
- **Use of Customer Data:** Use all the data from digital channels to raise the quality of every interaction. When heavy app users visit your store, having their phone number or payment method attached to their profile can allow the crew or the POS to identify them and provide what they need such as their favourite snack or any other relevant benefit. Thanks to this personalization, what would be a failsafe separates into a smooth and flow experience.
- **Transparency and Communication:** Clearly state the distinctions that can be found between channels. If a promotion is just for the app or only available in store, write that on the label to make sure buyers know. Should a store be busy enough to possibly delay an order, notify the customer or temporarily limit new orders from the website. People usually respect honesty and being open yourself can help cool down frustrating situations.

Limitations: The authors stated that this study was qualitative and centred on a specific group of people (who were mainly city dwellers and QSR users). The number of cases in the sample is large enough for thematic saturation, but it is not suitable for generalising findings statistically. More research could be done by using bigger surveys or controlled experiments such as analysing the

impact of an integrated loyalty system on whether omni-channel users stay loyal to a company. We conducted our research in a regular operating environment, yet events such as the pandemic have played a role in online food ordering behaviours (Kumar & Shah, 2021), meaning further study is needed on these topics' influence on omni-channel efforts.

Conclusion: This research concentrated on learning about consumer challenges associated with omni-channel food ordering in the Indian QSR industry and the results highlight the main areas that cause difficulties for them. Key difficulties mentioned in the interviews were faulty technology in online ordering, a gap between online and physical ordering, weak customer support, obstacles when customers wanted to switch channels and infrequent personalization. This means that improved convenience for customers from omni-channel initiatives comes with some frustrations and if these aren't handled, clients can feel less satisfied and loyal.
All in all, while using omni-channel methods to capture online customers, QSRs in India must handle associated changes and issues experienced by customers. A strong omni-channel strategy depends on each step being easy for the customer. Considering these insights and putting the customer first will help restaurants offer the smooth, convenience and satisfaction people are looking for in their omni-channel food experience. In addition to improving what customers feel about a brand now, these strategies will ensure loyalty and resilience, as the food business adopts more digital technology.

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