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Dining in the Digital Age: An Exploration of the Cloud Kitchen Craze

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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Convenience,	Taste and quality are the most important factors to customers, with the ease of ordering
Cost-saving,	through online delivery applications coming in second. The service experience, including
Delivery,	timely delivery and order accuracy, is also a significant consideration, while
Flexibility,	cost-effectiveness, though not the top priority, remains an important factor in the
Ghost Kitchen	decision-making process. With the increasing demand for convenience among consumers,
	the evolution and expansion of delivery platform technology are evident. Cloud kitchens
	leverage networking, social media, and technology to adapt to evolving consumer
	preferences in the online food delivery market. This research hopes to understand how
	convenience perceived influences habitual food ordering from cloud kitchen platforms by
	residents of Coimbatore. This was achieved through a sample of 390 residents who took part
	in organized surveys to provide their perceptions and usage patterns. Binary Logistic
	Regression was used in the research to examine the relationship between perceived
	convenience (independent variable) and the frequency of ordering food through cloud
	kitchen platforms (dependent variable). Findings show a strong positive correlation where
	greater perceived convenience is related to greater regularity in platform usage

1. INTRODUCTION

Cloud kitchens, or ghost kitchens or virtual restaurants, are a new food service business model. Cloud kitchens function without a dine-in space, focusing solely on food preparation and delivery using online food ordering

platforms (Mathur, 2023). The model has gained massive momentum over the past couple of years, especially in densely populated urban cities and increased dependence on online food delivery platforms. Cloud kitchens gained popularity due to various factors, such

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as reduced overhead expenses compared to conventional restaurants, increased flexibility in menu offerings, and the capacity to embrace quick changes in consumer behavior. Cloud kitchens adopt technology and data science to streamline operations, improve customer experience, and increase market reach. Cloud kitchens have revolutionized the food industry landscape, opening new avenues for entrepreneurs conventional food chains. The COVID-19 pandemic hastened the transition in consumer behavior towards online food delivery platforms, opening an enabling environment for cloud kitchens to grow (Sarbhai, 2023). With the limitation of dining-in and increased concerns for safety and hygiene, most customers shifted to online platforms to place food orders from home. The increased demand encouraged restaurants to shift to cloud kitchen models to serve the growing online market and ensure business continuity. The pandemic also exposed the convenience and accessibility requirements for food service, further speeding up cloud kitchen adoption. With consumers becoming more accustomed to the convenience and ease of online food delivery, the trend is likely to continue even after the pandemic has subsided. Coimbatore, a metropolitan city in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, provides a strong geographic setting for consumer adoption of cloud kitchens (Verma, 2025). With a diverse population, a strong economy, and a growing population of tech-literate individuals, Coimbatore provides a niche market for online food ordering services. The city population is increasingly adopting digital technologies for most aspects of life, including ordering food. This makes Coimbatore an appropriate place to study the determinants of consumer behavior towards cloud kitchens and gain insights into the local market's specific needs and preferences. A study of cloud kitchen adoption in Coimbatore can be useful for companies seeking to expand their operations in the region and for policymakers seeking to support the development of the food service sector.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Defining Perceived Convenience in the Context of Cloud Kitchens

Perceived convenience, within the context of cloud kitchens, is a multifaceted concept involving several determinants of convenience and efficiency of online

ordering food (Marri, 2023). Determinants involved are time-saving, ease of use, and accessibility. Time-saving is the extent to which cloud kitchens save effort and time to procure a meal compared to traditional dining restaurants. Ease of use is the convenience of utilizing the online ordering platform and ease of the process involved, such as accessing the app or website, ordering, and payment for the meal. Accessibility is the scope of cloud kitchen services available to a large consumer population irrespective of their location, physical limitations, or technological levels. When the consumer perceives a high level of convenience across these dimensions, they are more likely to adopt and use cloud kitchen platforms regularly. Perceived convenience has an influential role to play in impacting consumers' attitude and intention to use cloud kitchen platforms (Moyeenudin, 2020). When consumers experience cloud kitchens to be convenient, they are likely to have a positive attitude towards such services. Such positive attitudes, in turn, have significant influence on their intention to use cloud kitchens to order food. The more convenient a cloud kitchen is perceived to be, the stronger the consumer's intention to use it. This relationship is mediated by various factors, including perceived value, trust, and satisfaction. Consumers who perceive cloud kitchens to provide a convenient and valuable service are likely to trust such platforms and be satisfied with the experience. This results in a higher intention to use cloud kitchens in the future. Mobile food ordering applications play a crucial role in enabling the convenience of ordering from cloud kitchens (Marri, 2023. The applications have a simple interface that allows consumers to navigate menus effortlessly, order, track deliveries, and pay. The addition of features such as customized suggestions, order customization, and real-time ratings also enhances the convenience of ordering. Mobile applications enable consumers to order cloud kitchen services anywhere and at any time, which is convenient and hassle-free. The presence of these applications has significantly boosted the popularity of cloud kitchens because they enable simple and convenient online ordering of food.

2.2 Routine Usage and Customer Loyalty in the Cloud Kitchen Model

The distinction between initial adoption and repeat usage is crucial in determining the success of the cloud kitchen model (Reinaldilas, 2023). Initial adoption refers

to the initial usage of a cloud kitchen service by a customer. The initial experience is typically spurred by curiosity, promotional discounts, or the need for a convenient meal option. For a cloud kitchen to be successful, initial adopters must be converted to repeat users. Repeat usage is a repeat purchase behavior and ongoing use of the platform. The journey from initial adoption to repeat usage must be centered on offering consistent quality, excellent customer support, and an easy user experience. Customer loyalty in the cloud kitchen model is spurred by various factors, such as satisfaction with marketing mix and service quality (Reinaldilas, 2023). Service quality encompasses all facets of the customer experience, including the accuracy of the meals, the delivery speed, the response of customer support, and the quality of food. A quality marketing mix, including pricing strategy, promotional discounts, and branding efforts, can also spur customer loyalty. When customers are satisfied with the service quality and derive value from the marketing mix, they are more likely to become loyal customers to the cloud kitchen platform. Such loyalty is seen in repeat purchases, word-of-mouth referrals, and long-term use of the brand. Positive experience with cloud kitchen platforms greatly impacts repeat purchases and long-term use (Rahman, 2025). When customers have a positive experience, they are likely to order from the same cloud kitchen in the future. This positive experience may be fueled by a variety of factors such as food quality, accuracy and efficiency of the delivery, courtesy of the customer support, and simplicity of the platform. Repeat orders are one of the measures of customer satisfaction and loyalty, and they define the long-term success of the cloud kitchen. Long-term engagement with the platform, such as subscribing to newsletters, taking part in loyalty programs, and leaving good reviews, even more increases the trust between the customer and the cloud kitchen.

2.3 Factors Influencing Perceived Convenience of Cloud Kitchens

User experience and app interface are some of the key drivers of perceived ease of use for cloud kitchen platforms (Al-Qadhi, 2024). The app interface must be easy to use, simple, and visually appealing. Users must be able to easily navigate to what they are seeking, whether a specific restaurant, a specific dish, or information about the delivery options. The user

experience must be efficient and seamless, with few friction points that could irritate or discourage users. Factors like quick loading, concise and clear information, and responsive design that supports different screen sizes can all contribute significantly to creating a good user experience and improving the perceived ease of use. Variety of food and menu options are key drivers of improving the perceived convenience for consumers using cloud kitchens (Verma, 2025). A cloud kitchen platform that offers variety in cuisines, dishes, and dietary options is likely to attract a high number of consumers and cater to the diverse tastes and preferences. Consumers prefer to have variety at their fingertips, as it saves effort and time in searching for different restaurants or cuisines. The ability to customize orders, such as excluding or adding ingredients, also improves the perceived convenience, as it allows consumers to customize their meals based on their specific needs and preferences. Delivery speed and reliability contribute directly to perceived time-saving, which is an important part of convenience (Rahman, 2025). Consumers expect their orders to be delivered promptly and correctly. Order delays or order errors may lead to frustration and disappointment, lowering the perceived convenience of the cloud kitchen platform. Cloud kitchens that are dedicated to well-planned delivery systems, accurate order processing, and effective communication with customers are likely to enhance the perceived time-saving and overall convenience of the service. Real-time order tracking, estimated delivery times, and advance communication in the event of potential delays are some of the aspects that can further contribute to the positive customer experience.

2.4 Social and Economic Factors Affecting Cloud Kitchen Usage

Social media promotion and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) are major drivers of influencing consumer awareness and purchase intention toward cloud kitchens (Sanny, 2022). Social media websites offer an effective vehicle for cloud kitchens to communicate with a large number of audiences, publicize offerings, and engage with prospective customers. Successful social media promotion programs are able to make consumers aware of cloud kitchens, generate interest, and influence attitudes toward cloud kitchens. Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) like ratings, reviews, and

recommendations play a significant influence on consumer selection (Sanny, 2022). Favorable e-WOM enhances confidence and credibility, unfavorable e-WOM deter prospective consumers. Cloud kitchens who actively manage online reputation and stimulate favorable e-WOM will be more successful in attracting and retaining consumers. Price policies, offers, and discounting have considerable impact on perceived value and cost, which are key drivers of usage of cloud kitchens (Sanny, 2022). Prospective consumers are likely to order more frequently from cloud kitchens offering competitive price, attractive discount, and favorable promotions. Price policies must be designed carefully such that profitability will be balanced against affordability, assuring access to a large number of prospective consumers. Discount and promotional offers may be used to stimulate trial, induce repeat purchase, and provoke order frequency. Cloud kitchens, which clearly specify the price policies and promotional offers, have a higher tendency to attract price-sensitive and generate their sales consumers Demographic variables like age, income, and education level are associated with cloud kitchen usage in Coimbatore (Al-Qadhi, 2024). Young consumers, who are tech-savvy and accustomed to online ordering, are more likely to use cloud kitchens than elderly consumers. Other higher-end consumers, who are less sensitive to price and value the convenience, will further be likely to use cloud kitchens. Education can further influence the use of cloud kitchens, as more educated consumers will be more aware of the benefits of online ordering of food and better equipped to use digital platforms. Cloud kitchens can use these demographic linkages to inform their marketing strategies and service models for specific target segments.

2.5 The Role of Trust and Food Safety in Routine Usage Consumer trust is a mediator of usage and perceived convenience of cloud kitchens (Verma, 2025). Even if the consumer finds a cloud kitchen extremely convenient, they may not use the services if they lack trust in the platform or the food being offered. Trust is dependent on transparency, reliability, and consistency. Consumers need to have the confidence that the cloud kitchen will deliver its promise, order corrections, timely delivery, and quality food. Where trust has been established, the relationship between perceived convenience and usage will be strengthened, leading to adoption and repeat

consumption. Consumer fears of food hygiene and safety standards in cloud kitchens are relevant and can affect their willingness to use the services (Nield, 2024). Cloud kitchens differ from conventional restaurants in that they are likely to be operating behind closed doors, and consumers cannot assess their food safety procedures. This invisibility can be used to fuel fear and skepticism, particularly in the aftermath of food safety scares or health crises. Consumers want to be confident that the cloud kitchen employs strict hygiene procedures, fresh and safe ingredients, and follows proper food handling procedures. Addressing these fears is crucial in building trust and initiating regular use. Vehicles for building trust in cloud kitchens are transparency, certifications, and customer reviews (Sanny, 2022). Transparency involves giving clear and unambiguous information on the operations of the cloud kitchen, including its food sourcing procedures, hygiene procedures, and delivery procedures. Certifications from reputable food safety authorities can also be used to reassure consumers that the cloud kitchen follows some standards of quality. Customer reviews and ratings are a powerful expression of social confirmation, allowing potential customers to see what other customers have experienced with the cloud kitchen. Cloud kitchens that take the time to find and reply to customer feedback, resolving any problems or complaints immediately, can also build trust and credibility.

2.6 Technology and Innovation in Cloud Kitchen Operations

Smart applications and AI technologies significantly influence customer experience and operational effectiveness in cloud kitchens (Al-Qadhi, 2024). Smart applications, e.g., mobile ordering apps and delivery management systems, integrate order process streamlining, enhance customer communication, and optimize routes. AI technologies, e.g., machine learning algorithms and chatbots, can customize recommendations, automate customer support, and forecast demand patterns. These technologies allow cloud kitchens to function more effectively, save costs, and improve the overall customer experience. Cloud kitchens leverage data analytics and personalization to maximize user satisfaction (Al-Qadhi, 2024). Through gathering and analyzing customer preference data, ordering history, and feedback, cloud kitchens are able to derive valuable information on what customers want.

Such data can be employed to offer personalization of recommendations, menu customization, and individualized marketing campaigns to particular groups of customers. Personalization is able to raise user satisfaction as it makes ordering more relevant, convenient, and enjoyable. Cloud kitchens rely significantly on AI-based chatbots and effective delivery mechanisms to enhance customer service (Ali, 2024). AI-powered chatbots can give immediate answers to customer queries, troubleshoot problems, and fulfill orders, freeing human agents to address more complex or delicate scenarios. Streamlined delivery mechanisms, including route-optimized algorithms and real-time tracking, guarantee prompt and accurate order delivery. These technologies ensure a smooth and rewarding customer experience, boosting loyalty and repeat business.

2.7 Challenges and Opportunities for Cloud Kitchens in Coimbatore

Cloud kitchens in Coimbatore are confronted with a number of major challenges such as competition, operational expenses, and customer acquisition. The food delivery market is becoming more congested, with many cloud kitchens and conventional restaurants competing for the attention of customers. Such fierce competition may complicate it for new or smaller cloud kitchens to differentiate themselves and gain customers' attention. Operational expenses, including rent, utilities, and labor, can also prove to be a major challenge, especially for cloud kitchens that are located in prime Customer acquisition expenses, including marketing and advertising costs, can also be high, with cloud kitchens needing to spend money on effective means of attracting and retaining customers. In spite of all these challenges, cloud kitchens in Coimbatore have plenty of opportunities to grow through innovation, strategic collaborations, and penetration into new markets (Fridayani, 2021). Innovation in menu options, delivery of services, and technology can assist cloud kitchens to differentiate themselves from others and draw new customers. Strategic partnerships with complementary businesses, such as grocery stores or delivery services, can expand their reach and reduce costs. Expansion into new markets, such as catering services or corporate lunch programs, can also provide new revenue streams and growth opportunities. Cloud kitchens also need to address potential issues related to

sustainability, waste management, and environmental impact (Chen, 2022). The rise of online food delivery has led to increased packaging waste, contributing to environmental pollution. Cloud kitchens should adopt sustainable practices, such as using eco-friendly materials, reducing packaging food waste, promoting recycling. They can also partner with environmental organizations to offset their carbon footprint and promote environmental awareness among their customers. By addressing these issues, cloud kitchens can enhance their brand image and appeal to environmentally conscious consumers.

2.8 Purchase Dynamics of Consumer in Cloud Kitchen Practice

The consumer buying decision process encompasses the series of steps a consumer takes when acquiring products or services by exchanging money in the market. This process unfolds before, during, and after the purchase, typically divided into three key stages (Qazzafi, 2019). In the realm of consumer behavior, the purchase decision stage, as described by Kotler and Armstrong (2014), represents the critical juncture in the buyer's process where an individual deliberates on whether to proceed with acquiring a particular product. "Consumer behavior" is, according to Engel, Blackwell, and Mansard, the intricate sequence of behavior and decision-making processes individuals undergo when they make purchases of goods and services for personal consumption. Louden and Bitta (Syahirah Idris et al., 2023) expound on this by defining "consumer behavior" as the holistic process that includes the selection, physical behavior, and decision-making associated with assessing, acquiring, using, or disposing of goods and services. According to the findings of the research presented herein, (Mramba & Mramba, 2015)points out that a number of factors, ranging from personal, psychological, social, and cultural in nature, bear an impact on a consumer's buying decisions. Such complexity becomes a challenge for marketers to effectively forecast consumer behavior towards particular products. Likewise, (Djatmiko & Pradana, 2016) posit that the purchase decision phase is where consumers seal their buying decisions, usually motivated by the intent to buy or use a product (Latip et al., 2021). Importantly, consumer purchase decisions are significantly influenced by considerations such as perceived benefit, benefit risk, and consumer knowledge. Companies are able to customize their marketing strategies, product attributes, prices, and channels to speak more eloquently to their target market by learning about these triggers that set a consumer to buy on impulse. This customized strategy improves customer satisfaction, encourages loyalty, and promotes good word-of-mouth recommendations.

2.9 Perceptible Benefits Exploration of Consumers

Cloud kitchen services, though risky, have significant advantages that affect consumer purchasing behavior. perceived advantages include consumer satisfaction, convenience, variety of products, and minimized risks. In the tourism and hospitality industries, subjective and objective knowledge significantly contribute to the construction of perceived benefits and risks. Various forms of knowledge, as noted by (Mandasari et al., 2023) and (Rihn et al., 2021), have different effects. When customers feel personal conveniences, a broad range of quality food offerings, and social benefits such as environmental sustainability and economic contribution, they will develop trust and are more likely to look at cloud kitchens for future consumption. Cloud kitchens can be considered a boon to the local economy, providing new opportunities for both experienced and novice restaurateurs to enter or grow in markets with low overhead costs. Moreover, these kitchens contribute to traffic reduction, carbon footprint, and food waste (Talha Talukder et al., 2022). Perceived advantages of cloud kitchens are influenced by both cognitive shortcuts and real user experiences, whereas perceived dangers tend to result from the way the human mind interprets information (Ula & Fauzi, 2021). Holbrook (2005) emphasizes the significance of perception in interpreting intentions. Consumers complete their purchase when they expect to obtain the desired benefits from their online purchases. Certain consumer expectations, including discounts and product options, also affect this process decision-making (Gou et al., 2021). Hence, exploring the potential relationship between consumers' perceived benefits and their purchase decisions in cloud kitchen services is still relevant for future studies.

Though past research has analyzed consumer behavior and technology's role in food delivery, not much has been researched particularly on how convenience perceived affects the habitual use of cloud kitchens in Tier-II cities such as Coimbatore. There also remains a research gap to know the combined effect of ease in technology, trust, and food safety on frequent consumer interaction with cloud kitchen platforms. This research focuses on filling these gaps by examining the most important factors influencing repeated use and customer loyalty towards cloud kitchens in Coimbatore.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used standardized survey questionnaire to collect data from consumers utilizing cloud kitchen platforms in Coimbatore. The questionnaire involved Likert scale-type questions in order to determine perceptions of convenience and frequency of usage of platforms. A sample of 390 respondents was selected for the study to ensure the provision of strong statistical analysis. In order to determine the link between the perceived convenience of cloud kitchen platforms (the independent variable) and the frequency of food orders placed through these platforms (the dependent variable), Binary Logistic Regression was the primary analytical technique used. Using this technique, the researchers were able to ascertain how consumers' perceptions of convenience affect their propensity to routinely use cloud kitchen services. Cronbach's alpha was used to evaluate the questionnaire's reliability; the results showed that the survey instrument had strong internal consistency and reliability, with a score exceeding 0.96. SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was used to analyze the data.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table No 1: Case Processing Summary

Unweighted Cases ^a			Percent
	Included in Analysis	390	100.0
Selected Cases	Missing Cases	0	.0
	Total	390	100.0
Unselected Cases			.0
Total			100.0

A case processing summary along with the total number of respondents that were part of the analysis is given in the first section of the output. Specifically, the analysis encompassed data from a total of 390 respondents, as shown in Table No 1.

Table No 2: Dependent Variable Encoding

Original Value	Internal Value
No	0
Yes	1

The coding strategy for the criterion variable is displayed in Table No. 2 as Dependent Variable Encoding Table. In this case, respondents who place regular orders for food from cloud cooking platforms are assigned a number of 1, whereas those who place orders infrequently are assigned a number of 0.

Goodness-of-fit statistics

Block 1: Method = Enter

Table No 3: Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients

		Chi-square	df	Sig.
	Step	477.017	10	.000
Step 1	Block	477.017	10	.000
	Model	477.017	10	.000

The entire model fit is evaluated by the Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients, which are displayed in Table No 3. A significant result suggests a strong fit for the model employed in this study, meaning it fits the data much better than the null model.

Table No 4: Hosmer and Lemeshow Test

Step	Chi-square	df	Sig.
1	.435	5	.994

The model's goodness of fit is assessed using the Hosmer and Lemeshow test, which is displayed in Table No. 4. As this investigation has shown, the model fits the data well when the significance value is higher than 0.05. Consequently, this model indicates that there is no discernible difference between the observed and expected results.

Table No 5: Contingency Table for Hosmer and Lemeshow Test

	Will you order through cloudkitchen repetitively?		,			
		Observed	Expected	Observed	Expected	Total
	1	40	40.000	0	.000	40
	2	40	40.000	0	.000	40
1	3	38	38.466	1	.534	39
Step 1	4	21	20.534	19	19.466	40
S	5	0	.000	35	35.000	35
	6	0	.000	34	34.000	34
	7	0	.000	162	162.000	162

Table No. 5 indicates that the model fits the data quite well. The table validates the model's prediction accuracy by showing a negligible difference between the observed and anticipated values.

Table No 6: Model Summary

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	31.017a	.706	.969

An approximation of the amount of variance in the criterion variable explained by the predictor variables is provided by Table No. 6's Model Summary of the Pseudo R-Square. In particular, the modified Cox & Snell R-Square, known as Nagelkerke's R2, is employed in this context. A significant explanatory power of the model is suggested by the table, which shows that the predictor variables in the model account for about 96.9% of the variation in the criterion variable.

Table No 7: Classification Tablea

1	Observed		Predicted		
15		Will yo	u order	Percentage	
			through		Correct
4 N			cloudkitchen		
			repetitively?		
0			No	Yes	
	Will you order	No	139	0	100.0
т.	through				
Step 1	cloudkitchen	Yes	7	244	97.2
S	repetitively?				
	Overall Percentage				98.2
a. The cut value is .500					

The above table shows the percentage of cases that were correctly classified by the model. For the "No" category, the model correctly classified 100% of the cases. For the "Yes" category, the model accurately classified 97.2% of the cases. Therefore, the value is the overall percentage of correctly classified cases by the model, which in this instance is 98.2%. The cut value is the threshold employed to classify cases into the "No" or "Yes" categories. Here, the cut value is 0.500, indicating that any probability prediction greater than 0.500 is considered "Yes", and any prediction probability less than 0.500 is considered "No". The table is clear in terms of evaluating how well the model correctly classifies the cases as being in the "No" or "Yes" category. It indicates that the model has a very high overall 98.2%, that accuracy of meaning it is a highly effective predictive model for the given data.

V. CONCLUSION

The cloud kitchen ecosystem in Coimbatore is flourishing with a multitude of cuisines and experiences for customers. Cloud kitchens offer a diverse palette ranging from healthy lunch bowls to fine international cuisine. Key learnings point out that cloud kitchens in Coimbatore are adding authentic global tastes like Mexican, Japanese, Italian, and Asian to the domestic palate, most of them possessing a unique flavor to suit the local taste buds. In addition to rich food, cloud kitchens are also providing healthy salads and lunch bowls in response to growing demand for wholesome food. Cloud kitchens provide customers with a choice of different cuisines and food items without leaving the comfort of their homes, thus making it a convenient and desirable option. Cloud kitchens provide an inexpensive platform for emerging food entrepreneurs to try out their ideas and reach consumers. With the growth of Coimbatore's food culture, consumers are more open to trying new and innovative foods from cloud kitchens. In short, the Coimbatore cloud kitchen business is thriving, offering diverse cuisines, healthy eats, and entrepreneurial opportunities. Cloud kitchens are aptly positioned to satisfy the increasing demand for convenient, amazing meal experiences as consumer preferences continue to change.

Conflict of interest statement

Authors declare that they do not have any conflict of interest.

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