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A Study on Consumer Expectations and Experiences towards Zepto

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ABSTRACT:

The exponential evolution of digital technology has transformed shopping behavior among consumers, giving way to on-demand delivery services. Zepto is one of the leading platforms operating in the sphere of fast commerce, providing extremely fast delivery in 10-15 minutes. As consumers increasingly demand convenience, they anticipate fast delivery, convenient service, and a high product availability. This research investigates the Hyderabad and Secunderabad consumer's attitude towards Zepto and their experience and expectations in regards to speed, affordability, and service quality. Speed and convenience are the key drivers of customers in selecting a shopping service nowadays. As an ultra-fast delivery platform even a slight delay, affects trust and satisfaction. In addition to speed experience, price and customer care also influence a customer's overall experience. A well-optimized app enables customers to browse easily, locate products easily and monitor their orders in real time.

The study relies on primary data, and a systematic questionnaire was conducted to gather 107 consumer responses. The questionnaire covered major drivers such as speed, usability, price and general satisfaction with Zepto's service. Statistical techniques like percentages and graphical analysis have been employed for the analysis of the findings. The collected data indicates that convenience and speed are the primary reasons why customers opt for Zepto over conventional shopping. The majority of the respondents use the service on a weekly basis, with others ordering on a daily basis. Ease of navigating the platform, smooth browsing, easy product search and quick checkout process are enjoyed by the majority of the users. The delivery process is fairly efficient, with the majority of the respondents opting for speed as excellent or good. Loyalty programmers and membership schemes were preferred by most consumers to enhance their shopping experience.

The study finds that Zepto has managed to position itself as a leader in the quick commerce space by focusing on speed and efficiency. To maintain its edge, however the platform must continually refresh its product lineup, pricing strategies, and overall customer experience. As the shopping landscape continues to change, Zepto must continue to adapt based on changing customer expectations in order to sustain its long-term success and retain customers. With mounting competition in the fast commerce area Zepto's focus on dependability, price and improved service quality will be important in their long-term growth and industry leadership.

Keywords: *Consumer expectations, consumer experience, delivery, grocery, commerce, service, platform, product.*

Introduction:

The emergence of online grocery delivery services like Zepto has gained significant popularity in today's fast-paced world where convenience and efficiency are important. As a platform that promises ultra-fast delivery (typically within 10 to 15 minutes), Zepto is changing the way consumers shop for groceries. Understanding consumer expectations and experiences toward Zepto is essential to evaluate the brand's success and improve customer satisfaction. In the past grocery shopping required time and effort including driving to stores, finding parking, walking through aisles and waiting in line. Many retailers such as Zepto now offer convenience shopping from the comfort of their homes or offices without needing to step out of their homes. This change in consumer behavior created new expectations. Zepto has made a name for itself in the market by promising to deliver items in just 10 minutes. However, Zepto must continuously meet and above these standards if it is to sustain its expansion and client loyalty. Therefore, understanding the elements that affect client expectations is crucial. These elements include product variety, delivery speed, customer service quality, and overall satisfaction. Conversely, the term "experience" describes real-life exchanges between customers and Zepto. Negative customer experiences can result in dissatisfaction and a loss of customers, whereas favorable experiences encourage repeat business loyalty and word-of-mouth referrals. The increasing reliance on online grocery services as more customers choose the comfort of home shopping makes it necessary to research consumer expectations and experiences with Zepto. It is crucial to comprehend how customers feel about services like Zepto as their purchasing habits continue to move away from physical locations. So, it is essential to study consumer expectations about service quality, product availability, and speed. This study can give a better picture of how Zepto is serving the demands of its consumers and provide a deeper knowledge of their preferences in the changing online purchasing process by focusing on consumer expectations and experiences towards Zepto.

Literature Review:

Kavitha (2023) explored consumer concerns in online meal delivery, emphasizing the impact of food quality, customer service, delivery efficiency, and app interface on user satisfaction and loyalty. Promotions, personalized suggestions, and service errors like misplaced orders or high service charges were also found to significantly affect customer preferences. Similarly, Fahad (2024) studied consumer behavior in Saudi Arabia, finding that advertising, social media, and convenience influence app usage more than pricing, with proximity between restaurants and customers playing a key role in satisfaction. His research highlighted the popularity of the Jahez app due to its excellent customer service.

Ashok & Kishan (2023) examined how apps like Swiggy influence dietary habits and satisfaction, identifying users aged 21 to 35 as the primary demographic. Their study found that user-friendly interfaces, fast delivery, and food variety drive loyalty. Meanwhile, Croker (2005) assessed Woolworths' online service, noting high satisfaction levels, though website functionality and perceived value required improvement. Brand loyalty was also linked to the company's corporate image.

Benedict (2001) and Punakivi & Juha (2001) addressed broader e-grocery behaviors, identifying variables such as trust, product characteristics, and supply chain efficiency as key factors. These studies emphasized the importance of customer service and communication in ensuring satisfaction. Imran & Naushad (2021), focusing on Delhi and NCR, found that perceived ease of use, time-saving value, and product quality significantly affect satisfaction, even though value for money had a lesser impact.

Udayanithi & Ramya (2023) evaluated customer preferences for Zepto's quick delivery services, revealing that age and income influenced satisfaction and delivery expectations. Li & Zhang (2002) analyzed consumer traits and behaviors in online grocery contexts, identifying website quality, personal characteristics, and product features as major influences on purchasing decisions.

Ghosh & Sarkar (2023) studied 10-minute delivery services in Kolkata, linking speed and service quality to trust and loyalty. Arce & Javier (2005) compared online and offline grocery shopping behaviors, demonstrating that channel choice significantly affects consumer decision-making due to differences in product category sensitivity and brand loyalty.

Harini & Inbaraj (2021) extended the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to Indian e-commerce, highlighting how perceived enjoyment, risk, and usefulness shape consumer acceptance. The study suggested that emotional factors increasingly drive online retail adoption. Likewise, Dilotsotthe (2024) in South Africa explored ethical design, app usability, and aesthetics, showing how these aspects influence trust and satisfaction in the grocery app market.

Schiffman (2001) introduced a five-step buyer decision model, emphasizing post-purchase behavior's role in satisfaction. Joshi & Priyanka (2021) further identified factors like price, payment options, and cuisine description as crucial in online food delivery satisfaction, accounting for 74% of customer experience variations. Priyadarshini (2024) focused on Indian consumer behavior, underscoring the importance of information availability, ease of use, enjoyment, and privacy concerns.

Finally, Muntaqheem & Raiker (2019) highlighted a growing shift toward online shopping, particularly among men, due to convenience, although physical stores remain important for sensory validation. This suggests a future trend toward hybrid retail models.

Collectively, these studies provide a comprehensive understanding of the evolving dynamics in online food and grocery delivery. They highlight the need for continued innovation in service design, customer engagement, and technological adaptation to meet changing consumer expectations.

Objectives and Methodology:

The key objectives of the study are to examine consumer expectations and experience towards Zepto and to evaluate the overall consumer experience with Zepto. Research is the systematic process of gathering, analyzing and interpreting data to gain knowledge and address specific questions. To research and understand a particular topic or issue it makes use of a range of techniques and materials. On the other hand, methodology refers to strategies and processes used in conducting research, including techniques for analyzing and interpreting data. This study was conducted using both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data was collected using structured questionnaires. Secondary data was obtained from published journals, articles, company websites, etc. The size of the sample for the study is 107 respondents. The collected data was tabulated and analysed using simple averages, percentages and graphs.

Discussion:

Demographic research of the study indicated that the gender distribution was almost equal with females being at a slight advantage. The greater part of the population was under 25 years old and the majority were students who had no income. Most of the respondents had earned at least a bachelor's degree indicating that Zepto was very appealing to the younger, educated audience as observed by Ashok and Kishan (2023) who found that the typical profile of a user of a digital food delivery app was between 21 to 35 years old. The top reason was curiosity about fast delivery (30.8%), followed by attractive offers and positive reviews (29% and 28% respectively), while recommendations were the least preferred; this indicated that most people preferred to explore apps themselves rather than rely on others as noted by Harini and Inbaraj (2021).

For user behavior, there was a weekly order for the most part (40.2%), followed by several times or daily use. The search for the product was described as "easy" or "very easy" for most users, and the speed of delivery was considered "good" (56.1%) or "excellent" (38.3%) by a majority of users. In

addition, delays were rare or nonexistent, which means that the quality of service is another important satisfaction factor. This is consistent with the results of Croker (2005) and Ghosh & Sarkar (2023), who prioritized delivery reliability and app ease of use in building customer trust and repeat usage. App notifications were generally viewed as useful or neutral, with little annoyance, reflecting good communication design - a observation shared by Dilotsolthe (2024), who attributes app interface quality to satisfaction and loyalty.

Time-saving and convenience were most highly valued by respondents, with supporting roles for product availability and price. Freshness of products was rated as "good" by the majority of users (62.6%), with few reports of poor quality. Most also characterized packaging as "somewhat eco-friendly" or "very eco-friendly," indicating the increasing eco-awareness among digital consumers, as noted by Priyadarshini (2024). The majority of consumers discovered offers via app alerts and opted for UPI/net banking or cash on delivery as payment methods. Improvement recommendations dealt with rewards programs (36.4%) and increasing categories (33.6%). Customer service was rated as a whole "good" or "excellent," and the brand impression was overwhelmingly positive, with 60.7% finding it "good" and 35.5% "excellent." This general endorsement lends credence to Schiffman's (2001) contention that post-purchase satisfaction is a key predictor of future loyalty and advocacy, reinforcing Zepto's status as a trustworthy and easy-to-use service in the field of quick commerce.

Findings:

The major findings of the study are as follows:

- The gender demographic of the survey has a nearly equal gender distribution with mostly younger respondents as the participation decreases with age.
- A considerable proportion of the respondents are students having no income with a few who earn between ₹2,00,001 - ₹5,00,000.
- The significant percentage of respondents hold a bachelors' degree, which indicates a well-educated sample.
- We found that curiosity regarding quick delivery is the main reason for trying the platform.
- A substantial number of respondents order weekly, while few order daily.
- According to the study, a large number of respondents find the product search very easy.
- The majority of the respondents found the delivery speed as good or excellent while delayed deliveries are never or rarely experienced.
- A considerable proportion of respondents found the notifications neutral or somewhat helpful.
- Through the study, it was found that time-saving and convenience are the main reasons for continued use of the application.
- It is also found that perishable items delivered were mostly generally fresh.
- A significant proportion of the respondents found the packaging to be eco-friendly.
- According to the study it was found that most users discover deals through notifications.
- It is found that loyalty programs and more product categories are the most requested improvements by the respondents which helps to enhance consumer expectations.
- According to the research it is found that the platform is rated better or on par with its competitors by the respondents.
- As per the study, substantial respondents found product search, checkout, and offers as the most user-friendly features.
- A significant number of respondents prefer UPI/Net banking followed by cash on delivery as their payment method.
- From the survey we found that the majority of respondents said that they often or always get value for money.
- The respondents of the study rated the customer service as good or excellent.
- According to the study, the majority of the respondents would definitely or probably recommend the platform to others.
- The significant number of respondents rated the overall impression of the platform as good or excellent.

Conclusions:

The following are the derived conclusions based on the study:

- A younger audience, primarily students, are drawn to the platform.
- Frequent engagement is driven by its attractive offers and quick delivery.
- Customers like the quickness of delivery, product search and deal discovery.

- Customers are satisfied with delivery, customer service, and product freshness.
- Product variety and loyalty are two crucial areas of improvement.
- The platform is viewed favourably and highly recommended by users.
- Users commend its value for money, user-friendliness, and eco-friendly packaging.

Overall, the study highlights a younger, well-educated audience, primarily students, who are drawn to the platform due to quick delivery and attractive offers. Users are generally satisfied with the platform's ease of use, delivery speed, product freshness, and customer service, with minimal complaints about delays or difficulties in finding products. Loyalty programs and wider product categories offer opportunities for the platform's growth and enhancement. Users really recommend the platform, and it compares favourably to its competitors. Because of its eco-friendly packaging, and high value, the platform has established a strong goodwill as a reliable and user-friendly business.

In conclusion, Zepto has carved out a niche by responding to the shifting needs of modern consumers. To maintain its market leadership, the platform must continue to refine its strategies, enhance its value offerings, and prioritize consumer feedback. With strong approval ratings and high likelihood of user recommendation, Zepto demonstrates not only technological strength but also the capacity to build lasting consumer relationships. This study contributes to the broader discourse on digital consumerism and offers actionable insights for businesses operating in the fast-paced online retail environment.

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