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A Study on the Customer Attitude using ABC Model towards 7Ps of Services Marketing Mix of e-Grocery Mobile Apps in India

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Abstract

The purpose of this study to know the factors influencing the overall customer attitude using the ABC model towards the 7Ps of services marketing mix of the e-grocery app. An online survey of 226 sample size was conducted by the convenience sampling method. The results of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) confirmed the factor structure of the 7Ps of the services marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence). Furthermore, multiple regression results showed that physical evidence, process, and promotion of e-grocery apps are among the most influencing factors on overall customer attitude.

Keywords— 7Ps of Services marketing mix, customer attitude, ABC model of attitude, e-grocery app, etc.

INTRODUCTION

Services marketing mix is one of the most popular business mechanisms used by the service providers to satisfy their customers and organizational objectives. It consists of the seven components (7P's), which are interrelated and interdependent on each other. And, each component appears as a core decision variable in the marketing process. According to Valarie Z. et al (2018), the 7Ps (Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical evidence) of services marketing mix affect the customer's initial decision to buy a service and also the customer's level of satisfaction and repurchase decisions. In today's dynamic competitive marketplace, any service provider to be successful and gain competitive advantage has to offer excellent services at reasonable prices, with effective promotion. Also, the marketers need to design effectively the process of delivering the service and servicescape that pleases the customers. The servicescape is the place where the service is actually delivered. It includes the people: who deliver the services, and physical evidence: the facility design, equipment, web pages, and other tangibles. The expanded marketing mix has included the traditional 4Ps - product, price, place, and promotion of marketing mix and also three new components - people, process, and physical evidence. (Booms, B. and Bitner, M. 1981). Over the time, the 7Ps of the marketing mix has got huge attention as a services marketing framework (Hansen 1987). Service quality can be gauged by the consumers' overall findings on organizational excellence or consumer's attitude toward the firm superiority in delivering services (Bitner 1988; Berry, Parasuraman, and Zeithaml 1988).

Customer attitude is a mental state that structures about how they perceive the service and the way they respond to such an environment. (Tsang et al., 2004). The ABC Model of Attitudes consists of three elements - Affect, Behavior, and Cognition, which are referred to as the verbs “feel, do and think”. Affect - feeling of a consumer about an object. Behavior – the intention of the consumer to do something. Cognition - consumer's believes about an object. (Solomon, 2013). Services are generally produced and consumed at the same time and consumers are in fact part of the service production process. Also, because services are intangible, customers often look for any tangible signs to help them understand the nature of the service experience. The effects of the services marketing mix on brand equity have a strong relationship (Aghaei et al. 2014). Alike to the ABC Model of attitude, Aaker, et al. (2000) divided an attitude into three components. Cognitive/knowledge, affective/liking and intention/action components. Cognitive or knowledge refers to an individual’s information about an object. The affective or liking summarises an individual’s overall feelings toward an object, person, or situation. The intention or action refers to an individual’s expectation of future behavior toward an object.

The grocery market in India accounts for Rs19.9 trillion (2019), which is almost half of the country's retail consumption. It is highly unorganized industry run and control by local grocery (Kirana) stores that account for 98 percent of the total consumption and serve more than 90 percent of customers, while on the other hand, merely just 2 percent is shared by the organized grocery retail (including online grocery) at Rs3.4 trillion. All the organized offline modern grocery retailers like Big Bazaar, Reliance fresh, D-Mart, Spencer, Walmart, etc. are entered in online grocery space. However, Bigbasket and Grofers have been the most prominent players, together with sharing 75 percent market share of the $1.5 billion e-grocery markets in 2019. The other e-grocery players are Amazon, Walmart-owned-Flipkart, Reliance SMART, D-Mart Ready, etc. are enjoying the remaining 25 percent of market share.

Moreover, in march-2020, the announcement of the 21-days nation-wide lockdown to fight with COVID-19 pandemic by the Government of India has shifted the gear for e-grocery companies where they witnessed the rise of demand by three to five times from a regular business day. This high-demand trend of e-grocery has triggered intense competition where many companies like Uber (cab aggregator app), Zomato (food delivery app), Netmeds (e-pharm), and BharatPe (Fintech Company) have started offering e-grocery services.

Since the mobile phone has become one apparatus for most of the things, customers are now shifting their online booking platform from website to mobile apps, and the companies are going ahead with the trend of mobile apps by offering their services through both website and mobile app. E-grocery companies are making and promoting services through mobile apps as their USPs by differentiating from their competitors.

Due to the ample choice of e-grocery options available in the market, e-grocery firms are concerned in understanding customer attitude with reference to overall service quality. In the case of services (intangible), services marketing mix (7P’s) play a fundamental role in offering overall quality to customers and consequently expecting loyalty with the company. Most of the service organizations aim to deliver services through direct distribution, where a service provider visits the customer through offline or online, and/or a customer visits a service provider through offline or online. However, this research work intended to:

- Evaluate overall customer attitude of e-grocery shoppers using ABC model towards services marketing mix elements (7Ps) of e-grocery mobile app that represents the overall service quality.
- Examine the factors underlying customer attitude.

Literature Review:

The services marketing mix comprises of product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence (Booms, B. and Bitner, M. 1981). It represents a simple, useful, and most effective tool for managing and enhancing service quality. The e-marketing mix acronym proposed by Kalyanam and McIntyre (2002) is $4Ps+P^2C^2S^3$, where 4Ps=product, price, place and, promotion - the traditional marketing mix, P^2=personalization and privacy, C^2=customer service and community, and S^3=site, security and sales promotion. Although this e-marketing acronym is a comprehensive approach towards the understanding of the elements of an online marketing platform. This study assumes all the e-marketing mix elements are covered under the 7Ps (elements) of the services marketing mix, and hence considered as a base for the study.

A Product can be anything that can be offered to sell in the market (Kotler 1994). Products can be a kind of service, an object, place, personality, organization, a thought, or an idea (Moheb A. and Amir, 2002). Price is the amount that consumers pay in exchange for the benefits of acquiring a product or service (Kotler and Armstrong, 2006). Place is the location where services are actually rendered, whereby bridges the gap between production and consumption. Promotion is the real communication about the services offered by the service provider to consumers. People are the human actors who play a part in service delivery. Physical evidence is the environment wherein the services are delivered. It is a point of interaction between the provider and the customer. Process refers to the procedures, mechanisms, and flow of activities by which the service is delivered, consumed, and co-created—the service delivery and operating systems. (Valarie Z. et al 2018)

Zetty M. &Zaini M, (2011) consumers who do not go for repeat purchases for buying groceries online are due to their constraint of availability of time. Most of such consumers believe that navigating online pages is a lengthy process and time-consuming.

Katia Campo & Els Breugelmans (2015) found that the majority of e-grocery customers are multi-channel shoppers, they combine the self-service benefits of offline stores with the convenience benefit of online shopping. The study exhibited how such consumers divide their grocery purchases on the online and offline channels. It analyzed the impact of category features on designing the allocation of multi-channel grocery customers and found that the decision of category allocation is affected by the different marketing mix of the online and offline channels. Furthermore, the study also found that the outcome of an e-grocery experience influences the allocation patterns like it strengthens marketing mix effects, thus making online category share differences more obvious, and it has no effect for promotion factor, which is easy to value without experience, and thus parting the online category share steadier.

Sathiyaraj S. et al (2015) found 29% of consumers opt for e-grocery to purchase unique and special items. The study also revealed that the demographic variables like age, gender do not have any influence on customer satisfaction. The study was conducted in Chennai – a southern city in India.

Souar et al. (2015) highlighted the most significant services marketing mix elements in the Algerian telecommunications sector by examining the relationship of elements of the services marketing mix (7Ps) with consumer loyalty. The authors used the structural equation model (SEM) that confirmed the positive effects of product, promotion, and process on consumer loyalty, while the remaining four elements were found insignificant.

Pogorelova E.V. et al (2016) identified the changes in the marketing mix elements in e-business context. The authors took the 7Ps of the services marketing mix to allow the structural changes in a composite of marketing tools with respect to trade and information services of online business. The study revealed that practical execution of the marketing mix is a mechanism of personal recommendations of products, which has a direct impact on the firm’s productive performance - increase in

revenues and profits, consumer's commitment to a firm. This is because when an e-firm applies the service recommendations, the buyer recognizes that the company is reacting towards his/her request(s), and the reaction is individual (personalization) and specific (service quality) that establish the influential part of technology and information support of consumers.

Priya M. M. (2016) segmented the attitude of Indian online buyers by using the ABC model of attitude. The study revealed that online customers were paradoxical in nature. The author applied the logit analysis to arrive at the segmentation of online buyers. The online buyers were further scrutinized by applying the ABC model of attitude wherein three distinct segments of online users emerged – CBA, CAB, and BCA.

Anuja S. & Shiv Kumar S. (2018) inspected the role of mobile technology in grocery shopping among Indian consumers. The study used the technology acceptance model (TAM) to assess in what way Indian consumers perceive the use of mobile apps in grocery shopping. The authors selected a purposive and snowball sampling technique. The study found that consumers are more adapted to the use of mobile apps for general shopping but very less for groceries.

Bikramjit R. et al (2018) identified the influencing factors of the adoption of e-grocery in India. The factors like transaction security, guidance for shopping, sensory perception, and product availability and assortment were studied on perceived communicability, perceived risk, perceived complexity, and perceived compatibility. The authors concluded that a thorough knowledge of the influencing factors of online grocery adoption leads to the effective design of marketing mix by online retailers. The study was based on a sample of 500 MBA graduates.

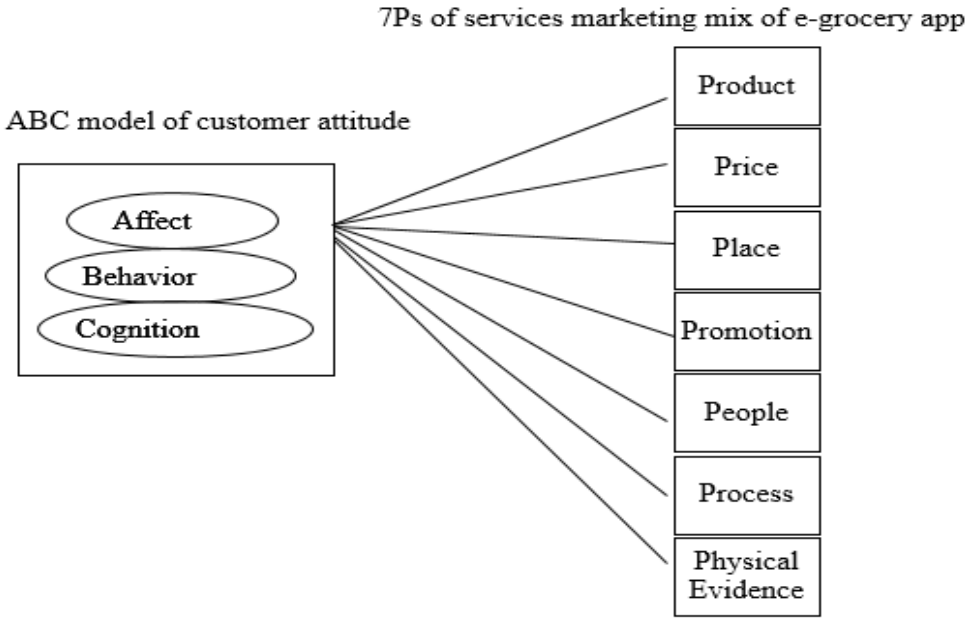
Sonal K. &Sujo Thomas (2019) conducted the study to explore the beliefs of local grocers (Kirana stores) on e-grocery. The authors used the theory of planned behavior (TPB) and studied factors that inducing local grocers' intention to join or reject to take part in the online grocery platform. The authors categorized the research outcome (grocers' belief) into five broad heads – customer expectations, gaining visibility and reputation, business expansion, margins, costs and technical issues, and inventory management. The normative belief of grocers was that the actions and response to e-grocery would be administered by their consumers. The key control belief was that associating with the e-grocery platform would result in loss of control regarding their business operations.

The current study observed a model to understand the customer attitude by using ABC model towards the seven elements of the marketing mix of e-grocery apps.

Research Model:

The current study is centered on the research model, adopted from the existing literature in the area of customer attitude and services marketing mix elements (7Ps) in diverse contexts. This study examines the customer attitude using the ABC model towards different marketing mix elements (7Ps) of e-grocery app in India (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: *Research model for the study*



The above figure of the research model is the foundation of this study. The ABC of customer attitude are the dependent variables and services marketing mix elements (7Ps) are independent variables. In this study, the dependent variables are analyzed to find out the solution to the problem. It is assumed that the independent variables influence the dependent variables in either a positive or a negative way.

Except the product and people factors where the customers do not find much differentiation in the products offered by the marketers and people involved in the process on either mobile app or website, all other elements of the marketing mix are varied in the execution by marketers on two different platforms – mobile app and website. However, to understand the overall customer attitude, the study has taken all the 7Ps of the marketing mix. Thus, based on the relationship of underlying factors and customer attitude towards the e-grocery mobile app, the following hypotheses were developed:

H1: Price has a positive impact on attitudes towards using an e-grocery mobile app over the website for online grocery.

H2: Place has a positive impact on attitudes towards using an e-grocery mobile app over the website for online grocery.

H3: Promotion has a positive impact on attitudes towards using an e-grocery mobile app over the website.

H4: Process has a positive impact on attitudes towards using an e-grocery mobile app over the website.

H5: Physical evidence has a positive impact on attitudes towards using an e-grocery mobile app over the website.

Research Methodology

Sampling and Data collection:

An online survey has been conducted through a list of a close-ended structured questionnaire in southern Indian metropolitan cities – Hyderabad, Chennai, and Vijayawada. The first section of the questionnaire was a screening section comprising a set of 2 questions to confirm the eligibility of the participants i.e. participants must be an e-grocery shopper through the mobile app(s). The second section was about demographic and general information like respondents' gender, age, marital status, education, occupation, income, e-grocery brand, etc. The third section of the questionnaire included 22 questions based on the ABC model of attitude on 7Ps elements of services marketing mix elements of e-grocery apps. This section of the questionnaire was measured on a Likert's scale ranging from 5=

strongly agree to 1 = strongly disagree. The convenience sampling method (non-probability sampling) was adopted for data collection.

A total of 258 responses were received from an online survey. However, based on the screening questions, 32 responds were eliminated and not considered into the data set because the participants did not meet the eligibility of purchasing online grocery through mobile apps. Therefore, only 226 valid responses were used in data analysis.

Data analysis

Reliability test:

The questionnaire was piloted on the sample size of 30 before moving for an online survey. The reliability of the collected data was tested on Cronbach's Alpha rule of consistency. The data showed 0.897 Cronbach's Alpha, which is greater than the acceptable value i.e. 0.7 (Tavakol M. and Dennick R. 2011).

Sample profile:

The convenient sample of 226 e-grocery shoppers covers a wide number of variables like gender, age, marital status, education background, occupation, monthly income (personal/family), and a preferred/using brand of e-grocery. The majority of the respondents were 26-35 years of age (54.90%) whereas only 4% belonged to below 25 years of age category. The male-female ratio was 55:45, among which 76.5% were married. The educational level of the majority of the respondents (65%) were post-graduates, another 29.2% were doctorates. More than half of them (53.1%) were salaried employees. Among the 226 respondents 43.4% were using BigBasket to shop online grocery and 27.40% were using Amazon. 9.3% of the respondents were using Walmart owned Flipkart grocery. Around 20% of them were using other brands like Grofers, Dmart ready, Reliance SMART, etc. (See table 1)

Table 1: Sample profile

Variable	Category	Percent	Variable	Category	Percent
1. **Age**	Below 25 years	4	2. Gender	Male	54.9
	26–35 years	54.9		Female	45.1
	36–45 years	23.9			
	Above 45 years	17.3			
3. **Education**	Graduate	5.8	4. Marital Status	Married	76.5
	Post graduate	65		Unmarried	23.5
	Doctorate	29.2			
5. **Occupation**	Self-employment	8	6. Monthly income	Below Rs.25,000	29.2
	Salaried	53.1		Rs.25,000-50,000	43.4
	Professional	27		Rs.50,000-75,000	11.5
	Others	11.9		Above Rs75,000	15.9
7. **Brands**	Amazon	27.4			
	Flipkart	9.3			
	BigBasket	43.4			
	Grofers	5.3			
	Dmart ready	6.6			
	Reliance SMART	4			
	Others	4			

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA):

The study adopted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess how well the model fits the collected data for the study. IBM AMOS 26 version was used to compute the CFA. The model was tested by considering seven factors with sixteen variables (refer figure 2). The study used GFI -Goodness of fit index, RMSEA - Root mean square error of approximation (for assessing badness of fit indices), CFI - comparative fit index, and minimum discrepancy by dividing degree of freedom for the measurement model.

Figure 2: Model of the confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

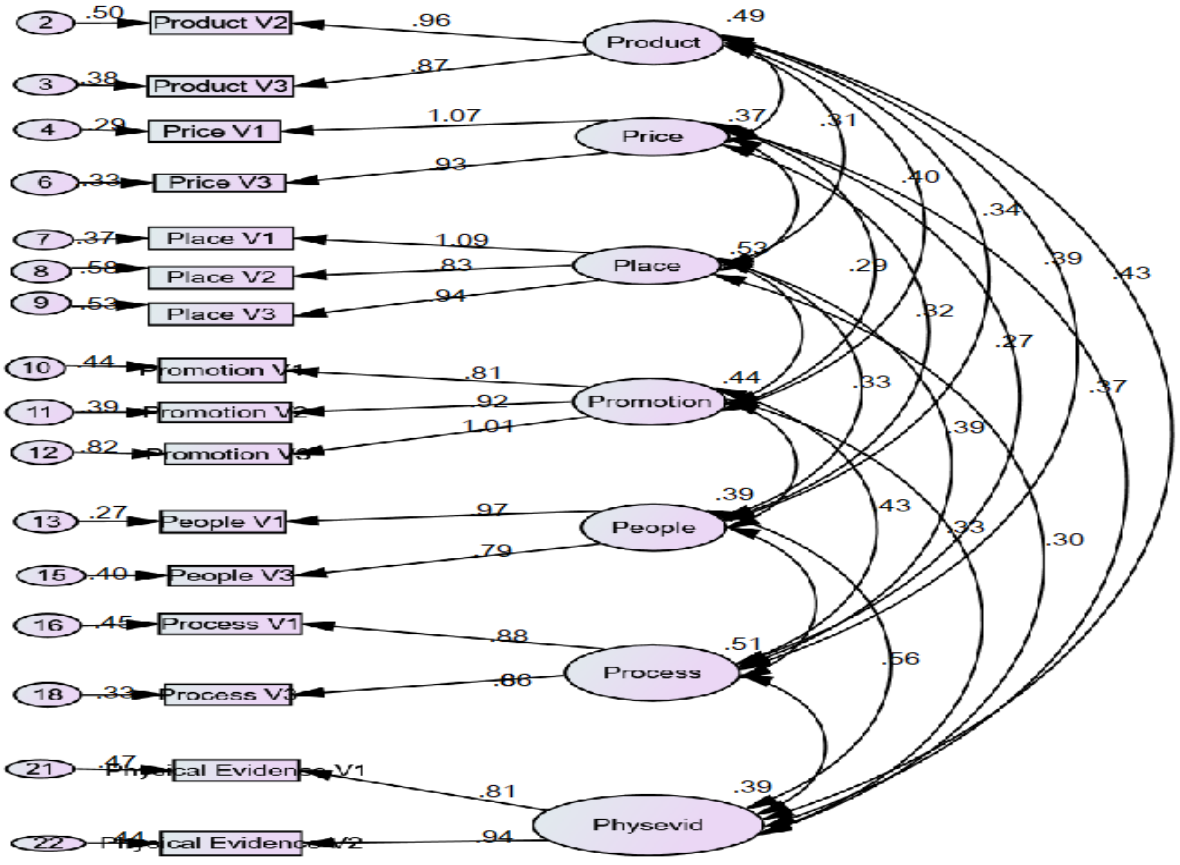


Table 2: Fit indices table

Fit index	Value index	Acceptable value for good model
RMSEA	0.069	<0.08
CFI	0.932	>0.90
GFI	0.962	>0.90
CMIN/DF	2.919	<5

The result of CFA is based on a set of 16 variables from seven factors. The other six variables were deleted from four factors (product = 1, price = 1, people =1, process = 3). The deletion of the six variables was based on the criteria of factor loadings i.e. < 0.70 threshold level (Tellis et al., 2009). From the CFA results (see Table 2), it is concluded that the values of absolute, incremental, and parsimonious fit indices are in the acceptable threshold. Thus, CFA results support the measurement model fit.

Correlation

Table 3: Pearson correlations among variables

	Product	Price	Place	Promotion	People	Process	Physical evidence

Product		0.662**	0.484**	0.514**	0.532**	0.449**	0.373**
Price	0.602**		0.596**	0.557**	0.493**	0.464**	0.635**
Place	0.447**	0.691**		0.607**	0.398**	0.433**	0.606**
Promotion	0.499**	0.512**	0.576**		0.488**	0.629**	0.504**
People	0.476**	0.492**	0.633**	0.511**		0.471**	0.669**
Process	0.565**	0.607**	0.522**	0.497**	0.686**		0.409**
Physical evidence	0.448**	0.470**	0.639**	0.399**	0.393**	0.502**	

Note: ** Significant level at 0.01 (2-tailed).

The statistical significance of the correlation coefficient is below 0.0005, and thus, all the variables have positive correlations among themselves.

Multiple regression analysis

Table 4: Coefficient for multiple regression.

Coefficients[a]

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	0.728	0.138		3.941	0.000		
Product	0.008	0.079	0.047	2.340	0.270	0.462	2.163
Price	0.091	0.041	0.068	3.929	0.064	0.466	2.145
Place	0.144	0.049	0.165	6.312	0.002	0.496	2.017
Promotion	0.110	0.011	0.185	6.813	0.002	0.585	1.710
People	0.001	0.029	0.073	1.861	0.390	0.350	2.853
Process	0.125	0.031	0.264	8.238	0.001	0.380	2.629
Physical evidence	0.154	0.059	0.494	9.389	0.001	0.914	1.094

[a.] Dependent Variable: attitude on e-grocery mobile app

Multiple regression equations were developed to relate the overall customer attitude with the collected data on 7Ps. For the purpose of developing the regression equation, overall customer attitude about e-grocery mobile apps was taken as the dependent variable and the 7Ps (product, price, place, promotion, people, process and physical evidence) were taken as the independent variables.

From Table 4, the proposed hypotheses H2, H3, H4, and H5 are accepted. Place, promotion, process, and physical evidence have a positive impact on customer attitude towards the e-grocery mobile app. Price has a significant value of 0.064, which is more than the significant value i.e. 0.05. Thus, price does not affect customer attitude to use the e-grocery app over the website while purchasing online groceries.

The model summary (see table 4) reveals that seven independent variables are able to explain 63.3% of the variance in dependent variable (see table 5).

Table 5: Multiple regression equation

Overall customer= Attitude	**.008 + (product)**	**0.091 + (price)**	**0.144 + (place)**	**0.110 + (promotion)**	**0.001 + (people)**	**0.125 + (process)**	**0.154 (physical evidence)**

R^2 = 0.633

The standardized coefficient (see Table 3) for the independent variable physical evidence is the highest (β = 0.494, t = 9.389, and p < 0.001), and thus it is concluded that it has the strongest influence on the overall customer attitude towards the e-grocery mobile app. The second strongest influencing variable was

process (β = 0.264, t = 8. 238, and p = 0.001). The promotion (β = 0.185, t = 6.813, and p = 0.002), and place (β = 0.165, t = 6.312, and p = 0.002) elements of 7Ps also had a significant influence on overall customer attitude towards e-grocery mobile app. The people, product, and price elements of services marketing mix were not found significant in explaining overall customer attitude towards the e-grocery mobile app, as these elements are not much differentiated by the marketers in offering on both the platform website and mobile app.

Conclusions

In India, the online grocery market is on a high-speed gear drive and is expected to grow at a 60% CAGR. The intensity of competition in the online grocery market is increasing at a faster pace where each player (marketer) trying hard to attract the offline local (Kirana) store customers to their e-grocery platform. Each e-grocery company adopted a channel to reach customers directly on their primary gadgets – mobile apps. Through mobile apps, marketers are constantly and innovatively differentiating their 7Ps of marketing mix elements – discounts on booking over the app, easy and quick process, one-tap payment, personalization, and customization, to say some. The attention of this study was to evaluate overall customer attitude with respect to 7Ps of services marketing mix elements (product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence) towards the e-grocery mobile app. The study concluded that the physical evidence (app layout, the pathway of shopping, etc.), process (easiness, search engine, filter, and sort options, check-out process, initiation of the return policy, etc.), promotion (shopping reminders, personalized e-mails, etc.), and place (accessible, feasibility, comfort, etc.) have a positive impact on overall customer attitude towards the e-grocery mobile app. The majority of the respondents (43.4%) were using BigBasket.

Implications

The unorganized Indian grocery market, which is heavily dominated by the local (Kirana) stores (98%) is witnessing a huge demand for online grocery. As a result, many companies are entering into the online grocery market. The findings of this study would help the e-grocery marketers to understand customers' attitudes and expectations on the 7Ps of the e-grocery mobile app. Further, it would help to develop an optimum framework of services marketing mix elements and their implications to enhance the revenue.

This study would be able to improve an understanding of the following:

• Marketing strategy for e-grocery.

• Understanding the predictors for the formation of an overall customer attitude towards an e-grocery app.

• Distinguishing the ways by which competitors are using 7Ps in developing customer attitude.

Limitations

The findings of this study are not universal for entire India as the scope was limited to the southern Indian cities (Hyderabad, Chennai, and Vijaywada). This study was primarily focused on customer attitude on e-grocery apps and did not included attitude towards the e-grocery website shopping, nor compared the attitude towards e-grocery mobile apps with its website. Therefore, the comparative study of the 7Ps of e-grocery websites and mobile apps may be included in the study to assess how they influence the overall customer attitude.

Recommendations

The e-grocery market is experiencing a rigid competition and therefore the major players like BigBasket, Amazon, Flipkart, etc. are under competitive pressure to retain a customer, which is cheaper than attracting a new one. In order to gain a sustainable competitive advantage, the marketers need to differentiate the 7Ps of the services marketing mix - product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence from their competitors. Any response from the competitors to counterpart any of these elements (7Ps) may involve a change in the marketing strategy. Thus, the existing marketers can emphasize on the various services marketing mix elements discoursed in this study to gain a sustainable competitive advantage. Based on the result of multiple regression, the study recommends that

e-grocery marketers apart from maintaining a wide range of products and brands should primarily focus on physical evidence, process, and promotion to develop their USP on their e-grocery mobile apps.

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