



## IMPACT OF FOOD PHOTOGRAPHY ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR TOWARDS ONLINE FOOD DELIVERY SERVICES

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### ABSTRACT:

The online food industry has seen tremendous growth in recent years. The consumer behaviour towards food services has also changed to a great extent. What can be more convenient than just to click luscious cuisine and get it delivered at doorstep. The delicious image of double-cheese pizza loaded with extra cheese toppings or dum biryani in golden bowl or the visual of kadai paneer with roasted paneer cube often makes mouth water and stimulates appetite. The mouth-watering food pictures create visual appeal and tempts consumer to place prompt orders. Further in online food ordering, food images draw consumer's attention and help them to understand the product to place orders conveniently. Therefore, it is imperative for online food service providers to include food photographs in their menu list and make it impressive. The present study contributes to the literature by investigating the impact of food photographs on consumer behaviour. The focus of study is to carefully explore the relationship between food photos and consumer behaviour in online food delivery services. The research findings based upon the data collected from respondents indicate that consumer prefer viewing food photos present in menu list than reading the text-based menu. Researcher observed that food pictures present in menu list influence the consumer's intent to order and have direct impact on consumer's buying behaviour in online food delivery services.

### KEYWORDS:

**FOOD PHOTOGRAPHY, FOOD DELIVERY APPS, VISUAL APPEAL, CONSUMER BEHAVIOR.**

### INTRODUCTION:

The tremendous growth in smart phone owners, digital wallets and convenient any time anywhere shopping has given boost to online shopping. The rapid growth of e-commerce has increased the expectations of consumers in last decade. Today's consumers look beyond and wish their deals to be end with overall exciting and delighted shopping experience. The rapid change in digital technology has brought significant changes in food delivery business. Most of the brick and mortar restaurants provide online delivery services and now the share of online orders is overriding their overall orders.

"A picture is worth than thousand words", is an old saying. Images and pictures have been a part of our societies from long ago. Images have visual appeal that affects our decisions. Restaurants usually print food pictures in their menu to create confidence and trust among their customer. An impressive and good photography plays a very significant role in online food delivery services. It is the visual appeal which assures consumer that the product would match and meet their need when it will reach their doorstep.

When it comes to delivery of food online, service providers have to face various challenges to meet the consumer expectations. Consumers can't touch, smell and taste the food while placing order. Menu present on service apps or websites have to be tempting and informative to get more

orders in food industry. Eyes sense the flavours before tongue taste the food. Mouth -watering food photographs can activate visual hunger. It is the food picture that creates an idea for a customer that how their product would taste and satisfy their hunger needs for a particular cuisine. To catch consumers' attention it becomes imperative for service providers to enrich their menu list with tempting food photos to increase conversions.

Online food delivery apps and websites should be appealing so as to stimulate consumers' appetite and make their mouth water to get more orders.

Food not only satisfy the basic hunger need of humans but is goes beyond and it represents our culture, societal values, group identity and cohesion. The increased use of social media and restaurants becoming digitalized the role of food photographs becomes imperative and their use has to be refined. The present work is performed to study the impact of food photographs present in menu list on consumer behaviour while ordering food online. The research study is an attempt to understand and explore how the photograph based menu effect consumer's intent and decisions to buy food online.

### THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

In recent years, online food delivery industry is growing so fast. Every service provider looks for including some unique content on their apps or websites to increase their

conversion rates.

Researcher identifies that food photo in menu list can draw consumers' attention and help service providers to get more orders. Therefore, the researcher in the present study makes an attempt to understand the impact of food photography on consumer behaviour towards online food delivery services.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The present study has been performed keeping the following objectives in consideration:

1. To understand the importance of food photography on consumer behavior
2. To compare and analyze the impact of photo-based and text-based menu on consumer behavior
3. To determine the effect of food pictures on consumer's unplanned and unintended orders
4. To know the importance of food photos that help consumer to buy more and repeat the orders.
5. To understand the role of food photos in helping consumers to place online orders

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

**Liu, Hongbo & Feng, Shunzi & Hu, Xingbao (2022)** explored the importance of photos posted by users in review section. They studied the role of two types of food pictures – process focused and outcome focused photos on consumer buying behaviour. The two experiments performed in their research investigated that process focused food images resulted in more conversions as compared to outcome focused images. Consumers were motivated by process focused photo reviews as these reviews build trust and provide practical assessment of the food.

The study was performed with the objective of examining the role of food photos and associated calorie information on consumer behaviour by **Gunden, N., Morosan, C. and DeFranco, A. (2021)**. Their study explored very interesting fact that consumer behaviour of giving tip to delivery boy is influenced by calorie information on website or service app. Further their study also revealed the relationship between conversion rate and food pictures showing enjoyed by people. Their study concluded that food pictures that shows people enjoying have greater influence and trigger purchase decisions than those pictures that simply shows food only.

**Meersseman E, Geuens M, Vermeir I. (2021)**, presented their views on food photos showing bite in it. Their investigation revealed that the photos that have bite effects consumer behaviour. Their study highlights the very interesting concept of cautious use food images having bite on websites or apps. Though food photos having bits effects consumer intent to pay but sometimes these pictures create hate as a result of psychological mental feeling of food being contaminated.

**G, Raghu.(2021)**, highlights the effect of food photos on consumer buying behaviour. The study reveals the food photos as being an important part of website content. The present work suggests that high quality and attractive pictures are retained for longer time by consumers and have greater impact on their buying behaviour.

**Sherly Christivanny Lie. (2018)** performed the study to understand the relationship between food photos and consumer's consumption behaviour. The research was performed upon young people of 18-29 years of age. The eight respondents were interviewed and to explore more a photo based method photo-elicitation was performed upon them. In their research, Lie found that there is a positive relationship between consumer's consumption behaviour and food photography. The study recommends to think from the consumer's perspective and to increase conversions; the website content should be enriched with high quality photographs.

In their study, **Li, X. & Wang, M. & Chen, Y. (2014)**, used image processing techniques to examine the effects of product images on consumer buying behaviour. This technique helped the researchers to analyze large number of image features and their effects on consumer's intent to buy products online. This study reveals the various photo characteristics that induces and strengthens consumer attachment to the product.

### GAP IDENTIFIED

Considering the above literature, it is identified that researchers have taken keen interest in understanding online consumer behaviour. The previous studies focused upon the features of product images however limited literature contribute to the understanding of food photos present in menu list of online food service providers. Most of the work talks about visual appeal in e-commerce. Some literature highlights the importance of product photographs and its impact on online consumer buying behaviour. The researcher tries to fill this gap and tries to understand the role and importance of menu with food images and their impact on consumer behaviour in online food delivery services.

### RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no impact of photo-based menu on consumer's intention to place online order.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Consumer does not prefer viewing photo-based menu than reading text-based menu while ordering food online

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no effect of food pictures on consumer's unplanned and impulsive orders

**H<sub>04</sub>:** Food pictures does not make consumer's ordering procedure convenient and easy  
**H<sub>05</sub>:** Photo-based menu do not help in comparing the menu of different service providers

### RESEARCH DESIGN

A structured questionnaire in Google form was created to collect the data. Closed type questions were asked from respondents based on frequency rating scale some binary

questions were also asked.

**SAMPLE**

A sample of 70 respondents using random sampling method was selected from Jodhpur and Udaipur Districts.

**DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION TABLE NO. 1: PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS**

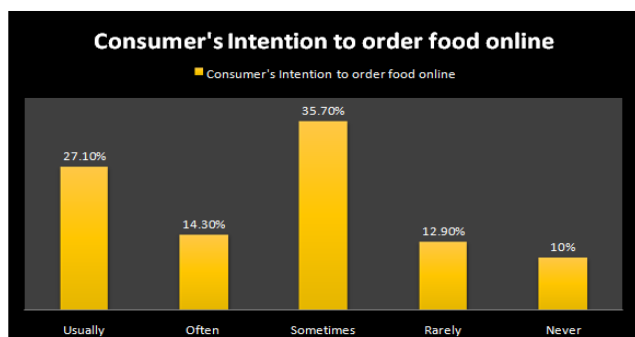
Gender	Male	50.9%
	Female	49.1%
Age	18-30	62.3%
	31-45	37.7%
	46-60	0%
	61& above	0%
Profession	Student	66.7%
	Employee	24.6%
	Self-employed	8.8%
	Homemaker	0%

Around equal percentage of male and female respondents were representing the sample randomly selected for our study. Out of total respondents 51% were male and 49% were female. Most of the respondents (62.3%) belonged to 18-30 years of age and 37.7% were between the 31 to 45 years of age. However no respondent above 46 years was representing our sample for study. Most of the respondents participated in our study were students. 24% were employees and 9% were self-employed.

**TABLE NO. 2: IMPACT OF PHOTO-BASED MENU ON CONSUMER'S INTENTION TO ORDER FOOD ONLINE**

Impact on Consumer's Intention	No. of Respondents	(%)
Usually	19	27.1
Often	10	14.3
Sometimes	25	35.7
Rarely	9	12.9
Never	7	10

**GRAPH NO. 1: IMPACT OF PHOTO-BASED MENU ON CONSUMER'S INTENTION TO ORDER FOOD ONLINE**



**FINDINGS:**

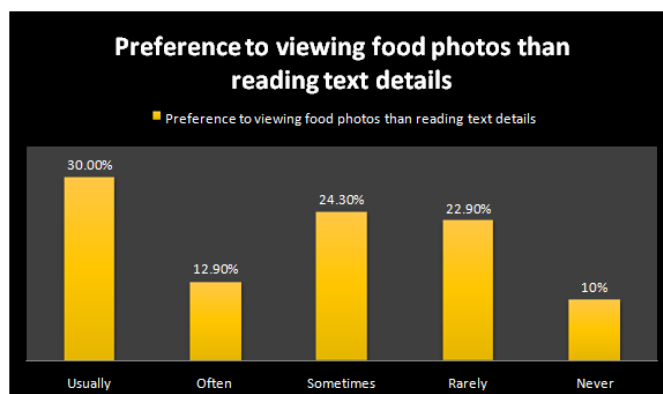
Out of 70 respondents 19 responded that photo-based menu usually impact their intentions to order food online. Most of the responded agreed that photo-based menu has impact on their buying behaviour.

Hence, we reject  $H_{01}$  and conclude that photo-based menu impact consumer's intention to place online order.

**TABLE NO.3: PREFERENCE OF VIEWING FOOD PHOTO OVER READING TEXT DETAILS**

Impact on Consumer's Intention	No. of Respondents	(%)
Usually	21	30
Often	9	12.9
Sometimes	17	24.3
Rarely	16	22.9
Never	9	10

**GRAPH NO.2: PREFERENCE OF VIEWING FOOD PHOTO OVER READING TEXT DETAILS**



**FINDINGS:**

It is clearly shown in the above graph that 30% of total respondents usually prefer viewing photo-based menu than reading text-based details. Only 10% responded that they rarely prefer photo-based menu over text details.

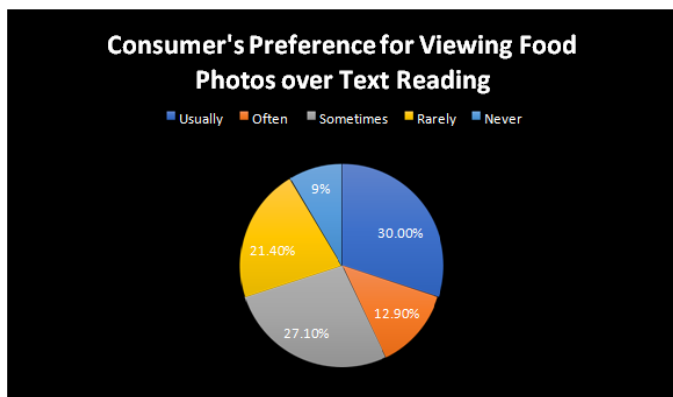
Hence  $H_{02}$  is rejected and alternative is accepted that consumer prefer viewing photobased menu than reading text-based menu while ordering food online.

**TABLE NO.4: ORDERING FOOD BECAUSE FOOD PHOTOS ARE TEMPTING**

Impact on Consumer's Intention	Respondents	(%)
Usually	21	30
Often	9	12.9
Sometimes	19	27.1

Rarely	15	21.4
Never	6	8.6

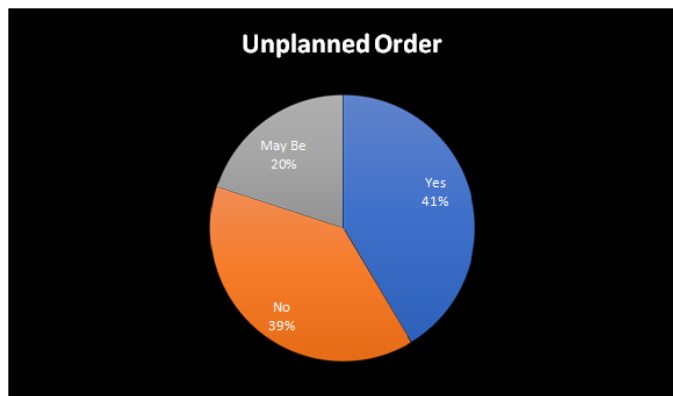
**GRAPH NO.3: ORDERING FOOD BECAUSE FOOD PHOTOS ARE TEMPTING**



**FINDINGS:**

30% respondents agreed that they usually order food just because the food photos are tempting. 12% respondents often order food after viewing tempting food photos in menu. Whereas 9% of the respondents said that they never placed any impulsive order because of mouth-watering food photos.

**GRAPH NO.4: CONSUMER'S UNPLANNED AND UNINTENTIONAL ORDER BECAUSE THE FOOD PHOTOS WERE TEMPTING:**

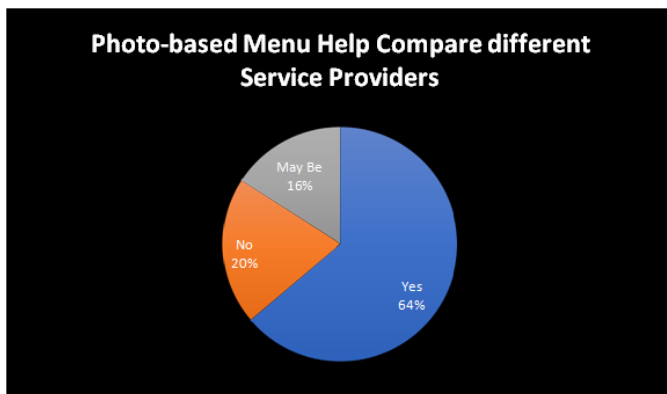


**FINDINGS:**

41% of the total respondents placed unplanned orders after viewing tempting food photographs whereas 39% never did the same. However 20% of the respondents were not sure about whether they ever ordered unplanned food because of tempting food photos present in menu list.

Therefore we reject  $H_{04}$  and accept the alternative hypothesis that food pictures have effect on consumer's unplanned orders.

**GRAPH NO. 5: PHOTO-BASED MENU MAKES EASY TO COMPARE DIFFERENT SERVICE PROVIDERS**

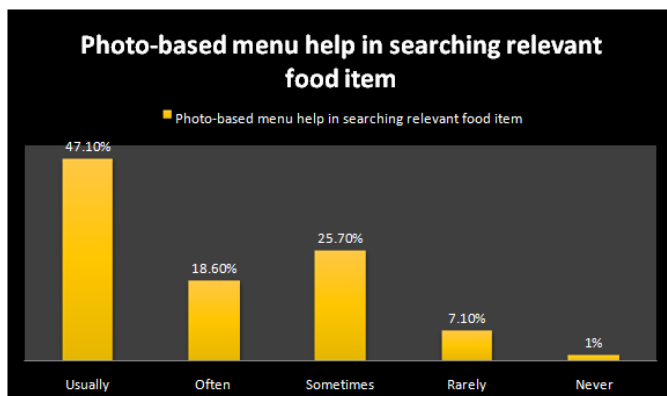


**FINDINGS:**

It can be seen in the above graph that maximum number of respondents (64%) agreed that photo-based menu helps in comparing the menu of different service providers. However 16% of respondents were not sure about it.

Hence we reject the null hypothesis  $H_{05}$  and accept the alternative that photo-based menu help in comparing the menu of different service providers.

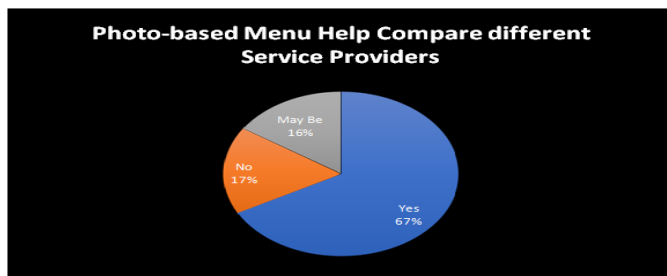
**GRAPH NO.6: MENU WITH PHOTOS HELP IN SEARCHING THE RELEVANT FOOD ITEM EASILY**



**FINDINGS:**

47% respondents usually feel that photo-based menu help them in searching the relevant food item. Only 7% of respondents rarely and 1% never experienced the same. Around 26% respondents sometimes experienced that in searching the relevant food item photo-based menu is helpful.

**GRAPH NO. 7: PHOTO BASED MENU HELPS IN REMEMBERING THE RESTAURANT EASILY**



**FINDINGS:**

67% respondents remember the restaurants because of their photo-based menu. 17% respondents denied over this question. Only 16% of respondents were unable to recall and were not sure about it.

**On the basis of findings of graph no.6 & 7, null hypothesis H<sub>04</sub> is rejected and alternative is accepted that food pictures make consumer's ordering procedure convenient and easy.**

**CONCLUSION**

"Content is King", and when it comes to online food delivery services food photos are superiors to all kings. When consumer order food online, food photos play very important role. Photo based menu not only draws consumer's attention but induces their appetite also. It affects consumer behaviour towards online delivery apps and websites. Photographs help in reproducing the actual image of the food and build trust among consumers. Photo based menu also help consumers to remember the restaurant easily. It is observed that consumer usually prefer viewing photos than reading the text details. Photo-based menu not only helps consumer in comparing the menu of different service providers but also make their ordering procedure convenient and easy.

Thus, it is recommended that food service providers should design their apps and websites as appealing as their brick and mortar restaurants. Food image that does not match with product details should be avoided. The photos which are either too small or technically poor will not result in good. In order to encourage their sales the necessary details along with food photos should be added up. The high quality clear food images with short description should be included in menu to stimulate the consumer's appetite.

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