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Factors influencing customer's online purchase decision of vegetables

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine and comprehend the influencing elements that affect vegetable purchases made by consumers through online channels. Consumers spend a significant portion of their food budget on fresh vegetable. Every customer wants to get the best value possible when buying fresh vegetable, as well as good-quality, pest-and disease-free, hygienic, and safe product at a reasonable price. The effectiveness of finding purchase information online, convince a customer to provide an alternative evaluation, price consideration, quality consideration, secured transaction, refund policy, gift vouchers/offers, and the ability to purchase in bulk are just a few of the many factors that a customer must take into account when shopping online.

Keywords: Consumers, vegetables, online channels, effectiveness, secured transaction and refund policy

Introduction

Vegetable shopping is considered as one of the most vital and regular task of every household. People purchase vegetable 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 etc. However, in the hustle and bustle of modern lifestyle, people are unwilling to spend their time and energy on purchasing vegetables. People associate shopping at vegetable stores as tiresome and stressful. In addition to heavy traffic and long working hours, many people avoid buying vegetable.

Luckily, the emergence and development of e-commerce has opened new ways of doing business. Thus, online vegetable shopping is becoming more and easier. With the growing Internet connectivity, clientele and rising popularity of electronic shopping, entrepreneurs have seen the opportunity of opening online vegetable stores. Various e-vegetable stores like - AaramShop.com, EkStop.com, BigBasket.com, At MyDoorSteps.com, MyGrahak.com, ZopNow.com, Omart.in, LocalBanya.com, RationHut.com and SeaToHome.com are some of the online stores retailing groceries. Most of the existing e-tailers offer their service in metros and major urban centers.

Online shopping or e-shopping is a form of electronic commerce which allows consumers to directly buy goods or services from a seller over the Internet using a web browser. Michael Aldrich is the man who invented online shopping in 1979. With the increasing internet literacy, the prospect of offline marketing is increasing in India. Alternative names of online shopping are: e-web-store, e-shop, e-shop, Internet shop, web-shop, web-store, online store, online stone front and virtual store. The largest of these online retailing corporations are Snap deal, Amazon.com and eBay. Retail Success is no longer all about physical stores. This is evident because of the increase in retailers now offering online store interfaces for consumers. The Five dominant factors which influence consumer perceptions of online shopping are Information, Ease of use, Satisfaction, Security/Privacy, Proper Utilization.

Fresh vegetables are integral part of consumer's food expenditure. Every consumer wants good value for money in market for making purchase of fresh vegetable and also looks forward to have good quality, pest and disease free, hygienic and safe produce at affordable price. The lifestyle changes in recent times has made an impact on purchasing behaviour of consumers owing to rise in spendable income, rise in dual income groups, less time to spend in local mandi markets, accessibility to online purchase platforms, etc. (Akpinar *et al.*, 2009) [2]. Consumers would also like to prefer healthy and good quality vegetables but yet the decision-

making process is complex and the importance of motives (hygiene, pesticides residue, etc.) and barriers (price, awareness, etc.) may affect the buying behaviour of consumers (Padel and Foster, 2005) [3]. Huang *et al.*, (1999) [4] and Liu *et al.*, (2013) [5] also describes about the affinity of consumers to have hazard free food which primarily is characterized by good quality, nutritious and free from harmful or toxic residues, such as fertilizers, pesticides, heavy metals and nitrates are controlled within limits set by national standards. The act of consumption influences consumers purchasing decisions and the decision to purchase is further influenced by price (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 1999) [6]. However, as far as fresh vegetables are concerned, non-price factors like product quality, shelf like, place of purchase, place of origin of vegetable, nutrition values, awareness on safety concerns, etc., play an important role in determining purchase decision (Chikkamath *et al.*, 2012) [7]. As consumers are integral part of vegetable supply chain and also act as end users, the present study was undertaken with an attempt to investigate the factors influencing customer's online purchase decision of vegetables.

Methodology

A total of 60 respondents were chosen for the sample from Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, of which 30 were offline vegetable

buyers and 30 were online vegetable buyers. A two-stage sampling procedure was used, with the first stage involving judgemental sampling based on the area chosen for the survey and the second involving snowball sampling to find the respondents who would be interested in purchasing vegetables from online retailers. For the study, both primary and secondary data were gathered. Through a personal interview with respondents and a pre-structured questionnaire, primary data was gathered. Secondary data was gathered via online retail sites like Flipkart, Amazon, Bhindiwala, Big Basket, etc. Pre-structured and pretested questionnaire will be prepared. The study method used an exploratory and descriptive technique. Information was gathered using an interview schedule and both open-ended and closed-ended questions. A report will be written based on the analysis and interpretation of the facts and figures after the information has been gathered and tabulated.

Result and Discussion

There are various factors which a customer take into consideration while doing an online shopping. In case of online vegetable shopping factors influencing the customer purchase decision are discussed below:

Table 1: Factors influencing customer's online purchase decision of vegetables N=60

Influencing Factors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Effective way for finding purchase information	50%	37%	13%	0.00%	0.00%
Convince to provide alternative evaluation	46%	37%	17%	0.00%	0.00%
Price consideration	13.33%	53%	20%	13.67%	0.00%
Quality consideration	33%	40%	17%	10%	0.00%
Secured Transaction	66%	27%	7%	0.00%	0.00%
Refund policy	80%	13%	7%	0.00%	0.00%
Gift vouchers /offers	23%	33%	27%	17%	0.00%
Online shopping allows to shop in a bulk	6.67%	17%	27%	33%	16.33%

Effective way to find purchase information

All the information related to seasonal vegetable with their prices is available on web portal of service provider. This made ease for customer to get everything on single stop. This factor influences the customer toward online vegetable shopping. Over 50% of respondent as shown in table 1 strongly agree that this one of the factor which influences the buying behavior.

Convince to provide alternative evaluation

46% of the online vegetable customer strongly agree followed by 37% of the respondent agree that convince to provide alternative evaluation plays a major role.

Price Consideration

Reasonable price with quality vegetable surely attracts the customer to purchase online. Over 50% of the respondent agrees that price is also a major factor.

Quality Consideration

33% of the total online vegetable customer strongly agree followed by 40% of the respondent agrees that quality consideration plays a major role. In online vegetable purchase quality can't be checked by customer, this is total depend on service provider trust.

Secured Transaction

It has been found many times missing of money from personal bank account due to illegal hacking done by professional hackers. Middle class families even afraid and

are not comfortable to do online transaction due to all these illegal activities. Over 60% of respondent believe that secured transaction affects the buying behavior.

Online retail fraud is one of the biggest risks. Deals are a big draw for customers, but there are a lot of phoney online shopping platforms that prey on this tendency. Customers' debit or credit card information will be utilized fraudulently in those situations (Statista, 2015) [8].

Refund Policy

People like to buy more from online if they are assured from service provider that money will be refunded back if they are not satisfied from vegetable they have ordered. 80% of the respondent as shown in table1 strongly agree that refund policy is major factor to influence buying behavior.

Gift Vouchers/Offer

The survey shows that 23% respondents strongly agree followed by 33% agree that gift voucher/offer is a factor which influence purchase decision. This was found that if something additional or discount was provided then customer attracts to purchase online.

Online shopping allows to shop in bulk

This is one of the major factors which influence the decision of customer to purchase vegetable online. This was found those online vegetable service providers are not much in the study area, their service is limited in some Porsche colonies of

Lucknow. Vegetable requirement in households is on daily basis in small amount depending on household size, so sometimes cost of service and tax applied by service provider is more than the cost of vegetable ordered by customer. Purchasing vegetable online on daily basis depending upon day today requirement is not a profitable business for customer and even service provider is also not interested due to low profitability. This is the only reason they have to buy vegetables in bulk on weekly basis even though if they don't want. By the end of the week few green vegetables get degraded also if they are not consumed.

Conclusion

Based on the research the following conclusions were found out

- Various online vegetable retails (e.g. Bhindiwala) initiated but unable to continue because of various factors like less demand, transportation cost, unavailability, storage, etc.
- Online retails are also providing grocery item along with vegetables because all alone online vegetable demand is less.
- Customer prefers to buy vegetable along with grocery on weekly basis.
- In regular basis purchasing vegetable online is not possible. So people used to buy online vegetables weekly or two to three days of interval.
- Online vegetable shopping is mostly done in Porsche colony of district.
- Customer located in rural and far away locations of district don't purchase vegetable online.
- People prefer to buy vegetable from local market or vegetable vendor, this gives them feeling of freshness.
- Delay in delivery is major issue of online vegetable shopping.
- Selection of vegetable and then to place order is time taking process in online shopping.
- Large range and off seasonal vegetables are available on web portal but customer don't get different seasonal vegetables in local market.
- Awareness regarding online vegetable shopping is still less in customer.
- Questions related to quality and freshness arises in the mind of customer in online vegetable shopping.
- Customer has to purchase in bulk even if they don't have requirement, this results in wastage.
- Bargaining can't be done in online shopping but the get best offers at web portals, some of the customer thinks they can get the vegetables in cheap rate from local market rather than purchasing from online market.

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