

# Looking at Takeaway Food Phenomenon from Design with Multiple Perspectives

Yue Jin

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, China 999077

**Keywords:** Takeaway, Multi-angle, Design value

**Abstract:** Takeaway refers to food delivery service from restaurants that sell food for customers to take out of the store, usually in packages. With the development of technology and the commercialization of mobile phones and the Internet, the food takeaway industry has developed swiftly. However, while takeaway brings convenience and trouble to society, it also has its worrying phenomenon. This article looks at the takeaway phenomenon from the perspectives of body, space, time, and object, summarizes the three social consciousnesses and values behind this phenomenon and considers using these values in the design field.

## 1. Introduction

With the development of cities, food delivery services have gradually become an indispensable part of people's urban life. In order to save time for work and rest, more and more people use food delivery services to meet their daily food needs. After the emergence of take-out service, convenient and fast service methods and fast ordering methods have been widely welcomed by the public. This food consumption behavior has become an important part of urban life, especially in rapidly urbanizing China. More importantly, with the addition of a large number of online food delivery platforms, urban food delivery has gradually become an indispensable part of modern urban life. In 2020, the total transaction volume of China's food delivery industry exceeded 650 billion yuan, further demonstrating the important position of food delivery in the urban catering industry. However, previous studies have limited perspectives on the phenomenon of food delivery, some focus on analyzing the nutrition of food delivery, some focus on analyzing the use of big data by food delivery platforms, and some articles focus on website Looking at this phenomenon from the perspective of a delivery boy, this paper will consider in multiple aspects means phenomenon from the perspectives of body, space, time and object. Analyzing the causes and values behind this phenomenon and explore the relationship between.

## 2. Manifestation of culture

Takeaway foods have beneficial impacts on the human body, and it signifies the symbols that encompass the phases of human life, including the body, space, object, and time. When people order food from takeaway stores, the cultural perception is a mutual relationship between the food bloggers, riders, cooks, and the people who package them. Time is also related to the speed at which the delivery is done, reflecting the conversation time for ordering up to the delivery guys' reach. The detrimental status of takeaway foods has been known to possess heavy oil and salt and are not hygienically made. Most people prefer not to eat at restaurants due to the limited spatial space. Pollution has also remained a major challenge to the environment since the disposable wraps are thrown into the environment where they have been a threatening factor.

### 2.1 Symbols

#### (1) Body

Takeaway foods have been very dangerous to the human medical body due to their heavy oil and salt deposits and unhygienic packaging and storage. They are much different from the normal home-prepared meals high in energy and lower in trace elements, especially iron, calcium, and vitamin C.

People have always preferred takeaway foods since they do not have time to prepare food at home. This is usually triggered by tiresome work, especially during the day, which leaves them with no option but to buy food. However, takeaways have unhealthy ingredients, and regular consumption of such foods may increase the risk of non-communicable diseases. Through the sample survey of takeout food, the salt content in these foods is surprisingly high. The excessive sodium content will cause harm to human health, resulting in cardiovascular disease. Medical index measurement shows that frequent Eating fast food and takeout food is associated with higher BMI and HDL, higher fasting blood sugar, and insulin. Overall, takeaway food is less nutritious.

The consumer body is an important aspect of the culture. Many takeout food restaurants advertise their products and services using fitness models to feel attracted and obliged to buy takeaway foods. However, it is improper because it has led to many mental health diseases since many people, especially women who watch these adverts, have been victims of binge eating, leading to obesity, cardiovascular diseases, and kidney-related problems in the long run. Many people become dissatisfied with their bodies when they watch these fitness models, which leads to anxiety and depression in the long run. According to the case studies in the study, women devalue themselves by comparing themselves to a chosen advertising image. In general, viewing idealized advertising images is detrimental to people's emotional and physical satisfaction. It can also be noted that the delivery boys have opted for this delivery job due to the high rise of unemployment in the cities. They, therefore, trade their bodies in exchange for the little revenue, and they have to undergo harsh delivery times and bad weather to get paid, which is sometimes detrimental to their health.

Takeaway also has a certain impact on people's social bodies on social media. Since the advent of Web 2.0 in 1999, social media platforms have grown in size, providing the public with instant access to vast amounts of information at a low cost. With the development of the Internet, Internet celebrity anchors have become a popular trend, one of which is called "food bloggers." The videos posted by food bloggers include evaluations of food delivery. Through these food-related videos, bloggers can gain many followers, that is, fans. After that, bloggers can earn income in the form of receiving advertisements.

However, through research, the "healthy" advice provided by some "healthy food" bloggers has no evidence. These bloggers seem to give false information in their recipes, like quantifying some ingredients and lessening others just to fit the desires of consumers, while in a real sense, it is not ideal. This is dangerous to the health of online consumers. However, social media followers have learned to analyze their food contents according to their prescriptions, and most of them have had the chance to shape up their bodies. Giving untrue information is a critical issue that has misled followers, and this has damaged peoples' health statuses, and some food stores are subject to lawsuits.

## (2) Space

The spatial distribution of takeaway restaurants in the city has a certain relationship with people's choice of food. An unhealthy community food environment may encourage people to make unhealthy food choices. The study found a highly significant link between the distribution of takeaway restaurants and the consumption of to-go food after combining home, work, and commute settings. Findings from the survey recommend that cumulating the obtainability of exercise facilities may have the greatest prospective to decrease populace obesity in areas with the lowermost park densities and takeaway/fast food exposure. However, in areas where people have takeaways near their homes, adding exercise facilities may have limited impact, as the positive benefits on weight may be outweighed by the effects of an unhealthy food environment. In addition, in cities, food delivery depends on urban building density and road conditions. In theory, under the premise of moderate building density, the stronger the accessibility of urban roads, the longer the delivery distance of food delivery vehicles. In general, the distribution and density of urban space and takeaway food outlets can influence people's food choices.

Due to the epidemic, people cannot dine in and the dine-in space is not attractive enough, so people choose takeaway. With the invasion of coronavirus pandemic, many people fear visiting public places, which sparked the popularization of takeout foods in many parts of the world. In addition, the space of the restaurant is very complex. Specifically, restaurants don't just need to attract customers; they

have large windows facing the street or open doors toward the mall they're in, which insulates them from outside noise. They also need to give a neat impression. Sometimes customers want a "vibrant atmosphere" with the right mix of music and sound to a delightful cacophony; other times, customers seek calm to digest delicious food or a private space to have a conversation. Restaurants must rely on the overall level of customer satisfaction with the experience. To sum up, because of the epidemic's impact on the internal dine-in space and the difficulty of creating an attractive dine-in space, more and more people choose takeout.

Takeout is a bridge connecting cyberspace and real space. Specifically, the takeaway can be analyzed from the three spaces written in "the production of space": the first is spatial practice, in which people's behaviors and activities in a specific space master and occupy the space, thereby shaping different Social relationships, structures and forms give meaning to spaces. Under the context of takeout, it refers to the behaviors and activities of takeout brothers, takeout restaurants, and customers who order takeout to shape the urban space. (Real-world) The second category, representations of space, is a conceptual, abstract, and imagined space by professionals such as scientists, planners, officials, and engineers. In the context of takeout, takeout is not the main object of consideration when the government or urban planners plan and conceive of urban space, it is more of an activity that people spontaneously generate. The third type of space is symbolic space, an imaginary space experienced, used, and dominated by residents and users through images related to life. Under takeout context, it refers to the comments written by customers who order food on the takeaway software. The text and pictures in the comments make people imagine, and the image space is symbolic. (Internet world) So, takeout connects the virtual world with the real world and allows people to get better services.

### (3) Time

The delivery boys take time as a precious gift that keeps them going, and it becomes their interest to make more money while doing the deliveries. According to the rider employment report released by the food delivery platform, income and free labor time are the most important reasons for attracting riders to join the industry. Specifically, the labor hours in the food delivery industry are relatively flexible, and riders have certain powers to control the labor hours freely. It is different from the labor system that commutes to and from getting off work regularly in the factory, which restricts workers in terms of time. However, to improve the customer's consumption experience, the food delivery industry's requirements for "punctuality" and "fastness" have reached a very strict level, and the time calculation method is carried out in minutes. Because of overtime, they will be fined. Riders generally report that the time is not enough, not only the delivery time is getting more and more, but the number of orders is increasing to sum up, time is very precious for delivery guys, and time is closely related to their remuneration.

During the Song Dynasty, China's "food delivery service" was fully developed. For example, Zhang Zeduan's stunning long scroll "Along the River During Qingming Festival" is precious. In this painting, the "takeaway" industry is reflected: in the painting, there is a shop called "Ten Thousand" next to a shop similar to "Takeaway". A guy wearing an apron in the store, holding chopsticks in his right hand and two food containers in his left hand, he hurriedly walked down the street with bright eyes, as if he was eagerly looking for a place to deliver meals. Also, Fan Zhongyan of the Northern Song Dynasty often discussed important matters with his colleagues at the inn. He would leave the recipes in the capital in advance, and the restaurant staff would deliver the meals when the time came. Thus, as stated in Nietzsche's concept of the eternal return, repetition is eternal, and each repetition is read as a repetition of some previous scene. Take takeout as an example. This service method popular in the Song Dynasty has become popular again today. As Deleuze articulates in his book *Difference and Repetition*, Nietzsche's eternal return is "the power of beginning and beginning again." Generally, takeaways have a long history, dating back to the Song Dynasty, which Due to the development of productive social forces, this service method meets people's needs.



Fig. 1 “Along the River During Qingming Festival”

The contamination of cutlery and packaging from takeaways is constantly threatening our environment. The first is plastic pollution. During the epidemic, more and more people choose takeout. According to the survey, 36% of Britons feel they are forced to use more plastic, with 3,432 tons of plastic waste thrown away every day in Bangkok, of which 80% is everyday plastic waste such as takeaway packaging. This is followed by solid waste, which has also increased dramatically in office buildings due to the growing demand for takeaway food in the workplace and the disposal of leftovers and tableware packaging. In conclusion, these pollutants will accumulate over time, harming the environment and causing problems such as global climate change.

#### (4) Object

Each takeout order requires a package of objects, and the takeout cabinet helps classify different takeaways for people to take. The chaotic nature of handling takeaways has posed security risks from offices to distribution channels, leading to unreliability. The staff has opted for the cabinet that sorts out different orders simultaneously and is device-controlled with sanitization functions. The labeling and classification need to be advanced to improve the takeaways experience. With the explosion of short videos in recent years, many Internet celebrities have emerged, and the "big stomach king" has also become a peculiar existence among Internet celebrities. We searched for the two keywords "eat and broadcast" on some video playback platforms, and we can see that the video with the highest playback volume was viewed by 16.4171 million times, followed by 12.78 million. The controversies behind the food-eating bloggers are off the hook. It may deceive the eyes of the public since all they want is to make money and not care about the public's health since the "big stomach kings" often edit videos that are far from reality. Such practices not only deceive the audience but also cause food waste. It can be seen that takeout has led to the commercialization of food and has made "Internet celebrities" more and more commercialized. The accumulation of these objects has certain potential hazards.

Food delivery connects the disparate objects of food, stores, customers, and delivery riders into a network. According to Jean Baudrillard's Object Value System to classify takeaway, the first category is "The functional value of an object is its instrumental purpose" in the context of takeaway, it refers to people eating takeaway food to fill their stomachs; the third category is "The functional value of an object is its instrumental purpose." The second is "The exchange value of an object is its economic value," which means that people need to pay the store in exchange for food and services from the rider. The third is "The symbolic exchange value of an object is it is arbitrarily assigned and agreed value," for example, people order takeaway food for their best friend to celebrate their birthday; the fourth category is "The sign exchange value of an object represents its value in a system of objects," which means that there are for example Meituan, during the flood disaster in some cities, Meituan delivered takeaway food to the disaster area for free and assumed some social functions. So, food delivery connects the food, the store, the customer, and the delivery rider, creating a new social network for people.

## 2.2 Heros

### (1) Founder of Meituan

Meituan is a well-known APP in mainland China, and it not only conducts delivery but is also responsible for taking social functions such as floods and epidemics. Its approach emphasizes Food+Platform and builds a multi-level skill service platform from the demand side to the supply side of the life service industry with "eating" as the fundamental option. Wang Xing, the founder of Meituan, said: "In addition to luck, Meituan has survived mainly because it can put consumers first, do the right thing after a clear goal, resist temptation, overcome difficulties, and create conditions. This founder has become the greatest in the world's history and continues to make a successful business and human health improvements.

"Putting the consumer first" means that companies need to meet the different needs of consumers. For example, Meituan's "Little Elephant Fresh" refers to offline fresh food supermarkets, often small community stores. Such needs are usually complementary to the ready-to-eat takeaways at meal points; Yes, the catering supply chain needs. Adopt large-scale procurement business, negotiate prices with upstream, take advantage of channel advantages in circulation to reduce costs, and provide small and medium-sized businesses with assured quality and effective distribution of ingredients.

Going further, Meituan is determined to shape itself into social originality, hoping to cooperate with government departments, universities, non-profit organizations, ecological partners, and other aspects. Taking the epidemic as an example, to control the spread of the epidemic, Meituan sprang a "contactless delivery" service to safeguard the protection of users. In addition, Meituan has also launched "Contactless Safe Delivery," which makes food safety information public throughout the entire process from merchants to delivery and finally to customers to guarantee food safety fully. During the epidemic, to ensure the normal life of medical staff, Meituan has arranged special counterparts in the medical team. By understanding their needs, they coordinate all parties to do their best to ensure it.

### (2) Takeaway boy of Meituan

During the epidemic, the younger brother of Meituan appeared on the cover of Time Magazine, focusing on ordinary people, and sticking to his post during the epidemic, which is worthy of respect and is a strong corporate culture of Meituan. According to statistics from a food delivery platform, during the 76 days of Wuhan's "closed city," the platform's riders completed 3.96 million orders and delivered more than 4 million masks. During the epidemic, riders on the platform completed 56.22 million orders sent to hospitals across the country and delivered over 90,000 meals to the medical team in Hubei, of which 20.8% of riders delivered more than 50 kilometers a day. They faced the wind and rain, took risks, delivered medicine, delivered meals, and effectively guaranteed medical treatment and citizens' lives. They were the beautiful city scenery and safety guardian under the epidemic.

The main problem of food delivery guys is acceptance since they even shy away from telling peers and families that they do deliveries. Maintaining dignity is a great setback for these people since they feel degraded due to their salaries and mostly feel down in society. They tend to lie about their job since they feel despised, and there is always no correct view of labor and occupation.

## 2.3 Values

In general, behind the phenomenon of takeout, there are three manifestations of social consciousness and value. First, takeout conveys a sense of free choice and provides a new communication system between people. Although takeaways will be harmful to the body due to heavy oil and salt, and the hygienic state of the store, people can choose all kinds of food freely, and the working hours of the takeaway brother are freer. The takeaway service has also become a bridge connecting cyberspace and real space. Food bloggers on the Internet get a variety of food by ordering takeout, making food, and broadcasting videos for people to watch. People can also express their comments and opinions on the Internet while watching the video. So, food delivery connects food, store, customer, and delivery rider into a network.

Secondly, takeout indirectly stimulates people's sense of responsibility and awakens their social awareness. The delivery boy is consuming his own body. Time is very precious for the delivery boy

and is closely related to their interests. In addition, the delivery boy has also assumed some social functions in society, especially during the epidemic. The delivery service has facilitated the lives of many people. This means that food delivery indirectly stimulates people's sense of responsibility and awakens their social awareness.

Last but not least, the prosperity and popularity of takeaway brings benefits to people and brings some problems to a society, which needs to be paid attention to. With the proliferation of online videos, some Internet celebrities, "big stomach kings," eat fake food to gain attention, which is a waste of food; there are a large number of advertisements in the field of fitness meals in the takeaway, in which the perfect body of the model is easy to make consumers feel more Appearance anxiety, negative emotions, and dissatisfaction with one's own body are mostly related to weight; in addition, the disposable garbage generated by takeout packaging has brought environmental pollution to the society.

### 3. Design Niches

Firstly, in response to the awareness of free choice conveyed by takeout, the design can also think about the plan from "increasing the possibility of choice" to providing people with more choices. Reach the destination by bus, taxi, bicycle, motorcycle, ferry, walking, etc.

Secondly, in terms of awakening people's social awareness and social responsibility, people tend to interact well through the contact and deliveries of products and services from the bloggers to the delivery guys and final consumers, which binds them to a network. The interesting interactive design devices have amplified the communication and linkage of people.

Thirdly, design can help solve the problems posed by takeaways, and efforts can be made in material design and raising awareness. In response to the problem that the Internet celebrity "Big Stomach" eats fake food to gain attention, the design can start from the perspective of food, condemning the behavior of wasting food; for the perfect figure of the model in the takeaway advertisement, which causes people to have appearance anxiety, the design Concepts can promote various aesthetic standards and make people aware of the diversity of beauty; in terms of one-time pollution caused by takeout, new degradable packaging materials can be used in the design.

### 4. Conclusion

In a word, takeout is a cultural phenomenon that has become popular recently, especially after the epidemic. This article analyzes takeout from four aspects: body, space, time, and object—the embodiment of consciousness and value. Takeout conveys a sense of free choice and provides a new system for people to communicate and interact in society. Takeout also indirectly stimulates people's sense of responsibility and awakens their social awareness. From the design perspective, we can think about the scheme from "increasing the possibility of choice" to stimulating people's sense of social responsibility through interaction design. We can also make efforts in material design. It is possible to develop perfect interior spaces in homes and restaurants to promote the taking of foods in restaurants that give consumers much responsibility to control and own their food. This will give free choices for customers, and that sense of belonging and satisfaction is critically imperative while considering the negative outcomes such as pollution and obesity.

### References

- [1] Bourcier-Béquaert, B., Chevalier, C., & Moal, G. The old and the beautiful: Senior women's exposure to models in advertisements and the impact on their identity. *The Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 38(4), 410-419. July. 2021.
- [2] Boyd D M, Ellison N B. Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *J Comput Mediat Commun*; 1: 210–230. 2007
- [3] Huang Hongfu, He Yong, Chen Jing Cross-market selling channel strategies in an international luxury brand's supply chain with gray markets [J] *Transportation Research Part E*, 2020, 144

[4] Qiao Zhang, Jing Chen, Georges Zaccour Market targeting and information sharing with social influences in a luxury supply chain [J]Transportation Research Part E, 2020, 133(C)