ABSTRACT

Grocery shopping is an activity that every person will conduct at some or other time in his or her lifetime. Over the past few centuries, shopping has always been done in the traditional way, where customers go physically to stores to purchase the products that they require. With the advent and extensive adoption of the Internet, the face of grocery shopping has changed and a new animal in the form of Online Grocery Shopping has emerged as a potential service that offers significant benefits to both users and retailers.

The purpose of this research was to firstly indentify the typical demographical and behavioural profile of a South African that would use an Online Grocery Shopping Service (OGSS). The second aim was to review the factors identified from previous research that could potentially affect the adoption of such a service and to then test whether such factors were applicable to the South African market.

Data was collected via online and email questionnaires that were sent to potential respondents, as well as paper questionnaires that were physically administered at the entrances to certain grocery stores. A total of 175 surveys were collected, of which 132 responses were fully completed and were used for the analysis. The demographical and behavioural profiles were analysed and discussed using graphs. A confirmatory factor analysis was employed and applied to the data collected, to determine whether the factors identified were pertinent to the South African consumer.

It was found that the South African that is most likely to use an OGSS was between the ages of 30 to 49, would have a tertiary qualification and would earn at least a net household income of R10 000. The behavioural characteristics of the potential South African OGSS user was found to be that they would have larger families of at least 4 members, have one to two children, have access to the Internet, would be the major grocery shopper in the family and would normally spend a significant amount of time conducting the grocery shopping activity.

It was concluded from the confirmatory factor analysis that the five factors identified namely, perceived benefits, perceived ease of use, perceived risk, visibility and social influence, were indeed factors that would affect the adoption of an OGSS in South Africa.

From the perceived benefits aspect, users perceived the time saving, convenience and assisting the old and elderly elements to be the prime benefits offered by an OGSS. The perceived ease of use highlighted that the OGSS offered must be simple to understand and easy to follow for it to be initially adopted. The perceived risk factor was also found to be a critical element that influenced the adoption of an OGSS. Primary reasons of risk related to credit card fraud, potential robbery, incorrect products being delivered and poor quality of products. The visibility and social influence factors were found to be essential to the adoption of an OGSS, especially during the growth phase. The reason provided for this was that the visibility of the service being used and the social pressure by others contributed to new users adopting or rejecting such a service.