(RESEARCH ARTICLE)

Instant Food Delivery Adoption in India: Examining Consumer Shifts in Time, Value, and Convenience Relative to Traditional Delivery

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Abstract

The rapid rise of instant food delivery services in India is changing the way consumers think about convenience, value, and time when ordering food online. Unlike traditional food delivery platforms that compete mainly on price and menu variety, instant delivery services emphasize extremely fast delivery. This shift encourages consumers to reconsider what matters most in their decision-making process. This study explores the factors influencing purchase intention toward instant food delivery services among urban consumers in Bangalore, with a particular focus on the importance of time efficiency.

The study is based on the Technology Acceptance Model and consumer trade-off theory, examining how perceived convenience, perceived value, expected delivery speed, and willingness to sacrifice menu variety influence purchase intention. Data were collected from 261 respondents using a structured questionnaire. The responses were analyzed using reliability testing, exploratory factor analysis, correlation, and multiple regression.

The results show strong reliability and validity of the measurement model (Cronbach's α = 0.860). Among the variables, delivery speed emerged as the most influential factor affecting purchase intention. Perceived convenience and willingness to compromise on variety also had a meaningful impact, while perceived value showed a significant but smaller effect.

These findings indicate that consumers increasingly prioritize saving time when choosing instant delivery services, even if it means fewer food options. Delivery speed does not replace traditional decision factors but changes how consumers interpret convenience and value. This study provides empirical evidence that time efficiency has become a key driver of consumer behavior in India's fast-growing instant food delivery market.

Keywords: Instant food delivery; Purchase intention; Delivery speed; Perceived convenience; Consumer trade-offs; Quick commerce.

1. Introduction

Over the past decade, the food delivery industry in India has undergone rapid transformation, driven by increasing internet penetration, urbanization, and changing consumer lifestyles. The widespread adoption of digital platforms such as Zomato and Swiggy has shifted food consumption patterns from traditional dining and takeaway toward app-based ordering. In the early stages of online food delivery, competition largely cantered on offering a wide range of restaurant choices, promotional discounts, and expanded delivery coverage. Delivery times of approximately 30–45 minutes were generally considered acceptable and formed the industry standard.

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However, as digital food delivery services became more mainstream, consumer expectations began to evolve. Convenience alone was no longer sufficient; users increasingly sought faster service, real-time order tracking, and seamless payment experiences. In densely populated urban environments where time constraints are more pronounced, delivery speed has emerged as an important factor influencing consumer satisfaction and platform preference. Speed is no longer viewed merely as an added benefit but as a core component of the service experience.

In response to these changing expectations, a new category of instant food delivery services has emerged, promising delivery within 10–15 minutes. Unlike traditional platforms that emphasize menu variety, these services operate through curated menus designed for rapid preparation and dispatch. This operational model reflects an assumption that consumers may prioritize immediacy over extensive choice. As exposure to ultra-fast delivery increases, conventional delivery timelines may increasingly be perceived as slow, potentially altering long-standing evaluation criteria in online food ordering.

Despite the rapid growth of instant delivery services, limited empirical research has examined how consumers evaluate this shift within the Indian context. In particular, there remains insufficient understanding of whether factors such as perceived convenience, perceived value, delivery speed expectations, and willingness to accept reduced menu variety meaningfully influence consumer adoption intentions. Understanding these behavioural drivers is important for determining whether instant delivery represents a temporary market trend or a broader structural change in urban consumption behavior.

Accordingly, this study investigates the determinants of purchase intention toward instant food delivery services among urban consumers. By examining how perceptions of convenience, value, speed, and trade-offs between time and variety shape consumer decisions, the research aims to provide insight into how accelerated delivery models are redefining expectations within India's evolving digital food delivery ecosystem.

2. Literature Review

People's food choices now hinge on saving time, city living, and phones. Anju Mathew (2024) says folks want quick food but also care about healthy stuff. Being easy is key when picking what to buy. Samuel Anbu Selvan and Andrew (2021) saw young Indians ditching restaurants for food apps, making ordering in normal.

Reviews from Nikita and Nimbrain (2022) say saving time, getting food delivered, easy payments, and lifestyle changes push people to order food online. Ray et al. (2019) note people use food apps for saving time and because it's fun. Yeo et al. (2017) agree, saying being convenient and liking the idea makes people buy.

Research shows being easy to use and worth the cost matters. Panse et al. (2019) show that ease, feeling in charge, getting info, and not being scared of tech make people happy. Models from Lee et al. (2019), Rasli et al. (2020), and An et al. (2023) say that if an app works well and seems useful, people will keep using it.

Ghosh (2020) found good service is the top thing making people happy with online fast food in India, then comes getting your food on time and good prices. Prasetyo et al. (2022), Wu et al. (2024), and Ahmad et al. (2025) say getting food fast, getting good food, and fixing problems matter for keeping customers. Olivia Lee and Han (2022) add that a good app makes people stick with a brand. So, while fast delivery gets attention, good overall service keeps people coming back.

Naik and Kapdi (2025) point out that quick delivery is changing what people want in India. Harter et al. (2024) found that delays hurt repeat business, so being on time is big. Ajeya K and Santhosh M (2025) bring up that good last-mile delivery, tracking, and getting orders right affect happiness and keeping customers.

Raman and Roopali Batra (2025) say people like quick commerce because they want things now, trust it, and think it's reliable. Andhare et al. (2025) say fast delivery makes people buy without thinking. Arora (2025) thinks quick commerce works because it plays into wanting things easy and now.

Ma et al. (2024) put a number on how much people value time, showing they'll pay more to save it. Nguyen et al. (2019) found different groups want cheap, fast, or good deals. Jamaludin et al. (2025) say being easy and having good prices make things seem worthwhile, while trust matters less sometimes.

Chakraborty et al. (2024) say convenience, speed, and trust keep Indians using these apps. Goel and Sharma (2025) say fast delivery and discounts get people to try, but good service keeps them. Tamilmani and Archana (2025) found people

use apps if they know about them and think they work well. Kumar and Khan (2025), Bhattacharjee et al. (2023), and Sinha et al. (2021) agree that good delivery, engagement, and app quality build loyalty.

Dsouza et al. (2025) say students care most about fast delivery, prices, and tasty food. Teh et al. (2025) and Inthong (2024) also show young people keep using apps if they're useful and work well.

Most studies look at online or instant delivery on their own. We don't know much about instant versus normal delivery. Some studies, like Banerjee (2024) and Gupta and Prashar (2023), note worries about safety and ethics with super-fast delivery. But not many compare instant and normal delivery in terms of time, cost, and ease.

So, we need to understand how people in India choose between instant and normal food delivery. We know about phones, service, and ease in online shopping, but not how people see time, cost, and ease with these two delivery types. With India's fast-growing quick-commerce scene, this is key. This study looks at how instant food delivery changes what people expect from time, value, and convenience, giving a full picture of what's happening with food trends in India.

2.1. Statement of the Research Problem

The rapid emergence of instant food delivery services in India is reshaping how consumers evaluate time efficiency, convenience, and value in everyday food purchasing decisions relative to traditional delivery models. While traditional platforms emphasize menu variety and customization, instant delivery services prioritize ultra-fast fulfillment, creating new behavioural trade-offs between delivery speed and service attributes. Although prior research has examined online food delivery adoption and customer satisfaction, limited empirical work has comparatively investigated the behavioural drivers underlying instant delivery usage.

In particular, there is insufficient understanding of how perceived convenience, perceived value, speed expectations, and willingness to sacrifice variety influence consumer purchase intention toward instant delivery when evaluated alongside traditional alternatives. This study addresses these gaps by developing a comparative behavioural adoption model that explains how these perceptual factors drive purchase intention toward instant food delivery. By focusing on consumer experiences in a metropolitan Indian context, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of shifting consumer behaviour within India's rapidly evolving quick-commerce ecosystem

2.2. Conceptual Framework of Research

The conceptual framework of this study is grounded in behavioural adoption theory and draws upon principles of the Technology Acceptance Model and consumer value evaluation frameworks. The model proposes that purchase intention toward instant food delivery is influenced by four key perceptual constructs: perceived convenience, perceived value, speed expectation, and willingness to trade variety for time.

Perceived convenience reflects the extent to which instant delivery simplifies ordering and reduces effort. Perceived value captures consumers' evaluation of benefits relative to cost and time savings. Speed expectation represents the importance assigned to rapid fulfillment. Willingness to trade variety indicates readiness to accept fewer menu options in exchange for faster delivery.
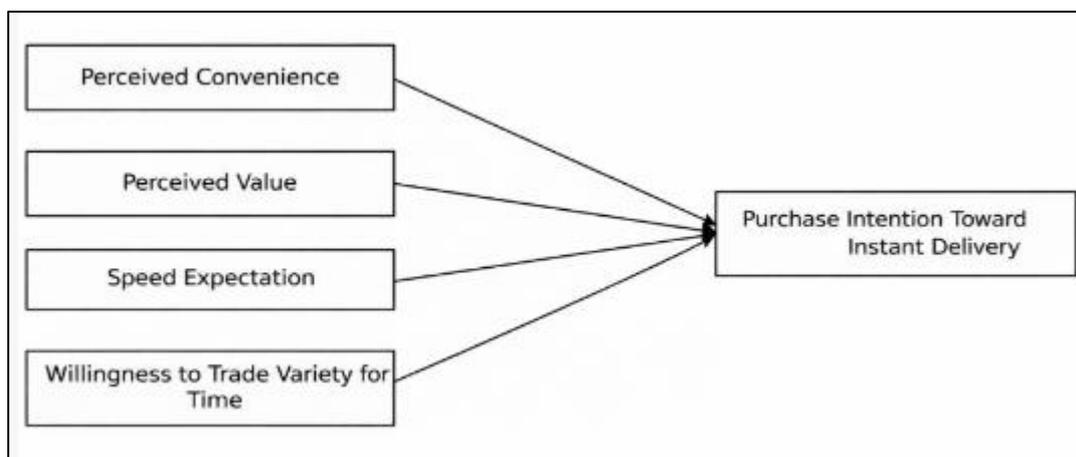

Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Instant Delivery Purchase Intention

2.3. The Hypotheses of the Research

- H1: Perceived convenience positively influences purchase intention toward instant food delivery.
- H2: Perceived value positively influences purchase intention toward instant food delivery.
- H3: Speed expectation positively influences purchase intention toward instant food delivery.
- H4: Willingness to trade variety for time positively influences purchase intention toward instant food delivery.

2.4. Research Objectives

- To examine the influence of perceived convenience on consumer purchase intention toward instant food delivery.
- To analyse the impact of perceived value on adoption intention for instant delivery services.
- To evaluate how delivery speed expectations shape consumer purchase intention.
- To investigate the effect of willingness to trade menu variety for faster delivery.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Respondents

The study employed a quantitative cross-sectional research design to examine behavioural determinants of instant food delivery adoption. Data were collected from 261 respondents residing in Bangalore, India. The sample consisted of multiple urban users who had prior experience with online food delivery platforms. A screening question was included at the beginning of the survey to ensure that only individuals who had ordered food online within the previous six months in both traditional and instant delivery services were eligible to participate. Respondents who did not meet this criterion were excluded from the analysis.

A non-probability convenience sampling technique was adopted due to accessibility and feasibility considerations. The sampling approach allowed the researcher to reach active online food delivery users within urban Bangalore through digital distribution channels. While convenience sampling limits generalizability; it is commonly used in behavioural research where the objective is to examine relationships among psychological constructs rather than to estimate population parameters.

The final dataset comprised 261 usable responses after data screening. All responses were complete and met the inclusion criteria. The study focused exclusively on Bangalore city in order to maintain geographic consistency and to examine behavioural patterns within a metropolitan context where instant delivery services are actively operational.

3.2. Measures

The study employed a structured questionnaire consisting of validated multi-item scales measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The constructs were operationalized to capture behavioural perceptions associated with instant food delivery services.

Perceived convenience was measured using three items assessing time-saving benefits, ease of use, and suitability in urgent situations. Perceived value was measured through three items evaluating fairness of pricing, value perception despite premium charges, and the role of discounts and offers. Delivery Speed Expectations were captured using three items measuring expectation of quick arrival, preference for faster delivery even with limited menu options, and the influence of speed on platform choice. Willingness to trade variety was assessed through three items examining readiness to accept fewer menu options, prioritization of speed over variety during urgency, and preference for simple meals if delivered faster. Purchase intention was measured using three items reflecting likelihood of future adoption, preference for instant delivery in urgent contexts, and continued usage if speed consistency is maintained.

All constructs were derived from established theoretical foundations, including the Technology Acceptance Model (perceived convenience), Expectation–Confirmation Theory (delivery speed expectations), and consumer trade-off theory (willingness to sacrifice variety). Reliability analysis confirmed acceptable internal consistency across constructs, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70.

3.3. Procedure

Data collection was conducted through an online survey administered via Google Forms. The survey was distributed digitally between December 2025 and January 2026. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed about the academic purpose of the study prior to participation. No monetary or non-monetary incentives were offered.

Anonymity and confidentiality were assured to all participants. No personally identifiable information was collected, and responses were used solely for research analysis. The questionnaire was structured to minimize response bias by presenting items in a grouped construct format with consistent scaling.

Upon closure of the data collection period, responses were exported and analyzed using SPSS software. Prior to hypothesis testing, data screening procedures were conducted to ensure completeness and suitability for statistical analysis. Exploratory factor analysis was performed to assess construct validity, followed by correlation and multiple regression analyses to examine the proposed relationships among variables

4. Results and Analysis

4.1. Reliability Analysis

Before conducting hypothesis testing, the internal consistency of the measurement instrument was examined using Cronbach's alpha. Reliability analysis helps determine whether the questionnaire items consistently measure the intended constructs.

The overall reliability coefficient for the 16 measurement items was $\alpha = 0.860$, with a standardized alpha value of 0.861, indicating strong internal consistency among responses.

In behavioural research, alpha values above 0.70 are considered acceptable, while values exceeding 0.80 indicate high reliability. The obtained value therefore confirms that the items measuring perceived convenience, perceived value, delivery speed expectations, willingness to trade variety, and purchase intention are reliable and suitable for further statistical analysis.

The results indicate that the measurement scale demonstrates satisfactory reliability and can be used for factor and regression analysis.

4.2. Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to examine construct validity and verify whether the survey items grouped according to the proposed theoretical framework. Principal Component Analysis with Varimax rotation was applied.

4.2.1. Sampling Adequacy

Sampling adequacy was assessed using the Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) test and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity.

Table 1 Results of KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sampling Adequacy

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.831
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1216.509
	df	78
	Sig.	0

The KMO value of 0.831 indicates good sampling adequacy. Bartlett's Test was significant (p < .001), confirming that correlations among variables were sufficient for factor extraction.

4.2.2. Communalities

All extracted communalities exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.50, indicating that each item shared adequate variance with the extracted components. As a result, no variables were removed from the analysis.

4.2.3. Total Variance Explained

Five components with eigenvalues greater than one were retained, consistent with the conceptual framework of the study. The cumulative variance explained exceeded the recommended 60% benchmark for behavioural research, indicating a strong explanatory structure.

4.2.4. Rotated Component Matrix

The rotated component matrix revealed clear factor groupings aligned with theoretical constructs. Items measuring perceived convenience, perceived value, delivery speed, trade-off behaviour, and purchase intention loaded strongly onto separate components with minimal cross-loading.

Table 2 Results of Rotated Component Matrix

Rotated Component Matrix[a]					
	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
PC1		0.803			
PC2		0.797			
PC3		0.775			
PV1				0.713	
PV2				0.815	
PV3				0.679	
DS1	0.818				
DS2	0.686				
DS3	0.779				
TV2					0.703
PI1			0.666		
PI2			0.760		
PI3			0.828		
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.[a]					
a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.					

The clear loading structure confirms satisfactory construct validity.

4.3. Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine relationships among variables and assess potential multicollinearity issues. The analysis included 261 valid responses.

Table 3 Pearson Correlation Matrix of Study Variables

Correlations		Perceived_ Convenience	Perceived_Value	Delivery_ Speed	Trade off	Purchase_ Intent
Perceived_Convenience	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	261	261	261	261	261
Perceived_Value	Pearson Correlation	0.448**	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.000
	N	261	261	261	261	261
Delivery_Speed	Pearson Correlation	0.226**	0.318**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000
	N	261	261	261	261	261
Tradeoff	Pearson Correlation	0.250**	0.374**	0.420**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000		0.000
	N	261	261	261	261	261
Purchase_Intent	Pearson Correlation	0.406**	0.437**	0.520**	0.435**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	N	261	261	261	261	261
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

Note: p < .01

All relationships were positive and statistically significant. Delivery speed showed the strongest association with purchase intention (r = .520), highlighting the importance of rapid fulfilment in influencing adoption decisions.

Since no correlation exceeded 0.80, multicollinearity was not considered a concern.

4.4. Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of perceived convenience, perceived value, delivery speed expectations, and willingness to trade variety on purchase intention.

4.4.1. Model Summary

Table 4 Model Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.644[a]	0.414	0.405	0.65343
a. Predictors: (Constant), Tradeoff, perceived_Convenience, Delivery_Speed, Perceived_Value				

The model explains **41.4% of the variance** in purchase intention, indicating strong explanatory capability.

Table 5 ANOVA Results for Regression Model

ANOVAa						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	77.267	4	19.317	45.242	.000b
	Residual	109.304	256	.427		
	Total	186.570	260			
a. Dependent Variable: Purchase_Intent						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Tradeoff, Perceived_Convenience, Delivery_Speed, Perceived_Value						

The model is statistically significant ($p < .001$), confirming overall model fit.

4.4.2. Regression Coefficients

Table 6 Regression Coefficients Predicting Purchase Intention

Coefficientsa						
Model		**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**	**t**	**Sig.**
		B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**		
1	(Constant)	.500	.238		2.099	0.037
	Perceived_Convenience	.224	.058	.208	3.867	0.000
	Perceived_Value	.178	.060	.168	2.958	0.003
	Delivery_Speed	.329	.051	.346	6.427	0.000
	Tradeoff	.136	.043	.175	3.183	0.002
a. Dependent Variable: Purchase_Intent						

Delivery speed emerged as the strongest predictor, followed by perceived convenience, willingness to trade variety, and perceived value.

4.5. Hypothesis Testing

Table 7 Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	Result
H1	Perceived Convenience → Purchase Intention	Supported
H2	Perceived Value → Purchase Intention	Supported
H3	Delivery Speed → Purchase Intention	Supported
H4	Trade-Off Variety → Purchase Intention	Supported

All hypotheses were supported at the 5% significance level.

4.6. Findings

The results indicate that instant food delivery adoption is primarily influenced by time-oriented evaluation mechanisms. Delivery speed emerged as the most influential determinant of purchase intention, suggesting that rapid fulfilment has become a key driver of consumer preference.

5. Discussion

This study examined how perceived convenience, perceived value, delivery speed expectations, and willingness to trade menu variety influence purchase intention toward instant food delivery services among urban consumers in Bangalore. While online food delivery platforms have received considerable academic attention, research specifically addressing ultra-fast delivery models promising fulfilment within 10–15 minutes remains limited. The present study therefore aimed to understand how time-related perceptions influence consumer decision-making within this emerging service category.

The reliability analysis demonstrated strong internal consistency across measurement items (α = 0.860), indicating that the constructs were measured reliably. The exploratory factor analysis further confirmed the validity of the measurement structure. The KMO value of 0.831 and the statistically significant Bartlett's Test indicated that the dataset was appropriate for factor analysis, and the extracted factors aligned well with the proposed conceptual framework.

Correlation analysis showed positive and significant relationships among all variables. Delivery speed displayed a strong association with willingness to trade variety as well as purchase intention, suggesting that consumers who value faster delivery are more open to accepting fewer menu options. This finding indicates that speed not only influences service evaluation but also shapes how consumers approach choice, encouraging quicker decision-making when time savings are prioritized.

The regression analysis provided deeper insight into these relationships. The model explained 41.4% of the variance in purchase intention, demonstrating meaningful explanatory power. Delivery speed emerged as the strongest predictor, followed by perceived convenience and willingness to trade variety, while perceived value showed a significant but comparatively smaller effect. These findings suggest that time efficiency has become a central consideration in consumer evaluation of instant delivery services, potentially outweighing traditional determinants such as variety or price-based comparisons.

Overall, the results point toward a shift in consumer expectations within urban food delivery markets. Speed appears to function not merely as an enhancement to service quality but as a primary decision-making factor. Consumers appear willing to adjust their preferences and accept limited options when rapid fulfilment meets their immediate needs. This reflects a broader behavioural adaptation to time scarcity in metropolitan lifestyles, where convenience increasingly depends on immediacy rather than abundance of choice.

5.1. Implications

The findings of this study offer important implications for both academic research and industry practice. From a theoretical perspective, the results extend existing consumer behaviour and technology adoption literature by highlighting the growing role of time efficiency as a distinct evaluative dimension. Traditional frameworks often emphasize usefulness, ease of use, or economic value; however, the present findings suggest that delivery speed can independently influence adoption decisions by reshaping how consumers interpret convenience and value. The observed relationship between delivery speed and willingness to trade variety also supports the idea that consumers dynamically adjust their expectations when faced with time constraints.

From a practical standpoint, the results underline the importance of operational reliability for instant delivery platforms. Since delivery speed emerged as the strongest predictor of purchase intention, maintaining consistent fulfilment timelines becomes critical for sustaining customer engagement. The willingness of consumers to accept reduced menu variety suggests that curated menus optimized for rapid preparation can remain strategically effective, provided the promise of speed is consistently delivered. Platforms may therefore benefit from focusing on efficiency, predictability, and streamlined user experiences rather than competing solely through expanded assortment.

At the same time, the continued significance of perceived value indicates that consumers still evaluate whether the service justifies its cost and overall experience. This suggests that instant delivery providers must balance speed with perceived fairness and service quality to maintain long-term adoption.

5.2. Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The sample was restricted to urban consumers in Bangalore, which may limit the generalizability of findings to other regions. The use of convenience sampling may affect representativeness, although it is common in behavioural research. Additionally, the study relied on self-reported perceptions, which may not fully reflect actual purchasing behaviour. The cross-sectional design also prevents conclusions about causality or long-term behavioural change.

5.3. Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies may expand the research across multiple cities to explore regional variations in instant delivery adoption. Longitudinal research designs could help determine whether speed-driven preferences remain stable over time. Additional constructs such as impulse buying tendency, habit formation, or digital trust may further strengthen the explanatory model. Incorporating behavioural platform data alongside survey responses may also provide deeper insight into how stated intentions translate into actual usage patterns.

6. Conclusion

This study investigated the influence of perceived convenience, perceived value, delivery speed expectations, willingness to trade menu variety, and price consciousness on purchase intention toward instant food delivery services among urban consumers in Bangalore. The primary objective was to examine whether time-related perceptual factors significantly shape consumer preference in comparison to traditional delivery models. The findings confirm that instant delivery adoption is not incidental but behaviourally grounded in structured evaluative mechanisms, particularly those related to time efficiency and convenience within digitally mediated consumption environments.

The empirical results demonstrate that delivery speed is the strongest predictor of purchase intention, followed by willingness to trade variety and perceived convenience. These findings indicate a clear behavioural orientation toward immediacy, where consumers are prepared to accept limited menu options in exchange for faster fulfilment. While perceived value also contributes positively to adoption intention, its comparatively smaller effect suggests that time compression may carry greater weight than conventional price-based evaluation in instant delivery contexts.

Overall, the study provides evidence of a shift in consumer evaluation criteria within India's urban food delivery ecosystem. Instant delivery appears to represent more than an incremental service improvement; it reflects a structural adjustment in how consumers prioritize time, convenience, and value. By empirically validating the proposed behavioural framework, the research contributes to the emerging literature on quick commerce and offers insight into how speed-driven service models are reshaping contemporary consumption patterns.

The significance of willingness to trade variety indicates that consumers are increasingly willing to sacrifice choice breadth in exchange for faster service. Perceived convenience further strengthens adoption by reducing effort and simplifying the ordering process.

Although perceived value remains significant, its comparatively smaller effect suggests that consumers may prioritize time efficiency over traditional price considerations in instant delivery contexts.

With the expanded sample size of 261 respondents, the regression model demonstrates improved explanatory power, reinforcing the robustness of the findings. Overall, the results suggest a shift toward speed-driven decision-making within India's evolving digital food delivery ecosystem.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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