# The Changing Role of Food Delivery Apps among Hotel Guests before and after Covid 19 Pandemic

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## Abstract

*Purpose* – The hospitality industry has experienced significant transformations in recent years, primarily driven by advancements in technology and changes in consumer behavior. The worldwide COVID-19 epidemic has intensified a trend of hotel guests increasingly relying on meal delivery applications. Considering the recent COVID-19 pandemic, this study sets out to investigate how hotel guests have been using food delivery apps before and during the outbreak.

*Research design, data, and methodology* – This study utilizes a systematic literature review as its research design. A systematic literature review is a methodical, well-structured procedure for locating, analyzing, and synthesizing pertinent research articles.

*Result* – The findings shed light on four main aspects: convenience and accessibility, safety and hygiene assurance, personalization and customization, and local exploration and cultural immersion. These findings provide valuable insights into the evolving preferences and behaviors of hotel guests in utilizing food delivery apps, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Conclusion* – This study has contributed to the understanding of the changing role of food delivery apps among hotel guests. By recognizing the evolving dynamics and leveraging the opportunities presented by food delivery apps, hotels can adapt to meet guest expectations, enhance customer satisfaction, and thrive in the ever-changing landscape of the hospitality industry.

**Keywords:** Food Delivery Apps, Hospitality Industry, Hotel Guests, Qualitative Research Approach

**JEL Classification Code**: L83, L21, C25, P46

## 1. Introduction

The hospitality industry has experienced significant transformations in recent years, primarily driven by advancements in technology and changes in consumer behavior. The worldwide COVID-19 epidemic has intensified a trend of hotel guests increasingly relying on meal delivery applications. In light of the recent COVID-19 pandemic, this study sets out to investigate how hotel guests have been using food delivery apps before and during the outbreak. Apps that facilitate the ordering and delivery of food have significantly altered the dining habits of modern society because of the ease, quickness, and variety they provide. Hotel visitors used to rely on the hotel's restaurants, room service, and nearby eateries for their meals before the epidemic. However, the emergence of food delivery apps disrupted this traditional model, allowing guests to explore various dining options conveniently from their smartphones. The COVID-19 pandemic has further intensified the need for contactless experiences, leading to a surge in the use of food delivery apps among hotel guests. With the rapid growth and evolving role of food delivery apps, it is crucial to examine how this transformation has impacted hotel guests' behavior and preferences (Huang, 2023). By understanding the changing dynamics of food delivery app usage before and after the COVID-19 pandemic, hotel practitioners can better adapt their services to meet guest expectations and enhance customer satisfaction.

The study aims to achieve several main objectives. Firstly, it seeks to examine the usage and perception of food delivery apps among hotel guests before the COVID-19 pandemic. By understanding the pre-pandemic landscape, the researchers can establish a baseline for comparison. Secondly, the study aims to explore the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the usage and perception of food delivery apps among hotel guests. This investigation will shed light on any shifts or changes in behavior and attitudes brought about by the pandemic. Another important objective is to identify the factors that influence the usage of food delivery apps among hotel guests. By analyzing these factors, such as convenience, affordability, and variety of options, the study can provide insights into the drivers behind app usage.

The researchers also want to look at how much of an impact the COVID-19 outbreak has on the popularity of food delivery apps. By comparing different areas, it is possible to learn more about the shifts and tendencies that have evolved because of the epidemic. Finally, this research intends to provide practical consequences and suggestions for those working in the hospitality sector. The study will help professionals in the hospitality sector make the most of food delivery applications by combining the findings of previous studies and providing actionable insights and recommendations. The study's objectives encompass a comprehensive investigation of food delivery app usage among hotel guests, considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and offering actionable recommendations for industry practitioners. This research could inform hotel owners, managers, marketers, and service providers in the hospitality business, which is why it is important. To fulfill the changing requirements and expectations of hotel guests, it is critical for hotel stakeholders to understand the growing popularity of meal delivery applications. In order for hotels to make educated judgments about integrating food delivery applications, they need to better understand how customers use these services. With this knowledge, they can better serve their guests by offering quick and easy meal alternatives. Hotel owners and operators may use the results of this research to raise the quality of their services, delight their guests, and gain a competitive edge. To increase the reach and effectiveness of their promotions, businesses should adapt their strategies to the evolving nature of app use (Kim & Kang, 2023).

To understand the changing role of food delivery apps among hotel guests before and after the COVID-19 pandemic, this study will draw upon several theoretical frameworks. The first framework is the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), developed by Fred Davis, which provides a theoretical lens to examine individuals' acceptance and usage of technology (Hadidi & Power, 2020). In the context of food delivery apps, TAM will be used to analyze hotel guests' attitudes and intentions towards using these apps. The second framework is the Diffusion of Innovation Theory by Everett Rogers, which offers insights into the adoption and spread of new ideas, practices, or technologies within a social system (Curtis, 2020). This theory will be applied to understand the rate of adoption of food delivery apps among hotel guests. By utilizing this theory, the study will investigate the factors that influence hotel guests' adoption and usage of food delivery apps.

The third framework is the Social Exchange Theory developed by George Homans and Peter Blau, which focuses on the social relationships and exchanges between individuals. In the context of food delivery apps, this theory can help analyze the motivations and perceived benefits that drive hotel guests to use these apps (Poyraz, 2020). By applying this theory, the study will explore the social factors and perceived benefits that contribute to hotel guests' usage of food delivery apps. By employing these theoretical frameworks, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the changing role of food delivery apps among hotel guests before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. These frameworks will guide the analysis of data and help identify the key factors influencing app adoption and usage, as well as the shifts in guest behavior and attitudes brought about by the pandemic.

The following research questions will guide this study:

- How did hotel guests use and perceive food delivery apps before the COVID-19 pandemic?
- How has the COVID-19 pandemic influenced the usage and perception of food delivery apps among hotel guests?
- What factors influence the usage of food delivery apps among hotel guests?
- What are the differences in food delivery app usage before and after the COVID-19 pandemic among hotel guests?
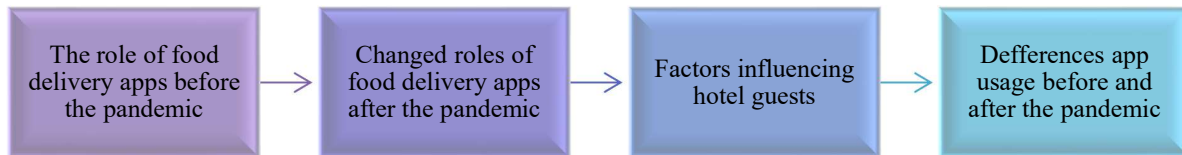
| The role of food delivery apps before the pandemic | → | Changed roles of food delivery apps after the pandemic | → | Factors influencing hotel guests | → | Defferences app usage before and after the pandemic |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

**Figure 1:** The Flow of the Research Questions

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Introduction to Food Delivery Apps

Apps that transport meals have exploded in popularity in recent years, giving people quick and easy access to a broad range of cuisines. Users may place orders using their smartphones and have food delivered from nearby eateries. Because of the convenience of smartphone ordering and the speed of modern transportation, meal delivery applications have exploded in popularity (Ali et al., 2020). In this part, we will examine how the COVID-19 pandemic has altered the function of food delivery applications among hotel guests, comparing their use before and after the outbreak. The proliferation of food delivery apps over the last several years has revolutionized how consumers get and eat their favorite meals. Customers looking for stress-free eating options are gravitating toward these applications due to their diversity and ease of use (Ali et al., 2020). The broad availability of smartphones and technical developments have been critical to the growth of food delivery apps, which allow customers to place orders with a few clicks and keep them apprised of their food's progress in real time.

### 2.2. Research Gap

While the literature acknowledges the widespread popularity and convenience of food delivery apps, there is a research gap regarding the changing role of these apps among hotel guests, specifically in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although studies have examined the adoption and usage of food delivery apps in general, there is limited research that specifically focuses on the utilization of these apps by hotel guests and how their usage has evolved before and after the pandemic (Amin et al., 2021). The existing literature primarily emphasizes the convenience and accessibility provided by food delivery apps, but there is a need for more comprehensive research that explores other aspects such as safety and hygiene assurance, personalization and customization, and local exploration and cultural immersion. The research gap lies in the lack of in-depth studies that specifically focus on the changing role of food delivery apps among hotel guests before and after the COVID-19 pandemic, considering factors beyond convenience and exploring aspects such as safety, personalization, and local exploration (Muangmee et al., 2021). Bridging this research gap would provide valuable insights for both researchers and industry practitioners in understanding and catering to the evolving needs and preferences of hotel guests in the post-pandemic era.

### 2.3. Pre-Pandemic Role of Food Delivery Apps Among Hotel Guests

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, food delivery apps played a supplementary role in the dining experiences of hotel guests. While hotels traditionally offered in-house dining options and room service, food delivery apps provided guests with an alternative for exploring local cuisine (Hong et al., 2021). Research by Hong et al. (2021) found that factors such as convenience, variety, and affordability influenced customers' intention to use food delivery apps in the pre-pandemic era. Guests appreciated the ability to order meals from their smartphones and have them delivered directly to their hotel rooms, offering a convenient and time-saving option for dining. Before the COVID-19 pandemic,

food delivery apps had already started to gain traction among hotel guests, offering them a convenient and diverse dining experience (Cheong & Law, 2023). The pre-pandemic role of food delivery apps among hotel guests was characterized by several key factors. One of the primary reasons for the adoption of food delivery apps was convenience. Hotel visitors found it convenient to order food using their cellphones rather than looking for nearby eateries or calling for delivery (Leung et al., 2023) since it saved them time. The hotel's customers may easily order room service from a large selection of restaurants with only a few touches on their smartphones. People who were on the go and needed a fast meal appreciated this feature.

## 2.4. Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Food Delivery Apps

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about significant changes in consumer behavior and preferences, including a heightened reliance on food delivery apps among hotel guests. The pandemic necessitated social distancing measures, leading to a decline in in-house dining and room service options. As a result, guests turned to food delivery apps as a safer and contactless way to satisfy their dining needs (Burlea-Schiopoiu et al., 2022). A study conducted by Kumar and Shah (2021) revealed that emotions, such as fear and anxiety, influenced customers' preference for food delivery apps during the pandemic, as they provided a sense of safety and minimized the risk of exposure to the virus. Fear and anxiety played a significant role in influencing customers' preference for food delivery apps during the pandemic. Amin et al. (2021) found that emotions associated with the pandemic, such as fear of contracting the virus or anxiety about crowded public spaces, heightened customers' inclination to use food delivery apps. These apps provided a sense of safety and control, as they enabled contactless ordering and delivery, minimizing the risk of exposure to the virus (Muangmee et al., 2021). Hotel guests, like many other consumers, prioritized their health and well-being during the pandemic, and food delivery apps offered a convenient and perceived safer option for satisfying their dining needs.

## 2.5. Changing Consumer Behavior and Expectations

The COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally altered consumer behavior and expectations regarding food delivery apps. Consumers now place a greater emphasis on hygiene and safety measures when selecting dining options, with contactless delivery and adherence to health protocols becoming key considerations (Prasetyo et al., 2021). The study by Burlea-Schiopoiu et al. (2022) found that consumers' trust in food delivery apps increased during the pandemic due to the perception that these platforms implemented strict safety measures. Additionally, consumers have become more inclined to explore new cuisines and support local restaurants through food delivery apps (Lau, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about significant changes in consumer behavior and expectations regarding food delivery apps among hotel guests. One of the notable shifts is the increased emphasis on hygiene and safety measures. Consumers now prioritize contactless delivery and expect food delivery apps to adhere to strict health protocols to minimize the risk of virus transmission. Hygiene considerations have become crucial factors in consumers' decision-making process when selecting dining options. They expect food delivery apps to ensure that their meals are prepared and delivered in a safe and sanitary manner.

## 2.6. Role of Food Delivery Apps in the Hospitality Industry

The Food delivery apps have become integral to the hospitality industry, providing hotels with an opportunity to expand their dining options and cater to guests' changing preferences. Yang et al. (2021) highlighted the adoption of online-to-offline (O2O) food delivery platforms by luxury hotel restaurants in China as a strategic response to the pandemic. By collaborating with food delivery apps, hotels can reach a wider customer base and generate additional revenue streams. These partnerships also allow hotels to maintain customer engagement and loyalty during periods of restricted in-person dining (Sharma et al., 2021). Food delivery apps have assumed a crucial role within the hospitality industry, offering hotels the means to adapt to evolving guest preferences and expand their dining options. Particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, the strategic integration of food delivery apps has proven vital for hotels to sustain their business operations and maintain customer engagement. This strategic decision allows hotels to leverage the popularity and convenience of food delivery apps to reach a broader customer base (Gupta, 2019). By partnering with these platforms, hotels can extend their dining services beyond the physical confines of their establishments, enabling guests to enjoy the hotel's culinary offerings in the comfort of their own rooms. This collaboration with food delivery apps not only ensures the continuity of business but also allows hotels to tap into the growing demand for contactless dining experiences.

**Table 1:** Prior Literature Resource to Fill out the Research Gap

| The Gap in the Current Literature | Prior Evidence from the Current Literature |
|---|---|
| • The existing literature primarily emphasizes the convenience and accessibility provided by food delivery apps, but there is a need for more comprehensive research that explores other aspects such as safety and hygiene assurance, personalization and customization, and local exploration and cultural immersion.<br>• The research gap lies in the lack of in-depth. studies that specifically focus on the changing role of food delivery apps among hotel guests before and after the COVID-19 pandemic, considering factors beyond convenience and exploring aspects such as safety, personalization, and local exploration | Ali et al. (2020), Amin et al. (2021), Muangmee et al. (2021), Hong et al. (2021), Cheong and Law (2023), Leung et al. (2023), Burlea-Schiopoiu et al. (2022), Kumar and Shah (2021), Amin et al. (2021), Muangmee et al. (2021), Prasetyo et al. (2021), Burlea-Schiopoiu et al. (2022), Lau (2020), Yang et al. (2021), Sharma et al. (2021), Gupta (2019) |

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Research Design

To investigate the changing role of food delivery apps among hotel guests before and after the COVID-19 pandemic, this study utilizes a systematic literature review as its research design. A systematic literature review is a methodical, well-structured procedure for locating, analyzing, and synthesizing pertinent research articles. A full comprehension of a subject is guaranteed when a systematic literature review is used to analyze several different papers. This study's methodology combines quantitative data with in-depth observations to provide a complete picture of the impact of food delivery applications on the hospitality industry.

### 3.2. Data Collection Methods

In accordance with the selected research strategy of a systematic literature review, this study mostly used peer reviewed secondary sources. In this study, we used a technique called a systematic literature review, which is a rigorous and methodical procedure for finding, analyzing, and synthesizing studies from the available literature. Through this method, we may examine a broad variety of articles to fully grasp how hotel guests' use of food delivery applications has evolved both before and after the COVID-19 outbreak. This study method offers a comprehensive view of the evolving function of food delivery applications among hotel guests by evaluating and synthesizing numerical data and in-depth insights from the literature. Using qualitative evidence improves the reliability and completeness of the results and enriches the insight into the issue (Kim & Kang, 2022; Phommahaxay et al., 2019).

### 3.3. Selection of Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

The selection of peer-reviewed journal articles for this study followed a systematic and rigorous process in accordance with the chosen research design of a systematic literature review. The objective was to identify and include relevant studies from existing literature that shed light on the changing role of food delivery apps among hotel guests before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The process began with the systematic identification of potential articles through comprehensive searches across databases, such as academic journals and online repositories. Search terms and inclusion criteria were carefully defined to ensure the retrieval of articles specifically focused on the topic of interest. The identified articles underwent a meticulous evaluation to assess their relevance, quality, and methodological rigor. By utilizing the systematic literature review approach and selecting peer-reviewed journal articles, this study ensured a rigorous and evidence-based examination of the changing role of food delivery apps among hotel guests. The inclusion of high-quality research from diverse sources strengthened the reliability and

generalization of the findings, enabling meaningful conclusions and insights to be drawn from the literature (Woo & Kang, 2021; Nguyen, 2022).

## 3.4. Identification of Relevant Articles

The identification of relevant articles for this study followed a systematic and rigorous process as part of the systematic literature review methodology. The aim was to identify and gather studies from existing literature that are pertinent to understanding the changing role of food delivery apps among hotel guests before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The process commenced with a comprehensive search across various databases, including academic journals and online repositories, using carefully defined search terms and inclusion criteria. The search terms were designed to capture articles specifically focused on the topic of interest. Through this systematic approach, a broad range of potentially relevant articles were identified. The systematic identification and evaluation of relevant articles ensured comprehensive and unbiased coverage of the available literature on the changing role of food delivery apps among hotel guests. The research maintains a high degree of quality and dependability in its data collecting by sticking to strict selection requirements and using peer-reviewed sources. By drawing on a wide variety of high-quality research publications, this study can reach more certain judgments about the state of the field (Hong, 2020; Lee, 2021).

## 3.5. Screening of Articles

As part of the systematic literature review procedure, papers that seemed promising were screened for relevance. The evaluation of each article occurred to see whether it was appropriate for our research. Each item was assessed during screening according to a set of inclusion and exclusion criteria. These criteria were established to ensure that only articles directly addressing the research topic of the changing role of food delivery apps among hotel guests before and after the COVID-19 pandemic were considered for further analysis.

The screening of articles typically involved two stages: title/abstract screening and full-text screening. In the title/abstract screening stage, the titles and abstracts of the identified articles were carefully examined to assess their relevance to the research topic. Articles that clearly did not meet the inclusion criteria or were unrelated to the research objectives were excluded at this stage. By rigorously screening articles based on predefined criteria, the study ensured that only the most relevant and suitable articles were included in the systematic literature review (Song et al., 2021). This meticulous screening process enhances the reliability and validity of the study's findings, as it guarantees that the selected articles directly contribute to the understanding of the changing role of food delivery apps among hotel guests.

## 3.6. Selection of Articles

Following the screening stage, the selection of articles was carried out as part of the systematic literature review process. Articles that were judged relevant and appropriate for inclusion in the research were selected at this stage. The publications that made it beyond the first screening were then assessed critically to check for quality, relevance, and contributions to the study's aims. The research's concentration on the increasing popularity of food delivery apps among hotel guests both before and after the COVID-19 pandemic was a major factor in the evaluation, along with the clarity of the research questions, the suitableness of the approach that was employed, the accuracy and reliability of the outcomes, and the overall alignment with the study's concentration. By carefully selecting the articles that met the predefined criteria, the study ensured the inclusion of high-quality research that contributed directly to the investigation of the changing role of food delivery apps among hotel guests (Tandon et al., 2021; Richard & Kang, 2018). The selected articles formed the basis for the synthesis, analysis, and interpretation of findings in the systematic literature review, ultimately leading to meaningful conclusions and insights.

## 4. Findings

This section presents the key findings of the study, highlighting the changing roles of food delivery apps among hotel guests. The findings shed light on four main aspects: convenience and accessibility, safety and hygiene assurance, personalization and customization, and local exploration and cultural immersion. These findings provide valuable insights into the evolving preferences and behaviors of hotel guests in utilizing food delivery apps, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## 4.1. Convenience and Accessibility

One of the primary findings of the study is the enhanced convenience and accessibility offered by food delivery apps to hotel guests. Before the pandemic, these apps were primarily used as an alternative to hotel restaurants, providing guests with a wider range of food options. After the COVID-19 outbreak, the convenience factor became even more critical. The convenience and accessibility provided by food delivery apps have been widely acknowledged in the literature. Vinaik et al. (2019) found that the convenience factor played a significant role in the adoption of online food delivery ordering (OFDO) services in Pakistan during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study emphasized how these apps offered a convenient solution for consumers to satisfy their food cravings while adhering to safety guidelines. Similarly, Bouarar et al. (2021) extended the theory of planned behavior and highlighted the increased intention to use online food delivery services during the pandemic due to their convenience and accessibility. With social distancing measures and safety concerns, guests increasingly relied on food delivery apps to order meals without leaving their rooms, ensuring minimal contact, and reducing the risk of exposure (Alalwan, 2020). This shift in perception and utilization highlights the evolving role of food delivery apps in providing a seamless and convenient dining experience for hotel guests (Chowdhury, 2023). The ability to order food with just a few taps on a mobile device provided a high level of convenience and accessibility, making it an attractive option for hotel guests as well.

## 4.2. Safety and Hygiene Assurance

Another significant finding relates to the increased importance of safety and hygiene assurance associated with food delivery apps. Following the pandemic, guests became more cautious about their food sources and preferred contactless options. Food delivery apps played a crucial role in ensuring safety and hygiene standards by providing transparent information about restaurant partners, including ratings, reviews, and adherence to sanitation guidelines (Curtis, 2020). Hotel guests appreciated this feature and relied on food delivery apps to make informed choices, placing a greater emphasis on food safety during their stay. Le and Phi (2021) suggests that food delivery apps have become a trusted source for guests seeking secure and hygienic dining options. During the pandemic, food delivery apps have played a pivotal role in ensuring the safety and hygiene of the food being delivered. These apps provide guests with valuable information about their restaurant partners, including ratings, reviews, and compliance with sanitation guidelines. This transparency empowers guests to make informed decisions about their dining choices, placing a greater emphasis on food safety during their stay (Lau, 2020). By leveraging these apps, guests can easily access a wide range of restaurants while having the confidence that their chosen establishments prioritize safety measures. The availability of user reviews and ratings further enhances the accountability of restaurants and delivery services, as guests can assess the experiences of other users and make choices based on their feedback.

## 4.3. Personalization and Customization

The research also revealed a shift towards personalization and customization in the utilization of food delivery apps by hotel guests. Traditionally, hotel restaurants offered limited menu options, catering to a general audience. However, food delivery apps presented guests with a diverse range of cuisines and customizable choices, allowing them to personalize their dining experience according to their preferences. This aspect became even more pronounced post-pandemic, as guests sought to recreate the personalized dining experience they would typically have in restaurants (Rita et al., 2023). The ability to order food tailored to their dietary needs, preferences, and cultural requirements contributed to the growing popularity and evolving role of food delivery apps among hotel guests. This shift can be attributed to the limitations of traditional hotel restaurants, which typically offered a limited menu catering to a general audience (Talwar et al., 2023). However, the emergence of food delivery apps has transformed the dining experience for hotel guests by providing them with a diverse range of cuisines and customizable choices (Gruenwald, 2022). Guests now could personalize their dining experience according to their individual preferences, dietary needs, and cultural requirements.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further accelerated the demand for personalized and customized food options through delivery apps. As a result of lockdowns and restrictions, guests have been unable to dine out and enjoy the personalized experience they would typically have in restaurants (De Souza et al., 2022). Consequently, they have turned to food delivery apps as a means to recreate that personalized experience within the comfort and safety of their hotel rooms (Gani et al., 2023). The ability to order food tailored to their specific preferences has become an attractive feature for hotel guests, as it allows them to have a customized dining experience even during challenging times. Studies have shown that the customization options offered by food delivery apps have contributed to their growing popularity among hotel guests (Pretolesi et al., 2023). For example, research conducted in Pakistan found that the

COVID-19 pandemic situation significantly influenced the adoption of online food delivery ordering services, with consumers valuing the ability to personalize their food choices. Food delivery applications has significant impact on consumers' behavior, with customization being one of the key factors driving their adoption.

## 4.4. Local Exploration and Cultural Immersion

The final finding of the study highlights the changing role of food delivery apps in facilitating local exploration and cultural immersion for hotel guests. In the pre-pandemic era, guests often relied on hotel recommendations or concierge services to discover local dining options. However, with limited mobility and a desire to experience the local cuisine, food delivery apps became an invaluable tool (Kemper et al., 2023). These apps allowed guests to explore and order from a wide variety of local restaurants, promoting cultural immersion and enabling them to sample authentic dishes without leaving their accommodation. In the pre-pandemic era, guests typically relied on hotel recommendations or concierge services to discover local dining options (Le & Phi, 2021). However, the limitations on mobility during the pandemic, as well as the desire to experience local cuisine, led to a shift in the way guests sought out local flavors. Food delivery apps emerged as a valuable tool for guests to explore and order from a wide variety of local restaurants, even without physically leaving their accommodation (Singh & Goel, 2022). These apps offer a diverse range of culinary options, allowing guests to discover and sample authentic dishes that are representative of the local culture and cuisine. By providing access to a multitude of local restaurants and food establishments, food delivery apps have become gateways for cultural experiences within the hotel setting.

Through food delivery apps, hotel guests can immerse themselves in the local culture by trying dishes that are unique to the region (Ramli et al., 2021). This avenue for cultural immersion allows guests to experience the flavors, ingredients, and cooking techniques that are intrinsic to the local cuisine (John & Gopalakrishnan, 2022). Moreover, it provides an opportunity for guests to support and engage with local businesses, as many of these restaurants and food establishments rely on the delivery app platform to reach a broader customer base (Tribhuvan, 2020). This newfound avenue for discovering local flavors and supporting local businesses has transformed the role of food delivery apps, turning them into gateways for cultural experiences.

The findings from this research emphasize the changing roles of food delivery apps among hotel guests. These roles encompass enhanced convenience and accessibility, safety and hygiene assurance, personalization, and customization, as well as local exploration and cultural immersion. Understanding these evolving roles is essential for hotels and food delivery app providers to adapt their services and meet the changing expectations of guests in the post-pandemic era.

**Table 2:** Final Results based on the Literature Analysis

| The Gap in the Current Literature | Prior Evidence from the Current Literature |
|---|---|
| • The highlighting the changing roles of food delivery apps among hotel guests between before and after the pandemic timeline | Vinaik et al. (2019), Bouarar et al. (2021), Alalwan (2020), Chowdhury (2023), Curtis (2020), Le and Phi (2021), Lau (2020), Rita et al. (2023), Talwar et al. (2023), De Souza et al. (2022), Gani et al. (2023), Pretolesi et al. (2023), Kemper et al. (2023), Le and Phi (2021), Singh and Goel (2022), Ramli et al. (2021), John and Gopalakrishnan (2022), Tribhuvan (2020) |

## 5. Implications for Hotel Practitioners

Research on the changing role of food delivery apps among hotel guests before and after the COVID-19 pandemic has significant implications for hotel practitioners. This chapter provides brief suggestions on how these findings can be utilized to improve their business strategies and enhance guest satisfaction.

### 5.1. Embrace Food Delivery App Partnerships

Given the growing importance of food delivery apps as a preferred dining option among hotel guests, hotel practitioners should consider embracing partnerships with these platforms. Collaborating with popular food delivery apps allows hotels to expand their culinary offerings without significant investments in infrastructure or staffing. By integrating with these apps, hotels can offer guests a diverse range of cuisines, personalized choices, and local dining experiences (Nyikos, 2021). Building strategic alliances with food delivery app providers not only enhances convenience for guests but also positions the hotel as an innovative and adaptable accommodation option.

### 5.2. Prioritizing Safety and Hygiene Standards

Considering the increased emphasis on safety and hygiene assurance, hotel practitioners should prioritize and communicate their commitment to these aspects. Guests now expect transparency and reassurance regarding the cleanliness and safety of food sources. Hotels should ensure their restaurant partners comply with stringent sanitation guidelines and regularly update guests about these measures. Collaborating with food delivery apps that have robust safety protocols and hygiene standards further bolsters guest confidence (Özoğul & Güçlütürk Baran, 2021). By prioritizing safety and hygiene, hotels can differentiate themselves and attract guests who value a secure dining experience.

### 5.3. Offer Personalized Dining Experiences

To cater to guests' desire for personalization and customization, hotel practitioners should consider offering more flexible and tailored dining experiences. Instead of relying solely on traditional fixed menus, hotels can collaborate with food delivery apps to create customizable meal options. This allows guests to select dishes according to their dietary restrictions, preferences, and cultural requirements (Ramli et al., 2021). Hotels should also ensure that room service menus reflect diverse cuisines and accommodate various dietary needs. By providing personalized dining experiences, hotels can enhance guest satisfaction and loyalty.

### 5.4. Promote Local Culinary Exploration

To leverage the role of food delivery apps in facilitating local exploration and cultural immersion, hotel practitioners should actively promote local culinary experiences. They can curate lists of recommended local restaurants available through food delivery apps and provide guests with curated guides or suggestions for popular regional dishes. Hotels can also collaborate with local food tours or offer virtual experiences to showcase the unique flavors of the destination (Shah et al., 2022). By encouraging guests to explore local cuisine, hotels contribute to the local economy, support small businesses, and enhance the overall guest experience.

### 5.5. Enhance App Integration and User Experience

To maximize the benefits of food delivery apps for their guests, hotel practitioners should focus on enhancing app integration and user experience. Hotels can streamline the ordering process by providing guests with seamless access to food delivery apps through their own mobile apps or in-room tablets. This integration should prioritize ease of use, clear navigation, and intuitive design. Additionally, hotels should actively seek guest feedback to identify areas for improvement and ensure continuous enhancements to the app integration and user experience.

### 5.6. Monitor and Adapt to Guest Preferences

Hotel practitioners should continuously monitor and adapt to evolving guest preferences regarding food delivery apps. By analyzing guest feedback, reviews, and ratings related to food delivery experiences, hotels can identify trends and adjust their offerings accordingly. This may involve collaborating with different app providers, expanding menu options, or incorporating innovative technologies to enhance the overall guest experience (Zanetta et al., 2020). Being responsive to guest preferences demonstrates a commitment to meeting their evolving needs and maintains a competitive edge in the hospitality industry.

The findings of this research provide valuable insights for hotel practitioners seeking to leverage the changing role of food delivery apps among their guests. By embracing app partnerships, prioritizing safety and hygiene, offering

personalized dining experiences, promoting local culinary exploration, enhancing app integration and user experience, and monitoring guest preferences, hotels can improve their business strategies and provide an exceptional dining experience for their guests. Adapting to these evolving trends ensures that hotels remain relevant, competitive, and successful in the post-pandemic era.

## 6. Conclusions of the Research

Despite the valuable insights gained from this study on the changing role of food delivery apps among hotel guests before and after the COVID-19 pandemic, there are several limitations that should be acknowledged. To begin, a possible bias in the results exists due to the research's reliance on the examination of peer-reviewed articles. While peer-reviewed publications are a reputable and rigorous resource, they may not give comprehensive coverage of the subject. The research's scope and depth may be compromised if additional sources, such as industry publications, surveys, or interviews with hotel customers and practitioners, aren't used. Secondly, the study focuses on a specific context, namely the usage and perception of food delivery apps among hotel guests. While this narrow focus allows for a detailed examination of this particular segment, it may not capture the broader perspectives of consumers in different settings or regions. Generalizing the findings beyond the scope of hotel guests should be done with caution.

Additionally, the research design employs a mixed-methods approach but places more emphasis on qualitative analysis. Quantitative data may give generalizability and statistical rigour, whereas qualitative insights provide rich and comprehensive information but may lack these qualities. We can't draw firm findings or establish strong causal linkages without quantitative analysis like statistical tests or regression analysis. The possible impact of confounding factors that were not included in the study is another caveat. Not expressly investigated in this research were potential moderators of hotel guests' use and impression of meal delivery applications, such as cultural differences, socioeconomic position, or technical ability. Future research could consider incorporating these variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic. Despite these limitations, this study contributes valuable insights into the changing role of food delivery apps among hotel guests before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. By acknowledging these limitations, future research can build upon this foundation and address the gaps to further enhance our understanding of this evolving phenomenon.

This study aimed to investigate the changing role of food delivery apps among hotel guests before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. By examining the usage and perception of food delivery apps, exploring the impact of the pandemic, identifying influencing factors, and analyzing the differences in usage patterns, this research has shed light on the evolving dynamics of food delivery app usage in the hospitality industry. The findings of this study revealed several key insights. Before the pandemic, food delivery apps played a supplementary role in the dining experiences of hotel guests, offering convenience, variety, and affordability. The study identified convenience, affordability, variety, and safety as the main factors influencing the usage of food delivery apps among hotel guests. These findings can guide hotel practitioners in adapting their services to meet guest expectations and enhance customer satisfaction. By leveraging the popularity and convenience of food delivery apps, hotels can expand their dining options, reach a wider customer base, and generate additional revenue streams. By embracing food delivery apps as part of their strategic response, hotels can not only ensure the continuity of their business operations but also cater to the changing needs of their guests.

In conclusion, this study has provided valuable insights into the changing role of food delivery apps among hotel guests before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The research has contributed to existing knowledge by exploring the usage patterns, impact, influencing factors, and differences in app usage. The findings offer practical implications and recommendations for hotel managers, marketers, and service providers in the hospitality industry. This study has contributed to the understanding of the changing role of food delivery apps among hotel guests. By recognizing the evolving dynamics and leveraging the opportunities presented by food delivery apps, hotels can adapt to meet guest expectations, enhance customer satisfaction, and thrive in the ever-changing landscape of the hospitality industry.

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