

A Study on Significance of Convenience in Online Grocery Purchases: A Sustainable Approach

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[Abstract] Online grocery shopping is in the country's embryonic stage. The number of clients who are inclined towards web-based shopping for groceries is minuscule in number. Of late, there have been several organizations that have forayed into the online grocery business. Some online grocery companies also needed help to sustain their business. Many of them cleared out from the industry. The reasons were many, from requiring the option to sort out conveyance models to the unendurable expenses related to the interaction. This research paper deals with convenience as a factor and tries to judge its impact on online grocery shopping. Research methodology discusses the methodology adopted for constructing measures and collecting and analyzing the data. The research design used in this study is exploratory. The sampling method used to select the sample is done by convenience sampling. The Chi-Square test has been used for Inferential analysis to conclude.

[Keywords] online grocery shopping, e-grocery, online shopping, convenience, sustainability

Introduction

Online businesses/e-services have impacted us in many ways. Purchasing habits have shifted from retail stores to online purchasing. Lucrative offers and diversified product/segment have influenced purchasing decisions. The upward spiral of the online industry seems prominent, and online grocers have succeeded in leaving a footprint in an upward market. Online grocers have penetrated deep within the online segment and have managed to become a billion-dollar industry in a short span.

The sector has managed to become a must for households. The industry has hugely impacted consumer-intake behavior. The niche being daily consumable-related has helped it grow at multiple phases. The wait time, delivery service, and any bottleneck resulting from operational costs and glitches have influenced consumer behavior for this segment. The sector has few redundancies because of the sudden spike in orders; online grocery companies are looking over all these. Several methods are used to simplify and sort the problems faced by the customers to have smooth transaction/ transparency and recurring transparency business.

Literature Review

According to Gabriela Hanus, 2016, the market will see a significant shift in customers' roles in the industry. The fastest-growing and most dynamic type of trade is e-commerce. Consumer behavior refers to the process that comprises the pre-consumption, consumption, and post-consumption stages, as well as contacts with nonprofit organizations and governmental entities. Customers are essential to choosing, acquiring, and utilizing products, services, and experiences. Now, consumers can buy and sell almost everything on the internet. The convenience of buying products online has led to the significantly increasing popularity of online grocery shopping. Along with the advantages of saving time in online grocery shopping, it comes with some risks, like incorrectly evaluating some products because of inadequate representation on the website.

The study of Dr. Amit Kumar Singh and Malswami Sailo, 2013, examines the perception and behavior of online customers. It shows how the internet has developed into a global perspective by changing the way of consumer stores. Buying products and services from the internet shop is business-to-customer online shopping. In the 21st century, online shopping is the most accessible and efficient. Since selling online has more subjects than the benefits it currently proposes, companies want to decrease the risks associated with customers. Buyers are at great risk of fraud until the quality of products sold online and service dealings are uniform.

Online commercial dealings between companies and customers for a variety of goods and services have grown. This study focuses on how online grocery shopping is perceived and accepted in Australia. It suggests that potential adopters are more likely to see other people doing online grocery and get a favorable opinion of doing the same. Additionally, it was discovered that OGS's exposure was a significant obstacle to the community's adoption of the system. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), used in the study by Sherah Kurnia and Ai-Wen Jenny Chien, 20003, served as the theoretical underpinning for the conclusions drawn from the survey's empirical data collected in Australia.

According to Ellen Van Droogenbroeck and Leo Van Hove's research in 2017, the adoption of online grocery shopping is influenced by population-related factors. The study employs Motivation Adoption Ability (MOA) to examine how sociodemographic factors relate to and are recorded in consumer motivation. The researchers' analysis revealed that because age is connected with young children and the working conditions in the family, age captures a person's capacity to use technology and its usefulness to that person's household.

Kim Ramus and Niels Asger Nielsen's research in 2005 focuses on the variety of attitudes people have toward online grocery shopping. The researchers created the focused group interview guide using the TPB framework. Consumers perceived online grocery shopping as having advantages over traditional supermarket shopping in terms of price and convenience. Some of the drawbacks identified by the study were the potential for obtaining subpar food and the loss of the enjoyable element of grocery shopping.

The paper of Radka Baueroval and Martin Klepek, 2018, explains the technology acceptance and behavior of the consumer concerning online grocery shopping. The research suggested that the marketer should focus primarily on raising awareness about online grocery shopping and improving the service to generate the appropriate value. The study's results can be utilized mainly in service management, marketing communications, and customer relationship management.

Sonal Kureshi and Sujo Thomas's 2019 research ascertains what local grocery store owners think about online grocery retailing. The study discusses the fundamental ideas of the neighborhood merchants who were significant figures in the food retailing industry. It supplied knowledge on local grocery merchants and looked at the variables driving local grocers to adopt online grocery retailing. It guided how to work with and make the neighborhood grocery stores for everyone's gain.

With the potential to expand healthier options through nutrition labelling initiatives, online groceries may be a two-edged sword. Due to factors like customers' fear to buy products online, it also has the potential to increase the number of unhealthy choices. The Stephanie Pitts et al. study 2018 analyzes the present situation of online grocery shopping to identify its benefits and drawbacks. The experts advise more studies to encourage people to switch to online grocery shopping for healthier options.

Moeller et al. (2012) discussed the possibilities of a new time-based parcel delivery service in their study article. Convenience is a critical factor in every relationship between a service provider and a client. According to the investigation, a time-based delivery service's perceived attractiveness is positively

correlated with availability to receive deliveries and professional vocation. The study's secondary primary goal was to analyze the income potential of a time-based delivery service as a convenience-improving service. As these locations reflect the various societal living area arrangements, a survey of 315 people was conducted in Germany's rural, suburban, and urban areas. The results show that the two categories, which comprise more than 70% of the primary population segment, may be served by services offered at comparable prices. The customer segment that finds the service unappealing is very tiny, remarkably price sensitive, and would only use the service if it were provided at an extremely cheap cost.

Through their research, Huang and Opewell (2006) discovered how several situational aspects affect customers' propensity to purchase their groceries in-store or online. Grocery shopping is considered to be a very stressful and tedious activity. People prefer to avoid grocery shopping, which is considered a chore. So, it is surprising that people have not lapped up the idea of online grocery shopping, even though it provides many conveniences.

The research, which included four situational criteria (goal of the trip, time available for shopping, delivery fee, and journey time to a physical store), was performed among 152 respondents from southern England. They impact consumer preferences regarding prices, risk, convenience, and enjoyment.

The second factor in ascending order was shopping time. Travel time to a physical store influenced the purchase propensity of the four factors studied. Despite having a high level of internet connection at home (60%) and being familiar with at least some kind of online shopping (63.2%), it was discovered that only a tiny portion of the sample (22.4%) had ever done their food shopping online. The most negligible impact, the Delivery Charge, was nonetheless shown to be considerable.

Objectives

- To determine whether convenience is an essential unique selling proposition for online grocery shopping
- To evaluate whether convenience as a factor influences purchase behavior for online grocery
- To determine whether service plays an essential part in online grocery purchase

Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis (H₁₀): Convenience is not highly significant in online grocery shopping.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_{1A}): Convenience is highly significant in online grocery shopping.

Convenience – The Only Way Ahead

For an online grocery service, convenience is one of the most critical factors for survival. The business is still in the nascent stage, and most people purchase groceries due to the convenience factor. In metro cities, where several households and married partners work, online grocery delivery provides a big relief from errands to the market and pick up at a grocery. Many companies, like BigBasket.com, grofers.com, JioMart.com, and SuprDaily.com are already thriving in this business.

The expansion in stress related to the balance between work-life activities has changed the bundled products industry. One of the ways of facilitating rushed ways of life-on-the-go products and online shopping for food could answer for the simplicity of focusing on furious ways of life. As a general rule, Twofold pays families to get remarkably less opportunity for a unique collaboration. Individuals who choose not to buy groceries offline would keep away from them happily. Along these lines, buying groceries

online not just saves time that can be enjoyed with families, but also provides for recreational activities as a result of time-saving. In metro cities, wherein the normal travel time to work has expanded due to infrastructural limitations, requesting groceries on the web will, without a doubt, save money and time, along with the stress associated with it.

Delivery

One of the most prominent factors associated with convenience is delivering products on time. This is one of the main reasons for customers opting for groceries through the online mode. The business model for the delivery of groceries varies as per the company. The products are checked for in the warehouse and affiliated stores. Product delivery is given top priority, and the emphasis is to deliver it within the stipulated time.

Due to the high complexity of the process structure and demand and supply bottlenecks, there are disruptions in the process, which lead to delivery issues in a few instances.

One of the significant put-offs for a customer is the non-delivery of items. The undelivered items can be the entire order or some of the things. Due to various complexity and supply chain issues, there are times when products cannot be delivered after an order has been placed. This occurs because of a lack of availability of the product or glitches in the system. During this time, the money is refunded if it is paid online. The funds can also be refunded to the grocery account in the form of credit, and these credits can be used against future orders. However, companies should understand that even if the money is refunded, the customer must go through a repetitive process of ordering once again, which may be very inconvenient and stressful.

Another factor that is one of the big put-offs for the customer is the untimely delivery of products. Due to huge demand and supply and operational look-out, companies tend to have untimely delivery, which seems challenging for most customers. This can be bifurcated into two parts.

Scenario A: Delivery is much sooner than expected. Customers being busy with chores and unaware of the delivery's having arrived is a bottleneck of online grocery. Sudden calls or mail regarding the product being delivered sooner than the stipulated timeline, a few hours before the expected delivery time, is a challenge.

Scenario B: Delivery is later than expected. In this scenario, the customers who are expecting their delivery at a prior time get upset due to non-delivery. The delivery may also occur when the customer is not at his residence. Also, in such cases, if the customer is unable to take the product delivery, additional logistics costs incur for the customers. To avoid such a scenario, companies should always get in touch with the customers before the delivery of products.

Unclear Information

Unclear information on the website ranges from price, delivery slots, modes of payments, cashback, etc. Often, this can also be due to technical glitches. It may also be due to the incorrect information provided by the online retailer, which results in the pricing of products being skewed in many instances. In such cases, companies cancel the order and give coupons or credit to compensate for inaccurate information displayed on the company's website. This credit is available for use against transactions on the website/app of the company.

Research Methodology

To address the many aspects of the investigation, a descriptive cross-sectional research design was used. The study measures customer purchasing patterns for online grocery shopping while accounting for

associated factors and convenience. Using the proper statistical methods, the data gathered from the clients and their reactions were examined.

Convenience Sampling. This technique seeks an information-ready sample of convenient items. The following were used to identify the sampling components or clients:

- First, by using established sources.
- Second, the information would be gathered from the clients based on ease and accessibility. One hundred twenty respondents were taken as an adequate sample size for this study.

Types of Questions. Nominal and ordinal scales can be used when the data is in a category having both dichotomous and multiple questions. Likert rating scales [1-5] have been used to determine the attitude of the respondents on a series of statements indicating their agreement and disagreement in response to the convenience factor of online grocery. The internal consistency of the research variables has been evaluated by Cronbach Alpha (α). Cronbach Alpha (α) is a model of reliability analysis.

Data Analysis & Interpretation

Table 1

Profile of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	54	45.0
	Female	66	55.0
	Total	120	100.0

Table 1 shows the profile of the respondents; 66% of respondents were females and 54% were males

Table 2

Age of the respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	<18	1	.8	.8	.8
	18-30	91	75.8	75.8	76.7
	31-45	24	20.0	20.0	96.7
	45-60	4	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Table 2 shows the age of the respondents. Around 75% of the respondents fall into the category of 18-30 years, followed by 31-45 years old, which is 20% in the number.

Table 3*Academic Degree*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Up to SSC	6	5.0	5.0	5.0
	Graduate	67	55.8	55.8	60.8
	Post Graduate	34	28.3	28.3	89.2
	Professionals	11	9.2	9.2	98.3
	Others	2	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

From Table 3, it can be observed that around 85% of the respondents (cumulative) were graduates and post-graduates.

Table 4*Frequency of Purchase*

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Once a week	23	19.2	19.2	19.2
	Once a fortnight	16	13.3	13.3	32.5
	Once a month	48	40.0	40.0	72.5
	Quarterly	33	27.5	27.5	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 shows that 40% of respondents prefer to buy online groceries once a month. This is followed by 27.5% of respondents who purchase grocery through online mode once a quarter.

Table 5*Cronback Alfa Test for the Variables in the Convenience Factor*

Convenience	Cronbach's Alpha
Online grocery shopping is convenient	.894
Prompt service with undamaged products plays an important role in online grocery shopping	.887
Delivery employees should be dressed neatly	.901
Home delivery is an important component of online grocery shopping	.874
The client anticipates that products should be delivered on the day they picked	.871
The client anticipates that products should be delivered during the time chosen	.899
Time savings happens in online grocery purchase	.883

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.903	6

Inference: From the above table, it can be inferred that all the variables have the value of Cronbach's Alpha 0.8 and above. It shows that they are highly consistent for the study. The variables in the above table are related to the convenience factor in online grocery purchases, and they are found to be compatible with the study.

Table 6

Chi-Square Analysis for the Significance of Convenience in Online Grocery Shopping

Description	Chi-Square Value	Level of significance
Convenience is an important factor in Online Grocery	80.310	.000
Products delivered should be in an undamaged condition	74.917	.000
Delivery representatives ought to be dressed & groomed perfectly	72.382	.000
Home delivery is a significant part of online grocery shopping	73.583	.000
The client anticipates that products should be delivered on the day they picked	78.083	.000
The client anticipates that products should be delivered during the time chosen	73.917	.000
Time savings happens in online grocery purchase	81.333	.000

{Here df – degrees of freedom and sig – significance level (5%)}

Inference: The significance values of less than 5% for all the variables suggest that convenience is highly significant in online grocery shopping. The significance value of less than 5% reveals that the null hypothesis can be rejected. It can be inferred that convenience is highly significant in online grocery shopping. The highest Chi-Square value has been observed for “Time savings happens in online grocery purchase” at 81.333, followed by “Convenience is an important factor for online grocery” at 80.310.

Conclusion

E-grocery shopping is starting to become one of the massive growing industries in India. The industry, per se, is striving to be successful and reduce customer problems by focusing more on efficiency and customer handling. This paper has strategically analyzed the convenience factor, the unique selling proposition of online grocery business. For any industry to survive, being optimum and robust in operations is the key. Consumers save time and effort, as the products are delivered to their doorsteps, and convenience comes into the picture.

Customers face difficult circumstances, like delays in the scheduled delivery, non-availability of products due to unavoidable conditions, and risk of incorrectly valuing some products. The perishable nature of vegetables, eggs, and meat items adds another layer of uncertainty to handling these products. Despite these restrictions, India's e-grocery market has tons of potential. Further study must be conducted to find the best strategies for encouraging customers to use online grocery shopping for healthier options. While there are many different motivations for placing a digital grocery order, from planning a party to replenishing the pantry, one aspect of the process is constant: purchasing from any platform should be as simple as going to the store. Customers demand detailed filters, intuitive search options, and easy navigation regardless of where they place their orders. Nobody wants to struggle with a confusing user interface.

On Maslow's hierarchy of wants, convenience is the thin, invisible layer immediately above safety. Customers will always prefer convenience if given the option. Convenience had previously been a differentiation. Today, many anticipate it.

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