

# Growth of Q-Commerce Industry in South Asia: Challenges and Opportunities

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## Abstract

The study is based on understanding the opportunities and challenges of the q-commerce industry in South Asia. In the market, people are relying more on the q-commerce because of the fast delivery and convenience that they get. As the industry is shifting more towards bringing easiness in people's life, people still face problems in it. This study is focused on understanding the needs of the q-commerce customers and the opportunities that the industry must overcome those problems. The methodology of the study is quantitative where questionnaires are conducted from the q-commerce customers. In addition, it is concluded, based on regression analysis, that all three factors (Pricing, Convenience, and Security) are significantly correlated with the consumer decision. The results of the study show that the customers face problems in terms of the security when they sometimes feel that the stores seek for more information than necessary. Further they still prefer this option because of their convenience and even if it is at a little high price, they opt for it to save time.

**Keywords:** Q-Commerce, Consumer Decision, Pricing, Convenience, Security.

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## I. Introduction

Q-commerce, also known as quick commerce, is a type of e-commerce that focuses on fast deliveries, typically in less than an hour. Q-commerce began with food delivery, and it still accounts for the majority of the company's revenue. Customers who require immediate delivery may be willing to try new products and shop at new locations (Lueg, 2020; Brahme,2022). The added convenience of fast commerce allows online retailers to compete with large multinational marketplaces such as Amazon as well as other stores. It combines the benefits of traditional e-commerce with last-mile delivery innovations. The premise is largely the same, with delivery speed being the primary differentiator (Purcarea, 2021). If quick commerce survives the initial hiccups and challenges, to make the business sustainable, it must continue to create private labels. The road to sustainability is arduous. There are no shortcuts. Every major retailer requires a warehouse network (Černikovaitė, 2021; Bhujbal,2022).

There are many reasons for the success of the quick commerce industry, and the major reason is that the delivery time in the e-commerce industry was not fast, which is why quick commerce is thriving today. Almost every essential and commodity of life falls under the category of quick commerce, including grocery deliveries and food. Speedy delivery is a model that differentiates the quick commerce model from (Černikovaitė, 2021). The e-commerce model, which was previously very popular and the only option available for the consumers. Consumers were looking for something more efficient and faster; that is why quick commerce was introduced and was a huge success worldwide. Nowadays, consumers expect that all the deliveries of their online orders should be shipped to them immediately, and they should receive them as early as possible and sometimes within one day only. The model of quick commerce in grocery supplies started getting recognition in 2020 when the pandemic was rising the most, and people were moving towards the online shopping experience because they could not go outside of their homes due to the pandemic (Černikovaitė, 2021). Customers frequently used the internet to order everything, including groceries and medicine; even if they needed it to talk with their doctors, they were making online consultations. The world was connected digital throughout the pandemic, so advantage was taken of this factor, and quick commerce was introduced to the world. There was a Global Health crisis, and according to Statista.com, more than 190 million people in South Asia (Pakistan and India) were using the internet to order everything online and keep in touch with their family and friends. People were becoming more health-conscious during this time, which is why they are interested in ordering healthy grocery ingredients by using the internet and receiving the goods on their doorstep without having to go outside. This is the exact model of quick commerce and how this works because the goods

ordered by the customers are delivered to them within a few hours or minutes, depending on the customer's location (Purcarea, 2021). This situation raises the question of whether the quick commerce business model will go out of the trend, and people will not be interested in it once the pandemic ends. However, that was not the case because people already experienced the benefits, they got from the quick commerce business model and how convenient it was for their daily life and routine. Customers liked the idea that goods and services were delivered within a few hours to their doorstep, and they didn't have to hassle at all to get their hands on those goods and services (Giampoldaki, et al, 2021). That is why the quick commerce business model is here to stay and is not going out of trend anytime soon. It is here to stay in South Asia because people like to order their groceries online and get hands-on with their daily essentials without having to go outside depending on the scorching heat and other weather conditions. It is a very effective business model because a small delivery fee is charged from the consumers, and then services are delivered to their doorstep (Yahya, 2020). The objective of the study is to analyze through systematic analysis regarding the effectiveness of Q-commerce in the industry and for the people that utilizes it. The empirical analysis will indicate the importance and the necessity of Q-commerce in the industry and why it is essential to adapt into for the future.

## **II. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Consumer Decision in Q-commerce in South Asia**

Consumers' decision before purchasing on a q-commerce website or a mobile application is a dependent variable that is dependent on three different factors. These three factors include convenience for the consumers, the amount of risk involved (security), and the pricing of the product they purchase from the q-commerce website. Gaining the trust of the consumer plays a vital role in making a positive decision of the consumer about making a purchase (Arifah, Suryani and Samopa, 2022). To gain the consumer's trust and increase their loyalty to the q-commerce website, it is essential to use social media platforms to integrate the customers' views and then alter their decision-making process. First, the q-commerce brands need to provide value for money to the consumers, and then they can build online trust with the consumers and start getting more orders online. Building trust by providing value for money is important for every online business so that they can increase their number of returning customers and improve customer retention, which is important for the profitability of the company in the long run. This is the only way to shape a business model that is not only going to be sustainable but also provide customer satisfaction to the customers who are interested in shopping from q-commerce businesses.

### **2.2 Pricing in Growth Of Q-Commerce Industry in South Asia**

Almost a decade ago, consumers did not use to be vigilant enough to thoroughly find out about a particular brand or business owner before purchasing from them. However, the tables have turned now, and the consumer of today has become a smart consumer who is more focused on learning more about the brand and comparing the pricing and other features of the products on the competitors' websites (Chen, Wu and Hsu, 2019). This is especially true in the case of Q-commerce because there are multiple Q-commerce platforms available online in the form of different websites and mobile applications for the smartphone. There is tough competition in the world of Q-commerce, and every business owner looks forward to increasing their daily sales and transactions. Due to this tough competition, multiple E-commerce businesses and brands offer similar types of products and services (Weisstein, 2016). When the competitors of a q-commerce business are offering similar products, then customer retention is at risk because it can decrease to a great extent if the customer is not getting value for their money in one place. If the consumer is not getting value for money at one platform, it will not take them a lot of time to jump on to another platform that is providing them with similar products and services along with value for their money. Another great pricing strategy for the Q commerce platforms online is to highlight the price drop in red color and circle the percentage of discounts on the platform online. This will give a vibe to the consumers that they don't want to miss this offer. It will not only make up the consumer's mind to purchase your platform but will also stop them from jumping to the platform or website of your competitors.

### **2.3 Convenience of consumers in the Growth Of Q-Commerce Industry in South Asia**

The first and the sole reason for the growth in the q-commerce industry is the convenience it provides to consumers every day. Undoubtedly, the Q commerce industry was on the rise during the pandemic. That is when it benefited worldwide consumers because it enabled them to get their hands on the products, they need every day without having to go outside (Pham, et al, 2018). Q Commerce provides a lot of convenience to consumers because they can choose the payment method of their choice. By providing the consumers with different payment options, it is possible to make up the consumer's mind, and it also helps the consumer decision making positively (Fazal-e-Hasan, 2019). According to a survey conducted by smart insights, almost 13% of the people believe that convenience is the most important factor when purchasing anything from a q-commerce platform online (Unknown, 2020). However, it is important to note that convenience is not a major

factor in the initial stage of decision-making when the consumer is thinking about purchasing something from a q-commerce platform rather than visiting the retail store to purchase the same product or availing of the same service. The factor of convenience will arise during the time of checking out from the Q commerce platform and how much convenience that process will provide to the consumers. This is the stage where most consumers pay a lot of attention. If the checking-out option at the Q commerce website is complicated, then the chances are that consumers will abandon the cart even if it is full. In the end, it can be said that the amount of convenience that the retailer provides to the consumers will directly impact the consumer decision-making process.

#### **2.4. Security in the Growth Of Q-Commerce Industry in South Asia**

The consumer's security and trust play a vital role in the Q commerce industry. It is also directly related to consumer decision-making and whether they are going to end up purchasing the Q-commerce platform or not. This factor is important for consumers because they want to ensure that they make safe transactions with an online platform with no malicious intent (Badotra and Sundas, 2021). This issue can be resolved for the consumers by the platform by ensuring that they are implementing protocols for the safety and related concerns of the consumers on the platform. The first strategy is to provide privacy to the consumers because it is important to smart consumers nowadays that the activities, they perform online will not cause any breach of their data (Al-Khalaf, 2020). Every q-commerce platform needs to ensure that they are not providing their consumers' data to any third party, and then they will be able to build a more trusting relationship with their consumers in the long run. Minimum Firewall and encryption are important to implement in the platform so that the security and privacy of the users can be maintained properly. It is an important thing that needs to be done to gain the consumers' trust. If a platform cannot gain the consumers' trust, then it will not be able to turn them into loyal customers, which in return increases customer retention. The next important factor is integration which is a concept that means that all the information that the consumer provides should not be changed at any cost. The next important factor is authentication, which is very important when someone runs a platform online to sell products and services to consumers. It is important for the consumers that the platform they purchase from is authentic. They should believe in real things and prove they have authentic products and services (Hyun, 2022). If online services only provide what they are showing, they will be able to gain the trust of their customers.

### **III. Methodology**

#### **3.1. Research method**

The research method is quantitative as the primary sources were used in the research. The research design used in this study is primary data collection approach via surveys.

#### **3.2. Sampling:**

Even though questions that were asked in a closed-ended questioner with at least 145 responses from different 2 different South Asian countries sample size very large. Similarly, many locals were approached for the questionnaire.

#### **3.3. Validity and reliability**

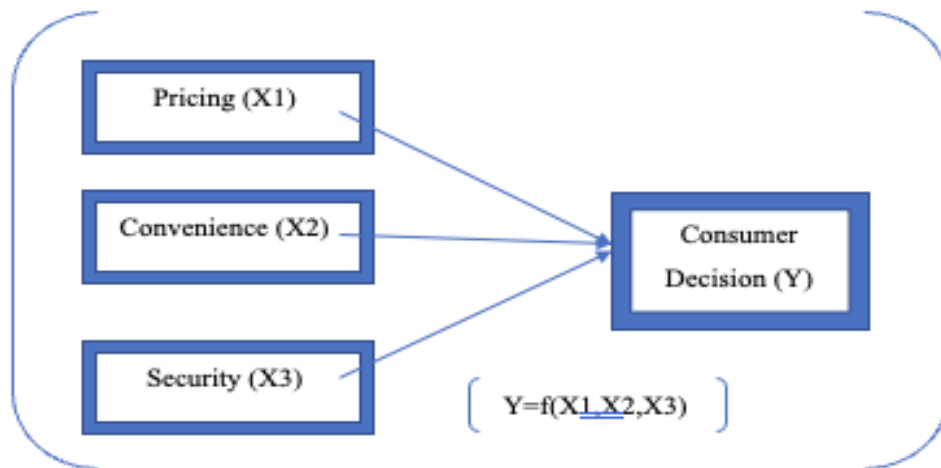
Since the method and technique is high quality and targeted the existing information through analyzing the scholarly literature and comparing it with the primary sources of data therefore it is valid, likewise the data is based on the responses of the individuals hence it is valid.

#### **3.4. Ethical considerations**

In research, ethical considerations are a set of principles that guide your research designs and practices. Voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, potential for harm, and results communication are among these principles. Internally, establishing an ethical practice culture boosts morale and reduces the risks associated with unethical behavior. (Jabbarzare,2019; Jahanshahi,2021)

All names of research participants are kept confidential in accordance with the code of ethics. Similarly, companies involved in the mining industry are kept private. A code of ethics is a set of values and guidelines that individuals and organizations use to guide their decision-making and distinguish between what is right and wrong. They provide an overview of a company's or organizations ethical standards. It entails integrity, objectivity, professional skill, discretion, and professional conduct.

3.5. Research Framework:



IV. Empirical Results

This section presents the empirical results of the study.

4.1 Demographic Summary

Table 1. demographic analysis

	Options	Count	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male	50	34,4
	Female	89	61,3
	Prefer Not to say	6	4,1
<b>Total</b>		145	100
<b>Age</b>	18-25	65	44,8
	25-45	59	40,7
	45+	21	14,49
<b>Total</b>		145	100
<b>Country</b>	Pakistan	104	71,7
	India	40	28,30
	<b>Total</b>	144	100
<b>Marital Status</b>	Unmarried	88	60,70
	Married	49	33,80
	Prefer Not to say	8	5,50
<b>Total</b>		145	100
<b>Highest Degree Completed</b>	High School	36	24,80
	Bachelors	46	31,70
	Masters	32	22,10
	PhD.	20	13,80
	Others	11	7,60
<b>Total</b>		145	100
<b>Employment Status</b>	Employed	44	30,30
	Self Employed	44	30,30
	Entrepreneur	24	16,60
	Unemployed	32	22,10
	Housewife	1	0,7
<b>Total</b>		145	100

4.2 ANOVA Test

Table 2: ANOVA Test (Author’s Findings)

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Significance F
Regression	86.113	3	28.704	44.739	1,4064E-25
Residual	65.449	141	0.464		
<b>Total</b>	151.562	144			

In ANOVA table, Significance F is the most important statistic. This determines if the independent variables explain the variability of the dependent variable in the model. Value of Alpha in the model hypothesis is 0.05 (Usually most used). However, it is important to note that if the value of significance F is going to be smaller as compared to the model hypothesis value, then it means that the regression model is good. Since the value of Significance F is very small (exponent -25), this shows that the model is good to go. Regression analyses are done to measure the effect of independent variables on the dependent variables. This result is showing that there is a significant amount of difference between the mean of the variables. It is an indicator that the variations are seen in the regression analysis. Therefore, to conclude, the Regression Model is statistically significant.

### 4.3. Correlation Analysis

Table 3: Correlation Analysis (Author’s Findings)

	Consumer Decision (DV)	Pricing (IV)	Convenience (IV)	Security (IV)
Consumer Decision (DV)	1			
Pricing (IV)	0,74280470	1		
Convenience (IV)	0,639641392	0,760922442	1	
Security (IV)	0,563072192	0,639196163	0,78816874	1

### Pearson Correlation Test

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Critical Values

Value of Correlation Coefficient	1	0.7-0.9	0.4-0.6	0.1-0.3	0
Strength of Correlation	Perfect	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Zero

The correlation analysis is indicating that the two variables are strongly related to each other and there is a positive correlation between both. The value is between -1 and +1. If the value is closed to plus one, then it is an indicator that the relationship between the variables is strong and direct. As shown in the Table 11, the value between the consumer analysis and the pricing is + 0.7438 which means that there is a high and positive correlation between both variables. Convenience is 0.639 and security is 0.563. It is showing that there is a moderate positive relationship with the dependent variable which is consumer decision.

### 4.4. Reliability by using Cronbach’s Alpha

Table 5: Cronbach’s Alpha (Author’s Findings)

Variables	No. of Items	Alpha Coefficient	Reliability	Std. Deviation	Variance
Consumer Decision	4	0.688		1.442	2.080
Pricing	4	0.596		1.367	1.871
Convenience	9	0.883		1.279	1.63
Security	5	0.862		1.261	1.592

Cronbach's Alpha is utilized to test the reliability or the internal consistency of the test items (Zach, 2021). The value of all independent variables is showing the reliability of the internal consistency of the variables. The Alpha value of the dependent variable is also in an acceptable range and that is why it is going to be considered reliable for measuring the parameter for consumer decision. It is important to note that the Alpha value of pricing is going to fall in the questionable range (Zach, 2021). There are many reasons behind this and many factors affecting this. It also means that there is a need to include more questions in the question. Maybe it is also an indicator that every customer has their requirement in terms of pricing. A third possible reason is that the sample size of 145 respondents is not enough to measure the independent variable of pricing. Many other questions are going to arise regarding the three independent variables and whether they are good enough to measure the dependent variable which is the consumer decision. The answer to this question is positive because it has been proven through the Pearson analysis. It has been seen that the three independent variables have a positive and strong relationship with the dependent variable.

Table 6: R-square

Multiple R	0,75376874
R Square	0,56816731
Adjusted R Square	0,55897938

Standard Error	0,6813099
Observations	145

The data shows the extent to which it is possible to explain it by using the regression model. The value is 0.568 1 which means that 56.8% of the results with this model can be explained. It is proof that the data is a good fit in this regression model. It is important to note that the value of R squared is representing a good variation in the data. However, it is also important to keep in mind that the statistical measure of the data set is dependent on multiple factors.

**Table 7: Regression Analysis (Author's Findings)**

	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>
Intercept	0,31762487	0,2672074	1,18868291	0,23656261
Pricing (IV)	0,67475076	0,09646058	6,99509302	9,8084E-11
Convenience (IV)	0,12277216	0,11949345	1,02743843	0,3059734
Security (IV)	0,09445777	0,09167255	1,03038228	0,30459481

### V. Conclusion And Discussions:

The biggest challenge that Q-commerce is currently facing in South Asia from the perspective of the consumer is that the Q-commerce brands need to provide exceptional customer service to retain the customer. And they also provide all the possible mode for the payment including Cash on delivery and rider bringing machine for the card payments.

The competition among Q-Commerce brands is increasing day by day. New players are entering the market, and everyone is trying to be the market leader and attract and retain more and more consumers. And customer expectations from these stores are increasing with each passing day. On the long run consumer will choose the brand that he thinks is fulfilling his expectations in the best possible way. The Q-commerce brands will need to come up with different strategies to capture the market. They will have to come up with lucrative promotions and deals for their customers. They will need to provide extraordinary customer service to the consumers, and they will also need to be very much mindful of the quality of the products that they are providing.

The biggest challenge that the industry is facing, from the point of view of the consumers is that the Q-commerce brands have so far failed to provide customer service according to expectations of the consumers. The brands need to understand this and need to take it very seriously. The competition among stores is increasing and it will further increase in the future. It will be very difficult to survive for everyone in the market. Brands have to be on top and have to be consistent. A bit of slip up and consumer will prefer another brand.

#### 5.1. Managerial Implications:

It is clear from the results that the people of South Asia are interested in Q-commerce. In fact, 72% people agreed that they would prefer buying online instead of going to the nearest grocery stores. So, customer acquisition and customer retention might not be the biggest challenges for new entrants or for those already in business. But the study suggests that the people want certain things on the consistent basis. They want their order to be delivered within 20 minutes, people are not willing to compromise on quality. As the study is based on 2 South Asian countries, in both countries Cash on delivery is still in fashion, but the study suggest that the rider should bring card machines with them, because around 65% of the people agreed that they fear about entering their information on these Q-commerce stores, so it is understood that they would fear further when entering credit card or other payment information while checkout. Another most important implication is the customer service. People want their concern to be addressed within one hour. There could be any reasons to why the customer's expectation is not met, but on top of that when the customer service is poor, that means the customer is lost now. With the top customer service stores can retain many customers.

Quick commerce is seeking towards the new challenges and is trying to overcome them but with the current struggle and the increasing needs of customers, they are unable to cope up. A lot of businesses are entering in this market every now and then, which is giving a tough time to existing brands. The rising competition is making it more difficult for them to cope up with the needs of their people. The study is giving a clear edge to the future scholars to continue the study in detail with a different methodology. There is a wide research gap, after this research that needs to be filled by the future scholars.

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