

The Acceptance and the Intention of Online Groceries Shopping in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Grocery shopping is a part of important tasks that must be carried out in order to fulfill the needs for household or even for personal consumption. The purchases of basic household foods such as rice, flour, sugar, fish, vegetables and dairy products are perceived a must and must be done frequently. Most of the time, groceries shopping requires a low involvement product's decision. It is believed that groceries shopping does not require longer time and effort in purchasing and making a decision, where it can be considered as simpler than buying an expensive items such as car and mobile phone. The emergence of online shopping groceries is well adapted by most of the developed countries, especially in American and European market. However, this scenario is rarely happen in Malaysia. Nowadays, the availability of technologies has encouraged the use of online platform such as a groceries shopping medium. Therefore, this study aimed as to investigate Malaysian acceptance towards online groceries shopping and its influence towards the intention to shop groceries online. About 200 respondents were chosen conveniently among consumers in Klang Valley and were tested using the Pearson Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Findings show that majority of respondents accept the online groceries shopping. Their overall acceptance influenced their intention to online groceries shopping in future. Thus, the hypothesis is supported. As an impact, embracing the new way of online groceries purchase enable consumers to enjoy a number of benefits such as the reduction in cost, more convenient and ease daily-life activities and productivity as a whole. Therefore, based on the results retailers or sellers in Malaysia are urge to start offering the new form of groceries purchase which is through the online platform by promoting and emphasizing on the positive values of the practice.

KEYWORDS: The Acceptance of Online Groceries Shopping, Intention to Online Groceries Shopping.

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the internet in the past decades has influenced the society's lifestyle tremendously, from the personal life up to the business matter. The revolution of the Internet as a new significant distribution channel has obtained so much attention when compared to its capabilities with today's static movement of traditional retailing. Thus, this scenario has put the viability of traditional stationary retailing into question. In many advanced nations especially in western, it is proven that e-grocery has been widely used and well accepted. As an example, a quarter of American households have experienced at least one time buying their groceries through online. On the other hand, the sales amount of UK e-grocers represented 3% of total market share for the whole British food retailing [1]. Online platform requires consumers to change their traditional shopping way extensively, since information searching, transaction and buying processes as well as logistics issue are totally different from the online groceries purchase experience [2]. Better prices, variety product selections, better virtual facilities, convenience and time savings has become among the main reasons why there number of consumers buying groceries through online are rising. Thus, this home delivery concept is very pleasant to those who are faced with difficulties for various reasons such as physical disability, the need to care for small children, transportation problem or even people with a busy lifestyle.

However, the benefits of online groceries shopping seem not appealing to everyone as a total replacement to their regular trips to the supermarket. In the year 2000, out of 4.5 million households that bought groceries online, only 1.1 million did so more than once a month [3]. In Malaysian scenario, since the introduction of the internet by Jaring Communications Sdn Bhd (JARING) in 1990 and later Telekom Malaysia Net (TMNET) in 1996, the growth of Internet usage in Malaysia has been gradually increasing. From a very small number of 90 Internet users in 1992, the peoples' obsession to get connected has significantly increased the internet users to 100,103 at the end of 1997 [4]. Thus, this evolution of the internet is supposed to enhance the acceptance and implementation of online groceries shopping in Malaysia. As discussed earlier, evidently online groceries shopping provide numbers of benefits to the customer. A lot of time can be saved by purchasing groceries

online. Consumers are not required to travel to a physical grocery store and park their car. Furthermore, they need not to stand in long queues to pay for their groceries. Also, there is no need to load and unload their grocery in their car. In fact purchased groceries online will be delivered to their doorsteps. Thus, it will make the consumers' life easier.

Unfortunately, looking at the current situation, many of us can presume that consumer's preference of buying groceries through online in Malaysia is not widely used. There are some factors that have been observed as reasons why consumers still prefer the traditional way of grocery shopping. The research found that consumers might have some skepticism about the quality of the grocery product while buying online grocery [5]. Apparently, compared to physical grocery shopping, the availability of information and review from previous customer enable consumer to easily assess the quality of the product prior to the purchase. However, still there are less numbers of research focused on comparing online and offline purchase behavior specifically in term of its acceptance and intention to use it in the future. The available current specific issues focus on brand loyalty [6], brand names [7] and general consumers' perceptions on the advantages and disadvantages of online groceries [8]. Apart from that, academically, there is limited academic research in this area. Due to the lack of available data, there is a prominent absence of published empirical work on what types of customers in a behavioral perspective are attentive to shopping online versus in a traditional store [9]. Thus, the 2 key objectives of this study are to investigate Malaysian acceptance towards online groceries shopping and to examine the possible relationship that might exist between consumer acceptance and their intention to do online groceries shopping.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Acceptance of Online Shopping Groceries

The e-commerce existence is not revolutionarily new. The first e-retailing was started in 1994 [10]. It is considered as one form of direct consumer marketing of non-store retailing using online channels. From that point, this innovative concept of retailing has gain the interest of many retailers and merchants because of the general admission that this new way of shopping will begin itself as a superior channel of retailing other than traditional channel such as physical retail store [3]. Specifically, the online grocery sector is defined as the online sales of food and drinks as well as in-home consumption products. The online grocery store offers private individuals or businesses to purchase grocery products online. A researcher has found that there are some factors that consumers might experience including the online technicality, cost, convenience and sociality aspect. All these factors are from consumer shopping experienced that will affect their intention to shop their groceries through online.

Cost

It is common that the delivery service charged is higher for smaller orders and vice-versa. As for example in Malaysia, Tesco charged RM15 delivery fee for orders below RM100 and the charged will be free when groceries purchased worth RM100 and above [11]. It shows that the more you buy, the less the charge will be. Hence, the concept is making it more cost-effective to shop your groceries through online. Apart from that, shopping at physical store will dangerously expose buyers to the unintentional impulse purchase. Whether it is a just a sweets or battery but still if it is not in the buyer's bucket list, impulse buys can easily damage the planned grocery's budget. However, by opting online groceries shopping, you can make your selections wiser and efficient. Furthermore, temptations on items which normally you buy because you are bored or hungry while shopping in physical store such as junk food can be avoided. Therefore, by strictly following to the important shopping list, online groceries shopper will significantly enjoy the price savings. On the other hand, lower prices offered for groceries items if bought through online compared to physical store has become another reason for opting online shopping. Indirectly, it leads to the success of many leading e-grocers. Other than monetary cost, there are also cost-bounded reasons that making the potential online groceries shopper to consider switching from traditional to new online shopping. Through a mobile or desktop interface, consumer experiencing time and physical energy savings because they only have to wait for the goods or shopping items to be delivered at their doorstep. This enables the consumers to avoid inconvenience of having to drive to the physical store, pick out goods and long waiting time for payment. Therefore, in traditional retail grocery stores, the customer plays an important role of co-producer distribution chain accessibility. But in the perspective of online shopping, e-retailers are the one who responsible in ensuring the availability of their 24-hours virtual store online [3].

Convenience

If consumers are faced with time constraints, visiting a physical store for grocery store is not the perfect choice. Opting for online groceries purchase will enable consumers to never step into the store. With a fast doorstep groceries delivery service, consumers may allocate more time for other more priority matters such as better family time, extra working hours or even for a personal time. Most of the time, the consumer perception towards convenience expressed in a few key definitions. The first one is the ability to easily fill up the grocery

cart with the click of a button anytime and anywhere as long as the connection is available. Buying groceries online is a timesaver. It not only lets shoppers avoid traveling to and from the physical store and queuing in line, but also the product selections can be done faster especially in hunting for the specific ideal brands or items using fast search facility available in most of the e-retailers' homepage or catalog. Apart from that, most of online groceries shoppers appreciate how the convenience they are for being able to virtually buy groceries anywhere 24 hours a day even while wearing their most comfort attire such as pajamas. At the same time, consumers may avoid the common crowd in the supermarket, the uncertain outside weather as well as the heavy traffic which are considered as unpleasant.

Obviously, the above discussion is agreed by Alastair Lockhart in which the practitioners defines convenience in term of store format. However, the shoppers' viewpoint on convenience is about how much the retailers would make their life easier [12]. In part, this move towards convenience is closely related to a general improvement of individual economic status. We can see the individual economic trend towards expectation on convenience when the individual tries to manage their increasingly busy lives at work with their personal life at home. On the other hand, online groceries shopping are already convenient itself due to the aids of technology especially the mobile gadget such as smart phones and tablets which provide shoppers with a promising e-store accessibility. In fact, most of the mobile applications permit the access without the need to log on which indirectly encourage the extensive usage of online groceries shopping via applications. Hence, with these abundant reasons, there will be no excuses for customers to say no to online groceries shopping either now or in the future [13].

Sociality

Social aspects of shopping are a set of the psychosocial consequences of shopping for groceries via the internet, compared to conventional grocery shopping. This dimension is referring to the social interface with other people in the physical store and or between family members. Many believe that social networking may build and exist among shoppers while shop in the supermarket. Some of the customer loves to share the product knowledge with others, exchange review on product quality, sharing daily's recipes up to the serious matter discussed on current issues such as economic and political condition. Due to that, when it comes to online groceries shopping, that social interaction and network building is missing.

However, some of the above scenarios were seen positively by some online shoppers who prefer to anticipate purchasing in private. But still, other shoppers did not like this detaching aspect of shopping if it is done through online. For them, shopping time at physical store enable them to have an opportunity to see an outside world and meet new people [8]. In fact, many families nowadays perceived that monthly grocery shopping functioned as a social platform for a family where everyone can participate in.

Online Technicality

In many advanced countries, the evolution of online shop development lies in the emergence of latest technologies such as gadgets especially smartphones which mostly equipped with the internet browser. Search engines like Google and Yahoo mines data from thousands of web pages, thus extract usable information through ranking. However, some website architecture is insufficient to gear up the search engine's ability to extract the essential data from the web pages. As a consequence, the site may not be listed up among the top list.

Technical hiccups like poor server response time or page downloading time may influence the searched results. Several deficiencies in the website's content can also add reasons why the website might be results at the bottom list of the searched list. Thus, this situation might be happening as a part of online technicality during online shopping. Even though experiences related to the home page are various, but general expectation was that online shoppers wanted a clear and simple design of web pages with the ability to receive and retrieved information regarding their purchase [8]. Most online grocery stores fail because they do not have mobile applications for their store. In such a mobile era, everybody loves to do all the tasks while on the move, including ordering groceries, so they can have everything in hand when they reach home. Nobody has time to go home, open personal computer (PC) and order stuff, then wait for hours for someone to deliver groceries [2].

The Intention to Shopping Groceries Online

According to [14], intentions are the motivational factors that stimulate an action or behavior and the higher the intention the more the tendency for the behavior to take place. Intention can be defined as the purpose or attitude of the person towards the effect of one action or conduct [15]. This study referring to the consumer's intention to buy groceries online from their past shopping experienced. Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) can be used in this study, which to identify elements to measure consumers' intention to use online groceries shopping [16]. The initial principle factors in TPB specifically in investigating intention are included attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control. To use intention as a predictor of behavior, two situations must be met: (1) the evaluation of an intention must correctly be made prior the behavior since intentions have possibility to change over time, (2) the behavior is controllable which means that the person is consciously made

a choice or decision to voluntarily act on it [17]. Furthermore, referring to [18], intention is perceived as being contributed to the behavior. The consumer often has the tendency to perform a behavior if the further action is measured positively and influenced by the others that the action should be done. Thus, it shows that positive attitudes and strong subjective norms have a positive influence on consumer intention to perform specific behaviors. Consequently, the above discussion shows the exact process that commonly involves making a decision to purchase groceries online instead of offline.

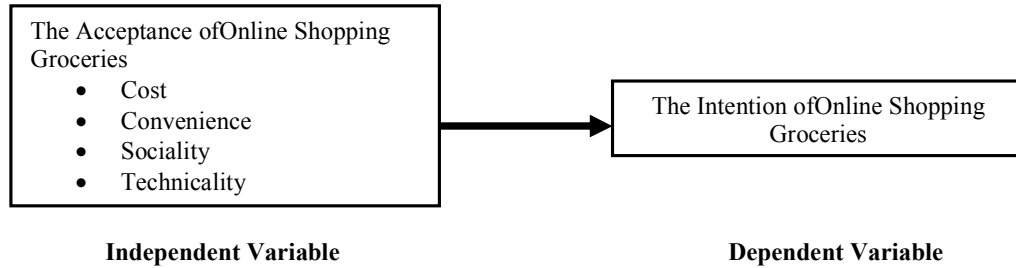


Figure 1: Theoretical framework

As the above discussion, a single hypothesis was developed to see the influence of the overall acceptance towards the purchase intention as below:

Ho: There is a positive relationship between the acceptance and the intention to shop groceries online

H1: There is a positive relationship between the acceptance and the intention to shop groceries online

METHODOLOGY

Correlation study was undertaken by the researchers in order to facilitate the decision to test variables that have been used as the predictors of the criterion. This study has been conducted to investigate Malaysian acceptance towards online groceries shopping and to examine the possible relationship that might exist between consumer acceptance and their intention to do online groceries shopping. The data have also been analyzed by using the descriptive analysis. Using convenient sampling, 200 respondents as suggested by [19] were chosen from different locations in Klang Valley area. This is because enough sample size is one of the four inter-related features of a study design that can influence the detection of significant differences, relationships or interactions [8].

A fully structured questionnaire was used as an instrument in order to gather information from the respondents. It consists of the closed-ended multiple choice questions and Likert-scale questions which enable respondents to express their level of agreement and select answer that suits them best. The Likert-scale questions for this study are using five points of responses. According to [20], a forum has been conducted to understand market researchers’ preferences by using between 5 point and 6 point Likert scales. Collective agreement from this forum stated that the 5 point scale is the most appropriate when conducting a survey. Due to that, the researcher has decided to follow 5 point scale in this study.

The researcher’s set of questionnaire is divided into three major sections including section A which is demographic. Section B and section C represent the acceptance and the intention to do online shopping groceries respectively. Alpha coefficients were calculated in order to test the independent variable and dependent variable. The Cronbach’s Alpha rating is illustrated in Table 2:

Table 1: Reliability analysis

Variable	No. of Items	Alpha
The acceptance for online groceries shopping	29	0.892
The intention for online groceries shopping	20	0.932

Table 1 indicates the value of Cronbach alpha in determining item’s reliability. According to [21], the test of the alpha coefficient shows that all of the variables are between moderate and good. The highest alpha coefficient score is intention for online groceries shopping with 0.932, which indirectly represents the most reliable part of the questionnaire.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As to investigate the acceptance towards online groceries purchase, descriptive analysis has been done to answer the objective. The results are as follows:

Table 2: Descriptive results

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
The acceptance for online groceries shopping	3.34	1.012
Cost	3.03	1.097
Convenience	3.62	0.960
Sociality	3.51	0.999
Online technicality	3.22	0.997

Based on Table 2, the highest mean is scored by the convenience as one of the factor that lead to the acceptance towards online groceries shopping with the mean $M=3.62$ and followed by sociality, online technicality and cost with $M=3.51$, $M=3.22$ and $M=3.03$ respectively. As for the total mean for the overall acceptance towards online shopping groceries, the score is $M=3.34$. Thus, it exceeds the central score of the agreement scale of 2.5 which proven the acceptance of the online groceries shopping in Malaysia. On the other hand, the results of the tested hypothesis in examining the relationship between the respondent's acceptance of online groceries shopping and their intention to purchase groceries online is shown as below:

Table 3: Correlation analysis (n = 200)

Variable	Pearson Correlation
The acceptance for online groceries shopping The intention for online groceries shopping	0.64**

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 3 summarizes the result for the hypotheses tested. The correlation value of the relationship is $p = 0.000 < r = 0.640$. Based on the result, it shows that the consumer acceptance of online groceries shopping has a strong relationship with the intention in shopping groceries online. This result is consistent with [8] which suggests the positive belief and acceptance of online shopping groceries that influence the consumer intention to shop groceries online.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results from this study shows and proves that Malaysians are keen to accept the online groceries shopping which it was correlated with the intention in shopping groceries online. Hence, putting more effort on promoting the online grocery shop will enhance the intention in shopping groceries through online. This is in line with research done by [8]. Another recommendation including advertise the online shop on a daily paper article or newspaper to attract more consumer to try this online groceries shopping. A positive press about online groceries shopping should be put on the news to enhance more consumers. In addition, online technicality including issues of web navigation should be avoid especially when starting an online grocery shop. Customers will expect that the organization's webpages are friendly user and features like auto-scroll is crucial to help avoid users losing interest. Hence, e-retailers encourage to invest in good site technology development. Other than that, customer reviews are more trusted than a marketing piece from an organization which provides consumers a better service from the management site [22]. Its function as a part of the recommendation to enhance more customers to try online groceries shopping. The positive correlation between the independent variable and a dependent variable generates in this study is consistent with previous researcher who discover the customer's previous experience has a positive relationship toward the intention. As per discussion, the analysis result revealed that the high level of acceptance will increase the intention in shopping groceries through online. The acceptance of online groceries shopping has a strong relationship toward the intention to use online groceries shopping. Therefore, future research should take into consideration the larger the sample size and sampling area for the purpose of great findings. In addition, the researcher also should find more resources including journal, articles and other supporting materials in order to have clear and well understood about the topic. To conclude, the acceptance of online groceries shopping does influence the intention in shopping groceries online.

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