

The 10-Minute Economy: Consumer Behavioural Shifts and Operational Transformation in India's Quick Commerce Ecosystem

Prof. Sanjay Pattanshetty

Research Scholar and Assistant Professor, Visvesvaraya Technological University Belagavi, CPGS,
Kalaburagi

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2026.1306000346>

Received: 20 June 2026; Accepted: 25 June 2026; Published: 10 July 2026

ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study investigates consumer behavioural shifts and operational transformation within India's quick commerce (Q-commerce) ecosystem, examining how ultra-fast 10-minute delivery models reshape purchasing behaviour, service expectations, and retail logistics.

Design/Methodology/Approach: A quantitative, cross-sectional research design was employed. Primary data were collected via structured questionnaire from 500 respondents (400 consumers and 100 retail/operational partners) across major Indian metropolitan cities. The study applied descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, and multiple hierarchical regression to test 12 research hypotheses governing the relationships among delivery speed, convenience, pricing, platform trust, consumer expectations, satisfaction, loyalty, operational transformation, and business sustainability.

Findings: Results confirm that delivery speed ($\beta=0.68$, $p<0.001$) is the strongest predictor of consumer expectations, while customer satisfaction ($\beta=0.71$, $p<0.001$) is the dominant driver of consumer loyalty. Operational transformation explains 55.9% of variance in business sustainability. A total of 75% of consumers report increased impulse purchasing, 82% have shifted grocery spending from traditional retail, and 71% select platforms based on delivery speed. All 12 hypotheses are supported at $p<0.01$ or $p<0.001$.

Originality/Value: This study provides the first integrated empirical model simultaneously examining consumer behavioural and operational dimensions of India's Q-commerce ecosystem. Findings extend Platform Economy Theory, TAM, Instant Gratification Theory, and SERVQUAL to the hyperlocal ultra-fast delivery context. Practical implications are identified for quick commerce operators, partner retailers, and regulatory policymakers.

Keywords: Quick Commerce, 10-Minute Delivery, Consumer Behaviour, Operational Transformation, Platform Economy, Digital Retail, Business Sustainability, India

INTRODUCTION

The rapid digitalisation of India's retail economy has catalysed an unprecedented transformation in consumer purchasing behaviour, culminating in the emergence of quick commerce (Q-commerce) — a delivery model in which groceries, daily essentials, and convenience products are fulfilled within 10 to 15 minutes of order placement (RedSeer Consulting, 2024). Platforms such as Blinkit, Zepto, and Swiggy Instamart have pioneered this ultra-fast delivery paradigm in Indian urban markets, fundamentally redefining consumer expectations around speed, convenience, and service immediacy.

India's Q-commerce market, valued at USD 5.5 billion in 2024 and projected to reach USD 20–22 billion by 2028 at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 26–28 percent, represents one of the world's fastest-growing digital retail segments (Bain & Company, 2024; Statista, 2024). The COVID-19 pandemic (2020–2022) served as a structural inflection point: lockdowns and social-distancing mandates rapidly normalised contactless home delivery, converting millions of Indian consumers from occasional digital shoppers to habitual platform users.

Daily order volumes on Indian Q-commerce platforms grew from approximately 0.7 million in 2022 to 4.8 million by 2025 — an increase exceeding 500 percent in three years (RedSeer Consulting, 2024).

This phenomenal growth is predicated on a dual transformation: on the consumer side, ultra-fast delivery reconditions purchasing psychology toward impulse-driven, high-frequency micro-consumption; on the operational side, platforms and their retail partners must redesign fulfilment infrastructure, inventory management, and logistics systems to sustain delivery promises that traditional retail models were structurally incapable of making. Understanding these twin transformations — and the mechanisms connecting them — is the central intellectual task of the present study.

Despite rapid industry expansion, academic research investigating the integrated impact of ultra-fast delivery on consumer behaviour and operational transformation within the Indian Q-commerce context remains limited. Existing scholarly literature predominantly addresses traditional e-commerce adoption (Chatterjee et al., 2021), online food delivery platforms (Kapoor & Vij, 2018), or consumer satisfaction in digital markets (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016), but does not examine the 10-minute delivery model as a distinct consumption paradigm with unique behavioural and operational dynamics. This study addresses this gap through an integrated empirical investigation grounded in primary survey data from 500 respondents across major Indian metropolitan markets.

The remainder of this paper is organised as follows: Section 2 reviews the theoretical background and extant literature. Section 3 presents the research methodology. Section 4 reports data analysis and interpretation. Section 5 discusses findings in the context of theory and practice. Section 6 presents conclusions, limitations, and future research directions.

Research Objectives

- To analyze consumer behavioural changes and the key factors influencing adoption of quick commerce platforms in India.
- To examine the impact of ultra-fast delivery speed on consumer expectations and purchase behaviour.
- To investigate operational transformations adopted by quick commerce platforms and their partner retailers.
- To evaluate the effects of delivery speed and customer satisfaction on consumer loyalty and long-term business sustainability.

Research Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical framework and empirical literature reviewed in Section 2, twelve hypotheses are formulated across six thematic pathways (Table 2.1), capturing the relationships among delivery speed, convenience, pricing, platform trust, consumer expectations, customer satisfaction, consumer loyalty, operational transformation, and business sustainability.

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

Evolution of Digital Commerce to Quick Commerce

The history of retail digitalisation can be mapped across three distinct phases. Traditional retail operated through physical store-based commerce characterised by planned purchasing cycles, geographic dependence, and face-to-face service interactions. The emergence of e-commerce in the late 1990s and 2000s introduced online marketplaces offering wider product variety, price transparency, and scheduled home delivery — fundamentally shifting consumer expectations toward convenience and digital accessibility (Brynjolfsson et al., 2013; Verhoef et al., 2015).

The third and current phase — platform-based Q-commerce — eliminates the final constraint of e-commerce: delivery time. By locating micro-fulfilment infrastructure (dark stores) within 2–3 kilometres of target consumer

clusters and deploying AI-powered routing algorithms, Q-commerce platforms have compressed delivery timelines from days to minutes (Parker et al., 2016). In India, this evolution has been particularly rapid: Grofers' rebranding as Blinkit in 2021 and its subsequent acquisition by Zomato in 2022, combined with Zepto's venture capital-fuelled expansion and Swiggy's instamart integration, created a competitive Q-commerce duopoly that now drives over 60 percent of India's e-grocery demand (IBEF, 2024).

Consumer Behaviour in Quick Commerce Environments

Consumer behaviour research in digital platform contexts has evolved substantially from the classical five-stage decision-making model (problem recognition, information search, evaluation, purchase, post-purchase evaluation) toward more dynamic, technology-mediated frameworks that acknowledge the compressive effects of digital interfaces on decision time and cognitive effort (Rogers, 2003; Chatterjee et al., 2021). In Q-commerce environments, the five-stage model is radically foreshortened: instant product availability, algorithmic personalisation, and frictionless one-touch ordering collapse search, evaluation, and purchase into a single compressed decision event.

Dholakia (2015) established that waiting time is a significant source of consumer psychological cost, and that reductions in waiting time produce disproportionately large improvements in perceived service quality. In the Q-commerce context, this principle manifests as the 'instant gratification effect': the knowledge that ordered products will arrive within minutes significantly reduces the decision threshold for marginal purchases, producing the impulse-buying amplification extensively documented in the study's empirical findings.

Convenience-oriented consumption theory (Seiders et al., 2007) argues that contemporary urban consumers increasingly prioritise time efficiency and effort minimisation over price optimisation, particularly in high-income, time-scarce urban demographics. This theoretical position is strongly supported by the present study's finding that 87 percent of Indian Q-commerce consumers are influenced by promotional pricing, while simultaneously 71 percent select platforms based on delivery speed — demonstrating that convenience has become at least as important as price in platform selection decisions.

Operational Transformation in Platform-Based Commerce

The operational demands of 10-minute delivery require a fundamental departure from traditional retail logistics architectures. Traditional e-commerce relies on centralised fulfilment centres located outside urban areas, serving wide geographic catchments through scheduled courier networks — a model optimised for cost efficiency rather than delivery speed (Frazelle, 2016). Q-commerce inverts this logic: the primary operational objective is time minimisation, which requires hyperlocal fulfilment infrastructure (dark stores) co-located with consumer demand clusters, real-time inventory management, and algorithmic last-mile routing.

Dark stores — small-format warehouses (typically 2,000–5,000 square feet) operating exclusively for online order fulfilment without retail frontage — represent the operational backbone of Q-commerce logistics (McKinsey & Company, 2023). Blinkit operates over 1,000 dark stores across India; Zepto has invested significantly in expanding its dark-store network to over 800 locations (RedSeer Consulting, 2024). Each dark store serves a limited geographic radius (2–3 kilometres), enabling delivery within 10–15 minutes through optimised rider routing.

Artificial intelligence and machine learning play critical roles in Q-commerce operational performance. Demand forecasting algorithms analyse historical order data, weather patterns, local events, and sociodemographic profiles to pre-position inventory at the dark-store level — ensuring that frequently ordered products are available at nearby fulfilment points without excessive stockpiling (Davenport & Ronanki, 2018; Huang & Rust, 2021). Real-time order processing systems automated by computer vision and barcode scanning have reduced average picking-to-dispatch times to under 90 seconds at leading platforms (Bain & Company, 2024).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

Davis' (1989) Technology Acceptance Model posits that technology adoption is determined by two core cognitive evaluations: perceived usefulness (the degree to which the technology improves task performance) and perceived ease of use (the degree to which using the technology is free of effort). In the Q-commerce context, perceived usefulness maps directly to the platform's ability to deliver products faster and more conveniently than alternative retail channels, while perceived ease of use reflects the quality of the application interface, payment integration, and order tracking experience. The present study operationalises TAM through the convenience perception and platform trust constructs.

Instant Gratification Theory

Instant gratification theory (IGT) draws on Mischel's (1972) foundational work on delayed gratification to explain why individuals systematically prefer immediate over deferred rewards, even when deferral would yield greater absolute benefits. Q-commerce directly exploits this preference architecture by eliminating the temporal gap between purchase intention and product receipt. The 10-minute delivery promise functions as a behavioural trigger that amplifies purchase probability for marginal consumption decisions — explaining the 75 percent impulse purchase increase documented in this study. IGT has been applied to online impulse buying contexts by Dholakia (2015) and is extended here to the Q-commerce setting.

SERVQUAL Model

Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry's (1988) SERVQUAL model conceptualises service quality as the gap between consumer expectations and perceptions across five dimensions: reliability (consistent, accurate delivery), responsiveness (speed and willingness to help), assurance (consumer confidence in platform reliability), empathy (individualised attention and care), and tangibles (physical and digital interface quality). In the Q-commerce context, reliability and responsiveness emerge as the dominant SERVQUAL dimensions, reflecting consumers' extreme sensitivity to delivery time variance and order accuracy — both central to the satisfaction and loyalty findings of this study.

Platform Economy Theory

Platform Economy Theory (Parker et al., 2016; Evans & Schmalensee, 2016) explains how digital multi-sided platforms create value by orchestrating interactions among distinct participant groups — in the Q-commerce case, consumers, partner retailers, delivery partners, and brand manufacturers. Network effects (where platform value increases as more participants join) drive winner-take-most dynamics in Q-commerce markets, explaining the rapid consolidation of India's market around three dominant platforms. The theory also frames operational transformation as ecosystem co-evolution: as platforms scale, the operational practices of all ecosystem participants (partner retailers, logistics providers, brand manufacturers) are restructured around the platform's service architecture.

Research Gaps

Based on the literature reviewed, four critical research gaps are identified. First, no integrated empirical study simultaneously examines consumer behavioural and operational transformation dimensions of Q-commerce, instead treating these as separate research problems. Second, existing Q-commerce research is concentrated in European and East Asian markets (Pantano et al., 2020; Bae & Chang, 2021); the Indian market — the world's fastest-growing Q-commerce ecosystem — is significantly underrepresented. Third, the behavioural mechanism linking delivery speed through expectations and satisfaction to loyalty has not been empirically tested in the Indian Q-commerce context using validated psychometric instruments. Fourth, the operational transformation of partner retailers (as distinct from platform operators) within the Q-commerce ecosystem has not been empirically examined. The present study addresses all four gaps.

Hypothesis Development

Twelve hypotheses are developed across six theoretically grounded thematic pathways, drawing on TAM, Instant Gratification Theory, SERVQUAL, and Platform Economy Theory:

Delivery Speed and Consumer Behaviour (H1–H3): Grounded in IGT and SERVQUAL, delivery speed is hypothesised to positively influence consumer expectations (H1), customer satisfaction (H2), and operational transformation (H3), consistent with Liu et al.'s (2021) finding that logistics speed is the dominant competitive variable in platform-based delivery markets.

Convenience Perception (H4–H5): Drawing on TAM's perceived usefulness dimension and convenience economy theory, convenience perception is hypothesised to positively influence consumer expectations (H4) and customer satisfaction (H5).

Pricing Perception (H6): Consistent with Grewal et al.'s (2017) promotional pricing framework and the present study's finding that 87 percent of consumers are price-sensitive, pricing perception is hypothesised to positively influence customer satisfaction (H6).

Platform Trust (H7–H8): Grounded in Morgan and Hunt's (1994) commitment-trust theory and TAM's ease-of-use construct, platform trust is hypothesised to positively influence consumer expectations (H7) and customer satisfaction (H8).

Customer Satisfaction and Consumer Loyalty (H9): Consistent with Lemon and Verhoef's (2016) customer experience framework, customer satisfaction is hypothesised to positively influence consumer loyalty (H9).

Operational Transformation and Business Sustainability (H10–H12): Consumer expectations are hypothesised to drive operational transformation (H10); operational transformation is hypothesised to enhance business sustainability (H11); and consumer loyalty is hypothesised to contribute positively to business sustainability (H12).

Table 2.1: Summary of Research Hypotheses and Theoretical Grounding

H	Thematic Pathway	Hypothesis Statement	Theoretical / Empirical Grounding
H1	Delivery Speed & Consumer Behaviour	Delivery speed has a significant positive effect on consumer expectations.	Instant Gratification Theory; SERVQUAL
H2	Delivery Speed & Consumer Behaviour	Delivery speed positively influences customer satisfaction.	Instant Gratification Theory; SERVQUAL
H3	Delivery Speed & Consumer Behaviour	Delivery speed positively affects operational transformation.	IGT; SERVQUAL; Liu et al. (2021)
H4	Convenience Perception	Convenience perception positively influences consumer expectations.	TAM (perceived usefulness); convenience economy theory
H5	Convenience Perception	Convenience perception positively affects customer satisfaction.	TAM (perceived usefulness); convenience economy theory
H6	Pricing Perception	Pricing perception positively influences customer satisfaction.	Grewal et al.'s (2017) promotional pricing framework
H7	Platform Trust	Platform trust positively influences consumer adoption expectations.	Morgan & Hunt's (1994) commitment-trust theory; TAM ease-of-use

H8	Platform Trust	Platform trust positively affects customer satisfaction.	Morgan & Hunt's (1994) commitment-trust theory; TAM ease-of-use
H9	Satisfaction & Loyalty	Customer satisfaction positively influences consumer loyalty.	Lemon & Verhoef's (2016) customer experience framework
H10	Operational Transformation & Sustainability	Consumer expectations positively influence operational transformation.	Platform Economy Theory (ecosystem co-evolution)
H11	Operational Transformation & Sustainability	Operational transformation positively influences business sustainability.	Platform Economy Theory (ecosystem co-evolution)
H12	Operational Transformation & Sustainability	Consumer loyalty positively contributes to business sustainability.	Platform Economy Theory (ecosystem co-evolution)

Note: Table constructed from the hypothesis statements and theoretical grounding set out above; statement wording is held identical to the empirical testing summary in Table 4.12 for traceability.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Philosophy and Design

The study is anchored in a positivist research philosophy, treating consumer behavioural and operational phenomena as objectively measurable realities governed by discoverable causal regularities (Saunders et al., 2019). A deductive research approach is employed: the 12 hypotheses are derived from established theoretical frameworks and subjected to empirical testing. A descriptive and explanatory cross-sectional quantitative research design is adopted, enabling simultaneous measurement of multiple constructs across the sample and examination of causal relationships through regression analysis.

Sample Design and Data Collection

The target population comprises (a) urban Indian consumers who have used at least one Q-commerce platform (Blinkit, Zepto, or Swiggy Instamart) at least once in the past three months, and (b) retail partners and dark-store operators associated with Q-commerce platforms. A non-probability purposive sampling technique is employed, with respondents selected based on verified platform usage experience. The total sample comprises 500 respondents: 400 consumers and 100 retail/operational partners across Tier-1 and Tier-2 Indian cities. Sample size adequacy is confirmed by the subject-to-item ratio of 11.4:1 (well above Hair et al.'s 2019 minimum of 5:1) and the Cohen (1992) power analysis indicating a minimum of 107 respondents for detecting medium effects ($f^2=0.15$) at $\alpha=0.05$ with power=0.80.

Primary data were collected via structured online questionnaire distributed through Q-commerce platform user communities, professional networks, and direct platform partner associations during a 10-week period. The questionnaire comprised five sections: (A) demographic and platform usage profile; (B) delivery speed, convenience, pricing, and trust perceptions (independent variables); (C) consumer expectations and customer satisfaction (mediating constructs); (D) consumer loyalty (dependent variable); and (E) operational transformation and business sustainability indicators. All behavioural constructs were measured on a seven-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree; 7=Strongly Agree), consistent with best practice for SEM-applicable quantitative studies (Hair et al., 2019). Secondary data were drawn from RedSeer Consulting (2024), Bain & Company (2024), NielsenIQ (2024), and NRAI (2022) industry reports.

Measurement Instrument Validity

Content validity was established through expert review by five academics specialising in digital marketing and operations management and three industry practitioners, achieving Content Validity Ratios (CVR) exceeding 0.62 for all items (Lawshe, 1975). A pilot study with 50 respondents confirmed face validity and enabled initial reliability assessment prior to the main data collection. Construct validity was evaluated through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), with all factor loadings exceeding 0.70 ($p < 0.001$), Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values above 0.50, and Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratios below 0.85 — confirming both convergent and discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015). Common Method Variance (CMV) was assessed using Harman's single-factor test; the largest factor explained 31.4 percent of total variance, well below the 50 percent threshold, suggesting CMV is not a significant concern.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted in four sequential stages using IBM SPSS 27. Stage 1: Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, skewness) and demographic profiling. Stage 2: Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha (α) and composite reliability (CR), with AVE computed for convergent validity assessment. Stage 3: Pearson correlation analysis to examine bivariate relationships among all constructs and check for multicollinearity (VIF values). Stage 4: Hierarchical multiple regression analysis (three separate models for DV1: Customer Satisfaction; DV2: Consumer Loyalty; DV3: Business Sustainability) to test H1–H12 and compute explained variance (R^2 and adjusted R^2). All regression models were checked for normality of residuals (Shapiro-Wilk), homoscedasticity (Breusch-Pagan), and multicollinearity ($VIF < 5$).

Data Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter presents the empirical findings of the study in six subsections: respondent profile, quick commerce market context, descriptive statistics and reliability, correlation analysis, regression analysis and hypothesis testing, and thematic cross-construct analysis aligned with each research objective.

Respondent Demographic Profile

Table 4.1 presents the demographic profile of the 500 respondents. The sample skews slightly male (58.4%), is predominantly in the 25–34 age bracket (39.2%), and is concentrated in Tier-1 metropolitan areas (70.0%), consistent with the urban-centric nature of India's Q-commerce market. Postgraduate respondents constitute 49.4% of the sample, reflecting the educated, tech-savvy urban demographic that is the primary Q-commerce consumer base. Blinkit is the most frequently used platform (38.4%), followed by Zepto (30.8%), consistent with industry market share data.

Table 4.1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N=500)

Category	Sub-group	n	%
Gender	Male	292	58.4%
	Female	199	39.8%
	Non-binary/Other	9	1.8%
Age Group	18–24 years	157	31.4%
	25–34 years	196	39.2%
	35–44 years	102	20.4%
	45 years and above	45	9.0%
City Tier	Tier-1 Metro	350	70.0%

	Tier-2 City	150	30.0%
Education	Undergraduate	148	29.6%
	Postgraduate	247	49.4%
	Doctoral / Professional	55	11.0%
	Other	50	10.0%
Monthly Income	Below ₹25,000	98	19.6%
	₹25,001–₹50,000	186	37.2%
	₹50,001–₹100,000	164	32.8%
	Above ₹1,00,000	52	10.4%
Platform Used	Blinkit	192	38.4%
	Zepto	154	30.8%
	Swiggy Instamart	124	24.8%
	Multiple Platforms	30	6.0%
Order Frequency	Daily	93	18.6%
	3–5 times per week	157	31.4%
	1–2 times per week	176	35.2%
	Occasionally	74	14.8%
Total Sample	Consumers (n=400) + Retail Partners (n=100)	500	100%

Note: respondent counts (n) were computed from the reported percentages against N=500; each category sums exactly to 500, consistent with the reported totals.

Quick Commerce Market Context

Table 4.2 contextualises the study within India's Q-commerce market growth trajectory. The industry has grown from USD 0.3 billion in 2019 to an estimated USD 5.5 billion in 2024, with daily orders projected to reach 4.5 million by 2025 — representing compound growth of over 1,400 percent in six years. This extraordinary growth rate establishes the commercial significance of the research problem and justifies the urgency of empirical investigation.

Table 4.2: India Quick Commerce Market Growth Trajectory (2019–2028)

Year	Market Size (USD Bn)	Daily Orders (Mn)	Active Users (Mn)	Key Milestone
2019	0.3	0.2	5	Zepto founded; dark-store model piloted

2020	0.7	0.3	8	COVID-19 accelerates contactless delivery adoption
2021	1.5	0.7	12	Grofers rebrands to Blinkit; 10-min promise launched
2022	3.0	1.3	18	Rapid dark-store expansion; Swiggy Instamart scales
2023	4.2	2.0	22	Zomato acquires Blinkit; industry consolidation
2024	5.5	3.2	28	Tier-2 city expansion; 40,000+ SKUs per dark store
2025E	7.0	4.5	35	Non-grocery diversification; AI-driven personalization
2028E	20–22	10+	60+	Projected CAGR 26–28%; dominant urban grocery channel

Table 4.3 presents platform-level daily order distribution for 2025, showing Blinkit's market leadership (~36% share) followed by Zepto (~31%) and Swiggy Instamart (~22%). The market is concentrated but competitive, with significant multi-platform consumer behaviour observed in the sample (6% of respondents use multiple platforms simultaneously).

Table 4.3: Quick Commerce Platform Market Share — Daily Orders (India, 2025E)

Platform	Daily Orders (Mn)	Market Share	Competitive Position
Blinkit (Zomato)	1.70–1.80	~36%	Market leader; strongest dark-store network (1,000+ locations)
Zepto	1.45–1.55	~31%	Fastest-growing; deepest AI inventory analytics
Swiggy Instamart	1.05–1.15	~22%	Food delivery ecosystem synergy; strong brand recall
BigBasket BB Now	0.40–0.50	~9%	Established grocery brand; TATA ecosystem support
Others / Emerging	~0.10	~2%	Regional and niche players with localised strategies
Industry Total (2025E)	~4.80	100%	Sources: RedSeer (2025); Bain & Company; industry estimates

Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Analysis

Table 4.4 presents descriptive statistics for all nine construct measures. Mean values range from 4.87 (Business Sustainability) to 5.82 (Delivery Speed), with all means above the scale midpoint (4.0), indicating generally positive perceptions across constructs. Skewness values are negative for all constructs (ranging from -0.39 to -0.74), indicating slight left skewness consistent with responses from platform-engaged consumers — a predictable sampling effect in purposive samples of platform users.

Table 4.4: Descriptive Statistics for All Construct Measures (N=500)

Construct	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Skewness
Delivery Speed (DS)	[Mean]	[SD]	[Min]	[Max]	-0.74
Convenience Perception (CP)	[Mean]	[SD]	[Min]	[Max]	-0.61
Pricing Perception (PP)	[Mean]	[SD]	[Min]	[Max]	-0.42
Platform Trust (PT)	[Mean]	[SD]	[Min]	[Max]	-0.58
Consumer Expectations (CE)	[Mean]	[SD]	[Min]	[Max]	-0.69
Customer Satisfaction (CS)	[Mean]	[SD]	[Min]	[Max]	-0.63
Consumer Loyalty (CL)	[Mean]	[SD]	[Min]	[Max]	-0.54
Operational Transformation (OT)	[Mean]	[SD]	[Min]	[Max]	-0.48
Business Sustainability (BS)	[Mean]	[SD]	[Min]	[Max]	-0.39

Author action required: the Mean, SD, Min, and Max columns above were blank in the source file and have been left as clearly marked placeholders rather than estimated. Please insert the corresponding values from your SPSS output before submission — the two known reference points from your own narrative text are Delivery Speed (highest mean, 5.82) and Business Sustainability (lowest mean, 4.87).

Table 4.5 presents reliability and validity statistics. All Cronbach's alpha values exceed the 0.83 threshold, with four constructs achieving 'Excellent' reliability ($\alpha > 0.88$). Composite reliability (CR) values range from 0.849 to 0.917, all exceeding the 0.70 benchmark (Hair et al., 2019). Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values range from 0.583 to 0.671, all exceeding the 0.50 threshold required for convergent validity. These results provide robust psychometric justification for proceeding to regression analysis.

Table 4.5: Reliability and Validity Analysis — Cronbach's Alpha, CR, and AVE

Construct	α	CR	AVE	Items	Interpretation
Delivery Speed (DS)	0.887	0.901	0.645	5	Excellent
Convenience Perception (CP)	0.862	0.878	0.618	5	Good
Pricing Perception (PP)	0.831	0.849	0.583	4	Good
Platform Trust (PT)	0.854	0.871	0.611	5	Good
Consumer Expectations (CE)	0.876	0.893	0.632	5	Good
Customer Satisfaction (CS)	0.901	0.917	0.671	6	Excellent
Consumer Loyalty (CL)	0.879	0.896	0.639	5	Good
Operational Transformation (OT)	0.865	0.882	0.621	6	Good
Business Sustainability (BS)	0.843	0.861	0.598	5	Good
Threshold Criteria	≥ 0.70	≥ 0.70	≥ 0.50	—	Hair et al. (2019)

Pearson Correlation Analysis

Table 4.6 presents the Pearson correlation matrix for all nine constructs. All inter-construct correlations are statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), ranging from $r = 0.29$ (Pricing Perception — Business Sustainability) to $r = 0.73$ (Consumer Expectations — Customer Satisfaction). No inter-construct correlation exceeds $r = 0.75$, and all VIF values in the regression models fall below 3.1, confirming the absence of problematic multicollinearity. The strongest bivariate relationships are observed between Consumer Expectations and Customer Satisfaction ($r = 0.73$), Consumer Loyalty and Business Sustainability ($r = 0.64$), and Delivery Speed and Consumer Expectations ($r = 0.68$) — consistent with the hypothesised pathways.

Table 4.6: Pearson Correlation Matrix — All Constructs ($p < 0.01$, two-tailed)

Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Delivery Speed	1.00								
2. Convenience	0.61**	1.00							
3. Pricing	0.43**	0.51**	1.00						
4. Platform Trust	0.57**	0.62**	0.48**	1.00					
5. Consumer Expect.	0.68**	0.54**	0.39**	0.52**	1.00				
6. Customer Satisf.	0.61**	0.49**	0.38**	0.44**	0.73**	1.00			
7. Consumer Loyalty	0.54**	0.46**	0.31**	0.40**	0.62**	0.71**	1.00		
8. Oper. Transform.	0.57**	0.48**	0.35**	0.43**	0.46**	0.51**	0.49**	1.00	
9. Sustainability	0.49**	0.42**	0.29**	0.38**	0.41**	0.55**	0.64**	0.59**	1.00

Consumer Behavioural Changes and Platform Adoption (Objective 1)

Table 4.7 presents the consumer behavioural transformation indicators derived from the sample ($n = 400$ consumers), triangulated with secondary data from NielsenIQ Shopper Trends (2024) and IBEF industry analysis. The data reveal a profound shift from planned to impulse-driven purchasing: 75% of respondents report increased unplanned purchases, and 82% have reallocated grocery spending away from traditional retail channels — representing a structural digital channel migration with long-term consequences for India's retail ecosystem.

Table 4.7: Consumer Behavioural Transformation Indicators — Quick Commerce Adoption

Sl.	Behavioural Indicator	% of Consumers	Interpretation
1	Use quick commerce for primary grocery shopping	31%	Structural shift from planned retail to instant digital consumption
2	Use platforms for top-up / convenience purchases	39%	On-demand micro-purchasing behaviour emerging
3	Report increase in unplanned/impulse purchases	75%	Instant gratification economy; reduced decision hesitation
4	Purchase ready-to-eat or instant meal products	42%	Time-saving preference drives prepared food demand

5	Order snacks and beverages via quick commerce	45%	Impulse consumption pattern; low-value high-frequency orders
6	Shifted grocery spending from kirana / local stores	82%	Digital channel substitution; serious threat to traditional retail
7	Influenced by pricing promotions and discounts	87%	Price-sensitive adoption; promotional subsidies critical for growth
8	Regularly purchase staple groceries online	60%	Digital habit formation across essential categories

The five dominant adoption drivers, in order of prevalence, are: price sensitivity and promotional offers (87%), digital channel shift from traditional retail (82%), impulse buying amplification (75%), urgent-need fulfilment (74%), and speed-based platform selection (71%). These findings empirically establish that Q-commerce adoption in India is primarily driven by behavioural convenience rather than technological novelty — a finding with significant implications for platform marketing strategy and the theoretical extension of TAM to the Q-commerce context.

Delivery Speed and Consumer Expectations (Objective 2)

Table 4.8 presents the impact of delivery speed on consumer expectations and purchasing behaviour. The data confirm a decisive shift in consumer speed benchmarks: 64% of respondents now expect deliveries within 15 minutes, establishing a service norm that would have been commercially infeasible as recently as 2019. The 71% of consumers selecting platforms primarily on delivery speed, and the 52% who abandon purchases when estimated delivery time increases, demonstrate that speed has transitioned from a logistical feature to a fundamental determinant of consumer utility in the Q-commerce context.

Table 4.8: Impact of Delivery Speed on Consumer Expectations and Purchase Behaviour (N=400)

Sl.	Consumer Behaviour Indicator	% of Consumers	Impact Interpretation
1	Expect delivery within 15 minutes	64%	New speed benchmark established; resets industry norms
2	Select platform primarily for delivery speed	71%	Speed is the dominant competitive differentiator
3	Abandon cart when estimated delivery time increases	52%	Low waiting tolerance; speed directly affects conversion
4	Report higher impulse purchases due to fast delivery	68%	Instant fulfilment reduces decision hesitation
5	Place repeat orders at least once weekly	58%	Habitual platform usage pattern forming
6	Use platform for urgent or immediate need fulfilment	74%	Platforms substituting neighbourhood retail stores
7	Willing to pay additional convenience fee for faster delivery	49%	Perceived value justifies price premium; monetisation potential

The behavioural mechanism linking delivery speed to purchase frequency is theoretically framed by Instant Gratification Theory: the 10-minute delivery promise eliminates the temporal cost of delayed gratification,

lowering the purchase threshold for marginal consumption decisions and producing the 68% impulse purchase increase observed in the sample. The finding that 74% of consumers rely on Q-commerce for urgent needs positions these platforms as functional substitutes for neighbourhood retail stores — a competitive displacement dynamic with profound implications for India's kirana ecosystem.

Operational Transformation (Objective 3)

Table 4.9 documents the operational transformations adopted by Q-commerce platforms and partner retailers. Hyperlocal logistics (90% adoption) and dark-store infrastructure (85%) emerge as the most universally adopted operational innovations, reflecting their status as foundational requirements for 10-minute delivery fulfilment. AI-driven demand forecasting (72%) and real-time order processing (78%) demonstrate the industry's transition toward algorithmic operational management — a shift from human-judgement-based retail operations to data-driven, automated fulfilment systems consistent with Davenport and Ronanki's (2018) prescriptions for AI-enabled service excellence.

Table 4.9: Key Operational Transformations in Quick Commerce Platforms (India, 2024–2025)

Sl.	Operational Dimension	Traditional Model	Quick Commerce Transformation	Adoption
1	Fulfilment Infrastructure	Centralised warehouses	Dark stores (2–3 km delivery radius)	85%
2	Inventory Management	Manual forecasting	AI-powered demand prediction algorithms	72%
3	Delivery Logistics	Scheduled fulfilment	Hyperlocal last-mile routing & batching	90%
4	Product Assortment	Limited, basic SKUs	10,000–45,000 SKUs per dark store	68%
5	Retailer Integration	Offline supply chain	Platform-linked digital inventory	63%
6	Order Processing	Batch / manual processing	Real-time automated picking systems	78%
7	Data Analytics Usage	Minimal analytics	Real-time consumer behaviour analytics	74%

The relatively lower adoption rates of product assortment expansion (68%) and retailer digital integration (63%) reflect the operational sequencing of Q-commerce scale-up: platforms prioritise logistics efficiency before deepening retailer partnerships and expanding SKU breadth. This sequencing has consequences for partner retailers, who gain platform-enabled demand visibility and digital inventory tools only after logistics infrastructure is stabilised — creating a temporal gap between platform operational maturity and partner retailer capability development.

Customer Satisfaction, Loyalty, and Business Sustainability (Objective 4)

Table 4.10 presents the satisfaction-loyalty-sustainability relationship indicators. The 78% satisfaction rate among consumers receiving deliveries within 15 minutes, combined with the 72% reorder intention following positive delivery experiences, empirically confirms the hypothesised satisfaction-loyalty pathway (H9). The 65% repeat purchase rate indicates that a majority of Q-commerce consumers have reached habitual platform usage — a critical commercial milestone representing customer lifetime value beyond the single transaction.

Table 4.10: Delivery Speed, Customer Satisfaction, Loyalty, and Sustainability Indicators (N=400)

Sl.	Performance Indicator	% of Users	Analytical Interpretation
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1	Customers satisfied with deliveries within 15 minutes	78%	Speed enhances perceived service quality; satisfaction driver
2	Rate delivery as primary satisfaction determinant	69%	Logistics performance dominates service evaluation
3	Likely to reorder after positive delivery experience	72%	Satisfaction is the strongest loyalty formation mechanism
4	Demonstrate consistent repeat purchase behaviour	65%	Habitual usage; platform integration into daily routine
5	Switch platforms when delivery delays occur	54%	Loyalty is conditional on service consistency; retention risk
6	Recommend platform following positive experience	61%	Word-of-mouth acquisition reduces marketing costs
7	Subscribed to loyalty / membership programmes	47%	Membership programmes enhance long-term engagement
8	Willing to pay premium for reliable fast delivery	52%	Sustainability potential through premium service monetisation

The 54% of consumers who switch platforms following delivery delays reveals the conditional, performance-dependent nature of Q-commerce loyalty — consistent with Morgan and Hunt's (1994) finding that commitment is a function of trust, which in platform markets is built through consistent operational performance rather than emotional brand attachment. The 52% willingness to pay premium for reliable fast delivery, and the 47% membership programme adoption, indicate substantial monetisation potential for platforms achieving consistent operational excellence.

Multiple Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

Table 4.11 presents the results of three hierarchical multiple regression models testing the 12 hypotheses. Model 1 (DV: Customer Satisfaction) explains 63.4% of variance ($R^2=0.634$, adj. $R^2=0.629$, $F=214.82$, $p<0.001$). Delivery speed is the strongest predictor ($\beta=0.61$, $p<0.001$), followed by platform trust ($\beta=0.44$, $p<0.001$) and convenience perception ($\beta=0.49$, $p<0.001$). Model 2 (DV: Consumer Loyalty) explains 58.1% of variance ($R^2=0.581$, adj. $R^2=0.576$, $F=174.61$, $p<0.001$), with customer satisfaction ($\beta=0.71$, $p<0.001$) the dominant predictor. Model 3 (DV: Business Sustainability) explains 55.9% of variance ($R^2=0.559$, adj. $R^2=0.553$, $F=158.39$, $p<0.001$), with consumer loyalty ($\beta=0.64$, $p<0.001$) and operational transformation ($\beta=0.59$, $p<0.001$) as the principal predictors.

Table 4.11: Multiple Regression Analysis Results — Hypothesis Testing

Predictor Variable	B	SE	β	t	Significance
DV1: Consumer Satisfaction ($R^2=0.634$; Adj. $R^2=0.629$; $F=214.82$, $p<0.001$)					
Delivery Speed	0.48	0.041	0.610	11.71	$p<0.001$
Convenience Perception	0.31	0.047	0.492	6.60	$p<0.001$
Pricing Perception	0.19	0.052	0.381	3.65	$p<0.01$
Platform Trust	0.27	0.045	0.440	6.00	$p<0.001$

DV2: Consumer Loyalty ($R^2=0.581$; Adj. $R^2=0.576$; $F=174.61$, $p<0.001$)					
Customer Satisfaction	0.52	0.038	0.714	13.68	$p<0.001$
Consumer Expectations	0.24	0.049	0.619	4.90	$p<0.001$
Delivery Speed	0.18	0.053	0.540	3.40	$p<0.01$
DV3: Business Sustainability ($R^2=0.559$; Adj. $R^2=0.553$; $F=158.39$, $p<0.001$)					
Consumer Loyalty	0.43	0.044	0.638	9.77	$p<0.001$
Operational Transformation	0.37	0.048	0.593	7.71	$p<0.001$
Customer Satisfaction	0.22	0.055	0.554	4.00	$p<0.001$

Table 4.12 presents a consolidated hypothesis testing summary. All 12 hypotheses are supported at $p<0.01$ or $p<0.001$, providing comprehensive empirical validation of the integrated conceptual model.

Table 4.12: Hypothesis Testing Summary

H	Hypothesis Statement	Construct	β / r	p-value	Decision
H1	Delivery speed has a significant positive effect on consumer expectations.	Delivery Speed $\rightarrow$ Consumer Expectations	$\beta=0.68$	$p<0.001$	Supported
H2	Delivery speed positively influences customer satisfaction.	Delivery Speed $\rightarrow$ Customer Satisfaction	$\beta=0.61$	$p<0.001$	Supported
H3	Delivery speed positively affects operational transformation.	Delivery Speed $\rightarrow$ Operational Transformation	$\beta=0.57$	$p<0.001$	Supported
H4	Convenience perception positively influences consumer expectations.	Convenience $\rightarrow$ Consumer Expectations	$\beta=0.54$	$p<0.001$	Supported
H5	Convenience perception positively affects customer satisfaction.	Convenience $\rightarrow$ Customer Satisfaction	$\beta=0.49$	$p<0.001$	Supported
H6	Pricing perception positively influences customer satisfaction.	Pricing $\rightarrow$ Customer Satisfaction	$\beta=0.38$	$p<0.01$	Supported
H7	Platform trust positively influences consumer adoption expectations.	Trust $\rightarrow$ Consumer Expectations	$\beta=0.52$	$p<0.001$	Supported
H8	Platform trust positively affects customer satisfaction.	Trust $\rightarrow$ Customer Satisfaction	$\beta=0.44$	$p<0.001$	Supported
H9	Customer satisfaction positively influences consumer loyalty.	Satisfaction $\rightarrow$ Consumer Loyalty	$\beta=0.71$	$p<0.001$	Supported
H10	Consumer expectations positively influence operational transformation.	Expectations $\rightarrow$ Operational Transformation	$\beta=0.46$	$p<0.001$	Supported

H11	Operational transformation positively influences business sustainability.	Operational Transformation Sustainability →	$\beta=0.59$	$p<0.001$	Supported
H12	Consumer loyalty positively contributes to business sustainability.	Consumer Loyalty Sustainability →	$\beta=0.64$	$p<0.001$	Supported

The collective regression findings establish three critical empirical insights. First, delivery speed is the primary upstream driver of the entire customer experience chain — its direct effects on expectations, satisfaction, and operational transformation make it the foundational variable in the Q-commerce performance architecture. Second, customer satisfaction is the most powerful proximal predictor of consumer loyalty ($\beta=0.71$), reinforcing SERVQUAL's proposition that service quality evaluation (not product evaluation alone) drives repeat patronage in service industries. Third, business sustainability in Q-commerce is jointly determined by consumer loyalty ($\beta=0.64$) and operational transformation ($\beta=0.59$), establishing that sustainable platform growth requires simultaneous excellence in consumer-facing service delivery and back-end operational efficiency.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The 10-Minute Economy as a New Consumption Paradigm

The empirical findings collectively establish that India's Q-commerce ecosystem represents a qualitatively distinct consumption paradigm — not merely an incremental improvement on traditional e-commerce, but a structural reconfiguration of the relationship between consumer psychology, retail operations, and platform economics. The convergence of ultra-fast delivery (10–15 minutes), algorithmic personalisation, frictionless digital payment (enabled by UPI's 900 million-plus user base), and hyperlocal dark-store infrastructure has created an environment in which the temporal gap between consumption impulse and product receipt is effectively eliminated.

This temporal compression has three cascading effects documented in the present study. First, it amplifies impulse purchasing (75% of sample), consistent with Instant Gratification Theory's prediction that reduced delay between desire and fulfilment lowers the inhibitory threshold for discretionary purchases. Second, it redefines service quality benchmarks: a 15-minute delivery window, unthinkable in e-commerce contexts as recently as 2019, has become the expectation of 64% of Indian Q-commerce consumers — creating a standard that traditional retail channels cannot match and new platform entrants must meet from day one. Third, it produces platform dependency: 74% of consumers rely on Q-commerce for urgent needs, effectively substituting digital platforms for neighbourhood retail in the urban consumption geography.

Theoretical Contributions

The findings make three primary theoretical contributions. First, they extend TAM to the Q-commerce context by empirically demonstrating that perceived usefulness in ultra-fast delivery ecosystems is primarily operationalised through delivery speed rather than product variety or pricing — a platform-specific modification of Davis's (1989) original framework that has significant implications for how TAM should be applied to time-competitive platform markets.

Second, the study empirically validates the Instant Gratification Theory-based mechanism in a non-Western, emerging-economy Q-commerce context, demonstrating that the psychological dynamics of impulse consumption are not culture-specific but manifest consistently across the Indian urban consumer population — extending Dholakia's (2015) theoretical framework to a new geographic and commercial context.

Third, the study extends Platform Economy Theory by documenting the specific operational transformation pathway through which ultra-fast delivery commitments are operationally translated — from dark-store network expansion (85%) through AI-based demand forecasting (72%) to real-time order processing (78%) — demonstrating that platform operational architecture is not an incidental feature but the core structural determinant of competitive sustainability in Q-commerce markets.

Managerial Implications

For quick commerce platform operators, the finding that delivery speed is the strongest predictor of consumer expectations and satisfaction ($\beta=0.68$ and $\beta=0.61$ respectively) implies that operational investment in logistics efficiency should take strategic priority over pricing subsidies or promotional spending. Platforms that achieve consistent sub-15-minute delivery build consumer expectations that function as competitive moats — the 54% platform switching rate due to delivery delays demonstrates the severity of the performance penalty for operational inconsistency.

The 52% consumer willingness to pay premium for reliable fast delivery, combined with 47% membership programme adoption, signals that subscription-based loyalty monetisation (analogous to Amazon Prime) represents an underexploited revenue stream for Indian Q-commerce platforms — one that could improve unit economics and reduce dependence on promotional discount subsidies currently driving 87% of consumer adoption.

For partner retailers, the 63% retailer digital integration rate and the empirical association between operational transformation and business sustainability ($\beta=0.59$) establish a clear commercial case for accelerating digital inventory management adoption. Retailers that leverage platform analytics for demand forecasting and align their replenishment cycles with dark-store restocking patterns gain measurable competitive advantages through reduced stockouts, improved inventory turnover, and enhanced platform visibility.

For regulatory policymakers, the 82% consumer shift away from traditional kirana stores and the structural displacement of neighbourhood retail channels by Q-commerce platforms raise important policy questions regarding the competitive fairness of platform economics, gig-worker welfare standards, and the environmental sustainability of high-frequency, small-basket urban delivery operations. The findings provide empirical grounding for evidence-based policy development in these areas.

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Conclusions

This study provides the first integrated empirical examination of consumer behavioural shifts and operational transformation within India's Q-commerce ecosystem, testing 12 theoretically grounded hypotheses across a sample of 500 respondents using hierarchical multiple regression analysis. All 12 hypotheses are supported at $p<0.01$ or $p<0.001$, providing comprehensive validation of the integrated conceptual model.

The study's four principal conclusions are as follows. First, quick commerce adoption in India is primarily driven by convenience and speed rather than price: while 87% of consumers are influenced by promotions, 71% select platforms based on delivery speed and 74% use platforms for urgent needs — establishing speed as the foundational value proposition of the 10-minute economy. Second, ultra-fast delivery has created a new consumer expectation benchmark (15-minute delivery norm for 64% of consumers) that traditional retail channels cannot match, accelerating structural digital migration and threatening the viability of India's kirana retail ecosystem. Third, customer satisfaction ($\beta=0.71$, $p<0.001$) is the single most powerful predictor of consumer loyalty in the Q-commerce context, emphasising that operational excellence — not promotional spending — is the sustainable basis for platform customer retention. Fourth, business sustainability in Q-commerce requires simultaneous optimisation of consumer-facing service delivery (loyalty: $\beta=0.64$) and back-end operational efficiency (operational transformation: $\beta=0.59$), confirming that the 10-minute economy is a systemic model requiring integrated consumer and operational management.

Limitations

The study acknowledges four methodological limitations. First, the cross-sectional design captures the platform–consumer relationship at a single point in time; panel or longitudinal designs would strengthen temporal causal inference. Second, purposive sampling, while appropriate for studying experienced platform users, may introduce self-selection bias: satisfied consumers may be more willing to participate than dissatisfied ones.

Third, the geographic concentration of the sample in metropolitan Tier-1 cities (70%) limits direct generalisability to Tier-2 and Tier-3 city markets where Q-commerce is rapidly expanding but consumer demographics and operational conditions differ meaningfully. Fourth, retail partner respondents (n=100) represent a smaller sample than consumer respondents (n=400), potentially limiting the statistical power of operational transformation analyses.

Future Research Directions

Four directions for future research are identified. First, longitudinal studies tracking consumer behavioural evolution over 24–36 months would enable examination of whether impulse-purchasing behaviour is a permanent feature of Q-commerce consumption or a novelty effect that attenuates with platform maturity. Second, comparative cross-city research extending the study to Tier-2 and Tier-3 Indian markets (Jaipur, Coimbatore, Nagpur) would assess the generalisability of the 10-minute economy model beyond India's four major metropolitan markets. Third, platform-side transactional data analysis — supplementing survey-based perceptual measures with objective order, rating, and revenue data from platform APIs — would enable more precise quantification of the delivery speed-satisfaction-revenue causal chain. Fourth, environmental sustainability research examining the carbon footprint of high-frequency, small-basket Q-commerce delivery operations and the lifecycle impact of packaging materials would address a significant gap in the sustainable commerce literature.

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