The analysis of consumers’ attitudes towards online grocery shopping - A case study in Indian context

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Abstract

The concept of online grocery shopping is in its nascent stage. This study has been carried out to examine the impact of varied attributes on the consumers’ attitude towards online grocery shopping. Perceived Cost, Convenience, Risk and Enjoyable are the four attributes examined in this study. The sub-populations of the various demographic traits and usage behavior will be compared and analyzed to find out if there is any significant difference amongst the attitudes of sub-populations towards online grocery shopping in India.

Introduction

Grocery shopping is considered as one of the most vital and regular task of every household. People purchase groceries irrespective of the country’s economic condition. People may stop going to vacations, restaurants, movies, etc but they cannot stop buying the basic necessity goods such as fruits and vegetables, oils, breads, etc. However, in the hustle and bustle of modern lifestyle, people are unwilling to spend their time and energy on purchasing groceries. People associate shopping at grocery stores as tiring and stressful. In addition to heavy traffic and long working hours, many people avoid buying groceries. Anckar et al. (2002) claim that "consumers generally dislike shopping for groceries; they have a desire to accomplish the task as fast as possible" (p.215). A survey by Peapod.com, one of the world’s largest e-grocer showed that individuals dislike grocery shopping as a job next to visiting a dentist. (Huang and Oppewal, 2006; Wu and Teng, 2011).

Luckily, the emergence and development of e-commerce has opened new ways of doing business. Thus, online grocery shopping is becoming more and more popular (Ankar et al, 2002; Wu and Teng, 2011). With the growing Internet connectivity, clientele and rising popularity of electronic shopping, entrepreneurs have seen the opportunity of opening online grocery stores. Various e-grocers like BigBasket.com, AaramShop.com, et cetera have emerged in Indian online grocery market.

The e-commerce sector of India is small when compared globally but it is growing rapidly. A survey by Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) revealed that the e-commerce market in India rose from U.S. $3.9 billion in 2009 to U.S. $12 billion in 2013. Another study by Crisil Research displays that the e-tailing industries in India are expected to grow 50-55% annually. Although, online food and grocery industry forms an insignificant part of the Rs 2700 crore e-tailing market of India, it is growing approximately 25 to 30 % year on year. This category will add significantly to the total online retail market of India in the next ten years. Thus, it is a great opportunity for businessmen aspiring to open retail stores online, especially online grocery stores. (The Hindu Businessline, 2014)
Literature Review

Robertson (1967) classifies innovations as continuous, dynamically continuous and discontinuous. Critically, discontinuous innovation not only involves the innovation of a new product but also triggers a significant change in the customers’ behavior. Online grocery shopping is debatably a discontinuous innovation (Hansen, 2005), involving a significant change in behavior (Robertson, 1967): online shoppers give up the social interaction at supermarkets and the ability to inspect the quality of groceries prior to purchase. For the advancement of online grocery shopping beyond its existing “niche” size, retailers not only need to understand what makes the customers to change their behavior but also the degree to which their shopping experience online strengthens the adoption process (Hand et al., 2008). Thus, there is a direct relationship between the customers’ perception of an innovation and its rate of adoption. For example: Perceived convenience brought by online grocery shopping has a positive influence on its adoption by the time-pressed consumers.

Liebmann (1988, p.25) noticed that despite the fact that customers are regularly shopping at more outlets, “these same consumers repeatedly tell us they are time-pressed and want more convenience-oriented and added value services that will save them time”. In reference with the above need for convenience and increasing penetration levels of internet, Huang and Opperwal, 2006 believe that consumers would welcome the benefits offered by online grocery shopping. Since the mid 1990s, researchers have shown different opinions about the suitability of groceries for e-commerce. Some researchers gave their outlook of grocery shopping to emerge as a big business opportunity (Andersen Consulting, 1998). However, there are others who are negative about the success of online grocery shopping in the online environment (Ankar et al, 2002).

The study by Bell et al, (1998) shows that shopping costs comprise of both fixed and variable costs. The travelling distance from the customers’ house to the supermarket, customers’ loyalty and innate preference towards a store constitutes fixed cost of shopping. While, variable costs are dependent on the customers’ shopping list. Transportation costs such as petrol and parking expenditure, and travel time discourage consumers to purchase from a supermarket and encourage them to purchase goods online (Forman, Ghose and Goldfarb, 2009; Chntagunta, Chu and Cebollada, 2012). However, majority of the consumers hate to pay premium in the form of delivery fee for everyday necessity products like groceries (Baker, 2000; Kacen, Hess and Chiang, 2003). A survey conducted by OMD snapshots revealed that about 20 percent of online groceries shoppers deterred to shop online due to the delivery charges. (Anonymous, 2001)

Since the 1960s, the theory of perceived risk has been used to explain consumers’ behavior.

Researchers have provided various definitions for perceived risk. Perceived risk in electronic shopping has been defined as a persistent expectation of loss, uncertainty and unfavorable consequences by an online shopper in planning a specific online purchase of product or service (Forsythe and Shi, 2003; Dowling and Staelin, 1994).

Couple of risks emerge in online shopping such as the risk of losing money by means of credit card stealing (Bhatnagar et al,2000 ; Maignan & Lukas, 1997), or privacy risk which shows the unwillingness of the customer to give away personal information.( Liebermann and Stashevsky, 2002). A study conducted by (Ranganathan and Ganapathy, 2002) revealed that security and privacy factors came forward to be the most important predictors for distinguishing the high and low purchase intent purchasers. However, another study by (Swaminathan, Lekowska- White and Rao, 1999) displayed opposing results that the consumers did not show much concern over the transactions’ security.
Shopping experience has been assessed by consumers' along two central dimensions (Childers et al, 2001; Babin, Darden and Griffin, 1974) - 1) ‘utilitarian value’ in which consumers are rational, task oriented and desire to obtain utilitarian outcomes; and 2) ‘hedonic value’ which can be associated with the consumers’ need to obtain fun such that the fulfillment of a task may not be very essential (Wolfinbarger and Gilly, 2001)

Dawon et al. (1990) points out that social interaction offered by shopping is one of the major reasons for people to go shopping. It has been indicated that shopping at stores is often treated as an opportunity for people to spend time with their friends or family members and also take pleasure from the social activities whilst shopping. (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003; Ramus and Nielsen, 2005)

However, few online shoppers do not want to be bothered while they are shopping online. The technology interface offered online provides them with the convenience to browse for products without being disturbed by sales people. (Joerding and Meissner, 1998)

Convenience is related to forms of non monetary costs like time, stress and effort and psychological cost (Aylott and Mitchell, 1998). Study conducted by Morganosky and Cude (2000) state that convenience and times saving are the two major reasons for the consumers to purchase groceries online. Online shopping offers greater convenience to consumers as consumers can shop from anywhere at any time and provides customers with an opportunity to save time by making trips to physical retail stores. Similar study conducted by Ramus and Nielsen (2005) shows that online grocery shopping relieves the customers from the burden of carrying heavy groceries home from the supermarket. Aylott and Mitchell (1998) found crowding and queuing to be the two major stressors when buying groceries at the supermarket or grocery store. Crowding is not liked by customers as it does not let customers achieve their task as easily and quickly they like, while queuing adds to the customer’s level of frustration as they have to waste their time standing in a long queue for checkout. Predictably, shopping online also has its disadvantages and difficulties. Geuens et al., (2003) report that online shoppers may find difficulty in obtaining relevant information about groceries online before purchasing the product. Additionally, as proposed by Ring and Tigert (2001), many online grocery website are difficult to navigate around and shop. A study conducted by Raijas (2002) of electronic grocery consumers revealed that “easiness to order groceries” might have a positive influence on the consumers’ preference to select an e-grocery store. If the customers find what they are looking for but fail to carry out the transaction, they are likely to cancel their order (Oderketken-Schroder and Wetzels, 2003).

Methodology

The study follows quantitative methodology. Data was collected by sending online questionnaires to the people, using convenient and snowball sampling. Within the timeframe, questionnaires were filled by 100 respondents and their responses were analyzed by using SPSS software. Independent sample T-test and one way ANOVA was used to find out significant differences between the attitudes of sub-populations of demographic traits and usage behavior towards online grocery shopping in India.

The research aims to study the consumers’ attitude towards online grocery shopping in India

The research objectives for the study are as follows:

1).To determine the impact of Perceived Cost on the consumers’ attitude towards online grocery shopping.
H1a: Cost will be perceived differently by non-Online grocery shoppers and online grocery shoppers
H1b: Cost will be perceived differently by customers not aware of online grocery shopping and customers aware of online grocery shopping.
H1c: Males and Females will perceive cost differently.
H1d: Single and married customers will perceive cost differently.
H1e: Unemployed and employed customers will perceive cost differently.
H1f: Different age groups will perceive cost differently
H1g: Different income groups will perceive cost differently

2). To determine the impact of Perceived Risk on the online consumers’ attitude towards online grocery shopping.

H2a: Risk will be perceived differently by non-Online grocery shoppers and online grocery shoppers
H2b: Cost will be perceived differently by customers not aware of online grocery shopping and customers aware of online grocery shopping.
H2c: Males and Females will perceive risk differently.
H2d: Married customers will perceive risk higher than single customers
H2e: Employed and Unemployed customers will perceive risk differently
H2f: Different age groups will perceive risk differently
H2g: Different income groups will perceive risk differently

3). To determine the impact of Perceived Convenience on consumers’ attitude towards online grocery shopping.

H3a: Online grocery shoppers and non- online grocery shoppers will perceive convenience differently
H3b: Customers aware of online grocery shopping and customers who are not aware of online grocery shopping will perceive convenience differently
H3c: Males and Females will perceive convenience differently
H3d: Single and married customers will perceive convenience differently
H3e: Employed and unemployed customers will perceive convenience differently
H3f: Different age groups will perceive convenience differently
H3g: Different income groups will perceive convenience differently

4). To determine the impact of Perceived Enjoyable on the consumers’ attitude towards online grocery shopping.

H4a: Online grocery shoppers and non- online grocery shoppers will perceive enjoyable differently
H4b: Customers aware of online grocery shopping and customers who are not aware of online grocery shopping will perceive enjoyable differently
H4c: Males and Females will perceive enjoyable differently
H4d: Single and married customers will perceive enjoyable differently
H4e: Employed and unemployed customers will perceive enjoyable differently
H4f: Different age groups will perceive enjoyable differently
H4g: Different income groups will perceive enjoyable differently
Reliability –

The internal consistency of the data was measured using the Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient. The coefficient value for scale variables in the sample was above the 0.6, the prescribed value below which the data lacks internal consistency reliability. (Malhotra and Dash, 2009). Thus, the data collected is fit for statistical analysis.

Perceived Cost

The analysis showed that the customers value the offers and discounts offered in online grocery shopping. As seen in various literatures such as Baker, 2000; and Kacen, Hess and Chiang, 2003, delivery fee is one of the major reasons for consumers hesitating to purchase groceries online. However, with the average of 2.48, it is apparent that majority of the people would not mind paying delivery fee for groceries.

Difference between online grocery shoppers and non grocery shoppers

No significant difference was found between these two groups of shoppers as the p-value is greater than $\alpha = 0.10$. Therefore, $H1a$ was not supported.

Difference between customers aware/ not aware of online grocery shopping

It was found that these two groups significantly differed in one variable: not having to incur travelling costs to a store as the p-value is less than $\alpha = 0.10$.
Therefore, $H1b$ is partly supported.

Furthermore, the means of perceived cost variables was connected with each sub-population of the various demographic traits like gender, marital status, and employment status.
No significant difference was found in the sub populations for all the three demographic traits, gender, marital status and employment status as the p values are greater than $\alpha = 0.10$. Therefore, hypothesis $H1c$, $H1d$ and $H1e$ are not supported.

Difference between age groups –Young Adults, Adults and Older Citizens

One way ANOVA was applied to measure if there is any significant difference between the three age groups for perceived cost elements. No significant difference was observed in any age groups as p-value was greater than $\alpha=0.10$. Therefore, $H1f$ was not supported.

Difference between income groups- No Income, Mid Income, High Income

One way ANOVA was applied to measure if there is any significant difference between the three income groups for perceived cost elements. No significant difference was observed in any income groups as p-value was greater than $\alpha=0.10$. Therefore, $H1g$ was not supported.

Perceived Convenience

□ Descriptive Statistics

The mean and standard deviation of perceived convenience variables were analyzed. The result showed that customers value the convenience which comes with online grocery shopping,
most especially not having to stand in the queue at billing counter, carry home all the products by themselves, less time and the comfort of purchasing at any location and time. This is in harmony with previous literature by Morganosky and Cude (2000), Ramus and Nielsen (2005) and, Aylott and Mitchell (1998).

- **Difference between online grocery shoppers and non-online grocery shoppers**

The two groups of shoppers differed significantly in 6 variables as the p-values are less than 0.10. The 6 variables are expect that shopping online takes less duration of time than going to a physical store, comfort of purchasing at any location and time, value of not having to stand in the queue at the billing counter, convenience of goods being delivered to the customers’ doorstep, concerned if the goods wanted can be easily found and worry if the product information is easy to locate online. Therefore, H2a is partly supported.

**Difference between customers aware/ not aware of online grocery shopping**

These two groups of customers differed significantly in two variables namely online shopping takes less duration of time than going to a physical store and not having to stand in the queue at the billing counter, as the p-values for these variables are less than \( \alpha = 0.10 \). Therefore, H2b is partly supported.

The means of perceived risk variables were connected with each sub-population of the various demographic traits like gender, marital status, and employment status. Males and females differed significantly in one variable namely the comfort of purchasing at any location and time as the p-value is less than \( \alpha = 0.10 \). Therefore, H2c was partially supported.

In the same way, it was found that these married and single respondents differed significantly in two variables namely, worry about the ease of navigating the website or if the goods wanted would be found easily as the p-value is less than \( \alpha = 0.10 \). Therefore, H2d was partly supported.

Similarly, it was found that employed and unemployed respondents differed significantly in two variables namely online shopping takes less duration of time than going to a physical store and the complexity of the transaction process online as the p-values are less than \( \alpha = 0.10 \). Therefore, H2e was partly supported.

**Difference between age groups – Young Adults, Adults and Older Citizens**

One way ANOVA was applied to measure if there is any significant difference between the three age groups for perceived enjoyable elements. It was found that age groups differed significantly in three variables namely; not having to stand in the queue at checkout, convenience of goods being delivered to the doorstep and worry if the goods wanted would be found easily. With the help of Tukey’s post hoc test, it was found that young adults and adults have differed significantly in all the three variables as p-values are less than \( \alpha = 0.10 \). Adults perceive all the variables significantly higher than young adults. Therefore, H2f was partly supported.

**Difference between income groups- No Income, Mid Income, High Income**

One way ANOVA was applied and it was found that income groups differed significantly in three variables namely, online shopping takes less time, not having to stand in the queue at checkout and
convenience of goods being delivered to the doorstep. With the help of Tukey’s post hoc test, it was found that no income and high income customers differed in one variable namely online shopping takes less time. Customers with high income perceive this higher than customers with no income. Also, mid income and high income customers differed significantly in all the three variables. High income customers perceive all the three variables higher than the mid income customers. Therefore, H2g was partly supported.

Perceived Risk

The mean and standard deviation of perceived risk variables were found. The most significant perceived by the customers is the quality of the products delivered. So, online grocers should make sure that they provide customers with fresh groceries. This is in harmony with the previous literature Jarvenpaa & Todd, 1997; Bhatnagar et al, 2000 where consumers hesitate to buy groceries as they doubt the product quality.

Difference between online grocery shoppers and non-online grocery shoppers

These two groups differed significantly in three variables as the p-value is less than 0.10. The variables are: concerned about the credit card data security, doubt the quality of goods received and worry if the product would perform as expected. Therefore, H3a was partly supported.

Difference between customers aware/ not aware of online grocery shopping

The groups differed significantly in one variable i.e. credit card data security as p-value is less than α=0.10. Therefore, H3b was partly supported.

The means of perceived risk variables were connected with each sub-population of the various demographic traits like gender, marital status, and employment status.

It was found that males and females differed significantly in three elements i.e., credit card data security, quality of goods received and concerned whether the right goods would be delivered on time as the p-value is less than α=0.10. Females perceive this risk higher than males. Therefore, H3c was partly supported.

Also, married and single customers differed significantly in three elements i.e., credit card data security, safety of personal data and concerned whether the right goods would be delivered on time as p-value is less than α=0.10. Married population perceives this risk higher than single population. Therefore, H3d was partly supported.

However, no significant difference for perceived risk was observed between the employed and unemployed customers. Therefore, H3a was not supported.

Difference between age groups – Young Adults, Adults and Older Citizens

One way ANOVA was applied and it was found that age groups differed significantly in three variables namely; credit card data security, personal data risk and whether the right product would be delivered at the right time. With the help of Tukey’s post hoc test, it was found that young adults and older citizens have differed significantly in two variables: credit card data risk and personal data risk as p-values are less than α=0.10. Older citizens perceived both these risks higher than young adults. Also, young adults and adults differed significantly in two variables; personal data risk and whether
right product would be delivered at the right time as p-values are less than \( \alpha=0.10 \). Adults perceive both these risks higher than young adults. Therefore, H3f was partly supported.

**Difference between income groups- No Income, Mid Income, High Income**

One way ANOVA was applied to measure if there is any significant difference between the three age groups for perceived risk elements. No significant difference was observed in any income groups. Therefore, H3g was not supported.

**Perceived Enjoyable**

The mean and standard deviation of perceived enjoyable variables were found. The most significant perceived enjoyable variable in average is that customers expect to find new products online.

**Difference between online grocery shoppers and non-online grocery shoppers**

These two groups differed significantly on one variable namely; online shopping to be enjoyable as p-value is less than \( \alpha=0.10 \). Therefore, H4a was partly supported.

**Difference between customers aware/ not aware of online grocery shopping**

These two groups differed significantly on 3 variables as p-values are less than \( \alpha=0.10 \). The three variables are: expect online shopping to be enjoyable, expect going to the supermarkets to be a recreational activity and expect to enjoy finding new products online. Therefore, H4b was partly supported.

The means of perceived enjoyable variables were connected with each sub-population of the various demographic traits like gender, marital status, and employment status.

No significant difference was found in the sub-populations of gender and marital status demographics as p-values are greater than \( \alpha=0.10 \). Therefore, H4c and H4d are not supported.

However, employed and unemployed respondents were compared on one variable, namely going to the supermarkets to be a recreational activity as p-value is less than \( \alpha=0.10 \). Therefore, H4e was partly supported.

**Difference between age groups –Young Adults, Adults and Older Citizens**

One way ANOVA was applied to measure if there is any significant difference between the three age groups for perceived enjoyable elements. No significant difference was found between the three age groups as p-values are greater than 0.10. Therefore, H4f was not supported.

**Difference between income groups- No Income, Mid Income, High Income**

One way ANOVA was applied and it was found that the age groups differed significantly in one variable namely- expect to have fun from socializing at supermarkets. To better understand the interrelationship between the age groups, Tukey’s post hoc results were seen. It was found that mid-income and high income customers differed significantly in one variable: expect to have fun from socializing at supermarkets and no significance was found between ‘no income and mid income’ or ‘no income and high income’ customers. Customers in the mid-income group perceived this variable higher than the customers.
in the high-income group category. Therefore, H4g was partly supported.

**Conclusion**

This research shows that consumers’ attitude towards online grocery shopping in India is influenced by four factors namely Perceived Cost, Perceived Convenience, Perceived Risk and Perceived Enjoyable. The existing literature on the various perspectives of online grocery shopping is done in Europe, Australia but no study has been done in India for online grocery shopping. However, as the concept of online grocery shopping is in its budding phase in India, it would be beneficial to find out the consumers’ attitude towards various aspects of online grocery shopping. This would help the e-grocers to direct their attention towards those and provide best value to the consumers’.

Sample of 100 respondents was collected and the consumers were asked for their demographic traits, awareness of online grocery shopping and usage behavior of online grocery shopping. Seven hypotheses were made and tested for each factor to find out if the attitudes differed amongst the sub-populations of the demographic variables, or usage behavior.

Table 1, 2, 3 and 4 summarizes the study’s finding in terms of demographic and usage behaviour effects for Perceived Cost, Perceived Convenience, Perceived Risk and Perceived Enjoyable respectively.

### Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Cost Variables</th>
<th>Online Grocery Shopping</th>
<th>Aware Online Grocery Shopping</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Income</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concerned about the additional costs of online shopping</td>
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<td>Appreciate not having to incur travelling costs to a physical store</td>
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<td>Value the discounts and offers offered in online grocery shopping</td>
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Notes: * Statistically significant difference (at p<0.10 two tailed), n=100

The findings for Perceived cost show that there was no significant difference among the various demographic traits of the consumers. However, significant difference was found in customers who are aware and not aware of online grocery shopping. This information can be used by marketers to cater to the different attitudes of two individual groups.
The findings for the other three factors show that, both the usage behavior variables and demographic traits have their own effect on the different elements of the factors. This information can further be used by various e-grocers or marketers along the course of personalization. Each individual can be dealt with differently and more efficiently on the basis their attitude towards the various elements of Perceived

### Perceived convenience variables

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Online Grocery Shopping</th>
<th>Aware Online Grocery Shopping</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Income</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Believe that online shopping takes less duration of time than going to a physical store</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appreciate the comfort of purchasing at any location and time</td>
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<td>Appreciate the value of not having to stand in the queue at checkout</td>
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<td>Appreciate the convenience of goods being delivered to the doorstep</td>
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<td>Worry about the ease of navigating the website</td>
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<td>Concerned if the goods wanted can be found easily</td>
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<td>Worry if product information is easy to locate online</td>
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<td>Worry about the complexity of the transaction process online</td>
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Notes: * Statistically significant difference (at p<0.10 two tailed), n=100

### Perceived enjoyable variables

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Online Grocery Shopping</th>
<th>Aware Online Grocery Shopping</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Employment Status</th>
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<tr>
<td>Expect online shopping to be enjoyable</td>
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<td>Expect going to the supermarkets be a recreational activity</td>
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<td>Expect to have fun socializing at supermarkets</td>
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<td>Expect to enjoy finding new products online</td>
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Notes: * Statistically significant difference (at p<0.10 two tailed), n=100

### Perceived risk variables

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Online Grocery Shopping</th>
<th>Aware Online Grocery Shopping</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Employment Status</th>
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<tr>
<td>Concerned about the credit card data security</td>
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<td>Concerned about the security of personal information</td>
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<td>Doubt the quality of goods received</td>
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<td>Concerned if the right goods would be delivered timely</td>
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<td>Worry if the product would perform as expected</td>
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Notes: * Statistically significant difference (at p<0.10 two tailed), n=100
Risk, Perceived Convenience, and Perceived Enjoyable. Different personalization message or advertisements can then be sent to these diverse individuals.

This research was undertaken to study the consumers’ attitude towards online grocery shopping in India. However, generalizing from the responses of a sample size of 100 respondents to the attitude of customers all over India is not straightforward as India is a culturally rich country. Thus, it is recommended to conduct similar nature studies for the various cultural groups India and study their personality traits before trying to generalize these results.

IV. Limitation:

1. The research was targeted towards the whole demographic population of India but since the sample size is small, the accuracy and authenticity can be low.

2. Some people may have filled the questionnaire without interest which may have lead to the collection and analysis of inaccurate data.

References


