

A study on consumer adoption of Q-commerce services in Surat

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Abstract

This research investigates the dynamic landscape of Quick Commerce (Q-commerce) in India, tracing its evolution from a niche concept in 2011 to a transformative force in the e-commerce sector, with a focus on ultra-fast delivery within 10 to 30 minutes. Accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, Q-commerce gained significant traction, serving over 190 million people in South Asia during the health crisis. Major players, including JioMart, Bigbasket, Amazon Fresh, and Swiggy Instamart, dominate India's Q-commerce market, emphasizing swift delivery, operational efficiency, and 24/7 service. The study explores consumer adoption patterns, revealing a balanced gender distribution, strong appeal among the 15-24 age group (primarily students), and active engagement from homemakers. Notable platform preferences include Bigbasket, BBNOW, and Swiggy Instamart, with convenience, delivery speed, and payment options influencing purchase decisions. Challenges such as delivery delays and high prices are identified, prompting recommendations to address delivery charges and optimize operations. The paper concludes by highlighting the transformative impact of Q-commerce, emphasizing the need for technological advancements, robust infrastructure, and consumer-centric strategies for sustained success in this dynamic market.

Keywords: Q-commerce; Consumer Adoption; Online grocery delivery; Digital Commerce; COVID-19 Impact

1. Introduction

The emergence of Quick Commerce (Q-commerce) represents a significant shift in the e-commerce landscape, focusing on ultra-fast delivery within 10 to 30 minutes. Originating around 2011, Q-commerce gained momentum by 2017, catering to the increasing demand for swift deliveries of everyday essentials and groceries. The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 further accelerated its growth, particularly in South Asia, where over 190 million people relied on its services during the health crisis.

Q-commerce, distinct from traditional e-commerce, centers on immediate delivery, with a primary focus on meeting the urgent needs of consumers. It utilizes local stores, dark stores, cloud stores, or micro-fulfillment centers to swiftly fulfill orders, mainly consisting of low-cost daily essentials, food, or medicines. Unlike traditional e-commerce, which often promises delivery within a few hours at most, Q-commerce guarantees order fulfillment and delivery in minutes, using two-wheeled vehicles for its rapid delivery services.

Several factors fuel the development of Q-commerce, including the growing demands of consumers influenced by technological advancements, fast-paced lifestyles, epidemic-related circumstances, and the need for adaptation during health crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. Its benefits include rapid delivery, enhanced availability, operational efficiency, 24/7 service, and unparalleled convenience for time-strapped customers.

The product profile of Q-commerce encompasses groceries, household essentials, fashion items, electronics, home decor, food and beverages, health supplements, beauty products, among others. Major players in India's Q-commerce

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market include JioMart, Bigbasket, Amazon Fresh, Flipkart Supermart, Swiggy Instamart, Blinkit, Nature's Basket, DMart Ready, Dunzo, and Zepto.

This evolving industry faces challenges and opportunities. Its strengths lie in swift delivery, dynamic stock display, and on-demand production. However, weaknesses include high consumer expectations and trust issues in online transactions. Opportunities for Q-commerce include expanding into new product categories and markets, especially in tier 2 and tier 3 cities, while threats include the need for substantial funding, the risk of cyberattacks, and potential competition-related issues for local small businesses.

This research endeavors to comprehensively analyze the Q-commerce market, evaluate the current scenario, predict future industry developments, and investigate consumer adoption of major Q-commerce players in India.

2. Literature review

The literature review encapsulates various studies exploring Quick Commerce (Q-commerce), its evolution, market dynamics, consumer behavior, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the e-commerce landscape. Bhatia (2022) emphasizes the rapid growth of Q-commerce in India, catering to convenience-seeking customers in metros with swift delivery services, projecting a substantial rise in market share by 2025. Lohariwala (2021) highlights COVID-19 as a catalyst for Q-commerce growth, emphasizing factors like delivery charges and minimum order value for its success. Mukhopadhyay (2022) explores the shift from E-commerce to Q-commerce post-pandemic, focusing on dark stores' role and challenges faced by major players in the sector. Reif (2022) provides an overview of the European Q-commerce market, citing its benefits in terms of flexible delivery times and increased online shopping proportions.

Stojanov (2022) assesses Q-commerce's emergence as the next-gen e-commerce model, shaped by technological advancements and pandemic-induced shifts in consumer behavior. Huang & Yen (2021) delve into the digital transformation driving forces of HK-based Q-commerce companies, highlighting diverse approaches taken by HKTV mall and Pandamart. Ahmed & Shafighi (2022) investigate Q-commerce customer needs, focusing on security concerns, convenience, and customer service.

Various studies also evaluate the impact of COVID-19 on related sectors. Salunke, Joshi, & Bhoir (2020) examine the pandemic's effect on E-pharmacies, acknowledging its contribution to healthcare and economic aspects in India. Badhwar et al. (2021) analyze the pandemic's impact on Indian pharmaceutical companies' sales, identifying shifts in consumer behavior towards e-pharmacies among the tech-savvy youth. Srivastava & Raina (2020) study factors influencing consumer adoption of e-pharmacies, revealing insights into various motivational aspects.

Additionally, studies explore innovative solutions within the Q-commerce landscape. Kumar (2022) emphasizes the potential of drones for scalable and sustainable delivery solutions, expanding businesses' reach and reducing costs. Quick Commerce (2022) stresses consumers' increasing preference for convenient delivery options, predicting market growth and diversification into different product categories.

These studies collectively underscore the transformative impact of Q-commerce, driven by technological advancements, consumer preferences, and the exigencies of the pandemic, providing insights into its growth trajectory and consumer behavior trends (Bhatia, 2022; Lohariwala, 2021; Mukhopadhyay, 2022).

Research objective

- To study the various Q-commerce platforms of India.
- To analyze the adoption of various Q-commerce platforms by consumer.
- To understand consumer awareness and familiarity with Q-commerce services in India.
- To analyze consumer behavior and attitudes towards Q-commerce services, including factors that influence adoption such as convenience, trust, user experience, and price.

3. Research methodology

The Research design of study of identifying consumer adoption towards Q-commerce is descriptive research design which requires a clear specification of the conducted research. The structured questionnaire is prepared over the internet by using google forms which covers total 21 questions. In a study on consumer adoption of quick commerce services in India, the research instrument could be a survey questionnaire. The survey could gather data on the

consumer's demographic information, awareness and usage of quick commerce services, factors influencing their adoption, and overall satisfaction with the services.

4. Data analysis and interpretation

The survey on "Consumer Adoption of Q-commerce Services" in Surat revealed a balanced gender distribution, with 49% male and 51% female respondents utilizing Q-commerce services. The age breakdown illustrated a predominant awareness among the 15-24 age group (44.5%), emphasizing the appeal of Q-commerce to younger demographics. Notably, students constituted the largest user segment (46%), followed by service/job holders (33%), highlighting the diverse occupational backgrounds of Q-commerce users.

The study demonstrated a robust adoption rate, with 94% of respondents having used Q-commerce services in the past six months. Usage frequency varied, with 40% utilizing services weekly, 38% monthly, 1% daily, and 3% never. Food and grocery delivery were primary use cases, and respondents exhibited diverse platform preferences, with Bigbasket, BBNOW, Swiggy Instamart, and Blinkit leading the way.

Convenience, product selection, payment options, user reviews, and delivery speed emerged as pivotal factors influencing purchase decisions. Noteworthy preferences included a preference for delivery within 60-90 minutes (40%) and reliance on cash on delivery (56%).

Challenges encompassed delivery delays, high prices, limited options, and customer service issues. Respondents cited inconvenience and cost as key reasons for not using Q-commerce platforms. Despite this, 46% considered Q-commerce a convenient alternative to traditional commerce.

Future usage intentions were positive, with 44% somewhat likely to use Q-commerce services again. Factors influencing ordering through Q-commerce platforms included reliability, security, delivery speed, and accuracy. Overall, the findings provide valuable insights into the dynamics of Q-commerce adoption in Surat, shedding light on usage patterns, challenges, and consumer preferences.

5. Conclusion

This comprehensive exploration into the realm of Q-commerce in India unveils pivotal insights shaping this burgeoning industry. Leading the charge are major players, including Bigbasket, BBNOW, and Swiggy Instamart, establishing dominance within the Q-commerce sector. The study accentuates the crucial role of platform features such as order tracking and customization in fostering widespread consumer adoption. Despite an encouraging 81% of respondents experiencing timely order fulfillment, a substantial 69% express apprehension regarding elevated delivery charges. The adoption of Q-commerce services demonstrates a balanced gender distribution, with 51% female and 49% male users. The 15-24 age demographic, predominantly comprising students, emerges as a significant adopter, positioning Q-commerce as a convenient alternative. Noteworthy is the active participation of homemakers, constituting 10% of Q-commerce consumers.

Consumer behavior and attitudes reveal compelling trends, with an impressive 94% engaging with Q-commerce in the past six months, and 40% incorporating it into their weekly routines. Platforms like Bigbasket, BBNOW, and Swiggy Instamart are preferred for essential purchases. Determinants in purchase decisions include convenience, delivery speed, payment options, and product selection. However, challenges persist, with timely delivery and high prices emerging as notable concerns. Drawing insights from these findings, recommendations are proposed, including addressing delivery charges, optimizing operations for competitive pricing, and investing in a robust last-mile delivery infrastructure. Diversification of product ranges, commitment to quality, reliable delivery, transparent pricing, multiple payment options, and responsive customer service are highlighted as crucial strategies.

In conclusion, this research underscores the transformative impact of Q-commerce in India, notably accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. While the sector's trajectory showcases reduced delivery times and a shift towards micro-warehouses, future success hinges on strategic technological advancements, infrastructure development, and consumer-centric approaches. Despite persistent challenges, brands that adapt, innovate, and prioritize consumer needs stand poised for sustained growth in India's dynamic Q-commerce market.

6. Compliance with ethical standards

Statement of Ethical Approval

The research was conducted in accordance with academic ethical standards. Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires from general consumers. Participation was entirely voluntary, and no personal or sensitive information was collected.

Statement of Informed Consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants involved in the study. Respondents were clearly informed about the purpose of the research, their rights, and the confidentiality of their responses.

Disclosure of Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest related to this research.

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