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Understanding Customer Attitudes, Behavioral Intention, and Continued Usage of Mobile Food Ordering Services: A Study of Bangladesh

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Abstract: This study tests the socio-psychological factors that sustain the continued use of mobile food ordering apps (MFOAs) in Bangladesh's post-pandemic digital economy by extending the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) with food safety concerns, food delivery hygiene, and work-life balance. An explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was adopted. Survey data from 403 active MFOA users were collected through purposive sampling and analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), and three focus group discussions were then conducted to explain the quantitative results. Perceived behavioral control, dining attitudes, food safety concerns, food delivery hygiene, and work-life balance significantly influenced behavioral intention (R^2 = 0.409). Behavioral intention strongly predicted continued behavior (β = 0.543), explaining 29.4% of its variance, and mediated the effects of these antecedents. Subjective norms had no significant direct effect on intention or indirect effect on continued behavior; the focus groups indicated that MFOA use has shifted from a social trend to a personal, time-saving utility. MFOA platforms should invest in reliable app and payment infrastructure, make hygiene measures visible to consumers, and position their services as time-management tools to secure long-term customer retention and loyalty. Policymakers may also consider a national hygiene certification scheme and minimum service-level standards for digital food delivery. This study contributes to the literature by extending the TPB to include food safety concerns, delivery hygiene, and work-life balance. The paper's primary contribution is finding that subjective norms do not drive continued MFOA use. This study documents how intention mediates these determinants in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Continuance behavior, food delivery hygiene, mixed-methods design, mobile food ordering apps, theory of planned behavior, work-life balance.

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INTRODUCTION

The exponential growth of information and communication technology (ICT) and its high penetration rate worldwide as part of consumers' lives and service delivery have created a paradigm shift in the way these services are delivered to consumers (Alalwan, 2020; Kapoor & Vij, 2018). Mobile apps have moved beyond being

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a technology tool to become key parts of the lives of Bangladesh's citizens, even affecting consumer behaviour in sectors, including the food service industry (Yeo, Goh, & Rezaei, 2017). Mobile Food Ordering Apps (MFOAs) like Foodpanda, Pathao Foods, Foodie, and Shohoz Food have not only gained great popularity in the country since 2013 but have also grown drastically in number. Such digital platforms have become essential tools that a large and growing number of restaurants in Bangladesh strategically rely on to attract and retain customers in a competitive market. Comprising digital ordering, smooth payment systems, real-time tracking of orders and reviews, and restaurant comparison tools, MFOAs have changed the standard dining experience, setting new benchmarks for convenience and efficiency. Demographic changes and speedy urbanization play a vital role in precipitating the increased adoption of MFOAs in Bangladesh. With a largely tech-savvy population, especially among those under 25, and a rapidly developing middle class that is increasingly accepting of and demanding the Internet, the need for online food delivery services has grown sharply. Consequently, speed, convenience, and the variety of food options and access have made MFOAs an integral part of the lifestyles of these new generations, rather than a second choice (Rita, Eiriz, & Conde, 2023; Wang, Zhou, & Suh, 2025). In Bangladesh, the total foodservice and meal delivery industry is worth about $4.56 billion in 2026 and is estimated to grow by more than 13 per cent per year on average over the next four years. This growth is also exponential, as opposed to the current trend, which signifies that something has likely shifted in the psychology of the consumer at a structural level; something that makes consumers' continued interest in app usage need to be rigorously studied through empirical analysis (Dhaliwal, 2026).

The COVID-19 pandemic acted as a catalyst for digital adoption, accelerating the growth trajectory of the MFOA market by several years relative to its pre-pandemic pace. The changes in dining behaviors under traditional, pre-pandemic conditions have been drastic, caused by factors such as institutional lockdowns, government-mandated social distancing measures, and increased public health safety concerns (Tsang, Tavitiyaman, & Lo, 2026). As a result, consumers quickly shifted from dining in restaurants to contactless dining. Thus, consumers swiftly and effectively adopted contactless delivery methods and started valuing physical security as well as convenience (Chotigo & Kadono, 2021; Shah, Yan, & Qayyum, 2022). Neither this period nor the subsequent period saw an improvement in user frequency, the volume of food-ordering transactions, or per capita spending on food delivery through online or offline platforms, as food delivery became an essential tool for maintaining foodservice during these periods. Importantly, consumers' beliefs and expectations regarding hygiene and risk reduction, formed during the pandemic, have become the new normal and are now more entrenched in the digital realm (Timur, Oğuz, & Yilmaz, 2023; Zhao & Bacao, 2020).

Although MFOAs are deeply integrated and economically dominant in most economies, empirical studies looking into post-adoption behavior in an emerging economy that is culturally different, such as Bangladesh, are largely underdeveloped. Although studies have explored initial technology adoption in developed markets (Venkatesh, Thong, & Xu, 2012), studies investigating socio-psychological mechanisms that can help turn initial trials into continued behavioral intentions are scarce, and there is a need to understand these mechanisms in a local context. This research aims to overcome the logical weaknesses of the segmented or dismantled nature of the theoretical approaches and explicitly situates the investigation in terms of an extended model of the theory of planned behavior (TPB) as introduced by Ajzen (1991). Standard TPB constructs, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and attitudes alone fail to fully capture the modern differences in relation to digital food consumption (Troise, O'Driscoll, Tani, & Prisco, 2021). Thus, the aim of this study is to extend the TPB model by adding relevant contextual factors that are crucial in the current context of the post-pandemic developing-market context: food delivery hygiene, food safety issues, and work-life balance. The study synthesizes these components that, to date, have not been analyzed in combination, allowing an examination of the influence these particular contextual factors have on dining attitudes and, ultimately, intentions for continued use and post-adoption in a quickly changing digital landscape.

The primary research purpose is to conduct a thorough examination of the behavioral responses of Bangladeshi customers toward MFOAs and to investigate the influence of perceived factors such as safety, hygiene, and convenience on dining attitudes and their intention to use MFOAs in the future. To accomplish this goal, the project identifies a number of specific aims:

- To investigate the direct impacts of subjective norms, dining attitudes, and perceived behavioral control on behavioral intention to use MFOAs.
- To systematically evaluate how food-delivery hygiene and post-pandemic food-safety concerns influence users' long-term behavioral intentions and continued use.
- To assess the novel role of work-life balance as a fundamental determinant shaping continuous digital food service engagement.
- To analyse the direct and mediating mechanisms linking these antecedent variables to actual continued behaviour through behavioural intention.

Combining these analyses, the study aims to suggest specific, data-backed strategic recommendations to stakeholders to improve the customer experience, ensure safety standards, and optimize service systems for long-term customer retention in Bangladesh.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Theoretical Framework: The Extended Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

This research is based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). TPB is a strong sociopsychological model that predicts people's behavior based on three key constructs: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms/social pressure, and perceived behavioral control/perceived ease or difficulty of the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). The TPB has been widely used and validated as an excellent predictive model of intention to use a system (Troise et al., 2021).

However, predicting continued behavioral usage within the current rapidly evolving digital economy emerging from a pandemic involves going beyond foundational models. The standard TPB is effective at capturing general intent in a given setting but inherently lacks the in-depth contextual understanding needed to capture the meanings of current digital food service settings, especially in emerging economies such as Bangladesh. Some points of friction are unique to developing markets, including variability in infrastructure, changing patterns of cultural eating, and increased health insecurity since the pandemic (Chotigo & Kadono, 2021). Therefore, the use of the traditional TPB framework alone creates a risk of omitted-variable bias. To correct this, the present study suggests an extended version of the TPB model that includes three highly context-specific determinants: food safety concerns, food delivery hygiene, and work-life balance. This strategic extension guarantees a multifaceted, multidimensional assessment of the psychological, social, and functional determinants shaping the initial use and continued use of mobile food-ordering apps (MFOAs) after adoption.

Hypothesis Derivation and Synthesis

Subjective Norms (SN)

Subjective norms are the perceived social pressure to perform or not perform a behaviour that is greatly affected by referent groups, including family, friends, and peers (Ajzen, 1991). In collectivistic societies like Bangladesh, social influence is more powerful than individual considerations in consumer decision-making processes. If a social group actually supports or uses it, then one's willingness to accept a new technology, such as a digital service, is easily encouraged (Alalwan, 2020). This vicarious validation not only instigates the initial behavioural intention to download and use the app but also normalises this behaviour, making it part of social practices. Thus, positive social reinforcement can be used to maintain a player's commitment to the site because positive feedback exists at all times (Hsiao, Chang, & Tang, 2016). Thus, social endorsement plays a significant role as a catalysing factor for technology continuance, both immediately and over the long term.

But even in collectivistic societies, the evidence of the strength of subjective norms is mixed. With maturing digital food ordering platforms and the emergence of individual and habit-forming uses, the role of referent groups might be less important than more instrumental factors like control and attitude (Hsiao et al., 2016; Troise et al., 2021). This implies that the influence of subjective norms on behavioral intention and

continued use, which is theoretically believed to exist, is an empirical question and does not have to be assumed in a post-adoption digital situation.

H_1: Subjective norms exert a favorable effect on behavioral intention to utilize MFOAs.

Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)

Perceived behavioral control is the consumer's belief in their ability and resources to execute a behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In the context of the MFOA case, PBC is manifested in terms of facilitating conditions (the availability of a smartphone, a stable internet connection, and digital payment facilities) and technological self-efficacy (the ability to operate the user-friendly interface of the app) (Venkatesh et al., 2012). Infrastructure challenges can create a significant obstacle to digital adoption in emerging markets.

On the other hand, if users are confident that MFOAs are accessible and user-friendly, with no technical problems, they feel more confident about using the service (Atulkar & Singh, 2021). The higher the PBC, the lower the stress experienced when performing a task. When users are able to order successfully, they enter a state of dependency on this behavior and gradually change their initial intention to take action into eventual behavior (Amoroso & Lim, 2017).

H_2: Perceived behavioral control exerts a favorable effect on behavioral intention to utilize MFOAs.

Dining Attitudes (DA)

The attitude is the extent to which the individual has a positive or negative assessment of the behavior under consideration (Ajzen, 1991). Dining attitudes have structurally changed, with consumers shifting their focus from only the physical restaurant environment to a greater consideration of the convenience, speed, and variety of digital restaurant aggregators (Yeo, Tan, Teo, & Tan, 2021).

In the digital age, a positive dining attitude is defined by a focus on utility and time savings, in addition to restoring seamless services when things go wrong (Mohamadabadi, Nazarian-Jashnabadi, Daryani, Al-Rashid, & Campisi, 2025). The attitude towards MFOAs becomes strong when consumers gain utilitarian value and experience hedonic satisfaction while avoiding some of the traditional dining constraints, thereby aiding this process (Akdim, Casaló, & Flavián, 2022). In addition, having positive attitudes reinforced by good app performance will trigger psychological commitment, which will stimulate long-term continued patronage (Al Amin et al., 2021).

H_3: Dining attitudes exert a favorable effect on behavioral intention to utilize MFOAs.

Food Safety Concerns (FSC)

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted consumers' attitudes towards food consumption, which is now a major factor influencing the choice of restaurant (Shah et al., 2022). Food safety issues involve concerns about the quality, preparation, and risk of contamination of food products (Mostafa, Al Dhaheri, Feehan, & Yousif, 2024; Shen et al., 2025). In the digital marketplace, MFOAs capable of proactively tackling the aforementioned concerns through safety-accredited restaurants, visible user feedback, and sanitary preparation displays can mitigate consumers' negative concerns and foster trust (Khan, Khan, Shamim, Gupta, & Sherwani, 2023). By assuring users of a platform's effectiveness in addressing their safety concerns, this perception alone positively influences users' intentions to use the platform (Prasetyo et al., 2021). Long-term platform loyalty is based on trust, which comes from stringent safety assurance protocols.

H_4: Perception of food safety concerns exerts a favorable effect on behavioral intention to utilize MFOAs.

Food Delivery Hygiene (FDH)

Food safety issues relate to the internal aspects of food preparation, while food delivery hygiene relates to the external aspects of food delivery: the condition of the packaging, the hygiene of the delivery personnel, and the use of contactless delivery methods (Cheng, Chang, & Chen, 2021). The 'last-mile' in delivery is a psychological hurdle for customers, as they are exposed to risks during the operation. Platforms that ensure tamper-proof packaging and rider hygiene provide one of the strongest avenues for risk reduction, which can be measured in a very tangible and visible manner.

We draw on the literature on psychological safety to explain the link between visible hygiene compliance and the intention to order. Namely, visible hygiene compliance lowers perceived risks and increases perceptions of service quality, which in turn significantly and positively influences the initial intention to order (Lin, Au, & Baum, 2024). Repeated application of superior delivery hygiene will create an expectation-confirmation loop, which is a key determinant in sustaining its use (Khuc & Vu, 2025; Waris & Mohd Suki, 2026).

H_5: Food delivery hygiene has a favorable effect on behavioral intention to utilize MFOAs.

Work-Life Balance (WLB)

The rate of urbanisation and changing corporate needs in Bangladesh have considerably limited the amount of personal time available, which has a significant effect on the work-life balance of individual workers. In this high-pressure situation, food procurement becomes more than a leisure activity and turns into a burden that demands a lot of time for food procurement (Cho, Bonn, & Li, 2019). The importance of MFOAs is that, as time-saving tools, they restore temporal autonomy to consumers (Ezenwa, Discetti, Memery, & Bray, 2026). Outsourcing meal preparation and meal procurement has enabled users to save personal time; hence, it can reduce the frictions of daily life (Hasan, Shohag, Chowdhury, Miswar, & Ashaduzzaman, 2023). Consumers actively seek a better work-life balance, which tends to eliminate their need to use technological time-saving measures (Madinga, Blanckensee, Longhurst, & Bundwini, 2023). For example, once users become familiar with the convenience of using MFOAs to plan their day-to-day routines, this behaviour becomes lasting (Wang et al., 2025).

H_6: Work-life balance exerts a favorable effect on behavioral intention to utilize MFOAs.

Behavioral Intention (BI) and Continued Behavior (CB)

The cognitive representation of a consumer's willingness to engage in a certain behavior is behavioral intention. Studies on information systems continuance have shown that behavioral intention to use is the strongest and most immediate determinant of behavior (Bhattacherjee, 2001). Wang, Zheng, and Jiang (2026) explained that intention is a unified driving force that is the sum of social norms, attitudes, and perceived control.

Thus, a strong intention to use the MFOA naturally and easily leads to the continued use of the application over time (Zhao & Bacao, 2020). Moreover, behavioral intention is a crucial cognitive process (Conner & Norman, 2022). The external and perceptual variables, such as norms, control, attitudes, safety, hygiene, and WLB, do not merely become "blocked" in the cognitive process or create an automatic reflex. Rather, these influences affect the individual's conscious intention, which in turn influences the ultimate continuance behavior (Limayem, Hirt, & Cheung, 2007).

Therefore, the relationship between the extended TPB and actual sustained use of the MFOA platform is hypothesized to be mediated by the intention to use the platform.

H_7: Behavioral intention to use MFOAs exerts a favorable effect on continued behavior.

H_8: The behavioral intention to utilize MFOAs modulates (mediates) the interactions among a) subjective norms, b) perceived behavioral control, c) dining attitudes, d) food safety perception, e) food delivery hygiene, f) work-life balance, and continuing behavior toward MFOAs.

Figure 1 represents the research framework.

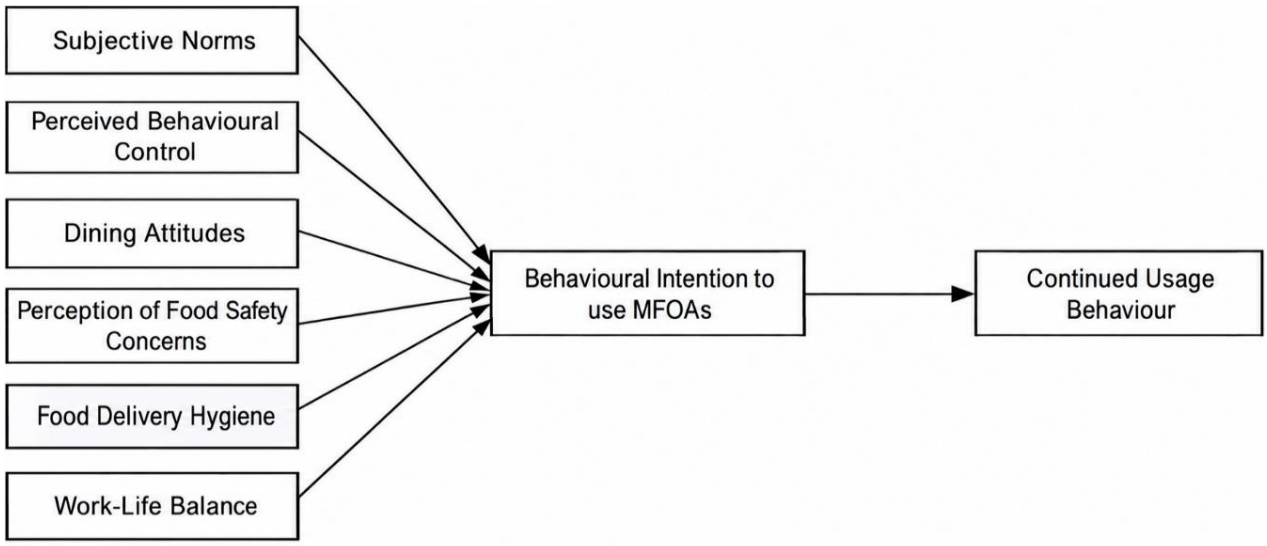


Figure 1: Research Framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted an explanatory sequential mixed-methods research design, with an empirical study employing a questionnaire-based cross-sectional survey and qualitative focus group discussions (FGDs) to study the factors that influence behavioral intention and continued use of Mobile Food Ordering Apps (MFOAs). This study adopted a mixed-methods approach because it yields a much more focused and thorough understanding of the topics of interest in consumer studies than can be achieved by using just one method; thus, by using both methods together, the limitations and methodological biases of the case and survey components were effectively neutralised (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). The quantitative approach was used to objectively test the hypothesized structural relationships in the expanded TPB model (Ajzen, 1991). At the same time, the qualitative FGDs were based on an interpretivist approach and aimed to display socio-cultural realities and the motivating reasons for not adopting directly after the event, which are more nuanced and difficult to grasp using quantitative instruments (Yeo et al., 2021). This methodological merger was highly suitable for critically assessing the dynamic market for food services in the digital era within a developing-economy context.

Population and Sampling Strategy

The respondents in the study were regular consumers of the major mobile food delivery apps in the main cities of Bangladesh, including Dhaka, Chattogram, and Khulna. They were carefully chosen based on geographic locations with the highest smartphone penetration, well-developed digital payment systems, and the most partner restaurants. A non-probability sampling technique, namely purposive sampling, was used to ensure the validity of the quantitative responses (Bouncken, Czakon, & Schmitt, 2026; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2023). An essential requirement for inclusion was that the respondents had explicitly used an MFOA to place food orders in the past three months (Alalwan, 2020). A sample of members of the target population was drawn using criterion-based purposive sampling for the qualitative phase and brought into the focus group discussions. The dual-sampling approach allowed both the quantitative survey data and the qualitative narrative data to represent genuine assessments and evaluations after the participants had actually undergone adoption, thereby vastly increasing the ecological validity of the results.

Sample Size Determination

For the quantitative phase, the sample size was calculated in line with the rule of thumb related to the item-to-response ratio provided for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). This is a well-known methodological guideline for multivariate data analysis that mandates at least 10 respondents per measurement, producing a sufficiently large sample for low standard errors, good model fit, and greater statistical power (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2017). The absolute minimum quantitative sample size was determined to be 290 respondents, based on the finalized survey instrument, which consisted of only twenty-nine measurement items for all latent constructs. The quantitative data-collection target was set at 403 and ultimately achieved due to the meticulous data-cleaning process, including checking whether data were missing, whether the subjects responded in an "unengaged" way, and whether the screening criteria were met. For the qualitative phase, the number of focus groups was guided by thematic saturation: data collection concluded once the third and final discussion produced no new codes or themes relative to the first two sessions, consistent with an information-power approach to qualitative sample adequacy. Each focus group had between 6 and 8 active MFOA users, and there were three focus group discussions. The sample size was intentionally increased to enhance interactive discussion, provide sufficient time for each participant to express their experiential knowledge, and provide a variety of thematic reflections without any analytical redundancy (Ahmed, 2024). In addition to this a priori item-to-response ratio justification, a post-hoc statistical power analysis was conducted for the quantitative model: given the achieved R^2 of 0.409 for Behavioral Intention with six predictors and $n = 403$, the achieved statistical power exceeded 0.99 at $\alpha = 0.05$, well above the conventional 0.80 threshold.

Instrument Development and Data Collection Procedures

The survey instrument used was a quantitative one, and a process of adaptation was carried out to achieve theoretical (construct) and content validity from published and peer-reviewed material. The 5-point Likert scale was used for all latent constructs and ranged from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree". Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) and Subjective Norms (SN), which are the key variables of the traditional TPB model, were adopted directly from the literature (Ajzen, 1991). Validated items from recent contextual studies (Al Amin et al., 2021) were used to accurately measure Dining Attitudes. Aside from the systematic adaptation from Wang, Zhang, Zhang, Wang, and Na (2022) for the specific measures for Food Safety Concerns, the Food Delivery Hygiene measure was also informed by (Yeo et al., 2017). The list of required items for Work-Life Balance was created based on the model of Madinga et al. (2023), while the continuance measures were designed based on Bhattacherjee (2001). A semi-structured discussion guide was created for use in the FGDs during the qualitative part of the study. The purpose of these open-ended prompts was to gain insightful, exploratory responses related to participants' experiences with living with digital hygiene standards, social pressures, and platform reliability, providing a much-needed exploratory instrument to complement the rigid measures of the surveys.

Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the help of SmartPLS software because it is very powerful for testing complex predictive models, and the data have a non-normal distribution (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, & Ringle, 2019). To ensure that the results were accurate, a two-step procedure was carried out: an assessment of the measurement model for internal reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015), followed by an assessment of the structural model, which includes/excludes the proposed hypotheses. Concurrently, the focus group recordings were audio-recorded, then transcribed verbatim and analysed using a strong and rigorous thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2022). This kind of inductive analysis of the consumers' narratives resulted in the identification, organization, and reporting of emerging conceptual patterns and thematic meanings, which shared commonalities in the consumers' testimonies. The holistic approach of integrating the PLS-SEM structural results with the qualitative thematic insights enabled methodological triangulation, which created a rich interpretation of the digital food service ecosystem.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the quantitative and qualitative data collection processes. Information regarding confidentiality and informed consent was provided electronically to all online survey respondents before they began the questionnaire. Similarly, focus group participants were provided with both verbal and written information regarding confidentiality and informed consent before the focus group discussions (FGDs). All participants were clearly informed that the study was conducted solely for academic purposes. Participation was completely voluntary, and the absolute right to withdraw without penalty or coercion at any stage of the process was ensured. Even the quantitative phase sought to minimize potential problems arising from social desirability by not collecting any personally identifiable information, thereby attempting to ensure respondent anonymity (Podsakoff et al., 2003). During the qualitative phase, all group discussions were audio-recorded after explicit verbal and written consent had been obtained, and all transcripts were anonymized to protect the participants' identities. The research procedures were conducted in full compliance with all ethical standards and data governance requirements of the University's Institutional Review Board. This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of Jashore University of Science and Technology, Bangladesh, under (Ref. No. JUST/MKT/964).

Table 1: Demographic Profile

Age group	N	%
18 - 24 years	148	36.7%
25 - 34 years	154	38.2%
35 - 44 years	58	14.4%
45 - 54 years	37	9.2%
55 years and above	6	1.5%
Gender		
Female	190	47.1%
Male	205	50.9%
Prefer not to say	8	2.0%
Occupation		
Other	4	1.0%
Private Sector Employee	166	41.2%
Public Sector / Government Employee	39	9.7%
Self-employed / Entrepreneur	39	9.7%
Student	136	33.7%
Unemployed / Homemaker	19	4.7%
Income_BDT		
20,001 - 40,000 BDT	161	40.0%
40,001 - 60,000 BDT	68	16.9%
60,001 - 80,000 BDT	43	10.7%
Above 80,000 BDT	19	4.7%
Below 20,000 BDT	112	27.8%
Preferred_App		
Foodi	17	4.2%
Foodpanda	256	63.5%
Pathao Food	98	24.3%
Shohoz Food	32	7.9%

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Demographic Profile

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of respondents (N = 403). It can be seen that users of mobile food ordering applications in BD are youthful and professionally active in their use of the application. The age

group with the highest proportion is the 25–34-year-old group, comprising 38.2% of the respondents, followed very closely by the 18–24-year-old group, at 36.7%. In contrast, the adoption of digital technology among older people is not very high, with only 1.5% of respondents aged 55 and over. There is parity in the gender distribution, with 50.9% of respondents being male and 47.1% being female, in addition to 2.0% who have opted not to formally share their gender identity.

So far as occupational status is concerned, the largest group comprises employees in the private sector (41.2%), with university students coming in as the next largest group (33.7%). This occupational distribution perfectly matches the income distribution as reported; a significant 40.0% of the respondents report having a monthly income between 20,001 and 40,000 BDT, while 27.8% of the respondents report having a monthly income below 20,000 BDT. These socio-economic data validate that the use of these new tools is well targeted towards young urban professionals and students who are on the lookout for daily convenience.

Lastly, there's the platform preference info, which exhibits an extremely consolidated electronic marketplace. Among the surveyed respondents, a whopping 63.5% prefer Foodpanda over Pathao Food, which comes in a distant second with 24.3%, while Shohoz Food and Foodii, with 7.9% and 4.2%, respectively, form a minuscule share of the overall market among this respondent group.

Common Method Bias (CMB) Assessment

Since quantitative data for the independent and dependent variables were gathered simultaneously, the possibility of common method bias (CMB) was assessed statistically using the full collinearity assessment. Variance inflation factor (VIF) values are used to determine the degree of pathological collinearity and common method bias in variance-based structural equation modeling: A model can be considered free of pathological collinearity and common method bias if all the VIF values are equal to or less than the conservative threshold of 3.3. A systematic extraction and evaluation of the VIF values for each of the measurement items were conducted, and the values ranged from 1.532 to 1.856. The highest VIF value for a single variable (1.856) was much lower than the threshold of 3.3, so there is no indication of common method bias in the data, and the validity of the subsequent prediction models is intact.

Measurement Model Assessment

The evaluation of the measurement model determined the reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of the survey instrument. Internal consistency reliability was found to be strong, as Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.797 to 0.822 and composite reliability (CR) values ranged from 0.867 to 0.888, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 for all the latent constructs. Indicator outer loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) were used to check convergent validity. The outer loadings of all the items in the measuring instruments were considered strong, ranging from 0.753 to 0.862, and were greater than 0.708. Moreover, all of the AVEs were above 0.50, indicating that more than half of the variance of each indicator was accounted for by its respective latent variable. Figure 2 illustrates the PLS-SEM measurement model, in which the eight latent constructs are linked to their 29 indicators. The figure shows that every outer loading exceeds the 0.708 threshold, confirming that each indicator is reliably represented by its construct.

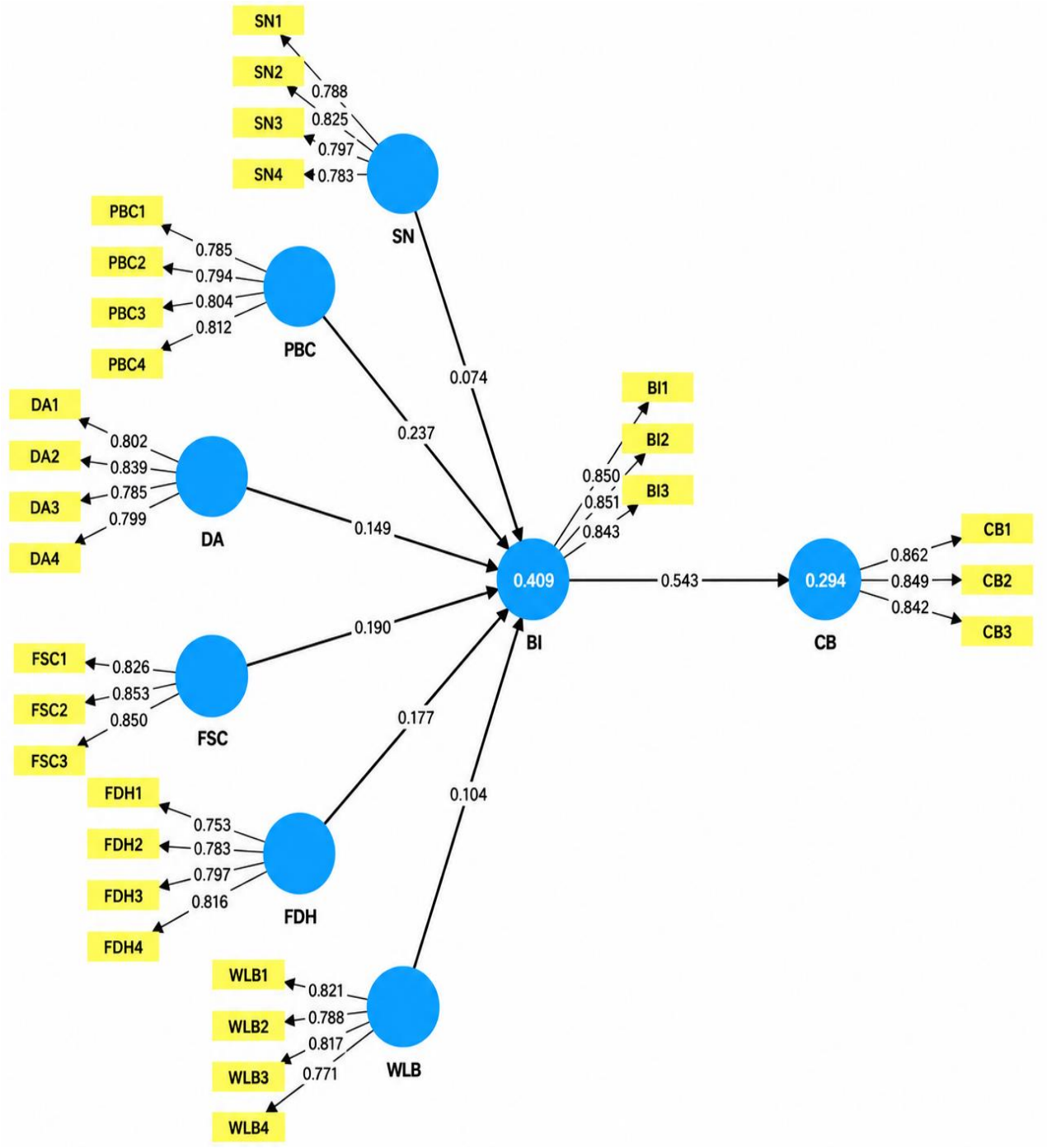


Figure 2: The PLS-SEM Measurement Model

The consolidated reliability and convergent validity metrics are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2: Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Items	Outer Loadings	VIF	Cronbach's Alpha	CR (ρc)	AVE
Behavioral Intention (BI)	BI1	0.850	1.708	0.805	0.885	0.719
	BI2	0.851	1.763			
	BI3	0.843	1.748			
Continued Behavior (CB)	CB1	0.862	1.856	0.810	0.888	0.725
	CB2	0.849	1.702			
	CB3	0.842	1.770			
Dining Attitudes (DA)	DA1	0.802	1.811	0.822	0.881	0.650
	DA2	0.839	1.762			
	DA3	0.785	1.587			
	DA4	0.799	1.733			
Food Delivery Hygiene (FDH)	FDH1	0.753	1.532	0.797	0.867	0.621
	FDH2	0.783	1.573			
	FDH3	0.797	1.648			
	FDH4	0.816	1.620			
Food Safety Concerns (FSC)	FSC1	0.826	1.665	0.797	0.880	0.711
	FSC2	0.853	1.741			
	FSC3	0.850	1.682			
Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)	PBC1	0.785	1.602	0.811	0.876	0.638
	PBC2	0.794	1.607			
	PBC3	0.804	1.695			
	PBC4	0.812	1.724			
Subjective Norms (SN)	SN1	0.788	1.697	0.811	0.875	0.637
	SN2	0.825	1.716			
	SN3	0.797	1.628			
	SN4	0.783	1.600			
Work-Life Balance (WLB)	WLB1	0.821	1.760	0.812	0.876	0.639
	WLB2	0.788	1.614			
	WLB3	0.817	1.670			
	WLB4	0.771	1.622			

The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations was used to evaluate discriminant validity. This criterion ensures that the latent constructs are empirically different from each other. The correlations obtained from the scales in Table 3 were all significantly lower than the conservative value of 0.85, and the highest correlation was obtained between Behavioral Intention and Continued Behavior (0.670). Thus, the measurement model had good discriminant validity.

Table 3: Discriminant Validity (HTMT Ratio)

Construct	BI	CB	DA	FDH	FSC	PBC	SN	WLB
BI								
CB	0.670							
DA	0.532	0.530						
FDH	0.536	0.543	0.429					
FSC	0.562	0.553	0.452	0.432				
PBC	0.595	0.539	0.474	0.408	0.439			
SN	0.435	0.554	0.440	0.416	0.410	0.370		
WLB	0.488	0.508	0.440	0.420	0.426	0.461	0.412	

Structural Model Assessment

The overall predictive relevance and model fit were first examined before testing the hypothesized paths. In Figure 3, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) for the estimated model was 0.075, which adequately met the suggested criterion of < 0.08 and implied an acceptable fit of the model. The explanatory power of the structural model was significant, as the independent variables in the model collectively contributed 40.9 per cent of the variance in Behavioral Intention, and Behavioral Intention contributed 29.4 per cent of the variance in Continued Behavior.

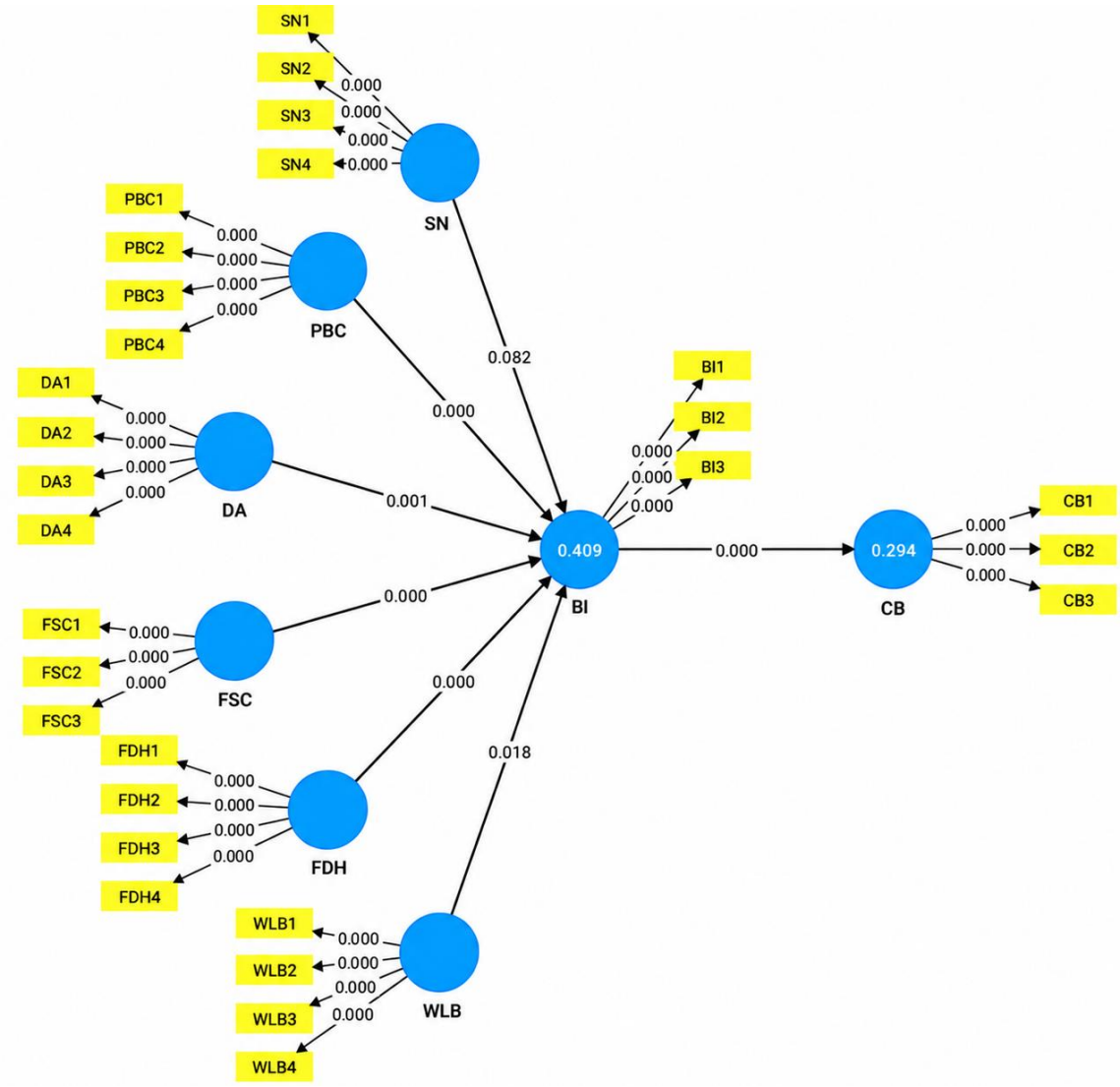


Figure 3: The PLS-SEM Structural Model

A bootstrapping procedure utilizing 5,000 resamples was executed to assess the statistical significance of the direct effects (Table 4). The analysis revealed that Perceived Behavioral Control (β = 0.237, p < 0.001), Food Safety Concerns (β = 0.190, p < 0.001), Food Delivery Hygiene (β = 0.177, p < 0.001), Dining Attitudes (β = 0.149, p = 0.001), and Work-Life Balance (β = 0.104, p = 0.018) all exerted significant, positive direct effects on Behavioral Intention. Interestingly, the direct influence of Subjective Norms on Behavioral Intention was statistically non-significant (β = 0.074, p = 0.082). Finally, Behavioral Intention demonstrated a powerful, highly significant direct effect on Continued Behavior (β = 0.543, p < 0.001).

Table 4: Direct Effects and Hypothesis Testing

Path	Original Sample (β)	Standard Deviation	T-Statistics	p-value	Decision
DA → BI	0.149	0.045	3.336	0.001	Supported
FDH → BI	0.177	0.042	4.190	0.000	Supported
FSC → BI	0.190	0.043	4.463	0.000	Supported
PBC → BI	0.237	0.046	5.169	0.000	Supported
SN → BI	0.074	0.042	1.740	0.082	Not Supported
WLB → BI	0.104	0.044	2.373	0.018	Supported
BI → CB	0.543	0.035	15.531	0.000	Supported

In order to assess the overall mediating effect of Behavioral Intention in the conceptual framework, the total indirect effects were calculated (Table 5). The bootstrapping results showed the effectiveness of Behavioral Intention as a mediator between the basic constructs and the final outcome variable. Specifically, Perceived Behavioral Control (β = 0.129, p < 0.001), Food Safety Concerns (β = 0.103, p < 0.001), Food Delivery Hygiene (β = 0.096, p < 0.001), Dining Attitudes (β = 0.081, p = 0.001), and Work-Life Balance (β = 0.056, p = 0.020) all exhibited significant positive indirect effects on Continued Behavior through Behavioral Intention. Consistent with the findings on direct effects, the indirect effect of Subjective Norms on Continued Behavior failed to reach statistical significance (β = 0.040, p = 0.092; see Table 5).

Table 5: Indirect Effects (Mediation Analysis)

Indirect Path	Original Sample (β)	Standard Deviation	T-Statistics	p-value	Significance
DA → BI → CB	0.081	0.025	3.199	0.001	Significant
FDH → BI → CB	0.096	0.024	4.029	0.000	Significant
FSC → BI → CB	0.103	0.024	4.297	0.000	Significant
PBC → BI → CB	0.129	0.026	4.884	0.000	Significant
SN → BI → CB	0.040	0.024	1.686	0.092	Not Significant
WLB → BI → CB	0.056	0.024	2.325	0.020	Significant

Qualitative Thematic Findings (FGDs)

Thematic analysis of transcripts from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) was conducted to extract themes and systematically interpret the underlying socio-psychological understanding of the quantitative structural findings. This inductive analytical phase successfully distilled 3 major themes which, in turn, capture the contextual behavioral aspects of Bangladesh's digital food service market. To strengthen the integration of the two strands, each theme below is explicitly linked to the corresponding structural path and its β-coefficient and p-value from Table 4, forming a joint display that connects the quantitative pathways to the qualitative narratives that explain them.

Theme 1: The Societal Push Versus Digital Friction

The qualitative results revealed a systematic effort to demystify the statistical non-significance of Subjective Norms in the structural model (β = 0.074, p = 0.082). The majority of participants portrayed the use of MFOA as a very personal and pragmatic practice, rather than a social practice. To this end, one participant observed that digital ordering was a social phenomenon in the past, but it has turned into a "solitary utility," meaning that no effort is made to validate people's use of an app with others. This was also confirmed by another participant, who stated that the platforms were only the "personal necessity" of each individual due to their lack of time and hunger, and not because of social media influence. In contrast, the importance of Perceived Behavioral Control was strongly emphasized. The participants expressed a strong concern about digital friction and demanded that they be able to continue using it only if the interfaces became faster and digital payments were executed seamlessly. When the technological infrastructure is complicated and unreliable, however, the

user gives it up immediately, which is perfectly consistent with the highly significant quantitative pathway from behavioral control to usage intention.

Theme 2: Trust Equivalencies in the Post-Pandemic Era

The focus groups provided a strong psychological perspective on why consumers distinguish between intrinsic food preparation and extrinsic last-mile logistics, justifying the delineation of the Food Safety Concern and Food Delivery Hygiene constructs in the expanded TPB. The participants found the value of internal hygiene ratings for restaurants to be a starting point, and the physical delivery aspect was always mentioned as the strong point of post-COVID responsibilities. Participants shared numerous first impressions of delivery riders and their packaging upon arrival. Physical hygiene signals (tamper-proof seals, stapled bags, and the obvious cleanliness of the bike and the rider's thermal equipment) were often mentioned as the ultimate factors in establishing trust. It is possible to promise a completely hygienic kitchen, but if the resulting product is not the same, everything is undermined. These insights verify visual logistical hygiene as a tangible risk mitigator, which is an excellent explanation for the strong predictive power of both safety and hygiene constructs in the structural model (FSC → BI: $\beta = 0.190$, $p < 0.001$; FDH → BI: $\beta = 0.177$, $p < 0.001$).

Theme 3: The Commodification of Time and Work-Life Balance

The empirical evidence from the participant narratives was overwhelmingly in favour of adding WLB as a new factor in the continuous adoption of digital technology. Amid the pressures of urban life in Bangladesh, professionals, in particular, actively reinterpreted MFOAs from luxury to basic, everyday survival services. The qualitative discourse revealed a general theme of "commodified temporality", as users do not simply use platforms as a resource to order food but, in a sense, weaponize them as a way of dominating their personal and professional time. One respondent highlighted this effect as "purchasing an additional 45 minutes of work time" to achieve the company's goals. Moreover, the apps were often described as important stress-relief products, vital for counterbalancing the exhaustion of the work week. This kind of deep dependence on digital service delivery, which eliminates the hassles of food preparation, is fully in line with the direct contribution to the intention to change behavior, especially the continued behavioral intention observed in the quantitative analysis (WLB → BI: $\beta = 0.104$, $p = 0.018$).

DISCUSSION

Triangulated Synthesis of Findings

The current digital food service environment is very complex and difficult to fully decipher in emerging economies using one method alone (Nivornusit, Kraiwanit, & Limna, 2024). This study used an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design to rigorously explore the factors influencing the continuance behavior of mobile food ordering applications (MFOAs) in Bangladesh. Results from the triangulation strongly support the predictive power of the expanded theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). The analysis in the study combines deep qualitative focus group narratives with rigorous structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) (Hair et al., 2019), showing how the socio-psychological mechanisms that drive post-adoption consumption are intricately multidimensional. The qualitative findings also provide strong support for and significantly expand the quantitative pathways of the constructs, implying that ongoing technological uptake in this demographic is much more complex than simply being driven by transactional utility; instead, it is fueled by a sophisticated algorithm of temporal commodification, infrastructural reliability, and highly visual risk-minimizing approaches (Alalwan, 2020; Rita et al., 2023).

The Role of Social Influence and Behavioral Control

Contrary to the general theoretical beliefs about deeply collectivistic cultures, the structural model showed that there was no significant impact of Subjective Norms on behavioral intention ($\beta = 0.074$, $p = 0.082$). The perspective gained from the focus group discussions is pivotal to understanding this key statistical anomaly,

particularly how participants re-articulated MFOA usage as completely "lonely use" rather than a "socially acknowledged and community-led activity" (Troise et al., 2021). The qualitative narratives showed that the development of the digital market has taken the 'novelty value' out of food delivery apps; therefore, the influence of peers and pressure from the social environment no longer plays a vital role in decisions about using or continuing to use these apps (Hsiao et al., 2016). The strongest direct effect among all the independent variables evaluated on the dependent variable of behavioral intention was that of Perceived Behavioral Control ($\beta = 0.237$, $p < 0.001$). Qualitative findings directly relate this influential predictive relationship to the high sensitivity Bangladeshi consumers show toward digital friction. The narratives revealed that perceived user control was also very much restricted by infrastructural reliability, which implied that, as seamless digital payment gateways and highly responsive user interfaces laid the foundation of perceived user control, there was no question of platforms remaining (Amoroso & Lim, 2017; Atulkar & Singh, 2021).

Attitudes, Safety, and Hygiene Paradigms

Dining Attitude was found to have a significant positive effect on behavioral intention ($\beta = 0.149$, $p = 0.001$), supporting the latest empirical evidence that today's consumers seem to value the unprecedented convenience of digital aggregators, both in terms of utility and hedonic value (Akdim et al., 2022; Al Amin et al., 2021). What is important about this current work is that the cognitive separation of Food Safety Concerns and Food Delivery Hygiene is empirically supported by the factor analysis, with beta values of 0.190 for the first and 0.177 for the latter, both with significance at $p < 0.001$. In many exhaustive studies that were conducted prior to the pandemic, these variables were often lumped together and interpreted as a single risk factor (Yeo et al., 2017); but these triangulated data unequivocally show that there are clear and separate assurances needed to ensure post-pandemic consumer psychology. The qualitative narratives showed that although users value intrinsically positive safety measures in a restaurant kitchen, their trust goes beyond this and is completely built during the final logistical step of delivery. The hygiene signals are direct, visible, and immediate risk mitigation measures that directly increase platform loyalty in the long term, as demonstrated in the literature by Cheng et al. (2021); Khan et al. (2023) and Shah et al. (2022), namely, tamper-proof packaging, hermetically sealed containers, and immaculately clean thermal delivery equipment.

Work-Life Balance as a Modern Catalyst

Madinga et al. (2023) identified and incorporated the strategic role of work-life balance in the extended TPB model, which served as a key factor and a new finding in this research, as well as a strong determinant of the continued adoption of digital food services. The qualitative thematic analysis strongly validated that, in the context of corporate businesses in Bangladesh (where people experience immense pressure and rapid urbanization), MFOAs have become a necessity of life. The respondents explicitly identified MFOAs as an important means of reducing stress because they found these apps useful for eliminating the friction of traditional food preparation, especially during times of stress (Cho et al., 2019; Joshi, Garg, Kumar, & Dhiman, 2025). Urban professionals outsource personal and professional time by purchasing their food. Such substantial temporal commodification is, of course, directly related to the highly entrenched and continued use of this behaviour found in quantitative structural data, thus redefining the basic value promise of the app.

The Mediating Mechanism of Behavioral Intention

The structural model clearly showed that Behavioral Intention is the cognitive pathway toward Continued Behavior with a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.543$ and p-value < 0.001. In addition, the strong mediation results showed that, alone, all the independent variables (positive dining attitudes, mitigated safety concerns, and temporal convenience) are quite insufficient to lead to long-term loyalty (Bhattacherjee, 2001). These basic components need to be gradually manifested as a clear, deliberate use of platforms in actual, permanent, and continuing behaviors (Limayem et al., 2007; Zhao & Bacao, 2020). This very potent mediation effect provides ample evidence of the high level of cognitive activity needed to get consumers to switch from situational use of the applications to the establishment of a routine or habit in their digital behavior.

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study theoretically added the multidimensionality of post-pandemic digital food consumption to the traditional Theory of Planned Behavior framework and validated this multidimensionality from an empirical perspective (Ajzen, 1991). The novel combination of work-life balance with the structural bifurcation of intrinsic food safety and extrinsic delivery hygiene offers better contextualization for a predictive model especially designed for this new digital economy (Wang et al., 2022; Yeo et al., 2021). Managerially, it's highly actionable intelligence for MFOA executives in the form of triangles. Therefore, in order to sustain long-term customer retention, digital platforms should always focus on the infrastructural reliability of the UI/UX, which in turn contributes consequential immediate-time clarity to users' perceived user control (Venkatesh et al., 2012). Moreover, marketing should actively turn the tide toward the recognition and enforcement of transparency recording (visual tamper-proofing methodologies) while creating strategic corporate partnerships that should fearlessly put forward the unique value that MFOAs are time-management utilities indispensable for the urban professional's lifestyle.

LIMITATIONS AND STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Limitations

The present study is a considerable contribution both theoretically and practically, yet it has certain methodological drawbacks for which fruitful discussions can be pursued in the future. The quantitative stage mostly involved a single-point-in-time (cross-sectional) survey design that aimed to “snapshot” consumer attitudes and technical intentions at one time. Digital habits are continually evolving; in the future, it would be better to use longitudinal methodologies to dynamically follow the crystallization of behavioral intention into continued behavior over the longer term. In addition, the sampling was purposive, which inherently limited the population to only the active users in these regions, particularly those from the major urban and commercial centers of Bangladesh. For this reason, the results cannot necessarily be generalized to populations outside urban centers that have different infrastructural and cultural norms. Further research needs to broaden the scope of the study systematically, reaching non-digital natives and low-tech users, thus enabling comparative geographical studies. Lastly, although the mixed-methods design was effective in reducing common method bias, inevitable evaluation vulnerabilities exist with the use of self-reported survey data despite rigorous procedures being in place. Future researchers are strongly encouraged to incorporate an experimental research design or secondary, objective behavioral data directly from the algorithms on the platform. These methodological approaches would more precisely identify the exact causal impact of the changes made to the user interface or the visual hygiene interventions on actual continuous purchasing behavior, which would further elevate the literature on the adoption of digital services to a theoretical level.

Strategic Recommendations

Based on the 'triangulated empirical evidence,' a few practical recommendations can be made for MFOA executives, restaurant partners, and policymakers. For one, platform makers should work tirelessly to meet the high bar of infrastructural reliability and live up to users' expectations in order to overcome this effect. User interfaces must be continually optimized, digital friction reduced to a minimum, and flawlessly secure payment gateways integrated (Sirigina, 2023), without which user retention is impossible. Second, awareness of the important cognitive difference between food safety and service-level cleanliness is needed to shift marketing strategies toward clear risk management. Platforms need to have hygiene safeguards in place and advocate for them, especially tamper-proof packages, sanitized and standardized thermal equipment, and aggressive contactless delivery services to help ease pandemic-era concerns. Third, recognizing that work-life balance is a new standard, corporate strategies need to be devised for the appropriate repositioning of MFOAs as critical utilities of time management and not as an optional luxury. To really penetrate and secure these platforms in everyday corporate life, promotional campaigns should evoke a sense of ‘stress-lightened’ time and highlight

the 'time gained.' To conclude, based on these findings, policies should be brought into line with established national standards for digital food-delivery hygiene requirements, protecting consumers and encouraging food-delivery business growth in a sustainable manner. More specifically, policymakers could consider: (i) a national digital food-delivery hygiene certification or labelling scheme, jointly administered by platforms and municipal food-safety authorities; (ii) minimum service-level standards for delivery-time reliability and payment-gateway uptime; and (iii) incentive structures that encourage platforms to publish verifiable, consumer-facing hygiene-compliance data.

CONCLUSION

The fast-paced digitalization trend in the food service industry in Bangladesh requires a fine understanding of consumer behavior post-adoption. The use of an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design in this study was successful because it aimed to examine the determinants of Mobile Food Ordering Application (MFOA) continuous use. The research strategically draws on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) for understanding and prediction, which considers post-pandemic contextual factors. The results support the empirical findings and provide in-depth information based on the qualitative thematic analysis, which indicated several factors that have been identified as sustaining the act of using digital food as a non-social validation norm or as a subjective norm. Instead, the key lies in a complex technological mix, rigorous visual codes, and the non-negotiable issue of work-life balance. However, over time, this representation of behavioral intention turns into a powerful mediator, facilitating the formation of utilitarian and safety-type evaluations and making these behaviors more lasting and sustainable in the digital sphere. Such a comprehensive understanding is undoubtedly essential in order to guarantee the sustainable development of the digital food system in the long run. This study is unique in its theoretical contribution of adding food safety concerns, food delivery hygiene, and work-life balance to the Theory of Planned Behavior and in its use of mixed-methods triangulation to validate the model, rather than relying solely on quantitative analysis. In practical terms, the results provide MFOA platforms with guidance on how to remain relevant in the long run, specifically by investing in infrastructure reliability, making hygiene compliance visible to consumers, and offering their services as time-management tools instead of discretionary conveniences.

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INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD STATEMENT: The Ethical Committee of Jashore University of Science and Technology, Bangladesh, has granted approval for this study (Ref. No. JUST/MKT/964).
Informed Consent Statement: Electronic informed consent was obtained from all online survey respondents, while both verbal and written informed consent were obtained from all focus group participants. All data were anonymized to protect participant confidentiality.
TRANSPARENCY: The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.
COMPETING INTERESTS: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.
AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS: Both authors contributed equally to the conception and design of the study. Both authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.
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