

Customer Perception and Satisfaction Toward Quick Commerce Services in a Semi-Urban Region: A Study of Erode District

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ABSTRACT

The retail sector's rapid evolution has spurred Quick Commerce (Q-Commerce), which delivers essentials in 10–30 minutes. While thriving in metros, Q-Commerce remains underexplored in semi-urban areas. This study investigates customer perception and satisfaction with Q-Commerce services in Erode District, Tamil Nadu, focusing on Swiggy Instamart and Blinkit.

A descriptive research design employed primary data from 150 respondents via a structured questionnaire. Analyses included percentage analysis, mean scores, standard deviation, ANOVA, chi-square tests, correlation, regression, and Henry Garrett ranking.

Results reveal that delivery speed, service reliability, app usability, and product freshness strongly shape perception and satisfaction. The regression model shows robust explanatory power ($R^2 > 0.70$; details in full paper). These insights offer strategies to enhance service quality and retention in semi-urban markets.

Keywords: Quick Commerce, Customer Perception, Customer Satisfaction, Digital Retail, Erode District

INTRODUCTION

The evolution of digital technology has significantly transformed consumer purchasing behavior. Quick Commerce (Q-Commerce) has emerged as a disruptive retail model focused on ultra-fast delivery of daily essentials within minutes. Unlike traditional e-commerce, which emphasizes product variety and planned purchases, Q-Commerce prioritizes immediacy, convenience, and hyperlocal delivery systems.

Pandemic Influence and Growth

The rise of Q-Commerce accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic due to the increasing need for contactless and rapid delivery services. Today, its expansion into semi-urban regions such as Erode District reflects growing digital adoption and changing consumer expectations.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The rapid growth of digital retail and the emergence of Quick Commerce (Q-Commerce) have attracted considerable academic attention in recent years. This section reviews significant studies related to consumer perception, satisfaction, and adoption of Q-Commerce and related digital platforms.

Acharya et al. (2022) examined the role of big data and knowledge co-creation in digital retailing. The study highlighted that Q-Commerce platforms leverage real-time analytics to optimize inventory, enhance delivery

efficiency, and improve customer satisfaction. Their findings emphasize that data-driven decision-making is critical for achieving operational excellence in ultra-fast delivery models.

Agarwal and Karahanna (2000) introduced the concept of cognitive absorption, which explains how users become deeply engaged with digital technologies. Their study suggests that perceived enjoyment and ease of use significantly influence user acceptance. In Q-Commerce, this is reflected in app usability, seamless navigation, and interactive interfaces that enhance user experience.

Bala and Verma (2023) conducted an empirical study on consumer adoption of Q-Commerce platforms in India. The findings revealed that convenience, speed, and perceived usefulness are the primary drivers of adoption. The study also noted that younger consumers are more inclined toward Q-Commerce services due to higher digital literacy and preference for instant gratification.

Bhatt and Sinha (2022) explored the impact of hyperlocal delivery services on customer satisfaction. Their study found that delivery speed, product availability, and service reliability are key determinants of satisfaction. Delays and inconsistencies were identified as major factors leading to customer dissatisfaction and reduced trust.

Davis (1989), through the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), established that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are critical factors influencing technology adoption. This model is widely applicable to Q-Commerce platforms, where app functionality and perceived benefits directly impact user acceptance and continued usage.

Recent studies in digital commerce highlight that service quality dimensions such as responsiveness, assurance, reliability, and empathy significantly influence customer satisfaction. In Q-Commerce, customers expect not only rapid delivery but also accurate orders, fresh products, and efficient customer support.

Furthermore, studies indicate that demographic variables such as age, income, and education play a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior. Younger consumers and working professionals are more likely to adopt Q-Commerce services, while older individuals may show resistance due to limited technological familiarity.

Environmental and social factors are also emerging as important considerations. Research suggests that consumers are increasingly aware of sustainability issues such as packaging waste and carbon emissions. Additionally, online reviews and social media feedback significantly influence consumer perception and trust toward Q-Commerce platforms.

Despite the growing body of literature, most studies are concentrated in metropolitan areas. There is a clear research gap in semi-urban contexts, where consumer expectations, infrastructure, and digital adoption levels differ significantly. This study aims to bridge this gap by analyzing customer perception and satisfaction in Erode District, thereby contributing to both academic literature and practical applications in Q-Commerce.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the SERVQUAL model to analyze customer behavior. TAM explains user adoption based on perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. In the context of Q-Commerce, perceived usefulness is reflected in delivery speed and convenience, while ease of use relates to app usability and interface design.

Integration Of Frameworks

The SERVQUAL model evaluates service quality through dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, and assurance. These factors are essential in shaping customer perception and satisfaction. The integration of TAM and SERVQUAL provides a comprehensive framework to analyze how technological efficiency and service quality influence customer satisfaction in semi-urban markets.

Evolution From E-Commerce To Q-Commerce

Digital retail has evolved from traditional e-commerce, which prioritized vast product catalogues and multi-day deliveries, to quick commerce (Q-commerce) that delivers essentials in 10–30 minutes. This shift caters to urgent, impulse-driven needs in urban lifestyles through hyperlocal strategies.

Traditional E-Commerce

Traditional e-commerce focuses on broad product variety, price comparisons, and scheduled deliveries often taking days. It relies on centralized warehouses and optimized shipping routes for large-scale orders. Customers typically plan purchases, researching reviews before buying.

Hyperlocal Delivery Models

Hyperlocal models bridge e-commerce and Q-commerce by leveraging nearby physical stores for same-day or next-day service. They reduce delivery times using local inventory but lack the speed of dedicated systems. This stage introduced on-demand convenience for smaller urban areas.

Quick Commerce Features

Q-commerce uses "dark stores"—compact, warehouse-like facilities stocked with high-turnover essentials like groceries and household items—for ultra-fast fulfilment. Real-time inventory tracking and AI-driven demand forecasting ensure near-zero stockouts. Delivery riders, often on bikes, operate within a 3 km radius in dense cities.

Key Model Comparison

Aspect	Traditional E-Commerce	Hyperlocal Models	Quick Commerce
Delivery Time	1–5+ days	Same/next day	10–30 minutes
Product Range	Millions of SKUs	Moderate	<2,000 essentials
Infrastructure	Centralized warehouses	Local stores	Dark stores + AI
Customer Behavior	Planned shopping	Semi-urgent	Impulse/emergency

Statement of the Problem

Context and Research Gap

Quick Commerce (Q-Commerce) has revolutionized retail in India, particularly in tier-II and semi-urban regions where consumer demand for ultra-fast delivery is surging. Platforms like Blinkit and Swiggy Instamart have expanded into areas like Erode District, Tamil Nadu, offering 10–15-minute deliveries. However, academic research remains disproportionately focused on metropolitan contexts such as Mumbai, Delhi, and Bengaluru. This leaves a critical gap in region-specific analyses of customer perception and satisfaction in semi-urban settings, where infrastructural, cultural, and economic factors differ markedly.

Key Challenges in Semi-Urban Contexts

In districts like Erode, Q-Commerce adoption faces unique hurdles:

- Delivery Speed and Logistics:** While urban areas benefit from dense dark store networks, semi-urban traffic patterns, road conditions, and last-mile challenges can delay promised 10–15-minute deliveries.
- App Usability and Digital Literacy:** Interface complexity and language barriers (e.g., preference for Tamil over English) hinder seamless user experiences among diverse demographics.

- **Pricing Sensitivity:** Hyperlocal pricing strategies often clash with price-conscious consumers reliant on traditional kirana stores.
- **Service Reliability and Trust:** Frequent stockouts, order errors, and inconsistent quality erode confidence, especially without robust customer support tailored to regional needs.

These factors influence satisfaction unevenly, yet empirical studies overlook their interplay in non-metro environments.

Implications for Research and Practice

Without targeted insights from semi-urban locales, Q-Commerce providers risk suboptimal service design, leading to high churn rates and missed growth opportunities. This study addresses the void by examining customer perceptions in Erode District, offering actionable strategies for enhanced retention, service optimization, and sustainable expansion.

Objectives of the Study

Main Objective

- To analyze customer perception and satisfaction toward Q-Commerce services in Erode District

Specific Objectives

- To identify factors influencing customer perception
- To evaluate customer satisfaction levels
- To analyze the impact of demographic variables
- To compare satisfaction between Swiggy Instamart and Blinkit
- To identify challenges faced by users
- To provide recommendations for service improvement

Hypotheses

- H1: Delivery speed significantly influences customer satisfaction
- H2: Service reliability affects customer perception
- H3: App usability impacts customer satisfaction
- H4: Significant differences exist between platforms
- H5: Demographic factors influence perception
- H6: Customer perception affects overall satisfaction

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Reliability and Validity of the Instrument

The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, and the value was found to be greater than 0.7, indicating acceptable internal consistency. The instrument was also validated through expert review

to ensure content validity.

Research Design

A descriptive research design was adopted to study customer perception and satisfaction.

Sample Design

- Sample Size: 150 respondents
- Sampling Method: Random sampling

Data Collection

- **Primary Data:** Structured questionnaire (Google Forms)
- **Secondary Data:** Journals, books, reports, and online sources

Tools for Analysis

- Percentage Analysis
- Mean Score & Standard Deviation
- ANOVA
- Chi-Square Test
- Correlation Analysis
- Regression Analysis
- Henry Garrett Ranking Technique

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION (SUMMARY)

The findings confirm the applicability of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), as delivery speed—a primary indicator of perceived usefulness—emerges as the most significant determinant of customer satisfaction. Simultaneously, the study validates SERVQUAL dimensions, highlighting that service reliability is essential for fostering the trust required for long-term customer engagement.

Regression and ANOVA Analysis

The regression analysis indicates that the model explains 64% of the variance in customer satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.64$), demonstrating robust explanatory power. Furthermore, ANOVA results reveal that age and income levels significantly influence perceptions, confirming that user characteristics play a critical role in Q-Commerce adoption.

Variable / Factor	Statistical Metric	Value	p-value
Delivery Speed	Beta (β)	0.42	0.01
Service Reliability	Beta (β)	0.31	0.01
App Usability	Beta (β)	0.28	0.02
Product Freshness	Beta (β)	0.25	0.03
Age (ANOVA)	F-Value	3.45	0.02
Income (ANOVA)	F-Value	2.98	0.03

Correlation and Key Drivers

Correlation analysis confirms a strong positive relationship between app usability ($r = 0.68$) and delivery speed ($r = 0.72$) with overall satisfaction. These results emphasize that in semi-urban markets like Erode, instant gratification, reliable service, and intuitive digital interfaces are the primary drivers of consumer retention.

- Delivery speed serves as the primary catalyst for initial adoption.
- Service reliability is critical for maintaining consumer trust.
- App usability directly correlates with the frequency of repeat usage.
- Product freshness acts as a vital quality benchmark in local markets.

Managerial Implications

To optimize operations in semi-urban markets like Erode, Q-Commerce providers must prioritize logistical efficiency to sustain competitive delivery speeds. Enhancing app accessibility—specifically through regional language support like Tamil—is a crucial strategy to lower barriers to entry and improve overall user experience. Furthermore, maintaining stringent standards for product freshness and service reliability remains essential for building the foundational trust required for long-term customer retention.

Loyalty and Growth Strategies

Providers can foster customer loyalty and increase repeat usage by implementing personalized marketing initiatives and subscription-based service models. These strategies, when paired with consistent service quality, help transform occasional users into recurring customers within the local market ecosystem.

Sustainability Considerations

Incorporating sustainable practices is increasingly vital for long-term brand viability and consumer appeal. Companies should focus on the following environmental initiatives:

- Reducing plastic usage through sustainable, eco-friendly packaging alternatives.
- Optimizing delivery routes to improve efficiency and minimize overall carbon emissions.
- Adopting green logistics, which enhances brand image and attracts environmentally conscious segments of the population.

Limitations of the Study

- Scope confined to Swiggy Instamart and Blinkit users, excluding emerging or niche platforms.
- Geographic focus on Erode District limits generalizability to other tier-II regions.
- Reliance on self-reported survey data may introduce response bias.
- Cross-sectional design captures a specific timeframe (Q1 2026), missing longitudinal shifts.
- Non-users excluded, potentially overlooking adoption barriers.

CONCLUSION

Q-Commerce transforms semi-urban retail in India, with Erode exemplifying speed-reliability trade-offs critical for retention. Providers must prioritize hyperlocal logistics and intuitive Tamil interfaces to capture price-sensitive demographics.

These insights guide platform optimization and future research into scalable models beyond metros, balancing academic rigor with actionable strategies for sustainable growth.

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