# ONLINE FOOD PURCHASING CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN NORTH MACEDONIA AMID COVID-19 PANDEMIC: AN EXTENDED TAM APPROACH

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**ABSTRACT**
*The current COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world on irreversible way towards digitalization. It has changed people's attitude and behaviour towards online shopping, leading to global e-commerce unprecedented growth. The pandemic crisis accelerated an expansion of e-commerce worldwide, but impacted it in different ways. The progress varies between developed and developing countries, as well as between different industries. The biggest increase in online shopping is evident in food and daily use products category, especially during lockdowns. Despite the cross-country difference of e-commerce growth, the e-commerce in North Macedonia has increased at high rates as a result of COVID-19 with evident increase in online food purchasing. The goal of this study is to analyse which factors affect young consumer intention to buy food online during COVID-19. In order to get insights regarding the young consumer behaviour towards online food purchasing in the country, a survey was conducted among more than 150 young people during April and May 2021. This study examines the crucial factors encouraging young consumers to use online food delivery channels on the basis of the extended Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), including the following constructs: perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, attitude towards using, actual use and website trust. The analysis revealed that perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and website trust are important drivers of attitude towards online food purchasing. Attitude towards online food purchasing has the highest positive and statistically significant impact on the Intention towards online food purchase. This research provide relevant theoretical and practical implications by confirming that the above factors are critical in attitude towards online food purchasing in a developing country context.*

*Key words: Online Food Purchasing, Technology Acceptance Model, North Macedonia.*

*JEL classification: D12, D91, L81, L66, M31.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The current COVID-19 pandemic has changed the world, doing business and human life on irreversible way towards digitalization. Companies are urging rapid and unprecedented digital transformation that affects not only workers, but humans as consumers (Vaska et al, 2021). It has changed people's attitude and behavior towards online shopping, leading to global e-commerce growth especially during long periods of lock-downs.

Online food shopping is a way of purchasing food products online using a web-based shopping service (or app-based). It can be defined as the process of ordering food from a website or other application. The product can be either ready-to-eat food (e.g., direct from a home-kitchen, restaurant, etc.) or food that has not been specially prepared for direction consumption. Food is a specific good. Food needs can't be delayed and food is usually purchased on a daily basis. The elasticity of demand is low and price sensitivity as well. In the pre-COVID era if a person wants to buy a meal, they can choose to have dinner in restaurants or buy fast foods in convenience stores. Still, today people change their behavior to cope with "next experiences" (Li, 2021). Nowadays, catering service providers can build their e-commerce store and place social media advertisements on food deliveries portals like Uber Eats that is the most popular site in the USA, so they can enjoy all-in-one food ordering/ delivery services at their earliest convenience. (Li, 2021). Even restaurants offering their products only through delivery have emerged; a practice that provides the opportunity to new entrants with low fixed costs. Therefore, nowadays this activity has gained relevance not only for established but also for new businesses.

The global online food ordering/delivery market can be segmented using different criteria. The first segmentation is by the business model type into restaurant-to-consumer delivery and platform-to-consumer delivery. Restaurant-to-consumer delivery providers make the food and deliver it, as typified by providers (for ex. KFC). The order can be made directly through the restaurant's online platform or via a third-party platform. These third-party platforms vary from country to country, and include examples, such as Uber Eats in the USA, Eleme in China and Just Eat in UK. Third-party platforms also provide online delivery services from partner restaurants which do not necessarily offer delivery services themselves, a process which is defined as platform-to-consumer delivery. By business model online food delivery can be segmented on three different concepts such as order focused food delivery system, logistics focused food delivery system and full service food delivery system. By platform type, online food delivery/ordering can be web based and application based. By food source, the classification is restaurants and food outlets, grocery stores and supermarkets. Finally, the market of online food delivery can be divided in two categories by payment method -online payment and cash on delivery (Goldstein Research, 2021). On the basis of business model, logistic based food delivery system accounted for larger market share of 48.6% in 2017. This has been even beneficial to restaurants which do not have their own established delivery system. Full service food ordering system is a flourishing business model type, which is beneficial for small scale and independent restaurants that have their own kitchen and logistics. North America consists of major global players and also the large customer base ordering the food through online platforms. Further, Asia-Pacific region accounts for maximum millennial population, who are handy with online platforms for ordering food and the growing restaurant industry in the region, are expected to flourish the online food delivery market at a CAGR of 4.1% over the forecast period (Goldstein Research, 2021). Over the years pizza has been the major food type, but even after the evolution of online portals and smartphones, pizza acquires 60% of the total food ordered. The evolution of food ordering app has boosted the global food ordering market. In USA, 50% of the people ordering food for delivery enjoy using food delivery apps. The convenience of ordering food by comparing the menu of various restaurants and quick delivery of meals straight at home/offices has attracted the people towards using food app services.

The online food delivery sector has been growing at high rates worldwide in the last years. The factors such as improved logistics, increasing penetration of internet and smartphones and development of user-friendly food apps are majorly impacting the growth of global online food delivery market. Its revenues have risen from US$76,193 million in 2017 to projected US$306,808m in 2021. Revenue is expected to show an annual growth rate (CAGR 2021-2025)

of 10.01%, and a revenue growth of 16.6% in 2022. The market's largest segment is Platform-to-Consumer Delivery with a projected market volume of US$172,944m in 2021, and the most revenue will be generated by China. In the Online Food Delivery segment, the number of users is expected to amount to 2,897.1m users by 2025. User penetration in the Online Food Delivery segment will be at 26.5% in 2021. (Statista, 2021).

E-commerce is growing in North Macedonia, but is still relatively limited, both in terms of local retail selling and consumers shopping online. According to the UNCTAD report of 2020, measuring the B2C e-commerce index of countries North Macedonia was ranked 52 out of 152 countries. But luckily, the country was no exception regarding the dynamic growth in e-commerce boosted by the COVID-19 pandemic, witnessing online sales growth, exclusively for grocery shopping (www.unctad.org). The restrictions on movement and fears of spreading the corona virus have changed people's behavior and habits in North Macedonia, leading to increased online shopping and online payments. E-commerce was no longer a choice but a necessity for companies to grow and reach new customers. Customers, on the other hand, acquire digital skills and change their habits, which is reflected in the three-digit growth of 126% in the value of realized transactions with domestic cards to domestic e-merchants (www.nbrm.mk). Digital skills, trust in domestic e-shops, e-transactions and domestic supply are growing exponentially during pandemic ([www.ecommerce.mk](www.ecommerce.mk)). According to the Annual Report of the Association for E-commerce for 2020 for North Macedonia, the value of online transactions in 2020 was increased for 56% compared to 2017 and the number of online transactions in 2020 was increased for 56.4% compared to 2017. The E-Commerce Association of the country has confirmed that during the corona crisis, clothes and sports equipment are still the most purchased categories, but the biggest increase in online shopping is in food and daily use products (www.ecommerce.mk).

According to the latest official statistics of the NBRNM for the first quarter of 2021, the value of online transactions realized in the country and abroad amounted to 86.6 million euros, which compared to the same period in 2020 is an increase of 74.6%. According to the data on the number of devices at the virtual sale points (e-commerce websites), as of March 31, 2021, there are 1,552 active points of sale in the country. For the first quarter of 2021, the number of online stores increased by 93 newly opened. Compared to March 31, 2020, when the number of active e-shops was 1,029, we can conclude that in one year a total of 523 new e-shops were opened, which is an increase of 51% ([www.nbrm.gov.mk](www.nbrm.gov.mk)).

In these globally changed circumstances and increased e-commerce opportunities in the food purchasing sector especially because of pandemic, the goal of this paper is to analyze which factors affect young consumer intention to buy food online during COVID-19 in North Macedonia.

## 2. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

During the current COVID-19 pandemic, businesses in almost every industry and type were pushed to udergone rapid transformation moving towards online shopping channels, especially retailers. Studying consumer behavior in the field of online shopping reached new levels during pandemic. Knowing what influences consumer behavior in online shopping during pandemics has become priority in creating strategies that will ensure first of all survival of retailers on short run, and likely long-term growth.

In the literature, different  theories and subsequent models are available that are in broad use to measure end users' acceptance of a new technology since 1990s, but the most widely used are Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989) and Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis & Davis, 2003). The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is widely used and popular model for exploring factors that influence use of new technology. TAM is one of the most renewed approaches to explain and predict user

acceptance of information systems (Davis, 1989). Even though TAM has been tested broadly in different situations/samples and proved to be valid and reliable model explaining information system acceptance and use, many extensions to the TAM have been proposed and tested continuously (Venkatesh and Davis, 2000; Lai, 2017).

Online food purchasing (ordering/delivery) is gaining popularity rapidly especially in recent times. Therefore, literature review for research on this subject is focused on the last few years. Different authors research various aspects of this topic. Troise et al (2021) found out that contextual factors and subjective norms more important than technical factors. AIDA model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) is strongly connected to constructs in TAM and it was confirmed that attitude towards the adoption of technology is a mediator that promotes interest for the app for food delivery (Song et al, 2021). In Choe et al (2021) a merger of two models (TAM and TPB) is investigated for the use of drone food delivery and implications on food industry and tourism. Extended TAM is used in Nguyen et al (2019). Website trust is added construct proven to be important for intention to use online food shopping having broad managerial implications. In Preetha and Iswarya (2019) a concrete app is analyzed and its quality is the most important factor for their adoption. Lee et al (2017) found that user-generated information, firm-generated information, and system quality had a significant effect on perceived usefulness, and system quality and design quality have impact on the perceived ease of use, which improved perceived usefulness, that affected attitude toward the use of mobile apps. Zhao and Bacao (2020) examined FDAs (food delivery apps) during the COVID pandemic and proposes a comprehensive model integration. Their statistical results and discussions proved that satisfaction is the most significant construct, together with perceived task-technology fit, trust, performance expectancy, social influence and confirmation. Characteristics of the customers can be used to explain customer behaviour while OFD (online food delivery) and it was proven that only 22% of the decision towards OFD can be explained using personal charactesristics (Mehrolia et al., 2020). In Prasetyo et al. (2021) structural equation modeling (SEM) proved that hedonic motivation has the highest effect on customer satisfaction, than price, the quality of information and promotion. Interestingly, the authors found out that usability factors, (design and perceived ease of use) were not significant during the time of COVID-19. In Hong et al. (2021) the reserches discuss whether consumer intention depens on different types of OFD services.They proved that perceived usefuleness and trust are the most significant predictors. Intresting and comparable to our research is the work of Pal et al. (2021) because they are interested in the behaviour of students while using apps for online food ordering. Their results showed that among the mobile app characteristics information design has the highest impact on both satisfaction and loyalty, together with navigation and visual design.

Based on the discussion above, in this empirical study, the proposed research model which is based on the technology acceptance model (TAM) as the basic theoretical model, is adjusted/extended with website trust in order to predict the customers' adoption intention of online food purchasing during pandemic. The theoretical framework used in this research is a combination of the existing information available in the literature on online shopping behavior and new insights specifically defined to understand the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on the adoption of online food purchasing by young consumers. Based on the research model, seven hypotheses are defined (Figure 1).

## 2.1. Research method and data collection

For the analysis in this study, authors designed the research in two segments: the first step was to create a structured questionnaire entailing the extended TAM model, in order to create reliable constructs that can be used in the second segment, the regression analysis. Similar

approach was implemented in Alaimo et al, (2020), Troise et al (2021), Song et al (2021), Choe et al (2021), Nguyen et al (2019), Bauerová and Klepek (2018) and others.

This study employs a quantitative research design and questionnaire was distributed by using electronic survey or e-survey via Google Form. A questionnaire was developed to be the instrument for data collection, adopted from basic TAM and extended by additional construct. Since, it has been recognized that youth are very representative sample of today's online population in the country, the population of interest in this research are young people (mostly students) aged 18-25. Facing the pandemic restrictions and lock-downs, the data was collected by distributing online questionnaire on Google platform (April and May 2021), targeting around 200 internet users.

The items that were chosen for measuring of each variable are as follows: *Perceived Usefulness* (3 items): Online food purchase saves (me) time. Using website for online food purchase makes buying more effective. Using website for online food purchase makes comparison easier. *Perceived Ease of Use* (3 items): Learning how to use online food purchase is easy for me. I think it is easy to become skillful in online food purchase. It is easy to purchase food online. *Website Trust* (4 items): Products from the online food purchase sites are safe and reliable. I trust in the food information provided by the web sites. The conditions for online food purchase are clearly stated on the site. The website provides customer privacy. *Attitude towards Online Food Purchase* (3 items): Online food purchase is a good idea, online food purchase is a wise decision. I like to buy food from online sites. *Intention towards Online Food Purchase* (3 items): I intend/plan to start using online purchase web sites soon. I anticipate that I will use online food purchase sites regularly in the future. I intend to recommend online food purchase to my friends. Five-point Likert scale was included with level of agreement from 1-Strongly disagree, 2- Disagree, 3-Neither agree nor disagree, 4-Agree, and 5-Strongly agree.

## 3. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The purpose of this analysis is to determine the main factors that influence and encourage customers to use online websites for food purchase. Extended TAM model will be applied to examine the potential relationships. The sample is comprised of 175 survey responses, where 6 of them were taken out the analysis because they stated that they do not use online food purchasing websites, and yet they completed some part of the given questionnaire. Demographic structure of the responders is presented in Table 1.

*Table 1. Demographic structure of the respondents*

| VARIABLE | VARIABLE CATEGORIES | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Female | 115 | 68.0 |
| | Male | 54 | 32.0 |
| Residence | Skopje | 92 | 54.4 |
| | Other | 77 | 45.6 |
| What device do you use for Internet | Laptop | 17 | 10.1 |
| | Mobile phone | 148 | 87.6 |
| | Desktop computer | 4 | 2.4 |
| How often do you use Internet for buying any type of products? | Every day | 2 | 1.2 |
| | Few times a week | 13 | 7.7 |
| | Once a week | 13 | 7.7 |
| | Once a month | 62 | 36.7 |
| | Rarely | 79 | 46.7 |
| How often do you use Internet to buy food during the pandemic? | Few times a week | 14 | 8.3 |
| | Once a week | 17 | 10.1 |
| | Once a month | 31 | 18.3 |

| | Rarely | 107 | 63.3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Few times a week | 10 | 5.9 |
| How often did you use Internet to buy food before the pandemic? | Once a week | 9 | 5.3 |
| | Once a month | 34 | 20.1 |
| | Rarely | 116 | 68.6 |
| | Food Guru | 15 | 8.9 |
| | Gruper | 15 | 8.9 |
| Which site do you use to buy food online? | Klikni jadi | 103 | 60.9 |
| | One stop shop | 2 | 1.2 |
| | Other | 28 | 16.6 |
| | No answer | 6 | 3.6 |
| | Up to 500 denars | 59 | 52.7 |
| What is the amount that you pay per order on average? | 500 – 1000 denars | 74 | 43.8 |
| | More than 1000 denars | 4 | 2.4 |
| | No answer | 2 | 1.2 |
| | Food products | 9 | 5.3 |
| What type of food do you order by Internet? | Previously cooked food | 129 | 76.3 |
| | Both | 28 | 16.6 |
| | No answer | 3 | 1.8 |

*(Source: Authors calculations)*

A typical respondent of this survey would be female that lives in Skopje, mostly uses mobile phone for Internet access, buys products via Internet once a month, rarely buys food via online websites pre-pandemic and post-pandemic, Klikni Jadi is a website of preference, spends from 500 to 1000 denars on average order and mostly orders previously prepared (cooked) food.

Respondents were asked to evaluate the characteristics of the online food purchase sites regarding simplicity and convenience, expense effectiveness, availability 24/7, easy way of payment, delivery, diverse menu, safety, and easy way to order. The lowest grade is 1 (poor performance) and the highest grade is 5 (best performance). Detailed responses are presented in Figure 2.

Highest average grade regarding the site performances was assigned to Easy way of payment (4.49) and Easy way to order (4.46). Respondents find websites to be simple to use, for ordering food and payment, and as presented most of the grades are with highest score, with almost no low scores.

Websites for food ordering are also evaluated with high scores for diverse menu (4.31), safe food for consummation (4.16) and availability (4.0). Characteristics such as simplicity and convenience and delivery have lower average grades, 3.98 and 3.85 respectively. The lowest average score of 3.53 was given to expense effectiveness, which can also be seen as area for improvement for the web sites, besides the delivery.

To examine possible relationship that stimulate online food purchase, TAM model with five constructs is used (Figure 1): Perceived usefulness, Perceived ease of use, Attitude towards online food purchase, Intention towards online food purchase and Website trust. Constructs are tested for their reliability, as defined by Filed, 2005, it means that a scale should consistently reflect the construct it is measuring. The results of the reliability analysis are presented in Table 2.

*Figure 1. Research model with estimated regression coefficients*
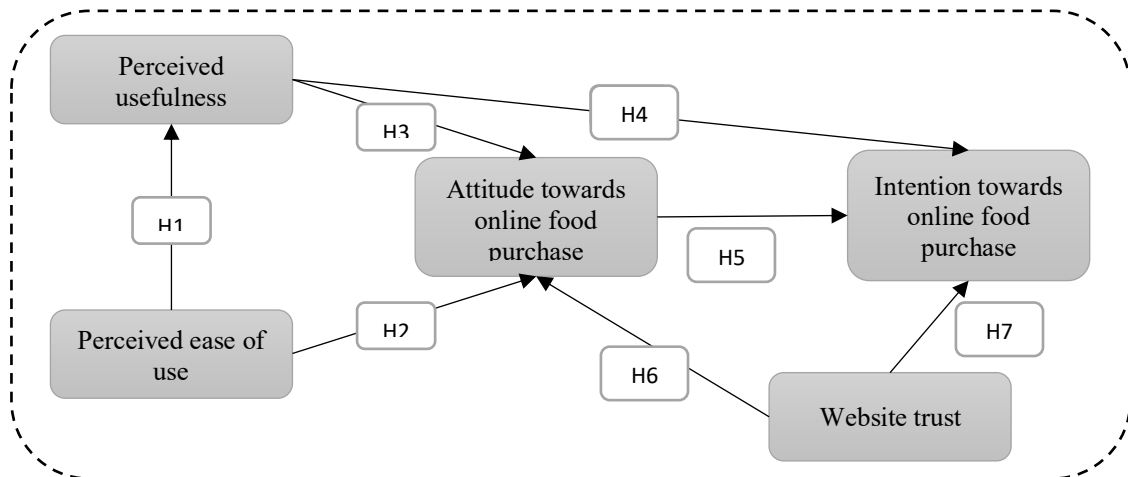


*(Source: Authors calculations based on survey data)*

As the research model implies, there are five constructs derived as variables for the regression model. All the variables, (constructs), can be implemented in regression models, as their respective reliability coefficients are greater than 0.7 which is acceptable value for reliable scale (Hair at al., 2005). Results from the reliability analysis are presented in Table 2. All constructs are with satisfactory internal consistency. Values for Cronbach's alpha if item is deleted point out that even if some of the variables are deleted, there will be no increase in reliability of the construct's Cronbach $\alpha$. Thus, every construct remains with its designated variables. The moderating effect of variables like age and gender, on the online food purchasing acceptance was not tested since in the chosen sample of young consumers these individual characteristics of respondents are similar.

*Table 2. Scale reliabilities for defined variables*

| VARIABLE | CRONBACH'S $\alpha$ |
|---|---|
| Perceived Usefulness | 0.774 |
| Perceived Ease Of Use | 0.851 |
| Website trust | 0.769 |
| Attitude towards online food purchase | 0.881 |
| Intention towards online food purchase | 0.865 |

*(Source: Authors calculations based on survey data)*

Perceived ease of use has the highest average value of 4.52 out of 5, which is in accordance with the previous finding regarding the characteristics of the online food purchase sites – respondents find online websites for food purchase to be easy to use regarding payment and ordering. Also, most of the respondents trust the websites for online food ordering, its average value is 3.87. Lowest average score is given to Intention towards online food purchase, which could be interpreted that most respondents don't really tend to use online websites for food purchase, even though their attitude towards online food purchase has higher score (3.74). Having in mind that most of the respondents were young people that tend to socialize more than the older generations, this can be explained as their preference to go out more after the pandemic is put in order, even though they find it the idea for online web purchase to be good and wise.

*Figure 2. Characteristics of the online food purchase sites*
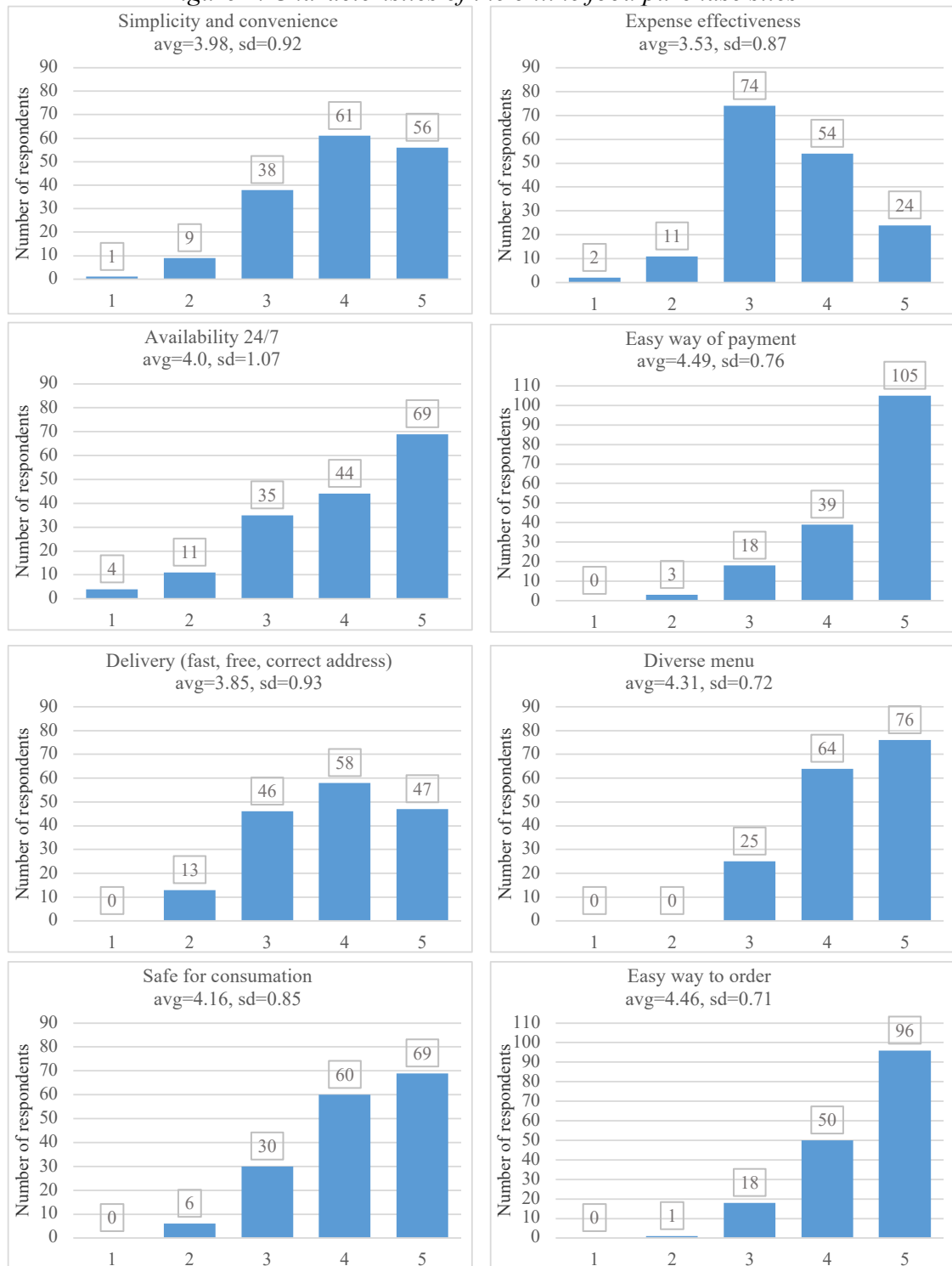
*Source: Authors calculations based on survey data*

## 3.1. Testing hypotheses of the research model

The proposed research model and its internal relationships are presented on Figure 2. The model includes seven hypotheses. To examine if there is any potential multicollinearity between variables, Pearson's correlation coefficients and two tailed tests of significance are calculated in Table 3. The relationships between each variable for each hypothesis are examined:

H1: Perceived ease of use influences Perceived usefulness – correlation coefficient of 0.41, statistically significant at 0.01 level;

H2: Perceived ease of use influences Attitude towards online food purchase - correlation coefficient of 0.40, statistically significant at 0.01 level;

H3: Perceived usefulness influences Attitude towards online food purchase - correlation coefficient of 0.66, statistically significant at 0.01 level;

H4: Perceived usefulness influences Intention towards online food purchase - correlation coefficient of 0.59, statistically significant at 0.01 level;

H5: Attitude towards online food purchase influences Intention towards online food purchase - correlation coefficient of 0.75, statistically significant at 0.01 level;

H6: Website trust influences Attitude towards online food purchase - correlation coefficient of -0.57, statistically significant at 0.01 level;

H7: Website trust influences Intention towards online food purchase - correlation coefficient of -0.41, statistically significant at 0.01 level.

*Table 3. Pearson's Correlation Analysis*

| Variables | | Perceived usefulness | Perceived ease of use | Website trust | Attitude towards online food purchase | Intention towards online food purchase |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Perceived usefulness | Pearson Correlation | 1 | H1 0.41** | 0.51** | H3 0.66** | H4 0.59** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Perceived ease of use | Pearson Correlation | 0.411** | 1 | 0.58** | H2 0.40** | 0.27** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.00 | | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Website trust | Pearson Correlation | 0.51** | 0.58** | 1 | 0.57** | 0.41** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.00 | 0.00 | | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Attitude towards online food purchase | Pearson Correlation | 0.66** | 0.40** | H5 0.57** | 1 | 0.77** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | | 0.00 |
| Intention towards online food purchase | Pearson Correlation | 0.59** | 0.27** | H6 0.41** | H5 0.77** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | |

*\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level*
*Source: Authors calculations based on survey data*

All seven hypotheses have significant correlation coefficients implying that statistically significant relationships in the regression models can also be confirmed.

Regression models for the seven hypothesis and their results are presented in Table 4. As previously confirmed by the correlation matrix, all regression coefficients are statistically significant, confirming the overall TAM model. Perceived ease of use has positive and statistically significant impact on the perceived usefulness. This can be interpreted that if the respondents find the process of online purchase to be simple and easy, they will further recognize the online food purchase to be effective, time saving and makes easier comparison between products.

Second hypothesis confirms that the perceived ease of use has positive and significant influence on the Attitude towards online food purchase. If the process for online food ordering is easy, than the customers may find that the online food purchase is a good and wise decision, and they might increase their usage of the online websites for food ordering.

*Table 4. Single regression models for analyzed variables*

| Variable | Coef. | Std. Error | t-stat. | $R^2$ | Adj. $R^2$ | Durbin-Watson |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H1: Perceived ease of use influences Perceived usefulness | 0.55 | 0.10 | 5.67** | 0.17 | 0.16 | 1.93 |
| H2: Perceived ease of use influences Attitude towards online food purchase | 0.60 | 0.11 | 5.43** | 0.16 | 0.15 | 2.02 |
| H3: Perceived usefulness influences Attitude towards online food purchase | 0.74 | 0.07 | 11.20** | 0.44 | 0.44 | 1.97 |
| H4: Perceived usefulness influences Intention towards online food purchase | 0.71 | 0.08 | 9.11** | 0.35 | 0.34 | 1.97 |
| H5: Attitude towards online food purchase influences Intention towards online food purchase | 0.83 | 0.06 | 14.97** | 0.59 | 0.58 | 2.06 |
| H6: Website trust influences Attitude towards online food purchase | 0.80 | 0.09 | 8.56** | 0.32 | 0.32 | 1.97 |
| H7: Website trust influences Intention towards online food purchase | 0.62 | 0.11 | 5.53** | 0.17 | 0.16 | 1.97 |

*\*\*Coefficient is significant at the 0.01 level*

*(Source: Authors calculations based on survey data)*

Perceived usefulness also has positive impact on the Attitude towards food online purchase. If the websites continue to be time saving, effective and easy to use, the attitude and the overall perception of the customers will be in favor of the online food purchasing. Perceived usefulness influences the Intention towards online food purchase in a positive manner. Not only than the Attitude towards food online purchase will change, also the plans for further usage of online websites for food ordering will remain, creating a habit for this type of shopping.

Attitude towards online food purchase has the highest positive and statistically significant impact on the Intention towards online food purchase. If a positive attitude towards online food purchase is created, it will significantly contribute as an incentive for further usage and recommendation of websites for online food ordering.

Website trust is important factor that significantly contributes to the perception of the online food purchase. If the customers find the websites to be safe, with correct information, clearly stated conditions for purchase and with guaranteed privacy, they will be encouraged to think that online food purchase is a good idea, they will begin to like to concept and to use this type of purchase in the future.

## 4. CONCLUSION

During the pandemic, the country witnessed unexpected and enormous e-commerce growth, exclusively for online grocery shopping. This study is among the first of its kind in providing empirical evidence regarding the effects of TAM based constructs and website trust on attitude and behavioral intention among young online food shoppers in the country during COVID-19 pandemic. Facing the uncertainty of the duration of the pandemic and the uncertainty of how the behavior and habits of consumers obtained/gained during pandemic will be/change afterwards, this model developed and validated in our study can serve as a framework for evaluating online food shopping in other research contexts.

This research provides relevant theoretical and practical implications. From a theoretical point of view, our study contributes to enrich the literature on the consumer intention to adopt online food purchasing demonstrating the importance of defined determinants and their relationships. The results of this study will serve as a solid base and after pandemic, in order to explore this phenomenon and give insights whether online food purchase behavior may vary in the future and in which direction. There is no doubt, that COVID-19 pandemic has forced world population to use and rely on online grocery service more than before. From managerial perspective, the practical implications refer to revealing the characteristics affecting the

decisions of young consumers that buy food via online shopping. Knowing how young consumers behave online is an important aspect for retailers and producers as well as marketers. These findings have important overall implications for key stakeholders, such as online food retailers, associations, and policy makers. Another practical implication is that online food sellers must endeavor to make their websites simple to use, easy to navigate, reliable, and secure Some of the evident changes in the e-commerce landscape in the country will likely be of a long-term nature, in light of the convenience of the new purchasing habits, time and money savings, comparison facilities, boosting the incentive of firms/retailers to capitalize on investments in new online sales channels The COVID-19 pandemic imposes a rethinking of online purchasing process and online consumers' behaviour especially in developing countries. The results of this study are adding practical value to this challenge. In other words, the research question for future attention is will there be a lasting impact on young consumers' grocery shopping preferences in the country i.e. will young consumers continue to make use of online grocery services after pandemic.

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