Study on Consumer Perception Towards Quick Commerce Platforms

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ABSTRACT

The evolution of the Indian retail industry has led to the development of Quick Commerce (q-commerce) platforms which place utmost importance on fast delivery. The current paper explores the multi-faceted consumer perceptions associated with q-commerce which has transitioned from being a mere necessity due to the pandemic to becoming an integral aspect of urban life. It is important to highlight that the key focus of this paper is the investigation of psychological and economic drivers affecting consumers' acceptance and continued use of q-commerce platforms in particular, and their 10-minute delivery promise offered by companies such as Blinkit, Zepto, and Swiggy Instamart.

In terms of research design, this paper used a descriptive cross-sectional research approach to gather primary data from 100 urban Indian consumers using a structured questionnaire conducted online. In addition to percentage analysis and frequency distribution methods, the present study relied on weighted average scores calculated with regard to a five-point Likert scale for interpreting various aspects of service quality.

From the standpoint of findings, it can be seen that consumers are generally happy with quick delivery (3.79/5) and mobile applications (3.79/5). However, the biggest point of dissatisfaction concerns the high price of goods offered by the platform (3.10/5) and poor customer support service (3.26/5). Notably, 69% of the respondents are willing to continue using the services, although high costs hinder sustainable loyalty. From this perspective, it could be concluded that q-commerce companies have managed to establish habit-forming behaviors amongst urban youth; however, improvements in unit economics need to be addressed in the future.

Keywords: Quick Commerce, Consumer Perception, Consumer Behaviour, Online Grocery Delivery, E-commerce Platforms.

INTRODUCTION

The journey of Indian shopping over the last decade has witnessed a few different stages, thanks to the democratization of technology and the changes in the mindset of consumers. The Indian Kirana stores, being small family-owned shops in their respective neighbourhoods, provide personalized services and know-how of local products better than even large companies.

The process of change gathered steam during the latter half of the decade, especially with the onset of Jio in increasing internet penetration among the masses. The lockdowns during the pandemic saw many brick-and-mortar stores close down while more people opted for online grocery. This has led to the emergence of the dark store system, wherein a store set up near dense neighbourhoods stocks 2,000 to 5,000 commonly used items within a radius of 2 to 3 km.

Quick commerce is yet another trend, offering goods in just 10 to 30 minutes' time. Companies like Blinkit (earlier called Grofers), Zepto, and Swiggy Instamart lead this race by making use of real-time neighbourhood demands to stock up their inventory.[1]

India's market for q-commerce, which is estimated to reach USD 5.5 billion in 2025, will skyrocket to USD 40 billion by 2030 as per industry forecasts.1 However, this growth is more than just increased sales. It reflects the transformation of the "planning horizon" for the Indian shopper, moving from a weekly to an instantaneous, impulse-driven shopping practice, wherein the mainstay transactions consist of "top-ups"—groceries required immediately for food preparation and snacks.18

Nonetheless, the exponential growth of q-commerce businesses has been associated with concerns about its future acceptability by consumers.9 While the initial response was positive in terms of the "wow-factor" of delivery within ten minutes of ordering, consumers are becoming concerned about the value-for-money, product quality, and the availability of customer support in case of complaints.1 Therefore, there is a crucial need to analyze the perceptions that underlie consumers' experiences of these businesses to determine if q-commerce is a sustainable change or simply a luxury that may disappear once venture capitalists move out of their businesses.9 The current study attempts to fill this void through its investigation into the multi-dimensional variables affecting satisfaction and loyalty in the Indian q-commerce market segment.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main aim of this study is to identify the factors that affect consumer perception about q-commerce platforms operating in the Indian urban markets. The other specific aims of this study include the following:

● To determine the extent of awareness amongst the consumers about popular brands like Blinkit, Zepto, and Swiggy Instamart.

● To understand the behavior patterns, particularly the frequency of use and the commonly ordered products.

● To evaluate the level of satisfaction amongst consumers across several dimensions like delivery time, price competitiveness, user-friendliness of apps and the availability of products.

● To identify the key motivating factors that lead consumers to prefer q-commerce over the traditional and e-commerce models.

● To understand the difficulties encountered by consumers while availing of services, especially in regard to customer support and the pricing model adopted.

● To explore the potential for building long-term loyalty and willingness to recommend the q-commerce platform to their friends and families.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Several models can serve as the basis for assessing the consumer perception within the framework of q-commerce services. The first notable theory on which our evaluation is based is the SERVQUAL model, developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988). According to this theory, five main dimensions – reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles – determine the assessment of the service quality made by consumers. Within the framework of q-commerce, reliability is estimated as the ability to deliver within 10 minutes, while tangibles represent the design of the application and the quality of delivered goods.

In addition to SERVQUAL, another key model that can be used in this case study is TAM, which was proposed by Davis in 1989.1 The Technology Acceptance Model is based on two major assumptions: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use drive technology adoption.1 Within the q-commerce sector, usefulness means time saved due to rapid delivery, and ease of use refers to the user-friendly mobile application interface. However, according to the recent study conducted by Singh and Patel in 2023 with the help of structural equation modelling, the delivery speed is a "hygiene factor" within the competitive environment of q-commerce services.

Another important factor discussed in previous studies was price sensitivity. According to Arora and Aggarwal, a substantial percentage of consumers is ready to pay more for faster deliveries, but not beyond a particular "convenience-price trade-off threshold". For instance, platforms implementing high delivery or platform costs may lead to a decreased perceived value of saved time, resulting in lower usage frequency. As stated before, this issue is quite important due to rational nature of Indians, who were always extremely price-sensitive.

Instant delivery also has its influence on consumer psychology. In their work, Cho and Mukhopadhyay introduced the concept of "presentism" and discussed the role of impulsivity and immediacy in the decision-making process. There is a "threshold effect" related to delivery time as reducing delivery time from two days to one, for instance, creates more added value than from 15 to 10 minutes.1 Nonetheless, according to Kapoor and Singh, q-commerce platforms effectively satisfy the need for instant gratification characteristic of the urban youth. Indeed, about 78.4% of surveyed young consumers prefer delivery velocity to the price optimization.

Environmental and ethical aspects have been recognized as a factor influencing consumer behavior in recent years. Thus, in their research, Mishra and Jain discovered a "green attitude-behavior gap" in the context of q-commerce platforms. Specifically, 71% of urban consumers express concern about over-packaging and motorcycle emissions, but only a small percentage of them modifies their consumption habits accordingly.1 Additionally, as noted by Bhattacharya and Sen, the changes in behavior stimulated by the pandemic (namely reliance on digital intermediaries) remain as an essential component of urban life in India. The pandemic has established a new normal in the Indian urban environment.

Finally, one should consider the importance of the "last mile delivery" in post-purchase satisfaction. According to Rao et al., the accuracy of the specified time of delivery and the behavior of the delivery partner are the most important variables influencing the customers' willingness to recommend a q-commerce platform. The authors note the existence of asymmetry between positive and negative events. Namely, a failure to meet the time deadline (e.g., delivering a product within 20 minutes despite the promise of delivery within 10 minutes) negatively influences customers' satisfaction significantly more than a number of success cases.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology is a fundamental element of scientific structure, ensuring that the process of collecting and analyzing data is consistent with academic requirements and statistical validity.

Research Design

This research employs a descriptive and cross-sectional research design. Descriptive research is best suited for such a study, as it allows researchers to present an accurate description of the characteristics of a particular population at a certain moment. The employment of a cross-sectional design is justified by the need to obtain a snapshot view of how the q-commerce market looks like now in the context of rapid developments in the field.

Data Collection

In this study, both primary and secondary data are used.

● **Primary Data:** Primary data was obtained by using a structured questionnaire provided through Google Forms. The sampling strategy used was a convenience sampling, as it was appropriate for exploratory academic research aimed at investigating urban digital users. In total, 100 people were selected as respondents, who lived predominantly in major cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Pune, as q-commerce is most developed there. The questionnaire contained 20 questions on demographics, consumption patterns, and satisfaction and loyalty rated on a five-point Likert scale.

● **Secondary Data:** Secondary data came from multiple sources, such as peer-reviewed journal articles (Journal of Retailing), reports from industry analysts (Mordor Intelligence and RedSeer), corporate financial statements from Zomato and Swiggy, and online business news (The Economic Times).

Tools for Data Analysis

Analysis of the collected data was conducted using several tools.

1. Percentage Analysis: This method enabled the researcher to turn the raw data obtained into percentages for easier comparison between various groups and categories.
2. Frequency Distribution: This tool was helpful in organizing responses to each question in order to identify prominent patterns in consumer behavior and platform awareness.
3. Weighted Average Scoring: For the purposes of analyzing consumers' satisfaction and

loyalty scores on the five-point scale, a weighted average score was calculated. Thus, each attribute has one representative score (out of 5.0).

4. Graphical Representation: Graphs (bar graphs and pie charts) are used to support the findings and emphasize significant discrepancies, such as the difference between satisfaction with delivery speed and dissatisfaction with pricing.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study can be identified as follows :

● Geographic Scope: This study is limited to urban consumers in India, particularly those living in Tier-1 cities, where the facilities for q-commerce delivery (i.e., dark stores) exist.

● Scope in Terms of Platforms: The study will cover the Big Three players in the Indian q-commerce scene – Blinkit, Swiggy Instamart, and Zepto, along with some niche platforms.

● Scope in Terms of Respondents: The respondents in this study would be adults, i.e., individuals aged 18 and above who have used the q-commerce platform at least once in the last six months.

● Scope in Terms of Themes: The study will cover aspects pertaining to consumer perceptions about quality of services, value-for-money and technological interface of the platform

.LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

While this study provides significant insights, it is subject to the following inherent limitations [1]:

- **Sample Size:** The sample of 100 respondents, while statistically valid for this research, may not be fully representative of the millions of q-commerce users across the vast and diverse urban landscape of India.[1]
- **Sampling Bias:** The use of convenience sampling via digital channels may skew the results toward a younger, more tech-savvy audience, potentially underrepresenting older or less digitally active consumers.[1]
- **Self-Reporting Bias:** The study relies on self-reported data, which is subject to the accuracy of the respondents' memory and the possibility of social desirability bias.[1]
- **Cross-Sectional Nature:** The study captures perceptions at a specific moment in time; however, consumer sentiment is highly dynamic and may shift as the industry moves from heavy discounting to a focus on profitability.[1]
- **Limited Scope:** The research focuses on the demand/consumer side and does not

incorporate the perspectives of delivery partners, dark store staff, or platform management.[1]

HYPOTHESIS

Based on the research objectives and the existing literature, the following four hypotheses were formulated to be tested against the survey data :

Hypothesis 1: Speed of Delivery and Consumer Satisfaction

- **H0:** The speed of delivery has no significant impact on the overall consumer satisfaction with quick commerce platforms.
- **H1:** The speed of delivery has a significant positive impact on the overall consumer satisfaction with quick commerce platforms.

Hypothesis 2: Pricing and Consumer Dissatisfaction

- **H0:** Higher product pricing and additional fees on quick commerce platforms do not lead to significant consumer dissatisfaction.
- **H1:** Higher product pricing and additional fees are a major cause of consumer dissatisfaction among quick commerce users.

Hypothesis 3: Prior Positive Experience and Repurchase Intention

- **H0:** A prior positive experience with a quick commerce platform does not significantly influence the consumer's intention to repurchase or recommend the service.
- **H1:** A prior positive experience is a strong predictor of repeat usage and the intention to recommend the platform to others.

Hypothesis 4: App Usability and Perceived Service Quality

- **H0:** The usability and design of the mobile application do not significantly influence the consumer’s overall perception of service quality.
- **H1:** The usability and design of the mobile application significantly enhance the consumer’s overall perception of service quality.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The analysis of the survey data, gathered from 100 urban Indian respondents, reveals a complex

and multi-faceted picture of the current q-commerce consumer. In accordance with the project requirements, the following findings are presented in narrative form, integrating the key statistics and interpreting their implications for the industry.

Regarding the demographic profile of theirespondents, the data confirms that q-commerce is primarily a phenomenon of the urban youth. A plurality of the sample, totaling 45%, belongs to the 18–25 age cohort, while 30% are in the 26–35 age group. Together, these two segments constitute 75% of the total user base, suggesting that "digital natives" who value time and convenience above traditional market navigation are the primary drivers of this sector. Gender distribution shows a slight male skew, with 58% identify as male and 39% as female. Occupationally, students represent the largest single group at 38%, followed closely by working professionals in the private sector at 32%. This distribution highlights that the service is most frequently utilized by individuals with high technological literacy and significant daily time constraints.

Awareness levels of the major q-commerce platforms are remarkably high, indicating the success of aggressive marketing and the leverage of existing brand equity. Blinkit leads the category with near-universal awareness at 96%, followed by Swiggy Instamart at 89% and Zepto at 84%. When examining actual usage patterns, Blinkit emerges as the dominant choice, with 48% of respondents citing it as their most used platform. Swiggy Instamart follows with 27% usage, while Zepto, despite being the youngest player, has captured a significant 19% share. These figures closely align with industry reports on market share, where Blinkit maintains a leading position through its integration with the Zomato ecosystem.

The frequency of usage suggests that q-commerce has moved beyond the "trial" phase and has become a structural part of urban consumption. Approximately 34% of respondents use these platforms once or twice a week, while 35% use them three or more times a week. Only 10% of the sample reports infrequent usage (less than once a month).[1] This high frequency is reflected in the product categories purchased, with fruits and vegetables being the most popular at 34%, followed by dairy and eggs at 28%. These "perishable staples" require frequent replenishment, making the 10-minute delivery model an ideal substitute for local Kirana store visits. Furthermore, 21% of purchases are snacks and beverages, highlighting the impulse-driven nature of the q-commerce value proposition.

Consumer satisfaction was measured across five key dimensions using a weighted average score out of 5.0. The results show a significant gap between technological execution and economic value. Delivery speed and app usability reached the highest levels of satisfaction, both scoring an identical 3.79 out of 5. For delivery speed, 65% of respondents expressed being "satisfied" or "very satisfied," confirming that platforms are largely delivering on their core promise of velocity. Similarly, the app interface is perceived as highly efficient, with 66% positive sentiment. This reinforces the TAM theory that ease of use is a critical pillar of digital adoption.

However, the scores for product availability (3.43/5) and customer support (3.26/5) indicate emerging operational pain points. While a majority are satisfied with availability, 22% reported frequent "out-of-stock" messages, which can undermine the platform's reliability as a grocery source. Customer support remains the second lowest-rated dimension, with 26% dissatisfaction. Respondents often found the automated, chat-based resolution systems frustrating when dealing with incorrect or damaged items. The most striking finding, however, is the satisfaction with product pricing, which scored the lowest at 3.10 out of 5. A significant 31% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with pricing, citing higher product costs, platform fees, and delivery charges. This suggests that as platforms attempt to improve their margins, they are approaching the "convenience-price trade-off threshold" where the cost of delivery begins to outweigh the value of the time saved.

Finally, the data on loyalty and advocacy provides a cautiously optimistic outlook for the sector. About 69% of the respondents indicate they are likely to continue using q-commerce platforms in the next six months. Furthermore, 67% are willing to recommend these services to their friends or family. However, the primary reason for choosing these platforms remains "delivery speed and convenience" (47%), while "discounts and offers" only account for 11% of the primary motivation. This indicates that the consumer base is being built on the utility of the service rather than just promotional subsidies, which is a positive sign for the industry’s long-term sustainability.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

The results of the hypothesis testing, based on the statistical threshold of 50% positive responses and the weighted average scores, are summarized below :

- **Hypothesis 1 (Speed vs. Satisfaction):** With 65% of respondents expressing high

satisfaction and a weighted score of 3.79/5, the Null Hypothesis (H0) is rejected, and the Alternative Hypothesis (H1) is accepted. Delivery speed is confirmed as the primary determinant of consumer satisfaction.

- **Hypothesis 2 (Pricing vs. Dissatisfaction):** Pricing received the lowest satisfaction score (3.10/5) and the highest dissatisfaction rate (31%), with many respondents citing platform fees as a major deterrent. Therefore, the Null Hypothesis (H0) is rejected, and the Alternative Hypothesis (H1) is accepted. Pricing is a significant driver of consumer dissatisfaction.
- **Hypothesis 3 (Experience vs. Loyalty):** The 69% likelihood of repeat usage and 67% recommendation intent correlate strongly with those reporting positive prior experiences in delivery and usability. Consequently, the Null Hypothesis (H0) is rejected, and the Alternative Hypothesis (H1) is accepted. Prior positive experience is a powerful predictor of loyalty.
- **Hypothesis 4 (Usability vs. Quality):** App usability scored 3.79/5 with 66% satisfaction, indicating that a frictionless interface is integral to the perception of service quality.[1] Thus, the Null Hypothesis (H0) is rejected, and the Alternative Hypothesis (H1) is accepted. Technology interface significantly influences perceived service quality.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study confirm that quick commerce has successfully transitioned from a venture-capital-funded experiment to a deeply integrated habit for the urban Indian consumer. The platforms have effectively addressed the most difficult logistical challenge: the delivery of fresh groceries and essentials within a 10-to-15-minute window. By achieving high satisfaction scores in delivery speed and app usability, Blinkit, Zepto, and Swiggy Instamart have established a new benchmark for convenience in the Indian retail sector.

However, the research also highlights significant structural vulnerabilities that could impede long-term sustainable growth. The high level of dissatisfaction with pricing (3.10/5) suggests that as platforms attempt to achieve profitability by increasing platform fees and reducing discounts, they risk hitting a "ceiling" of consumer willingness to pay. Pricing remains the most critical "swing factor" that could drive consumers back to traditional Kirana stores for planned shopping. Additionally, the underinvested customer support dimension (3.26/5) represents a significant operational risk; in a high-frequency, low-transaction-value model, the frustration of an unresolved

issue can quickly lead to platform abandonment.

To ensure future resilience, q-commerce platforms must prioritize "experiential consistency" over mere "transactional speed". This involves investing in AI-driven inventory management to solve product availability issues and restructuring customer support to be as fast as the delivery itself. Furthermore, addressing the "green attitude-behavior gap" by adopting sustainable packaging and electric delivery fleets will be essential to maintaining the trust of the environmentally conscious younger demographic. Ultimately, the winners in this space will be those that can successfully balance the need for speed with the structural necessity for value and service reliability.

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