

## **The Impact of Quick Commerce on Consumer Behavior and Economic Trends in India: A Systematic Review**

Risbaa Singh

Shiv Nadar School Gurgaon

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The rapid growth of e-commerce in India, driven by technological advancements and increased internet penetration, has significantly influenced consumer behavior and economic trends. Quick commerce (q-commerce), a subset of e-commerce focusing on rapid delivery of goods, has emerged as a significant part of e-commerce.*

*Q-commerce's impact extends beyond convenience; it reshapes consumer expectations and behaviors. Factors such as perceived benefits, socio-demographic influences, social pressures, and ease of use drive consumer engagement. The appeal of quick delivery, combined with secure transactions and comprehensive service quality, improves consumer satisfaction and loyalty. However, challenges such as regulatory hurdles, infrastructure limitations, and intense competition persist. Addressing these through strategic planning, innovation, and government support is crucial for sustained growth.*

*The economic implications of q-commerce are insightful. It attracts significant investment, stimulates market expansion, and transforms retail landscapes. Despite the potential, q-commerce businesses face sustainability challenges, including high operational costs, traffic congestion, and environmental impact. This systematic review expounds how q-commerce influences consumer behavior in India, offering insights for stakeholders to navigate this continuously changing environment and take advantage of the opportunities. Understanding these changing aspects is critical for informed decision-making and maintaining a competitive edge in the rapidly evolving q-commerce sector.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background to the Study**

The rapid growth of e-commerce in India, driven by technological advancements and increased

internet penetration, has significantly influenced consumer behavior and economic trends (Koli et al., 2023). Quick commerce, or q-commerce, is a subset of e-commerce focusing on ultra-fast delivery of goods and is changing the retail setting and consumer expectations and behaviors in India.

The proliferation of smartphones and internet access, including 4G services, has significantly boosted the e-commerce sector in India, creating a favorable environment for q-commerce (Khosla & Kumar, 2017; Pallivalappil & Jagadeesha, 2021; Sharma, 2016; Geetha & Shetty, 2017). Government initiatives like Digital India and the reduction in data costs have further accelerated the adoption of e-commerce (Khosla & Kumar, 2017; Geetha & Shetty, 2017). Therefore, technological advancements and internet penetration facilitates great opportunities for e-commerce, and particularly, q-commerce.

The young, tech-savvy population in India, coupled with rising living standards and a growing middle class, has driven the demand for q-commerce (Khosla & Kumar, 2017; Geetha & Shetty, 2017; Sharma, 2016; Akther, 2023). The convenience of online shopping and the increasing preference for mobile commerce are pivotal factors in the growth of q-commerce (Akther, 2023; Mittal & Sharma, 2023). The efficiency potential that comes with e-commerce is creating a global culture that is influencing the consumer behavior of the tech-savvy demographic that is constantly increasing. This influence in turn creates the need to further explore the possibilities of q-commerce.

E-commerce, including q-commerce, is a significant contributor to India's economic growth, with projections indicating substantial market expansion (Pallivalappil & Jagadeesha, 2021). The sector has attracted considerable investment from both domestic and international investors, highlighting its potential for further growth (Pallivalappil & Jagadeesha, 2021). The projected economic growth in q-commerce has already seen investors come in, making it necessary to understand the dynamics of q-commerce in-order for various stakeholders to make informed decisions that will offer them a competitive edge in the landscape.

Despite its growth, the e-commerce sector in India faces challenges such as regulatory hurdles, infrastructure limitations, and intense competition (Khosla & Kumar, 2017; Sharma, 2016; Akther, 2023). Addressing these challenges through strategic planning, government support, and innovation can unlock further growth opportunities for quick commerce (Sharma, 2016; Akther, 2023). However, it is important that stakeholders begin by getting a comprehensive understanding of the consumer behavior changes associated with q-commerce. Analyzing consumer behavior for business development ensures competitiveness and helps implement reliable, effective, and flexible marketing strategies that guarantee profits and sales (Zhao et al., 2021). Therefore, this systematic review aimed to understand how q-commerce has changed

consumer behavior in India.

### **Statement of the Problem**

It has been established in research that the rapid growth of e-commerce in India has considerably affected consumer behavior and economic trends (Koli et al., 2023). The influence is fueled by technological advancements and internet penetration which enables great potential, particularly, in q-commerce (Khosla & Kumar, 2017; Pallivalappil & Jagadeesha, 2021; Sharma, 2016; Geetha & Shetty, 2017).

E-commerce, largely influenced by q-commerce, is projected to grow in terms of its percentage contribution to India's economy with substantial investments already made in the sector (Pallivalappil & Jagadeesha, 2021). Despite its growth, the e-commerce sector in India faces challenges such as regulatory hurdles, infrastructure limitations, and intense competition (Khosla & Kumar, 2017; Sharma, 2016; Akther, 2023). Most of the existing literature focuses on how e-commerce as a whole influences consumer behavior as opposed to focusing on q-commerce. Therefore, it is important to understand how q-commerce has influenced consumer behavior in India in order to make informed decisions that will offer a competitive edge to various players in the sector.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. The general objective of the study is to understand how q-commerce in India has influenced consumer behavior. The specific objectives will be as follows;
2. To identify and analyze the q-commerce factors driving consumer behavior in India.
3. To understand how q-commerce has influenced consumer behavior in India.
4. To evaluate the economic impacts of consumer behavior changes resulting from q-commerce in India.
5. To examine the sustainability challenges associated with the growth of q-commerce in India, considering consumer behavior trends.

### **Research Questions**

The general research question is how has q-commerce influenced consumer behavior in India? The specific research questions are as follows:

1. What are the q-commerce factors driving consumer behavior in India?

2. How has q-commerce influenced consumer behavior in India?
3. What is the economic impact of consumer behavior changes resulting from q-commerce in India?
4. What is the sustainability challenges associated with the growth of q-commerce in India, considering consumer behavior trends?

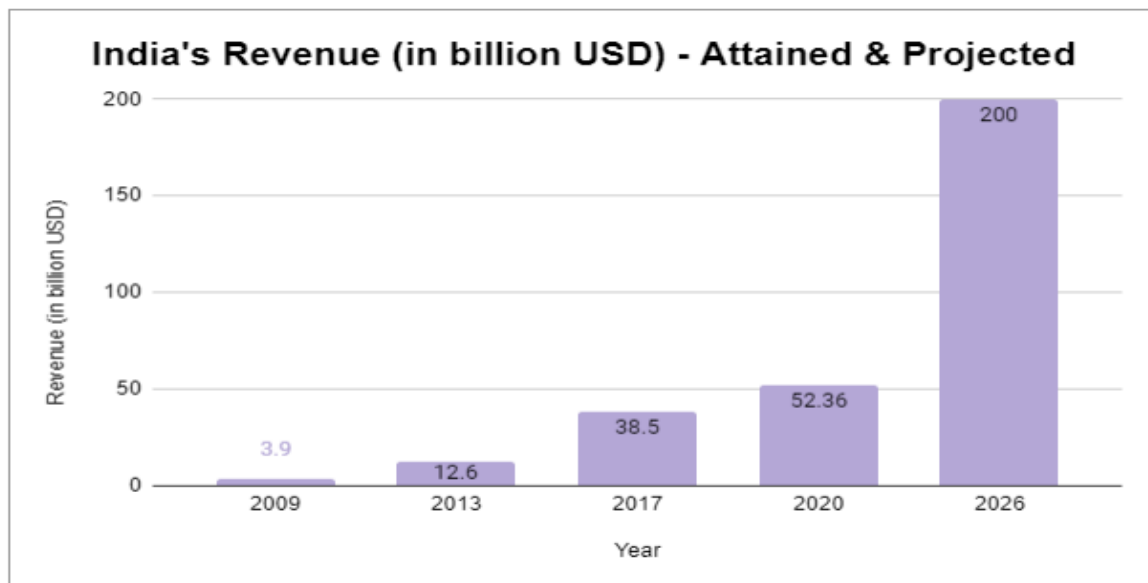
## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Overview of E-commerce in India

E-commerce refers to the buying and selling of goods and services over the internet. This sector has seen significant growth in India over the past decade, driven by technological advancements and increased internet penetration. The e-commerce industry in India has experienced rapid growth, with revenues increasing by 36% in 2020 alone (Khan 2014; Kumar, 2021). Online business in India grew from 3.9 billion US\$ in 2009 to 12.6 billion US\$ in 2013, and 38.5 billion US\$ in 2017 (Babde, 2022). E-commerce has become a catalyst to the development of the Indian economy, replacing traditional business and trade with online shopping and trade. India's e-commerce market is projected to reach 200 billion US dollars by 2026, doubling the nation's GDP from 125 billion to 250 billion by 2020 (Srivastava & Singh, 2023).

**Figure 1:**

*India's projected revenue growth in USD billions.*



This growth is attributed to several factors, including the widespread use of mobile devices, increased consumer confidence in online shopping, and government reforms supporting the sector (Kumar, 2021; Anand, 2023). For example, the Indian government has allowed 100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in business-to-business e-commerce and in the marketplace model of e-commerce, which has further fueled this growth (Kumar, 2021).

Several factors present significant opportunities for India's e-commerce sector including a large youth population, rising standard of living, and rapid expansion in information and communication technology (Gojiya, 2023). The sector is expected to continue growing, with more businesses moving their operations online and consumers becoming more comfortable with online transactions. Electronic gadgets like phones and personal computers are increasingly becoming affordable and the growing use of the internet have also contributed to the sector's expansion (Panigrahi et al., 2016).

Despite its growth, the e-commerce sector in India faces several challenges. These include poor telecom infrastructure, lack of strict legal regulations, and varying social and educational attitudes towards e-commerce (Anand, 2023). Online fraud and corruption are also significant issues, with many consumers unaware of the risks associated with online transactions (Alam & Ali, 2020). Additionally, the sector's growth rate still lags behind that of other developed countries (Gojiya, 2023).

The future of e-commerce in India looks promising, with the sector expected to continue its rapid growth. The distinction between traditional and e-commerce is becoming increasingly blurred, with more companies integrating online operations into their business models (Alam & Ali, 2020). The sector's expansion is also expected to benefit various industries, including banking, tourism, media, and retail.

### **Growth of Quick Commerce**

Q-commerce, a subset of e-commerce characterized by rapid delivery of goods, has similarly seen significant growth in India. This growth is driven by changing consumer behaviors, technological advancements, and strategic business decisions by key players in the market (Singh, 2023). Q-commerce has evolved from the growth of e-commerce where more players are increasingly entering the space hence the need to find a competitive edge even within e-commerce. One such solution is the speed and convenience of delivery, resolving the consumer's pain points with regard to the uncertainty of delivery for delivery windows like same-day delivery and two-day delivery (Singh, 2023; Ganapathy & Gupta, 2024).

One example where q-commerce has made significant inroads in India is the large grocery retail market. The grocery retail market in India is vast, with traditional brick-and-mortar stores

dominating. However, the online grocery segment, though currently small, is expected to grow significantly due to high incomes, changing purchase behaviors, and a preference for speed and convenience (Singh, 2023). The high projected growth of q-commerce is can be attributed to the high cash burn nature and the strategic moves by companies like Zomato, which acquired Blinkit to enter this market (Singh, 2023), and Quick Freshes, an e-commerce platform connecting customers to local retailers in India, empowering local retailers and creating a sustainable e-commerce ecosystem (Poudar et al., 2023).

### **Consumer Behavior Shifts**

The rapid growth of q-commerce in India has significantly influenced consumer behavior, particularly in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector. Q-commerce has contributed to a notable increase in FMCG sector growth, with a double-digit rise anticipated due to consumer spending rebound and favorable macroeconomic indicators (Kumar et al., 2017; Sharma et al., 2022).

Consumers prioritize secure and reliable systems, with cash on delivery being a preferred payment method. Effective customer care services and comprehensive website information are crucial for building trust in e-commerce (Chawla & Kumar, 2022). The convenience and incentives offered by mobile commerce applications drive impulsive purchases and enhance the overall shopping experience. However, impulsiveness can negatively impact repurchase intentions (Chopdar & Balakrishnan, 2020).

The rise of organized retail and online marketing has led to significant changes in consumer behavior, with businesses needing to adapt their strategies to meet evolving consumer needs (Kumar et al., 2017).

### **Economic Impact**

E-commerce, including q-commerce, has been a catalyst for the development of the Indian economy, driving growth through increased internet accessibility and innovative business models (James & Parashar, 2018; Babde, 2022; Srivastava & Singh, 2023). The rapid expansion of the e-commerce market is projected to significantly boost India's GDP, with estimates showing a doubling of GDP driven by digital commerce (Srivastava & Singh, 2023).

E-commerce has enhanced international trade and investment, leading to increased output and employment in India. This is evident from the rise in exports and the demand for skilled managers (Khan et al., 2014; Takkar & Sharma, 2021). Trade liberalization and reduced tariffs have further boosted firm productivity, particularly in import-competing industries, complementing the growth driven by e-commerce.

The shift from traditional business models to online shopping has been significant, with consumers increasingly preferring the convenience and flexibility offered by e-commerce platforms (Khan et al., 2014; James & Parashar, 2018; Mittal & Sharma, 2023). Critical infrastructural features such as convenient payment methods, fast delivery, and customer-oriented schemes have played a crucial role in the development of the e-commerce market in India (Babde, 2022).

E-commerce has not only transformed economic activities but also brought about social changes by making a wide range of products and services accessible to a larger population (Khan et al., 2014; Mittal & Sharma, 2023).

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Systematic Review Approach**

Systematic reviews are a cornerstone of evidence-based research, providing a structured and replicable method for synthesizing existing studies to answer specific research questions.

This approach is characterized by its rigorous methodology, which includes comprehensive literature searches, critical appraisal of studies, and synthesis of findings (Siddaway et al., 2019).

According to Lockwood et al. (2018), a systematic review is a qualitative research methodology that aims to provide an executive summary of existing literature subject to a study's research question. Broadly, systematic review entails gathering secondary data from the present literature by designing an inclusion criterion, followed by searching as extensively as possible to identify various research projects that meet the referred inclusion criteria. The final step entails the extraction and combination of data to produce meaningful results.

To achieve this study's objectives, a systematic review was adopted and is an ideal methodology for this research because it ensures a comprehensive and unbiased review of existing literature. The approach is structured, minimizes risk of bias, transparently documents the approach hence the study can be replicated, and hence the findings are accurate and generalizable. Additionally, systematic reviews facilitate the identification of research gaps and inconsistencies, guiding future research efforts.

### **Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

The inclusion criteria entailed the following three items;

1. The study is published in a peer-reviewed journal.
2. The study was published within the last five years (2020 to 2024).



3. The study is relevant to the research objectives.
4. The study is based on India.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

This systematic review was defined by and focused on the research questions to search for articles in the following databases: Google Scholar, PubMed Central (PMC), the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), the Bielefeld Academic Search Engine (BASE), the Social Science Research Network (SSRN), the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), and EconBiz. The articles were searched using the title and the research questions first before using different permutations and combinations of key words and phrases while limiting the timeline to only as far back as 2020. The inclusion criteria were then applied on the articles found to determine the articles to use for the analysis. The articles were then analyzed using content analyses to establish dominant themes that would comprehensively respond to the research questions. The process resulted in 12 articles that were used to respond to the research questions.

### **FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS**

#### **Q-Commerce Factors Driving Consumer Behavior**

There are many factors that influence consumer behavior in q-commerce. There is a positive and significant correlation between the intention of ordering through the q-commerce apps and the perceived benefits, socio-demographic, social influence, and perceived ease of use (Deepthi & Bansal, 2023). It is expected that every user conducts a cost benefit analysis based on these factors to decide whether to order or not (Malhotra, 2022). For example, factors including price, the perceived usefulness, and information quality of the Foodpanda (now Ola Foods) application have significant influences toward the consumer behavioral intention to use the food delivery service (Aryani et al., 2022).

In addition to pricing and convenience, Bharathithasan and Srinivasan (2024) posit that security is also significantly correlated to consumer decision. Consumers face problems in terms of their information security when they occasionally feel that the retailers ask for more information than necessary. However, consumers still prefer the q-commerce option since it offers convenience and even if it is priced higher, they choose it to save time. The consumer's security and trust play a major part in the q-commerce sector since they want to ensure that they make safe transactions with an online platform with no malicious intentions (Ahmed & Shafighi, 2022). Therefore, q-commerce players must proactively go out of their way to ensure customer information is secured in order to achieve a competitive edge over rivals.



Incentives and disincentives also play a major role in the decision between shopping at a store in a mall and ordering online. The incentives provided by online applications to its consumers include a same day delivery and quick delivery within 10-minutes hence reduced waiting times, especially in comparison to in-person shopping, a one stop shop for all daily essentials, and a wider range of items (Malhotra, 2022). In particular, the speed of delivery significantly affects the consumer choice between one q-commerce platform and another (Mukhopadhyay, 2023).

The disincentives faced by the online platforms users include limited variety of goods offered by the application and impersonal relation with the grocery vendors when compared with in-person shopping (Malhotra, 2022). Additionally, while deals and offers act as incentives to shoppers, consumers find greater deals in physical stores and shopping malls than on q-commerce websites (Sharma et al., 2022). Consumers demand speedy delivery of high-quality goods, and a diverse selection of goods at sensible prices which are two main factors that can attract more individuals to online shopping (Sharma et al., 2022). Therefore, this can be borrowed when q-commerce platforms are trying to achieve a competitive edge and attempt to provide these incentives that favor in-person shopping in order to be ahead of the pack.

The other point of view of the q-commerce factors that impact consumer behavior is the logistics service quality. The quality of personal contact, product availability, shipment condition, order accuracy, and timely product delivery considerably affects customer satisfaction, with order accuracy being the factor with the most impact (Almuani et al., 2024). The logistics efficiency determines how q-commerce customers behave towards a brand.

Furthermore, both order discrepancy and cash on delivery handling significantly affects customer trust. Customer satisfaction and trust further impact on customer loyalty, though in multi-group analysis, their relative importance varies between ages. While the older customers value product availability and cash on delivery more than the younger clients, the younger customers prioritize speed of delivery and are less concerned on personal contact with the delivery personnel (Almuani et al., 2024). Therefore, different demographics may need to be handled differently.

Q-commerce business leaders must have a clear understanding of how to plan their q-commerce journey, mainly with regard to the business model they will choose and how they will anchor themselves to be in tandem with the factors that favor desired consumer behavior, should it be choosing an acquisition option or developing internal skills and/ or capacity (Mukhopadhyay, 2023). These findings offer valuable insights for q-commerce platforms to customize their strategies to the diverse priorities of different customer segments and improve the consumers' trust, satisfaction, and loyalty (Almuani et al., 2024).

**Table: 1: Summary of the factors driving consumer behavior in q-commerce**

Factor	Description
Delivery Speed	Customers prioritize rapid delivery times, which is a key influence on their choice of q-commerce services.
Product Availability	Availability of a wide range of products impacts customer satisfaction and loyalty.
Convenience	The ease of use and accessibility of the q-commerce platform affect customer behavior and preference.
Price Sensitivity	Competitive pricing and promotions influence customers' purchasing decisions and overall behavior.
Customer Service	Quality of customer service, including support and complaint resolution, plays a significant role in customer satisfaction.
Technology Adoption	The integration of advanced technologies (e.g., mobile apps, AI) enhances user experience and attracts customers.
Trust and Security	Assurance of secure transactions and data protection affects customers' trust and willingness to engage.

### **The Influence of Q-commerce on Consumer Behavior**

As the q-commerce industry continues growing, the expectations and behavior of consumers continuously develop and hence it is important for business leaders to understand these behavioral changes. Consumers expect the q-commerce process to be smooth, quick, logical and secure (Ganapathy & Gupta, 2024). The speed of delivery creates the urge to re-order for other products from the same platform (Mukhopadhyay, 2023). Therefore, q-commerce businesses will have to consistently deliver within the time-frames promised or even shorter periods.

A crucial behavior identified in research is the fact that consumers are motivated by the notion of fast delivery but delivery charges imposed by q-commerce platforms negatively influences their purchase decision (Ganapathy & Gupta, 2024). As individuals buy products online for saving time and money, they expect the q-commerce players to do free home delivery of the same (Salini, 2023). This places a substantial economic pressure on the e-commerce businesses, which perhaps may explain the struggle with breaking even.

There are changes in consumer behavior that may affect both substitute and complimentary goods. The unexpected purchase intention sparked by the ultra-fast delivery has the possibility to disrupt other consumer markets. For example, if a consumer uses canned juice to substitute for fresh oranges to make freshly blended juice, a q-commerce incentive like the 10- minutes delivery may negatively impact on the canned juice market. Alternatively, the market for appliances may be affected negatively due to long-term changes in intention about storage and

refrigeration (Mukhopadhyay, 2023). Therefore, the q-commerce question is complex and may hit markets that are not anticipated at all.

### **The Economic Impacts of Q-Commerce-Related Consumer Behavior Changes**

Whereas no studies directly investigated the economic impact of the consumer behavioral changes resulting from q-commerce, these can be inferred from the other findings. Consumers expect seamless logistics at little to no cost (Ganapathy & Gupta, 2024). This will have implications of reduced profit margins for the q-commerce players because more operational costs will go into ensuring logistical efficiency while needing to reduce the selling price to meet the changing customer expectation. While this may increase jobs in the q-commerce industry, there are other options like robotics which again require significant floor space to operate efficiently. There is also the possibility of affecting other markets like appliances due to the reduced long-term need for refrigeration (Mukhopadhyay, 2023) which will have a negative economic impact on the particular industry. Therefore, the economic impact is not certain and may require further investigations.

In an attempt to meet customer expectations while still remaining profitable, measures such as changing business models like on-boarding of neighborhood shops (kirana stores) by q-commerce players may be necessary to create a win-win situation (Ganapathy & Gupta, 2024). Local stores have always relied on walk-ins clients but with a digital presence, they can join hands with q-commerce players thus significantly altering the economic outlook for both the local entitie and the q-commerce players.

### **Sustainability Challenges Associated With the Growth of Q-Commerce**

The customer behavior of expecting rapid delivery comes with a number of sustainability challenges for the q-commerce business model. Inaccurate GPS locations result in breach of delivery times promises for customers and hence order cancellations as the technology may not always be able to find the address easily or may not even navigate close to the actual address (Reddy et al., 2022). Therefore, technological advances are necessary to ensure kept promises to maintain customer satisfaction. Traffic congestion coupled with riding risks can confound the problem further. Whereas inventive ways can be explored to ensure minimum delivery time, delivery timelines cannot be always under the control of the supplier (Ganapathy & Gupta, 2024).

Other challenges include raising capital, free deliveries, deep discounts, low average order value, carbon footprint, customer stickiness, intense competition, and safety of delivery partners (Ranjekar & Roy, 2023). Rising competition in the q-commerce sector and rising customer expectations such as live order tracking, order cancellations and returns, and speed in delivery

would require q-commerce businesses to be agile and flexible. They would need hybrid business models that help in quick warehouse order fulfillment complemented by efficient logistics to deliver the goods.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **Conclusions**

The general objective of the study is to understand how q-commerce in India has influenced consumer behavior. The study used 12 peer-reviewed articles published within the past five years (2020 to 2024). The findings show that perceived benefits, socio-demographic factors, social influence, and perceived ease of use affect consumer behavior. Price, perceived usefulness, and information quality as well play significant roles in influencing consumer behavior in q-commerce. Security concerns impact consumer decisions, although consumers prefer q-commerce for its convenience. Incentives like quick delivery and a wide range of items, along with logistics service quality and order accuracy, significantly affect consumer behavior and satisfaction. Q-commerce business leaders must position their organizations such that they acquire or retain the factors that encourage desired consumer behavior.

As the q-commerce industry grows, consumer behavior is significantly influenced by the expectation of smooth, quick, logical, and secure processes. The appeal of fast delivery drives repeat purchases, but delivery charges negatively impact purchase decisions. Consumers prefer free home delivery to save time and money. Rapid delivery can also influence markets for substitute and complementary goods.

The economic impact of q-commerce resulting from consumer behavior changes includes reduced profit margins for q-commerce players due to the high operational costs of meeting logistics expectations and the need to offer affordable prices. The demand for certain appliances, like refrigerators, may decrease due to reduced long-term storage needs. To balance profitability and customer expectations, q-commerce businesses may consider partnerships with local stores, changing the economic outlook for both sectors.

The sustainability challenges in the q-commerce business model are significant due to the consumer demand for rapid delivery. Inaccurate GPS locations can lead to order cancellations, traffic congestion and riding risks further complicate timely deliveries, which are not always under the supplier's control. Additionally, q-commerce faces challenges such as raising capital, providing free deliveries, offering deep discounts, managing low average order values, reducing carbon footprints, ensuring customer loyalty, handling intense competition, and maintaining the safety of delivery partners. Adapting hybrid business models that combine quick warehouse fulfillment with efficient logistics is essential for meeting these demands.

## **Recommendations**

For future research, scholars should consider investigating q-commerce in itself and not as e-commerce as a whole. The articles identified mostly covered e-commerce and not q-commerce in particular. Narrowing down the scope will allow for more comprehensive answers that can be directly implemented in practice. For example, specific behavioral changes attributed to q-commerce will enable researchers to reveal interesting patterns like what other sectors or industries will be impacted.

For practice, q-commerce managers should consider the future challenges and integrate business models that will ensure long-term profitability given the behavioral changes.

Additionally, business leaders in all sectors should conduct an assessment of how q-commerce may affect them, like how it may impact the appliances sector.

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