COVID-19 lockdown and the satisfaction with online food delivery providers

ABSTRACT

This paper analyses how customer satisfaction with online food delivery providers (ODP) evolved during the COVID-19 lockdown in Ecuador. First, analysis of covariance was carried out for e-satisfaction and three proposed determinants: e-service quality, perceived food quality, and personal aspects of delivery workers, in order to compare estimated means before and during the confinement. Using a sample of 483 respondents, results revealed that the evaluation of personal aspects improved during the lockdown, but there was no significant difference for the rest of the determinants, neither for e-satisfaction. Then, a structural model was tested, showing that all determinants positively influence e-satisfaction. A multi-group analysis revealed that the path coefficients did not change significantly in the two periods. However, when considering the two subsamples separately, personal aspects lost significance during the lockdown. Finally, a qualitative analysis of customers' opinions about the use of food delivery apps during the confinement is provided.

Keywords: online food delivery providers, e-satisfaction, e-service quality, food quality, delivery workers, COVID-19.

INTRODUCTION

The online food delivery sector has been growing at high rates in the last years worldwide. Its revenues have risen from US$ 76,193 million in 2017 to US$ 122,739 million in 2020 (17.2% average annual growth) with an expectation to reach US$ 164,002 million for 2025 (Statista, 2020). Moreover, during the COVID-19 lockdown, more online delivery providers have emerged and more restaurants have turned to the delivery format (Dishman, 2020). There are even restaurants that offer its products solely with delivery (ghost or cloud kitchens), giving the opportunity for new participants with lower fixed costs. Therefore, this activity has gained relevance not only for established but also for new businesses nowadays.

By May 22, 2020, Ecuador was one of the most affected countries by COVID-19 in the world (#22) and the third most affected in South America, with 35,828 total cases and 3,056 total deaths reported (2,034 cases and 174 deaths, by 1 million people) (Worldometer, 2020). However, non-official estimations suggest that the number of deaths is significantly greater than that reported by the government (León & Kurmanaev, 2020). Since March 17th, the Ecuadorian government imposed mobility restrictions within the country, closed its borders to all foreign travelers due to the spread of the coronavirus, and suspended face-to-face working in the government and private sectors; however, prioritized sectors (e.g., utilities, security, health, etc.) and delivery services were allowed to operate with specific norms (COE, 2020).

Due to the lockdown, the entertainment, hospitality and restaurant sector is one of the most affected in Ecuador. Most restaurants and cafes owners project a fall in sales of 30% or more during 2020 (Castillo & Zhangallymbay, 2020). In the midst of this crisis, delivery providers emerge as a tool to absorb the drop in sales; 46% of restaurants and cafes had a delivery service before the lockdown, but 92% expect to have it currently (Castillo & Zhangallymbay, 2020). As reported above, a similar picture is evidenced in other parts of the world during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Given the importance of this sector within service industries, this paper analyzes customer satisfaction with online food delivery providers (ODP) with a model of three determinants, in Ecuador. The literature on online services has evidenced that e-service quality and food quality impact e-satisfaction (Suhartanto et al., 2019). We suggest that the customer interaction with the delivery worker is another source of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with ODPs, according to a vast literature in the service industry (Alhelalat et al., 2017; Jang & Namkung, 2009; Macias et al., 2020; Wall & Berry, 2007). As this health

emergency has brought several changes in customer perceptions, attitudes and behavior, our purpose is to test whether e-satisfaction and its determinants have changed in the presence of the pandemic, comparing two samples: before and during the COVID-19 lockdown. In addition, an eventual change in the structural relation between e-satisfaction and its determinants is tested, and, finally, a qualitative analysis of customers' opinions about the service of ODPs during this crisis is provided.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

Service literature has turned its attention into the e-world mainly in the last two decades. The works of Zeithaml et al. (2000) and Parasuraman and Zeithaml (2005) provide a definition for e-service quality and a summary of its main dimensions. E-service quality is understood as '*the extent to which a web site facilitates efficient and effective shopping, purchasing, and delivery of products and services*' (Zeithaml et al., 2000). This construct comprises: (i) efficiency, as the ease and speed of accessing and using the site; (ii) fulfillment, as the extent to which the site's promises about delivery and item availability are fulfilled; (iii) system availability, referring to the correct technical functioning of the site; and (iv) privacy, as the degree to which the site is safe and protects customer information (Parasuraman & Zeithaml, 2005).

Nevertheless, works about online food delivery providers are recent and scarce in marketing literature. Some works have focused in the attitudes toward (Cho et al., 2019; Yeo et al., 2017), intention to use (Alagoz & Hekimoglu, 2012; Okumus et al., 2018; Yeo et al., 2017), adoption of ODPs (Okumus & Bilgihan, 2014), and final conversion (i.e., placing an online order) (Kapoor & Vij, 2018). All these studies analyze a pre-consumption stage. Instead, this work investigates customers who already adopted the use of ODPs, have placed orders and have consumed the food, and analyses their satisfaction with the ODP. Wang et al. (2019) study satisfaction with only same-restaurant apps, and include mainly information systems (IS) variables as determinants. The works from Alalwan (2020), Suhartanto et al. (2019), and Macias et al. (2020) are the most related to the present study. The first includes detailed functional aspects as precursors of ODP satisfaction; the second proposes e-service quality and food quality as determinants of e-satisfaction; while the third adds personal aspects of delivery workers in the ODP context, and explores spillover effects over restaurant brands. The present work differs from Macias et al.'s (2020) in the sense that we intend to analyze changes in the levels of evaluation of e-satisfaction and its determinants, and changes

in the structural relationship due to the COVID-19 lockdown, using a greater sample that allows capturing the effect of the health emergency period. In addition, we provide a qualitative analysis of customers' perceptions about the service of ODPs in the time of COVD-19, which could bring new insights for further research on this topic.

Based on Oliver's (1999) definition of satisfaction, we define ODP satisfaction as a subjective assessment of experience with an ODP, regarding the degree of fulfillment of prior expectations. The customer's service encounter in the ODP context includes interaction with the platform/app (launching, searching, ordering, payment, waiting/tracking), interaction with the delivery worker, and food consumption. With regard to the platform, the variable that best describes its performance is e-service quality. Adequate functioning of the platform in its several dimensions (efficiency, fulfillment, system availability, privacy) should contribute to e-satisfaction. For example, prior works in lodging websites (Jeon & Jeong, 2017) and ODPs (Macías et al., 2020; Suhartanto et al., 2019) showed this relationship. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: e-service quality is positively associated with ODP satisfaction.

On the other hand, delivery workers may perform some activities interacting with the customer, such as text messaging or phone calls for delivery details, and the personal delivery of products. Several works have explained that the appearance and behavior of employees influence brand image formation in customers' minds (Pounders et al., 2015; Warhust & Nickson's, 2007a, 2007b). Managers in many industries establish parameters of clothing, speech, and behavior in order to reflect brand image and values (Witz et al., 2003). We define personal aspects of delivery workers (hereafter, personal aspects) as the combination of physical appearance, clothing, and manners when interacting with customers of ODP. There is evidence that personal aspects influence the way customers evaluate the service (Kim, 2014), restaurant experience (Wall & Berry, 2007), and satisfaction (Alhelalat et al., 2017; Macías et al., 2020). The next hypothesis is proposed:

H2: personal aspects is positively related with ODP satisfaction

From a process perspective, after platform and delivery worker interaction, customers consume food as a part of their experience. The degree of perceived food quality in aspects such as the variety of menu, presentation, size, healthiness, taste, freshness, and food temperature, contribute to customer experience in the whole service encounter. Despite the fact that the food has being prepared by the restaurant, there is some degree of control by the ODP regarding the delivery time, which, in turn, could affect the freshness of the food

4

received by the customer. It has been shown that perceived food quality is positively associated with satisfaction with delivery service providers (Macías et al., 2020; Suhartanto et al., 2009). Based on these arguments and evidence, the following hypothesis has been drawn:

H3: perceived food quality is positively associated with ODP satisfaction.

Finally, despite food order is prepared by restaurants, Spillover Theory (Sirgy et al., 2001) posits that the experience with some parts of a process influences the perception with another part of this process. Some evidence is provided in several fields. For example, in the case of brand alliances, the negative behavior of one brand is likely to spill over to the other brand if consumers believe that the latter knew and overlooked the misbehavior (Votolato & Unnava, 2006). Within coalition loyalty programs, service failure by one program partner has a negative effect on customer loyalty toward the whole program (Schumann et al., 2014). In the ODP context, there has been proved that e-service quality influences the way customers perceive food quality (Macías et al., 2020; Suhartanto et al., 2019). In addition, it can be argued than the good or bad experience with the previous phase of food consumption (i.e., delivery worker interaction) could influence the way customers assess food quality. Therefore, we propose:

H4: e-service quality is positively related with perceived food quality.

H5: personal aspects is positively related with perceived food quality.

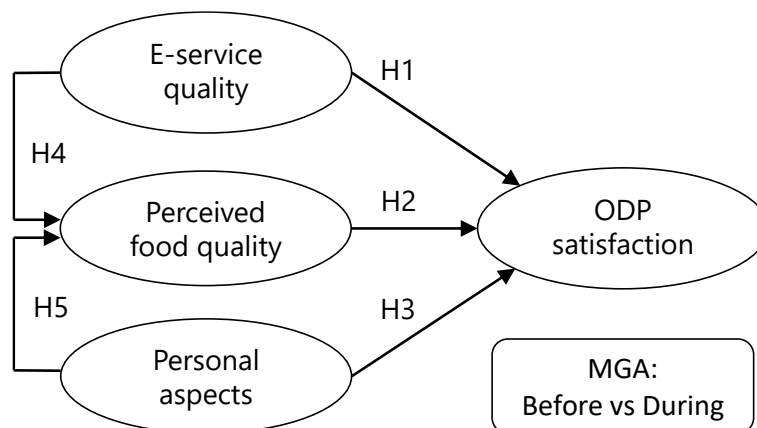The relationships proposed above are depicted in figure 1.

Figure 1. Conceptual model

METHODOLOGY

Measures and procedures

Items for the study constructs were adapted from previous studies and measured in 5-points Likert scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). ODP satisfaction (e-SAT) was measured with three items from Möhlmann (2015). E-service quality (e-SQ) was measured with a summarized scale that resembles the conceptualization from Parasuraman and Zeithaml (2005) (Harris & Goode, 2004; Ryu, Lee & Kim, 2012; Suhartanto et al., 2019). Perceived food quality (PFQ) was measured with 6 items (Ryu et al., 2012; Namkung & Jang, 2007), and personal aspects (PASP) was adapted from Alhelalat et al.'s (2017) scale. Table 1 shows the items for all the main constructs. All items were translated from English to Spanish, slightly adjusted after a pilot study (n=18), and back-translated. There was a high level of coincidence between the original and back-translated versions of the items. An online questionnaire was applied in two phases. The first one during February 2020 (before COVID-19 lockdown), and the second one from April 1 to May 4, 2020 (during the lockdown). A categorical variable was created to register the two periods (PERIOD=1 during lockdown). Frequency (FREQ) of using food apps (1= never, 5= very often) (Newman et al., 2018) and demographic variables were also measured: age (AGE), gender (GEN), income (INCO), and education (EDU). Unrestricted self-administered survey on the Internet (Fricker, 2008) is a convenience sample technique, which can be justified in this case due to a lack of access to ODPs' customer databases and the fact that the context for studying ODP's customers is the Internet.

Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed in order to test several validity criteria for the study constructs' measurement: construct reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. In order to determine if whether have been differences in the evaluation of the three determinants proposed, and e-satisfaction, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was performed, with summed dependent variables, a categorical variable describing the period of evaluation as the main factor (before or during the lockdown). Control variables included were: age, income, education, and frequency of ODP use.

Then, the structural model in figure 1 was tested with the Partial Least Squares (PLS) technique in SmartPLS (Ringle et al., 2015). PLS is a suitable technique for structural

equation models (SEM) when the researcher aims to explore a new theory, rather than confirming established theoretical models, when complex models with many indicators and relationships are tested, with non-normal data or small sample sizes (Hair et al., 2017). A multi-group analysis (MGA) was performed to check if whether these relationships changed during the lockdown.

Finally, a summary of responses for an open-ended question is provided, intended to know the main opinions of customers about being able to have the food delivery service during the lockdown. Qualitative data analysis involves making sense of the text. In order to analyze the text of the responses, researchers followed a three-stage coding process. First, open coding identified basic categories. Then, axial coding related categories to subcategories. Finally, key themes were identified.

RESULTS

A total sample of 483 respondents was obtained (N_{Before}=332; N_{During}=151). Descriptive data for each group is shown in table 1. There are significant differences regarding age, income, and education. Frequency of use of ODPs is not significantly different between the two subsamples. Considering the differences in the subsamples, demographic variables were used as control variables in further analyses.

Table 1. Descriptive data by group and tests for differences

	Before	*During*	
N	332	151	
Means			**p-value (t)**
Age (years)	29.62	32.50	0.002
Frequency (1-5)	3.48	3.42	0.578
Percentages			**p-value (χ^2)**
Gender			0.265
Female	54.2%	61.6%	
Male	45.5%	38.4%	
Other	0.3%	0.0%	
Income (household, monthly)			0.015
$400 or less	7.8%	4.0%	
$401-$700	12.3%	8.6%	
$701-$1200	23.2%	16.6%	
$1201-$2500	26.2%	35.1%	
$2501-$4800	18.7%	27.8%	
more than $4800	11.7%	7.9%	
Education			0.000
Secondary education	34.3%	16.6%	
Bachelor's degree	37.3%	33.1%	
Graduate	28.3%	50.3%	

Table 2. Items and measurement model results

Constructs and items		Factor loading	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
e-Service Quality (e-SQ)			0.877	0.903	0.538
esq1	In the app, I can easily find what I need	0.760			
esq2	The app makes it easy to get anything	0.745			
esq3	The app is easy to use	0.773			
esq4	Whenever I need, I can access the app	0.750			
esq5	The app launches straight away	0.744			
esq6	The app accurately inform the delivery time and conditions	0.721			
esq7	The payment information is safe in this app	0.704			
esq8	The ordered products were delivered within the estimated time	0.668			
Personal aspects (PASP)			0.915	0.934	0.701
pas1	The delivery worker had a clean and well-kept physical appearance	0.796			
pas2	The delivery worker's clothes looked clean and tidy	0.784			
pas3	The delivery worker showed friendly facial expressions	0.840			
pas4	The delivery worker expressed himself in a friendly and warm way	0.881			
pas5	The delivery worker expressed himself courteously and respectfully	0.841			
pas6	Overall, the attitude of the delivery worker was cordial	0.878			
Perceived food quality (PFQ)			0.888	0.914	0.641
pfq1	The food was delicious	0.839			
pfq2	[Brand] offered a variety of menu items	0.734			
pfq3	[Brand] offered freshly prepared food	0.820			
pfq4	The food was properly packed	0.800			
pfq5	I received the food at the appropriate temperature	0.783			
pfq6	The smell of the food was tempting	0.823			
ODP satisfaction (e-SAT)			0.875	0.923	0.800
esat1	Overall, I am satisfied with the app	0.916			
esat2	The last time I used the app it met my expectations	0.892			
esat3	The app used represents the ideal version of an app to order food online	0.874			
Frequency (FREQ)					
freq	How often do you use apps for ordering food online?				

Confirmatory factor analysis

Construct reliability was assessed with Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). Both criteria showed values above the recommended threshold of 0.7 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The average variance extracted (AVE) for all constructs reached values above 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), but it required to remove some items

from e-service quality carefully analyzing not to affect the content validity. For convergent validity, the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) was calculated, which is considered a more efficient criterion than Fornell and Larcker's (Henseler et al., 2015). Values for HTMT were all below 0.85, as recommended by Hair et al. (2017). Factor loadings were greater than the minimum suggested level of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2017). Considering all together, the measurement model was satisfactory (tables 2 and 3).

Table 3. Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	e-SQ	*PASP*	*PFQ*	*e-SAT*
e-SQ				
PASP	0.471			
PFQ	0.550	0.502		
e-SAT	0.700	0.494	0.624	

Analysis of covariance

ANCOVA results for each determinant and e-satisfaction evidenced that PASP is the only determinant that changed during the lockdown (the main effect of PERIOD was significant), showing a significant increase (M_{Before}= 4.16; M_{During}= 4.39). FREQ was significant for all of the determinants and for e-satisfaction (table 4).

Table 4. ANCOVA results

	e-SQ	*PASP*	*PFQ*	*e-SAT*
Estimated means[a]				
Before	4.349	4.157	4.409	4.642
During	4.393	4.388	4.495	4.697
Main effects: F (p-value)				
PERIOD	0.45 (0.503)	8.89 (**0.003**)	1.75 (0.187)	0.52 (0.471)
GEN	0.25 (0.782)	3.14 (**0.044**)	0.13 (0.881)	0.49 (0.610)
INCO	1.71 (0.130)	1.15 (0.332)	1.56 (0.171)	1.73 (0.126)
EDU	1.2 (0.309)	0.47 (0.707)	1.57 (0.195)	1.95 (0.121)
AGE	0.27 (0.606)	0 (0.992)	0.07 (0.792)	0 (0.988)
FREQ	13.68 (**0.000**)	6.23 (**0.013**)	10.17 (**0.002**)	28.26 (**0.000**)
R²	0.056	0.059	0.052	0.091

a. Covariates in the model were evaluated at the following values: AGE = 30.52, FREQ = 3.47.

Structural model

Turning now to the structural model, the analysis for the total sample showed significant and positive relations between e-satisfaction and the three determinants, giving support to H1,

H2, and H3. Also, the relationship between e-SQ and PFQ, and PASP and PFQ were positive and significant, giving support to H4 and H5 (table 5). All control variables, except frequency, were non-significant. Structural models estimated with PLS should be evaluated based on their predictive power measured by the coefficient of determination (R^2). R^2 for PFQ and e-SAT were 0.314 and 0.499, considered moderate values (Hair et al., 2017). Moreover, size effects (f^2) were estimated for all endogenous variables in the model. The results show that e-service quality is the main factor when evaluation customer satisfaction with ODPs, with a medium effect ($0.15 \leq f^2 < 0.35$). On the other and, PASP and PFQ showed small ($f^2 \geq 0.02$) size effects (table 6). Finally, the MGA showed that there were no significant changes in any of the path coefficients when comparing the two temporal samples, although the impact of PASP lost significance during the lockdown. The path coefficient for PASP to e-SAT is not significant for the 'during' subsample, and at the same time is not significantly different from the 'before' path coefficient (table 5). Further analysis of total indirect effects showed a significant effect of PASP over e-SAT (mediated by PFQ) in both subsamples.

Customer opinions

Finally, responses to an open-ended question were analyzed. The question located at the end of the questionnaire was 'What is your opinion on being able to count on the food delivery service while the mobility restrictions due to COVID-19 apply in your country?' In order to analyze the text of 104 responses obtained, researchers followed a three-stage coding process. Key themes were identified and summarized below.

Attitudes toward the service: Attitudes are overall evaluations of a brand, object, or, in this case, the service provided by ODPs. Attitudes have some properties, as valence (negative or positive), extremity (low to high extremity), and emotionality (cognitive versus emotional) (Rocklage & Fazio, 2015). A large majority of respondents favorably expressed about having the ODP service during the lockdown. Some of them qualified this possibility from 'okay' to 'excellent' or from 'useful' to 'indispensable', where 'excellent' and 'indispensable' denote high extremity. Adjectives like 'good', 'very good', 'positive', 'wonderful' or 'excellent' are mainly emotional; while 'useful', 'helpful', 'necessary', or 'indispensable' are more

cognitive, i.e., beliefs about the service and its properties. Most of the adjectives expressed by respondents were emotional.

> 'Excellent option.'
> 'It is the best we have.'
> 'It is a good option.'
> 'Well, it is necessary.'

There were few negative responses, which expressed it was a 'risky', 'unsafe', or 'expensive' service:

> 'I find it dangerous, high risk, and at the moment I am not consuming anything prepared.'

Reasons for positive opinions: Some of the respondents indicated reasons why they expressed a favorable opinion about the ODP service during the lockdown. The most cited cause was the reduction of risk exposure: less probability of crowding and contagion. The second cause was convenience, which includes time saving and the possibility to stay at home. In some cases, staying at home is imperative when the consumer has mobility problems or belongs to the most vulnerable population.

> 'It helps us to have the necessary products without risk to leave home.'
> 'It is valuable to be able to count on this service in times of restricted mobility, especially for people who may be experiencing the disease and, because they are isolated, cannot go out or have anyone to give them food.'
> 'It is an excellent option; it exposes the consumer less to the threat of the virus and offers you an advantage by taking that time doing other things such as teleworking.'

Finally, a smaller group of respondents argued from the point of view of businesses and workers, since the delivery option allows preserving the financial stability of restaurants, ODPs, and delivery workers.

> 'An excellent option. It maintains sales in the restaurants found in the app and keeps its delivery workers employed.'

Concerns and demands: Another relevant theme that emerged from customers' responses was the concern about adopting biosecurity norms by restaurants and delivery workers when preparing and delivering the food, respectively.

> 'It seems very opportune to me, as long as the appropriate sanitary and safety measures are taken.'

In addition, several customers demanded that more restaurants, apps, and workers should incorporate into the collaborative system in order to increase food options, improve geographic coverage, and reduce waiting times.

> 'It is a wise decision, and more restaurants should be added in order to have more available options.'

Table 5. Structural model and multi-group analysis

	Structural relation	Total sample				Before		During		Multi-group analysis	
		Path coefficient	Standard Deviation	Bootstrapping t	p-value	Path coefficient	p-value	Path coefficient	p-value	Path coefficient difference Before-During	p-value
H1	e-SQ→e-SAT	0.395	0.047	8.445	**0.000**	0.356	**0.000**	0.430	**0.000**	-0.074	0.481
H2	PFQ→e-SAT	0.275	0.052	5.321	**0.000**	0.291	**0.000**	0.292	**0.005**	-0.001	0.991
H3	PASP→e-SAT	0.145	0.047	3.047	**0.002**	0.171	**0.001**	0.090	0.295	0.081	0.404
H4	e-SQ→PFQ	0.358	0.044	8.061	**0.000**	0.358	**0.000**	0.359	**0.000**	-0.001	0.994
H5	PASP→PFQ	0.305	0.048	6.296	**0.000**	0.343	**0.000**	0.233	**0.003**	0.110	0.292
Control	FREQ→e-SAT	0.118	0.035	3.422	**0.001**	0.158	**0.000**	0.063	0.266	0.095	0.207
	AGE→e-SAT	0.019	0.041	0.466	0.641	0.047	0.290	-0.012	0.876	0.059	0.477
	GEN→e-SAT	-0.030	0.032	0.953	0.341	-0.052	0.167	-0.001	0.992	-0.051	0.469
	EDU_cat2→e-SAT	-0.045	0.041	1.086	0.277	-0.056	0.230	0.004	0.963	-0.060	0.526
	EDU_cat3→e-SAT	-0.048	0.049	0.971	0.332	-0.056	0.273	-0.013	0.907	-0.043	0.684
	INCO_cat2→e-SAT	-0.055	0.054	1.002	0.317	-0.103	0.108	0.047	0.714	-0.150	0.242
	INCO_cat3→e-SAT	-0.061	0.053	1.148	0.251	-0.069	0.234	-0.043	0.787	-0.026	0.849
	INCO_cat4→e-SAT	0.017	0.058	0.296	0.768	-0.023	0.707	0.090	0.631	-0.112	0.466
	INCO_cat5→e-SAT	0.010	0.056	0.180	0.857	-0.011	0.845	0.065	0.717	-0.077	0.607
	INCO_cat6→e-SAT	0.016	0.049	0.321	0.748	0.015	0.789	0.001	0.996	0.014	0.900

Table 6. Model evaluation

	PFQ	*e-SAT*
R^2	0.314	0.499
R^2 adj.	0.311	0.485
f^2		
e-SQ	0.152	0.215
PASP	0.111	0.030
PFQ		0.102

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

We tested three determinants of satisfaction with online food delivery providers: e-service quality, personal aspects of delivery workers, and food quality. The model was tested before and during the COVID-19 lockdown in Ecuador, in order to see if whether the impact of the determinants has changed. An individual analysis of each determinant's means showed that the only construct that experienced a significant increase was personal aspects. What could explain that customers better evaluated personal aspects during the lockdown? Plausible explanations could be a better appearance and interaction of delivery workers or a better perception of customers for the same level of workers' performance. Recently, various press reports revealed that customers valued the fact that delivery workers expose themselves to contagion to earn a living during the lockdown. According to existing research, delivery workers are mostly young people with no stable jobs (Goods et al., 2019; Prakash et al., n.d.). As a demonstration of gratitude, many ODP customers ordered food solely to give it to delivery workers (Expansion, 2020). We can suppose that the concerns about personal appearance and interaction during the lockdown stage have been to some extent ignored, and positive evaluations prevailed. However, not necessarily this better evaluation for delivery workers translated into greater satisfaction with ODPs. Although our findings with the total sample revealed that the three determinants positively influenced e-satisfaction, when separately analyzing the subsamples there was a loss of statistical significance for personal aspects during the lockdown. The smaller sample size during the lockdown produced larger standard deviations for path coefficients, which could affect statistical significance. Future research should analyze eventual changes in the structural relationship tested here, once the economic activity gets back to normal, or to "new normal" conditions in which some mobility restrictions and social distance norms would still apply.

In order to ensure satisfaction with ODPs, e-service quality is still the main factor for customers, coinciding with previous research (Macías et al., 2020; Suhartanto et al., 2019).

This result held during the COVID-19 lockdown with a higher coefficient path during than before lockdown (0.430 vs. 0.356). However, food quality and personal aspects are also factors that should not be neglected and must evolve considering current circumstances. The qualitative analysis revealed that risk reduction is nowadays a strong reason for customers to hold a positive attitude towards ODPs. This finding represents a contribution to the academic literature and has managerial implications. Consequently, firms involved in this collaboration (restaurants and ODPs) should follow strict biosafety norms since preparation, packaging, and delivery, to ensure customers that their food is safe to consume and favorable perceptions are triggered. In addition, companies must demonstrate and communicate their efforts and practices aimed at meeting these requirements. Regarding methodological implications for service evaluation in this context, it would be required that future measurement scales incorporate customers' safety perception about food preparation and manipulation of food packages by delivery workers.

On the other hand, convenience is a widely accepted motivation for using ODPs (Euromonitor, 2019; Furunes & Mkono, 2019; Yeo et al., 2017), which was also evidenced in this qualitative analysis. We think that the mobility restrictions due to the COVID-19 add value to this benefit of ODP service. Customers in this study were mostly positive about being able to count on the service during the lockdown, and the good predisposition is expected to continue in the future. Existing companies and new ventures must take advantage of the opportunities that still exist in markets where coverage of ODPs is insufficient or null in order to gain market share. In addition, new entrants in the OPD context should adopt the best practices in the different stages of the service encounter, considering current circumstances, in order to fulfill customers' expectations and offer them a better experience.

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