



E-Commerce Expansion, Consumer Channel Switching, and Adaptive Transformation of Traditional Retail in India: A Conceptual Framework

Umme Kulsum

M.Com Student, Department of Commerce, Kalinga University, Raipur City, Chhattisgarh, India

Abstract

The growth of e-commerce has altered retail competition by changing how consumers discover, compare, purchase, receive, and return products. In India, this transformation is particularly consequential because traditional retail remains socially embedded, employment-intensive, and structurally heterogeneous, ranging from kirana stores and informal traders to regional chains and specialist stores. Existing studies often examine either online consumer adoption or omnichannel retailing, but comparatively little attention is paid to the conceptual mechanism by which e-commerce simultaneously displaces, complements, and reconfigures traditional retail. This paper develops a conceptual framework linking perceived e-commerce value, digital trust, price transparency, delivery convenience, social-commerce influence, and quick-commerce immediacy to consumer channel switching. It further argues that the effect of switching on traditional retail performance is moderated by retailers' adaptive capacity, including digital payment acceptance, online discoverability, hyperlocal fulfilment, WhatsApp or social-commerce ordering, customer relationship capability, inventory visibility, and participation in open digital commerce networks. Drawing on the Technology Acceptance Model, Theory of Planned Behaviour, disruptive innovation theory, dynamic capability theory, and omnichannel customer-experience literature, the paper proposes a displacement–adaptation model of Indian retail transformation. The paper contributes by reframing e-commerce not as a one-directional threat to physical retail but as a structural pressure that can generate either decline or renewal depending on category characteristics, consumer trust, fulfilment economics, and retailer capability. The framework offers a foundation for future empirical research, which could include survey data, retailer interviews, platform data, or longitudinal case studies.

Keywords: E-commerce, Traditional retail, Kirana stores, Omnichannel retail, Consumer channel switching, Quick commerce, India, Digital transformation

1. Introduction

The retail industry is one of the most prominent areas of digital transformation since it involves consumers, producers, logistics providers, payments infrastructure, and local communities. The rise of e-commerce has shifted the grounds for competition within the retail sector from closeness and interpersonal connections towards searchability, convenience, transparency of prices, recommendation systems, and speedy delivery. The importance of this shift is further emphasized in India due to the coexistence of a rapidly growing digital commerce ecosystem and a vast amount of traditional retail operations, which are labor-intensive. According to the forecast of the India



Brand Equity Foundation, the market size of e-commerce in India will reach \$345 billion in 2030 and \$550 billion in 2035 [1].

Traditional brick-and-mortar retailing in India comprises kirana stores, local grocery stores, clothing stores, pharmacies, local electronics stores, street vendors, and local speciality retailers. Traditional brick-and-mortar retail enjoys many advantages such as familiarity with consumers, immediate possession of the good, informal credit, advice-oriented selling, flexibility in small quantities, trust, and integration in daily life. However, all these advantages of brick-and-mortar retail are being challenged by e-commerce sites that provide more options, reviews, price comparisons, door delivery, payment through electronic means, and discounts. With the advent of quick commerce, the challenge is being compounded with the delivery of goods in minutes instead of next day or same day delivery. Reuters reported quoting a Bain and Flipkart report that quick commerce had made up more than two-thirds of Indian e-grocery deliveries in 2024 and would continue to grow through 2030 [2].

The challenge does not lie in understanding whether e-commerce impacts traditional retail. This is already apparent from shifts in consumer search behavior and channel selection and consumption. The real challenge is to understand the mechanism through which this impact is achieved, the differences in impact by product category and consumer type, and the conditions under which traditional retailers can turn this digital disruption into adaptation. A mere displacement story is inadequate for several reasons. Consumers do not necessarily exit physical store channels entirely and, instead, engage in cross-channel use of channels. They could find the product online, examine it physically, price shop on marketplaces, buy it through WhatsApp, pick it up in the physical store, and return it physically. Research on omnichannel retailing shows that the right level of analysis is not the individual transaction, but the entire consumer journey spanning before, during, and after the purchase [3–5].

In this paper, a conceptual framework is presented to analyse e-commerce development and adaptations by traditional retailers in India. Five different theories form the framework for analysis. Technology Acceptance Model explains consumer adoption of e-commerce due to perceptions of usefulness and ease of use [6]. Theory of Planned Behaviour shows how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control impact channel selection [7]. Disruptive Innovation theory would help us understand how digital channels start out solving unmet convenience needs before scaling up into mainstream retail [8]. Dynamic Capability theory would help us understand retailer responses through the three C's of sensing, seizing, and transforming instead of static defences [9]. Three significant contributions can be noted about the paper. First, it brings together both customer-side and retail-side processes within one displacement-adaptation framework. Second, it considers rapid commerce and open digital commerce platforms as crucial contextual factors for India instead of being tangential issues. Finally, the paper suggests propositions that can be tested by future researchers through surveys, structural equation modeling, retailer interviews, platform transactions, or case studies.



2. Literature Review

2.1. E-commerce adoption and consumer channel switching

Adoption of e-commerce is analyzed from the perspective of value perception, convenience, trust, assortment, price comparison, and risk reduction. The Technology Acceptance Model still has relevance, since users tend to adopt new technologies provided they find them useful and easy to use [6]. However, in the case of emerging economies, there are several other aspects in addition to the ease of interface that determine the adoption rate. Payment safety, delivery reliability, impact of social media, return policy, and reputation of the platform become very significant here. An India-based study regarding online shopping predictors expanded the scope of UTAUT2 through inclusion of social media, reverse logistics, and pay-on-delivery as predictors of online shopping and customer satisfaction [10].

Channel switching by the customer does not mean the complete rejection of brick-and-mortar stores; instead, consumers shift different activities in their buying process across channels. The consumer might do the searching and comparing through digital channels and still use brick-and-mortar stores to do the tactile exploration, instant purchase, urgent needs satisfaction, or trust-related products. According to Biswas' investigation on the choice of online shopping channel versus the choice of the in-store shopping channel after growth in e-commerce, we can say that there is still an interrelationship between online and offline channel behaviour [11]. In addition, according to consumer journey, omnichannel marketing should consider pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase stages.

2.2. Traditional retail vulnerability and resilience

Conventional retail is subject to e-commerce for products, which have standardized features, price-searchability, ease of transportation, and adequate return policy. Products, such as electronics, books, packaging goods, fashion accessories, as well as selected household goods are vulnerable to price comparisons and discounts. Perishable, immediate delivery, local trust relationships, repairs, customizations, informal credit, and sensory evaluations may give more value to conventional retail compared to the online alternative. In consequence, the influence of e-commerce should be theoretically considered in a category-specific perspective.

It is also essential to recognize resilience factors for conventional retail. Local retail businesses can utilize customer familiarity, flexible service, availability of small packages, immediate delivery, and local informal social networks. E-commerce development does not mean disappearance of these factors but their insufficiency once customers get accustomed to digital orders, price transparency, and speedy delivery. As far as research of brick-and-mortar retail business in the light of e-commerce shows [12], it is beneficial for local stores to adopt digital channels as complimentary channels rather than rivals.

2.3. Omnichannel retailing and customer experience

The concept of omnichannel goes beyond the existence of online and offline channels. It entails the integration of information, transactions, fulfillment, pricing, customer service, and after-sales support among the channels [3]. According to Gereaa, Gonzalez-Lopez, and Herskovic, the concept of omnichannel customer experience necessitates the management of customer interactions and is a fragmented yet strategic area of research [5]. In the Indian traditional-retail environment,



omnichannel maturity might not be practical for micro-retailers; however, partial omnichannel practices are becoming more and more possible. Such practices would include WhatsApp order generation, digital catalogs, payments through UPI, hyperlocal deliveries, listings on marketplaces, presence on Google Business, and communication via mobile channels.

The use of omnichannel marketing transforms the purpose of a store. The store is not just a sales channel anymore; it is also a display, a pickup center, a services hub, an anchor of trust, a returns center, a local stock depot, and a relationship building channel. Omnichannel journey stage studies and promotional strategies reveal that a retail strategy must be built around the entire journey experience instead of individual transaction through a channel [4, 13]. This is particularly true for Indian kirana and small retail since they already have local embeddedness but lack digital presence and fulfillment capabilities.

2.4. Trust, social commerce, and persuasive digital environments

Consumer trust is one of the most important mechanisms for conducting transactions on the Internet because customers cannot see the actual product and have to depend on the reputation of the platform, seller rating, guarantees of delivery, payment security, and reviews. The new paradigm of social commerce shifts the trust generation mechanism through the inclusion of social interactions and purchases into the process of communication and sharing user-generated content. Studies related to the use of social media and purchase intention suggest that social media can trigger consumer purchase intention through the influence on information exposure and social validation [14].

However, the same elements which facilitate the purchase process may cause consumer protection issues. Persuasive design, personalization, limited time offers, and buy-now-pay-later services can trigger impulsive or regrettable purchase. The conceptual paper dedicated to persuasive e-commerce claims that digital commerce environments can benefit from exploiting the behavioral tendencies when the interests of the platform are divergent from those of consumers' [17]. Thus, an appropriate conceptual framework would be the balance between consumer convenience, retail adaptation, consumer welfare, and ethical design.

2.5. Logistics, reverse logistics, and quick commerce

Competitiveness in e-commerce is greatly influenced by fulfillment services. Logistics either makes the convenience of shopping online feel like true convenience or makes it feel like a long wait for slow, unreliable, and expensive service. In their research, Zennaro et al. define logistics as one of the research topics in e-commerce implementation and focus on the elements and indicators that influence e-commerce success [18]. The return management process is equally important since liberal return policies reduce consumer risks but add to costs. Research in online fashion retailers highlights the need to manage returns from pre-purchase to post-purchase [19].

The phenomenon of quick commerce escalates the competition which is primarily based on logistics through the utilization of dark stores, extensive network of fulfillment centers, and demand forecasting in order to decrease delivery time. Although the above-mentioned approach enhances the level of convenience for the customers, it brings a huge challenge for the local businesses operating in the fields of grocery and daily necessities. At the same time, the advantage



of immediacy might be duplicated in an easier way by the local businesses with the help of hyperlocal deliveries and phone ordering.

Table 1: Selected literature base for the conceptual framework

Theme	Representative sources	Main insight	Use in this paper
Technology adoption	[6], [10]	Perceived usefulness, ease of use, payment confidence, social media, reverse logistics, and pay-on-delivery influence online adoption.	Explains consumer acceptance of e-commerce.
Behavioural intention	[7], [14]	Channel choice is shaped by attitudes, social cues, and perceived control.	Supports consumer channel-switching propositions.
Disruption	[8], [12]	Digital models can disrupt incumbents, but physical stores may adapt through complementary strategies.	Frames e-commerce as both a displacement pressure and an adaptation opportunity.
Omnichannel retail	[3], [4], [5]	Customers use multiple touchpoints across pre-purchase, purchase, fulfilment, and post-purchase stages.	Moves the paper beyond online-versus-offline replacement.
Logistics and returns	[18], [19], [20]	Fulfilment, delivery, return management, and grocery technologies shape online-retail competitiveness.	Explains why convenience is operational, not merely perceptual.
Social and live commerce	[15], [16], [17]	Social content, interactivity, trust, and persuasive design affect online purchase intention.	Adds social-commerce influence and consumer-welfare concerns.
India context	[1], [2], [21]	India is experiencing rapid e-commerce growth, ONDC policy intervention, and quick-commerce expansion.	Grounds the framework in Indian market realities.

The chosen literature is presented in Table 1 below to provide a foundation for the theoretical framework. The table depicts how technology adoption, behavioral intention, disruption, omnichannel retailing, logistics, social commerce, and the Indian market context altogether form the displacement-adaptation model.

3. Theoretical Foundation

This study uses a multi-theory foundation because no single theory can fully explain the interaction between consumer adoption, platform disruption, and retailer adaptation.

3.1. Technology Acceptance Model

According to the Technology Acceptance Model, the perception of usefulness and ease of use determine the adoption of technology [6]. In a retail environment, perception of usefulness relates to the assumption that e-commerce enhances the shopping experience by enabling consumers to compare prices, offering variety, saving time, reading reviews, and getting deliveries easily. Ease of use, on the other hand, refers to the ease with which consumers can search for products online, pay, track orders, initiate returns, and access help.



3.2. Theory of Planned Behaviour

According to the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), the intention to exhibit a specific behaviour depends upon the attitudes of the individual towards that behaviour, along with subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control [7]. The application of this theory to the context of the choice of channel implies that the attitude of the consumer towards shopping through the Internet may be influenced by factors like convenience and low cost; subjective norm can be based on friends' recommendations or usage by family members or influencers.

3.3. Disruptive innovation theory

Disruptive innovation theory offers insights into how digital commerce could first penetrate via convenience, low search costs, large variety, or underserved populations and then become a competitive force in the mainstream [8]. In the case of India, digital commerce and quick commerce models initially offered solutions to variety, accessibility, and convenience problems faced by digitally-savvy and urban consumers. With better logistic and payment infrastructure being developed, these models increasingly challenge traditional retailers even on ordinary products. Theory is useful; however, it needs to be implemented cautiously – there is no one incumbent, but an entire ecosystem.

3.4. Dynamic capability theory

According to dynamic capability theory, survival of firms in evolving environment requires the ability of sensing opportunities and threats, seizing strategic options, and transformation within the organization [9]. Sensing for traditional retailers involves awareness of evolving consumer preferences; seizing involves implementation of electronic payments, home delivery and online presence; transforming involves restructuring of inventory management, communication with customers and suppliers. Dynamic capability theory provides room for adaptation beyond disruption.

3.5. Omnichannel customer-experience theory

The theory of omnichannel considers an effective customer experience in different channels [3, 5]. The theory is essential since customers now navigate between offline and online channels within one purchasing process. It might be unrealistic for traditional retailers to achieve omnichannel maturity at the level of platform-scale but a hybrid approach that unites trust and convenience of both environments.

4. Conceptual Framework and Propositions

The framework under consideration comprises three key constructs: consumer value perception, channel switching, and retailer adaptive capability. In the case of e-commerce, consumer value can be derived from convenience, price visibility, variety, customer feedback, flexibility in payment, reliable delivery and guarantee of returns. The value components listed above may cause switching away from the traditional retail channel to the alternative one. It should be noted that the impact of switching on the performance of traditional retailers will depend on the ability of such retailers to develop adaptive capability.



4.1. Consumer-side drivers

Consumer Perceived Value from E-commerce relates to the consumer's belief that the use of Internet technology offers them greater utility in relation to their conventional retailing experience. The value perceived is multi-dimensional, consisting of factors such as price transparency, delivery convenience, and product assortment.

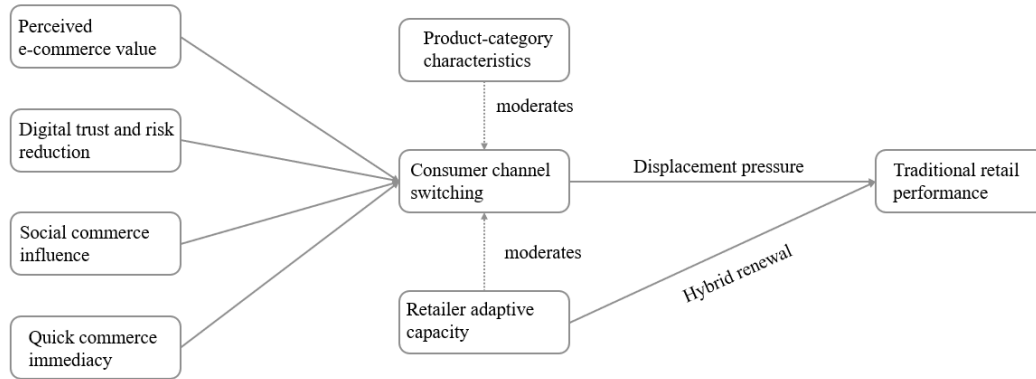


Figure 1: Displacement-adaption framework for e-commerce and traditional retail.

Digital trust mitigates risk perception. Social commerce influence offers normative and information-related signals. Immediacy of quick commerce alters customer expectations regarding time to delivery and daily necessities. Figure 1 represents the displacement-adaptation model posited in this study. Figure 1 reveals how value perceptions, digital trust, and risk reduction, social-commerce influence, and quick commerce immediacy affect consumer channel switching. Further, the effect of channel switching on traditional retail performance is dependent on the nature of product categories and adaptive capabilities of the retailers.

4.2. Retailer-side adaptive capacity

Adaptive capacity in traditional retailers is defined by their ability to integrate digital, relational, and operational skills in response to electronic commerce. These include digital payments, digital discoverability, digital customer communications, local deliveries, visibility of inventory, engagement in marketplaces or open platforms, experiential selling, personalizing service, and category repositioning.

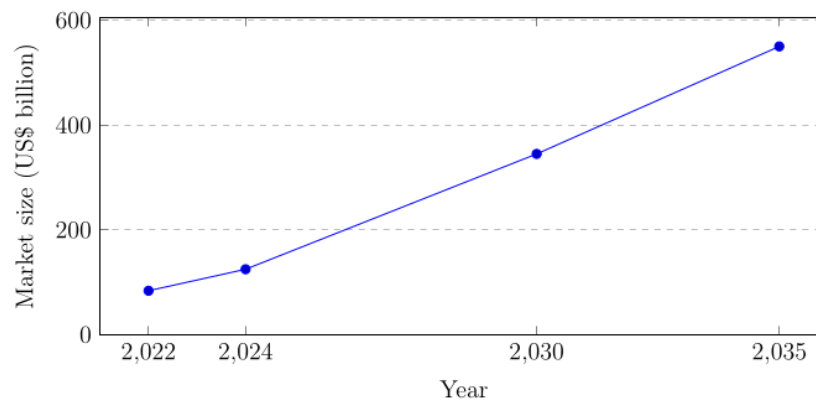


Figure 2: Projected Growth of India's E-commerce Market



This construct is different from mere adoption of technology. A business enterprise might be capable of accepting payments through the UPI system but may lack the ability to adapt if it does not have the capability to communicate its inventory status or deal with its frequent customers online or even manage the process of delivery. Figure 2 shows the forecasted growth of India's e-commerce market. The figure serves as an evidence for the claim that growth of e-commerce is not a passing fad for retailers.

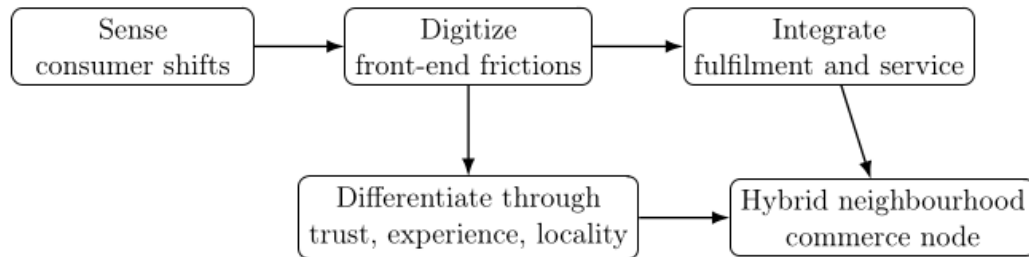


Figure 3: Retailer adaptation pathway from disruption recognition to hybrid renewal.

Figure 3 illustrates the suggested adaptation process for traditional retailers. The figure proposes that traditional retailers can adapt to e-commerce disruption by detecting consumer behavior change, digitalizing friction between customers and the company, combining delivery and service, building differentiation through trust and proximity, and eventually transitioning to neighborhood commerce.

4.3. Research propositions

Table 2: Conceptual propositions

Code	Proposition
P1	Higher perceived e-commerce value increases consumer channel switching from traditional retail to online or hybrid channels.
P2	Price transparency strengthens the relationship between perceived e-commerce value and consumer channel switching.
P3	Delivery convenience and quick-commerce immediacy increase switching in routine and replenishment categories.
P4	Digital trust reduces perceived risk and increases the likelihood of online purchase intention.
P5	Social-commerce influence strengthens consumer channel switching through peer validation, influencer cues, and user-generated content.
P6	Consumer channel switching negatively affects traditional retail performance when retailers lack adaptive capacity.
P7	Retailer adaptive capacity weakens the negative relationship between consumer channel switching and traditional retail performance.
P8	Product-category characteristics moderate e-commerce impact; standardized and searchable goods are more exposed to online switching than perishables, urgent goods, and service-intensive categories.
P9	Open digital commerce participation can improve traditional retailer resilience when combined with logistics access, digital literacy, and catalogue capability.



Conceptual propositions from the theoretical framework have been listed in Table 2 below. The propositions help to identify how perceived value of e-commerce, price visibility, delivery convenience, digital trust, social-commerce effects, retailer adaptability, product-category attributes, and openness of digital commerce may affect consumer channel switching and traditional retailing performance.

5. Conceptual Method and Scope

The approach adopted in this paper is that of conceptual synthesis. Instead of presenting any empirical data from original sources, it is an attempt at developing a framework by synthesizing theoretical models and available research papers, in addition to other sources such as Indian market and policy-related sources.

Table 3: Core constructs and possible operational indicators for future empirical testing

Construct	Conceptual meaning	Possible indicators
Perceived e-commerce value	Consumer belief that online shopping provides superior overall utility.	Price benefit, assortment, time saving, ease of comparison, review usefulness.
Digital trust	Confidence that the online platform, seller, payment, delivery, and return process are reliable.	Payment security, seller rating, return confidence, delivery reliability, privacy confidence.
Consumer channel switching	Degree to which consumers shift search, purchase, fulfilment, or repeat buying from physical stores to digital channels.	Online purchase frequency, reduced store visits, online-first search, category-level switching.
Quick-commerce immediacy	Consumer expectation of extremely fast delivery for routine or urgent items.	Preference for minutes-based delivery, willingness to pay for speed, reduced local-store urgency purchases.
Retailer adaptive capacity	Ability of traditional retailers to absorb digital tools and redesign operations.	UPI acceptance, WhatsApp ordering, local delivery, digital catalogue, marketplace/ONDC participation, customer database.
Traditional retail performance	Condition of physical-retail business outcomes under digital competition.	Footfall stability, revenue stability, customer retention, basket size, repeat visits.
Product-category exposure	Vulnerability of a category to e-commerce substitution.	Standardization, searchability, shipping ease, perishability, need for inspection, service intensity.

The literature was classified according to four inclusion criteria. First, foundational theories were selected when they directly addressed acceptance of technology, behavioral intentions, disruption, or organizational adaptation. Second, open-source literature on e-commerce adoption, omnichannel retailing, consumer journey, trust, social commerce, logistics, and returns was favored. Third, Indian sources were used to ensure that the framework was based on the Indian context, such as forecasts of e-commerce growth and developments of digital commerce policy in India. Lastly, sources were chosen on the basis of their conceptual value rather than their citation frequency.



Since this is a conceptual study, the propositions should be empirically verified before making causal assumptions. The future quantitative research will measure the concepts by means of survey scales and will test the framework using covariance-based SEM, PLS-SEM, or hierarchical regression. The future qualitative research will conduct retailer interviews, consumer diaries, or case studies of kirana digitization. Mixed method approach would be particularly well-suited since the phenomenon consists of measurable consumer switching and context-dependent retailer adaptation.

The constructs that make up the framework as well as the operational indicators that can be used to empirically test these constructs are provided in Table 3. The usefulness of this table lies in its ability to provide operational indicators from abstract constructs such as digital trust, adaptive capacity, and channel switching.

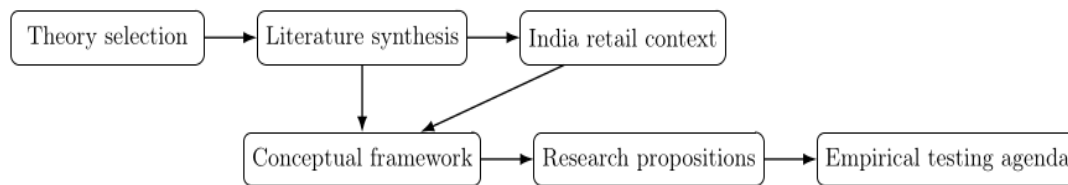


Figure 4: Conceptual research workflow.

Figure 4 illustrates the proposed research process that has been used in the current paper. This figure describes the process through which the selection of theory, literature review, and Indian retail setting are used to formulate the research framework from which propositions are developed.

6. Discussion

This theoretical framework implies that there is no straightforward contradiction between e-commerce development and conventional retail; the first phenomenon puts displacement pressure on the second due to online channels' superior convenience, cost-effectiveness, transparency, and reliability compared to physical shops. However, at the same time, the transition to digital channels generates adaptation possibilities for traditional retailers, who apply technology to enhance their competitive strengths. Such a duality forms the basic principle of the displacement–adaptation approach.

The most pronounced displacement effects will occur in categories that are standard, searchable, shippable, and reviewed via the platform. Customers purchasing electronics accessories, packages, fashion accessories, books, and selected household items can check prices quickly and do not require the possibility to inspect products personally. On the contrary, traditional retailing might benefit from being superior in perishable, urgent, trust-based, tactile, post-purchase advisory, credit, and localized categories. Therefore, category characteristics constitute the boundary conditions for empirical research.

Quick commerce brings this boundary into question. Traditionally, immediacy and locality protected groceries and other need-based purchases, but immediacy becomes a feature of digital platforms in quick commerce. This makes grocery retail one of the key sites of conflict. Yet local



retailers are not entirely at risk because they already have the advantage of location and customer knowledge. If they augment this with digital ordering, inventory management, and delivery, they may retain some of their relevance. For managers, the issue is not whether kirana shops can evolve into Amazon-type platforms; it is whether they can become digitally visible, responsive, and service-oriented neighborhood commerce hubs.

This framework also implies that the switch by consumers will not necessarily mean retailer failure. The impact of consumer switching depends on the retailer's adaptive capabilities. While a retailer failing to adopt digital payments, mobile communication, and delivery may find itself experiencing the full force of the decline, a retailer adopting digital while preserving physical relationships might convert the pressure from e-commerce into a hybrid model. This aligns with the omnichannel approach, which considers channels as integral parts of the customer journey [3, 5].

Firstly, there is a policy angle that comes out from the model. The dependency and margin issues that arise from the domination of e-commerce concentration with respect to large platforms can affect the smaller retailers adversely. Although the open network like ONDC can make it easier for sellers to enter digital commerce, the success of such open network will depend on the issues of on-boarding, logistics, disputes, catalog, awareness, and literacy.

7. Implications

7.1. Theoretical implications

This paper is theoretically significant in the way it combines adoption theory, behavioral intention theory, disruption theory, dynamic capability theory, and omnichannel customer experience literature. Both TAM and TPB help understand consumer adoption of digital channels, yet neither helps understand adaptation by the retailer. This void is filled by dynamic capability theory which explains how traditional retailers react to environmental change. Furthermore, the theory of omnichannel helps understand that the future of retail is not about replacing shops with platforms, but rather reconfiguring shopping experience across channels.

Also, the paper is innovative in the way it conceives quick commerce as a separate layer of disruption. While traditional e-commerce relies on assortment, price, and convenience to compete, quick commerce relies on immediacy. And immediacy used to be one of the biggest advantages of local retailers in the past. Hence, future research on the impact of e-commerce on traditional retail should separate it from quick commerce.

7.2. Managerial implications

The key take-away for traditional retailers is that defensive price matching is not enough. Competing on price with a company that has scale economy is dangerous. What retailers need to do is to leverage the strengths of digital convenience as well as physical retailing. Realistic options could be UPI/wallet, WhatsApp ordering, Google Business listing, cataloguing, customer communities, local deliveries, loyalty information, local language communication, product demonstration, after sales service, and personalized suggestions.

Another thing that needs to be done by retailers is to figure out which categories they are vulnerable to being moved to online and which categories can be saved by providing experiences



or immediacy or trust or service. A small retailer does not have to go digital with everything at once. They need to concentrate first on customer facing friction points such as discoverability, payment, ordering, delivery, and complaints.

7.3. Policy implications

To policymakers and trade associations, the approach highlights the importance of capacity building rather than mere provision of infrastructure for digital inclusion. The training courses should be targeted at catalogue development, digital payment transactions, communication with customers, inventory discipline, cybersecurity, digital accounting, and dispute resolution. Open digital marketplaces can aid small businesses, but only through the support of logistics, onboarding assistance, and consumer awareness. A policy approach that overlooks retailer capability will ensure formal access but lack competitiveness.

7.4. Consumer welfare implications

Consumer convenience cannot be seen as the only criterion for welfare. E-commerce provides advantages in terms of search, greater variety, and saving time; however, it also allows for excessive consumption, impulsiveness, non-transparent algorithmic nudging, and returns. Therefore, future research and policy will need to take into account fair platform design, pricing transparency, return sustainability, privacy of data, and consumer autonomy.

8. Limitations and Future Research

As for this paper, it is conceptual and does not measure any e-commerce impact on the performance of brick-and-mortar retailers. The hypothesized relationship is based on theoretical assumptions and requires further empirical investigation. Secondly, the framework is oriented to the Indian market but is quite universal. Retail situation may vary depending on such factors as a city (metropolitan, tier-2, tier-3), rural, products (groceries, apparel, electronics, pharmacy, personal care, etc.), and consumer income. Thirdly, the traditional retail sector is generalized here, while kirana stores, pharmacies, apparel stores, electronics stores, and informal vendors have different level of e-commerce exposure.

Further research needs to empirically test this framework by using multi-source evidence. Survey-based research may explore such variables as e-commerce value perception, digital trust, switching intention, and retailer's adaptive capacity. On the other hand, a retailer perspective can investigate the difference between digitally-enabled and non-digitally enabled brick-and-mortar retailers. Longitudinal design can reveal whether the adoption of digital means increases the stability of sales revenues of brick-and-mortar retailers. In turn, category-level design can compare different sectors (grocery, apparel, electronics, pharmacy, and personal care).

9. Conclusion

The growth of e-commerce in India will affect conventional retailing, but not in a mechanical and necessarily disruptive way. This transformation is carried out through consumers' shifting channels on the basis of perceived value, convenience, trust, price visibility, social interaction, and speed of delivery. The pressure on traditional retailing as a result of these changes will be tempered by its adaptive capability. Traditional retailing that is digitally inert will suffer more disruption.



Traditional retailing that combines local social relations with digital convenience will become a hybrid node of local commerce.

The proposed framework of displacement–adaptation provides the conceptual foundation for further empirical work and management practice. It claims that the future of retailing in India will not be fully online or fully offline. Instead, it will depend on the integration of digital efficiency with the social and experiential capabilities of brick-and-mortar commerce.

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