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Quick Commerce: A Bibliometric Review and Future Research Agenda

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Abstract: The present review is a systematic literature review-cum-bibliometric analysis of quick commerce (Q-commerce), the retail model that promises to deliver everyday goods within minutes. Through this review, the authors map how the field has evolved, who contributes to it and which themes dominate, and set out directions for future research. The data were retrieved from Elsevier's Scopus database on 16 September 2026. After inclusion and exclusion criteria and data cleaning were applied, 543 journal articles and reviews published between 2011 and 2026 were analysed with RStudio and Biblioshiny, and 77 studies on quick commerce and closely related instant-delivery models were reviewed in depth. Annual output grew at 12.26% a year, yet studies that name quick commerce explicitly appear only from 2022, and 39 of the 69 such studies were published in 2026. The literature is dispersed across 405 sources, concentrated in India, China and the United States, and divided into consumer, operations, and labour and sustainability streams that rarely meet. Within the core, consumer (27 studies) and operations (20) research dominate, cross-sectional surveys and optimisation models are the main methods, and 43% of the studies have not yet been cited. The review consolidates the field's terminology and proposes an input–process–outcome agenda of ten research questions. It identifies the effect of the delivery-speed promise on delivery-worker well-being, mediated by algorithmic control, as the most consequential under-researched combination.

Keywords: *Quick Commerce; Q-Commerce; Dark Stores; Last-Mile Delivery; Bibliometric Analysis; Systematic Literature Review.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technologies has changed the way consumers search for, purchase and receive products. The growth of e-commerce allowed consumers to buy a vast range of goods from online retailers without visiting physical stores. As the market has matured, however, convenience and delivery speed have become an increasingly important part of consumer decision-making. Quick commerce (Q-commerce) responds to this shift. It is a retail and delivery model that connects online ordering with local inventory, fulfilment and last-mile delivery so that everyday goods reach consumers within a very short window, often promised in minutes rather than in hours or days (Stojanov, 2022; Virmani and Anand, 2026).

Unlike conventional e-commerce, which relies on large regional warehouses and scheduled delivery, Q-commerce depends on dense networks of small urban fulfilment centres, commonly called dark stores or micro-fulfilment centres (MFCs), together with routing software and a large delivery workforce (Buldeo Rai *et al.*, 2023; Yang, Ostermeier and Hübner, 2024). Stojanov (2022) describes Q-commerce as the next generation of e-commerce, a business model driven by digital technologies, the increasing concentration of urban populations and the restrictions imposed during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the Indian market, where the model has attracted the most research attention, players such as Blinkit, Swiggy Instamart, Big Basket Daily and Dunzo Daily place their dark stores in densely populated areas so that delivery personnel can reach customers within minutes, most often ten (Virmani and Anand, 2026).

The commercial scale of the model explains the attention it now receives. In India, the gross order value of Q-commerce more than doubled from about Rs 30,000 crore in FY2024 to Rs 64,000 crore in FY2025, served from 3,072 dark stores, and CareEdge projects that it will exceed Rs 2 lakh crore by FY2028, even though only about 1% of the country's grocery demand had moved to the channel (PTI, 2025). The same estimates show platforms shifting their focus from hypergrowth to profitability, and the model has proved fragile elsewhere. Getir, once valued at close to US$12 billion, withdrew from the United States, the United Kingdom and

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continental Europe in 2024 to concentrate on Turkey, having not become EBITDA-positive in any market by the end of 2023 (Lunden, 2024). In India, Dunzo, an early hyperlocal delivery platform, faced rising costs, mounting debt and investor fatigue by mid-2023 as better-funded rivals competed through aggressive pricing and marketing (Priya, K and N, 2026). Q-commerce therefore combines rapid growth with unresolved questions about costs, labour and urban impact, which makes it an important subject for management research.

Beyond its emphasis on delivery time, Q-commerce represents a shift in the way consumers, retailers and technologies interact with each other. The topic draws on marketing, supply chain management, information systems, operations research and consumer behaviour, and it raises questions about consumer adoption and loyalty, last-mile logistics, pricing, artificial intelligence (AI), public policy, labour conditions and sustainability (Sorooshian, Ahadi and Liravi, 2026; Virmani and Anand, 2026). The front-end experience of speed therefore cannot be understood without the back-end processes that make it possible.

Academic interest in the subject has grown accordingly. The Scopus search conducted for this review returned 1,886 records, of which 543 journal articles and reviews published between 2011 and 2026 remained after screening and cleaning. Annual output in this broader literature grew at a compound rate of 12.26%, and 61.1% of the documents were published in 2021 or later. Yet only 69 of the 543 records name quick commerce explicitly, and all of them date from 2022 onwards. Studies of Q-commerce proper therefore form a small and very recent core within a much larger body of research on digital commerce, retail and supply chains, which makes it important to distinguish studies of Q-commerce from those that address e-commerce, commerce in general or supply chains.

The existing literature also leaves important gaps. First, consumer and operational dimensions are rarely considered together, although delivery operations shape the consumer's experience and consumer behaviour in turn drives inventory and transportation decisions. Second, research on AI in Q-commerce concentrates on optimisation, machine learning, scheduling and autonomous coordination, whereas privacy, fairness, transparency and accountability receive far less attention (Sorooshian, Ahadi and Liravi, 2026). Third, environmental impact, delivery workers' welfare and consumer behaviour are examined in separate streams, and the trade-offs between them in ultra-fast delivery supply chains remain largely unexplored (Gund and Daniel, 2024; Goswami, D'Silva and Choudhury, 2026). Finally, only six review or bibliometric studies of the topic exist, all published between 2024 and 2026, and only one of them maps the field as a whole (Virmani and Anand, 2026), which indicates the need for an up-to-date and integrative review.

The motivation for the present study is therefore to provide an integrative account of Q-commerce as a field of research, and it makes four contributions. First, it combines a bibliometric analysis of the wider literature (543 documents) with a systematic review of the 77 studies that address Q-commerce or closely related instant-delivery models directly, and it shows how far broad keyword searches overstate the size of the field. Second, it codes the core studies by research stream, method, theory and context, which gives a quantified profile of how Q-commerce has been studied so far. Third, it consolidates the field's inconsistent terminology into standard terms. Fourth, it proposes an input–process–outcome agenda of ten research questions, with boundary conditions and research designs, and identifies the most consequential under-researched combination. The review is organised as follows. The next section presents the literature review, followed by the research objectives and the research methodology. Section 5 reports the data analysis and results, Section 6 sets out the future research agenda, Section 7 discusses the findings and their implications, and Section 8 concludes with the limitations of the study.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The available literature is summarised and critically evaluated through a systematic literature review of the 77 studies retained after screening (Section 4), of which 69 name quick commerce explicitly and eight examine closely related online food delivery, hyperlocal, e-grocery, last-mile and rapid pick-and-delivery models. The earliest of these studies date from 2022, when Stojanov (2022) described Q-commerce as the next generation of e-commerce; the most recent address dynamic pricing, algorithmic control of delivery workers, agentic AI and environmental scoring. Six of the 77 studies are themselves reviews or bibliometric analyses. All six were published between 2024 and 2026, and five of them examine a single facet of the field, such as emissions, packaging or last-mile coordination. Their scope and stated future directions are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 Summary of Review and Bibliometric Studies on Quick Commerce

Authors (year)	Scope of review	Stated future direction
Gund and Daniel (2024)	Systematic review of studies comparing the last-mile greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of Q-commerce and e-commerce	Extend GHG accounting beyond last-mile logistics to other supply-chain sources
Son and Kwon (2024)	Review of the effects of Q-commerce distribution on air pollution, traffic and packaging waste	Promote sustainable consumption behaviour to curb Q-commerce traffic, emissions and packaging waste
Solanke *et al.* (2026)	Review of phase change material-based thermal packaging for Q-commerce supply chains	Close deployment gaps for thermal packaging under last-mile, rider-bag and mixed-load constraints
Sorooshian (2026)	Bibliometric review of crowdshipping for last-mile delivery and crowdsourced Q-commerce	Resolve inconsistent terminology, close regional research gaps and overcome methodological limitations

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Sorooshian, Ahadi and Liravi (2026)	Conceptual and bibliometric review of multi-agent systems and agentic AI for Q-commerce last-mile fulfilment	Examine autonomy, accountability, transparency, privacy, fairness, safety and governance, and validate agentic AI empirically
Virmani and Anand (2026)	Bibliometric mapping of 86 Q-commerce articles filtered from 1,294 Scopus records	Maps emerging trends and keyword clusters; no explicit future direction stated

➢ *Quick Commerce, E-Commerce and the Retail Ecosystem*

Q-commerce is positioned in the literature as a specialised form of e-commerce in which nearby inventory, dark stores and digital platforms support very rapid fulfilment (Stojanov, 2022; Virmani and Anand, 2026). Virmani and Anand (2026), in the only bibliometric mapping of the field before the present study, describe Q-commerce as an extension of the e-commerce sector whose success rests on digital infrastructure, technological advancement and innovation. A growing set of teaching cases documents how Indian platforms compete and scale, including Zomato's entry into Q-commerce, the rivalry between Dunzo and Blinkit, and the growth of Zepto (Singh, 2023; Sanghi, Chandra Balodi and Gupta, 2024; Karulkar *et al.*, 2025; Kulkarni, Roy and Sivaraman, 2026; Priya, K and N, 2026). The model also reshapes adjacent channels. Fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) companies weigh hyperlocal delivery against general trade, modern trade and e-commerce as a distribution channel (Guru *et al.*, 2023), conventional retailers use their stores to fulfil online orders (Liu and Lim, 2025), and urban consumers increasingly move between traditional kirana shops and Q-commerce platforms (Sharmila and Janis Bibiyana, 2026). These studies indicate that Q-commerce combines technological infrastructure with consumer value and behavioural factors. Table 2 summarises how the model differs from conventional e-commerce on the dimensions that recur in the reviewed studies.

Table 2 Quick Commerce Compared with Conventional E-Commerce (Authors' Synthesis)

Dimension	Conventional e-commerce	Quick commerce (Q-commerce)	Sources
Delivery promise	Same day to several days, with scheduled or batched delivery	Minutes: "twenty minutes or less", "10 to 30 minutes", or "within 15 min in the best case"	Buldeo Rai *et al.* (2023); Yang, Ostermeier and Hübner (2024); Darda, Gupta and Patra (2025)
Fulfilment node	Large distribution centres, often on the urban periphery	Small dark stores or micro-fulfilment centres in dense urban areas close to customers	Buldeo Rai *et al.* (2023); Fried and Goodchild (2023); Yang, Ostermeier and Hübner (2024)
Assortment	Broad catalogue across many categories	Curated range of groceries and essentials, expanded from about 2,000–3,000 to around 10,000 SKUs on leading Indian platforms	Kulkarni, Roy and Sivaraman (2026)
Order profile	Planned purchases, larger baskets, low time sensitivity	Small, frequent and often urgent or impatient orders	Gund and Daniel (2024); Sallnäs, Rogerson and Santén (2026); Zhang *et al.* (2026)
Last-mile delivery	Vans and parcel carriers on consolidated routes	Two-wheelers, bicycles and compact electric vehicles ridden by gig delivery workers	Buldeo Rai *et al.* (2023); Goswami, D'Silva and Choudhury (2026); Solanke *et al.* (2026)
Core operational problems	Warehouse location, inventory and route consolidation	Network design for micro-fulfilment centres, rapid picking and batching, real-time routing and rider allocation	Raj *et al.* (2024); Yang, Ostermeier and Hübner (2024); Kim *et al.* (2026); Bhattacharya and Kumar (2026b)
Economics	Scale economies from large warehouses and consolidated delivery	High fixed costs of urban dark stores, heavy cash burn and contested profitability; rising platform fees	Singh (2023); Yang, Ostermeier and Hübner (2024); PTI (2025)
Urban and environmental footprint	Logistics sprawl and parcel traffic	Transport intensity, kerbside and public-space use, packaging waste; emissions depend on delivery speed and basket size	Buldeo Rai *et al.* (2023); Gund and Daniel (2024); Son and Kwon (2024)

➢ *Consumer Behaviour, Satisfaction and Repurchase*

Consumer behaviour is one of the largest clusters in the literature. Early adoption studies applied the technology acceptance model (Deepthi and Bansal, 2023), and an extended UTAUT2 framework identifies facilitating conditions, price value and habit as drivers of hedonic motivation and behavioural intention among young consumers (Krishnan, Kandasamy and Perumal, 2026). Virani, Saini and Sharma (2026) integrate uses and gratifications theory with E-S-QUAL and show that gratification works through customer satisfaction, and e-service quality through perceived value, to sustain purchase continuation intention. Sharma *et al.* (2026) shift attention from first-time adoption to repurchase: delivery speed, product availability, price attractiveness, app usability and return convenience raise satisfaction and repurchase

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intention, whereas previous negative experiences weaken this link.

Trust and value are recurring mechanisms. Kapoor, Sindwani and Goel (2023) find that app design, security assurance and fulfilment drive loyalty through trust, and Al-Mu'ani *et al.* (2024) show that Generation Z prioritises delivery speed whereas Generation Y values product availability and cash on delivery. Nasir *et al.* (2026) link utilitarian and emotional shopping values to shopping well-being, loyalty and word-of-mouth, showing that consumers value convenience, monetary benefits and emotional outcomes in addition to speed. Using customer-level transaction data, Harter, Stich and Spann (2025) show that late deliveries lengthen interpurchase times more than early deliveries shorten them. Research on AI-enabled marketing further connects brand experience, brand passion and brand evangelism, demonstrating the growing role of technology in consumer engagement (Aggarwal *al.*, 2026).

- *Last-Mile Delivery, Logistics and Optimisation*

Last-mile delivery is a central technical cluster because rapid delivery depends on efficient routing, fulfilment and resource allocation. Yang, Ostermeier and Hübner (2024) formulate the design of MFC networks as a location-routing problem, and Lee, Han and Song (2023) optimise an omnichannel distribution network that uses MFCs under demand uncertainty. Tavana *et al.* (2026) develop a decision support system for multi-depot vehicle routing that offers fast and ultra-fast delivery options and combines in-house and platform riders, while Park, Park and Kang (2026) show that synchronous and asynchronous transshipment can improve delivery efficiency and reduce transportation costs. Ma, Tsang and Lee (2025) and Teimoury and Rashid (2023) extend instant logistics to combined truck and drone delivery, and Nikseresht *et al.* (2026) improve demand forecasting for e-grocery, on which in-stock availability depends.

At the warehouse level, Kim *et al.* (2026) develop a data-driven hybrid picking strategy for MFCs in Korea, Raj *et al.* (2024) model order picking, batching and last-mile delivery under a delivery-time promise, and Zhang *et al.* (2026) use reinforcement learning to schedule multi-product units. Vhatkar *et al.* (2026) use a hybrid multi-criteria decision-making model to identify the factors that matter when retailers adopt a Q-commerce service. Together, these studies show that delivery speed is the outcome of an integrated system rather than of the delivery process alone: inventory location, warehouse picking, routing and scheduling all determine whether a platform can meet customer expectations, and intensified fulfilment carries its own investment, equipment and workforce costs.

- *Artificial Intelligence, Decision-Making and Data-Driven Q-Commerce*

AI appears across both operational and consumer research. Sorooshian, Ahadi and Liravi (2026) review multi-agent systems, reinforcement learning, simulation and decision-support approaches to autonomous coordination in Q-commerce last-mile fulfilment and conclude that human autonomy, accountability, transparency, privacy, fairness and safety remain underexplored. Mo *et al.* (2025) apply deep reinforcement learning to the dynamic routing of order additions and cancellations. On the consumer side, Basha, Gopal and Sucharitha (2026) compare machine-learning and deep-learning models for classifying customer reviews of BlinkIt, Zepto and JioMart, Bansal and Singla (2025) extend sentiment analysis to text, image and video feedback with LSTM networks, Li *et al.* (2023) use latent class modelling to segment the users of Chinese food delivery apps by the service attributes they value, and Pahari *et al.* (2026) show that emotional manipulation and information overload in AI-enabled personalisation raise consumers' threat perceptions and lead to resistance, platform avoidance and brand distrust. At industrial scale, Alibaba's vehicle-routing algorithms, which support deliveries in as little as 30 minutes, have generated more than US$50 million in annual savings (Hu *et al.*, 2022). AI therefore connects operational optimisation, managerial decision-making and consumer analytics, but it also raises questions of governance.

- *Pricing, Economics and Decision Trade-offs*

Pricing is closely linked with the economics of rapid fulfilment. Zhu and Xie (2026) use a two-period game to examine behaviour-based pricing together with the choice between self-operated and platform-operated logistics, showing that pricing and fulfilment decisions are interdependent. Bhattacharya and Kumar (2026a) develop a dynamic pricing policy for perishable Q-commerce goods that accounts for shelf life, basket-level demand and platform commissions, and Sharma and Singh (2026) connect price transparency, perceived ethicality and price fairness with customer loyalty under dynamic pricing. Jayapal (2025) adds that gratification can sustain consumers' willingness to pay premium prices. Pricing therefore shapes not only short-term purchasing but also long-term customer relationships.

- *Business Models, Competition and Profitability*

A sizeable part of the literature consists of teaching cases on Indian platforms, which document how firms compete and why profitability remains elusive. Singh (2023) analyses the industry through Porter's five forces and Blue Ocean strategy, describes Q-commerce as a high cash-burn business and examines Zomato's acquisition of the loss-making Blinkit, a deal that Saha, Singh and Joshi (2025) frame as a choice between long-term competitive advantage and short-term financial risk. Sanghi, Chandra Balodi and Gupta (2024) compare the business models of Dunzo and Blinkit, and Priya, K and N (2026) show how Dunzo's one-hour delivery model was overtaken by better-funded rivals, which led to rising costs, debt and investor fatigue by mid-2023. Karulkar *et al.* (2025) trace Zepto's market entry and operating challenges, and Mali and Kulkarni (2026) examine the financing choices behind its anticipated public listing. Kulkarni, Roy and Sivaraman (2026) describe the intensifying contest after Flipkart's entry in 2024, with platforms expanding their assortments from about 2,000–3,000 to 10,000 SKUs and racing to add dark stores.

Speed is also a marketing asset. Verma and Pahwa (2026) show that the co-branded campaigns of Blinkit and Zomato combine delivery speed with humour, cultural timing

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and emotional triggers, so that a back-end capability becomes front-end branding. Operations studies confirm the cost pressure behind the model: services based on micro-fulfilment centres suffer from high costs and operational inefficiency (Lee, Han and Song, 2023), and many quick-commerce retailers struggle to achieve profitability (Yang, Ostermeier and Hübner, 2024). Because the case evidence rests mostly on secondary sources, rigorous empirical research on the unit economics of Q-commerce remains scarce.

- *Sustainability, Urban Space, Labour and Social Effects*

The sustainability literature shows that Q-commerce raises environmental and social questions alongside its efficiency benefits. Gund and Daniel (2024) find that the emissions of Q-commerce and e-commerce depend on delivery speed, depot locations, order patterns and basket size; Son and Kwon (2024) associate frequent Q-commerce transport with congestion, emissions and packaging waste; and Buldeo Rai *et al.* (2023) document the geographical and transport impacts of dark stores in Paris. Spatial studies show that delivery-time demands pull logistics facilities towards consumers: some last-mile platforms of Amazon in United States metropolitan areas locate closer to population centres than upstream facilities do (Fried and Goodchild, 2023), and in Cologne, quick, online and hybrid retailers form distinct location patterns shaped by customer proximity, population density and land prices (Zander, Spohner and Dannenberg, 2026). Kulkarni *et al.* (2026) propose GreenScore, an AI-based sustainability scoring system built on life-cycle assessment, and Chavhan and Dutta (2025) identify circular-economy practices such as waste reduction and sustainable packaging for fresh food supply chains.

Labour conditions form a smaller but growing stream. Kaul (2026) examines how the ten-minute delivery model reorganises urban time and space while deepening the precarity of delivery workers, Goswami, D'Silva and Choudhury (2026) document low pay and algorithmic control among 1,247 delivery workers, and Keerthi, Ashwini and Shivakumar (2026) note that existing green HRM frameworks do not address gig-based, algorithm-driven work. Research on fairness in order allocation (Bhattacharya and Kumar, 2026b) and on consumer impatience and urgency (Sallnäs, Rogerson and Santén, 2026) further shows that delivery speed involves trade-offs between riders, consumers and environmental sustainability.

- *Trust, Digital Access and Responsible Consumer Interfaces*

The literature also examines the wider social and ethical effects of Q-commerce. Khan *et al.* (2026) find that Q-commerce use is positively associated with financial inclusion in urban India, with platform accessibility as the significant mediating pathway, whereas digital literacy and trust show no significant indirect effects. Agrawal and Narayanan (2026) examine dark patterns such as basket sneaking, false scarcity and confirm-shaming and show that manipulative interface practices raise perceived betrayal and negative word-of-mouth. Growth in Q-commerce must therefore also be judged in terms of accessibility, trust and responsible platform design.

- *Theories and Conceptual Perspectives*

The literature applies several theories to explain different dimensions of Q-commerce. Uses and gratifications theory and E-S-QUAL connect consumer motivations and digital service quality with satisfaction and purchase continuation (Virani, Saini and Sharma, 2026); UTAUT2 explains adoption through facilitating conditions, price value and habit (Krishnan, Kandasamy and Perumal, 2026); and expectation–confirmation theory and the technology acceptance model explain repurchase, where satisfaction and previous experience shape repeat behaviour (Sharma *et al.*, 2026). Other studies draw on the stimulus–organism–response family, game theory, optimisation, reinforcement learning, simulation and green HRM to examine consumer, operational and sustainability issues (Kapoor, Sindwani and Goel, 2023; Keerthi, Ashwini and Shivakumar, 2026; Zhu and Xie, 2026).

- *Research Gaps*

The literature reveals a clear separation between consumer and operational research. Consumer studies focus on satisfaction, purchase intention, value and repurchase, whereas technical studies concentrate on routing, scheduling, fulfilment and cost. AI research is developing faster on optimisation than on governance, and sustainability research is divided between environmental performance, labour and consumer behaviour (Kaul, 2026; Kulkarni *et al.*, 2026; Sorooshian, Ahadi and Liravi, 2026). Pricing studies similarly show that financial decisions are connected with perceptions of fairness and loyalty. These gaps call for research that considers the consumer, technological, operational and social dimensions of Q-commerce together, which the present review addresses by examining Q-commerce as an integrated system.

A. Research Objective

The fundamental aim of this review is to examine how research on quick commerce has developed, who contributes to it and what it studies, to analyse the intellectual structure of the field and to set out where it should go next. This can be achieved by setting smaller goals as follows:

- To examine the evolution and publication trends of research related to quick commerce in terms of time, journals and countries.
- To identify the major research themes, contributors, geographical distribution and intellectual structure of the quick-commerce-related literature.
- To identify research gaps and propose a future research agenda concerning consumer behaviour, logistics, technology, labour, sustainability and responsible Q-commerce practices.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A systematic literature review (SLR) synthesises the extant literature on a subject in a transparent and replicable way, so that researchers can understand the state of a field and gain useful insights from it (Paul and Rialp Criado, 2020). The present study combines an SLR with bibliometric

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analysis. Its purpose is to bring together previous studies on quick commerce, identify how the field has evolved and which research trends have emerged in recent years, and locate research gaps, so that the findings can inform both future academic research and practice.

➢ *Article Selection, Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria*

Before an SLR is conducted, the topic under investigation must be clearly defined; a good review focuses on one focal question and on evidence that has already been published (Linnenluecke, Marrone and Singh, 2020). Quick commerce has become an object of research only in recent years, with studies concentrating on elements such as dark stores, last-mile logistics, delivery-route optimisation and consumer adoption.

An initial search of Elsevier's Scopus database was conducted on 16 September 2026 to obtain a general overview of the area of study. The keyword "quick commerce" was used to identify existing reviews and studies on the topic, and the search returned 1,886 records. The results included many records that use the words "quick" and "commerce" in other senses, such as quick-response systems, quick-service restaurants and electronic commerce in general, which indicates that the two words were matched separately rather than as a single phrase. This breadth was addressed through the relevance screening described below.

The next step was to set inclusion and exclusion criteria to narrow this large and heterogeneous set to recent and relevant studies. Four filters were applied. First, the time span 2011–2026 was selected because most of the development in the area has taken place in the last fifteen years; this reduced the set to 1,496 documents. Before 2011 only a few documents were published each year, although the records stretch back to the 1960s, which shows that the underlying idea is not new even though it attracted little research. Second, only articles and reviews were retained, and conference papers, conference reviews, book chapters, notes and other document types were excluded, leaving 579 documents. Third, the set was limited to documents written in English, leaving 554; the excluded documents were written in various Asian and European languages, which points to regional research interest in the topic. Finally, the source type was limited to journals, which produced a final export of 548 documents.

➢ *Data Preparation*

The 548 records were exported from Scopus in BibTeX and RIS formats and checked before analysis (Table 3). Five records had no author or index keywords and were removed, because keywords drive the keyword, thematic-map and co-occurrence analyses. This left 543 records (507 articles and 36 reviews), all in English and published between 2011 and 2026. No blank author fields, duplicate titles or duplicate DOIs were found. One journal, the *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Electronic Commerce Research*, appeared under two spellings that differed only by a trailing space, which would have counted it as two sources and split its four articles; after its name was standardised, the collection contained 405 distinct sources. After author keywords and index keywords were merged, every record had at least one keyword, although 34 records (6.3%) had no author keywords and 142 (26.2%) had no index keywords.

Table 3 Data Quality Checks

Check	Result	Action
Records in the original export	548	—
Records with no keywords	5	Removed
Records analysed	543	—
Blank author fields	0	None needed
Duplicate titles	0	None needed
Duplicate DOIs	0	None needed
Inconsistent source names	1	Standardised
Missing author keywords	34 (6.3%)	Index keywords used
Missing index keywords	142 (26.2%)	Author keywords used
Missing affiliation	3 (0.6%)	Excluded from country analysis
Missing corresponding-author address	87 (16.0%)	Excluded from SCP/MCP analysis
Missing abstract	1 (0.2%)	None needed

➢ *Relevance Screening for the Systematic Review*

Because the search also captured studies outside the topic, the titles, abstracts and author keywords of the 543 records were screened for relevance. Only 69 records (12.7%) use the terms quick commerce, Q-commerce or quick-commerce, and all of them were published from 2022 onwards. These 69 studies, together with eight closely related studies on online food delivery, hyperlocal delivery, e-grocery, last-mile logistics and rapid pick-and-delivery, form the corpus of 77 studies used for the literature review (Section 2) and the future research agenda (Section 6). The remaining 466 records, for example on pesticide residues, stock-market forecasting and the ethanol content of kombucha, were excluded from the qualitative synthesis but retained in the bibliometric analysis, which therefore describes the wider literature around Q-commerce.

Each of the 77 studies was then coded on five attributes using its title, abstract and keywords: primary research stream, research method, theoretical lens, empirical context (country and platform vertical) and the input, process and outcome constructs it examines. A study that addressed more than one stream was assigned to its primary focus. The stream and method codes are reported in Section 5, and the theory,

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context and construct codes underpin the literature review (Section 2) and the research agenda (Section 6).

The above criteria are presented in a PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) flow chart, a framework that helps authors report systematic reviews completely and documents data collection as an iterative process that is transparent and replicable (Moher *et al.*, 2010). The flow chart is given in Figure 1.

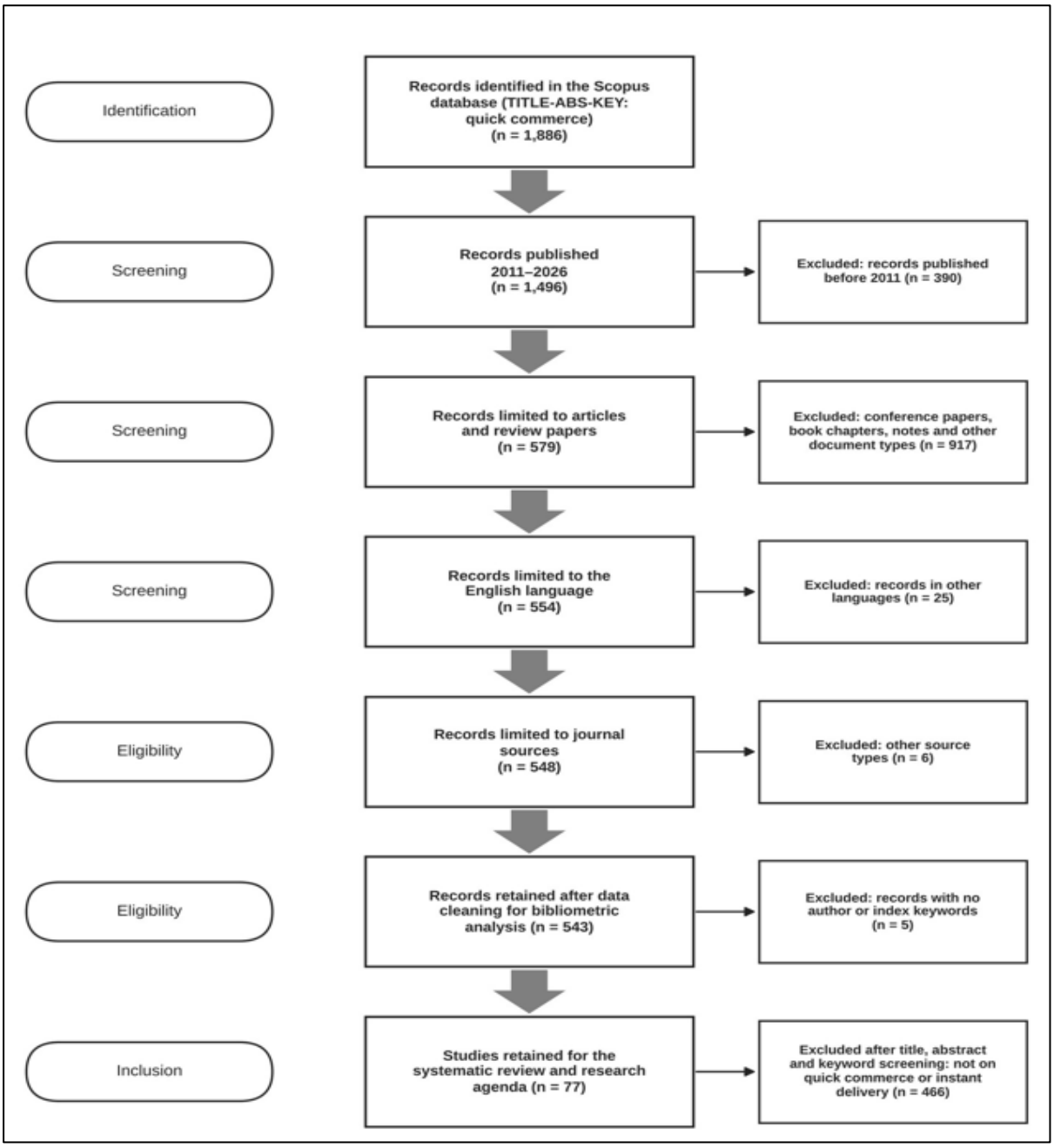


Fig 1 PRISMA Flow Chart of the Search, Screening and Inclusion Process (Authors' Work)

➢ *Bibliometric Analysis*

Bibliometric analysis applies quantitative techniques to bibliographic data such as publication records, citations, keywords and author affiliations. Its use in business research has grown with the availability of scientific databases such as Scopus and Web of Science, of software such as Biblioshiny, VOSviewer, Gephi and Leximancer, and with the spread of bibliometric methods from information science into management research (Donthu *et al.*, 2021). The method is well suited to large and fragmented literatures because it allows researchers to map the development of a field, identify its main contributors and themes, detect emerging trends and knowledge gaps, and set new research directions. Its value, however, depends on complete data and on a careful choice of analytical techniques.

Following the framework proposed by Donthu *et al.* (2021), the bibliometric analysis was conducted in four sequential steps.

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- *Step 1: Define the Aims and Scope.*

The study analyses the evolution and intellectual structure of quick-commerce research: its publication trends, key contributors, research themes, collaboration patterns and emerging directions.

- *Step 2: Select the Bibliometric Techniques.*

Given these aims, both performance analysis and science mapping were undertaken. Performance analysis examined publications and citations and the contributions of sources and countries. Science mapping examined the relationships within the literature through keyword co-occurrence, the thematic map and country collaboration patterns. Because the Scopus export did not contain the cited references of the records, citation-based science mapping such as co-citation analysis and bibliographic coupling could not be performed, and the influence of individual studies was assessed through their Scopus citation counts.

- *Step 3: Collect and Prepare the Data.*

The data were collected from Scopus with the search and filters outlined above and prepared as described under data preparation, which ensured that the dataset met the requirements of the chosen techniques.

- *Step 4: Conduct the Analysis and Report the Findings.*

The final dataset was analysed with the chosen techniques, and the results are presented in tables and figures in Section 5, together with a profile of the 77 coded studies. In line with Donthu *et al.* (2021), the descriptive results are combined with interpretation, and the clusters and trends are discussed in relation to the development of Q-commerce research, especially new trends and research gaps.

➢ *Software Used*

- Scopus: Elsevier's abstract and citation database, which provides access to peer-reviewed journals across disciplines, was used to search for and export the bibliographic records.
- RStudio and Biblioshiny: Biblioshiny, the web interface of the bibliometrix package for the R programming language (Aria and Cuccurullo, 2017), was run in RStudio to analyse annual production, sources and Bradford's law, country production and collaboration, keywords, the thematic map and the co-occurrence network, and to generate the corresponding tables and visualisations.
- Microsoft Excel: Excel was used to store and clean the exported records and to tabulate the results reported in Section 5.
- Mendeley: Mendeley was used only for reference management, to organise the research papers and the bibliography collected during the research process; it was not used to conduct the bibliometric analysis.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This section reports the bibliometric results for the 543 cleaned records. Because only 69 of these records name quick commerce explicitly, the results describe the broader quick-commerce-related literature, and the growth of explicit Q-commerce research is reported separately. Table 4 summarises the main information about the dataset.

Table 4 Main Information About the Dataset After Cleaning

Description	Result
Timespan	2011–2026
Sources (journals)	405
Documents	543
Document types	Article 507; Review 36
Annual growth rate	12.26%
Unique author names	1,709
Single-authored documents	63
Average authors per document	3.41
Documents with authors from two or more countries	124 of 540 (23.0%)
Average citations per document	20.93 (median 7)
Distinct keywords after cleaning	6,337

➢ *Publication Trends Over Time*

Table 5 and Figure 2 show the annual scientific production. Output rose from 12 articles in 2011 to 68 in 2026. The annual growth rate, calculated as the compound annual growth rate between the first and the last year over 15 yearly intervals, is 12.26%, which shows that the literature is expanding rather than shrinking. The value should be read with care because 2026 is an incomplete year; excluding 2026, the growth rate over 2011–2025 is 11.63%, so the conclusion does not depend on the partial year. Even before the year is complete, 2026 already has the highest count in the series, ahead of 2023 (63 articles).

The series is not a smooth curve, and its dips deserve to be reported. Production fell in 2013 (19 after 20), in 2014 (11, a fall of 42.1%), in 2018 (17 after 25, a fall of 32.0%) and slightly in 2024 (59 after 63) and 2025 (56). The early dips occur when yearly totals are only 11 to 25 articles, so a small change in the number of indexed papers produces a large percentage change. The small declines after the 2023 peak may reflect a return to normal levels after the post-pandemic surge in e-commerce research or delays in the indexing of recent papers; these explanations are plausible but were not tested in this analysis. The clearest inflection point is 2019, when output rose from 17 to 33 articles (an increase of 94.1%) and never returned to earlier levels. Because this jump

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precedes the COVID-19 pandemic, it cannot be explained by pandemic demand alone; it is consistent with the general growth of digital commerce and of data-driven methods in commerce research. Overall, 332 of the 543 articles (61.1%) were published from 2021 onwards, against 211 (38.9%) in the ten years to 2020.

Table 5 Annual Production, Year-on-Year Change and Cumulative total (*2026 is an Incomplete Year; Data Exported on 16 September 2026)

Year	Articles	Change on previous year	Cumulative articles
2011	12	—	12
2012	20	+66.7%	32
2013	19	−5.0%	51
2014	11	−42.1%	62
2015	17	+54.5%	79
2016	22	+29.4%	101
2017	25	+13.6%	126
2018	17	−32.0%	143
2019	33	+94.1%	176
2020	35	+6.1%	211
2021	37	+5.7%	248
2022	49	+32.4%	297
2023	63	+28.6%	360
2024	59	−6.3%	419
2025	56	−5.1%	475
2026*	68	+21.4%	543

To describe the pattern more formally, three trendlines were fitted to the annual counts, following the standard spreadsheet definitions in which the year is numbered from 1 (2011) to 16 (2026) (Figure 2, Table 6). The linear trendline has an RZ of 0.8644 and a slope of 3.77, which means that production has grown on average by about 3.8 additional articles each year; because the RZ is well above 0.8, growth has been consistent and fairly predictable over the whole period, even though individual years fluctuate. The second-order polynomial trendline fits best, with an RZ of 0.9220, and its positive squared term (0.237) shows that growth is accelerating. The exponential trendline has an RZ of 0.8624, almost the same as the linear one, and implies growth of about 12.4% a year, very close to the compound growth rate reported above.

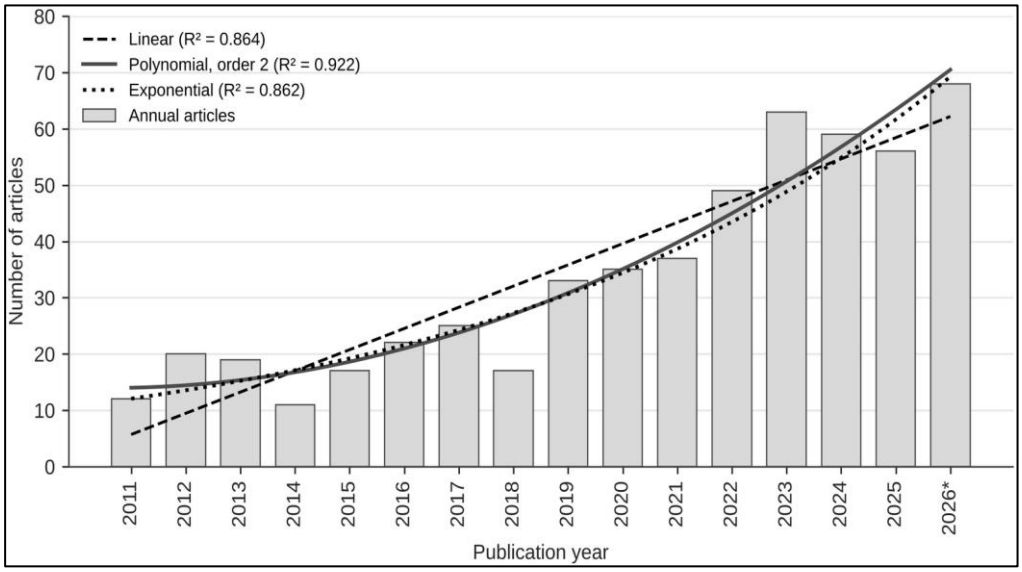


Fig 2 Annual Scientific Production with Linear, Polynomial and Exponential Trendlines, 2011–2026 (*2026 is an Incomplete Year)

A polynomial line always fits at least as well as a straight line because it has an extra parameter, so its advantage should not be over-interpreted. The most sensible reading is steady growth with some acceleration rather than a clean exponential pattern, given the step in 2019 and the flattening of the 2024–2025 values. The exponential RZ is calculated on the logarithm of the yearly counts, as spreadsheet software does. Removing the incomplete 2026 value lowers all three RZ values slightly; the polynomial trendline remains the best fit, and the linear and exponential trendlines remain almost identical. These figures describe the past and should not be treated as a forecast.

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Table 6 Trendline Measures for the Annual Number of Articles (x = Year Number, 2011 = 1)

Trendline	Equation	R^2	R^2 excluding 2026
Linear	$y = 3.766x + 1.925$	0.8644	0.8359
Polynomial (order 2)	$y = 0.2372xZ - 0.2666x + 14.023$	0.9220	0.9024
Exponential	$y = 10.729e^{0.1166x}$	0.8624	0.8390

➢ *Growth of Explicit Quick-Commerce Research*

A relevance check is important for interpreting every later result. Searching the titles, abstracts and author keywords for quick commerce, Q-commerce and quick-commerce finds 69 of the 543 records (12.7%). These records appear only from 2022 onwards and are concentrated in the most recent year, with 39 of them published in 2026, when they account for 57.4% of all records (Table 7). Together with the eight closely related studies identified in the relevance screening, they form the 77 studies reviewed in Sections 2 and 6, of which 56 were published in 2025 or 2026. The rest of the collection connects to the topic through broader terms, mainly electronic commerce, retail, sales, supply chains and decision-making, and through other uses of the word quick, such as quick response and quick-service restaurants, which are discussed with the thematic clusters below. The results that follow therefore describe the wider literature around quick commerce, and the growth of explicit Q-commerce research is visible mainly in the last few years.

Table 7 Records that Explicitly Mention Quick Commerce and Studies Retained for Review, by Publication Year

Year	Records naming quick commerce	Studies retained for review	All records in that year	Share naming quick commerce
2022	1	2	49	2.0%
2023	5	9	63	7.9%
2024	10	10	59	16.9%
2025	14	15	56	25.0%
2026	39	41	68	57.4%
Total	**69**	**77**	**295**	**23.4%**

➢ *Most Relevant Sources*

The 543 articles are spread across 405 sources. *IEEE Access* is the leading source with 10 articles, followed by *Sustainability (Switzerland)* with 8 and *Applied Sciences (Switzerland)* with 6 (Table 8). The ten sources in Table 8 together publish 56 articles, only 10.3% of the collection, so no journal dominates the field. Six sources are tied at four articles; the table therefore ranks tied sources by total citations, which fills the last three places with the *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, *Management Science* and *Energy Policy*.

The list also shows how broad the literature is. Alongside commerce and retail journals (*Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, *Management Science*), the leading sources include general engineering and computing outlets (*IEEE Access*, *Applied Sciences*, *Mathematical Problems in Engineering*), sustainability and energy journals (*Sustainability*, *Energies*, *Energy Policy*) and a food-science journal (*Food Research International*). Source impact adds a quality perspective to the counts. *IEEE Access* and *Sustainability* have the highest h-index within this collection (6 each), but the *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services* reaches 369 citations from only four articles and *Management Science* reaches 209, which means that their articles are cited far more often per paper than those of the higher-volume journals. The h-index is calculated within this collection only, from the citation counts recorded in the Scopus export.

Table 8 Top 10 Sources by Number of Documents, with Total Citations and h-Index

Rank	Source	Articles	Total citations	h-index
1	IEEE Access	10	381	6
2	Sustainability (Switzerland)	8	65	6
3	Applied Sciences (Switzerland)	6	56	4
4	Energies	5	77	4
5	Food Research International	5	51	3
6	Electronic Commerce Research and Applications	5	46	3
7	Mathematical Problems in Engineering	5	39	4
8	Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services	4	369	3
9	Management Science	4	209	3
10	Energy Policy	4	159	4

➢ *Bradford's Law and the Dispersion of Sources*

Bradford's law was used to identify the core sources (Figure 3). Biblioshiny divides the sources into three zones that each contain about one third of the articles (Table 9). The core zone contains 62 sources that together publish 183 articles (33.7%); the second zone needs 163 sources for the next 180 articles, and the third zone needs 180 sources for the final 180 articles. In other words, about 15% of the sources

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supply a third of the literature, while 326 of the 405 sources (80.5%) publish just one article. A literature review on this topic could therefore start from the 62 core sources, but it would still miss most of the sources that contribute to the field.

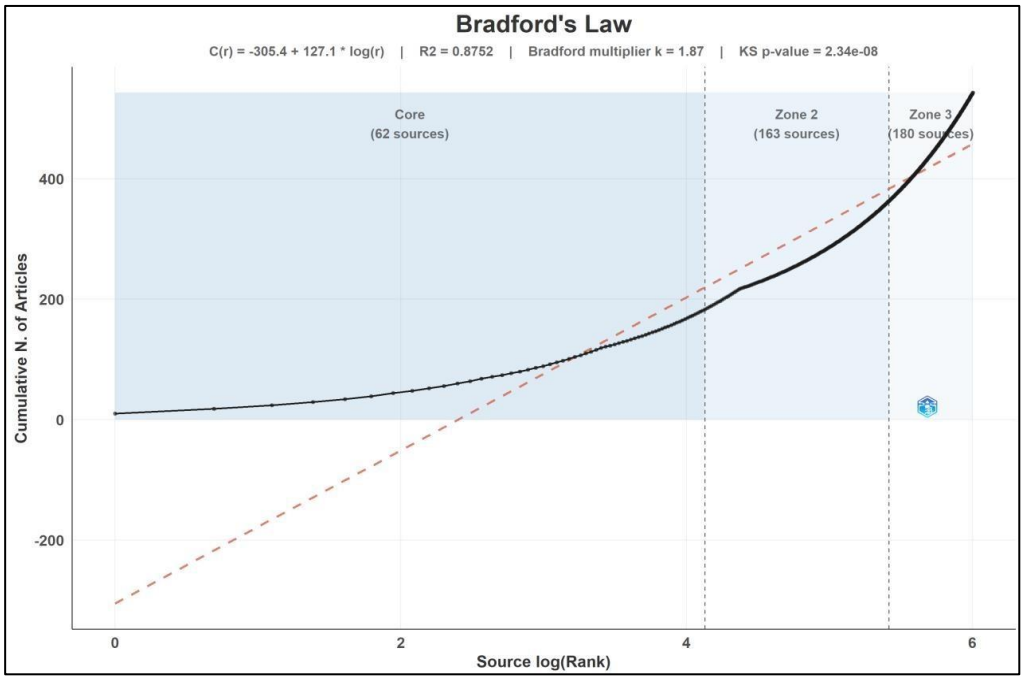


Fig 3 Bradford's Law (Biblioshiny Output)

The fitted line in Figure 3 has an RZ of 0.8752, and Biblioshiny estimates a Bradford multiplier of k = 1.87, so the distribution is broadly Bradford-like. However, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov p-value of 2.34×10^{-8} is far below 0.05, which means that the data do not follow an ideal Bradford distribution. The source counts per zone (62, 163 and 180) do not grow by a constant factor, and the curve rises steeply in the third zone because of the very large number of one-article sources. This is typical of a young, interdisciplinary literature that is published in many different outlets rather than in a small set of specialist journals.

Table 9 Bradford Zones

Zone	Sources	Articles	Share of articles
Core	62	183	33.7%
Zone 2	163	180	33.1%
Zone 3	180	180	33.1%
Total	**405**	**543**	**100.0%**

➢ *Contributing Countries and Global Collaboration*

Authors from 75 countries and territories contribute to the collection. Figure 4 shades countries by their number of articles, and Table 10 gives the values for the ten most productive countries, because a table with labelled values is easier to read than a colour scale. Each document is counted once for every country that appears in its author affiliations, so the country counts add up to more than 543. Production is concentrated in three countries: India (116 documents, 21.4%), China (106, 19.5%) and the United States (86, 15.8%). Together, 290 of the 540 documents with affiliation data (53.7%) involve at least one author from one of these three countries. South Korea (30), the United Kingdom (26) and Spain (21) come next, and no other country has more than 18 documents. The strong position of India and China is plausible given how prominent these markets are in quick commerce, although the data cannot show that this is the cause. Among the 69 studies that name Q-commerce explicitly, the concentration is sharper still: 45 have a first author affiliated with an Indian institution.

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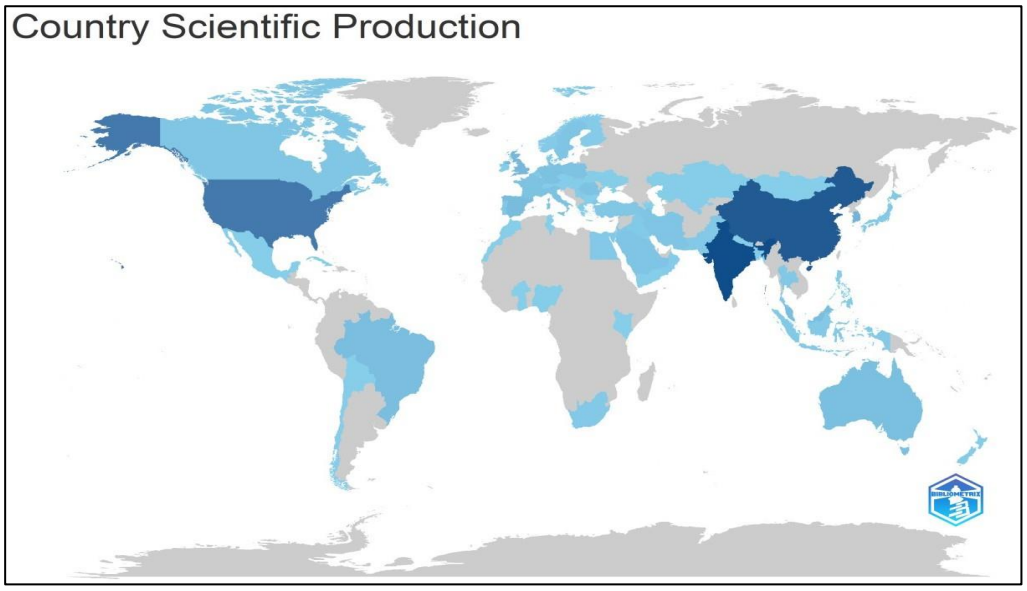


Fig 4 Country Scientific Production (Biblioshiny Output)

Table 10 Top 10 Countries by Number of Documents (Any Author Affiliation)

Rank	Country	Documents	Share of all documents
1	India	116	21.4%
2	China	106	19.5%
3	United States	86	15.8%
4	South Korea	30	5.5%
5	United Kingdom	26	4.8%
6	Spain	21	3.9%
7	Germany	18	3.3%
8	Malaysia	18	3.3%
9	Australia	15	2.8%
10	France	14	2.6%

The corresponding author's country gives a view of collaboration (Figure 5). Address data for the corresponding author are available for 454 documents. Of these, 343 are single-country publications (SCP) and 111 are multi-country publications (MCP), so 24.4% involve international collaboration; across all documents with affiliation data, 23.0% have authors from more than one country. The three largest producers are mostly domestic: only 12.1% of the Indian and 9.1% of the United States corresponding-author documents are MCP, against 25.3% for China. The most international countries are the United Kingdom, where 11 of 15 documents (73.3%) are MCP, and South Korea (43.5%), whereas Brazil has 10 corresponding-author documents and no international collaboration at all. The field is therefore led by a few countries that mostly publish within their own borders, while international collaboration is more common in countries such as the United Kingdom and South Korea.

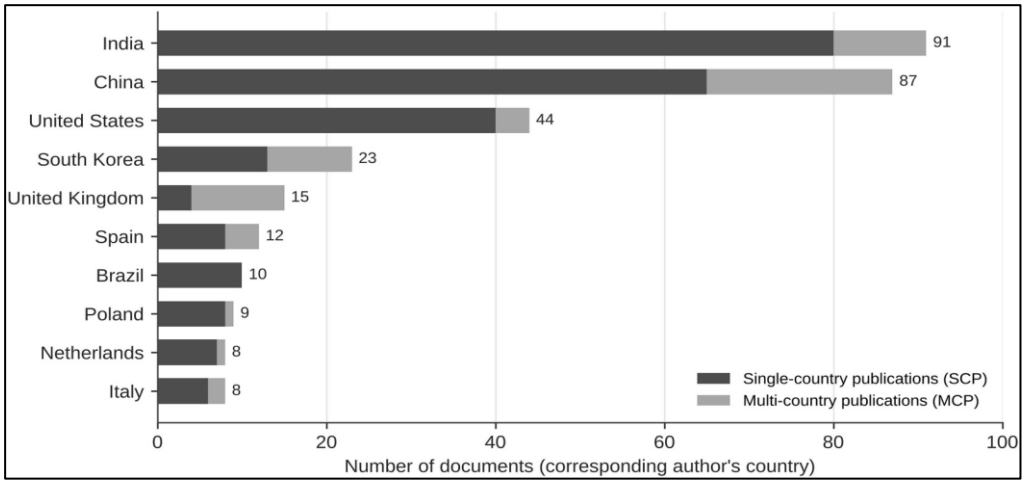


Fig 5 Corresponding Author's Country: Single-Country (SCP) Versus Multi-Country (MCP) Publications

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➢ *Keyword Analysis*

Keywords in a research paper indicate its field, themes and research issues. The keyword analysis combines author keywords and index keywords so that all 543 records can be used. Before counting, spelling variants were merged, and generic index terms that carry no subject information, together with the bare search term commerce, were removed. E-commerce is by far the most frequent keyword (115 documents), followed by commercial phenomena (53), sales (51), quick commerce (48) and decision-making (44) (Figure 6). Commercial phenomena and sales are broad index terms assigned by the database, whereas quick commerce (48 documents, 47 of them through author keywords) reflects the vocabulary chosen by the authors themselves. The vocabulary is dominated by consumer, cost and supply-chain terms, with deep learning, artificial intelligence and machine learning also appearing frequently.

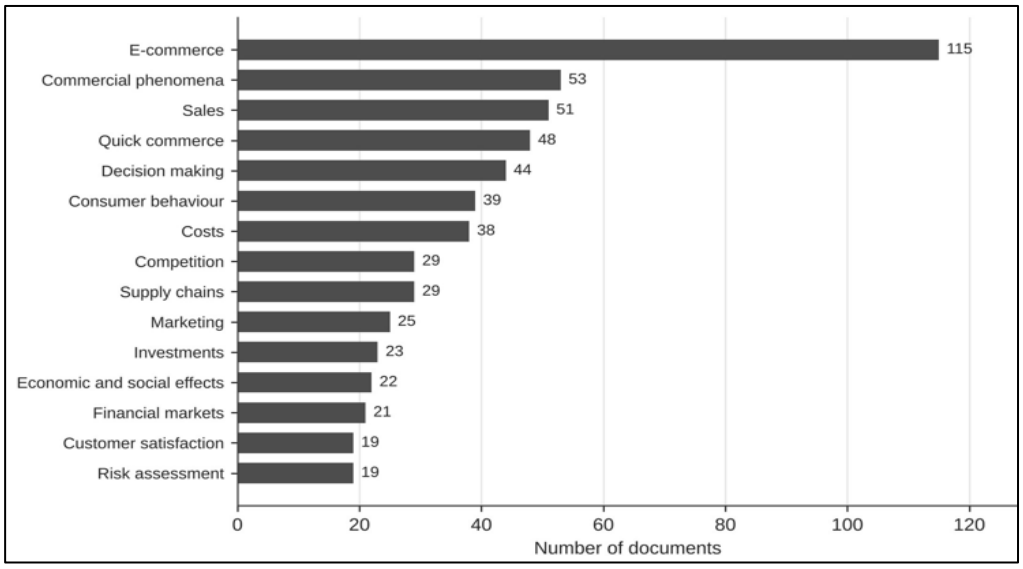


Fig 6 Most Frequent Keywords (Author and Index Keywords Combined, After Cleaning)

Comparing the periods before and after 2020 shows how the vocabulary has shifted (Table 11). E-commerce leads in both periods, but quick commerce does not appear among the frequent keywords before 2021 and is the second most frequent keyword from 2021 onwards. Sales, decision-making and consumer behaviour remain important in both periods, while supply chains and deep learning enter the top ten in the later period. This agrees with the year-by-year pattern in Table 7, where explicit Q-commerce records begin in 2022.

Table 11 Most Frequent Keywords Before and After 2020

Rank	2011–2020 (211 articles)	Freq.	2021–2026 (332 articles)	Freq.
1	E-commerce	31	E-commerce	84
2	Commercial phenomena	30	Quick commerce	48
3	Costs	17	Sales	34
4	Sales	17	Decision making	29
5	Decision making	15	Consumer behaviour	28
6	Competition	11	Commercial phenomena	23
7	Consumer behaviour	11	Costs	21
8	Economics	11	Supply chains	20
9	Marketing	11	Deep learning	18
10	Manufacture	10	Economic and social effects	18

➢ *Thematic Map*

Thematic mapping is used to understand the conceptual structure of a research field. The thematic map and the co-occurrence network were produced in Biblioshiny from the keywords of the 543 cleaned records (author and index keywords combined). Keywords that often appear in the same documents are grouped into clusters, and each cluster is labelled with its three most frequent keywords. On the thematic map, a cluster's centrality (relevance degree, horizontal axis) shows how strongly it is connected to the other clusters and hence how important it is to the field as a whole, and its density (development degree, vertical axis) shows how strongly its own keywords are connected and hence how well developed it is. The dashed lines mark the medians and divide the map into four quadrants: motor themes (central and well developed), basic themes (central but less developed), niche themes (developed but not central), and emerging or declining themes (neither). The axes carry no numeric scale, so positions are described qualitatively. Four clusters were identified (Figure 7, Table 12).

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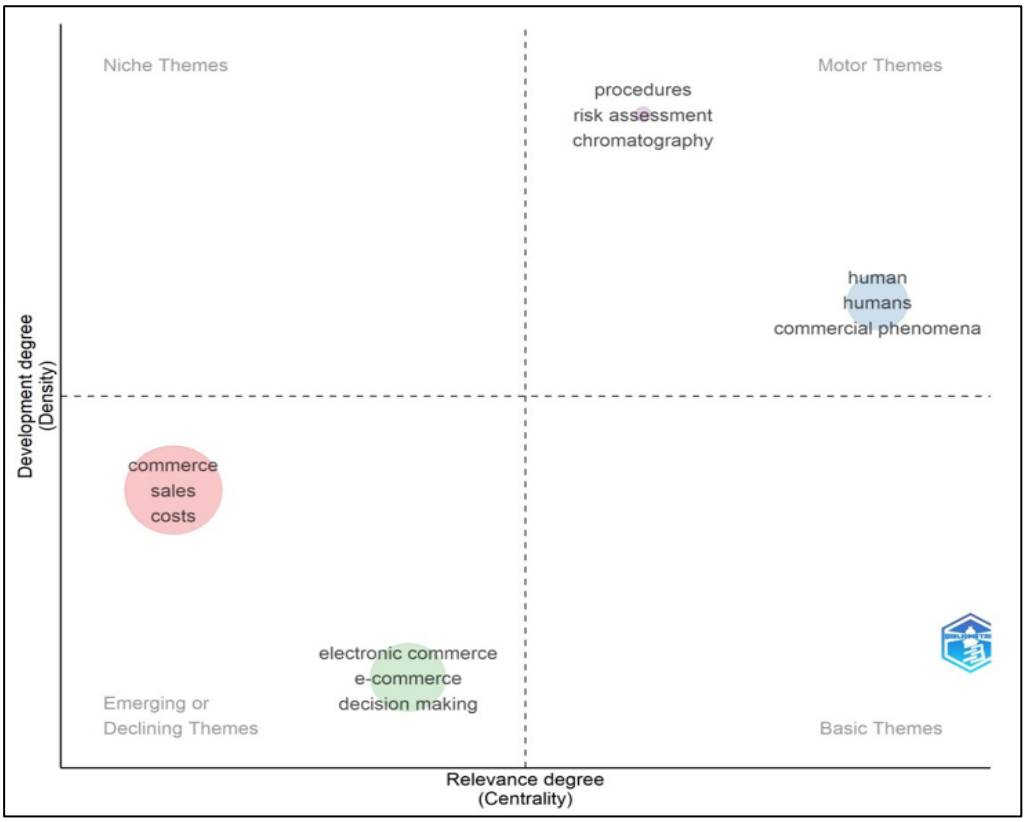


Fig 7 Thematic Map: Centrality (Relevance) Versus Density (Development) (Biblioshiny Output)

Table 12 Clusters Identified by Biblioshiny and Their Position on the Thematic Map

Cluster (colour)	Leading keywords	Quadrant	Position
Blue	Human, humans, commercial phenomena	Motor theme	Highest centrality; high density
Purple	Procedures, risk assessment, chromatography	Motor theme	Highest density; centrality only just above the median
Red	Commerce, sales, costs	Emerging or declining	Low centrality; density just below the median
Green	Electronic commerce, e-commerce, decision making	Emerging or declining	Low centrality; lowest density

Because a keyword list alone is not a reliable guide to what a cluster is about, each label was checked against the most-cited papers that contain the cluster's leading keywords and against how recent those papers are (Table 13). A document can belong to more than one cluster, so the document counts add up to more than 543. For the whole collection, the mean publication year is 2020.9 and 61.1% of the documents were published from 2021 onwards.

Table 13 Publication Profile of Each Cluster (Documents Containing at Least One of its Three Leading Keywords)

Cluster	Documents	Mean year	Published from 2021	Keyword counts (documents)
Blue	77	2020.2	50.6%	Human 66; humans 55; commercial phenomena 53
Purple	40	2020.8	60.0%	Procedures 19; risk assessment 19; chromatography 15
Red	311	2019.9	51.4%	Commerce 285; sales 51; costs 38
Green	139	2021.5	68.3%	Electronic commerce 64; e-commerce 51; decision making 44

- *Red Cluster (Commerce, Sales and Costs).*

This is the largest cluster, with 311 documents, because commerce is the general index term attached to most of the collection (285 documents). It represents the broad economic and commercial vocabulary of the literature rather than a single research question. Its most-cited papers are mixed: a study that forecasts the credit risk of small and medium-sized enterprises in supply chain finance with a hybrid ensemble machine-learning approach (Zhu *et al.*, 2019; 352 citations), a review of water footprint assessment (Hoekstra, 2017; 334 citations) and a stock-market volatility prediction study (Idrees, Alam and Agarwal, 2019; 258 citations). This confirms that the cluster is a general commerce and economics core rather than one topic. It sits in the emerging or declining quadrant, with low centrality and a density just below the median. Its documents are older than average (mean year

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2019.9, with 51.4% published from 2021 against 61.1% overall), so for this cluster the declining reading is more plausible than the emerging one, although the generic nature of the vocabulary also plays a part.

- *Green Cluster (Electronic Commerce, E-Commerce and Decision-Making).*

This cluster (139 documents) is the digital-commerce theme. Its most-cited papers concern consumer adoption and decisions in online settings: a study of mobile payment adoption by technology type (de Luna *et al.*, 2019; 439 citations), a study of atmospheric cues in live-streaming e-commerce (Wang *et al.*, 2022; 145 citations) and a study of how AI-powered technologies affect Instagram users' purchase decisions (Yeo *et al.*, 2022; 133 citations). It has the lowest density on the map, which means that its keywords are the most loosely connected: many different sub-topics (payments, live streaming, AI and consumer choice) share the general labels e-commerce and decision-making. It is also the most recent cluster (mean year 2021.5, with 68.3% of documents published from 2021 onwards). Together with its low density and low centrality, this points to an emerging theme that is still forming, and it is the cluster most closely related to quick commerce. Quick commerce itself does not appear among the cluster's leading keywords because Biblioshiny counts quick commerce and Q-commerce as separate keywords, which splits their frequency.

- *Blue Cluster (Human, Humans and Commercial Phenomena).*

This cluster (77 documents) is the most central on the map and is also well developed. Its keywords are generic index terms rather than commerce concepts: human and humans are database labels for studies involving people, and commercial phenomena is an economics index term. Of the 67 documents that carry human or humans, 43 also carry commercial phenomena. The most-cited papers are biomedical and analytical-science studies, such as a review of strategies for extending the half-lives of therapeutic proteins (Zaman *et al.*, 2019; 266 citations) and a study of how social media and encrypted messaging apps are used to supply and access drugs (Moyle *et al.*, 2019; 172 citations). The cluster therefore captures the records in which sales or trade meet health, drugs and food, and its motor position reflects widely shared index terms rather than the development of Q-commerce research.

- *Purple Cluster (Procedures, Risk Assessment and Chromatography).*

This is the smallest cluster (40 documents) and the most tightly connected internally, which explains its high density. It is an analytical chemistry and food-safety theme, as an evaluation of a QuEChERS sample-preparation and liquid chromatography–mass spectrometry method (Golge and Kabak, 2015; 119 citations) and a study of pesticide residues on cut flowers and the exposure of florists in Belgium (Toumi *et al.*, 2016; 44 citations) confirm. The word quick in QuEChERS (quick, easy, cheap, effective, rugged and safe) most likely explains why these records entered the search results. The term risk assessment also occurs in the credit-risk paper mentioned above, which links this cluster to the finance and supply-chain records. Its centrality is only just above the median and its bubble is very small, so its motor position is borderline. This theme is not Q-commerce research; it is a distinct strand of the dataset.

➢ *Co-Occurrence Analysis*

Co-occurrence analysis represents the relationships between terms that appear together in the same documents as a network, in which nodes stand for keywords and links for their co-occurrence. The network in Figure 8 shows the same four clusters, in the same colours as the thematic map. The red and green clusters are the largest and the most densely populated, with commerce forming the main hub of the red cluster and electronic commerce and decision-making at the centre of the green one. The blue and purple clusters lie apart on the right and are more compact, with the purple cluster the tightest, in line with its highest density on the thematic map. The dense links between the four groups pass mainly through the commerce hub, which shows that the general commerce vocabulary holds the collection together, while the health, chemistry and food-safety groups connect to the commerce groups only through a limited set of shared terms.

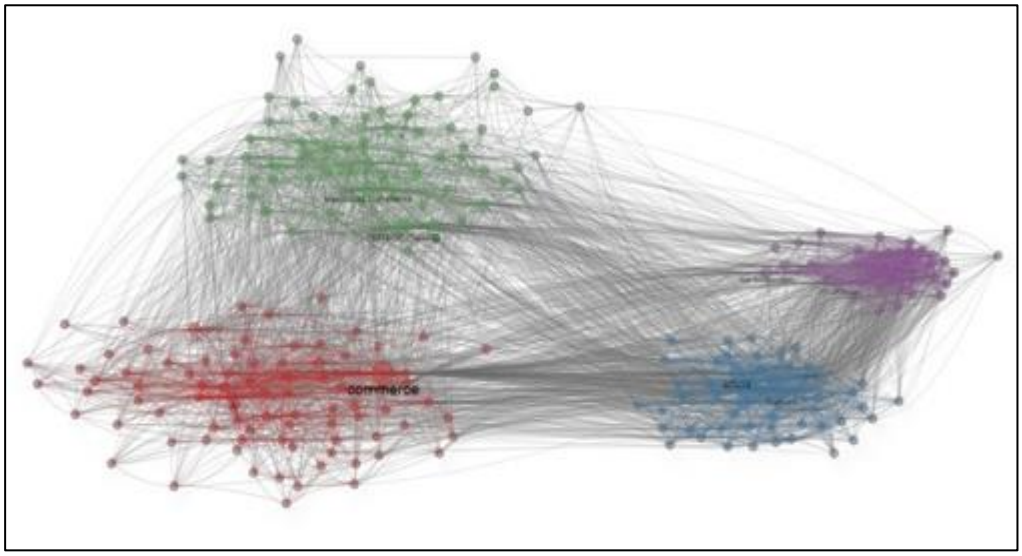


Fig 8 Keyword Co-Occurrence Network Coloured by Cluster (Biblioshiny Output)

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➢ *Profile of the Reviewed Quick-Commerce Studies*

The bibliometric results describe the wider literature; the coding of the 77 studies retained for the systematic review shows how quick commerce itself has been studied. Consumer behaviour and marketing is the largest stream, with 27 studies (35.1%), followed by operations, logistics and fulfilment with 20 (26.0%) (Table 14). Business models and industry cases account for 11 studies, sustainability and urban impacts for 8, labour, workforce and social inclusion for 6, and pricing and platform economics for 5. The two largest streams together hold three in five of the studies, whereas the labour and pricing streams, which concern the most contested aspects of the model, remain small.

Table 14 Research Streams in the 77 Reviewed Studies

Research stream	Studies	Share	Dominant methods	Representative studies
Consumer behaviour and marketing	27	35.1%	Cross-sectional surveys with SEM, PLS-SEM or regression (15); mixed methods (4); machine-learning analytics (3); qualitative designs (3); experiments and transaction data (2)	Kapoor, Sindwani and Goel (2023); Harter, Stich and Spann (2025); Agrawal and Narayanan (2026); Virani, Saini and Sharma (2026)
Operations, logistics and fulfilment	20	26.0%	Optimisation, simulation and analytical modelling (16); reviews (3); data analytics (1)	Raj *et al.* (2024); Yang, Ostermeier and Hübner (2024); Tavana *et al.* (2026); Zhang *et al.* (2026)
Business models, strategy and industry cases	11	14.3%	Teaching cases (7); conceptual and bibliometric overviews (2); mixed and multi-criteria methods (2)	Stojanov (2022); Singh (2023); Priya, K and N (2026); Virmani and Anand (2026)
Sustainability and urban impacts	8	10.4%	Spatial and field studies (3); reviews (2); survey and mixed methods (2); system design (1)	Buldeo Rai *et al.* (2023); Gund and Daniel (2024); Choubey *et al.* (2025); Kulkarni *et al.* (2026)
Labour, workforce and social inclusion	6	7.8%	Surveys (4); ethnography (1); teaching case (1)	Adnans, Panjaitan and Hadiyani (2024); Goswami, D'Silva and Choudhury (2026); Kaul (2026); Khan *et al.* (2026)
Pricing and platform economics	5	6.5%	Game-theoretic and dynamic-programming models (2); surveys (2); panel data analysis (1)	Chen *et al.* (2025); Jayapal (2025); Zhu and Xie (2026); Bhattacharya and Kumar (2026a)
Total	**77**	**100.0%**		

Methodologically, the core literature relies on two families of methods (Figure 9). Cross-sectional surveys analysed with structural equation modelling or regression are the most common design (22 studies, 28.6%), followed by optimisation, simulation and analytical modelling (19 studies, 24.7%). Teaching cases (8), reviews and conceptual papers (7), mixed and multi-criteria methods (7) and machine-learning or other data analytics (7) form a middle group, while purely qualitative designs (5) and experiments or behavioural transaction data (2) are rare. Within the consumer stream, 15 of the 27 studies rely on cross-sectional surveys, and only two use controlled experiments or behavioural data (Harter, Stich and Spann, 2025; Agrawal and Narayanan, 2026). Knowledge about consumers therefore rests largely on stated intentions, and knowledge about operations on models evaluated with simulated or proxy data, a pattern that shapes the methodological directions in Section 6.

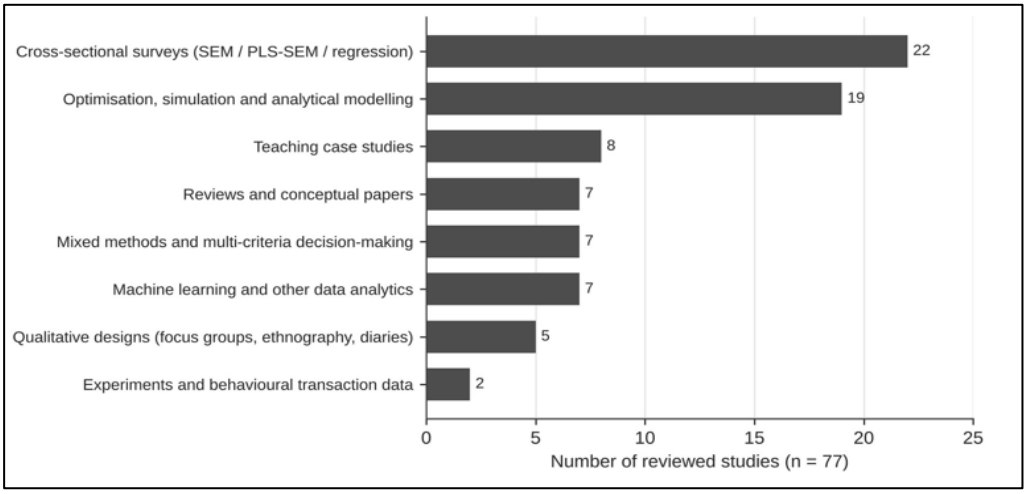


Fig 9 Research Methods Used in the 77 Reviewed Studies

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Citation counts confirm how young the core literature is. The 77 studies have received 646 citations in Scopus, an average of 8.4 per study, but the median is one and 33 studies (42.9%) have not yet been cited. Table 15 lists the ten most-cited studies. Harter, Stich and Spann (2025), the only study that tests a consumer hypothesis on customer-level transaction data, leads with 73 citations, followed by Buldeo Rai *et al.* (2023) on dark stores in Paris (59) and Guru *et al.* (2023) on hyperlocal delivery as a distribution channel (58). Six of the ten are operations, logistics, urban or sustainability studies, and the two other consumer studies in the list, Al-Mu'ani *et al.* (2024) and Kapoor, Sindwani and Goel (2023), both concern service quality, trust and loyalty. No source publishes more than four of the 77 studies: *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications* leads with four, followed by the *CASE Journal* with three. Once shared surnames and initials are resolved, no author has contributed more than two of the studies, which confirms that a stable community of Q-commerce scholars has not yet formed.

Table 15 Ten Most-Cited Studies Among the 77 Reviewed (Scopus Citations at 16 September 2026; † Closely Related Study that Does not Use the Term Quick Commerce)

Rank	Study	Focus	Source	Citations
1	Harter, Stich and Spann (2025)	Delivery-time deviations and repurchase behaviour	*Journal of Service Research*	73
2	Buldeo Rai *et al.* (2023)	Geographical and transport impacts of dark stores in Paris	*Research in Transportation Economics*	59
3	Guru *et al.* (2023) †	Hyperlocal delivery as a distribution channel for FMCG firms	*Management Decision*	58
4	Al-Mu'ani *et al.* (2024)	Service quality, trust and loyalty across Generations Y and Z	*Uncertain Supply Chain Management*	48
5	Fried and Goodchild (2023) †	Location of last-mile logistics platforms and logistics sprawl	*Journal of Transport Geography*	45
6	Kapoor, Sindwani and Goel (2023)	Service experience, trust and loyalty (SEM and fsQCA)	*Total Quality Management and Business Excellence*	43
7	Raj *et al.* (2024)	Stochastic model of picking, batching and last-mile delivery	*European Journal of Operational Research*	38
8	Yang, Ostermeier and Hübner (2024)	Network planning for micro-fulfilment centres	*Central European Journal of Operations Research*	37
9	Gund and Daniel (2024)	Review of Q-commerce and e-commerce emissions	*International Journal of Industrial Engineering and Operations Management*	29
10	Hu *et al.* (2022) †	Alibaba's routing algorithms for rapid pick and delivery	*INFORMS Journal on Applied Analytics*	23

➢ *Overall Interpretation of the Data Analysis*

Overall, the analyses give a consistent picture. The collection grows at 12.26% a year (11.63% without the incomplete 2026), with a marked step in 2019 and a peak of 68 articles already reached in 2026; the polynomial trendline (RZ = 0.922) shows accelerating growth, and 61.1% of the articles were published from 2021 onwards. Explicit Q-commerce research is the newest part of this growth: 69 records use the term, all from 2022 onwards, and 39 of them appeared in 2026. The literature is widely dispersed. The ten leading sources publish only 10.3% of the articles, 80.5% of the sources publish a single article, and Bradford's law gives a core of 62 sources but a statistically significant departure from an ideal Bradford distribution. Geographically, India, China and the United States dominate, with 53.7% of the documents involving at least one of them, while international collaboration is limited (24.4% of corresponding-author documents) and more common in the United Kingdom and South Korea.

Thematically, the Biblioshiny thematic map identifies four clusters that show how heterogeneous the collection is. Only the cluster built around electronic commerce, e-commerce and decision-making is a genuine and recent digital-commerce theme; it has the most recent documents and is the cluster most closely related to quick commerce. The cluster on commerce, sales and costs is the older, general commerce and economics background of the literature. The two motor themes are built on generic index terms and on analytical chemistry and food safety; they reflect records from health, drug and food science that entered the collection through general terms or through the word quick, not the development of Q-commerce research. No basic theme appears, so the field has no clearly established foundational theme of its own yet. Within the core of 77 studies, consumer and operations research dominate, cross-sectional surveys and optimisation models are the main methods, and citations are concentrated in a handful of studies while 42.9% remain uncited. In short, the literature is moving from general e-commerce, retail and supply- chain questions towards data-driven, digital-consumer studies, and explicitly Q-commerce work is only beginning to form its own theme.

V. FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

Research on quick commerce has expanded rapidly. Yang, Ostermeier and Hübner (2024) date the first quick-commerce grocery businesses in the European market to

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2020, although hyperlocal platforms such as Dunzo, founded in 2015, were already offering fast local delivery in India (Priya, K and N, 2026). Of the 77 studies retained for this review, 69 name quick commerce or Q-commerce explicitly, and 56 were published in 2025 or 2026 (Table 7); because 2026 covers only the months before the search was run, the recent acceleration is, if anything, understated. Early conceptual work frames Q-commerce as the next generation of e-commerce, combining online ordering with physical delivery within a relatively short period (Stojanov, 2022). The literature nevertheless remains fragmented across three streams: an operations stream concerned with routing, scheduling and dark-store or MFC network design (Lee, Han and Song, 2023; Raj *et al.*, 2024; Yang, Ostermeier and Hübner, 2024); a consumer stream concerned with adoption, trust, satisfaction and loyalty (Kapoor, Sindwani and Goel, 2023; Balasundaram *et al.*, 2025); and a thinner labour and sustainability stream concerned with delivery-worker welfare and environmental externalities (Gund and Daniel, 2024; Goswami, D'Silva and Choudhury, 2026). This section first consolidates the field's terminology and then sets out an input–process–outcome (IPO) agenda of ten research questions (RQs) with their boundary conditions. It checks these questions against the future directions already stated in the literature, discusses thematic, theoretical, contextual and methodological directions, proposes research designs for the priority questions and closes by identifying the most consequential under-researched combination.

➢ *Terminology Consolidation*

The reviewed studies use several labels for the same underlying concepts (Figure 10). The phenomenon itself is variously called quick commerce, Q-commerce, instant retail, quick e-commerce and hyperlocal delivery (Chen *et al.*, 2025; Agrawal and Narayanan, 2026; Priya, K and N, 2026; Zhang *et al.*, 2026). Promised delivery windows range from "within minutes" to "twenty minutes or less", "10 to 30 minutes" and "10–60 min" (Buldeo Rai *et al.*, 2023; Darda, Gupta and Patra, 2025; Harter, Stich and Spann, 2025; Solanke *et al.*, 2026). Such fragmentation hampers synthesis and mirrors the inconsistent terminology reported in the adjacent crowdshipping literature (Sorooshian, 2026). Table 16 groups these labels into clusters and proposes a standard term for each, which this review offers as a modest contribution in its own right. Future studies should also report the promised delivery window as a measured value, in minutes from order to doorstep, rather than as an adjective.

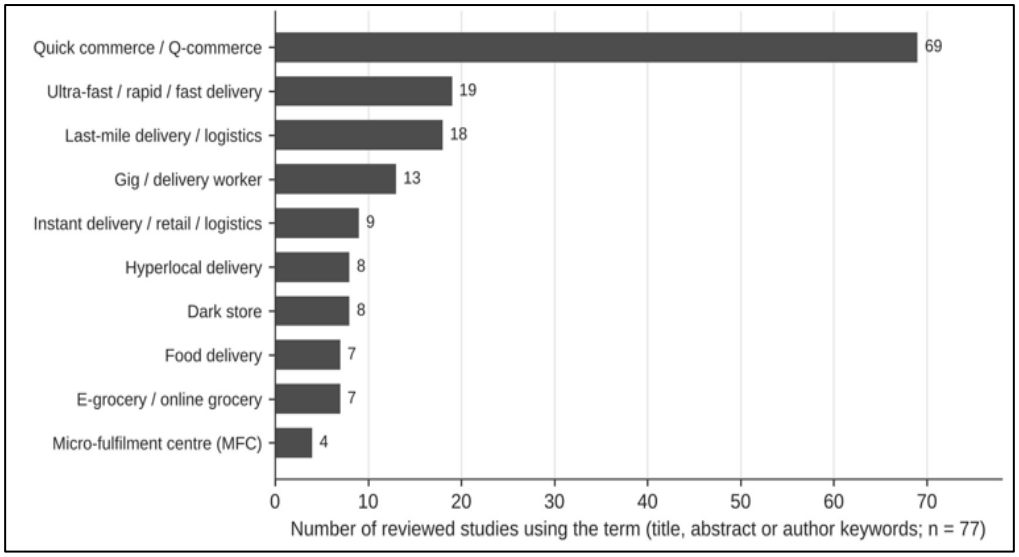


Fig 10 Terminological Fragmentation in the Reviewed Studies

Table 16 Terminology Consolidation

Inconsistent cluster	Proposed standard term	Justification
quick commerce; Q-commerce; quick-commerce; instant retail; quick e-commerce	Quick commerce (Q-commerce)	The most widely used label (69 of 77 studies; Figure 10) and the boundary term of the field's bibliometric mapping (Virmani and Anand, 2026). "Hyperlocal delivery" is deliberately excluded from this cluster because it is broader, also covering errand services and FMCG distribution (Guru *et al.*, 2023; Priya, K and N, 2026).
instant, rapid, ultra-fast, fast and quick delivery; 10-minute delivery; timeliness; lead time	Delivery speed (an operational variable, not the field name)	These terms describe the logistics promise, not the business model (Yang, Ostermeier and Hübner, 2024; Sahu, Khan and Gupta, 2025). Deviation from the promise is a distinct construct (Harter, Stich and Spann, 2025).
dark store; darkstore; dark warehouse; micro-fulfilment centre (MFC)	Dark store as the generic term; MFC only when facility type is modelled	Both denote the urban fulfilment node (Buldeo Rai *et al.*, 2023; Kaul, 2026; Virmani and Anand, 2026). MFCs range from small manual units to larger automated ones, which Yang, Ostermeier and Hübner (2024) treat as distinct facility types, so "MFC" adds

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		information only when facility size or automation is a variable.
last-mile delivery; last-mile logistics	Last-mile delivery (not a synonym for Q-commerce)	Last-mile delivery is the logistics stage common to all e-commerce (Gund and Daniel, 2024; Sorooshian, 2026); Q-commerce is a retail model whose last mile runs in a compressed window.
rider; gig worker; delivery partner; courier; delivery personnel	Delivery worker	"Delivery partner" denotes individual riders in some studies (Sharma and Khadka, 2026) but logistics providers in others (Singh, Lahri and Virmani, 2026); the employment model is itself a variable, as Tavana *et al.* (2026) distinguish in-house from platform riders.
repurchase intention; desire to re-purchase; purchase continuation intention; behavioural intention	Continuance intention, reported separately from observed repurchase behaviour	Several labels describe one post-adoption intention (Chavadi, Kokatnur and Sirothiya, 2024; Krishnan, Kandasamy and Perumal, 2026; Sowmya *et al.*, 2026; Virani, Saini and Sharma, 2026); observed behaviour is distinct (Harter, Stich and Spann, 2025).

➢ *An Input–Process–Outcome Agenda*

Table 17 combines inputs, processes and outcomes extracted from the reviewed studies into ten research questions. Figure 11 arranges them into consumer, worker and environment tracks. Two inputs, the dark-store network and the delivery-speed promise, cut across the tracks: they underlie the delivery-time and proximity questions on the consumer side (RQ1, RQ2), the worker track (RQ4) and the environment track (RQ5). No reviewed study models these outcome domains jointly.

Table 17 Input–Process–Outcome (IPO) Combinations

RQ	Input	Process (mediator / moderator)	Outcome	Sources
1	Delivery-time deviations	Perceived time pressure (moderator)	Repurchase behaviour	Harter, Stich and Spann (2025); Jayapal (2025); Sallnäs, Rogerson and Santén (2026)
2	Dark-store proximity / density	Algorithmic shopping dependence (mediator)	Consumer well-being	Buldeo Rai *et al.* (2023); Balasundaram *et al.* (2025); Darda, Gupta and Patra (2025); Nasir *et al.* (2026)
3	Green claims / green packaging	Perceived greenwashing scepticism (moderator)	Willingness to pay a premium	Chavadi, Kokatnur and Sirothiya (2024); Choubey *et al.* (2025); Jayapal (2025)
4	Delivery-speed promise	Algorithmic control: order allocation and performance metrics (mediator)	Delivery-worker well-being and financial security	Goswami, D'Silva and Choudhury (2026); Kaul (2026); Bhattacharya and Kumar (2026b)
5	Dark-store network density	Transport intensity (mediator); basket size (moderator)	GHG emissions and public-space use	Buldeo Rai *et al.* (2023); Gund and Daniel (2024); Son and Kwon (2024)
6	App design / service-experience quality	Trust formation (mediator)	Customer loyalty	Kapoor, Sindwani and Goel (2023); Al-Mu'ani *et al.* (2024)
7	eWOM / influencer engagement	Hedonic value (mediator)	Purchase decisions	Chakraborti, Dutta and Jana (2024); Jayapal (2025)
8	Instant-gratification cues	Temporal value perceptions (mediator)	Customer satisfaction	Chavadi, Kokatnur and Sirothiya (2024); Balasundaram *et al.* (2025)
9	Price transparency under dynamic pricing	Perceived price fairness (mediator)	Willingness to pay more	Jayapal (2025); Sharma and Singh (2026); Bhattacharya and Kumar (2026a)
10	Dark patterns (basket sneaking, false scarcity, confirm-shaming)	Perceived betrayal (mediator)	Repurchase behaviour	Harter, Stich and Spann (2025); Agrawal and Narayanan (2026)

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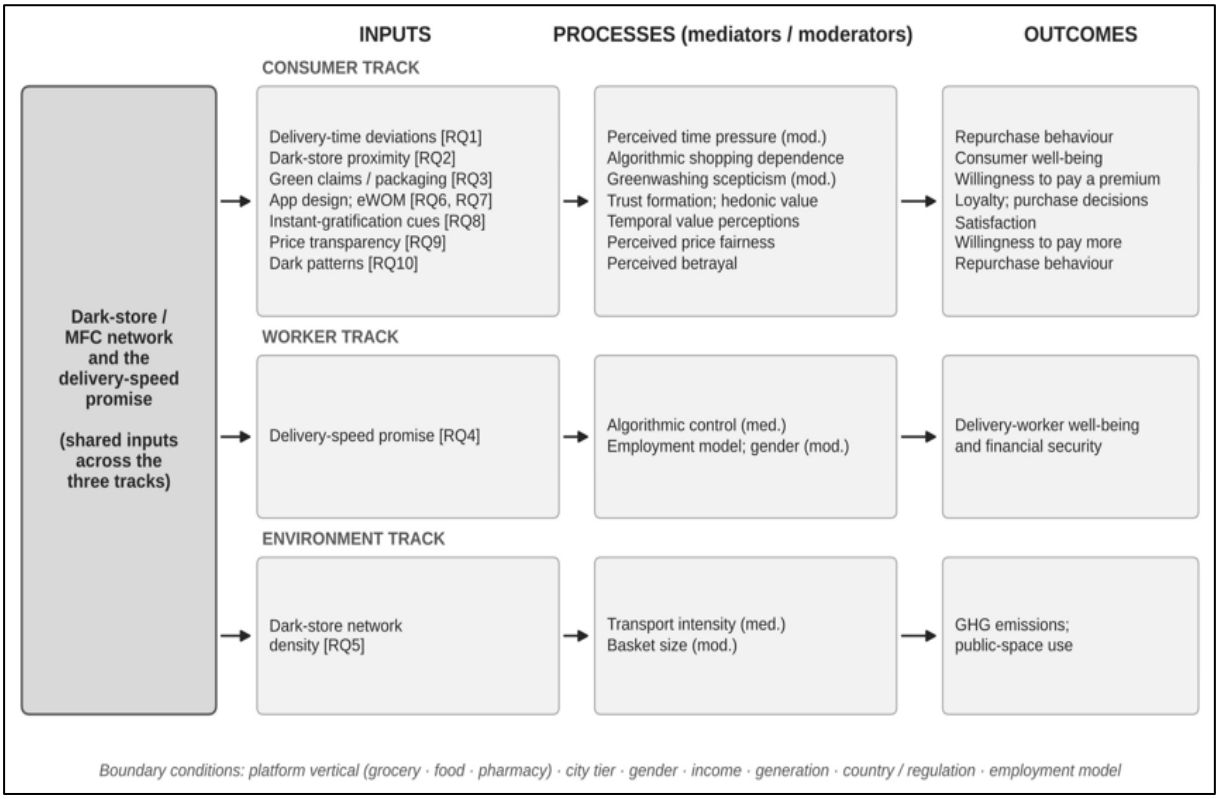


Fig 11 Integrative Framework for Future Quick-Commerce Research

Expressed in full, each pairing reads: "Future researchers may examine the impact of [input] on [outcome] with [process] as a mediator or moderator." For example, future researchers may examine the impact of delivery-time deviations on repurchase behaviour with perceived time pressure as a moderator (RQ1), and the impact of the delivery-speed promise on delivery-worker well-being and financial security with algorithmic control as a mediator (RQ4).

➢ *Moderated Sub-Questions*

Table 18 specifies boundary conditions for four of the ten RQs. These four were selected because the reviewed studies themselves report group differences, or leave heterogeneity untested, on exactly these dimensions: generation (Al-Mu'ani *et al.*, 2024; Nasir *et al.*, 2026), income (Sowmya *et al.*, 2026), urban segment (Sharma *et al.*, 2026), gender-targeted welfare programmes (Sharma and Khadka, 2026) and rider type (Tavana *et al.*, 2026). The remaining RQs are better tested first in their main-effect form before moderators are added.

Table 18 Moderated Sub-Questions for Four Research Questions with Reported Heterogeneity

RQ	Moderator	Sub-question
RQ1	Platform vertical	Does the effect differ between grocery, food and pharmacy Q-commerce? Harter, Stich and Spann (2025) observed a single food-delivery service, whereas pharmacy orders carry distinct privacy needs (Chitranka and Shanmugan, 2026).
RQ1	City tier	Does it hold outside metropolitan samples? Sharma *et al.* (2026) report differences across urban segments, tier-2 samples are rare (e.g., Dehradun; Sharma and Singh, 2026), and no reviewed study samples peri-urban or rural consumers.
RQ2	Generation	Does dark-store proximity affect the well-being of Generation Y and Generation Z users differently, given that Generation Y's shopping well-being rests more on convenience value (Nasir *et al.*, 2026)?
RQ2	Income	Is the dependence pathway stronger for lower-income consumers, for whom trust plays a larger role in willingness to use Q-commerce (Sowmya *et al.*, 2026)?
RQ4	Gender	Are women delivery workers affected differently, and do targeted programmes such as maternity insurance and women's inclusion initiatives buffer the effect (Sharma and Khadka, 2026)?
RQ4	Labour regulation	Does the link weaken where speed promises are constrained, as after Indian platforms dropped "10-minute" delivery branding in January 2026 following the Union Labour Minister's call for rider safety (PTI, 2026; The Week, 2026), and does it differ between India, where a lack of basic social security is widespread among surveyed workers (Goswami, D'Silva and Choudhury, 2026), and European markets?

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RQ4	Employment model	Does it differ between in-house and platform riders, which Tavana *et al.* (2026) model as fixed and flexible capacity?
RQ6	Generation	Does the trust–loyalty pathway differ between Generation Y and Generation Z users (Al-Mu'ani *et al.*, 2024; Nasir *et al.*, 2026)?
RQ6	Platform type	Does it differ between grocery and food Q-commerce apps? Kapoor, Sindwani and Goel (2023) did not disaggregate their sample by vertical.

➢ *Grounding and Novelty*

Table 1 lists the future directions stated in the six review and bibliometric studies within the corpus, and four of the six are taken up directly in this agenda. Gund and Daniel's (2024) call to move beyond logistics-only emissions accounting and Son and Kwon's (2024) concern with traffic and packaging waste are carried into RQ5 and RQ3; Sorooshian's (2026) call to resolve inconsistent terminology and regional gaps is answered by the terminology consolidation (Table 16) and by the context and method directions discussed below; and the fairness, safety and accountability concerns of Sorooshian, Ahadi and Liravi (2026) are operationalised in RQ4. Solanke *et al.*'s (2026) call is not taken up because it concerns packaging engineering rather than management research, and Virmani and Anand (2026) state no explicit direction.

Table 19 then classifies each RQ against an explicit criterion. An RQ is *novel* when no reviewed study links its input to its outcome; *integrative* when the component links exist only in separate streams and the RQ joins them into one testable chain; and an *extension* when the input–outcome link has already been tested and the RQ adds a new mediator, moderator, outcome or form of evidence. On this criterion one RQ is novel, two are integrative and seven are extensions, a profile typical of a young field whose core relationships have mostly been tested only once, in single cross-sectional samples.

Table 19 Novelty Assessment of the Proposed Research Questions

RQ	Type	Rationale
RQ1	Extension	Harter, Stich and Spann (2025) test delivery-time deviations on repurchase, with satisfaction as the mediator; perceived time pressure (Jayapal, 2025) as a moderator is new.
RQ2	Novel	No study links dark-store proximity to consumer well-being. Darda, Gupta and Patra (2025) and Nasir *et al.* (2026) study well-being without network inputs, and Balasundaram *et al.* (2025) test algorithmic shopping dependence only as a driver of adoption.
RQ3	Extension	Choubey *et al.* (2025) study responses to green claims and Chavadi, Kokatnur and Sirothiya (2024) green packaging as a moderator; willingness to pay a premium is a new outcome.
RQ4	Integrative	Joins simulated earnings effects (Bhattacharya and Kumar, 2026b), survey evidence on algorithmic metrics (Goswami, D'Silva and Choudhury, 2026) and ethnography (Kaul, 2026) into one chain, operationalising the fairness and safety concerns of Sorooshian, Ahadi and Liravi (2026).
RQ5	Integrative	Joins network-design models (Yang, Ostermeier and Hübner, 2024) with emissions evidence that is limited to logistics (Gund and Daniel, 2024), with network density as the causal input.
RQ6	Extension	Kapoor, Sindwani and Goel (2023) test the app design–trust–loyalty chain; the RQ generalises it across verticals and generations.
RQ7	Extension	Chakraborti, Dutta and Jana (2024) link eWOM to purchase decisions; hedonic value (Jayapal, 2025) as a mediator is untested.
RQ8	Extension	Chavadi, Kokatnur and Sirothiya (2024) link instant gratification to satisfaction; temporal value perceptions (Balasundaram *et al.*, 2025) as a mediator are new.
RQ9	Extension	Sharma and Singh (2026) link price transparency to loyalty through perceived fairness; willingness to pay more is a new outcome, and dynamic pricing models (Bhattacharya and Kumar, 2026a) supply the input.
RQ10	Extension	Moves Agrawal and Narayanan (2026) from one simulated exposure to observed repurchase behaviour.

➢ *Consumer-Facing Mechanisms*

A further avenue that could be pursued concerns the psychological mechanisms that translate operational features into consumer outcomes. Harter, Stich and Spann (2025) show that late deliveries lengthen interpurchase times more than early deliveries shorten them, with satisfaction mediating the effect, but their model omits perceived time pressure, which Jayapal (2025) finds amplifies the effect of habit gratification. Sallnäs, Rogerson and Santén (2026) further distinguish urgency, a genuine need for fast delivery, from impatience, a wish to receive goods as soon as possible. It would be particularly interesting to examine whether consumers ordering under acute time pressure punish delays more severely than those ordering for convenience (RQ1). Relatedly, one question that needs to be addressed by future research is whether hedonic value, which mediates the gratification–willingness-to-pay link (Jayapal, 2025), also mediates the effect of eWOM on purchase decisions, a pathway that Chakraborti, Dutta and Jana (2024) model without isolating hedonic value (RQ7). Instant-gratification cues deserve similar scrutiny: Chavadi, Kokatnur and Sirothiya (2024) show that instant gratification drives satisfaction through engagement and experience but do not test the temporal value perceptions proposed by Balasundaram *et al.* (2025) (RQ8). Interface and pricing design complete this stream. Dark patterns raise perceived

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betrayal and negative word-of-mouth without immediately eroding trust (Agrawal and Narayanan, 2026), and price transparency builds loyalty through perceived fairness (Sharma and Singh, 2026), yet these effects have not been linked to observed repurchase behaviour or to willingness to pay more, respectively (RQ10, RQ9).

➢ *Dark-Store Networks and Consumer Well-Being*

The consumer stream has so far examined well-being only alongside adoption. Darda, Gupta and Patra (2025) find in focus groups that Q-commerce shapes long-term consumer welfare, and Nasir *et al.* (2026) link utilitarian and emotional shopping values to shopping well-being, but neither considers where consumers live relative to the fulfilment network. Operations research, in turn, places dark stores in dense, customer-proximate locations to compress lead times (Buldeo Rai *et al.*, 2023; Yang, Ostermeier and Hübner, 2024) without asking what that proximity does to the people it serves. Balasundaram *et al.* (2025) identify algorithmic shopping dependence, consumers' reliance on platform algorithms in making purchase decisions, as one of three mechanisms behind adoption, and report anxiety-based value-creating effects, which suggests that immediacy can create value through, rather than despite, consumer anxiety. Future research could therefore test whether living within a dense dark-store catchment raises algorithmic shopping dependence and, through it, lowers or raises consumer well-being (RQ2). Geocoded survey designs that record each respondent's distance to the nearest dark store, or the delivery-time coverage of their address, would allow this network input to be measured rather than assumed.

➢ *Trust, Service Quality and Generational Heterogeneity*

Trust formation recurs as a pivotal mediator. Kapoor, Sindwani and Goel (2023) find that app design, security assurance and fulfilment drive loyalty through trust, with eWOM valence moderating these mediated effects, while Al-Mu'ani *et al.* (2024) show that Generation Z prioritises delivery speed and Generation Y values product availability and cash on delivery. Because Kapoor, Sindwani and Goel (2023) neither disaggregate their sample by generation nor distinguish verticals, a natural extension is to test whether the app design–trust–loyalty pathway holds equally for grocery and food Q-commerce and across generations (RQ6). A cross-country replication spanning the Indian market, which dominates recent research, Jordan (Al-Mu'ani *et al.*, 2024) and Western European markets (Yang, Ostermeier and Hübner, 2024; Harter, Stich and Spann, 2025) would establish whether these mechanisms are culturally invariant or context-dependent.

➢ *Sustainability and Environmental Externalities*

Gund and Daniel (2024) provide the first systematic comparison of Q-commerce and e-commerce emissions and show that these depend on delivery speed, depot locations, order patterns and average basket size, but they restrict their scope to logistics; Son and Kwon (2024) add congestion and packaging waste without linking them to network design; and Buldeo Rai *et al.* (2023) document the transport intensity and public-space use of dark stores in Paris. The direction of the network effect is not obvious. Denser networks of small facilities shorten last-mile distances and lead times (Yang, Ostermeier and Hübner, 2024), which should lower emissions per order, but they also make small, frequent orders viable and require replenishment trips to more sites, which may raise aggregate traffic; urgency- and impatience-driven ordering is likely to amplify this rebound (Sallnäs, Rogerson and Santén, 2026). What is now needed is primary measurement of whether denser dark-store networks raise aggregate emissions and public-space use through higher transport intensity, with basket size as a moderator (RQ5). The circular-economy practices identified by Chavhan and Dutta (2025), such as waste reduction and sustainable packaging, could serve as further moderators in such models. Because consumers become more discerning about green claims over time (Choubey *et al.*, 2025), perceived greenwashing scepticism should also be treated as a boundary condition on whether green packaging raises willingness to pay a premium (RQ3).

➢ *Labour and Algorithmic Governance*

The most consequential gap concerns delivery workers. Kaul (2026) shows ethnographically how the ten-minute guarantee reorganises urban time while deepening workers' precarity. Goswami, D'Silva and Choudhury (2026) find that most of the 1,247 delivery workers they surveyed earn below the statutory minimum wage, and that reliance on platforms governed by algorithmic performance metrics is associated with financial instability. Bhattacharya and Kumar (2026b) demonstrate in simulation that a 4–5% increase in mean delivery time can reduce rider earnings inequality by a third, and Sorooshian, Ahadi and Liravi (2026) identify fairness, safety and accountability as underexplored concerns. Platform responses such as Zomato's worker-empowerment initiatives (Sharma and Khadka, 2026) have not been evaluated empirically, and because they target riders in Zomato's food-delivery business, it is unclear whether they extend to the quick-commerce fleet of Blinkit, which the same group acquired in 2022 (Kulkarni, Roy and Sivaraman, 2026). Existing green HRM frameworks do not address gig-based, algorithm-driven work (Keerthi, Ashwini and Shivakumar, 2026), and evidence on other Q-commerce employees is limited to a single study of leadership and innovative work behaviour in Indonesia (Adnans, Panjaitan and Hadiyani, 2024).

Future research should therefore test whether the delivery-speed promise affects delivery-worker well-being and financial security through algorithmic control, that is, through order allocation and performance metrics, and whether gender, employment model and welfare programmes moderate that link (RQ4; Table 18). A timely opportunity exists. In January 2026, after the Union Labour Minister urged platforms to prioritise rider safety, Blinkit dropped its "10-minute" delivery claim, and Zepto, Swiggy Instamart and Flipkart Minutes followed within days, while BigBasket continued to advertise ten-minute delivery (PTI, 2026; The Week, 2026). This staggered and incomplete retreat offers a natural experiment for comparing rider outcomes before and after the change.

➢ *Business Models and Platform Economics*

Beyond the ten RQs, the economics of the model

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deserve sustained attention. Evidence on profitability comes almost entirely from teaching cases built on secondary sources (Singh, 2023; Mali and Kulkarni, 2026; Priya, K and N, 2026), while operations models optimise one network decision at a time (Lee, Han and Song, 2023; Yang, Ostermeier and Hübner, 2024). Industry estimates point to rising platform fees and a shift from hypergrowth to profitability in India (PTI, 2025), and Getir's withdrawal from Europe and the United States shows that the model can fail at scale (Lunden, 2024). Future research could link dark-store density, delivery-speed promises and assortment depth to unit economics using company disclosures, and examine how consolidation and the search for profitability change prices, fees, service levels and working conditions. Such work would connect the consumer, worker and environment tracks of Figure 11 to the financial logic that ultimately decides which promises platforms can afford to keep.

➢ *Theoretical Directions*

The reviewed studies draw on a wide but shallow theoretical base. Adoption research relies mainly on the technology acceptance model (Deepthi and Bansal, 2023), UTAUT and UTAUT2 (Bharathithasan and Srinivasan, 2024; Krishnan, Kandasamy and Perumal, 2026) and uses and gratifications theory (Darda, Gupta and Patra, 2025; Jayapal, 2025; Virani, Saini and Sharma, 2026). Experience and loyalty studies favour the stimulus–organism–response family (Kapoor, Sindwani and Goel, 2023; Chakraborti, Dutta and Jana, 2024; Chavadi, Kokatnur and Sirothiya, 2024). Individual studies borrow signalling theory and the elaboration likelihood model (Choubey *et al.*,2025), behavioural reasoning theory (Sahu, Khan and Gupta, 2025), technology threat avoidance theory (Pahari *et al.*, 2026), expectancy–disconfirmation and justice theories (Adhikari and Halder, 2026) and initial trust theory (Sowmya *et al.*, 2026). The most frequently used theories, TAM and UTAUT, were developed to explain initial technology acceptance, whereas Q-commerce is characterised by frequent, habitual repurchase. UTAUT2 does add habit, and habit is a significant predictor of behavioural intention where it is tested (Krishnan, Kandasamy and Perumal, 2026), but it is still modelled as an antecedent of stated intention rather than of repeat behaviour. Post-adoption lenses remain rare: expectation–confirmation theory appears only in Sharma *et al.* (2026), and expectancy–disconfirmation theory only in Adhikari and Halder's (2026) study of service failure. Future research should therefore privilege theories of continuance and habit over further replications of adoption models.

A second opportunity lies in transferring theories across streams. Justice theory, so far applied to consumers' reactions to delivery failure (Adhikari and Halder, 2026), could explain delivery workers' responses to algorithmic order allocation (RQ4), and signalling theory (Choubey *et al.*, 2025) could explain how promised delivery windows shape expectations before any deviation occurs (RQ1). Sharma and Khadka (2026) point to institutional theory, structural empowerment theory and dynamic capabilities theory as lenses for platform-led worker empowerment, and organisational information processing theory (Oliveira *et al.*, 2026) offers a basis for modelling omnichannel fulfilment. Finally, the operations stream rests largely on optimisation and game-theoretic models (e.g., Zhu and Xie, 2026; Bhattacharya and Kumar, 2026a) whose behavioural assumptions are rarely tested empirically; pairing these models with consumer theory would strengthen both streams.

➢ *Context and Methodological Directions*

Table 20 summarises the current state of the evidence by theory, context and method, together with the corresponding directions for future research. Contextually, the evidence is concentrated in India: 45 of the 69 studies that name Q-commerce explicitly have an Indian first-author affiliation, and Indian consumer and worker samples are drawn mainly from metropolitan cities (e.g., Deepthi and Bansal, 2023; Balasundaram *et al.*, 2025; Goswami, D'Silva and Choudhury, 2026). Studies set elsewhere are isolated: Jordan (Al-Mu'ani *et al.*, 2024), Indonesia (Adnans, Panjaitan and Hadiyani, 2024), Western and Northern Europe (Buldeo Rai *et al.*, 2023; Yang, Ostermeier and Hübner, 2024; Harter, Stich and Spann, 2025; Sallnäs, Rogerson and Santén, 2026), South Korea (Lee, Han and Song, 2023; Kim *et al.*, 2026), China (Chen *et al.*, 2025) and Brazil (Oliveira *et al.*, 2026). This skew is the reverse of the adjacent crowdshipping literature, which is concentrated in North America and Western Europe (Sorooshian, 2026), and it leaves China's large instant-retail market and North American markets largely absent from the evidence base.

Methodologically, cross-sectional surveys analysed with PLS-SEM dominate the consumer stream (e.g., Chavadi, Kokatnur and Sirothiya, 2024; Krishnan, Kandasamy and Perumal, 2026; Sharma and Singh, 2026). Stronger designs remain isolated: controlled experiments (Harter, Stich and Spann, 2025; Agrawal and Narayanan, 2026), a two-phase longitudinal survey (Choubey *et al.*, 2025), a consumer diary study (Sallnäs, Rogerson and Santén, 2026), sequential mixed methods (Sahu, Khan and Gupta, 2025; Pahari *et al.*, 2026; Sowmya *et al.*, 2026), fsQCA (Kapoor, Sindwani and Goel, 2023) and ethnography of delivery workers (Kaul, 2026). Behavioural data are equally scarce. Harter, Stich and Spann (2025) are the only study to test a consumer hypothesis on customer-level transaction records; other studies use platform or order data for segmentation or operational purposes (Chavhan *et al.*, 2025; Chen *et al.*, 2025; Kim *et al.*, 2026). The operations stream, for its part, evaluates fairness, resilience and routing mostly on simulated or proxy data, such as New York taxi trips (Bhattacharya and Kumar, 2026b) or synthetic demand on a Kolkata road network (Subrat and Ghosh, 2026).

Table 20 Theory, Context and Method: Current State and Future Directions

Dimension	Current state in the reviewed studies	Future direction
Theory	Adoption theories (TAM, UTAUT/UTAUT2, uses and gratifications) and the stimulus–organism–response family dominate; post-adoption lenses appear twice (Deepthi and Bansal,	Post-adoption and habit theories; transfer of justice and signalling theories to workers and delivery

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	2023; Kapoor, Sindwani and Goel, 2023; Adhikari and Halder, 2026; Krishnan, Kandasamy and Perumal, 2026; Sharma *et al.*, 2026).	promises (Choubey *et al.*, 2025; Adhikari and Halder, 2026).
Context: geography	India dominates (45 of 69 Q-commerce studies by first-author affiliation), mostly with metropolitan samples; isolated studies in Jordan, Indonesia, Western and Northern Europe, South Korea, China and Brazil (Buldeo Rai *et al.*, 2023; Al-Mu'ani *et al.*, 2024; Chen *et al.*, 2025; Oliveira *et al.*, 2026).	Cross-national comparisons, including China and North America; samples from tier-2, rural and peri-urban areas.
Context: vertical	Grocery, food and pharmacy Q-commerce studied separately (Chavhan and Dutta, 2025; Chitranka and Shanmugan, 2026; Nasir *et al.*, 2026).	Multi-vertical designs that treat platform type as a moderator.
Context: business model	Profitability evidence comes mainly from teaching cases on secondary data (Singh, 2023; Mali and Kulkarni, 2026; Priya, K and N, 2026).	Unit-economics studies linking network density, delivery promises and assortment to profitability, using company disclosures.
Context: stakeholder	Consumers and operations dominate; delivery workers, other employees and cities are rarely studied (Buldeo Rai *et al.*, 2023; Adnans, Panjaitan and Hadiyani, 2024; Goswami, D'Silva and Choudhury, 2026; Kaul, 2026).	Multi-stakeholder designs linking consumer, worker and urban outcomes.
Method: design	Cross-sectional surveys; isolated experiments, one two-phase survey and one diary study (Choubey *et al.*, 2025; Harter, Stich and Spann, 2025; Agrawal and Narayanan, 2026; Sallnäs, Rogerson and Santén, 2026).	Longitudinal panels, field experiments run with platform partners, and natural experiments around policy changes.
Method: data	Self-reported intentions; customer transaction data in one consumer study (Harter, Stich and Spann, 2025); platform data for segmentation and operations (Chavhan *et al.*, 2025; Chen *et al.*, 2025); simulated or proxy data in operations studies (Subrat and Ghosh, 2026; Bhattacharya and Kumar, 2026b).	Behavioural platform data; validation of operations models against live data.
Method: analysis	PLS-SEM; occasional fsQCA, machine-learning sentiment analysis and clustering (Kapoor, Sindwani and Goel, 2023; Chavhan *et al.*, 2025; Basha, Gopal and Sucharitha, 2026).	Multi-group, multilevel and configurational analysis; review text mining linked to observed behaviour.

➢ *Priority Research Designs*

To make the agenda actionable, Table 21 proposes designs for the four RQs whose inputs are network- or promise-level variables. These inputs vary across places and platforms rather than across individual attitudes, so they cannot be tested credibly with the cross-sectional intention surveys that dominate the field.

Table 21 Suggested Designs for the Priority Research Questions

RQ	Suggested design	Data and measures
RQ4	Staggered difference-in-differences around the January 2026 removal of "10-minute" branding, exploiting the different dates on which platforms dropped the claim and the platform that retained it (PTI, 2026; The Week, 2026); alternatively, a rider panel survey.	Earnings, hours and incidents from platform or union records; scales for perceived algorithmic control and well-being; gender and employment model as moderators (Goswami, D'Silva and Choudhury, 2026; Tavana *et al.*, 2026).
RQ1	Field experiment with a platform partner that randomises the communicated delivery window, complemented by a scenario experiment that manipulates time pressure.	Observed interpurchase times (Harter, Stich and Spann, 2025); perceived time pressure (Jayapal, 2025); urgency versus convenience as the order motive (Sallnäs, Rogerson and Santén, 2026).
RQ2	Geocoded consumer survey analysed with multilevel models, with consumers nested in dark-store catchments.	Distance to the nearest dark store or delivery-time coverage of the address; algorithmic shopping dependence (Balasundaram *et al.*, 2025); shopping well-being (Nasir *et al.*, 2026).
RQ5	Before-and-after measurement around dark-store openings, combining vehicle GPS traces with life-cycle assessment.	Vehicle-kilometres per order and in aggregate; replenishment trips; kerbside occupancy (Buldeo Rai *et al.*, 2023); basket size (Gund and Daniel, 2024).

➢ *Closing Gap Statement*

Taken together, the literature knows a good deal about why urban consumers say they will keep using Q-commerce, but much less about what minute-level delivery does to consumers, workers and cities. Within the framework in Figure 11, the most consequential under-researched combination is the impact of the delivery-speed promise on delivery-worker well-being and financial security, with

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algorithmic control as the mediating mechanism (RQ4). It is classified as integrative rather than novel because each element is documented in isolation (Goswami, D'Silva and Choudhury, 2026; Kaul, 2026; Bhattacharya and Kumar, 2026b), yet no study connects the consumer-facing speed promise, through the algorithm that enforces it, to measured worker outcomes, or tests whether welfare initiatives buffer that link. Its priority therefore rests on consequence rather than on scarcity alone: it concerns the welfare of the workforce on which the business model depends, and the 2026 retreat from "10-minute" claims in India shows that the question has become a matter of public policy (PTI, 2026; The Week, 2026). A central question for future research is therefore whether the speed that consumers value is purchased at the expense of the people who deliver it.

VI. DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

➢ *Findings*

- The general trend of publication in the broader quick-commerce-related literature is increasing: annual output grew at 12.26% a year between 2011 and 2026, with a marked step in 2019 and accelerating growth since 2021.
- Research that names quick commerce explicitly is very recent. All 69 such studies were published from 2022 onwards, 39 of them in 2026, and quick commerce became the second most frequent keyword of the 2021–2026 period.
- The literature is dispersed across 405 sources, none of which dominates, and production is concentrated in India, China and the United States, with limited international collaboration.
- The thematic structure is heterogeneous. Only the digital-commerce cluster is closely related to quick commerce, while the two motor themes rest on generic index terms from health, food and chemistry research that entered the dataset through broad search terms.
- Within the 77 studies reviewed, consumer (27 studies) and operations (20) research dominate, while labour (6) and pricing (5) research remain small. The streams are rarely connected, and the theoretical base relies mainly on adoption models such as TAM and UTAUT.
- The evidence is concentrated in Indian metropolitan samples and cross-sectional surveys. Worker outcomes, environmental effects and behavioural data are under-studied, and the effect of the delivery-speed promise on delivery workers is the most consequential gap.

➢ *Discussions*

Quick commerce promises consumers convenience measured in minutes. The systematic literature review, accompanied by bibliometric analysis, provides an objective evaluation of research on this model through a holistic approach, and the two analyses point in the same direction. The bibliometric results show a broad and fast-growing literature in which explicit Q-commerce research is a small and very recent core, spread thinly across hundreds of journals and concentrated in a few countries. The systematic review shows why this matters: the core literature has grown quickly but along separate tracks, built largely on cross-sectional surveys of urban Indian consumers and on simulation-based operations models. The field therefore knows a good deal about why consumers say they will keep using Q-commerce, but much less about what minute-level delivery does to consumers, workers and cities. Developing economies, India above all, make the largest contribution to this research, which reflects the size and visibility of their Q-commerce markets, while China's large instant-retail market and North American markets remain under-represented among the studies that name Q-commerce explicitly.

➢ *Comparison with Prior Reviews*

The present review complements and extends the earlier mapping of the field by Virmani and Anand (2026), who screened 1,294 Scopus records down to 86 relevant articles and analysed them with RStudio and VOSviewer. Three differences stand out. First, the present study makes the noise of broad keyword searches explicit: it separates the wider bibliometric dataset (543 records) from the core of 77 studies and shows that only 12.7% of the records name quick commerce. Second, it adds a content analysis of the core by research stream, method, theory and context, which reveals the dominance of consumer surveys and optimisation models (Table 14, Figure 9). Third, it moves from mapping to a testable agenda with boundary conditions and research designs (Tables 17–21). Unlike the five facet-specific reviews in Table 1, which concentrate on emissions, air pollution, packaging, crowdshipping or AI coordination, it integrates consumer, operations, labour and sustainability evidence in a single framework. It also shows that Q-commerce research is centred on India, the reverse of the adjacent crowdshipping literature, which is concentrated in North America and Western Europe (Sorooshian, 2026).

➢ *Academic Implications*

The study is of value to academic researchers because it systematises a young and fragmented research area. By grouping the reviewed studies into consumer, operations, AI, pricing, and labour and sustainability themes, it highlights the key points of the Q-commerce topic and the connections between them, and its terminology consolidation (Table 16) offers a common vocabulary for future studies. It also shows the need to consider consumer and operational factors together: satisfaction and purchase intention depend on delivery reliability, product availability and price, while logistics and technology choices shape pricing and sustainability outcomes.

Methodologically, the study demonstrates both the value and the limits of bibliometric mapping. Bibliometric analysis and visualisation are useful for exploring publication trends, relationships between themes and potential research topics, but the choice of keywords and the careful preparation of data strongly shape the results, as the large share of loosely related records in this dataset shows. Finally, the IPO agenda (Tables 17–21) gives future researchers testable questions, boundary conditions and research designs, and sets priorities for further work on Q-commerce.

ISSN No:-2456-2165 https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/26oct1096

➢ *Managerial Implications*

It is vital that managers balance rapid fulfilment against cost. Inventory positioning, micro-fulfilment, routing and scheduling decisions need to be planned together, and allowing slightly more delivery flexibility can enable order bundling and cost savings (Yang, Ostermeier and Hübner, 2024; Tavana *et al.*, 2026). Secondly, pricing practices must be sensitive to transparency and to the ways in which consumers perceive unfairness: pricing decisions affect not only short-term buying but also customer relationships, and manipulative interface designs raise perceived betrayal and negative word-of-mouth (Agrawal and Narayanan, 2026; Sharma and Singh, 2026). Thirdly, AI-enabled systems must address accountability, privacy and fairness as well as efficiency; consumer resistance to AI-enabled personalisation can lead to platform avoidance and brand distrust, which corporate social responsibility initiatives and human oversight can help to weaken (Pahari *et al.*, 2026). Finally, sustainability and workforce issues must enter the planning of Q-commerce operations, because both environmental concerns and the welfare and safety of delivery workers are central to the future of the model (Goswami, D'Silva and Choudhury, 2026; Kaul, 2026).

➢ *Societal and Policy Implications*

Policymakers and regulatory authorities need to address the implications of digital pricing practices, personal data use, platform-based employment and environmental responsibility. The January 2026 episode in India, in which platforms dropped "10-minute" delivery branding after the Union Labour Minister called for rider safety, shows that delivery promises have already become a matter of public policy (PTI, 2026; The Week, 2026). Digital accessibility is an additional consideration. The benefits of Q-commerce may not be equally available to all consumers because of differences in digital literacy, internet access and purchasing capacity, and Khan *et al.* (2026) find that it is platform accessibility, rather than digital literacy or trust, that links Q-commerce use to financial inclusion in urban India. The development of Q-commerce should therefore be assessed not only in terms of technological advancement and commercial growth but also in relation to inclusiveness, responsible business practices and social welfare.

Table 22 Summarises the Main Implications of the Review for Each Stakeholder Group.

Table 22 Summary of Implications by Stakeholder

Stakeholder	Key implication	Supporting evidence
Q-commerce platforms and retailers	Plan dark-store networks, picking, routing and delivery promises together; offer delivery-time options, and slightly longer windows where customers accept them, to enable order bundling; keep pricing and interface design transparent.	Yang, Ostermeier and Hübner (2024); Agrawal and Narayanan (2026); Sharma and Singh (2026); Tavana *et al.* (2026)
Delivery workers and their representatives	Use evidence on pay, working hours and algorithmic performance metrics to press for social security, fair order allocation and realistic delivery times.	Goswami, D'Silva and Choudhury (2026); Bhattacharya and Kumar (2026b)
Policymakers and regulators	Address platform employment, rider safety, personal data use and manipulative interfaces, and evaluate the effects of interventions such as the 2026 retreat from ten-minute branding.	Agrawal and Narayanan (2026); PTI (2026); The Week (2026)
City planners	Manage the transport intensity, kerbside use and location of dark stores through zoning and urban logistics policy.	Buldeo Rai *et al.* (2023); Zander, Spohner and Dannenberg (2026)
Consumers	Weigh convenience against hidden costs such as fees, manipulative interfaces and environmental impact, and scrutinise green claims.	Choubey *et al.* (2025); Agrawal and Narayanan (2026)
Researchers	Move from cross-sectional intention surveys to longitudinal, experimental and behavioural designs, and model consumer, worker and urban outcomes together.	Harter, Stich and Spann (2025); Section 6 of this study

VII. CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

This study set out to examine the development, structure and future direction of research on quick commerce through three objectives: exploring publication trends, identifying research themes and contributors, and proposing a future research agenda. Bibliographic data were retrieved from Scopus and analysed in RStudio and Biblioshiny; 543 documents published between 2011 and 2026 formed the bibliometric dataset, and 77 studies were reviewed in depth. The results suggest that research on commerce and digital retail has grown substantially, while studies explicitly focused on Q-commerce remain a recent phenomenon. At the same time, the review shows that the topic encompasses not only rapid delivery but also customer satisfaction, technology adoption, order-fulfilment optimisation, pricing strategy, sustainability and social responsibility.

With respect to the first objective, the analysis revealed a clear difference between the general commerce literature and the explicitly Q-commerce literature. Of the 543 cleaned documents, only 69 mention quick commerce explicitly, all of them published in 2022 or later, and their number reached 39 in 2026. India, China and the United States are the most productive countries, with 116, 106 and 86 documents respectively, and no single journal or publication outlet dominates: the ten most productive journals account for only 10.3% of the documents, and 80.5% of the sources published

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a single article. Q-commerce is therefore best understood as a recent and fast-growing part of the broader digital-commerce literature.

With respect to the second objective, the review identified consumer behaviour, logistics and optimisation, artificial intelligence, pricing and economics, business models, and labour and sustainability as the main research streams. The coding of the 77 studies shows that consumer (27 studies) and operations (20) research dominate, that cross-sectional surveys (22) and optimisation or simulation models (19) are the main methods, and that 42.9% of the studies have not yet been cited. Consumer studies examine purchase intention, satisfaction, value, service quality, shopping well-being and repurchase, drawing on UTAUT2, uses and gratifications theory, E-S-QUAL, expectation–confirmation theory and the technology acceptance model; operations studies address micro-fulfilment, picking, transshipment, scheduling and routing; and AI studies apply machine learning, reinforcement learning and sentiment analysis while raising concerns about privacy, bias, transparency and accountability. The thematic analysis also showed that the initial dataset is heterogeneous, with two clusters dominated by indexing terms and unrelated studies, which highlights the limits of broad keyword searches in a young field.

With respect to the third objective, the study identified the gaps that future research should address: the intersection between consumer behaviour and operations, the governance of AI, the environmental and social dimensions of sustainability, the links between pricing, perceived fairness and willingness to pay, and the need for geographically comparative studies. It consolidated the field's terminology and proposed ten research questions within an input–process–outcome framework, of which the effect of the delivery-speed promise on delivery-worker well-being, mediated by algorithmic control, is the most consequential.

The study has several limitations. Firstly, only one database, Elsevier's Scopus, was used, so relevant studies indexed only in other databases may have been missed. Secondly, the search matched the words quick and commerce separately, so the bibliometric dataset contains many records that are only loosely related to quick commerce; the growth, source, country and thematic results therefore describe the wider literature, and the explicitly Q-commerce studies are a small subset of it. Thirdly, the data for 2026 cover only the months up to the export date of 16 September 2026. Fourthly, the thematic map and the co-occurrence network depend on the keyword settings used in Biblioshiny, and generic index terms such as human, humans and procedures were retained, which strongly shapes two of the four clusters. Fifthly, the Scopus export did not contain cited references, so co-citation analysis and bibliographic coupling could not be performed, and influence was judged from citation counts, which favour older studies. Finally, the qualitative synthesis and the coding of the 77 studies drew on the titles, abstracts and keywords in the Scopus export, so findings reported only in the full texts may not be reflected.

Future bibliometric studies should therefore combine several databases, use standardised and phrase-based search terms to address keyword variation, export cited references so that the intellectual structure of the field can be mapped through co-citation, and screen records for relevance before mapping. Even with these limitations, this study provides a structured account of the themes and development of Q-commerce research, and there is considerable scope for further research on how the speed that consumers value can be delivered responsibly for workers, cities and the environment.

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