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A Study On Women Customer Preferences Towards Online Grocery Shopping With Special Reference To Agra City

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ABSTRACT :

Online shopping has emerged as a prevalent practice globally. It does not serve as a substitute for traditional retail markets but rather complements them to a certain degree. Online platforms are utilized not only for purchasing products but also for comparing prices, evaluating product features, and assessing the after-sales services associated with specific retailers. This research paper examines the key socio-economic factors influencing women's perceptions as consumers in the realm of online shopping. A self-administered questionnaire was crafted and disseminated to 500 online shoppers in Agra city using a random sampling method. The collected data were analyzed employing one-way ANOVA, factor analysis, and multiple regression statistical techniques. The findings indicate that, among the socio-economic factors, consumers' attitudes towards online grocery shopping are not influenced by marital status or gender. However, variables such as age, income, and educational background, along with family employment status, current purchasing behaviors, and prior e-commerce experiences, can assist online marketers in fostering a favorable inclination towards online grocery shopping.

Keywords : Online Shopping, Women Shopping, Grocery Shopping, Customer Satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION :

India ranks as the sixth largest grocery market globally and is among the fastest expanding sectors for online grocery shopping. This practice involves purchasing grocery items through the Internet, followed by the home delivery of the selected products (Burke, 1998; Peterson et al., 1997). Traditionally, consumers have purchased groceries in physical stores, allowing them to examine and assess products prior to making a purchase, as well as manage the transport of delicate items (Klein, 1998). In contrast, online grocery platforms enable consumers to utilize an electronic ordering system, with retailers responsible for selecting and delivering the requested goods to the customers (Raijas and Tuunainen, 2001).

The online grocery sector in India has experienced significant growth in recent months, driven by a wave of first-generation start-ups and the expansion of established traditional grocery chains into the digital realm. According to a report by Ken Research, the grocery segment accounts for 60% of the total market value within the Indian retail landscape, as food is a fundamental necessity for individuals across all social classes. A recent report from IBEF indicates that India's online grocery market is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 62% from 2016 to 2022. Given the uncertain future of online grocery for many retailers, Hansen (2005) emphasized the importance of understanding how early adopters of Internet grocery perceive this new channel and what sets them apart from consumers who prefer traditional brick-and-mortar stores. This understanding will enable online grocery retailers to develop marketing strategies aimed at attracting new users. To succeed in the competitive online marketplace, where products and competitors are easily accessible, companies must gain a thorough understanding of their customers. However, there remains limited knowledge regarding how consumers make purchasing decisions, search for products, and utilize information in this digital environment.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY :

The major objectives of the study are as follows:

i. To determine the factors influencing online grocery shopping by women consumers in Agra city.
ii. To find out the impact on tastes and preferences of women consumers in purchasing groceries online.
iii. To identify the challenges faced by the women customers in shopping online especially groceries.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY :

As online retail market has grown tremendously over the last decades, with sales and consumer adoption increasing every year. However, this growth has been highly heterogeneous across retail segments. Moreover, in the contemporary Indian society, bounded by the search of constant technological advances and innovations, consumers has been less and less loyal to any specific brand or retail format and increasingly focused on the satisfaction of immediate goals and needs. So the online grocerybusiness, in particular, has witnessed a difficult start in India and click-only grocery stores such as Local Banya, Peppertap, Amazon, Big Basket, SwiggyInstamart, Nearby, Grofers etc. are struggling to survive. As the penetration of computer users and online shoppers are increasing and online grocery retailers begin to learn from past errors and learn to take better advantage of the technological innovations developed for the digital world, more companies are venturing into this segment with improved business models and service levels. However, the ONLINE GROCERY SHOPPING market still remains a small share of the whole online sectors and the numbers using ONLINE GROCERY SHOPPING is a minority at present. It is crucial for retailers to learn how their customers shop online for groceries if they want to tap into this market's potential and thrive in the highly competitive online environment. It becomes, therefore, necessary for retailers and managers to better understand not only what motivates their consumers to shop for groceries online in the first place, but also how online consumers' attitude get influenced by various determinants for grocery shopping in a digital environment.

Although online shopping is not a new idea in this era of modern living, but the online grocery shopping business in India is underdeveloped and still in nascent stage. This is a very challenging business, yet it offers extraordinary opportunities to both groceries and consumers. However, this study intends to contribute to the growing body of knowledge of the consumers' attitude and intention to buy in online grocery shopping environments and an attempt has been made to identify the facilitating factors, issues and technical barriers influencing the consumer's attitude for the acceptance of online grocery channel for the grocery shopping in the areas of Agra city.

THE LITERATURE REVIEW :

Rhee and Bell, (2002) Shoppers often visit many stores; however, they have a prime affiliation to a 'main store' which takes care of the greater part of their purchases.

George Adamidis et al, (2006) "the good quality of the products offered" and "a money back guarantee" seems to be the better risk relievers for the e-grocers, whereas "the competitive prices of the products", "safe dealings through the Internet" and "loyalty to well-known products" are considered as very attractive and effective incentives for increasing the number of online shoppers.

G Mortimer, S Fazal E Hasan, L Andrews, (2016) A research investigated the online shoppers' experience in context of online purchasing frequency and examined the effect of perceived risk between trust and online repurchase intention of grocery. Results found that while customer satisfaction predicts trust for both infrequent and frequent online grocery shoppers, perceived risks fully mediate the effect of trust on repurchase intentions for infrequent online grocery shoppers.

Jasper Grashuis, Theodoros Skevas, Michelle S. Segovia, (2020) One of the studies determined the relationship between change in behaviour and the environment of covid 19. This change leads to an opportunity for the food retailers and deliverers to tailor business strategies according to the scenario. They may consider increasing their existing capacity as per the demand.

Y Wang, R Xu, M Schwarts, D Ghosh, (2020) Pandemic has hit different businesses differently- some negatively and some positively. Online shopping services initially did see a fall in the customers but eventually it turned out to be a boon for them. However, the survey's results indicate now consumers have higher expectations for in store safety, there has been reduction in the frequency of in store visits, there has been a shift in the ways.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY :

The present study aimed to study the consumers' attitude towards grocery shopping and also to estimate the potential for the online grocery market. Therefore, the research is based on an exploratory study with the purpose of gaining an in-depth understanding of what factors may motivate or inhibit the women consumers to start shopping online for groceries. The study also attempted to find whether online grocery shopping can be a valuable service to the women consumers in near future? In general, two types of research methods namely, quantitative and qualitative, are used in research and in this study quantitative method was used as it was a precise way. Quantitative research, which emphasizes quantification in the data collection and analysis.

The main instrument for this study is a self-administered questionnaire for the primary data collection to answer the research questions and objectives pertaining to attitude towards online grocery shopping. The first page of the questionnaire explained the purpose of this study, guaranteed confidentiality. Prior to the main body of the questionnaire one screening question was also there in the questionnaire. The purpose of the screening question was to ensure that only respondents with prior online shopping experience in any product will take part in the survey. Any respondent who answers "Yes" to the screening question was prompted to take part in responding to the remaining questions.

Once the responses were collected, they were analysed using different tools to reach a conclusion. For the quantitative part, statistical tools were used to make the analysis. The statistical tools used were mean and mode. Mean was used to calculate the average of the values and the mode was used to record the with the highest frequency. The data was also studied pictorially using graphs like pie charts, bar graphs, histogram to make it easy to comprehend. Tools like percentages were also used.

DATA ANALYSIS :

This section represents the socio- economic and previous purchasing profile of the respondents for grocery products and also the mean score and standard deviation of the individual statements to measure the attitude of women consumers towards online grocery shopping.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The gender profile is not calculated as only women respondents are only taken into consideration for this research

Table 1 Demographic Profile

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
15-24	139	27.8
25-34	223	44.5
35-44	109	21.8
45-54	26	5.2
Above 55	4	0.7
Qualification		
Below Matric	1	0.2
Undergraduate	24	4.8
Graduate	224	44.8
Post Graduate	203	40.6
Professional	48	9.6
Occupation		
Business	42	8.3
Government Services	40	8
Private Sector	328	65.7
Student	39	7.8
Homemaker	25	5
Self employed	26	5.2
Marital Status		
Single	250	50.1
Married	250	49.9
Number of Family Members		
Two	62	12.4
Three	42	8.3
Four	199	39.9
Five	114	22.9
>Five	83	16.5
Working Members in Family		
One	163	32.7
Two	214	42.8
Three	63	12.6
> Three	59	11.9
Income (In Lakhs/ annum)		
< 5	138	27.7
05-Oct	246	49.1
Oct-15	77	15.4
>15	39	7.8

Source: Primary Data

The above table represents a comprehensive respondent's profile who had participated in the study. A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed and after checking and editing the entire returned questionnaire, was used for analysis. Table 1 shows that 49.9% of the respondents are married. Majority

of the respondents 44.5% were in the age group of 25-34 years followed by those in age group of 15-24 years (27.8%) and 21.7 % of the respondents were in the age of 35- 44years. Age group 45-54 years and above 55 years was very less in terms of 5.2 percent and 0.7 percent respectively. It can be seen that majority of the respondents (44.8%) were holding
Graduate degree followed by 40.6% were having Post Graduate qualification however professional degree holders were 9.6% and 4.8% were under graduates respectively. It also represents the distribution of occupation of the respondents. Majority of 65.7 respondents were from private sectors followed by 8.3% were business persons, 8.0% were in Government service, 7.8% were students , 5.20/o were self-employed and 5.00/o were home maker. Majority of the respondents 39.9% have four members in the family followed by 22.9% with five members in the family. 49.1% of the total respondents have annual household income of 5-10 Lac followed by 27.7% of the respondents falls below household income of less than 5 Lac and 15.4 % falls in the income bracket of 10-15 Lac and 7.8 % were having annual household income of more than 15 Lac. With respect to working members in the family of the respondents, 42.9 % were found where two family members are working followed by 32.7 % with one working member, 12.6 % with three working members and 11.9% with more than three working members in the family.

Purchasing Behavior and Experience in shopping groceries online

This aspect was assessed because it was deemed important for this thesis to look at how the women consumers' current buying pattern may influence online grocery adoption.
Questions related to how they buy, from where they buy, average purchase time, factors influencing the store choice online shopping experience of other products and awareness about the websites were addressed.

Table 2

Online Women Consumer Grocery Buying Behavior

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Monthly Grocery Shopping Expenses		
Less than 2500	76	15.2
2500- 5000	108	21.5
5000-7500	99	19.9
7500-10000	113	22.6
10000-12500	46	9.3
12500-15000	40	8
15000 and above	18	3.5
Grocery Shopping Frequency		
Weekly	48	9.6
Fortnightly	59	11.9
Monthly	272	54.4
Other	121	24.1
Location Preference for Grocery Shopping		
Local Shops	157	31.4
Ration Shop/Dept Store	91	18.2
Market	22	4.5
Super Market	207	41.3
Online	23	4.6
Store Preference for grocery shopping on the basis of benefits		
Proximity	113	22.7
Best Price Shop	124	24.9
Product Choices	125	25
Discount/Offers	49	9.8
One Favorite place	88	17.6
Time Spent on Internet for personal usage		
Less than 1 hour	163	32.7
1-2 hours	297	59.4
2-3 hours	38	7.5

More than 3 hours	2	0.4
Products and Services purchased through internet		
Apparels	105	21
Books/CD	85	17.1
Electronics	143	28.6
Food	60	12.1
Footwear	101	20.2
Services (Banking, travel tickets, hotels, bills payments etc.)	277	55.5
Other (Cosmetic, Jewellery etc.)	99	22.3
Awareness about Grocery shopping websites		
Yes	306	61.2
No	194	38.8
How frequent you purchase grocery online?		
Never	475	95
Weekly	3	0.6
Fortnightly	6	1.1
Monthly	4	0.7
On any occasion	11	2.2
Rarely	2	0.4

Source: Primary Data

Table 2 depicts that, with the average monthly grocery expenditure, the majority of the respondents (64%) spends between 2500 to 10000 rupees per month followed by 21.3% of the respondents spends more than Rs. 10000 however 15.2 % respondents spends less than Rs.2500 per month. Most of the respondents usually buy the bulk grocery products on monthly (54.4%) or fortnightly (11.9 %) basis however, 24.1% of respondents purchase groceries quarterly or as per their needs. (41.3%) respondents have first preference to buy the grocery products from supermarket followed by (31.4 %) respondents from Local shops and (18.2%) from ration shop respectively. However, hardly (4.6%) respondents prefer to by grocery products through online. Discounts & offers (9.8%) and one favorite place(17.6%) for grocery shopping was considered not to play a big role as it has been observed that the respondents prefer to save time and money by shopping either from proximity stores (22.7%) or best price shops(24.9%) . However their preference for the grocery shopping also depends on the availability of product choices (25.0%). A question about the time spent on the internet usage for personal work was also addressed and it was found that most of the respondents likely to spend an average time between one to two hours (59.4%) followed by less than one hour (32.7%) and only (7.6%) respondents spent between 2-3 hours on the internet in office or home or mobiles. To assess their attitude towards acceptance of online grocery shopping, it was necessary to evaluate the respondent's current online buying behavior for other products. So the women respondents with experience in online shopping were then requested to specify products and services they purchased over the Internet. (55.5%) respondents have experience to buy services like travel tickets, hotel booking, bills payments etc. followed by (20.2%) to buy footwear, (21%) to buy apparels and (17.1%) to buy books/CD through internet. Other minor products and services purchased by the respondents over the internet were computer software/hardware, shares/stocks, electronics, cosmetics and jewelry and food items through online as shown in Table 2 Awareness about online grocery option was also assessed. 61.2% respondents are aware about the online grocery websites named bigbasket.com, naturebasket.com, dilikaryana.com, aaramshop.com, zopnow.com, pepperfry.com, pepper tap etc. However, only 5.0% of respondents have experience of the online grocery shopping through these websites from which only 2.4% of the respondents are frequent buyers and purchase grocery items on weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis through internet, which shows that there might be various factors or barriers which are influencing the attitude of respondents for the acceptance of online grocery shopping.

Association of demographic profile and women consumers' attitude towards online grocery purchase

To investigate how socio-economic profiles (gender, age, education level, occupation, income, family members and number of working members in family) influence women consumers' attitude towards online shopping.

H_0: There is no significant relationship between demographic variables and women Consumers' Attitude towards online grocery shopping.

H_1: There exists significant relationship between demographic variables and women Consumers' Attitude towards online grocery shopping.

These hypotheses is split into 9 portions on the basis of socio- economic variables. One way ANOVA was utilised to examine the relationship between socio- economic variables and consumers' attitude towards ONLINE GROCERY SHOPPING.

Table 3

Association of demographic profile and women consumers' attitude towards online grocery shopping - ANOVA

Hypothesis	**Ratio of Variance(F)**	**Significant**
Ho: There is no significant relationship between demographic variables and women Consumers' Attitude towards online grocery shopping.		
Ho(a) : Age	16.964	0
Ho(b) : Education	25.993	0
Ho(c) : Occupation	5.782	0
Ho(d) : Marital Status	2.681	**0.102**
Ho(e) : Family Members	43.896	0
Ho(f) : Working members in family	13.514	0
Ho(g) : Family Income	16.301	0

From the above results it can be concluded that the Hypothesis Ho(a); There is no significant relationship between Age and women Consumers' attitude towards online grocery shopping. Ho(b); There is no significant relationship between Education and Attitude towardsonline grocery shopping. Ho(c); There is no significant relationship between Occupation and Attitude towards online grocery shoppingHo(e) There is no significant relationship between number of Family Members and Attitude towards online grocery shopping, Ho(f) There is no significant relationship between Working Members of the Family and Attitude towards online grocery shopping, Ho(h) There is no significant relationship between Family Income and Attitude towards online grocery shopping, are all rejected; while Ho(d) There is no significant relationship between Marital Status of the respondent and Attitude towards online grocery shopping, are accepted. So, it can be said that women consumers' attitude towards online grocery shopping is independent of Marital Status of the respondents. So, it can be resulted out that hypothesis Ho. There is no significant relationship between demographic Variables and Attitude towards online grocery shopping is partially accepted.

CONCLUSION :

A relationship between women consumers' attitude and intension to actual usage of online grocery shopping was found in this study. So it can be said that online grocery shopping retailers have to understand the customer's particular need and impart facilities accordingly. Online grocery shopping Retailers have to provide the good quality products as per their convenient time slots. They have to make seasonal offers, discount and offers to lure the customer and keep open all the mode of payment options. Intriguingly, the perceived risk, which has been found to be one of the major obstacles to the adoption of electronic commerce technologies for grocery shopping in this study, might be due to that Online Grocery Shopping is still a relatively new for the grocery consumers in India and women consumers as a result do not have a high level understanding of the risks involved and that's why they look for the strong social influence to motivate them to use online grocery shopping. The results of the study are also consistent with the extended theory of reasoned action which states that past buying behavior of the respondent influence the consumers' intention to purchase online. One of the important implications of this study to practice is that the Indian grocery retailers need to ensure that the web sites developed to facilitate online grocery shopping be useful and easy to use by the consumers. In addition, they may need to device a better marketing strategy to ensure the awareness about the online grocery websites and the services provided through Online Grocery Shopping, while at same time, demonstrate the benefits of shopping online.

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