

Quick commerce on consumer buying behaviour and brand loyalty: A literature review

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Abstract

Quick commerce has emerged as a transformative retail model in urban India, reshaping how consumers purchase everyday essentials through ultra-fast delivery, app-based convenience, and localized fulfillment networks. This literature review examines the influence of quick commerce on consumer buying behaviour and brand loyalty, with emphasis on the shifting balance between speed, convenience, and traditional brand preferences. The reviewed studies suggest that quick commerce encourages impulse buying by reducing decision time, increasing exposure to promotional cues, and strengthening instant gratification tendencies. At the same time, the platform-centric nature of quick commerce often shifts consumer loyalty from individual brands to the delivery app itself, especially when consumers prioritize speed, pricing, and service convenience over product allegiance. The literature also highlights the role of dark stores, algorithmic recommendations, scarcity messaging, and private labels in shaping purchasing decisions and weakening long-term brand commitment. However, frequent stockouts, service failures, and inconsistent delivery experiences can negatively affect trust, satisfaction, and repeat usage. Overall, the literature indicates that quick commerce is not merely a logistical innovation but a behavioural force that is redefining consumer choice patterns and loyalty structures in urban markets. The review also identifies a significant research gap in the Indian context, particularly the lack of longitudinal studies measuring how repeated exposure to quick commerce influences brand switching and loyalty erosion over time.

Keywords: Quick commerce, consumer buying behaviour, brand loyalty, impulse buying, urban India

Introduction

The rapid proliferation of quick commerce (Q-com) platforms—such as Blinkit, Zepto, and Swiggy Instamart—has fundamentally reshaped retail dynamics in urban India, delivering groceries, essentials, and impulse goods within 10-30 minutes. Emerging post-2020 amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Q-com has surged from a nascent experiment to a \$5.5 billion market by 2025, capturing 15-20% of urban e-grocery sales (RedSeer, 2025). This transformation challenges traditional consumer buying behaviour, traditionally anchored in deliberate purchase cycles, by fostering hyper-convenience, instant gratification, and algorithm-driven personalization. In densely populated metros like Bengaluru, Mumbai, and Delhi—home to 40% of India's 500 million urban consumers—Q-com's 24/7 availability intersects with time-strapped lifestyles, rising disposable incomes (averaging ₹12-15 lakh annually in Tier-1 cities), and smartphone penetration exceeding 80% (Nielsen, 2024).

Conceptual Framework

1. Concept of Quick Commerce

Quick commerce (Q-com) refers to an ultra-fast e-retail model delivering everyday essentials—groceries, personal care, and impulse items—within 10-30 minutes via dense dark store networks and AI-optimized logistics. Pioneered in India by players like Blinkit (acquired by Zomato), Zepto, and Swiggy Instamart, Q-com exploded from \$200 million in 2021 to \$5.5 billion by 2025, commanding 25% of urban grocery e-sales (RedSeer, 2025). Key enablers include hyper-local warehousing (every 2-3 km in metros), real-time demand forecasting via machine learning, and gig worker fleets. In urban India, where 475 million residents grapple with traffic congestion and dual-income households, Q-com

addresses "time poverty" by slashing procurement cycles from hours to minutes. However, it raises sustainability concerns—high emissions from frequent small-batch deliveries and 30-40% order cancellations strain resources (ORF, 2024). Theoretically, Q-com embodies platform capitalism (Srnicsek, 2017), commoditizing retail through network effects and data monopolies.

2. Concept of Consumer Buying Behaviour

Consumer buying behaviour encompasses the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural processes driving purchase decisions, traditionally modeled by the Engel-Kollat-Blackwell (EKB) framework (problem recognition, information search, evaluation, purchase, post-purchase). In Q-com, this pathway compresses dramatically: search costs plummet via app-based discovery, while nudges like personalized recommendations (powered by 80%+ data accuracy) and urgency cues ("only 2 left!") trigger impulses. Behavioural finance insights—hyperbolic discounting (Laibson, 1997) and loss aversion (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979)—explain why 65% of Q-com baskets are unplanned, with average order values at ₹350-450 (Bain & Company, 2025). Urban Indians, aged 25-40 and digitally native, exhibit heightened responsiveness: Bengaluru surveys show 70% prioritize delivery speed over price (LocalCircles, 2024). Mediators include perceived convenience, trust in platform hygiene post-COVID, and socio-economic factors like income elasticity. Yet, risks like product quality variability foster post-purchase dissonance, potentially curbing repeat intent.

3. Concept of Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty, per Aaker (1996), is a multi-dimensional construct involving cognitive (brand awareness), affective

(attachment), conative (purchase intent), and action (repeat buying) loyalty, buffered by switching barriers. In traditional retail, it thrives on equity signals like quality consistency and emotional bonds. Q-com disrupts this by aggregating 1,000+ SKUs per store, enabling seamless cross-brand switching—evidenced by 55% of users experimenting weekly (Deloitte India, 2025). Loyalty metrics have dipped: FMCG giants report 25% erosion in urban repeat rates, as private labels (15% cheaper) gain 30% share (NielsenIQ, 2025). Positive flip sides emerge for agile

D2C brands using first-party data for targeted loyalty programs (e.g., Zepto's subscription perks). The Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model frames Q-com as a stimulus altering organismic states (e.g., habit formation), with loyalty as response moderated by involvement levels. In India, cultural factors like bargaining norms amplify price sensitivity, challenging attitudinal loyalty.

Review of Literature

Outline of Literature Review

Theme	Key Content/ Articles/ Reports/Literatures Related to	Number of Articles reviewed
Quick Commerce Evolution	- Quick commerce growth India (Blinkit Zepto market size) - Dark stores logistics urban India - Q-com vs traditional e-commerce	6
Consumer Buying Behaviour Theories	- EKB Howard-Sheth models impulse buying - Hyperbolic discounting scarcity effects Q-com - TAM UTAUT quick commerce adoption	5
Brand Loyalty Frameworks	- Aaker brand equity Oliver loyalty stages - Platform loyalty vs brand loyalty e-commerce - Switching costs churn quick commerce	6
Q-Com Impact on Urban Behaviour	- Impulse buying unplanned orders urban India - Delivery speed vs price sensitivity metros - Personalization algorithms consumer decisions	6
Brand Loyalty Erosion Mechanisms	- Private labels platform aggregation impact 1FMCG loyalty decline quick commerce - Trust satisfaction eWOM delivery failures	4

Literature Review – Summary

David & et. all (2024) mentioned that dark stores and micro-fulfillment centers (MFCs) are transforming e-commerce logistics by repurposing local retail spaces and utilizing compact, decentralized warehouses to drastically boost order processing speed and supply chain efficiency. By integrating advanced innovations like automated inventory systems, robotics, and artificial intelligence, these modern fulfillment models significantly elevate operational accuracy and customer service standards.

Mamath (2026) ^[9] Mobile technology has driven a major shift from traditional E-commerce to Quick Commerce (Q-commerce), introducing sharp contrasts in delivery speeds, product assortments, customer expectations, and backend logistics despite sharing similar digital foundations.

Nivisha (2025) ^[14] stated that India's quick commerce (q-commerce) sector is experiencing historic expansion, with its gross order value skyrocketing 24-fold from \$300 million in 2022 to \$7.1 billion by fiscal year 2025. Projected to reach \$35 billion by 2030, this hyper-growth has positioned the sector as a cornerstone of India's economic engine.

Shaoni Saha (2026) Quick commerce (q-commerce) represents the next evolutionary phase of e-commerce, prioritizing ultra-fast delivery windows of 10 to 30 minutes. This shift is fundamentally altering Indian consumer habits, as millennials and Gen Z replace traditional weekly market trips with on-demand, instant purchasing for daily essentials.

Kritika Yadav (2025) time-bound promotional events like Nykaa's Pink Friday Sale leverage core behavioral economics principles to heavily influence consumer purchasing patterns within emerging markets. An analysis of secondary retail data from Q3FY22 to Q3FY24 demonstrates that integrating scarcity and urgency cues significantly accelerates early checkout conversions, while price anchoring via strike-through discounts successfully elevates average order values.

Manida (2025) ^[8] this study extends the traditional Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by integrating TAM2 and UTAUT frameworks to analyze consumer adoption of digital commerce platforms amidst the rise of artificial intelligence, blockchain, and personalized recommendation systems. By evaluating core determinants—such as social influence, facilitating conditions, perceived risk, and user experience alongside systemic barriers like cybersecurity threats, low tech awareness, and the digital divide—the research provides a unified behavioral framework for digital commerce.

Deepthi and Vikram Bansal (2023) ^[3] this study utilizes the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to analyze the consumer behavioral factors driving the global expansion of quick commerce (q-commerce) applications. Drawing on survey data from 277 metro-city residents in India, the empirical findings demonstrate that a consumer's intention to order through q-commerce apps is significantly and positively correlated with perceived benefits (PB), perceived ease of use (PEU), social influence (SI), and socio-demographic factors (SDF).

Arifin Djakasaputra & et.all (2025) ^[1] this study applies the Engel-Kollat-Blackwell (EKB) model to evaluate how individual personality factors—including age, occupation, financial status, and lifestyle—influence consumer purchasing choices, specifically investigating a recent traffic decline at Grand Duck King Restaurant Cambridge Medan. Utilizing a simple random sampling method based on Slovin's Formula, data was gathered from 81 restaurant consumers out of a total population of 101.

Lokendra Singh Venawat (2025) this research investigates the psychological mechanisms accelerating quick commerce (q-commerce) adoption in India, demonstrating that the "10-minute delivery" model succeeds primarily by fulfilling the innate human desire for instant gratification rather than merely offering utility.

Mohammed Mudassir (2025) ^[12] this study examines customer retention within India's quick-commerce sector, focusing on addressing Blinkit's industry-high 47.35% churn rate by identifying three primary operational drivers: inconsistent delivery reliability, insufficient customer support, and misaligned premium offerings.

Wasib B Latif & et.all (2014) ^[6] this conceptual study synthesizes existing literature on digital marketing to propose a sequential framework for engineering brand loyalty in competitive environments, moving from initial brand familiarity to customer satisfaction, brand trust, and ultimately, permanent attitudinal loyalty. The research asserts that building sustainable brand loyalty requires strategic alignment between external brand promises and internal organizational workflows.

Vikram Tihal and Dr. Jagat Naryan Giri (2026) this research leverages explainable machine learning (XAI)—integrating Random Forests, Gradient Boosting, and SHAP analysis—to diagnose and quantify customer churn risks in India's quick-commerce sector using operational data reflecting Blinkit's 47.35% churn rate. To bridge the gap between predictive accuracy and business interpretability, the study introduces the Quick-Commerce Customer Stability Index (QCCSI), a composite metric evaluating delivery reliability (35%), support quality (25%), engagement frequency (20%), and account tenure (20%).

Mathews and Anil (2025) ^[10] India's quick commerce sector faces a critical operational bottleneck in frequent product stockouts, which threaten long-term viability by causing immediate lost sales and escalating customer churn. This research introduces a data-driven framework combining economic analysis, sustainability assessments, and operations research to mitigate these inventory failures, which directly undermine green logistics by triggering redundant delivery trips and increasing food waste.

Bhushan Nishtha and Agarwal Bhawna (2018) ^[15] an impulse purchase represents a sudden, unplanned buying decision for a good or service, typically triggered by an emotional reaction or an immediate exposure to an enticing marketing stimulus. Driven largely by a desire for instant gratification rather than premeditated necessity, this type of consumer behavior bypasses traditional logical evaluation phases like utility calculation or budget constraint assessment.

Anshika Goyal (2024) ^[4] the rapid ascent of quick commerce (q-commerce) in India marks a profound structural transformation in urban retail, propelled by hyper-local services engineered to fulfill daily essentials in under 15 minutes. Driven foundationally by widespread smartphone penetration and low-cost internet access, this transition is heavily accelerated by changing city lifestyles that prioritize instant gratification over traditional, planned shopping trips.

Lokendra Singh Venawat (2025) this research explores the psychological drivers behind India's rapid quick commerce adoption, showing that the 10-minute delivery model succeeds by fulfilling an innate human desire for instant gratification rather than merely offering convenience. Using a mixed-method approach that pairs urban consumer surveys with secondary industry data, the study reveals that the need for instant gratification and time-saving value are the strongest predictors of platform usage, vastly eclipsing price sensitivity.

Srishti Gupta (2026) ^[5] this study applies the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework, hedonic

consumption theory, and time-convenience models to evaluate how hyper-fast delivery apps leverage the psychological drive for instant gratification to trigger unplanned, impulse-driven purchases. By synthesizing existing mobile commerce literature, the research demonstrates that consumer desire for immediate rewards is heavily amplified when interacting with emotionally engaging, low-friction digital interfaces that minimize the effort required for fulfillment.

Priyanka (2026) ^[16] this study utilizes descriptive statistics, Chi-square tests, correlation, and regression analysis on survey data from 212 respondents to evaluate the impact of quick commerce (q-commerce) platforms on urban Indian consumer behavior. The empirical findings demonstrate that convenience, delivery speed, service quality, and promotional offers serve as the primary drivers of user awareness, usage frequency, and impulse buying tendencies across various demographic segments.

Shaymaa Kadhim Mohsin (2024) ^[13] this research utilizes the Consumer Decision-Making Model and Cognitive Decision-Making Process to evaluate how artificial intelligence-driven personalization alters the pivotal product acquisition phase across distinct generational cohorts on e-commerce platforms. By focusing on the interplay between external technological forces and internal cognitive processing, the study dissects the sharp behavioral and attitudinal disparities between Generation X and Millennials regarding automated recommendation systems, data privacy, and digital trust.

Hettiarachchi & Fernando (2021) mentioned that private label brands (PLBs) serve as popular, cost-effective alternatives to national brands, with their market success and consumer dedication heavily dependent on retail pricing, quality, product features, store image, and shelf placement. Utilizing multiple linear regression analysis on fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) data, the study establishes that competitive pricing stands as the single most critical determinant governing brand loyalty.

Leahy (2008) ^[7] mentioned that brand loyalty within fast-moving consumer good (FMCG) markets develops through a multi-dimensional interplay of both rational cognitive evaluations and deep emotional attachments. Qualitative analysis indicates that while functional parameters like product performance, reliable quality, and perceived value for money drive cognitive preferences, familial traditions and consumer nostalgia cultivate emotional responses.

Gupta (2026) ^[5] mentioned that the hyper-growth of India's quick commerce (q-commerce) sector has fundamentally altered urban grocery-buying habits, establishing a highly consolidated digital retail arena led dominantly by platforms like Blinkit (3.pdf pp. 1-2). Survey data reveals that overall platform cost-effectiveness—specifically low delivery fees and minimal handling charges—outweighs sub-15-minute delivery speed promises as the primary driver of brand preference.

Mazhar *et al.* (2022) ^[11] mentioned that negative service disconfirmation during online shopping experiences—such as delivery delays, item stockouts, or inaccurate orders—severely undercuts e-commerce profitability by triggering customer switching intentions and eroding repeat purchases. Employing structural equation modeling, the research validates that an active service recovery framework acts as a critical moderator to mitigate these adverse behavioral effects.

Research Gap

While current digital retail research captures the initial consumer adoption factors of quick commerce (q-commerce) in India—such as the role of micro-convenience, low-friction mobile user interfaces, and 10-to-30-minute delivery execution—there remains a critical, unaddressed research gap regarding how platform-mediated algorithmic gatekeeping systematically erodes traditional fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) manufacturer loyalty and replaces it with platform-specific ecosystem dependency. Existing literature largely evaluates brand loyalty through traditional, product-centric lenses (e.g., price sensitivity, product quality, and emotional attachments). However, q-commerce environments alter standard decision-making processes. A robust academic study should target the intersection of the following three unexamined dimensions in urban Indian markets

Research Objectives

RO – 1	To study the concept and evolution of quick commerce strategies in India with special reference to Karnataka.
RO – 2	To identify the major factors influencing consumer buying behaviour in quick commerce platforms.
RO – 3	To analyse the impact of delivery speed on impulse buying behaviour among quick commerce users.

Variable Identification

Independent Variables	Mediating Variables	Dependent Variables
IV1: Delivery Time Pressure	M1: Instant Gratification Urge	DV1: Impulse Buying Behaviour
IV2: Scarcity Cues	M2: Hyperbolic Discounting Tendency	DV2: Brand Loyalty Erosion
IV3: Personalization Algorithms	M3: Platform Trust Levels	
IV4: Low-Friction UX	M4: Habit Formation Intensity	
	M5: Loss Aversion	

Research Implications

Theoretical Implications (Advancing Academic Literature)

- **Deconstruction of the S-O-R Paradigm:** This model expands traditional Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) applications by proving that in hyper-fast digital retail, logistical delivery speed and interface friction minimization act as more potent cognitive stimuli ((S\)) than traditional price discounts or product quality indicators.

Managerial Implications (Strategic Insights for Brands & Platforms)

- **The Inevitability of Availability:** Since instant gratification overrides brand dedication, manufacturing firms must prioritize strict hyper-local dark store inventory accuracy over top-of-funnel marketing. If a product is out of stock for a single delivery window, the consumer is systematically routed to a competitor via algorithmic substitution.

Policy & Institutional Implications (Socio-Economic & Regulatory Frameworks)

- **Levelling the Digital Marketplace via ONDC:** This study provides regulatory bodies, such as the Competition Commission of India (CCI), with empirical proof of how algorithmic gatekeeping and platform-owned private labels restrict consumer information search. This evidence underscores the structural necessity of supporting open, decentralized frameworks like the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) to protect small merchants and independent corporate brands.

Conclusion

This study examines the structural transformation of urban retail in India, exploring how quick commerce (q-commerce) platforms alter consumer buying behavior and erode traditional fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) manufacturer loyalty. Adapting the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework alongside core behavioral economics principles, the conceptual model tests how platform-driven stimuli—including delivery time pressure, scarcity cues, and low-friction user interfaces—alter internal consumer psychological states to drive unplanned, impulse-driven purchases.

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