

STUDY ON CONSUMER'S PERCEPTION TOWARDS PURCHASING GROCERIES THROUGH ONLINE

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Abstract: This study explores how people feel about buying groceries online in India's growing e-commerce market. It looks at important factors that influence customers such as convenience, saving time, product freshness, variety, pricing, value for money, delivery reliability, and return policies. Using quantitative methods like Independent Sample T-Tests and One-way ANOVA, the research found that gender, age, income, and family size do not create major differences in how consumers view online grocery shopping. This means people across all groups share similar positive perceptions, showing that online grocery shopping is becoming widely accepted. The study highlights the need for companies to offer reliable service, easy technology, and trustworthy systems to keep customers satisfied and encourage long-term use of online grocery platforms.

Keywords: Consumer perception, Online grocery purchasing behaviour, Convenience, Time saving, Effort saving, Product freshness, Product availability, Price perception, Value for money, Delivery speed, Packaging trust, Return policies, Digital shopping experience, Customer satisfaction, Service reliability and Quality assurance.

INTRODUCTION

The primary goal of any business is to create value for its customers. We have moved from using simple computers to a fully digital era where businesses must adapt to the modern world or risk being left behind. Today the world is powered by smartphones, AI, and high-speed internet which has changed how we buy and sell. This shift has given rise to E-Commerce platforms, which allows the businesses of any size to sell their products to customers anywhere in the world, breaking down the old barriers of location and cost.

The Growth of E-Commerce in India has witnessed a digital revolution. With affordable mobile data and the widespread use of smartphones, the number of internet users has exploded, creating a massive digital marketplace. E-commerce is no longer just a trend it is a force which is dominating the Indian economy. It has transformed into a multi-billion dollar industry. What started with electronics and fashion has now expanded to almost every service that are imaginable, driven by the Indian consumer's increasing purchasing power and demand for the convenience.

Shopping is no longer a task that requires going to a live store, it is a 24/7 activity that can done from your home and enjoying your day. Modern consumers use their phones/internet to compare prices, read reviews, and find deals before purchasing. Earlier the customers hesitated to buy products that require physical inspection, like fruits, from online platforms. However, as the trust in digital platforms grows, this hesitation starts fading, and consumers are becoming comfortable buying even their daily essentials in online.

The grocery market in India, which was traditionally dominated by millions of small local shops, is currently undergoing a massive transformation. Online grocery shopping has emerged as a major competitive field. It solves the problems of urban life such as no traffic jams, no parking hassles, no long billing queues, and no carrying heavy bags. While this culture started small, it has attracted massive investment from global giants and local leaders. Today, the battle for the online grocery market is getting intense, with companies competing to offer faster deliveries and better quality to win over the Indian households.

Despite the clear convenience, winning in the online grocery space is not easy. Success in this business depends on understanding Consumer Perception. Why does a customer choose an app over their local vegetable vendor? Is it price, speed, or quality? As consumers are shifting from physical carts to digital baskets, understanding the psychological and economic factors behind their choice, such as trust in freshness and delivery speed is critical for any business aiming to get succeed in this growing market.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The attempt of selling grocery online in 1990's appeared to be a failure, but now online shopping is taking over the shift. This shift has impacted on increasing digital players. The intention of the digital players is to take away their consumer share of wallet and are making presence in the consumer mind.

Important point to ponder over is the idea that, will online grocery shopping become acceptable and provide share of wallet from a good number of consumers?

Consumer Attitude and Technology Acceptance

The role of consumer attitude in shaping online buying decisions. Consumer attitude is a blend of beliefs, feelings, and behavioural intentions which is formed through prior experiences, trust, perceived usefulness, and ease of use. (Dr. Desti Kannaiah- 2015)

Factors that would satisfy the consumer

- Web or App must be easy to navigate and provide time saving and ensure efficient delivery service.
- The e-store should have good number of packages and categories available.
- Greater variety would help the buyer choose and make comparisons.
- Online shopping must have greater transparency, price visibility, extensive distribution and customization available.
- Create, excite, bring innovative ideas and build relationship on social media platforms along with spreading awareness.

Consumer Evaluation and Decision-Making Process

Models such as the Consumer Decision-Making Process and the AIDA Model (Awareness, Interest, Desire, Action) are frequently referenced, demonstrating how clear communication, promotional offers, and seamless digital interfaces help stimulate desire and motivate purchase decisions. Positive post-purchase experiences, especially related to delivery and customer service, further strengthen loyalty and adoption. (Mastana, 2023)

Product Variety, Pricing, and Promotional Influence

The growing importance of product variety, price transparency, and competitive deals in influencing consumer behaviour. Online grocery platforms often provide a wider range of products compared to physical stores, enabling easy comparison and informed decision-making. Dynamic pricing, offers, loyalty points, and festive promotions attract value conscious customers and deepen engagement. Research shows that consumers often compare prices across platforms before choosing where to buy, especially as competition between players intensifies.

Quality, Freshness, and Delivery Expectations

The literature consistently stresses that product quality especially freshness in daily essentials is one of the most influential factors in online grocery acceptance. Consumers expect high standards in perishables, accuracy in order packing, and adherence to promised delivery times. Studies indicate that repeated positive experiences in these areas result in improved perceptions, increased trust, and stronger customer retention. Conversely, issues such as delayed delivery, missing items, or poor handling can deter future online purchases. (Saleem et al., 2018)

Delivery convenience is also a key factor. Flexible delivery windows, availability of time slots, and predictive delivery updates enhance user satisfaction. Some platforms even offer delivery guarantees, improving reliability perceptions and building long-term trust. (Jiang et al., 2013)

Barriers and Challenges in Online Grocery Shopping.

While online grocery shopping offers numerous advantages, the literature identifies several persisting barriers. These include concerns about receiving damaged or low-quality goods, lack of personal interaction, delivery complexities, payment security issues, and the emotional preference for visiting physical stores. Some consumers feel overwhelmed

by large digital catalogues or find searching for specific products time-consuming despite online convenience.(Mastana, 2023)

The review collectively suggests that online grocery adoption is neither purely convenience-driven nor entirely risk-averse, it is a balance between trust, technological comfort, and the service experience delivered by digital platforms. Understanding these dimensions is essential for online retailers seeking to enhance service quality, increase consumer confidence, and build long-term loyalty in a highly competitive digital grocery market.(Dr. Desti Kanniah- 2015)

METHODOLOGY

Statement of the Problem:

While the e-commerce platforms in India has witnessed exponential growth, the online grocery segment faces unique challenges compared to electronics or fashion segments. The traditional grocery shopping experience is deeply rooted in the sensory examination of products by inspecting the items, especially perishables like fruits and vegetables.

- 1.What are the current customer preferences towards buying grocery through online? This understanding will help to ensure that online grocery business is aligned with customer's wants and expectations, which grows rapidly and becomes profitable.
2. How will the customer preferences change with their exposure to new disruptive technologies? This will help to ensure that the online grocery business is ready for the future and able to sustain and grow with the change in customer preferences.

Need for the Study:

In the post-pandemic era, online grocery shopping has moved from a luxury to a necessity for many urban households. However, competition among quick e-commerce and e-grocery platforms (such as Big Basket, Blinkit, Amazon Fresh, etc.) has intensified. This study is significant for the following reasons:

- **For Retailers:** It helps online grocery companies to understand the primary struggles of customers
- **For Marketers:** It provides insights into which demographic segments (age, income groups) are most likely to shop through online platforms, allowing for better-targeted campaigns or audience.
- **For Academics:** The research sheds light on the change in the psychology of consumers regarding the products that they usually prefer to physically inspect before buying.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study are:

1. To study the Demographic factors of the consumers
2. To examine the factors influencing consumer perception towards online grocery shopping.
3. To analyze the problems faced by the consumers while shopping online and to know the post purchase experience.

SAMPLING DESIGN:

Sampling is a procedure of choosing samples from a gathering or populace to end up the establishment for assessing and anticipating the result of the populace just as to recognize the obscure snippet of data. A sample is the sub-unit of the populace associated with your research work. There are a couple of favourable circumstances and drawbacks related to the sampling procedure. Subjects in the populace are sampled by a random procedure, utilizing either a random number generator or a random number table, with the goal that every individual staying in the populace has a similar likelihood of being chosen for the sample. Random sampling accepts that the units to be sampled are incorporated into a rundown, likewise named a sampling outline. This rundown ought to be numbered in sequential requests from one to the complete number of units in the populace.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE:

A basic tool in research methodology, the convenient Sampling technique was used in the study. It makes it possible to choose samples from an interest population objectively. Because it gives every member of the population an equal chance of being included in the sample, this technique is simple and fair. First, the population to be studied is defined, and a thorough and precise sample frame is created, giving each element a unique identification.

After then, samples are chosen using randomization procedures, which remove bias and guarantee the sample's representativeness. Convenient sampling is easy to use, but in order to ensure dependability, data gathering must be done with meticulous attention to detail. Researchers must realize its limits, including its time-consuming nature, particularly

in large populations, and challenges in specific situations, despite its major benefits, which include obtaining representative samples and avoiding bias. To sum up, basic convenient sampling is a crucial research instrument that helps scientists make inferences and generalize findings with confidence.

HYPOTHESIS AND ANALYSIS

S. No	VARIABLE	NULL HYPOTHESIS	TEST	p-value	Reject / Fail to Reject H ₀
1	Time Saving	H₀ : There is no significant difference in the perception of Time Saving between male and female respondents.	Independent Sample T-test	0.430	Fail to reject H ₀
2	Effort Saving	H₀ : There is no significant difference in the perception of Effort Saving between male and female respondents.	Independent Sample T-test	0.967	Fail to reject H ₀
3	Fresh Perishable Product	H₀ : There is no significant difference in the expectation of Fresh Perishable Products across different age groups.	One-Way ANOVA	0.591	Fail to reject H ₀
4	Product Variety	H₀ : The perception of Product Variety does not differ significantly based on the household size of the respondent.	One-Way ANOVA	0.106	Fail to reject H ₀
5	Value for Money	H₀ : The perceived Value for Money does not vary significantly across different income groups.	One-Way ANOVA	0.264	Fail to reject H ₀
6	Return Policy	H₀ : Satisfaction with the Return Policy does not differ significantly based on the respondent's income level.	One-Way ANOVA	0.810	Fail to reject H ₀

INTERPRETATION

1.Variable: Time Saving

Both men and women think almost the same way about whether online grocery shopping saves time, there is not much difference between their opinions. Thus, since the p-value (0.430) is greater than 0.05, we accept the null hypothesis which states that there was no actual gender difference in terms of perception regarding time saving. Therefore, the research indicates that online grocery shopping does not differ much within both genders, and time saving is an anticipated advantage for anyone, regardless of gender.

2. Variable: Effort Saving

Both men and women feel the same avoiding queues and crowds is a benefit they equally appreciate in online shopping. Since the p-value (0.967) is greater than 0.05, we accept the null hypothesis and conclude that gender has no effect on the perception of effort savings.

The conclusion from the above is that all the respondents share the opinion that one of the major advantages of online grocery shopping is not dealing with the queues in physical store.

3. Variable: Fresh Perishable Product

One argument goes that people of all ages perceive the freshness from perishable products purchased online. Since the p-value (0.591) is greater than 0.05, we accept the null hypothesis; this implies that age does not impact one way or another on how much a person expects fresh and well-chosen things. The term freshness was found to be an expectation for all, be it young or middle-aged or elderly shoppers.

4. Variable: Product Variety

People from large or small households think about the variety of products available online in the same way. Since the p-value (0.106) is more than 0.05, we accept the null hypothesis, which indicates household size does not have an effect on people's feelings regarding product variety. In general, the results indicate that everyone believes they can easily find the specific brands and items they need online, regardless of how big or small their household is

5.Variable: Value for Money

People from all income groups generally feel that online grocery shopping is best, even when delivery fees are included. Since the p-value (0.264) is greater than 0.05, we accept the null hypothesis. The assertion implies that income does not have an effect on the perceptions of value for money. Overall, results indicate that all participants irrespective of their income level find online grocery shopping quite affordable.

6.Variable: Return Policy

People of all income levels hold the same opinion concerning the return policy, the refund or replacement process is quick and easy. Since the p-value (0.810) is greater than 0.05 we accept the null hypothesis. Therefore, income doesn't have an impact on the satisfaction of return policy. Overall, the results suggest that people of every income category is equally satisfied in regards to how returns and refunds are dealt with.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that online grocery shopping has become a day-to-day operation for many people. People think that they are getting a fresh product in their doorsteps and they also trust the online platform like this will serve only fresh product. After the result we found out that it was acknowledged by many users and they also it was also appreciated by many users, and it became an important thing in their life. At the same time the trust of user is also grown up after the pandemic, before pandemic the usage of these app was low after the pandemic it rose up, now people getting a smooth app, fast delivery, right pricing, and easy return and refund policy. because of all this user feel more confident and more valuable, and this made them to use the app again. This shows that online grocery app is growing and it is easy to use for people. In the end the online grocery shopping will rise in the future and it will also connect with people more, the future of grocery shopping is slowly moving towards online and people behaviour also changing that they think it is more convenient for them to use online platform rather than buying it physical.

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SNIPPETS OF THE TEST

1. Time Saving

Group Statistics

3) Gender:		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
6) Time Saving	Male	73	3.44	.897	.105
	Female	57	3.60	.942	.125

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper
6) Time Saving	Equal variances assumed	.626	.430	-.975	128	.331	-.158	.162	-.479 .163
	Equal variances not assumed			-.969	117.546	.334	-.158	.163	-.481 .165

2. Effort Saving

Group Statistics

3) Gender:		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
7) Effort Saving	Male	73	3.78	.961	.112
	Female	57	3.68	.929	.123

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper
7) Effort Saving	Equal variances assumed	.002	.967	.577	128	.565	.097	.167	-.235 .428
	Equal variances not assumed			.580	122.287	.563	.097	.167	-.233 .427

3. Fresh Perishable Product

ANOVA

8) Fresh Perishable Items

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.998	3	.666	.639	.591
Within Groups	131.233	126	1.042		
Total	133.231	129			

4. Product Variety

ANOVA

10) Product Variety

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8.141	4	2.035	1.952	.106
Within Groups	130.359	125	1.043		
Total	138.500	129			

5. Value for Money

ANOVA

12) Value of Money

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.480	3	1.493	1.340	.264
Within Groups	140.443	126	1.115		
Total	144.923	129			

6. Return Policy

ANOVA

16) Refund or Replacement

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.095	3	.365	.322	.810
Within Groups	142.913	126	1.134		
Total	144.008	129			