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The role of trust on enhancing buying intentions in online food delivery: findings from a developing country

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Abstract: This study employs the modified unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT) model to investigate the factors influencing user behaviour towards online food delivery systems, emphasising trust's moderating influence. Utilising SmartPLS, the research examines data collected from 217 users of online food delivery systems. The study reveals that facilitating conditions significantly impact users' intention behaviour, followed by performance expectancy, effort expectancy, and social influence. Consequently, the study underscores the significance of providing easy and convenient access to services within online food delivery systems to enhance proper facilitating condition. Furthermore, the research identifies trust as a significant moderator in the relationship between effort expectancy and intention behaviour. The implications of these findings are invaluable for online food delivery companies, as they offer insights to improve their services and attract a more extensive customer base.

Keywords: online food delivery system; OFDS; unified theory of acceptance and use of technology; UTAUT; SmartPLS; trust.

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Shelly Srivastava is a distinguished academician holding a PhD and an MBA, currently serving in the capacity of Assistant Professor in the Department of Management at Birla Institute of Technology, Mesra. Her professional acumen

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1 Introduction

Users of an online food delivery services (OFDS) may look through menus and make orders from nearby eateries, all from the convenience of their computer or smartphone (Ray et al., 2019). The food orders are then prepared by the restaurant and delivered to the customer's location by a delivery person (Raza et al., 2023). Many OFDS also offer the option for customers to pick up their orders at the restaurant (Hong et al., 2023).

OFDS offers convenience to customers, allowing them to order food from their preferred restaurants without the need to venture out from their homes or workplaces (Lau and Ng, 2019). They also offer a suitable option for people who may not have transportation access or prefer not to drive (Visser et al., 2014). Additionally, the items delivered via OFDS are one-of-a-kind: extremely perishable and diverse (Kotler et al., 2016).

Many different OFDS operate in various countries, including Grubhub, UberEats, and DoorDash in the USA; and Swiggy in India (McCain et al., 2022). These companies typically charge a fee for their services, which may be paid by the customer or the restaurant (Prasetyo et al., 2021).

India's online food delivery market has grown remarkably in the past few years. As per statistics provided by the Indian Brand Equity Foundation, the market value of OFDS in India reached around $3.9 billion in 2020 and is projected to exhibit a compound annual growth rate of 22% from 2020 to 2025.

Since the 1890s, India has had a rich history of food delivery services, including early examples such as the Mumbai dabbawallas. The growth of OFDSs in India can be attributed to several factors, with one of the primary drivers being the surge in popularity of e-commerce and internet growth in the country. As per the World Bank, the proportion of India's population with internet access rose from 15% in 2013 to 55% in 2020, representing a substantial increase in internet users. This trend is expected to continue, leading to a surge in demand for online services like OFDS as more individuals in India gain internet access and become comfortable with online platforms.

In addition, OFDS offers a convenient option for customers who may not have the time or desire to go out to a restaurant or who may not have access to transportation. The growth of OFDS has also been facilitated by the expansion of internet infrastructure and the increasing availability and affordability of internet-enabled devices such as smartphones.

India's online food delivery market has witnessed substantial expansion in recent times and is poised to continue growing in the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, OFDSs may expose restaurant owners and customers to potential risks concerning the

maintenance of appropriate temperatures during delivery, the hygiene of delivery drivers, and the possibility of food tampering. Temperature control is an essential factor in safely handling and delivering food. If food is not kept at the appropriate temperature during delivery, eating can become unsafe. OFDS faces challenges in maintaining the proper food temperature during delivery, especially if the delivery takes a long time.

Delivery drivers' hygiene is also a concern for OFDS, as poor hygiene practices can lead to food contamination. OFDS can implement measures such as providing drivers with hand sanitizer and requiring them to wear masks to help reduce the risk of contamination (Kim et al., 2008).

Food tampering is another risk associated with OFDS. While the risk of food tampering is low, it is still a concern for restaurant owners and customers. OFDS can implement measures such as using tamper-evident packaging and training drivers on food handling procedures to help reduce the risk of tampering (Ray et al., 2019). Despite the implementation of measures such as tamper-evident packaging and driver training on food handling procedures within OFDSs to reduce the risk of food tampering, there remains a significant research gap concerning the aspect of trust. While these measures aim to enhance food safety and security, the level of trust between consumers and OFDS platforms regarding the efficacy and reliability of these measures remains understudied and hence is investigated in current study. Furthermore, this study addresses another gap in the existing literature, which pertains to understanding how customers adopt online food services within the framework of unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT). In spite of the widespread adoption of various ICT (Marino and Pariso, 2022) and mobile platforms (Çera et al., 2022; Niasin and Belkhamza, 2021), the specific factors influencing consumers' adoption decisions within the context of UTAUT on OFDS remain relatively underexplored.

Thus, trust is crucial in the food delivery system as it encourages customer loyalty, contentment, and preservation (Assaker et al., 2020; Sinha et al., 2024) helps build a positive reputation for the food delivery service (Munikrishnan et al., 2023). Building customer trust requires high-quality food, timely delivery, good customer service, data security, and transparency (Aslam et al., 2020; Ratasuk and Gajesanand, 2023). The main objective of this research is to explore the relationship among performance expectancy (PE), effort expectancy (EE), social influence (SI), and facilitating conditions (FCs) on OFDS adoption, utilising the UTAUT model as the theoretical framework.

Additionally, this research aims to examine the moderating role of trust in the relationships within the context of OFDS. By exploring these relationships and the moderating influence of trust, the study seeks to provide valuable insights into the factors influencing consumers' intention to adopt and use OFDS platforms, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of consumer behaviour in the online food delivery industry.

2 Literature review

UTAUT2 is a theory that attempts to explain and foretell how people would adopt and utilise technological systems. The theory expands on the work of Venkatesh et al. (2003), who created the UTAUT framework and identified four primary constructs – PE, EE, SI and FC – that affect technology acceptance and usage. Hedonic motivation (HM) (i.e., the pleasure one derives from utilising the technology) and habit formation are two

constructs that builds UTAUT2 on the original concept (i.e., the automatic and unconscious use of the technology). In addition, it stresses the significance of human variables (such as age, gender, and experience) and contextual elements (such as culture and task characteristics) in determining technology adoption and usage (Murarka et al., 2020).

PE represents the degree to which an individual believes that using a specific technology will aid them in achieving their objectives (Yapp et al., 2018). It is a significant factor in determining a person's intention to use technology and is considered a crucial indicator of technology acceptance and adoption (Gunden et al., 2020a).

The term 'performance expectation' describes a person's confidence that using a particular technology would improve performance and facilitate attaining set objectives. Efficiency, communication, decision-making, and convenience are some possible upsides. Individuals are more likely to accept and use new technologies if they are confident that such technologies will improve their performance (Hong et al., 2023).

Customers are more inclined to utilise an online meal delivery app if they feel that doing so would help them complete a task more quickly and easily and save time while placing their food orders (Jawabreh et al., 2023; Lin et al., 2024; Morosan and DeFranco, 2016; Rane et al., 2002; Suhartanto et al., 2019). On the other hand, if they believe that the app is difficult to use or that the food quality will be lower, they may be less likely to use it and hence it led to our first hypothesis:

H_1 The level of PE among customers of OFDSs positively influences their purchase intention.

The following significant component to purchase intent is expected effort. In an online meal delivery system, client contentment and loyalty are determined mainly by the speed of delivery. When consumers use technology to place their food orders, they anticipate a streamlined and straightforward experience that makes it simple to locate what they're searching for and finish the transaction swiftly (Chua et al., 2017).

Pillai et al. (2022) found that consumer purchase intention was impacted by perceived risk, perceived benefit, and online persuasion in their study in the US. When individuals perceive high benefits and low risks associated with a particular action or behaviour, they are more likely to expect the effort involved in performing that action to be worthwhile. Several other previous studies have underscored the significance of EE or ease of use during technology adoption (Alalwan et al., 2018; Kesharwani and Bisht, 2012; Martins et al., 2014; Rodrigues et al., 2016).

The user-friendliness of the application or website used to make the purchase is a factor in estimating the effort required. It includes navigational convenience, the ability to search for particular menu items, and the availability of extensive information about each item, such as its components and nutritional content (Hong et al., 2023). A well-designed and user-friendly interface may make the ordering experience for clients considerably more efficient. Hence, providing for our second hypothesis:

H_2 The level of EE among customers of OFDSs positively influences their purchase intention.

SI is the effect of others' beliefs, behaviours, and attitudes on one's thoughts and actions (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1977). In the case of online meal delivery, customers' purchasing choices may be significantly impacted by the level of SI they are exposed to.

Word-of-mouth recommendations are one way SI may affect the desire to buy online meal delivery (Gunden et al., 2020b). Customers are more inclined to purchase from a meal delivery service if they hear excellent reviews from friends, family, and other reliable sources (Pitchay et al., 2022). These suggestions may influence consumers' opinions of the service's quality, dependability, and value, hence increasing the likelihood that they will place an order.

Social proof is one way that peer conditioning may affect purchasing intent. Social proof is when individuals turn to others for direction when making judgments (Bao and Zhu, 2022). For instance, if customers discover that a meal delivery service has a significant number of favourable comments or a higher rating on a review website, they may be more inclined to buy from that service because they believe it to be a reliable and popular one (Jun et al., 2022).

Similarly, the popularity of online meal delivery services with many followers on social media platforms may influence the customer's propensity to buy (Ariffin et al., 2021). Hence on the backdrop of previous literature, we propose following hypothesis:

H_3 The level of SI among customers of OFDSs positively influences their purchase intention.

FCs are external variables that make it simpler for customers to execute a transaction. In food delivery, these factors might include payment choices, delivery alternatives, and general website or application usability (Zhao and Bacao, 2020).

Payment choices are an essential enabling condition. Customers need the ability to pay for food delivery in an easy and secure manner (Pitchay et al., 2022). The greater the number of possible payment methods, the greater the likelihood that a consumer will finish their transaction.

Another crucial criterion is the availability of delivery choices. Customers want a selection of delivery alternatives, such as standard delivery, rapid delivery, and pickup, and the ability to choose a delivery time that is convenient for them. More delivery choices increase the likelihood that a consumer will make an order.

The usability of a website or application is also a critical enabling condition. A well-designed and user-friendly website or app may make it much simpler for clients to locate what they need and finish a transaction (Suhartanto et al., 2019). It includes navigational simplicity, product information clarity, and a straightforward checkout procedure. It provides for our next hypothesis:

H_4 FCs positively impact the purchase intention of OFDS customers.

Trust is faith in the technology and its provider's dependability, integrity, and capability. High levels of trust may promote increased acceptance and use of technology, but low levels might stymie adoption and usage (Hong et al., 2021). Customers who have faith in a delivery service will likely come back and utilise it again. They believe the service would bring their meals on schedule and in excellent shape. The trust may aid in developing a favourable reputation for delivery service (Troise et al., 2021). Customers are more inclined to promote a service when they had a pleasant experience. It may lead to more business and customers. Trust is also essential when safeguarding client information's security (Zhao and Bacao, 2020). Customers who trust a service are more inclined to reveal sensitive information, like credit card numbers, without hesitation. It is critical for avoiding fraud and other security risks. Trust is also essential for ensuring

customer items are delivered on time. Customers who trust a service are confident that their meals will be delivered on time (Lau and Ng, 2019). It is critical for preserving client satisfaction since delays or delivery difficulties may cause irritation and discontent (Sinha et al., 2024). Finally, trust helps to guarantee that consumers get high-quality meals. Customers who trust a delivery service have faith that the food will be properly cooked, wrapped, and safe to consume (Siddiqui and Siddiqui, 2021). It is critical for sustaining client satisfaction since food quality concerns may lead to discontent. To investigate the moderating role of trust, following hypothesis has been framed:

H_5 Trust moderates the relationship between PE and purchase intention.

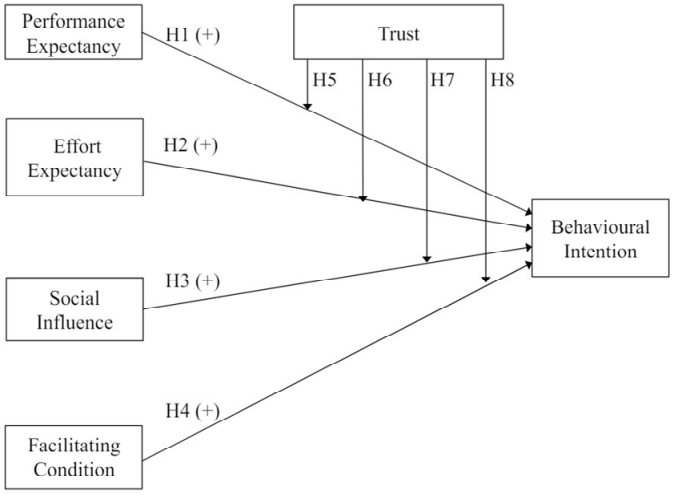
H_6 Trust moderates the relationship between EE and purchase intention.

H_7 Trust moderates the relationship between SI and purchase intention.

H_8 Trust moderates the relationship between FC and purchase intention.

Figure 1 shows the theoretical underpinnings of the research.

Figure 1 Conceptual framework



Source: The Authors (2023)

3 Materials and methods

The PLS-SEM approach enables the identification of latent variables and their relationships with observed variables. PLS SEM has several advantages as it is known for its robustness in handling complex models with limited data. This method allows to explore relationships among variables effectively without requiring a large sample. Secondly, it prioritises predictive power, making it suitable for studies aimed at understanding and predicting relationships among constructs. The use of PLS-SEM, hence provides with the flexibility, robustness, and predictive power needed to address the objectives of research effectively (Hair et al., 2017a).

The methodology involves employing PLS-SEM to identify the key factors that influence customer purchase intention. This approach can result in a more accurate and robust predictive model. PLS-SEM approach can better customer behaviour in OFDSs, which can help companies improve their marketing strategies, optimise their services, and increase customer satisfaction and loyalty.

3.1 Data description

After conducting an exhaustive search of the available research (Assaker et al., 2020; Hong et al., 2023; Jun et al., 2022; Prasetyo et al., 2021), A questionnaire intended for self-completion was specifically designed for this study. During the screening process, it was determined whether each participant had placed at least five orders for food delivery through the Internet during the last four months. Some previous studies are based on single order (Jun et al., 2022). However, the focus group formed for the present study opined that a single order may create a bias based on a single experience; hence, a minimum of five orders will provide a better result. As a result, the screening criteria were extended to include at least five online orders.

The survey was widely shared throughout the most well-known and often-used social media networks like Twitter, Facebook, Linked-In, etc. to acquire the necessary responses. The online platform was selected for purpose as it ensures that the questionnaire is filled by those respondents who are active online. There were two parts to the questionnaire. In the first part, we asked respondents to fill out some demographic details about themselves. The next part included items about the constructs. A total of 20 items were sourced from previously published works. The participants were instructed to express their preferences by selecting a response option on a five-point Likert scale for each item. In 26 instances out of a total of 250 responses, respondents failed to fully complete the survey.

Furthermore, seven of the respondents were disqualified for providing an incorrect response to the attention check query. Following the removal of extraneous information, 217 responses remained for subsequent analysis.

In determining the adequate sample size for our study, we utilised Daniel Soper's sample size calculator, which offers a comprehensive approach to estimating sample sizes for structural equation modelling (SEM) studies. We provided the following parameters to the calculator: the number of latent variables in our model (5), the number of observed variables (indicators) associated with these latent variables (20), a probability level of 0.05, an anticipated effect size of 0.01, and a desired statistical power of 0.8. The calculator indicated that the minimum sample size required for our model structure was 156. However, our sample size of 217 exceeds this minimum requirement, providing us with a robust dataset for our SEM analysis. This approach ensured that we had adequate statistical power to detect the anticipated effects while maintaining the desired level of confidence in our findings.

3.2 Measure development

In developing measures to assess the intention to use OFDSs, authors drew upon the UTAUT model (Venkatesh et al., 2003), which posits that intention to use technology is influenced by key constructs including PE, EE, SI, and FC. The same has been used in

several previous studies (Ariffin et al., 2021; Gunden et al., 2020a, 2020b; Mishra et al., 2022; Srivastava and Srivastava, 2021).

These constructs were adjusted to suit the context of OFDSs: PE was redefined to capture the perceived benefits such as convenience and variety of food options, while EE was tailored to reflect the ease of ordering and delivery processes. SI was adapted to consider peer recommendations and online reviews' impact. FCs were reconceptualised to include factors like internet access and familiarity with online payment methods. The measures were operationalised into survey items using validated scales and tailored to fit the specific nuances of the OFDS context, ensuring clarity and relevance. Additionally, it is noteworthy that the items for constructs of intention to use were also adopted from the UTAUT model while the modified item of trust was derived from the study conducted by Aslam et al. (2020). Using a Likert scale from 1 to 5, with 1 representing 'totally disagree' and 5 'totally agree', respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements.

3.3 Common method bias

Common method bias (CMB) arises when the variation across variables is attributed to the measuring technique rather than the actual constructs being studied. It can lead to inflated relationships between constructs, thereby compromising the validity of study findings. To address this issue, researchers often employ CMB tests to assess the extent to which method effects may be present in their data.

A variance inflation factor (VIF) over 3.3 may indicate severe collinearity issues and indicates that the model might be affected by multi-collinearity. Consequently, if all VIFs in the model, as determined by a thorough collinearity evaluation, are 3.3 or below, the model may be considered free from CMB (Kock, 2015).

In present study, SmartPLS was used to find the values of VIF for inner model. It was found that the values were below 3.3 as provided in Table 1. Hence, it can be said that the model is free from CMB (Kock, 2015).

Table 1 VIF

	VIF
Performance expectancy -> behavioural intention	2.647
Trust -> behavioural intention	2.809
Social influence -> behavioural intention	2.894
Effort expectancy -> behavioural intention	2.993
Facilitating condition -> behavioural intention	3.111

4 Results and finding

Model fit indices are crucial in assessing the adequacy of a statistical model in explaining the relationships between variables and representing the observed data accurately. In this case, two common fit indices, the standardised root mean square residual (SRMR) and the normed fit index (NFI), were used to evaluate the fit of the model.

The SRMR value of 0.031 indicates a good fit for the current model. The SRMR measures the average absolute standardised residual covariance between observed and predicted values in the model. A lower SRMR value suggests better fit, with values close to zero indicating excellent model fit. In this case, the SRMR value of 0.031 falls within the range typically considered indicative of a good fit, thus suggesting that the model adequately represents the relationships between variables in the data.

Similarly, the NFI value of 0.934 also indicates a good fit for the model. The NFI is a goodness-of-fit index that compares the chi-square value of the estimated model with the chi-square value of the independence model (i.e., a model where all variables are assumed to be unrelated). NFI values range from 0 to 1, with values closer to 1 indicating better fit. In this instance, the NFI value of 0.934 is close to 1, suggesting that the estimated model fits the data well compared to the independence model.

Overall, the combination of a low SRMR value and a high NFI value provides evidence that the current model fits the observed data well. This indicates that the specified relationships between variables in the model are supported by the data, suggesting that the model is a reliable representation of the underlying processes or phenomena being studied.

Table 2 Factor loading

	Behavioural intention	*Effort expectancy*	*Facilitating condition*	*Performance expectancy*	*Social influence*
BI1	0.852				
BI2	0.887				
BI3	0.869				
EE1		0.756			
EE2		0.862			
EE3		0.863			
EE4		0.861			
FC1			0.803		
FC2			0.855		
FC3			0.877		
FC4			0.752		
PE1				0.846	
PE2				0.899	
PE3				0.881	
SI1					0.814
SI2					0.858
SI3					0.874

Source: The Authors (2023)

4.1 Measurement model

PLS algorithm was performed to investigate whether the item loaded into their respective construct or otherwise. The finding suggests that all the items load into their respective construct with values more than 0.7, and there was no case of cross-loading (Vinzi et al., 2010). The same is depicted in Table 2.

PLS algorithm also provided the value of Cronbach alpha. The value was above the minimum threshold of 0.7, hence providing for the reliability of the items used in the research. Assessing construct reliability permits determining whether a given variable or group of variables reliably measures what they claim to measure (Straub et al., 2004). The score for construct reliability was also found to be above the threshold of 0.7, emphasising internal reliability. The value of Cronbach alpha and Construct reliability is provided in Table 3.

Table 3 Reliability analysis

Construct	*Cronbach's alpha*	*rho_A*	*Composite reliability*
Behavioural intention	0.839	0.839	0.903
Effort expectancy	0.856	0.861	0.903
Facilitating condition	0.84	0.847	0.893
Performance expectancy	0.847	0.848	0.908
Social influence	0.806	0.807	0.886

Source: The Authors (2023)

Table 4 Discriminant validity

	Behavioural intention	*Effort expectancy*	*Facilitating condition*	*Performance expectancy*	*Social influence*
Behavioural intention	*0.87*				
Effort expectancy	0.769	*0.837*			
Facilitating condition	0.799	0.771	*0.823*		
Performance expectancy	0.775	0.72	0.756	*0.876*	
Social influence	0.766	0.767	0.773	0.729	*0.849*

Source: The Authors (2023)

Table 5 Convergent validity

Construct	*Average variance extracted (AVE)*
Behavioural intention	0.756
Effort expectancy	0.700
Facilitating condition	0.678
Performance expectancy	0.767
Social influence	0.721

Source: The Authors (2023)

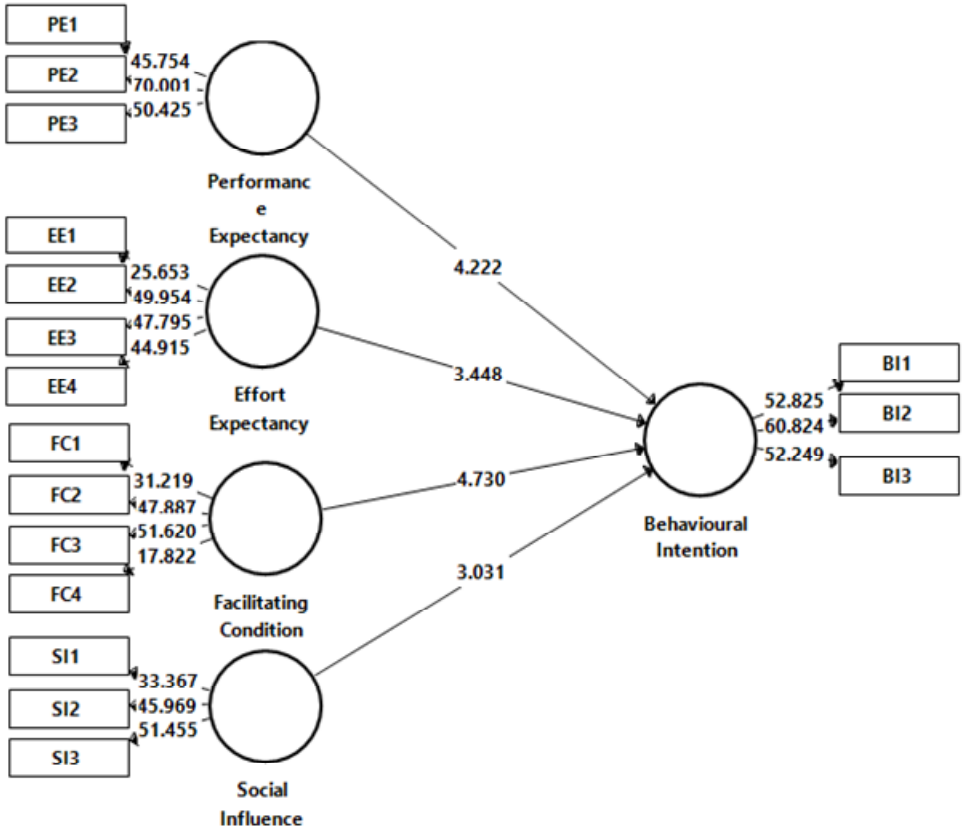
To measure the discriminant validity Fornell and Larcker (1981) criteria is applied. Measurement models' discriminant validity is often examined using this criterion, which is a standard statistical test. As per these criteria, a construct's correlation with other constructs must be lower than the square root of the average variance retrieved by the construct. When this prerequisite is met, discriminant validity is established. The finding is shown in Table 4, which highlights the fact that discriminant validity is well established.

Table 6 Correlation matrix

	BI1	*BI2*	*BI3*	*EE1*	*EE2*	*EE3*	*EE4*	*FC1*	*FC2*	*FC3*	*FC4*	*PE1*	*PE2*	*PE3*	*SI1*	*SI2*	*SI3*	*T1*	*T2*	*T3*
BI1	1	0.756	0.74	0.495	0.564	0.565	0.563	0.546	0.581	0.596	0.512	0.557	0.592	0.581	0.531	0.56	0.57	0.544	0.565	0.557
BI2	0.756	1	0.772	0.516	0.589	0.589	0.588	0.57	0.607	0.622	0.534	0.582	0.618	0.606	0.554	0.584	0.595	0.568	0.59	0.581
BI3	0.74	0.772	1	0.505	0.577	0.577	0.576	0.558	0.594	0.609	0.523	0.57	0.605	0.593	0.542	0.572	0.582	0.556	0.578	0.569
EE1	0.495	0.516	0.505	1	0.652	0.652	0.651	0.468	0.498	0.511	0.438	0.46	0.489	0.479	0.472	0.497	0.507	0.482	0.5	0.493
EE2	0.564	0.589	0.577	0.652	1	0.744	0.743	0.534	0.569	0.583	0.5	0.525	0.558	0.547	0.539	0.568	0.578	0.55	0.571	0.563
EE3	0.565	0.589	0.577	0.652	0.744	1	0.743	0.535	0.569	0.584	0.501	0.526	0.558	0.547	0.539	0.568	0.579	0.55	0.572	0.563
EE4	0.563	0.588	0.576	0.651	0.743	0.743	1	0.534	0.568	0.582	0.5	0.524	0.557	0.546	0.538	0.567	0.577	0.549	0.57	0.562
FC1	0.546	0.57	0.558	0.468	0.534	0.535	0.534	1	0.687	0.704	0.604	0.513	0.546	0.535	0.506	0.533	0.543	0.524	0.544	0.536
FC2	0.581	0.607	0.594	0.498	0.569	0.569	0.568	0.687	1	0.749	0.643	0.547	0.581	0.569	0.538	0.567	0.578	0.557	0.579	0.57
FC3	0.596	0.622	0.609	0.511	0.583	0.584	0.582	0.704	0.749	1	0.659	0.56	0.595	0.584	0.552	0.581	0.592	0.571	0.593	0.585
FC4	0.512	0.534	0.523	0.438	0.5	0.501	0.5	0.604	0.643	0.659	1	0.481	0.511	0.501	0.473	0.499	0.508	0.49	0.509	0.502
PE1	0.557	0.582	0.57	0.46	0.525	0.526	0.524	0.513	0.547	0.56	0.481	1	0.76	0.745	0.502	0.529	0.539	0.506	0.526	0.518
PE2	0.592	0.618	0.605	0.489	0.558	0.558	0.557	0.546	0.581	0.595	0.511	0.76	1	0.792	0.533	0.562	0.573	0.538	0.559	0.551
PE3	0.581	0.606	0.593	0.479	0.547	0.547	0.546	0.535	0.569	0.584	0.501	0.745	0.792	1	0.523	0.551	0.561	0.527	0.548	0.54
SI1	0.531	0.554	0.542	0.472	0.539	0.539	0.538	0.506	0.538	0.552	0.473	0.502	0.533	0.523	1	0.698	0.712	0.527	0.547	0.539
SI2	0.56	0.584	0.572	0.497	0.568	0.568	0.567	0.533	0.567	0.581	0.499	0.529	0.562	0.551	0.698	1	0.75	0.555	0.576	0.568
SI3	0.57	0.595	0.582	0.507	0.578	0.579	0.577	0.543	0.578	0.592	0.508	0.539	0.573	0.561	0.712	0.75	1	0.565	0.587	0.579
T1	0.544	0.568	0.556	0.482	0.55	0.55	0.549	0.524	0.557	0.571	0.49	0.506	0.538	0.527	0.527	0.555	0.565	1	0.754	0.743
T2	0.565	0.59	0.578	0.5	0.571	0.572	0.57	0.544	0.579	0.593	0.509	0.526	0.559	0.548	0.547	0.576	0.587	0.754	1	0.772
T3	0.557	0.581	0.569	0.493	0.563	0.563	0.562	0.536	0.57	0.585	0.502	0.518	0.551	0.54	0.539	0.568	0.579	0.743	0.772	1

Convergent validity provides how well the scale correlates with existing measures of the same concept. The concept should have a positive correlation with comparable variables and no correlation with unrelated ones. The AVE is determined by averaging the squared loadings of all indicators that belong to a specific construct. The statistical threshold for convergent validity is an AVE of >0.50. Table 5 depicts the AVE value of the constructs. The finding suggests that the value of AVE is above the minimum threshold.

Figure 2 Result of structural equation modelling



Source: The Authors (2023)

A correlation matrix is a fundamental tool to examine the relationships between variables within a dataset. The coefficients quantify the strength and direction of linear relationships between pairs of variables, ranging from –1 to 1. A correlation coefficient of 1 indicates a perfect positive correlation, while –1 denotes a perfect negative correlation. A coefficient of 0 suggests no linear relationship between the variables. The correlation matrix is provided in Table 6 and the value indicate that the relation is strong for the variable of same construct than other.

4.2 Structural model

A structural model is developed to assess the relationship between endogenous and exogenous variables. The model investigates the relationship between four exogenous constructs on the endogenous construct. To ascertain the impact and significance of each relationship, bootstrapping with 5,000 sub-samples was conducted. This involved randomly selecting subsets of the original dataset with replacement to create the sub-samples. The significance of each relationship was then assessed by calculating confidence intervals or p-values based on the distribution of values obtained from the bootstrapped sub-samples. The result of this analysis indicates that all the relationships developed are statistically significant.

The bootstrapping result suggests that PE ($\beta = 0.269$, $t > 1.96$, $p = 0.000$), EE ($\beta = 0.208$, $t > 1.96$, $p = 0.001$), SI ($\beta = 0.184$, $t > 1.96$, $p = 0.003$), and FC ($\beta = 0.292$, $t > 1.96$, $p = 0.000$) significantly impact the behavioural intention of individual toward OFDSs. The output is depicted in Figure 2, and the result is illustrated in Table 7.

Table 7 Result of bootstrapping

Hypothesis	*Relation*	*Original sample (O)*	*Sample mean (M)*	*Standard deviation (STDEV)*	*T statistics (|O/STDEV|)*	*P values*	*Result*
H_1	Performance expectancy -> behavioural intention	0.269	0.272	0.064	4.222	0	Supported
H_2	Effort expectancy -> behavioural intention	0.208	0.21	0.06	3.448	0.001	Supported
H_3	Social influence -> behavioural intention	0.184	0.182	0.061	3.031	0.003	Supported
H_4	Facilitating condition -> behavioural intention	0.292	0.291	0.062	4.73	0	Supported

Source: The Authors (2023)

Table 8 R^2 value

	R-square	*R-square adjusted*
Behavioural intention	0.744	0.74

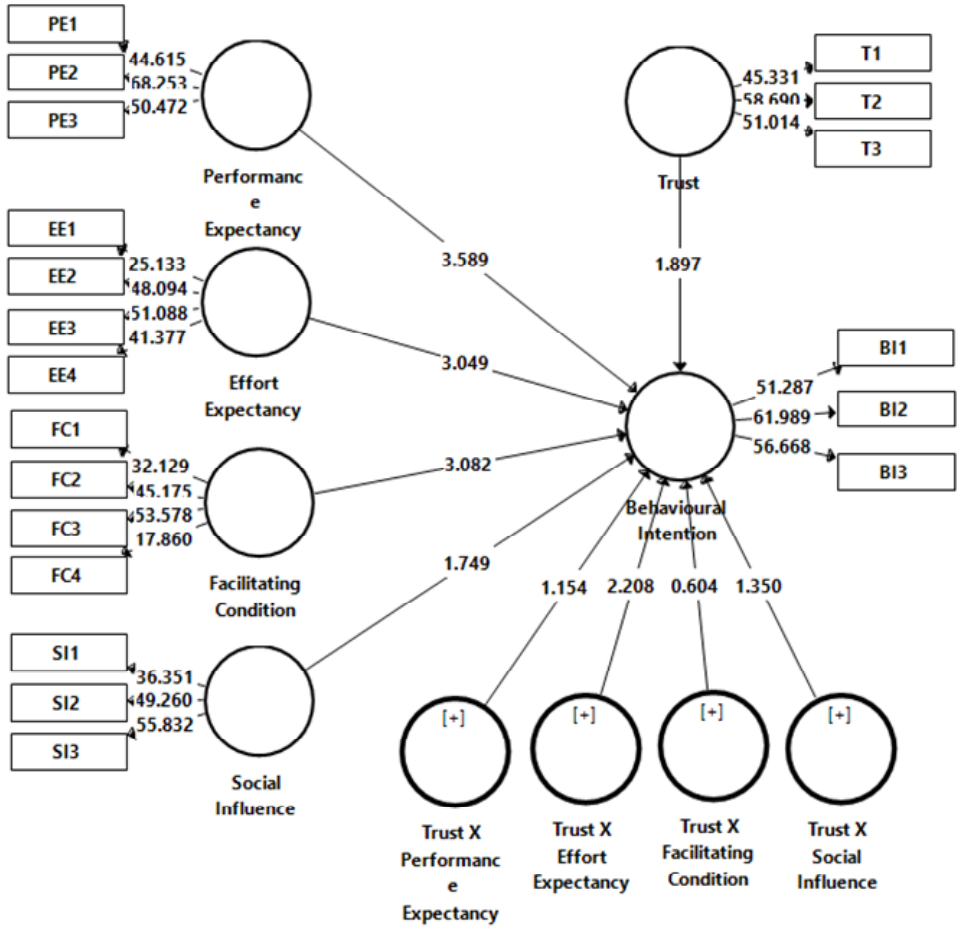
Source: The Authors (2023)

The R^2 value provides the proportion of variation in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables. In the present model, the value of R^2 is 0.74 (see Table 8), implying that the PE, EE, SI, and FC explain 74% of the variance in the behavioural intention.

Next, a moderator, trust, was introduced, and its impact on all the four relation was analysed. Examining the influence of moderating relationships is done by evaluating the effects of interaction terms (i.e., the product of moderator and predictor). It allows one to determine whether or not moderator modifications amplify the intensity of the focus

relation (Hair et al., 2021). A Product indicator approach is used so as to multiply every indicator by every other indicator (i.e., every indicator of trust will be multiplied by every indicator of PE, EE, SI, and FC), indicators were standardised, and an automatic weighing mode is used. After that, consistent PLS Bootstrapping is applied to identify if the impact of the moderator on the relationship is significant or otherwise. The output is given in Figure 3, and the result of the same is provided in Table 9.

Figure 3 Result of structural equation modelling after introducing trust as moderator



Source: The Authors (2023)

The analysis revealed that trust significantly moderates the relationship between EE and behavioural intention ($t > 1.96$, $p = 0.028$), supporting H_5. This suggests that the influence of EE on behavioural intention varies depending on levels of trust. A multi-group analysis was performed among two group of higher and lower level of trust for this relation. The result revealed that individuals with higher levels of trust are more influenced by EE in forming their intention to engage in the behaviour compared to those with lower levels of trust.

However, it was observed that trust does not significantly moderate the relationships between FC and behavioural intention ($t < 1.96$, $p > 0.05$), PE and behavioural intention ($t < 1.96$, $p > 0.05$), and SI and behavioural intention ($t < 1.96$, $p > 0.05$). This implies that the impact of these factors on behavioural intention remains consistent across different levels of trust. As a result, Hypotheses H_6, H_7, and H_8 are not supported.

Table 9 Bootstrapping result

Hypo.	*Relation*	*Original sample (O)*	*Sample mean (M)*	*Standard deviation (STDEV)*	*T statistics (|O/STDEV|)*	*P values*	*Result*
H_5	Trust X effort expectancy -> behavioural intention	0.108	0.107	0.049	2.208	0.028	Supported
H_6	Trust X facilitating condition -> behavioural intention	–0.041	–0.051	0.068	0.604	0.546	Not supported
H_7	Trust X performance expectancy -> behavioural intention	–0.069	–0.069	0.06	1.154	0.249	Not supported
H_8	Trust X social influence -> behavioural intention	–0.076	–0.073	0.056	1.35	0.177	Not supported

Source: The Authors (2023)

Further examination of trust levels revealed that for individuals with varying levels of trust, the relationships between three predictor variables (FC, PE, and SI) and behavioural intention were non-significant ($t < 1.96$, $p > 0.05$). Conversely, for individuals with high levels of trust, the relationship between EE and behavioural intention was significant ($t > 1.96$, $p = 0.028$), indicating that trust amplifies the influence of EE on behavioural intention in this subgroup.

Hence, it can be concluded that trust plays a significant moderating role in the relationship between EE and behavioural intention, particularly for individuals with high levels of trust. However, trust does not significantly moderate the relationships between other variables (FC, PE, and SI) and behavioural intention. These findings provide insights into how trust influences individuals' intentions in the context of the studied behaviour. Hence, findings support H_5 but do not support Hypotheses H_6, H_7, and H_8.

5 Discussion

By extending the established theory by incorporating new dimensions of trust, this study sought to understand the forces for purchase intention in the direction of OFDS. The investigation findings showed that all four factors, i.e., PE, EE, FC and SI, significantly influence the purchase intention. It was discovered that the FC was the most critical component in predicting the likelihood of a consumer making a purchase. The conclusion lends credence to earlier research that discovered a favourable relationship between the four variable and purchase intention (Al Amin et al., 2021; Bhatiasevi, 2016; Lau and Ng, 2019; Prasetyo et al., 2021; Ray et al., 2019).

For customers with high levels of trust, the perception of EE is notably influenced. They perceive the effort involved in using the online food service as a worthwhile

investment, confident that their actions will lead to favourable outcomes. In other words, they are more inclined to engage with the service actively, anticipating that their efforts will be reciprocated with efficient service, quality products, and overall satisfaction. Conversely, customers with low levels of trust may exhibit a different perspective on EE. Their lack of trust in the online food service provider may lead to scepticism regarding the effectiveness of their efforts. They may perceive the required effort as burdensome or futile, doubting whether their actions will lead to satisfactory outcomes. Consequently, these individuals may approach the service with caution, hesitant to invest significant effort due to their apprehensions about the reliability and credibility of the provider.

The rejection of the hypotheses related to the moderating role of trust also shed light into the dynamics of customer behaviour within the OFDS. Firstly, the findings suggest that trust does not substantially alter the relationship between FC and behavioural intention. This implies that factors such as user-friendly interfaces or convenient payment options may not be significantly influenced by customers' trust in the online food service provider when forming their intentions to engage with the service. FCs typically encompass functional aspects such as user interface design, ease of navigation, and convenience of payment methods. These elements are primarily transactional and operational in nature, focusing on streamlining the process of using the online food service. Customers may base their perceptions of FCs more on the objective usability and functionality of the platform rather than on their subjective trust in the provider. Hence, trust may have less impact on customers' assessments of these functional aspects.

Similarly, the results indicate that customers' perceptions of the benefits and outcomes associated with using the online food service, captured by PE, are not significantly influenced by their level of trust in the provider. Additionally, the rejection of the hypothesis related to SI implies that customers' susceptibility to SI, such as recommendations from friends or online reviews, may not be significantly influenced by their level of trust in the provider. Overall, while trust significantly moderates the relationship between EE and behavioural intention, its impact on other factors like FC, PE, and SI appears to be less pronounced. These findings underscore the complex interplay of factors shaping customer behaviour in the online food service industry and highlight the importance of a comprehensive understanding of these dynamics for effective strategic decision-making by service providers.

Hence, the finding emphasises the importance of trust in influencing customer behaviour in the online food service industry, in relation to EE only. When customers trust the online food service provider, they are more likely to have higher expectations regarding the effort they put into using the service, believing that their efforts will yield satisfactory outcomes. This means that customers who trust the provider perceive that their actions, such as placing an order or providing feedback, will be met with positive results.

As a result, higher levels of EE lead to increased levels of behavioural intention among customers. Behavioural intention refers to the likelihood of customers engaging in positive behaviours, such as making repeat purchases and recommending the online food service to others through positive word-of-mouth.

Therefore, trust plays a crucial role in shaping customer behaviour in the online food service industry. Customers who trust the provider are more likely to have higher expectations of their own efforts, leading to a greater likelihood of positive behaviours that contribute to the success of the business, such as repeat business and positive recommendations.

Given the significance of trust, online food service providers should prioritise building and nurturing trust with their customers by providing transparent and reliable service, ensuring timely and accurate deliveries, addressing customer concerns promptly, and maintaining a positive reputation in the industry. By cultivating trust, online food service providers can enhance customer satisfaction, loyalty, and overall business success.

6 Implications

6.1 Managerial implication

Various managerial implications might be inferred from the study results.

First, in light of FCs being identified as the highest predictor, the firm should prioritise enhancing these aspects of the online food service platform. This can be achieved by ensuring that the service is readily available in all areas served by the business, offering a variety of payment options to accommodate different customer preferences, and providing clear and concise information regarding delivery times and order tracking. By improving FCs in these ways, the firm can enhance the convenience and accessibility of its service, making it more appealing to a broader range of users and increasing the likelihood of positive user experiences and repeat purchases.

Second, regarding the findings on trust, the firm should focus on building and maintaining trust among its user base. This can be accomplished through various means, such as ensuring transparency in business practices, consistently delivering on promises, and promptly addressing any customer concerns or issues. Additionally, efforts should be made to improve the ease and convenience of the ordering process, further enhancing user trust and satisfaction. Regularly gathering feedback from customers can also be beneficial in identifying areas for improvement and strengthening trust over time. By prioritising trust-building initiatives, the firm can foster stronger relationships with customers, increase user satisfaction, and ultimately, enhance behavioural intention and profitability.

In conclusion, by addressing both FCs and trust-building initiatives, OFDS providers can significantly improve the user experience and increase behavioural intention, leading to greater success and profitability in the highly competitive online food service industry. These strategic actions emphasise the importance of focusing on key factors that drive user satisfaction and engagement, ultimately contributing to the long-term viability and growth of the business.

6.2 Theoretical implication

The theoretical implications of research findings highlighting the significant importance of PE, EE, FC and on OFDS behavioural intention are significant.

The study demonstrates the importance of SI in shaping behaviour intention, which is another key construct in the UTAUT model. The finding that subjective norms significantly predict behaviour intention supports the UTAUT model, which emphasises the role of SI in shaping technology adoption and usage.

Lastly, the study adds to the increasing body of research on OFDS adoption and usage by identifying the specific factors that are most important in shaping behaviour

intention. This knowledge can be used to inform the design of OFDSs and marketing strategies and guide future research on this topic.

6.3 Limitation of study

While the research provides valuable insights, the study has some limitations.

One limitation is its lack of generalisability to other situations or populations due to being done in a specialised environment. The research was done in a specific geographic area, and the findings may not be generalisable to other countries or cultures with potentially different attitudes and behaviours towards online meal delivery services.

Additionally, the study only examined a restricted set of attributes, future research could explore other theories since the theories have their own assumptions and perspectives.

Finally, the study did not examine actual behaviour but only intention to behave in a certain way. It is possible that intention does not always translate into actual behaviour, and future research could explore the relationship between intention and actual behaviour.

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