

AN IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON FOOD SUPPLY ENTREPRENEUR

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this research is to evaluate the effect of Covid-19 on the food supply chain of entrepreneurs. The study taken Talabat as entrepreneur in food supply in Dhofar region of Oman. Researchers utilized a quantitative research method. The primary data were collected in this study. The statistical techniques have been used to analyzed the collected data. It has been observed and found that the online ordering system for foods via client application ensured business continuity for the restaurants and partner businesses. The online ordering system could support in reducing the economic and health effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

With the development of mobile phone systems and with the widespread use of applications in the form of Android and iOS, most of companies design their own electronic platforms to place orders on their products or services [1]. Talabat Company considered one of the leading companies in this field, as it provides its customers with the best services in the field of food ordering [2]. Talabat is company located in Kuwait and it have one of the largest electronic platforms on the Internet, to order food in the Middle East, as the platform works in all Gulf countries such as the Sultanate of Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the Emirates [3]. Talabat provides its users with the opportunity to order food from more than 4,300 restaurants, including popular commercial restaurants such as Pizza Hut, Burger King, Papa John's [4]. This company was keen on the process of continuous renewal of its website, by renewing its basic system, and working to improve the interface and design for 2011.

It also issued various applications on its platform, through mobile applications, for Android devices, and worked also on issuing an application for IOS devices, in 2012. Talabat works to connect its customers with the largest group of restaurants, which are located in the Middle East, to be able to buy food and pay in cash, via the Internet. It is also keen to cover all local and well-known restaurants to offer different meals to its users, which suit all tastes [5]. Talabat also plays the role of mediator, as it is interested in promoting the offers made by restaurants that deal with it, on an ongoing basis, and works on marketing them through the Internet, such as advertisements and social media.

With the beginning of the year 2020, with the widespread of the Corona virus in the world and in the Gulf countries, most governments have adopted the closure of all commercial activities where the most important of which are restaurants [6]. Then it was satisfied with the delivery service to revive some vital activities. From here, delivery-based activities became the most important of which is food delivery services, which helped increase the demand for using electronic platforms to order food without going to restaurants.

The food supply chain in most countries of the world considered one of the sectors most affected, as it extends over a series of stages. The food supply chain begins with food from the farms until it reaches a product to be sale to the consumer, and it is one of the most important systems around the world to preserve human survival. According to the World Bank report, the food chain system represents 10% of the global gross national product [7].

Therefore, with the disruption of most of the business due to the spread of the Corona virus, the food delivery chain to the consumer become threatened, which has made many seek successful solutions while adhering to the regulations to prevent this pandemic. The researcher believes that the virtual spaces provided by companies such as Talabat Company contribute to solving the problem of delivering orders to customers.

The issue of food distribution after the Corona pandemic is a major one for suppliers and restaurants operating in the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, which made researchers investigating the success of Talabat Company in the success of the process of providing customers with food in light of this pandemic. The importance of the study is that it deals with an important modern topic for the food

distribution sector. It will also seek to prove the importance of digital platforms in facing distribution problems during the outbreak of the pandemic.

2.0 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(ILO, 2021) confirmed that the spread of the corona virus illness has unprecedented consequences on all over the world. The business world is being deeply impacted by such disease. Added to the public health threat, the social and economic disturbance menaces the long-term pensions of millions as well as their wellbeing. Covid-19 is profoundly impacting, especially, labor markets, companies, enterprises, economies, involving global supply chains, generating business disruptions in a wide range. The International Labor Organization besides its constituents will play critical role in struggling the incidence of the disease, assuring the sustainability of jobs and businesses as well as ensuring the individuals' safe.

The following observations were made that the most fields that were impacted in the business area. Famous firms were exposed to a huge financial pressure, the travel and tourism industry were so impacted in which a big percentage of hotel rooms became empty. The workforce of airlines was declined by 90%, and therefore tourism destination will not achieve profits, large gatherings such as conferences, expos, and sporting events, also, cultural institutions like museums were suddenly cancelled. General and personal services of consulting such as taxis, hairdressers as well as gyms were being lock downed. Substantial industries such as electronics and car industries have suddenly lock downed. In fact, [9] assessed that, where many businesses are fighting the losses, other businesses are thriving and gaining more profits.

In fact, businesses which are based on internet like those concerning to online education, online shopping and entertainment, food delivery, and distance working. Moreover, the campaign "Stay at home" leads people to change their consuming style, then, the demand of cleaning products, fast foods and snacks, since they spend much time in their houses. Besides, industries concerned to healthcare, medication, vitamins, and herbs, are working very well. Generally, the studies of markets are supposed that are static because they head for the slow change.

Pre Covid-19, the customer churn in a shopping mall [10], digital marketing [11], [12] [13] study of technology acceptance [14]–[16], was backbone in various fields in business sector including in banking sector, [17] and healthcare [18] [19], and automobile industry was also one of the imperative and integral industrial sector [20][21] [20], [22]–[24]. The social media [25] were useful in various business industries. [26] [27] [28] [29] [30] [18]. The information system auditing [31], empowerment and analysing environment impact [32], [33] useful techniques were adopted in businesses for analysis purposes. The use of

technology for sustainable development is became an important move [20], [34], [35]. The various examples illustrates how various improvised techniques could be useful before Covid-19 [36] that supported by technology in the business environment [21][10]. The Use of IoT and other techniques [27] were adopted in business organizations. [37]–[39].

3.0 METHODOLOGY

Talabat utilizes advent technology between services and products including Google Analytics, HTML5, and jQuery. It is uses seventy-six technologies for its online platform including iPhone / Mobile Compatible, Viewport Meta, and Google Analytics. There are 4,626,504 monthly web visitors' access to Talabat website which lead it registered the 12,114 rank among websites globally. The following methodology was adopted to evaluate the effect of Covid-19 pandemic on food supply entrepreneur.

3.1 Objective

To evaluate the food supply process and to investigate the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the food supply of the Talabat company.

3.2 Hypothesis Design

Null Hypothesis: There is no impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the food supply of the Talabat Company.

Alternative Hypothesis: There is impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the food supply of the Talabat Company.

One sample T Test will be done based on Mean comparison to test the acceptance of the null hypothesis or its alternative hypothesis.

3.3 Data Collection

A descriptive analysis has been carried out to evaluate the impact of Covid-19 on food supply entrepreneur taking Talabat Company as case study. The questionnaire was distributed on sample of 85 people in Dhofar region in Oman. The sample of respondents consists of students representing the most proportion 34% of the whole sample, individual business employers with 32% of occurrence, profession and employee with 18% of occurrence, employees with 11% of occurrence and other occupations with 6% of occurrence.

4.0 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Based on the collected data, it is inferred that respondents using Talabat from 6 to 12 months represent 44%, respondents using for more than 1 year represent 40%, whereas 9% respondents using from 1 to 6 months 4% using less than 1 month and remaining 4% never privilege the services from Talabat. In terms of finding the user frequency

it has been found that 48% orders at least once in two weeks, 36% of them orders at least once in a week, 12% orders every day and 4% of them never ordered from Talabat. The 54% from the respondents agree and 42% strongly agree that the company and their employees takes appropriate measures during pandemic, whereas 4% stay neutral on this count. Further, 60% of respondents strongly agree and 39% agree that Talabat encourages its customers to order from nearby restaurant partners whereas 1% of them still neutral. The company provides online payment system to avoid the

physical exchange of material during the pandemic. The 87% were male and 13% were female respondents. Most of the people living without family including students (Higher Secondary educational 28%, diploma 34%, Bachelors 20%, 7% masters) and employees (34% students, 32% business people, 28% employees, 6% others) are the main customers for Talabat and are depend on the food supply agencies for their daily meals. The detail analysis has been shown in the given tables.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Parameters	Mean	Standard Deviation
Strict measures to ensure the individuals' safety	4.39	0.558
Location-based free delivery	4.18	0.601
Business continuity for its restaurant partners	4.34	0.609
Encourages to order from nearby restaurant partners	4.59	0.519
Special offers for their customers	4.27	0.714
It is encouraging to buy from	4.48	0.569
Location-based technology is support	4.49	0.548
Electronic payment method	4.26	0.620
Encourage online Ordering	4.47	0.502
Maintains food delivery process Standards	4.26	0.538
Maintains hygienic	4.52	0.503

Table 2: ANOVA (Category wise)

Parameter	Gender		Education		Occupation		Experience		Frequency Order	
	F	Sig.	F	Sig.	F	Sig.	F	Sig.	F	Sig.
1	0.024	0.877	1.198	0.318	0.401	0.807	0.842	0.503	0.011	0.998
2	1.228	0.271	2.946	0.025	1.106	0.359	1.140	0.344	1.521	0.215
3	0.017	0.897	1.151	0.339	0.347	0.845	0.951	0.439	1.336	0.269
4	0.108	0.744	1.719	0.154	1.019	0.403	0.710	0.588	1.249	0.298
5	0.838	0.363	1.221	0.309	0.715	0.584	0.368	0.831	0.288	0.834
6	0.924	0.339	0.807	0.525	0.626	0.645	2.300	0.066	1.933	0.131
7	0.849	0.359	2.319	0.064	2.087	0.090	2.649	0.039	1.177	0.324
8	2.233	0.139	1.277	0.286	1.132	0.347	0.982	0.422	1.473	0.228
9	0.013	0.910	0.739	0.568	1.243	0.300	2.784	0.032	1.981	0.123
10	0.257	0.614	1.114	0.356	0.715	0.584	0.987	0.419	0.617	0.606
11	0.702	0.404	2.207	0.076	1.875	0.123	1.458	0.223	0.603	0.615

The eleven parameters have been considered to evaluate the effect of Covid-19 pandemic on the food supply of the Talabat Company. The ANOVA test been carried out. The obtained significance value which is less than 0.05 received in terms of location based free delivery in educational

criteria. In experience category parameter 7, location-based technology support and parameter 9, encouragement for online ordering illustrates significance difference. Based on the obtained significance value, the null hypothesis is rejected whereas the alternative hypothesis is accepted. So,

Covid-19 pandemic has positive impact on the food supply of the Talabat Company.

5.0 CONCLUSION

All sectors in the economic field were affected by the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. The food supply is an important, vital and sensitive activity for humanity, this field faced a big challenge in the food supply chain where the company Talabat deal with this situation with the conduct of virtual space for food delivery for its customers and it participated in helping its partners from restaurants and others to reactive their activities.

Researchers in this paper used a survey-questionnaire to assess the impact of this pandemic on the food supply chain of Talabat Company in Dhofar region. The main reached results concluded in the following:

- Most of respondents used the Talabat food requesting (96%) and a little portion never used the Talabat which represent 4% of the sample,
- A big proportion of respondents ordered from Talabat represent 96% of the sample size whereas 4% of them never ordered from this company,

- Most of respondents are respectively strongly agree and agree (54% and 42% of the sample) that Talabat takes strict measures to ensure the individuals' safety,

- It is inferred that respondents are respectively strongly agree and agree (55% and 40% of respondents) that during the Covid-19 Pandemic, Talabat ensures business continuity for its restaurant partners business,

- It is revealed from results that 52% of respondents strongly agree that Using Talabat's in-app location-based technology helped respondents to make orders from nearby restaurants,

It concluded also that 53% of respondents are agree that Talabat relies on the points system in its virtual ordering system (online system) to motivate customers to adopt the food order remotely.

- Most of respondents are respectively strongly agree and agree (52% and 48% of respondents) that Talabat maintains reduction of problems facing food supply chain in Dhofar region.

The study concluded that Covid-19 pandemic has positive impact on the food supply of the Talabat Company in Dhofar region.

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