

Investigating Consumer Perception and Consumer Attitude towards Online Purchase Intention: Applied on Online Grocery Shopping Applications

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Abstract:

This study aims to investigate consumers perception process towards grocery shopping online as well as their attitudes towards online grocers and its impact on their buying intentions. This study used quantitative research with a deductive reasoning approach, it also uses the positivism theoretical perspective. This research choice was positivism approach as purpose of theory is to generate hypotheses that can be tested and that will thus permit clarifications of laws to be measured. This was done by using online questionnaires and usage of secondary data. Online questionnaire

distribution took place during September 2023, seeking to collect a response size of 400 as Krejcie and Morgan (1940) claimed that this is an appropriate size to generalize the research findings. A cross sectional time frame was used as the data was collected only one time. Once the needed data was collected, structural equation modeling (SEM) was conducted to assess and test the research hypotheses. Based on the results, it shows that online grocery shopping mobile application exposure, attention, interpretation, usefulness, ease of use and entertainment had a strong relationship and impact on purchase intention.

Key Word: Attitude, Consumer Behavior, FMCG, Mobile Applications, Perception, Purchase Intention, Technology Usage

1 Introduction

During the past ten years, there has been a dense incline towards the operations of ecommerce and people's consideration of online product purchases (Ligaraba et al., 2023). Many retailers and manufacturers have integrated internet channels into their strategy and assigned a significant amount of support to operate their businesses in the virtual world as it has become a growing business channel (Kumar, 2022). Like Amazon, eBay, and other e-retailers, these businesses seek to operate only online- without having any physical store. As many people in the contemporary world are always online, a virtual business model becomes necessary for commerce operators to stay connected with customers (Anshu et al., 2022). Internet consumers are increasing,

and the different online channels are recruiting thousands of new consumers every year (Kantar, 2023). With ecommerce, consumers have access to buy any retail goods that they desire, such as: clothing, electronics, jewelry, personal hygiene products, household cleaning products, furniture, books, magazines, and other consumer good (Kumar, 2022).

Trivedi et.al. (2022) stated that shopping apps are mobile applications that have been modified and branded by a particular retailer; users benefit from their easy and quick use, and features inside the apps assist users while they buy. They claim though insufficient research exist in literature to show what are the significant capabilities that impact consumers to participate in online grocery shopping mobile applications. It is vital to develop empirical evidence showing consumers perception and attitude towards online grocery shopping mobile applications as these insights will determine the capabilities in which consumers can pay through the app, email a product link to friends and family, or locate a local real store staffed by retailers (Kumar, 2022). Limited studies exist that show consumer behavior towards online grocery shopping mobile applications (Reinartz, et.al., 2019). More studies are called to focus on online grocery shopping mobile applications as Court et al. (2019) explained that although consumers like online grocery shopping, they need some time to become used to mobile application and thus, insights are needed to understand how do consumers accept and use this technology in the field of FMCGs.

Kantar (2023) stated that the percentage of the online grocery shopping usage has doubled ever since the early year of Covid-19. Statistics show that 12.6% of online grocery shopping sales increased significantly in the UK in March 2022 compared with 8.0% three years ago in 2021. Globally, Anshu et al. (2022) claim that shopping online is the most recent and modern way of buying consumer goods, and online grocery shopping phenomena has seen a 76% growth in 2020 and it continues to grow till present time. Thus, this study seeks to focus on consumer behavior towards online shopping of FMCGs. Many new and existing ecommerce that sell FMCGs have turned to the development of mobile apps to sustain and compete in the market; the business field is cluttered (Trivedi et.al., 2022). Many scholars and practitioners seek to know how to develop the right marketing strategy that would encourage consumers to select their services over competitors. Hence, this study seeks to develop insights and empirical evidence that can be used to understand consumers purchase intention developments towards online grocery intentions.

This study aims to investigate consumers perception process towards grocery shopping online as well as their attitudes towards online grocers and its impact on their buying intentions. To achieve this aim, several research objectives were sought to be attained: (RO1): to recognize consumers' perception process (exposure, attention, and interpretation) towards developing

grocery shopping intentions with online applications; (RO2): to identify the significant variable that are interpreted by consumers regarding their online grocery shopping; (RO3): To clarify the impact of consumers interpretation on grocery shopping intentions with online applications; (RO4): to clarify the impact of consumers interpretation on consumers attitude towards online grocery shopping.

By achieving this research objectives, this study plans to develop insights in which scholars and practitioners can use so to further lead consumers to switch from traditional brick-and-mortar stores to online and mobile grocery shopping. This study seeks to show that using a mobile application for grocery shopping can help consumers make better decisions and have a more enjoyable shopping experience. This study contributes insights that pinpoint the elements that influence how consumers feel and act when they shop for groceries on their phones.

2 Literature Review

Studies show that many consumers in the digital era shop online, where it is a website or an application (Zheng et al., 2020). The relation between the consumers and food segment is changing dramatically due to the online grocery shopping applications phenomena (Singh and Srivastava,2022). Online retailing now is turning into mobile shopping applications (Trivedi et.al., 2022). Automation involves any activity or

process that functions automatically, with no human input or control. Automation impacts value creation at the client interface in two ways: first, it streamlines marketing procedures by automating communications (like reminders, in-stock alerts, and chatbots) and providing clients with real-time information and responses; second, it simplifies routine consumer processes like re-purchasing (Reinartz, et.al., 2019). Trivedi, et.al., (2022) stated that shopping apps are mobile applications that have been modified and branded by a particular retailer; users benefit from their easy and quick use, and features inside the apps assist users while they buy. According to Court et al. (2019), they claimed that the popularity of online grocery applications is increasing more and more everyday due to convenience. Thus, scholars have built on understanding consumer behavior towards shopping online with the theory of reasoned action and the technology acceptance model (Kantar, 2023).

2.1 Consumer Behavior Explained: The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

The theory of Reasoned Action was originally proposed by Fishbein and Ajzen in 1975, it is basically a model for the behavior that concentrates on interest and social influence. The main purpose of the TRA is to understand a person's voluntary behavior by testing the fundamental basic motivation that leads to an action. Also, the normative component such as social norms around the behavior which also contributes to the

decision of performing the action or not. The theory explains that actual behavior will occur if the individuals develop intentions. Behavior intentions is reflecting the individual motivational factors that influence a given behavior. The theory states that the stronger the intention to perform the behavior, the more likely the behavior will be performed. TRA explain that behavior intentions, such as shopping, is inspired by the norms and attitude. According to Grehan (2015) stated that attitude is the opinion about anything and the way of behaving towards it positively or negatively. Chuah et al. (2022) explained that social norms, the perceived social pressures/stress from family, friends, peers, media, society, etc., is viewed as substitution for developing intentions to behavior a certain way.

2.2 Consumer Behavior Explained: Technology Acceptance Model

The technology acceptance model (TAM) is an information systems theory that models how consumers come to accept and use a technology (Jia et al., 2023). TAM suggests that when users are presented with a new technology, a number of factors influence their decision about how and when they will use it, notably: Perceived usefulness, which refers to: "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance their job performance" (Venkatesh, 2000, p.1). In addition, consumers must perceive the technology as easy to use, which indicates the: "the degree to which a person believes

that using a particular system would be free from effort" (Venkatesh, 2000, p.1). If the technology is easy to use, then the barrier is conquered. If it's not easy to use and the interface is complicated, no one has a positive attitude towards it. In conclusion, when TAM elements of perception are in place (ease of use and usefulness), consumers will have the attitude and intention to use the technology. However, the perception may change depending on age and gender because everyone is different (Jia et al., 2023). Because usage of technology has different perception and motives among consumers, many studies have been conducted to add on to the TAM and other theories have been developed (Hasan, 2020).

2.3 Consumer Behavior Triggered by Developed Perceptions

According to Molise (2017), when consumers are exposed to stimuli, it must capture their attention so that the consumer begins to develop meaning and act accordingly. Normally a person gets exposed everyday to many marketing stimuli whether intentional or accidental in form of thousands of products with a diversity of design, colors, packaging in stores as well as many advertisements everywhere. The attention part in perception process is critical because even if an individual gets exposed to information a lot, if he doesn't pay attention to it, the message would be useless. Molise (2017) added that attention is also defined as "The momentary focusing of a consumer's cognitive capacity on a specific stimulus" (p.1). The

process of giving the selected stimuli meaning is referred to as interpretation, which is the third stage of perception. We attempt to interpret the ordered and consistent forms that have been formed from the chosen stimuli by giving them meanings. However, different individuals may interpret the same signal in various ways (Qiong,2017). Using one's past experiences, memories, and expectations to interpret and provide meaning to a stimulus is another definition of interpretation (Dai et al., 2022).

2.4 Consumers Purchase Intentions

Many factors affect the consumer's intention while selecting the product and the ultimate decision depends on consumers' intention with large external factors. Decision making about purchase is affected by the group in selection procedure of a brand for known product (Sohail et al., 2022). According to Wardani, et al (2019), a purchase intention is described as a multi-step process that pays attention to personal consumer experience to create products/services knowledge about certain products/services; consumer will buy a product after evaluating it this is another aspect of purchase intention. Chihab and Abderrezzak (2019) added that in order for a customer to have a purchase intention, this customer should feel that he will gain advantage from the provided product or service by any mean. Naseri (2021) explains that consumer purchase intention generally based on information's quality and quantity that they have. Today, sellers not just focus on convince customers to use

the websites where they sell their products but to influence customers to purchase their products again through the channels.

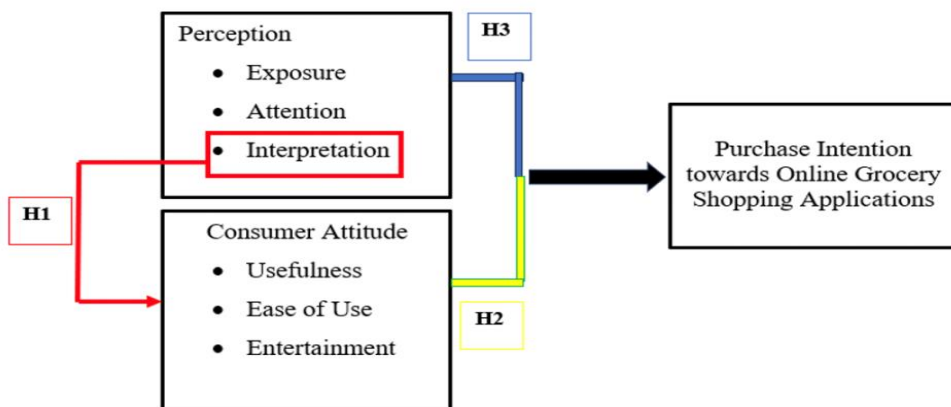
Purchase intention is also considered a component of a customer's cognitive behavior, demonstrating how an individual intends to purchase a certain brand in the form of "I should do," "I'm going to do," and "I'll do" (Dastane, 2020). Purchase intention must be viewed by managers as fundamental to success in business transactions. Companies have realized the importance of purchasing intention in terms of increasing product and service sales and optimizing profitability (Sohail et al., 2022). Literature demonstrated that the TRA and TAM was widely used to predict consumers online shopping intents (Jia et al., 2023).

The present study modified TAM, considering the variables explained in recent literature as predictors of online shopping intentions. Accordingly, this study assumed that consumers exposure and attention to mobile application will allow consumers to see this technology as perceived usefulness, ease of use, enjoyment, and hold positive attitude towards online shopping intentions. These constructs were tested separately in predicting preferences towards online shopping through mobile applications. Even though studies in literature used different combinations of these variables (Zheng et al., 2020; Dai et al., 2022; and Kantar, 2023), to the best knowledge, no study incorporated all the chosen variables together with such causal

relationship to understand online grocery shopping mobile application on consumers' shopping intentions. Figure 1 illustrates the proposed conceptual framework.

Based on the proposed research model that is to be tested in this study, the research assumes that (H1) there is a significant relationship between Consumer Interpretation and Customer attitude towards online grocery applications (perceived ease of use, usefulness, and entertainment); (H2) There is a significant relationship between Customer Perception and Purchase intention towards online grocery applications; (H3) There is a significant relationship between Customer Attitude and Purchase intention towards online grocery applications.

Figure 3.1. The Proposed Research Model



Source: The current research

3 Research Methods

According to bell, et al, (2022), Positivism is an epistemic perspective that supports using natural scientific techniques to explore reality in society and other areas. According to positivism, knowledge can only be ascertained by neutral, quantitative, and quantifiable observation of action, behavior, or response. Subsequently as this study used quantitative research with a deductive reasoning approach, it also uses the positivism theoretical perspective. This research choice was positivism approach as purpose of theory is to generate hypotheses that can be tested and that will thus permit clarifications of laws to be measured. This was done by using online questionnaires and usage of secondary data. Online questionnaire distribution took place during September 2023, seeking to collect a response size of 400 as Krejcie and Morgan (1940) claimed that this is an appropriate size to generalize the research findings. A cross sectional time frame was used as the data was collected only one time. Once the needed data was collected, structural equation modeling (SEM) was conducted to assess and test the research hypotheses.

The researcher created online questionnaires with Google Forms. The questionnaire was offered in English and in Arabic language (through the process of back translation) based on the respondent preferences. The link to the questionnaire was placed on different social media outlets that sell FMCG in Egypt. The questionnaire used in this study contained three main sections.

Section one was an introduction for respondents to read in order for them to understand what the research is about as well as to know how will they accurately participate in the study. The second section contains several Likert scales that measure each variable in the study. The Likert scales used a scale from number 1 (strongly disagree) to number 5 (strongly agree). The scales for the variables related to perception, attitudes, and purchase intentions were taken from prior studies of Bearden et al. (1999). The final part of the questionnaire contained questions related to the demographics of the respondents (age, gender, income, and occupation).

Nearly every consumer uses fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) daily. They are the small-scale consumer purchases made, which include milk, gum, fruit and vegetables, toilet paper, soda, beer, and over-the-counter drugs like aspirin. Nevertheless, this study focuses on online apps that sell FMCG. Thus, the population under study are generation-z as they are the ones who are known to be digitally literate and prefer to shop online than any other generations (Trivedi et.al., 2022; Kantar, 2023). The researcher used convenience sampling technique to reach the population. Convenience sampling is a specific type of non-probability sampling method that relies on data collection from population members who are conveniently available to participate in study.

4 Research Analysis

The sample consisted mostly of females, with over half aged 20 to under 30 years old. The majority were single and held bachelor's degrees. Over half were employed in the private sector. The most common income range was 6,000-9,000, while the least common were those earning under 3,000 and those earning over 12,000, which were nearly equal. Overall, the typical respondent was a young, single female with a bachelor's degree, working in the private sector and earning a moderate income. A sizable portion were over 50 years old. Very few held only a primary/preparatory certificate. Income distribution showed a predominantly middle-income sample with fewer at the extreme low and high ends of the income scale. It is noticed that Gourmet and Instashop had significantly less users than Breadfast, Talabat, Noon and Souq. Table One illustrates the frequency analysis of the respondents in the study.

Table 1: The Demographic Traits of the Respondents

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Variable	Categories	Frequency
Gender	Female	215	Education Level Reached	Bachelor degree	196
	Male	124		High school graduate	61
Age	20 to less than 30	163		Post graduate degree	68
	30 less than 40	92	Occupation	Employed private sector	160
	40 less than 50	23		Employed public sector	58
	Less than 20	56		Student	9
	More than 50 years old	5		Unemployed	112
Marital status	Divorced	13	Monthly Income level	12,000 EGP and above	60
	Engaged	38		3,000 to 6,000 EGP	74
	Married	123		6,000 to 9,000 EGP	82
	Single	160		9,000 to 12,000 EGP	59
	Widower	5		Less than 3,000 EGP	64

Source: Based on calculations done by the researcher using SPSS

Before analyzing the hypotheses with SEM, CFA is utilized to assess the validity and reliability of factors derived from the implementation of EFA (shown in table 2). The Cronbach alpha was utilized to assess the reliability. Each variable exhibited a Cronbach alpha coefficient exceeding 0.7. As a result, each of the statements' representations of the study's factors is dependable. In order to assess the soundness of the statements expressing the factors, average variance extracted and the composite reliability was calculated. Each factor had an AVE greater than 0.5 and a CR greater than 0.7. This demonstrates that the statements could be relied upon as factors. The loadings of each statement were found to be higher than 0.7, demonstrating how the statements were important in describing the variable and should not be reduced.

Table 2: Reliability and Validity Analyses

	Statements	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Attention	A1	0.896	0.944	0.957	0.817
	A2	0.916			
	A3	0.898			
	A4	0.886			
	A5	0.921			
Ease of use	EOU1	0.885	0.938	0.953	0.802
	EOU2	0.914			
	EOU3	0.890			
	EOU4	0.919			
	EOU5	0.870			

Entertainment	EN1	0.917	0.948	0.962	0.865
	EN2	0.926			
	EN3	0.949			
	EN4	0.928			
Exposure	E1	0.939	0.926	0.953	0.871
	E2	0.921			
	E3	0.941			
Interpretation	I1	0.908	0.933	0.952	0.832
	I2	0.913			
	I3	0.919			
	I4	0.910			
Purchase Intention	PI1	0.922	0.878	0.925	0.804
	PI2	0.925			
	PI3	0.840			
Usefulness	U1	0.925	0.933	0.952	0.834
	U2	0.903			
	U3	0.913			

Source: Based on calculations done by the researcher using SPSS

The hypotheses were tested with path coefficient analysis. Table three illustrates the outcomes. After applying SEM, it was found that interpretation had a positive significant impact on consumers attitude, whether it be the shopping ease of use, or usefulness, of entertainment at 99% confidence level. This means that the H1 is accepted. The analysis also shows that it was found that Exposure, Attention and Interpretation had a positive significant impact on Purchase Intention at 99% confidence level. This means that H2 is accepted. Secondly, usefulness, ease of use and entertainment had a positive significant impact on Purchase Intention at 99%.

Table 3: Hypotheses Testing

	Original Sample ***p-value<0.01	Standard Deviation
Interpretation -> Ease of Use	0.761***	0.033
Interpretation -> Entertainment	0.796***	0.027
Interpretation -> Usefulness	0.817***	0.023
Exposure -> Purchase Intention	0.424***	0.082
Attention -> Purchase Intention	0.238***	0.089
Interpretation -> Purchase Intention	0.593***	0.093
Usefulness -> Purchase Intention	0.458***	0.119
Ease of use -> Purchase Intention	0.324***	0.110
Entertainment -> Purchase Intention	0.273***	0.103

Source: Based on calculations using Smart PLS

5 Research Conclusion and Discussion

This study aims to investigate consumers perception process towards grocery shopping online as well as their attitudes towards online grocers and its impact on their buying intentions. To achieve this aim, several research objectives were sought to be attained: (RO1): to recognize consumers' perception process (exposure, attention, and interpretation) towards developing grocery shopping intentions with online applications; (RO2): to identify the significant variable that are interpreted by consumers regarding their online grocery shopping; (RO3): To clarify the impact of consumers interpretation on grocery shopping intentions with online applications; (RO4): to clarify the impact of consumers interpretation on consumers attitude towards online grocery shopping. Based on the results of this

study it shows that according to research objective one, consumers had a positive significant opinion regarding the exposure, attention, and interpretation of grocery shopping intentions with online applications, which impacted their purchase intentions. Based on objective two and three, this study developed empirical evidence that illustrate that consumers developed a positive significant interpretation of grocery shopping intentions with online applications; they perceive it as easy to use, useful and entertaining, which impacts consumers purchase intentions. Based on objective four, this study developed empirical evidence that consumers attitude towards online grocery shopping has a positive significant impact on purchase intentions. These outcomes lead to various theoretical and practical contributions.

5.1 Theoretical Contributions

In this research, all of the independent variables (Exposure, Attention, Interpretation, Usefulness, Ease of use and Entertainment) had a strong relationship and impact on the dependent variable (Purchase intention). This outcome supports findings done by prior studies. For example, Chuah et al. (2022) explained that social norms, the perceived social pressures/stress from family, friends, peers, media, society, etc., is viewed as substitution for developing intentions to behavior a certain way. According to Grehan (2015) stated that attitude is the opinion about anything and the way of behaving towards it positively or

negatively. Attitude is affected by motivational, perceptual, emotional, and cognitive processes to assess thoughts and react in a way or another.

This study shows that consumers seek to develop intentions to shop online as it is easy to use and useful, supporting the TAM in the context on online grocery shopping related to mobile applications. This outcome is supported by Singh and Srivastava (2022) stated that the main advantage of online grocery shopping is convenience. By one fast search for the needed products, ordering without requiring actual physical walk-in large market aisles. Time and travel expenses are saved. The idea that internet is available everywhere at any time, enables consumers to easily order even while at their work place, without the need of owning a car or not having the ability to physically move around easily, since the order is delivered to your doorstep.

Because usage of technology has different perception and motives among consumers, many studies have been conducted to add on to the TAM and other theories have been developed (Hasan, 2020). This study shows that grocery shopping online is entertaining to consumers, which is backed up by claims made by Jia et al. (2023), explaining that consumers perceive shopping online as a personal joyful and pleasurable experience. More specifically, Yupal (2020) examined the effect of

perceived enjoyment on online shopping intentions; it was found that that perceived enjoyment significantly predicts shopping intention.

5.2 Managerial Implications

Based on the outcomes of this study, in order for mobile application to be on demand among consumers, it is important to create high exposure to the consumer about the technology. This can be used as a guide for marketers in the FMCG sector specially those companies that uses the online grocery applications. For example, To do more promo codes and offers on weekends to encourage customers to shop through grocery applications, To do awareness campaign targeted for old generations to know how to use the application, To do more agreements with new partners to offer more variety of products. With high exposure the consumer can notice the application and seek to develop intentions to use the online shopping technology. In order for the consumers to use the online grocery shopping application it is significant that marketers and businesses make it perceived by them as easy to use, useful and entertaining. the popularity of online grocery applications is increasing more and more everyday due to convenience. Online platforms to encourage consumers use must be simple, easy to use, quick and offer effective delivery services. To improve the bugs in the application to make it more accessible, To hire more delivery men in order to reduce the time of delivery and also to

use eco-friendly bags instead of plastic bags for packaging to save the environment.

5.3 Research Limitations

This study faced several limitations when conducting the research. Most earlier studies addressed the characteristics from the viewpoint of the business owners rather than the customers. It is not covered, for instance, what online shoppers define as qualities like marketing from a company's perspective as a stimulus to attract users. As a result, there is considerable misunderstanding and mixing of the characteristics in the literature that require further clarification. The research used online questionnaires which have several disadvantages such as higher chances of survey fraud, responses bias, inability to read the participants' body language or facial reactions, the only tool for figuring out what customers actually think is by coding the responses. The majority of questionnaire respondents were under the age of 30, owing to the fact that data was gathered via online questionnaire via social media, and the bulk of social media users are young people. The majority of the respondents were female (215) while the males were (124) which can lead to bias results. Only very few studies have documented how the lifestyle features of online shoppers differ from those of non-shoppers, nor the factors that either satisfy or dissatisfy online users from buying.

5.4 Suggestion for future research

In order to avoid the limitations faced by this study, several suggestions are made for future studies to consider. It is recommended to administer a comparative study between different competing online grocery shopping applications in Egypt. When doing the comparative study, researchers should re-evaluate and expand the framework or model by adding new variables to the research framework such as intentions to switch between applications and customers loyalty.

It's recommended for researchers to use face-to-face surveys to collect more accurate data and to know how people will react. It's suggested to reach other segments and group characteristics different from what used in this research to collect more accurate data.

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