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IMPACT OF PRE-SALES AND AFTER-SALES SERVICE QUALITY ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN QUICK COMMERCE PLATFORMS

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Keywords	Abstract
Quick Commerce; Pre-Sales Service Quality; After-Sales Service Quality; Customer Satisfaction; Bangalore City.	Quick commerce (q-commerce) has redefined grocery and convenience retailing in India by compressing delivery windows to ten-twenty minutes through dense networks of dark stores. As speed converges across competitors, service quality before and after the transaction is emerging as the key differentiator. This study examines the relative contribution of pre-sales and after-sales service quality dimensions to customer satisfaction across five leading q-commerce platforms in Bangalore — Blinkit, Zepto, Swiggy Instamart, BigBasket Now, and Flipkart Minutes. A structured questionnaire was administered to 250 active users (50 per platform), and data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, multiple regression, and one-way ANOVA. Both pre-sales and after-sales service quality emerged as significant positive predictors of satisfaction, with after-sales quality exerting a marginally stronger effect. Platforms differed significantly on returns/refunds and complaint resolution despite broadly



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	similar overall satisfaction. The study concludes with managerial implications for differentiating on service quality rather than delivery speed alone, along with limitations and directions for future research.
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1. Introduction

India's retail sector is being reshaped by quick commerce — a hyper-local delivery model that fulfils grocery and daily-necessity orders within ten to twenty minutes. Platforms such as Blinkit, Zepto, Swiggy Instamart, BigBasket Now, and Flipkart Minutes have become established retail channels in metropolitan markets like Bangalore, enabled by concentrated micro-fulfilment centres (dark stores). As ten-minute delivery becomes the norm, competitive differentiation is shifting from speed alone to the overall quality of service. Two dimensions matter most: pre-sales service quality — product availability and variety, application usability, price transparency, and ease of ordering — and after-sales service quality — delivery timeliness, order accuracy, ease of returns, and complaint resolution. Customer satisfaction and continued platform use depend on how well these two dimensions are jointly managed.

Despite the industry's rapid growth, research on the role of pre- and after-sales service quality in driving satisfaction within Indian q-commerce remains scarce, and cross-platform comparisons are rarer still. This study addresses that gap through an empirical comparison of user perceptions across five platforms operating in Bangalore City.

2. Review of Literature

Service-quality literature has long framed customer satisfaction as a function of the gap between expected and perceived performance. The SERVQUAL framework (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy) remains a foundational lens for retail and e-commerce service evaluation, while the SERVPERF approach argues that perceived performance alone is a simpler and equally valid predictor of satisfaction. E-commerce research consistently decomposes service quality into pre-purchase dimensions — usability, information adequacy, assortment, and price transparency, which shape confidence at the point of ordering — and post-purchase dimensions — delivery reliability, order accuracy, ease of returns, and grievance responsiveness, which shape continued use. Studies on Indian online grocery and food-delivery platforms find delivery timeliness and order accuracy to be especially strong predictors of satisfaction given the perishable, time-sensitive nature of these categories.

Emerging q-commerce-specific literature highlights features that distinguish the ten-minute model from conventional e-commerce: a compressed decision window, smaller top-up basket sizes, and heightened sensitivity to even minor delays or substitutions. However, most studies treat q-commerce satisfaction as a single undifferentiated construct rather than separating pre-sales and after-sales components, and cross-platform comparative evidence within a single Indian city remains sparse — a gap this study addresses.

3. Research Gap

Three gaps motivate this study. First, existing literature largely treats q-commerce service quality as unidimensional, without disaggregating the pre-sales and after-sales phases that may affect satisfaction



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unequally. Second, comparative studies across rival platforms in the same city are scarce, despite their value to operators and consumer-welfare regulators in this still largely unregulated sector. Third, Bangalore — among India's earliest and most competitive q-commerce markets — has received disproportionately little academic attention relative to its economic relevance. This study addresses all three gaps together.

4. Objectives of the Study

- To identify the key dimensions of pre-sales and after-sales service quality relevant to quick commerce platforms.
- To compare customer perceptions of pre-sales and after-sales service quality across Blinkit, Zepto, Swiggy Instamart, BigBasket Now, and Flipkart Minutes in Bangalore City.
- To examine the relationship between pre-sales service quality, after-sales service quality, and overall customer satisfaction.
- To evaluate the relative contribution of pre-sales and after-sales service quality dimensions to customer satisfaction.
- To determine whether significant differences exist in customer satisfaction across the five platforms.

5. Hypotheses of the Study

H01: There is no significant relationship between pre-sales service quality and customer satisfaction on quick commerce platforms.

H02: There is no significant relationship between after-sales service quality and customer satisfaction on quick commerce platforms.

H03: Pre-sales and after-sales service quality do not significantly predict customer satisfaction when considered jointly.

H04: There is no significant difference in customer satisfaction across Blinkit, Zepto, Swiggy Instamart, BigBasket Now, and Flipkart Minutes.

6. Research Methodology

6.1 Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive, causal-comparative research design using a quantitative survey to evaluate and compare customer perceptions of service quality and satisfaction across quick commerce platforms.

6.2 Sampling Design

Respondents were required to (a) reside in Bangalore City, (b) be above 18 years of age, (c) have used at least one of the five platforms at least twice in the preceding month, and (d) consent to participate. As no unified registry of platform-level active users exists, the population is treated as large and open, consistent with digital-platform consumer research. Sample adequacy was ensured through quota



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design: 50 respondents per platform (N = 250), a minimum group size sufficient for the parametric techniques applied (multiple regression, one-way ANOVA). A convenience-cum-quota technique was used — convenience sampling to reach respondents via online communities, referrals, and in-person contact near dark-store delivery points, and quota sampling to ensure equal representation across the five platforms for valid comparison.

6.3 Data Collection Tool

The structured questionnaire comprised three parts: respondent demographics; ten service-quality items on a five-point Likert scale (five pre-sales, five after-sales); and a four-item overall satisfaction index. Data were collected online between April and June 2026.

6.4 Statistical Tools

Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation), Pearson correlation, multiple linear regression, and one-way ANOVA with Tukey post-hoc comparison, at a significance threshold of $p < 0.05$.

7. Data Analysis and Interpretation

7.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the 250 sampled respondents.

Variable	Category	%
Gender	Male	54.4
	Female	45.6
Age	18–25 years	34.0
	26–35 years	41.2
	36–45 years	17.6
	Above 45 years	7.2
Occupation	Salaried/Working Professional	52.8
	Student	24.4
	Self-Employed/Business	15.2
	Homemaker/Other	7.6
Usage Frequency	Daily	18.8



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Variable	Category	%
	2–4 times a week	46.0
	Once a week	25.6
	Less than once a week	9.6

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 250)

7.2 Pre-Sales Service Quality across Platforms

Table 2 reports mean pre-sales service quality scores (five-point scale) by platform.

Dimension	Blinkit	Zepto	Swiggy Instamart	BigBasket Now	Flipkart Minutes
Product Availability/Assortment	4.18	4.02	3.96	3.84	3.61
Application Usability	4.24	4.20	4.05	3.58	3.72
Order Placement Ease	4.15	4.10	3.98	3.66	3.70
Price Transparency	3.94	3.88	3.82	3.79	3.65
Delivery Time Estimate Accuracy	4.09	4.05	3.90	3.68	3.72
Overall Mean	4.12	4.05	3.94	3.71	3.68

Table 2: Mean Pre-Sales Service Quality Scores by Platform

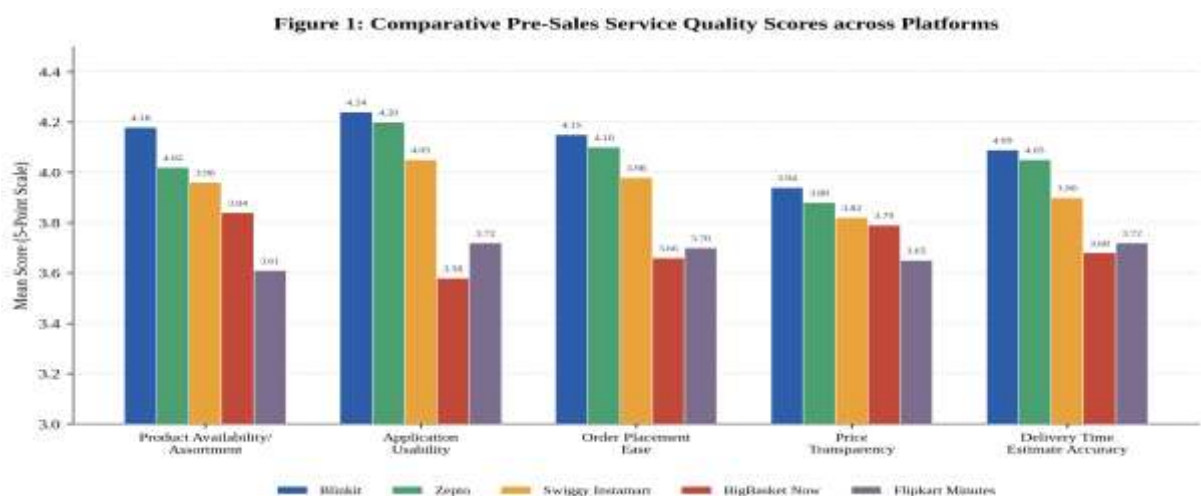


Figure 1: Comparative Pre-Sales Service Quality Scores across Platforms



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Blinkit and Zepto record the highest overall pre-sales scores, driven mainly by superior application usability and order placement ease. Flipkart Minutes and BigBasket Now lag, reflecting relatively newer or less developed interfaces in the q-commerce space.

7.3 After-Sales Service Quality across Platforms

Dimension	Blinkit	Zepto	Swiggy Instamart	BigBasket Now	Flipkart Minutes
Delivery Timeliness	3.98	3.90	4.12	3.95	3.58
Order Accuracy	3.90	3.84	4.05	3.92	3.55
Return/Refund Process	3.72	3.65	3.88	3.80	3.40
Customer Support Responsiveness	3.85	3.78	3.98	3.86	3.52
Grievance Redressal	3.85	3.79	4.02	3.87	3.53
Overall Mean	3.86	3.79	4.01	3.88	3.52

Table 3: Mean After-Sales Service Quality Scores by Platform

Figure 2: Comparative After-Sales Service Quality Scores across Platforms

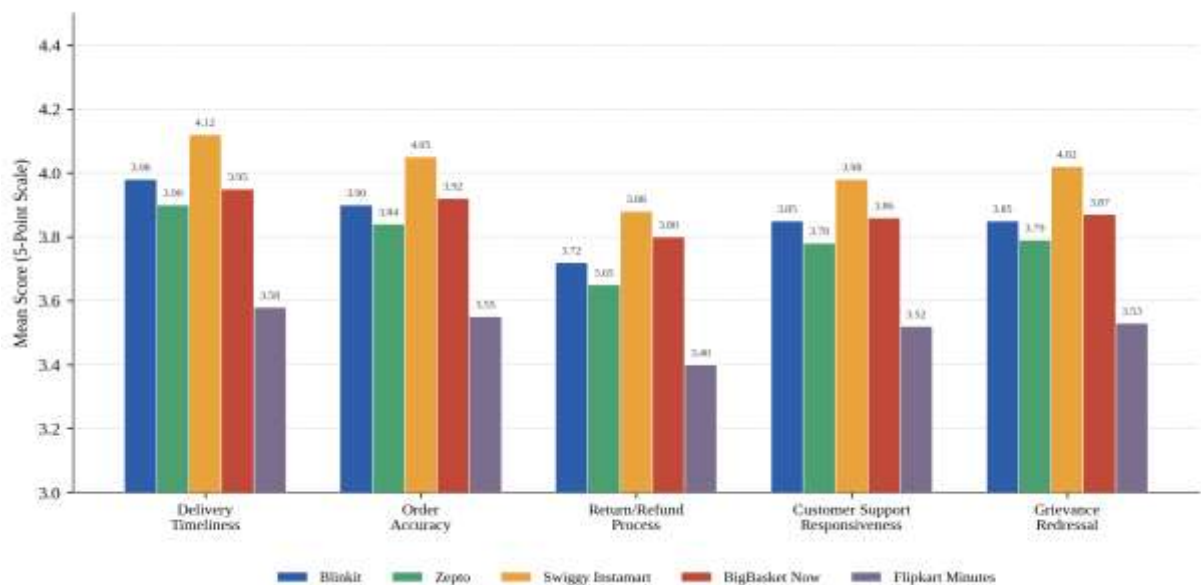


Figure 2: Comparative After-Sales Service Quality Scores across Platforms

Table 3 and Figure 2 show a reversal of the pre-sales ranking: Swiggy Instamart leads on after-sales quality, reflecting logistics and customer-support infrastructure inherited from its food-delivery operations, while Flipkart Minutes scores lowest across all five after-sales attributes — evidence that its post-purchase servicing has not kept pace with its front-end experience.



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Figure 3: Pre-Sales versus After-Sales Service Quality Scores by Platform

Figure 3 compares pre-sales and after-sales scores directly: after-sales performance exceeds pre-sales performance for Swiggy Instamart, while the reverse holds for Blinkit and Zepto — pointing to fundamentally different strategic emphases among competitors.

7.4 Correlation Analysis

Variable	Pre-Sales Quality	After-Sales Quality	Customer Satisfaction
Pre-Sales Quality	1.000	0.512*	0.586*
After-Sales Quality	0.512*	1.000	0.634*
Customer Satisfaction	0.586*	0.634*	1.000

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Matrix (*Significant at the 0.05 level)

Both pre-sales quality ($r = 0.586$, $p < 0.05$) and after-sales quality ($r = 0.634$, $p < 0.05$) correlate positively with satisfaction, with after-sales quality showing the stronger association. The moderate inter-correlation between the two predictors ($r = 0.512$) indicates related but distinct constructs.

7.5 Multiple Regression Analysis

Predictor	B	SE	β	t (Sig.)
(Constant)	0.812	0.184	—	4.41 (0.000)
Pre-Sales Service Quality	0.318	0.052	0.347	6.12 (0.000)
After-Sales Service Quality	0.394	0.055	0.402	7.16 (0.000)

Table 5: Multiple Regression Results (DV: Customer Satisfaction)



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$R = 0.702$, $R^2 = 0.493$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.489$, $F(2, 247) = 119.84$, $p < 0.05$. The model explains 49.3% of the variance in satisfaction; both predictors are significant, with after-sales service quality ($\beta = 0.402$) exerting slightly greater influence than pre-sales service quality ($\beta = 0.347$). $H01$, $H02$, and $H03$ are therefore rejected — both dimensions significantly predict satisfaction, individually and jointly.

7.6 One-Way ANOVA: Customer Satisfaction across Platforms

Source	SS	df	MS	F (Sig.)
Between Platforms	9.842	4	2.461	3.87 (0.004)
Within Platforms	155.826	245	0.636	
Total	165.668	249		

Table 6: One-Way ANOVA of Customer Satisfaction across the Five Platforms

The ANOVA result ($F = 3.87$, $p = 0.004$) is significant at the 0.05 level, rejecting $H04$. Tukey post-hoc comparisons localise the significant difference to Swiggy Instamart (highest mean satisfaction) versus Flipkart Minutes (lowest), while Blinkit, Zepto, and BigBasket Now are not significantly different from one another.

8. Findings of the Study

- Both pre-sales and after-sales service quality are significant positive predictors of customer satisfaction, together explaining nearly half the variance in satisfaction scores.
- After-sales service quality ($\beta = 0.402$) exerts a marginally stronger influence on satisfaction than pre-sales service quality ($\beta = 0.347$), indicating post-purchase reliability and problem resolution matter at least as much as the pre-purchase experience.
- Blinkit and Zepto lead on pre-sales dimensions, particularly usability and order placement ease; Swiggy Instamart leads on after-sales dimensions, particularly delivery timeliness and grievance redressal.
- Flipkart Minutes records the lowest scores on both dimensions, with returns/refunds as its weakest specific attribute.
- Overall satisfaction differs significantly across platforms, with the gap concentrated between Swiggy Instamart (highest) and Flipkart Minutes (lowest), while the remaining three platforms are statistically comparable.

9. Discussion

The stronger influence of after-sales quality aligns with the core value proposition of q-commerce: customers choose these platforms expecting fast, reliable fulfilment, so any post-purchase failure — delayed delivery, wrong orders, or cumbersome returns — directly undermines that promise and depresses satisfaction. This is consistent with Swiggy Instamart's strong after-sales scores, which draw



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on its parent food-delivery logistics and support infrastructure. Conversely, Blinkit and Zepto's strong pre-sales performance reflects investment in front-end design, assortment, and interface ease, which builds confidence at ordering but does not guarantee post-purchase excellence. Flipkart Minutes, as a newer entrant, is still building operational capacity in returns, refunds, and support — areas where more established players are ahead — which is reflected in its lower overall satisfaction.

10. Managerial Implications and Suggestions

Quick commerce platforms should treat after-sales service — particularly returns, refunds, and grievance resolution — as a core driver of satisfaction and retention rather than a minor operational task. Blinkit and Zepto, strong on pre-sales, should invest in dedicated grievance-resolution teams and simplified in-app return processes. Newer entrants such as Flipkart Minutes should benchmark post-purchase service standards against competitors before scaling order volumes, to avoid widening the gap between demand and service capacity. Platforms should not assume that strong front-end design automatically translates into strong post-purchase service.

11. Limitations of the Study

This study is confined to Bangalore City and five specific platforms, limiting generalisability to other cities or platforms. The convenience-cum-quota sampling technique, while adequate for the parametric techniques applied, yields less precise estimates than probability sampling at larger scale. Self-reported Likert-scale responses are also susceptible to common method bias and social desirability bias, as is typical of survey-based satisfaction research.

12. Scope for Future Research

Future studies could extend this framework to other Indian metros and tier-two cities to examine how pre-sales and after-sales service quality operate across markets at different stages of logistics maturity. Longitudinal designs tracking the same customer cohort across quarters would also offer insight into how service-quality perceptions and platform loyalty evolve as operating models mature.

13. Conclusion

This study shows that customer satisfaction in quick commerce is shaped jointly by pre-sales and after-sales service quality, with after-sales factors — timely delivery, order accuracy, and complaint redressal — carrying somewhat greater weight than pre-sales factors such as app usability and product variety. Evidence from Bangalore indicates that among Blinkit, Zepto, Swiggy Instamart, BigBasket Now, and Flipkart Minutes, no single platform excels on both dimensions, though overall satisfaction differs significantly only at the extremes. As delivery speed becomes normalised across the industry, brands' ability to retain customers will increasingly depend on how effectively they manage after-sales service.

AUTHOR(S) CONTRIBUTION

The writers affirm that they have no connections to, or engagement with, any group or body that provides financial or non-financial assistance for the topics or resources covered in this manuscript.



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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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