

Thesis 1: Impact of Food Delivery Services on Urban Eating Habits

Abstract

The proliferation of food delivery applications has significantly transformed dining behaviors in metropolitan areas. This study examines how platforms like GrabFood and Foodpanda have altered meal patterns, food choices, and cooking frequencies among urban residents. The research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys with 500 participants and qualitative interviews with 50 households in Kuala Lumpur. Results indicate that 68% of urban dwellers now order food delivery at least three times weekly, with significant implications for nutrition, food expenditure, and traditional dining culture.

Introduction

Urbanization and technological advancement have converged to create unprecedented changes in how people obtain and consume food. The traditional model of home-cooked meals or restaurant dining has been supplemented by a third option: delivered meals ordered through smartphone applications. This research investigates the multifaceted impact of food delivery services on urban residents' eating habits, nutritional intake, and social behaviors. Understanding these changes is crucial for public health planning and urban policy development.

Problem Statement

Despite the convenience offered by food delivery services, several concerning trends have emerged. Nutritional quality often deteriorates with frequent delivery orders, as high-calorie, low-nutrient options dominate platform offerings. Financial expenditure on food increases substantially, with families spending 40% more on delivered meals compared to home cooking. Additionally, traditional cooking skills are declining among younger generations who rely heavily on delivery services. There is limited comprehensive research examining all these dimensions simultaneously in the Malaysian urban context.

Issues

1. **Nutritional Decline:** Delivered meals typically contain higher levels of sodium, sugar, and saturated fats compared to home-cooked alternatives.
2. **Increased Food Costs:** Service fees, delivery charges, and restaurant markups inflate meal costs by 30-50%.
3. **Reduced Physical Activity:** The convenience of delivery eliminates trips to markets or restaurants, contributing to sedentary lifestyles.
4. **Packaging Waste:** Each delivery generates substantial single-use plastic and paper waste, exacerbating urban waste management challenges.
5. **Social Isolation:** Family meals prepared and eaten together are declining, potentially affecting family bonding and social development.
6. **Cooking Skill Erosion:** Younger adults show decreasing proficiency in basic cooking techniques, relying instead on delivered meals.