

# CHANGES AND THE IMPACT OF ONLINE THIRD-PARTY LOGISTICS COMPANY ON FAST-FOOD DELIVERY

Ifeanyi Ebuka Okafor\*  
University of Central Missouri

## ABSTRACT

*This research examines the influence of online third-party logistics on fast-food delivery within the fast-paced environment of the fast-food industry. By comparing historical and current data on online orders, it reveals key trends—such as DoorDash’s marketplace orders, which surged from around \$8 billion pre-pandemic to approximately \$66.8 billion in 2023—bolstered by DoorDash’s acquisition of Wolt in 2022 (Beyrouthy, 2024). These findings contribute to a broader understanding of supply chain management in the fast-food sector. The research offers insights that can inform both industry practices and future studies. It also notes that the first U.S. restaurant meal delivery service, Worldwide Waiter (now Waiter.com), launched in 1995, initially serving 60 of Silicon Valley’s top restaurants.*

*Furthermore, this study traces the history of food ordering and delivery—from Italy’s first documented delivery in 1889 to the practices of the Roman Empire and Indian methods in the late 1980s. By contrasting these early approaches with today’s advanced technologies, the research highlights the evolution and impact of logistics on fast-food delivery. It also explores current strategies for improving delivery processes, analyzes consumer perceptions and their effects on the industry, and evaluates the time-efficiency and cost-effectiveness of modern fast-food delivery systems.*

**Keywords:** Supply chain, Logistics, Third-party logistics, Fast-food delivery

## บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้ศึกษาผลกระทบของผู้ให้บริการลอจิสติกส์บุคคลที่สามผ่านระบบออนไลน์ที่มีต่อการจัดส่งอาหารจานด่วนในบริบทของอุตสาหกรรมฟาสต์ฟู้ดซึ่งมีความรวดเร็วและแข่งขันสูง โดยเปรียบเทียบข้อมูลคำสั่งซื้อออนไลน์ในอดีตกับปัจจุบัน เพื่อแสดงให้เห็นแนวโน้มต่าง ๆ เช่น ยอดคำสั่งซื้อในตลาดของ DoorDash ที่เพิ่มขึ้นจากประมาณ 8 พันล้านดอลลาร์สหรัฐฯ ก่อนเกิดการระบาดของโรคโควิด-19 ไปเป็นประมาณ 66.8 พันล้านดอลลาร์สหรัฐฯ ในปี 2023 ซึ่งได้รับแรงหนุนจากการเข้าซื้อกิจการ Wolt ของ DoorDash ในปี 2022 (Beyrouthy, 2024) ข้อค้นพบเหล่านี้ช่วยเสริมสร้างความเข้าใจในภาพรวมของการจัดการโซ่อุปทานในอุตสาหกรรมฟาสต์ฟู้ด งานวิจัยนี้ยังให้ข้อมูลเชิงลึกที่สามารถนำไปใช้ในการปฏิบัติงานในภาคอุตสาหกรรมและเป็นแนวทางสำหรับการศึกษาในอนาคต โดยชี้ให้เห็นว่า บริการจัดส่งอาหารจากร้านอาหารบริการ

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\*Ifeanyi Ebuka Okafor is an MSc Technology student at University of Central Missouri. Email: Okafor.ifeanyi94@yahoo.com

แรกของสหรัฐอเมริกา คือ Worldwide Waiter (ปัจจุบันคือ Waiter.com) ได้เปิดตัวในปี 1995 โดยให้บริการร้านอาหารชั้นนำ 60 แห่งในเขตซิลิคอนวัลเลย์

นอกจากนี้ งานวิจัยยังได้ย้อนรอยประวัติศาสตร์ของการสั่งและจัดส่งอาหาร ตั้งแต่บริการจัดส่งอาหารที่มีการบันทึกครั้งแรกในอิตาลีเมื่อปี 1889 ไปจนถึงรูปแบบการจัดส่งในยุคจักรวรรดิโรมันและวิธีการของอินเดียในช่วงปลายทศวรรษ 1980 โดยการเปรียบเทียบแนวทางในอดีตกับเทคโนโลยีที่ล้ำสมัยในปัจจุบัน งานวิจัยนี้เน้นให้เห็นถึงวิวัฒนาการและผลกระทบของระบบลอจิสติกส์ที่มีต่อการจัดส่งอาหารจานด่วน งานวิจัยยังสำรวจแนวทางที่ใช้อยู่ในปัจจุบันในการพัฒนาระบบการจัดส่ง รวมถึงการวิเคราะห์ทัศนคติของผู้บริโภคและผลกระทบต่ออุตสาหกรรม อีกทั้งยังประเมินระบบสมัยใหม่ในด้านประสิทธิภาพด้านเวลาและความคุ้มค่าของต้นทุนในการจัดส่งอาหารจานด่วนอีกด้วย

**คำสำคัญ:** โซ่อุปทาน ลอจิสติกส์ 3PL การจัดส่งอาหารจานด่วน

## INTRODUCTION

The fast-food sector has seen tremendous change in recent years, owing to the modern innovative revolution and shift in consumer tastes because of the recent Covid-19 pandemic crisis. Online ordering and delivery services have become critical components of fast-food chain strategies to meet the changing requirements of clients who require comfort and efficiency. The engagement of third-party supply chain operations, which bridge the gap between fast food businesses and consumers by providing smooth online ordering, and delivery, is crucial to this shift. As the fast-food industry increasingly relies on online third-party supply chain processes, the food sector is embracing technology to assist the collaboration required to proactively detect and mitigate supply chain concerns. The San Francisco-based startup's gross merchandise value increased her order from just eight billion dollars in 2019 to 53.4 billion dollars in 2022, according to statistics on the total dollar worth of orders placed on DoorDash marketplaces, in just three years, there has been an increase of almost 560% (Beyrouthy, 2023). Both excitement and trepidation have been expressed over the use of third-party supply chain procedures in the fast-food business. On the one hand, these procedures claim to improve business processes, increase the accessibility of fast-food chains, and improve consumer satisfaction by providing easy and quick delivery options. On the other side, issues with food safety, quality control, and the economics of third-party collaborations have been brought out as possible problems (Xiao & Wong, 2020). It is crucial to consider a holistic strategy that investigates numerous aspects of this phenomena to determine the real influence of online third-party supply chain (Logistics) operations on fast food delivery. Online food delivery has seen a tremendous surge in the past decade, fueled by technological advancements and changing consumer preferences. In 2014, the online food delivery market in the United States was valued at approximately \$35 billion (Research and Markets, 2014).

By 2023, this figure is projected to reach an astounding \$287.5 billion (Statista, 2024). This growth can be attributed to several factors, including the increasing popularity of food delivery apps, the rise of ghost kitchens, and the growing trend of meal kits. Furthermore, the COVID19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of online food delivery services as consumers sought to minimize their

exposure to the virus. During the pandemic, many restaurants that had previously relied solely on dine in service were forced to pivot to delivery and takeout options to survive. This shift led to a significant increase in online food delivery orders, even after pandemic restrictions were lifted. Several studies have documented the rapid growth of the online food delivery market in recent years. For example, a report by McKinsey & Company (2020) found that the number of online food delivery orders in the United States increased by 300% between 2019 and 2020. Additionally, a survey conducted by (Research and Markets, 2014) revealed that 70% of respondents had ordered food online at least once in the past year. In conclusion, the online food delivery market has experienced significant growth in the past decade, driven by technological advancements, changing consumer preferences, and the COVID19 pandemic. This trend is expected to continue in the coming years as more restaurants and consumers adopt online food delivery services. In doing so, it will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on supply chain management in the context of the fast-food sector.

### ***Statement of the Problems***

The fast-food industry has quickly adopted modern delivery methods using third-party (3P) logistics (supply chain) processes, making it easier and more convenient for customers. These changes bring both advantages and challenges. The efficiency, safety, and cost-effectiveness of these 3P processes are crucial for the success and acceptance of fast-food delivery systems by businesses and consumers. Assessing whether these third-party processes improve delivery quality, enhance customer satisfaction, and boost operational efficiency is increasingly important as online ordering grows. This research aims to uncover key insights into the impact of these processes on the overall growth and efficiency of the fast-food industry.

### ***Purpose of Study***

This study compares the pros and cons of modern delivery methods for fast food, their effectiveness in improving supply-chain processes, and their overall acceptance by business owners and consumers over time. It also looks at how online fast-food orders have changed because of new delivery processes. The aim is to provide a thorough evaluation of the impact of online third-party logistics on food delivery by analyzing the benefits and drawbacks, customer satisfaction, and financial implications for fast food chains. Ultimately, it assesses the efficiency and growth contribution of these delivery methods to the fast-food sector, evaluating their impact on delivery efficiency, quality, and overall performance.

### ***Significance of the Study***

The findings of this study may assist in assessing the impact of modern-day delivery mechanism on the fast-food industry, the result will serve as a measure of future projection, forecasting and to determine some of the factors that may affect the process of delivery due to the tested variables employed in this course of this study.

## **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This part reviews the existing literature on the Impact of an online third-party supply-chain process on fast food delivery. In the United States, the total market size for online food delivery was calculated to be around 217.6 billion dollars in 2022, with the grocery delivery segment expected to

generate revenues of around 141.4 billion dollars and the meal delivery section expected to generate revenues of approximately 76.2 billion dollars. According to Beyrouthy(2023), these figures clearly show the importance of modern online logistics delivery services. This chapter also highlights the significant impact of supply chain delivery services on the U.S. economy which in recent years, DoorDash, a major player in this sector has seen remarkable success. The study aims to evaluate historical and current online fast food order rates due to changes in delivery procedures over time.

### ***Modern Delivery Mechanism***

In this context the modern delivery mechanism refers to “web-based platforms that enable, facilitate, or promote demand matching (for instance, between customers and service providers) and profit from completed transaction” (de Oliveira & Cortimiglia, 2017, p. 748). The process involves a multi-purpose web-based platform which offers consumers a variety of food choices and performs several related services including receiving and retransmitting orders, keeping account of transactions as well as monitoring the delivery processes (Lin et al., 2022). Worldwide Waiter, which currently runs as Waiter.com, launched the first restaurant meal delivery service in the world in the United States in 1995 when it serviced 60 top Silicon Valley eateries (waiter, n.d.). Examples of the modern mechanism include DoorDash, which was created in January 2013, Uber Eat, which was founded in August 2014, and Grubhub, which was founded in 2004. According to research the first occurrence of food delivery was in Italy in 1889, when King Umberto and Queen Margherita ordered Raffaele Esposito to bring them a pizza to their palace in Naples out of sheer laziness (Ian, 2019). These are all historical data to show some of the modern day delivery services and the first ever record of such actions, furthermore there is a report on measuring the impact which shows that over \$2 billion was generated globally on consumers orders, while Dashers earned \$15 billion globally, and nearly \$50 billion was generated by merchant sales globally, a project which is named “Project DASH deliveries” for hunger relief organizations generated \$5million. In total \$78 billion was contributed to the GDP of America in 2022 (DoorDash, 2024). Figure 1 shows an illustration of the impact of DoorDash within the supply chain of online food delivery services.

**Figure 1: An illustration of the Impact of DoorDash**



Source: DoorDash (2024)

### ***Pros vs Cons of the Delivery Process***

There are advantages and disadvantages of the delivery process, and it borders on some variables that affect the logistics process. Table 1 below shows the Pros and Cons as it relates to the variables.

**Table 1: Pros and Cons of the Delivery Process**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Pros</b>	<b>Cons</b>
<b>Technology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This plays a vital role in the supply chain process of food delivery</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The process can malfunction because of glitches and various cyber issues</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This aids the tracking of the process from the vendor to the final consumer</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Malfunction can lead to late delivery, and customers dissatisfaction.</li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This makes it easier to access food without physically showing up to the stores and restaurants</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It is worthy to note that a lot of people are not tech savvy which limits the number of usages.</li></ul>
<b>Weather</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clear weather supports network strength and support online order</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Severe weather conditions such as flooding have led to a disruption in network services</li></ul>
<b>Holidays</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• These are very special days that most people choose to spend more time with their friends and family by not cooking but ordering food, third party logistics mechanism has provided that option to achieve that with ease.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Due to increased orders on certain holidays, the system is liable to fail (increased use on a particular platform can cause a jam), leading to distrust among customers.</li></ul>
<b>Taste (Preferences)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This mechanism has made it possible for ease of choice and variety of meal, either go in and pick up, or do it from your comfort zone</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase of people going in to pick up due to whatever reason can affect the process.</li></ul>

Source: Author (2024)

**Technology (software and gadgets):** this plays a vital role in the supply chain process of food delivery, from transporting to tracking of the process from the vendor to the final consumer, as much as this aids in making it easier to access food without physically showing up to the stores and restaurants, we also know that technology can malfunction because of glitches and various cyber issues, which will lead to late delivery, and customers dissatisfaction. According to dasher (DoorDash drivers) interviews, defective tech is frequently to fault for glitchy orders, DoorDash concedes in 2022 that the Android version of its app has had more troubles than the iOS version. (Captain, 2022). Also, it is worthy to note that a lot of people are not tech savvy which limits the number of usage and traffic on the food delivery options.

The following are also some of the factors that influence delivery:

- **Weather:** Natural disasters generally affect various operations and movements, not just food deliveries. Severe weather conditions, such as flooding, have caused disruptions to economic

activities in many organizations. For example, during a flood incident in New York City, people took to social media with posts ranging from “DON’T ORDER FOOD TONIGHT!” to “Whoever ordered food needs to be in The Hague” (Sytsma, 2021). This clearly illustrates the significant impact of severe weather conditions as an independent variable influencing the fast-food delivery process.

- **Holiday and Taste (preference):** These are both independent variables that have advantageous and disadvantage effects on the supply chain process of fast-food delivery. It is gathered that the “new year holiday of 2022 was the busiest ordering day for Grubhub”, a major player in the fast-food delivery business, according to Grubhub (2023). This simply shows how much this system has spurred comfort for final consumers and restaurant owners by bridging the gap of supply chain process.
- **Taste (preference)** affects the delivery process because some people are very traditional in their ways and prefer to handle things themselves. They may not fully trust someone acting as a middleman (such as a delivery person), especially when it involves something as delicate as food. If the number of people with this preference increases on a larger scale, it could negatively impact delivery options.

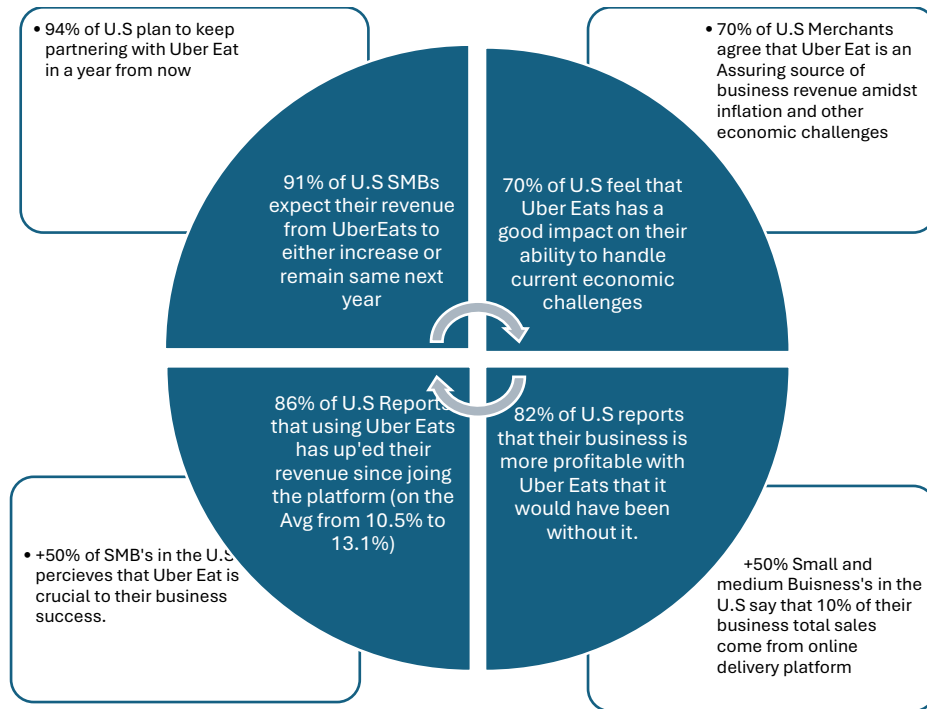
### ***Consumer Perception on Delivery System***

The food delivery mechanism is a system that was introduced to ease stress and aid comfort in the process of ordering and delivering food from restaurants to customers. Food delivery apps are becoming more and more popular; the typical individual has two of them and uses them three times each month (Lardieri, 2019), this simply goes to show the growing trend and acceptability of this system of ordering and delivering meals. You won't believe this, according to research by factor (2020), historians traced the history of food delivery services all the way back to Rome! Like us now, the Romans adored quick lunches, and they refer to their fast-food outlets as “Thermopolium” “a place where (something) hot is sold”.

Down the line to the late 80’s a system of food delivery was created in India where boxes of food are delivered to workers in their places of work by the boxes collected from them, this is called “dabbawalla” known as the one who carries the boxes (Jackson, 2021). All this is to show that the system has been in place and is improving and gaining more and more grounds.

According to the poll on usnews.com (Lardieri, 2019), we can determine that most individuals like to order their meals quickly, with 31% anticipating delivery to be at their door within 30 minutes. The maximum amount of time that clients will tolerate waiting is 40 minutes. All this serves as a positive indicator to the system which is encouraging the process. According to research by DoorDash (2024), we can determine that 80% of consumers now have more time to focus on other activities other than cooking. Food delivery apps are enabled with various features that give consumers access to discount coupons, customer review and AI customized menu recommendations (Lee & Kim, 2024). Lee et.al (2023), mentions an important aspect of customer reviews is that they reduce the uncertainty of shopping for other potential and existing customers. Figure 2 shows an illustration of the impact that UberEats has had on merchants.

**Figure 2: UberEATS Merchant Impact Report**



Source: UberEats (2022)

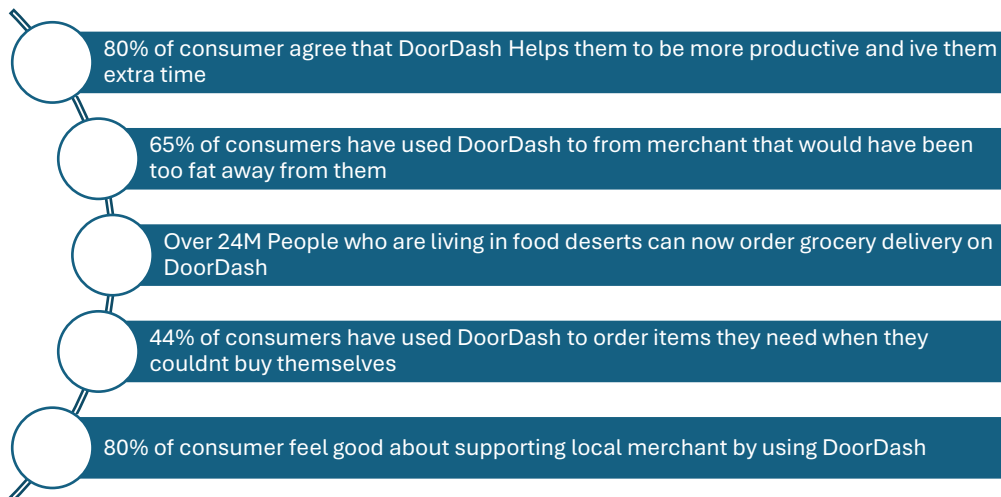
### ***Process Time and Cost Efficient***

Logistics process has no specific measurement metrics because different individuals and organization have different measure of scale that suits them personally, the influence on cost and time efficiency varies for each fast-food chain and is determined by how well the chain manages its relationship with third-party delivery services, including negotiating costs, improving delivery procedures, and maintaining quality standards. Some fast-food restaurants may find third-party delivery to be cost-effective and convenient, while others may opt to invest in their own delivery infrastructure to have more control over the process. Finally, the choice to engage third-party supply chain procedures in fast food delivery should be founded on a rigorous examination of the unique circumstances and needs of the restaurant in question.

Nevertheless, some common factors that might influence these are comparison of delivery fees and duration of delivery time between the different fast-food supply-chain companies. According to the research we can determine that in 2022 Door Dash and Uber Eats had market shares of 15% and 27%, respectively, while Grubhub had a 29% percent market share (Alda, n.d.). Grubhub continues to lose customers to its rivals despite still holding the largest market share. Approximately 12.2 million people downloaded the Uber Eats app in the US in 2022 compared to 6.98 million people who downloaded Grubhub. Since its launch in 2014, Uber's delivery app has grown in popularity in the United States and accounts for a growing portion of the company's worldwide income, an increase in a company popularity shows that she might be beating the competitors with various factor including but not limited to processing time or delivery fees (Cost Efficiency). It is also stated that the venture saved consumers over 400 million hours in 2023

(DoorDash, 2024), which can be invested into other activities. Figure 3 illustrates the impact that DoorDash has had on its consumers.

**Figure 3: DoorDash Impact to Consumers**



Source: DoorDash (2024)

### ***Are there any Measures in Place to Improve the Process***

The fast food delivery Supply-chain industry is a fast pace growing industry that aims to always provide comfort and convenience whenever possible while improving in more innovative measure to meet the ever increasing consumers demand, a good example of this improvement was seen in the modus operandi of many companies during and post covid pandemic, where a lot of adjustment was made in other to accommodate the changes that occurred in the way of doing things. Most small and medium-sized firms in the US, 67% believe that reducing costs is essential to assisting them in becoming more sustainable (UberEATS, 2022). A lot of these delivery companies are spreading their tentacles across boarder to provide more coverage in a lot of remote towns, in other to serve more people and support local business. According to Grubhub (2024), we can determine that this venture is particular about Investing in partnerships and programs that provide capital access and business development for local family-owned businesses where “\$2.2 million in grants was donated to over 248 restaurants across 25 states” and “Code Nation” was created to “empowers students in under-resourced high schools with essential skills”. All this and many more are measures put in place to enhance the already existing process. Figure 4 is an illustration of the impact that Grubhub has had in the industry.

## **DISCUSSION**

Following is a summary of how third-party logistics procedures affect the delivery of fast food:

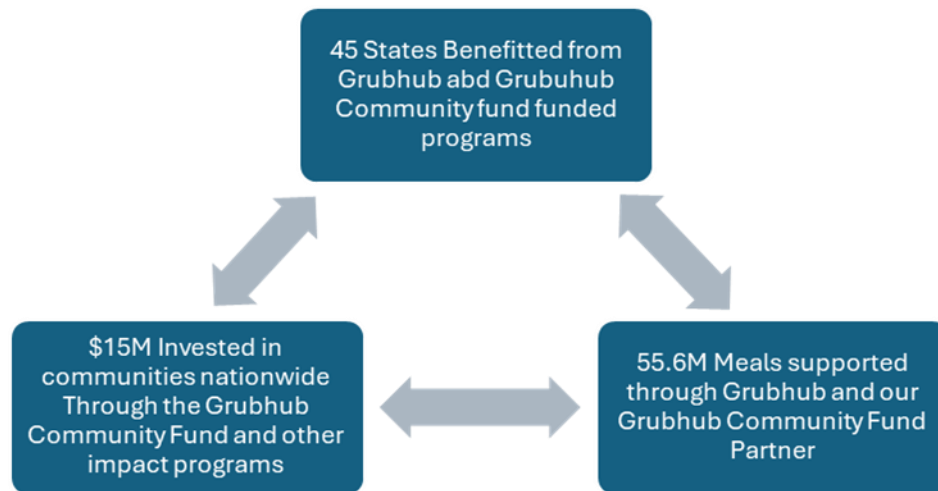
### ***Increased Accessibility***

Customers may now purchase their favorite meals from the convenience of their homes or places of employment thanks to third-party delivery services, which have dramatically increased the reach of fast-food establishments. Fast food chains have seen an increase in sales and income due to the



improvement in accessibility. According to research by (UberEATS, 2022), 89% of U.S. small and medium-sized businesses have reported that Uber Eats has enabled them to connect with new customers who they might not have reached otherwise. Customers can experience and enjoy a diverse range of cuisines at the convenience of their homes (Li et al., 2024).

**Figure 4: Illustration of the Impact of Grubhub**



Source: Grubhub (2023)

### ***Increased Effectiveness***

A lot of third-party delivery platforms have made technological investments to streamline their supply chain operations. This includes effective order administration, real-time tracking, and route optimization. The entire client experience has been improved due to these upgrades, which have spiked up and improved delivery times. According to research by (UberEATS, 2022), 85% of U.S. merchants on small and medium-sized businesses have reported that Uber Eats eliminates the worry of additional costs and logistical challenges associated with operating in-house delivery.

### ***Customer expectations***

Expectations of customers have increased for rapid meal delivery due to the prominence of third-party delivery services. Customers increasingly want prompt, on-time delivery, and any supply chain failures may result in unfavorable reviews and a decline in customer loyalty. Lee et.al, (2023) mentions that time is an important feature in online food delivery services since it affects the quality of food's taste and temperature. A research by (DoorDash, 2024),. Shows that 93% of consumers say that DoorDash provides a diverse selection of restaurants and businesses, in other words gives them more options from what they would have naturally known.

### ***Competitive Environment***

The fast-food sector is more competitive than ever due to the existence of third-party delivery services. Restaurants get increased traffic competition from various meal delivery services. This has caused marketing, advertising, and service quality to get more attention. Mobile food delivery

apps allow companies to boost sales without having to spend on marketing and promotion schemes (Kumar et al., 2023). In 2023 over 100,000 independent stores joined DoorDash Marketplace globally (DoorDash, 2024)., while an executive summary from (UberEATS, 2022)., boosted that the platform had over hundreds of thousands of active merchants across all 50 states and 9 provinces, experiencing over a 10% growth in the past year. This figure shows that there is enough room for competition among businesses.

### ***Data and analytics***

Numerous pieces of information about client preferences, ordering patterns, and delivery schedules are gathered by third-party systems. According to Quadrant survey report by (DoorDash, 2024) we deduced that an average time of 35 minutes for meal preparation, 30 minutes for traveling to and from a restaurant, and 22 minutes for picking up food from an outlet is a practical approach to time management, Fast food establishments may use this information to better understand their patrons and develop menus and promotions that cater to them.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The assessment of the influence of third-party supply chain procedures on fast-food delivery indicates a complex and changing ecosystem within the fast-food business. As the industry adapts to changing consumer tastes and technology advances, third-party supply chain activities emerge as a significant component impacting efficiency, customer happiness, and overall corporate performance. Having reviewed the historical and current rates of online fast food orders due to changes in the delivery procedure over time, it is safe to assume that a lot has changed in the fast food delivery sector since the inception of modern fast food delivery options like Uber Eats, DoorDash and Grubhub to mention a few, this options has created a very big effect by increasing consumers interest in ordering food and also making the restaurant and food business to channel more effort in the meal preparations aspect of the business by taking away the burden of delivery from them due to the ease it brings to the process.

From the already defined independent variable conditions attached to this process we can deduct by the data available, that technology alongside other variable play a very significant role/impact in this sector in a way that this modern mechanism cannot really exist and grow without her impact. To establish a balance between convenience and profitability, fast food restaurants must handle their interactions with third-party delivery services carefully.

Constant conversation between companies, customers, and third-party logistics service providers will be critical in designing a future in which fast food delivery is not just convenient, but also sustainable and economically feasible for all parties. Regulations from the government and business community may also be extremely important in creating an atmosphere that is favorable to the effective adoption of third-party supply chain procedures in the fast-food industry. This will open the industry to new potential and create an enabling environment for new players which will increase competition among third-party logistics players, increase best practice and hopefully reduce the price of consumption and make accessibility more effective.

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