

Understanding the Impact of Food Delivery Services on University Students' Purchase Intentions

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ABSTRACT

GrabFood, one of the leading food delivery applications, has become an essential part of university students' daily consumption behavior due to its convenience and accessibility. This study aims to examine the factors influencing students' purchase intentions toward GrabFood by focusing on convenience, price, design, and food variety as independent variables, with trustworthiness serving as a mediating factor. Using a quantitative research design, data were collected from 102 university students in Malaysia through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using multiple regression with SPSS. The results reveal that food variety ($\beta = 0.422$, $p < 0.05$) and price ($\beta = 0.343$, $p < 0.05$) are the strongest positive determinants of purchase intention, followed by convenience ($\beta = 0.214$, $p < 0.05$). In contrast, design ($\beta = -0.041$) and trustworthiness ($\beta = 0.080$) do not exhibit significant direct effects. The model explains 69.3% of the variance in purchase intention ($R^2 = 0.693$), underscoring the predominance of functional and value-based factors over aesthetic considerations. These findings suggest that GrabFood should continue prioritizing fair and transparent pricing, expanding menu diversity, and maintaining service reliability to strengthen user trust, satisfaction, and long-term loyalty among university students.

Keywords: Consumer Behavior; Consumer Purchase Intention; Delivery Services; GrabFood Application; Trustworthiness

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has transformed the way consumers purchase goods and services, including food and beverages. Mobile applications and online platforms have become essential tools that simplify transactions and reshape consumer experiences across industries. In Southeast Asia, food delivery applications have emerged as an integral part of modern lifestyles, offering convenience, accessibility, and time efficiency. This growth has been further accelerated by urbanization, evolving consumption patterns, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which collectively encouraged consumers to rely more heavily on digital platforms for their daily needs (Singh et al., 2024; Tjiptono et al., 2022).

Among the dominant platforms, Grab stands out as a comprehensive “super app” that integrates multiple services, including transportation, logistics, financial technology, and food delivery. Within this ecosystem, GrabFood plays a central role by connecting users to thousands of restaurants and food vendors through real-time ordering, secure cashless payments, and loyalty programs (Lok et al., 2024). For university students, who often face tight schedules and limited time for meal preparation, GrabFood provides a convenient, affordable, and diverse food delivery solution that aligns with their fast-paced and technology-oriented lifestyles (Homyamyen et al., 2024). The increasing popularity of GrabFood among young consumers reflects a broader shift toward digital convenience and the growing importance of mobile-based services in everyday consumption.

While convenience has long been recognized as a major determinant influencing the adoption of food delivery applications, other factors such as price, design, food variety, and trustworthiness also play significant roles in shaping user satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Among these, trustworthiness serves as a crucial mediating factor that enhances users’ confidence in digital transactions, influencing both satisfaction and long-term usage. A lack of trust may discourage repeated use even when the platform offers convenience and affordability, emphasizing its importance in digital consumption behavior (Hanif et al., 2024). Moreover, the competitive landscape of food delivery platforms, such as Foodpanda, ShopeeFood, and AirAsia Food, requires service providers to continuously improve reliability and perceived value to sustain user engagement (Nuharini & Purwanegara, 2022).

Despite the widespread adoption of food delivery platforms, research focusing specifically on the behavioral intentions of university students in Southeast Asia remains limited (Chantasoon et al., 2025). Most prior studies have examined general consumers or focused on contexts such as China, India, or Western countries, leaving regional characteristics underexplored. Furthermore, earlier studies often analyzed the direct effects of variables such as price and convenience, but seldom investigated trustworthiness as a mediating variable that connects perceived service quality with purchasing behavior. Addressing this gap provides valuable insights into how psychological and functional aspects interact in shaping user decisions (Dahiyat et al., 2011; Pillai et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2021).

Therefore, this study aims to fill the identified research gap by analyzing the influence of convenience, price, design, and food variety on students’ purchase intention toward GrabFood, with trustworthiness as a mediating factor. Specifically, this research seeks to (1) identify which variables significantly affect trust in GrabFood, (2) evaluate the mediating role of trust in influencing purchase intention, and (3) provide managerial implications for improving user engagement and retention. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically by extending the understanding of online consumer behavior and

practically by offering strategies for service providers to enhance user trust, satisfaction, and loyalty within the competitive food delivery industry.

Furthermore, this study contributes to the theoretical framework by integrating the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) to explain behavioral intention in the digital service context. Incorporating trustworthiness as a mediating construct provides a more comprehensive perspective on the psychological and behavioral mechanisms influencing technology adoption. This integration follows Davis (1989) and Ajzen (1991) while aligning with contemporary studies combining TAM and TPB to explain online consumer decision-making (Ahmed et al., 2024). This contribution is especially relevant in post-pandemic markets, where digital service providers must balance functionality, reliability, and credibility to foster sustained engagement and long-term competitiveness.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Convenience and App Usability

Convenience has long been recognized as a major determinant of consumer decision-making. According to Testa et al. (2021), convenience reflects the time and effort required to purchase consumer products, emphasizing accessibility and efficiency. Later, Lina et al. (2022) defined convenience as the prioritization of saving time and effort, particularly among consumers who have limited free time. In today's digital environment, convenience involves not only physical effort but also cognitive and procedural effort reduction. CV and Agrawal (2024) emphasized that convenience is achieved when customers can complete a purchasing process with minimal effort to achieve their desired outcomes.

In the context of online food delivery, convenience serves as a key motivator of behavioral intention, as consumers prefer platforms that simplify transactions. The TPB suggests that positive attitudes toward time-saving and effort-reducing experiences significantly shape consumers' behavioral intentions (Adeoti et al., 2024; Ajzen, 1991). Thus, GrabFood's user-friendly interface, which allows customers to browse menus, place orders, make payments, and track deliveries in real time, creates a seamless purchasing experience that reinforces user satisfaction and loyalty.

Kohli et al. (2024) found that modern consumers' preferences are strongly driven by their pursuit of convenience. Similarly, Rahman and Jyoti (2022) emphasized that ease of operation and intuitive design are essential determinants of consumers' adoption and continued use of digital applications. In the case of GrabFood, users benefit from being able to order from diverse restaurants without leaving their current location, enhancing both comfort and satisfaction. Wilkins et al. (2023) also demonstrated that convenience is closely linked to trust, as consumers who find a service easy to use are more likely to perceive it as reliable and credible.

By reducing effort and saving time, GrabFood aligns with students' expectations for efficiency, particularly given their busy academic schedules. As convenience strengthens user trust and satisfaction, it directly contributes to purchase intention. Therefore, this study theorizes that higher perceived convenience increases trustworthiness, which subsequently leads to stronger purchase intention.

H1: Convenience is positively related to trustworthiness.

Price

Price remains one of the most influential elements of the marketing mix affecting consumer purchase decisions. [Homyamyen et al. \(2024\)](#) stated that consumers' perceptions of price determine their evaluation of product value and shape competitive dynamics among firms. In service-based industries such as food delivery, strategic pricing plays a dual role: attracting new users while retaining existing ones. For university students, who typically have limited disposable income, price sensitivity is particularly high. Therefore, offering competitive delivery fees, student discounts, and promotional packages is critical to maintaining loyalty and engagement.

[Zhao et al. \(2021\)](#) argued that pricing directly impacts an organization's revenue, sustainability, and long-term competitiveness. The perception of fairness in pricing also influences customer trust and satisfaction. When consumers feel that prices are transparent and justified, they are more likely to develop confidence in the platform. Conversely, unexpected or excessive charges may erode trust and discourage repeat use. [Trebicka et al. \(2023\)](#) found that demand for digital services decreases when prices exceed competitors' offers, emphasizing the sensitivity of online consumers to pricing equity.

[Gao \(2023\)](#) noted that effective pricing strategies not only enhance profitability but also build positive brand recognition. For GrabFood, adopting student-friendly pricing models, such as free delivery campaigns or loyalty point systems, can strengthen perceived fairness and trust. The link between price and trustworthiness is supported by [Purnama et al. \(2025\)](#), who confirmed that transparent and affordable pricing signals reliability and reduces consumers' perceived risk. Consequently, fair pricing indirectly encourages purchase intention through the formation of trust in the platform.

H2: Price is positively related to trustworthiness.

Design (App Features)

Design is defined as a creative and systematic process of developing an idea or product to fulfill user needs ([Auernhammer & Roth, 2021](#)). The design of a mobile application plays a crucial role in shaping consumers' emotional engagement, satisfaction, and behavioral intention. [Hu et al. \(2022\)](#) emphasized that information system design is a knowledge-intensive activity requiring a balance between functionality and aesthetics to enhance user experience. In the context of GrabFood, app design includes interface layout, color schemes, navigation flow, icons, typography, and notifications, all of which influence users' perceptions of usability and credibility.

Design psychology and neuromarketing approaches highlight that consumers' subconscious responses to design elements affect decision-making ([Irani & Frankel, 2020](#)). For example, visual clarity and layout consistency enhance perceptions of professionalism, while responsive feedback builds trust in system performance. [Braca and Dondio \(2023\)](#) added that persuasive design techniques, such as social proof or scarcity cues, encourage continued engagement and repeated use.

In GrabFood's case, a clean interface, smooth navigation, and responsive performance build ease of use and trust. Students are more likely to trust and remain loyal to applications that provide clear instructions, minimal errors, and appealing visual design. Well-designed tracking and notification features also strengthen perceptions of transparency and reliability. This supports findings by [Saoula et al. \(2023\)](#), who observed that system design quality directly influences user trust in digital service environments.

Therefore, effective design enhances trustworthiness, which in turn contributes to behavioral intention toward continued use.

H3: Design (app features) is positively related to trustworthiness.

Various Food Choices

The availability of diverse food options is a vital factor influencing consumers' decisions to use food delivery applications. [Maziriri et al. \(2021\)](#) emphasized that perceived food variety directly affects purchasing decisions and satisfaction levels. When users perceive that an app offers a wide range of cuisines and restaurants, they associate it with convenience, quality, and inclusivity. [Adeoti et al. \(2024\)](#) found that menu diversity in mobile delivery apps significantly determines users' intention to order, especially among young consumers who value novelty and choice.

From a psychological perspective, food variety reflects cultural preferences and personal identity. [Suvittawat and Suvittawat \(2024\)](#) explained that a broad selection of foods caters to diverse student preferences, enhancing satisfaction and engagement. For university students, the ability to access both local and international cuisines through GrabFood increases perceived quality and credibility.

Moreover, food variety indirectly influences trustworthiness, as users perceive platforms with extensive restaurant partnerships as reliable and customer-oriented. This aligns with [Lim et al. \(2023\)](#), who found that variety signals platform stability and legitimacy. Hence, diverse food offerings strengthen both satisfaction and trust, leading to stronger purchase intention.

H4: Food variety is positively related to trustworthiness.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to the degree to which consumers perceive a platform as reliable, honest, and capable of fulfilling its promises. In digital commerce, trust reduces uncertainty and perceived risk, especially regarding payments and data security. [Xu \(2022\)](#) emphasized that trustworthiness builds brand dependability and long-term loyalty. When consumers believe that an online service is transparent and secure, they are more likely to engage in repeated transactions.

The TAM ([Davis, 1989](#)) and subsequent studies such as [Dahiyat et al. \(2011\)](#) and [Saoula et al. \(2023\)](#) support the role of trust as a mediator linking ease of use and behavioral intention. For GrabFood, real-time order tracking, secure payment gateways, and responsive customer service enhance trustworthiness. [Hanif et al. \(2024\)](#) also noted that trust extends beyond reliability to include privacy, transparency, and prompt service recovery. Therefore, trust serves as the mechanism through which convenience, pricing, design, and food variety influence purchase intention.

H5: Trustworthiness mediates the relationship between convenience, price, design, and food variety on purchase intention.

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention represents a consumer's willingness to buy a product or service in the future ([Hung et al., 2024](#); [Tan et al., 2022](#)). It reflects motivation arising from perceived value, satisfaction, and trust ([Mathea & Laksmidewi, 2024](#)). In online food delivery, purchase intention is shaped by convenience, reliability, and emotional engagement. [Lin et al. \(2024\)](#) observed that the expansion of mobile food delivery

corresponds to consumers' need for efficiency and reliability, particularly among students.

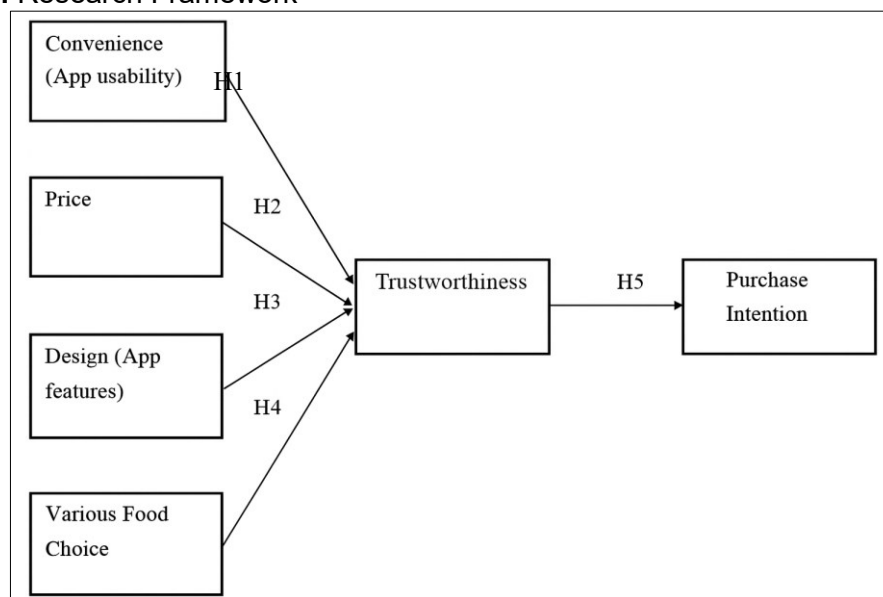
Based on the TPB (Ajzen, 1991), behavioral intention predicts actual consumption behavior. Pillai et al. (2022) confirmed that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control determine online purchase decisions within food delivery contexts. Homyamyen et al. (2024) also found that usefulness, ease of use, promotions, and trust significantly affect satisfaction and purchase behavior among students using GrabFood. For GrabFood, trust in secure transactions, consistent quality, and accurate order fulfillment drives repeat purchases.

Ultimately, purchase intention embodies the cumulative effects of convenience, price fairness, appealing design, food variety, and trustworthiness. When students perceive GrabFood as efficient, affordable, and trustworthy, their likelihood of continued usage and loyalty to the platform increases substantially.

Conceptual Framework

The study framework model is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Research Framework



RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the influence of convenience, price, app design, and food variety on students' purchase intention toward the GrabFood application, with trustworthiness as a mediating variable. The study used a descriptive-causal approach that enables hypothesis testing through the collection and analysis of numerical data. This method allows objective measurement of relationships between constructs, consistent with the positivist paradigm. The research framework was developed from the TAM (Davis, 1989) and the TPB (Ajzen, 1991), both of which explain how perceptions of usefulness, ease of use, and attitudes influence behavioral intentions in digital adoption contexts.

The population of this study comprised university students in Malaysia who actively use GrabFood for food delivery services. This segment was selected because students represent a digitally literate generation with frequent online purchasing behavior and high

familiarity with mobile applications. A purposive sampling technique was applied to ensure that respondents had prior experience with GrabFood. A total of 102 valid responses were obtained through an online survey distributed via Google Forms. This sample size is considered adequate for behavioral research, aligning with Roscoe's (1975) recommendation of 30–500 respondents for multivariate analysis.

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire divided into demographic and main construct sections. Respondents rated each statement using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). All measurement items were adapted from established studies and revised for clarity and relevance to the GrabFood context. A pilot test was conducted to ensure the instrument's content validity and reliability, while ethical considerations were maintained by ensuring voluntary participation, informed consent, and respondent anonymity throughout the process.

Each construct was operationalized based on previous literature: convenience (Wiastruti et al., 2022; Testa et al., 2021), price (Homyamyen et al., 2024; Zhao et al., 2021), design (Auernhammer & Roth, 2021; Irani & Frankel, 2020), food variety (Lim et al., 2023), trustworthiness (Hanif et al., 2024; Xu, 2022), and purchase intention (Pillai et al., 2022; Purnama et al., 2025). All items were measured using the same Likert scale to ensure response consistency and comparability.

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS software through descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, where values above 0.70 indicated internal consistency. Construct validity was confirmed through the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity to ensure data suitability for regression analysis. Multiple regression analysis was employed to examine both direct and indirect effects of the independent variables on purchase intention, with trustworthiness acting as the mediating factor. The coefficient of determination (R^2) and significance levels ($p < 0.05$) were used to evaluate the model's explanatory power and hypothesis testing results.

Ethical compliance was maintained by clearly informing participants about the study's purpose, assuring that participation was voluntary, and protecting the confidentiality of all responses. The entire research process adhered to the ethical standards of social science research.

RESULTS

This section presents the analysis of data collected from 102 respondents through a structured online questionnaire distributed via Google Form. The results are organized into seven main subsections, namely respondents' demographics, convenience (app usability), price, design (app features), various food choices, trustworthiness, and purchase intention.

Respondents' Demographic Profile

Table 1. Summary of Respondents' Demographics Profile (N=102)

Response	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18–20 years old	55	53.9
	21–30 years old	43	42.2
	31–40 years old	3	2.9
	Above 40 years old	1	1.0
Gender	Female	84	82.4
	Male	18	17.6

Year of Study	Year 1	23	22.5
	Year 2	51	50.0
	Year 3	14	13.7
	Year 4	13	12.7
	Year 5	1	1.0
How often do you use GrabFood delivery app	Daily	8	7.8
	Weekly	23	22.5
	Monthly	39	38.2
	Rarely	32	31.4
Average amount spent on GrabFood per order	Below RM10	5	4.9
	RM10–RM20	3	2.9
	RM20–RM30	61	59.8
	Above RM30	33	32.4

A total of 102 valid responses were collected from university students who actively used the GrabFood delivery application in Malaysia. As presented in Table 1, the majority of respondents (53.9%) were between 18 and 20 years old, followed by 42.2% who were between 21 and 30 years old, indicating that the sample predominantly represents young adult users with high digital engagement. The remaining 3.9% of respondents were above 30 years of age.

In terms of gender distribution, female respondents accounted for 82.4% of the sample, suggesting the increasing participation of young women in online food delivery services and their strong influence on digital consumption behavior. Regarding academic standing, most respondents were second-year students (50%), followed by first-year students (22.5%), third-year students (13.7%), fourth-year students (12.7%), and fifth-year students (1%), indicating diverse academic representation within the sample.

In terms of usage frequency, 38.2% of respondents reported using GrabFood on a monthly basis, while 31.4% used it rarely, 22.5% weekly, and 7.8% daily. With regard to spending behavior, the majority (59.8%) typically spent between RM20 and RM30 per order, whereas 32.4% spent more than RM30. These findings indicate that the respondents were active yet moderate users of the application, consistent with the general consumption behavior and spending capacity of university students.

Convenience and App Usability

Table 2. Respondents' Responses on App Usability and Design of GrabFood Delivery App (N = 102)

Statement	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
I would find it easy to become skillful at navigating through GrabFood delivery app.	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0
	Disagree	5	4.9
	Neutral	15	14.7
	Agree	47	46.1
	Strongly Agree	35	34.3
I think it is easy for me to learn how to use GrabFood delivery app.	Strongly Disagree	2	2.0
	Disagree	3	2.9
	Neutral	6	5.9
	Agree	44	43.1

	Strongly Agree	47	46.1
I like the feature to track order progress via GrabFood delivery app.	Strongly Disagree	2	2.0
	Disagree	5	4.9
	Neutral	7	6.9
	Agree	41	40.2
	Strongly Agree	47	46.1
The filter options are helpful to me.	Strongly Disagree	1	1.0
	Disagree	6	5.9
	Neutral	10	9.8
	Agree	42	41.2
	Strongly Agree	43	42.2
GrabFood delivery app's design is concise and easy to understand.	Strongly Disagree	2	2.0
	Disagree	6	5.9
	Neutral	8	7.8
	Agree	40	39.2
	Strongly Agree	46	45.1

The results in Table 2 reveal that respondents generally experienced a high level of convenience when using GrabFood. Nearly half (46.1%) agreed and 34.3% strongly agreed that the app is easy to navigate. Furthermore, 89.2% of respondents (combined “agree” and “strongly agree”) found it easy to learn and operate, suggesting that GrabFood’s interface design effectively facilitates usability and efficiency even for new users with minimal experience.

In addition, 86.3% of respondents were satisfied with the order-tracking feature, highlighting its essential role in strengthening user trust through real-time transparency and service reliability. Similarly, 83.4% found the filter options helpful in narrowing down food choices, and 84.3% agreed that the overall design is concise, visually clear, and easy to understand. These findings demonstrate that GrabFood has successfully optimized user convenience, minimizing time, reducing cognitive effort during ordering, and enhancing the overall customer experience.

Perceived Price and Value

Table 3. Respondents’ Perceptions on Price and Value of Food via GrabFood Delivery App (N = 102)

Statement	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Food featured in GrabFood delivery app is reasonably priced.	Strongly Disagree	2	2.0
	Disagree	20	19.6
	Neutral	32	31.4
	Agree	31	30.4
	Strongly Agree	17	16.7
Purchasing food through GrabFood delivery app is cheaper than dining in.	Strongly Disagree	19	18.6

	Disagree	29	28.4
	Neutral	23	22.5
	Agree	19	18.6
	Strongly Agree	12	11.8
The quality of food is lower than the price paid.	Strongly Disagree	3	2.9
	Disagree	10	9.8
	Neutral	31	30.4
	Agree	40	39.2
	Strongly Agree	18	17.6

As indicated in Table 3, perceptions of price fairness were mixed among respondents. While 47.1% viewed the food offered on GrabFood as reasonably priced, 31.4% were neutral, and 19.6% disagreed. Only 30.4% perceived GrabFood as cheaper than dining in, suggesting that users value the platform primarily for its convenience, accessibility, and time efficiency rather than for cost savings.

However, a notable 56.8% agreed that the quality of food sometimes does not fully match its price, indicating potential dissatisfaction with the price–value balance and perceived service consistency. These results suggest that while GrabFood’s pricing is generally acceptable to most users, the company may need to enhance its perceived value through promotional offers, loyalty programs, or stronger quality assurance measures to maintain long-term user trust and satisfaction.

App Design and Visual Appeal

Table 4. Respondents’ Perceptions on App Design and Visual Appeal of GrabFood Delivery App (N = 102)

Statement	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
The design of the GrabFood delivery app is simple and user-friendly.	Strongly Disagree	3	2.9
	Disagree	4	3.9
	Neutral	12	11.8
	Agree	47	46.1
	Strongly Agree	36	35.3
The structure of GrabFood delivery app is easy to follow.	Strongly Disagree	3	2.9
	Disagree	4	3.9
	Neutral	10	9.8
	Agree	48	47.1
	Strongly Agree	37	36.3
The GrabFood delivery app has attractive colours and fonts.	Strongly Disagree	4	3.9
	Disagree	4	3.9
	Neutral	20	19.6
	Agree	44	43.1
	Strongly Agree	30	29.4

The payment interface in the GrabFood delivery app is easy to understand.	Strongly Disagree	3	2.9
	Disagree	3	2.9
	Neutral	11	10.8
	Agree	48	47.1
	Strongly Agree	37	36.3
The food photos shown in the GrabFood delivery app meet my expectations for delivered items.	Strongly Disagree	4	3.9
	Disagree	12	11.8
	Neutral	25	24.5
	Agree	41	40.2
	Strongly Agree	20	19.6

Table 4 highlights respondents' positive evaluation of GrabFood's design features. The majority (81.4%) agreed that the design is simple and user-friendly, while 83.4% confirmed that the structure is easy to follow, allowing smooth navigation throughout the application. Most respondents (72.5%) also found the color scheme and typography appealing, which enhanced the overall visual experience and user engagement.

Regarding payment systems, 83.4% of users reported that the interface was easy to understand, suggesting strong performance in usability, transaction clarity, and payment accessibility. However, a smaller proportion (59.8%) indicated that the food photos always matched the delivered items, pointing to occasional mismatches between visual representation and actual product appearance. Overall, the results demonstrate that GrabFood's visual and structural design effectively enhances user trust and satisfaction, although improving the accuracy of food images could further strengthen reliability and consumer confidence.

Food Variety and Ordering Flexibility

Table 5. Respondents' Perceptions on Food Variety and Ordering Flexibility in GrabFood Delivery App (N = 102)

Statement	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
I am satisfied with the GrabFood delivery app offering a variety of restaurants.	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0
	Disagree	3	2.9
	Neutral	16	15.7
	Agree	52	51.0
	Strongly Agree	31	30.4
I am satisfied with the GrabFood delivery app offering a variety of food choices.	Strongly Disagree	1	1.0
	Disagree	4	3.9
	Neutral	17	16.7
	Agree	47	46.1
	Strongly Agree	33	32.4
Based on the range of prices in the application, I can order food easily.	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0
	Disagree	11	10.8
	Neutral	17	16.7

	Agree	41	40.2
	Strongly Agree	33	32.4

As shown in Table 5, respondents expressed high satisfaction with the app's food variety and restaurant selection. A total of 81.4% agreed or strongly agreed that GrabFood offers a diverse range of restaurants, while 78.5% were satisfied with the food choices available. Additionally, 72.6% agreed that the app's price range makes ordering easier for various budgets and encourages repeat usage among students with different spending capacities.

These findings confirm that GrabFood effectively meets the diversity and affordability preferences of university students. The wide selection of food options enables users to personalize their dining experience and enjoy flexible choices, thereby enhancing both convenience and perceived value within the app's digital service ecosystem.

Trustworthiness of GrabFood

Table 6. Respondents' Perceptions on Trustworthiness of the GrabFood Delivery App (N = 102)

Statement	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
I trust the GrabFood delivery app.	Strongly Disagree	1	1.0
	Disagree	5	4.9
	Neutral	14	13.7
	Agree	44	43.1
	Strongly Agree	38	37.3
The information provided by the GrabFood delivery app is reliable.	Strongly Disagree	2	2.0
	Disagree	2	2.0
	Neutral	15	14.7
	Agree	48	47.1
	Strongly Agree	35	34.3
I feel secure when ordering food through the GrabFood delivery app.	Strongly Disagree	2	2.0
	Disagree	5	4.9
	Neutral	14	13.7
	Agree	40	39.2
	Strongly Agree	41	40.2

Table 6 presents the results on trustworthiness, indicating strong user confidence in the GrabFood platform. A total of 80.4% of respondents agreed that they trust the GrabFood application, while 81.4% affirmed that the information provided, such as restaurant listings, delivery times, and pricing, is reliable. Furthermore, 79.4% reported feeling secure during transactions, reflecting strong confidence in data protection, payment safety, and overall platform credibility.

These findings demonstrate that GrabFood's service reliability and transparency substantially enhance customer trust. The platform's effective communication, consistent performance, and user-friendly interface foster positive perceptions of dependability, which, in turn, encourage repeat usage and strengthen long-term customer relationships.

Purchase Intention Toward GrabFood

Table 7. Respondents' Perceptions on Purchase Intention Toward GrabFood Delivery App (N = 102)

Statement	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
I will purchase food through GrabFood delivery app because their promotional plan is attractive.	Strongly Disagree	3	2.9
	Disagree	8	7.8
	Neutral	22	21.6
	Agree	40	39.2
	Strongly Agree	29	28.4
I will purchase food through GrabFood delivery app because it is easy to access at my university.	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0
	Disagree	8	7.8
	Neutral	16	15.7
	Agree	43	42.2
	Strongly Agree	35	34.3
Whenever I need to buy food, I likely will purchase from the GrabFood delivery app.	Strongly Disagree	4	3.9
	Disagree	11	10.8
	Neutral	22	21.6
	Agree	38	37.3
	Strongly Agree	27	26.5
I will purchase food through GrabFood delivery app every time I'm busy.	Strongly Disagree	3	2.9
	Disagree	11	10.8
	Neutral	24	23.5
	Agree	37	36.3
	Strongly Agree	27	26.5
I will purchase food through GrabFood delivery app because the food is a good product for the price.	Strongly Disagree	4	3.9
	Disagree	8	7.8
	Neutral	35	34.3
	Agree	39	38.2
	Strongly Agree	16	15.7
I will purchase food through GrabFood delivery app in the future.	Strongly Disagree	2	2.0
	Disagree	4	3.9
	Neutral	22	21.6
	Agree	51	50.0
	Strongly Agree	23	22.5
I will always try to use GrabFood delivery app in my daily life.	Strongly Disagree	11	10.8
	Disagree	13	12.7
	Neutral	21	20.6
	Agree	34	33.3

	Strongly Agree	23	22.5
I plan to continue to use the GrabFood delivery app frequently.	Strongly Disagree	9	8.8
	Disagree	12	11.8
	Neutral	26	25.5
	Agree	34	33.3
	Strongly Agree	21	20.6

The findings in Table 7 indicate that purchase intention among users is generally positive. A majority (67.6%) reported being influenced by GrabFood's promotional campaigns, confirming the significance of marketing incentives and their effectiveness in stimulating consumer engagement and interest. Additionally, 76.5% agreed that the app's accessibility on campus encourages more frequent use and enhances convenience in daily food purchases.

Regarding future intentions, 72.5% of respondents expressed their willingness to continue using GrabFood, suggesting strong loyalty potential and sustained consumer trust toward the platform. However, only 55.8% reported using the app daily or frequently, implying that purchasing decisions may still depend on situational needs, lifestyle patterns, or specific occasions rather than habitual use. Overall, promotional attractiveness, accessibility, and convenience remain the primary factors driving purchase intention, although continuous engagement strategies and user experience improvements are necessary to further enhance usage frequency and long-term retention.

Correlation and Regression Analysis

Table 8. Correlation Matrix, Descriptive Statistics, and Reliability Coefficients (N = 102)

Variables		1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Convenience (App usability)	0.931					
2	Price	0.416**	0.650				
3	Design (App features)	0.793**	0.533**	0.848			
4	Various Food Choice	0.680**	0.404**	0.807**	0.886		
5	Trustworthiness	0.802**	0.490**	0.849**	0.754**	0.883	
6	Purchase Intention	0.675**	0.620**	0.720**	0.733**	0.703**	0.911
Mean (M)		4.20	3.25	3.95	4.03	4.10	3.70
Standard Deviation (SD)		0.79	0.85	0.77	0.78	0.81	0.83

Note: N=102; *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01

Table 8 presents the results of the correlation and reliability analysis. All variables demonstrated positive and significant correlations ($p < 0.01$), with particularly strong relationships observed between design and trustworthiness ($r = 0.849$) and between convenience and trustworthiness ($r = 0.802$). These results indicate a high level of interrelatedness among the constructs, suggesting that improvements in one factor could positively influence the others. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.650 to 0.931, signifying acceptable to excellent internal consistency across all measurement items. Overall, these findings confirm that the measurement instruments were both reliable and suitable for subsequent regression and hypothesis testing analyses.

Table 9. Multiple Regression Analysis on Customer Purchase Intention Toward GrabFood Delivery App (N = 102)

Variables Entered		Beta (β)
1	Convenience (App usability)	0.214
2	Price	0.343
3	Design (App features)	-0.041
4	Various Food Choice	0.422
5	Trustworthiness	0.080
R ² Change		0.693

Note: N=102; *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01

Table 9 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis examining the influence of convenience, price, design, food variety, and trustworthiness on customers' purchase intention toward food delivery applications. The model demonstrates a strong explanatory power, with an R² value of 0.693, indicating that approximately 69.3% of the variance in purchase intention can be explained by these variables. Among the predictors, various food choice emerges as the most influential factor ($\beta = 0.422$), suggesting that customers are more motivated to make purchases when the application offers a wide range of food options catering to diverse preferences. Price also shows a strong positive effect ($\beta = 0.343$), implying that affordability and value for money significantly enhance customer confidence and intention to purchase. Convenience, reflecting the app's usability, has a moderate positive impact ($\beta = 0.214$), indicating that ease of use contributes positively to the perceived reliability and overall satisfaction with the platform.

In contrast, the design of the application ($\beta = -0.041$) demonstrates a weak and negative influence, suggesting that aesthetic or technical features alone do not substantially affect purchase intention. Trustworthiness itself shows a minor positive effect ($\beta = 0.080$), meaning that while reliability and credibility contribute to customer confidence, they are not the dominant determinants of purchase intention in this context. Based on these results, H1, H2, and H4 are accepted since convenience, price, and food variety display positive relationships with trustworthiness. H3, however, is rejected because the design variable shows a negative relationship, contradicting the proposed hypothesis. Meanwhile, H5 is only partially supported, as the mediating role of trustworthiness is weak. The findings indicate that the direct effects of convenience, price, and food variety on purchase intention are stronger than the indirect effects through trustworthiness.

DISCUSSION

Convenience and App Usability

The findings show that convenience plays a positive yet moderate role in shaping purchase intention. Most respondents perceived GrabFood as an efficient, user-friendly, and time-saving platform, reflecting strong usability in navigation, ordering, and payment processes. These results align with the TAM (Davis, 1989), which posits that perceived ease of use influences users' behavioral intentions to adopt a technology-based service.

Similarly, studies by Lina et al. (2022) and Wiastuti et al. (2022) found that consumers are more likely to continue using digital food delivery platforms when they perceive them as simple and intuitive. The user-friendly interface of GrabFood, allowing quick access to menus, order tracking, and payment confirmation, enhances satisfaction and reinforces the perception of convenience. For university students with demanding academic schedules, this efficiency becomes a key determinant in their decision to use the service repeatedly.

However, the regression analysis indicates that convenience, while important, is not the dominant predictor of purchase intention compared with economic and product-related factors. This suggests that while ease of use encourages adoption, price sensitivity and product variety remain stronger motivators for continued engagement among student users.

Pricing and Perceived Value

Price was identified as one of the most influential factors affecting purchase intention, confirming its importance in users' decision-making processes. Respondents expressed mixed perceptions of price fairness, with many acknowledging that delivery charges and restaurant markups occasionally reduce perceived value. Nonetheless, promotional campaigns and student-friendly pricing appear to strengthen overall satisfaction and trust.

These findings are consistent with [Homyamyen et al. \(2024\)](#) and [Zhao et al. \(2021\)](#), who reported that transparent and fair pricing enhances customer confidence and stimulates repeat purchases in online service platforms. From the perspective of university students, who are typically more price-sensitive, GrabFood's discount vouchers, loyalty programs, and periodic free delivery offers serve as strong incentives to continue using the platform.

The results also align with [Trebicka et al. \(2023\)](#), who emphasized that effective pricing strategies significantly influence customer satisfaction and long-term loyalty. Hence, maintaining clear and consistent pricing communication is crucial for GrabFood's brand credibility, especially in a highly competitive digital marketplace where minor differences in cost can influence customer-switching behavior.

App Design and User Experience

Although the descriptive analysis shows that most users found the GrabFood interface visually appealing and easy to navigate, app design did not significantly affect purchase intention in the regression model. This indicates that while users appreciate the aesthetic and structural quality of the interface, these factors alone may not directly determine their decision to make purchases.

This finding diverges from [Martinez and McAndrews \(2021\)](#), who found that well-designed mobile interfaces foster user "stickiness" and emotional engagement. One possible explanation is that GrabFood has already achieved a standardized, reliable design baseline; thus, variations in satisfaction with design have limited influence on behavioral outcomes. Instead, design appears to play a supporting role, enhancing the credibility of other variables such as convenience and trustworthiness.

Nevertheless, continuous improvement in interface responsiveness and visual accuracy, particularly ensuring that displayed food photos match delivered items, remains essential. A more precise representation would enhance perceived honesty and align with [Xu \(2022\)](#), who argued that service design consistency is a fundamental dimension of digital trust.

Variety of Food Choices

The study highlights that food variety has the strongest positive effect on purchase intention among all independent variables. Respondents highly valued the availability of diverse restaurants, cuisines, and price categories within the app, reflecting an expectation of inclusivity and choice flexibility.

These findings correspond with [Lim et al. \(2023\)](#) and [Lin et al. \(2024\)](#), who found that food variety and menu diversity significantly enhance user satisfaction and increase the likelihood of repeat orders. For university students, variety satisfies both practical and emotional needs; it provides accessibility to multiple meal options and supports lifestyle preferences for novelty and exploration.

The dominance of this factor indicates that GrabFood's competitive advantage lies not only in its technology or interface but also in its ability to connect users to an extensive network of food providers. Therefore, strengthening partnerships with local and international restaurants can sustain user engagement and ensure product diversity, which, according to [Lin et al. \(2024\)](#), directly contributes to long-term customer retention in food delivery ecosystems.

Trustworthiness as a Mediating Factor

Trustworthiness emerged as a key psychological and relational variable, even though its direct effect on purchase intention was statistically weak. This implies that most users already perceive GrabFood as a trustworthy platform, meaning that trust functions as a baseline requirement rather than a differentiating driver of purchase intention.

Consistent with [Hanif et al. \(2024\)](#), trust operates as a mediating factor linking service attributes (such as convenience, design, and price) with behavioral outcomes. When users perceive GrabFood as reliable, secure, and transparent, they are more willing to engage in repeated transactions despite minor operational issues. The positive correlation between trust and other variables further reinforces its integrative role in shaping consumer confidence.

However, trust can be fragile in digital service contexts. As [Cloodack \(2023\)](#) and [Li et al. \(2020\)](#) emphasized, even occasional service failures, such as late deliveries or inconsistent product quality, can quickly undermine user confidence. Hence, maintaining consistent delivery accuracy, prompt customer service, and transparent communication is essential to preserve user trust and sustain behavioral intention over time.

Managerial Implications

The findings provide several managerial insights for service providers and marketers. First, GrabFood should continue emphasizing value-driven strategies, such as student discounts, loyalty points, and transparent pricing policies, to attract and retain young consumers. Second, expanding partnerships with restaurants that offer diverse cuisines can further strengthen satisfaction and perceived inclusivity.

Third, enhancing system reliability and accuracy in order tracking will reinforce the app's trustworthiness and operational excellence. Finally, while design aesthetics may not directly drive purchase behavior, improving visual accuracy and interactive features can enhance perceived credibility and user engagement. By integrating these strategies, GrabFood can strengthen both functional and relational aspects of its service, thereby enhancing long-term loyalty among university students.

Theoretical Contribution

From a theoretical perspective, this study extends the TAM and the TPB by confirming that trustworthiness mediates the relationship between perceived service attributes and behavioral intention in the food delivery context. The results demonstrate that while functional value (price and variety) drives immediate behavior, psychological constructs such as trust and convenience sustain long-term user engagement. This integration

provides empirical support for multidimensional frameworks of digital consumer behavior, particularly within Southeast Asian markets.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to examine the factors influencing university students' purchase intentions toward GrabFood, focusing on the roles of convenience, price, design, food variety, and trustworthiness, as well as the mediating effect of trustworthiness on purchase intention. By identifying which factors most strongly shape students' behavioral intentions, the study seeks to provide both theoretical and managerial insights into how GrabFood can strengthen user trust and loyalty within the competitive digital food delivery market.

The findings reveal that food variety and price are the strongest determinants of students' purchase intentions, showing that users are primarily driven by diverse menu options and affordable pricing when deciding to use GrabFood. Convenience also exerts a positive but moderate influence, suggesting that while ease of use contributes to purchase intention, it is less dominant compared to price and variety. In contrast, design and trustworthiness, although perceived positively, exhibit limited direct effects on purchase intention, implying that aesthetic features and perceived reliability play only secondary roles compared to functional and value-based considerations.

Nevertheless, trustworthiness remains an important mediating factor that reinforces user confidence in the GrabFood platform. Once a basic level of trust is established, students' behavioral intentions are largely shaped by affordability, reliability, and product diversity rather than by design aesthetics. This finding highlights that consistent service quality, transparent pricing, and food variety are central to sustaining customer loyalty in the context of digital food delivery.

From a managerial perspective, GrabFood should continue prioritizing fair and transparent pricing, expanding the range of food options, ensuring delivery accuracy, and strengthening overall reliability to enhance user satisfaction and retention. Theoretically, this study contributes to extending the TAM and the TPB by validating the partial mediating role of trustworthiness in digital consumption behavior. Although limited to a single demographic group, the findings provide a valuable foundation for future research to explore cross-cultural or qualitative insights into user trust and loyalty within online food delivery services. Overall, this study emphasizes that trust, affordability, and product diversity are the key drivers of competitiveness and long-term engagement for GrabFood in the digital marketplace.

LIMITATION

This study relies primarily on secondary data, with limited primary insights from university students, which may reduce its contextual relevance and originality. The findings also tend to be generalized, lacking in-depth exploration of key operational challenges such as delivery delays, application malfunctions, customer service responsiveness, and sustainability practices. Although trustworthiness was positioned as a mediating variable, it was not examined comprehensively, and no practical recommendations were proposed to address operational weaknesses. Furthermore, the study does not consider competitor comparisons or geographical differences, which could provide a broader and more balanced understanding of GrabFood's market performance and strategic positioning. Future studies should incorporate mixed-method approaches and cross-platform analyses to capture more nuanced insights into consumer experience and trust formation in the digital food delivery sector.

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DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

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