

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF QUICK COMMERCE PLATFORMS: A STUDY OF NOON MINUTES UAE AND ZEPTO INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The rapid expansion of e-commerce and digital technology has transformed consumer purchasing behaviour across urban markets worldwide. One of the fastest-growing segments within digital commerce is quick commerce, commonly referred to as q-commerce, which focuses on ultra-fast delivery of groceries, daily essentials, and household products. This chapter presents a comparative analysis of two prominent quick commerce platforms operating in different economic and cultural environments: Noon in the United Arab Emirates and Zepto in India.

The study examines the operational structure, business strategies, customer engagement practices, technological integration, logistics systems, pricing approaches, and service quality dimensions adopted by both companies. The research is based on descriptive and comparative analysis using secondary data collected from research journals, industry reports, company publications, customer reviews, and market studies.

The findings indicate that both Noon and Zepto operate through technology-driven business models; however, their strategic priorities differ significantly due to variations in purchasing power, urban infrastructure, consumer behaviour, and competitive market conditions. Noon focuses strongly on premium convenience, diversified digital services, and integrated e-commerce ecosystems within the Gulf market. Zepto, in contrast, operates within a highly competitive and price-sensitive Indian market by emphasising affordability, rapid delivery, aggressive market penetration, and customer acquisition.

The study concludes that localisation, technological innovation, logistics efficiency, and customer trust are essential for sustaining competitiveness in the quick commerce industry. The chapter contributes to the growing literature on digital platform businesses and provides

useful insights for entrepreneurs, researchers, policymakers, and management students interested in the future of e-commerce and urban digital consumption.

KEYWORDS: E-commerce, Quick Commerce, Noon, Zepto, Consumer Behaviour, Digital Platforms, Urban Commerce

INTRODUCTION

The growth of e-commerce has transformed the global business environment by changing the way consumers purchase goods and services. Digital platforms have created highly efficient online ecosystems that allow consumers to access products and services conveniently through smartphones and internet-based applications. Among the various sectors within e-commerce, quick commerce has emerged as one of the most rapidly expanding industries in urban markets.

Quick commerce refers to a business model that focuses on delivering groceries, food items, medicines, household essentials, and convenience products within extremely short timeframes, often ranging from ten to thirty minutes. The increasing demand for convenience, changing urban lifestyles, digital payment systems, smartphone penetration, and improvements in logistics technology have accelerated the growth of quick commerce platforms.

Urban consumers increasingly prefer fast and convenient shopping experiences that reduce travel time and simplify daily consumption activities. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated the adoption of online shopping and hyperlocal delivery services. During periods of mobility restrictions, consumers became more dependent on digital platforms for groceries, medicines, and essential products. As a result, quick commerce companies invested heavily in logistics infrastructure, warehouse management systems, artificial intelligence, route optimisation technologies, and customer analytics.

In the United Arab Emirates, Noon Minutes has emerged as one of the leading quick commerce delivery platforms within the broader Noon digital ecosystem (Laudon & Traver, 2021). Initially established as a large-scale e-commerce marketplace, the company later expanded into grocery delivery, food delivery, digital payments, and quick commerce services. Noon operates in a technologically advanced and high-income market environment where consumers prioritise convenience, service quality, and delivery efficiency.

In India, Zepto has become one of the fastest-growing quick commerce companies by focusing on ultra-fast grocery delivery services in major metropolitan cities. The company

operates within a highly competitive and price-sensitive market where affordability, delivery speed, and promotional offers strongly influence customer purchasing behaviour.

Although Noon and Zepto both operate within the broader quick commerce industry, their operational strategies, customer expectations, logistics models, and market conditions differ considerably. The UAE represents a high-income economy with advanced digital infrastructure and premium consumption behaviour, whereas India represents a highly populated and competitive market characterised by strong demand for affordability and rapid service delivery.

This chapter aims to conduct a comparative study of Noon UAE and Zepto India in order to understand how regional and economic factors influence quick commerce platform strategies and customer experiences. The study also analyses technology integration, customer engagement practices, operational efficiency, and future opportunities within the evolving digital commerce ecosystem.

Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to analyse the growth and transformation of quick commerce platforms within two distinct urban and economic environments represented by the United Arab Emirates and India. The study examines the operational structure and business strategy adopted by Noon in the UAE and compares it with the service model implemented by Zepto in India.

The research further evaluates delivery efficiency, customer experience, pricing strategies, technological integration, and consumer engagement practices followed by both companies. Another important objective of the study is to understand how regional economic conditions, infrastructure development, purchasing behaviour, and urban lifestyles influence platform performance. The chapter also identifies major operational challenges faced by quick commerce companies and provides recommendations for improving sustainability, customer satisfaction, and long-term competitiveness.

1. Concept of Quick Commerce Platforms

Quick commerce represents an advanced form of e-commerce that focuses on ultra-fast delivery services through technology-enabled logistics systems. Unlike traditional e-commerce platforms that may require one or several days for delivery, quick commerce companies aim to deliver products within minutes.

Quick commerce platforms operate through integrated digital systems that connect consumers, warehouses, inventory management systems, delivery personnel, and payment gateways. These platforms generally maintain small urban fulfilment centres or dark stores strategically located near residential areas in order to reduce delivery time.

Several factors have contributed to the growth of quick commerce businesses. Smartphone penetration and internet accessibility have enabled consumers to access mobile applications conveniently. Urban lifestyle changes, long working hours, and increasing demand for convenience have encouraged consumers to prefer rapid delivery services.

Digital payment systems including mobile wallets, online banking, and card-based payments have further accelerated online transactions. Technological advancements such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, GPS tracking systems, and predictive analytics have improved customer experience and operational efficiency.

Consumer expectations within modern urban economies increasingly focus on speed, convenience, reliability, and service quality. Quick commerce platforms attempt to satisfy these expectations through efficient logistics systems and technology-driven operational models.

2. Overview of Noon Minutes UAE

2.1 Background of Noon Minutes

Noon was launched in 2017 as a major e-commerce platform serving the Middle East region, while Noon Minutes later expanded the company's operations into ultra-fast grocery and convenience delivery services within the UAE market. The company operates primarily within the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. Noon initially focused on large-scale online retail operations but later expanded into grocery delivery, digital payments, food delivery, and quick commerce services.

The UAE's strong digital infrastructure, high internet penetration, and premium consumer market created favourable conditions for Noon's growth. The company positioned itself as a comprehensive digital commerce ecosystem serving both retail and convenience-oriented customer needs.

2.2 Services Offered by Noon Minutes

Noon Minutes primarily focuses on grocery delivery, convenience products, beverages, household essentials, pharmacy items, and rapid hyperlocal delivery services within urban areas. The company has diversified its services significantly in order to strengthen customer engagement and digital ecosystem integration.

2.3 Business Model of Noon Minutes

Noon Minutes operates through a hyperlocal quick commerce and commission-based business model supported by integrated dark stores, logistics systems, and rapid delivery operations. Revenue is generated through seller commissions, delivery fees, advertising partnerships, subscription services, and digital promotions. The company also benefits from integrated logistics and fulfilment operations.

2.4 Technology Integration in Noon Minutes

Noon Minutes utilises advanced technologies including AI-driven recommendation systems, GPS-enabled delivery tracking, customer analytics, automated inventory systems, and route optimisation software (Patel, 2023). These technologies improve operational efficiency and customer satisfaction.

2.5 Customer Experience in the UAE

Consumers in the UAE generally prioritise convenience, premium service quality, reliable delivery, and secure payment systems. Noon Minutes has aligned its operational strategy with these expectations by focusing on rapid delivery, convenience, operational efficiency, and integrated digital commerce experiences.

3. Overview of Zepto India

3.1 Background of Zepto

Zepto was established in India as a quick commerce startup specialising in ultra-fast grocery delivery services. The company rapidly expanded across major Indian metropolitan cities by offering delivery services within very short timeframes.

India's large urban population, smartphone penetration, and growing digital economy created favourable conditions for Zepto's growth. The company became particularly popular among young urban consumers seeking convenience and time-saving services.

3.2 Services Offered by Zepto

Zepto primarily focuses on grocery delivery, household essentials, beverages, packaged foods, personal care products, and daily convenience items. The platform operates through strategically located dark stores that support rapid delivery operations.

3.3 Business Model of Zepto

Zepto generates revenue through product margins, delivery fees, promotional partnerships, advertising collaborations, and subscription-based customer benefits. The company focuses heavily on scale expansion and customer acquisition.

3.4 Technology and Innovation

Zepto integrates artificial intelligence, real-time inventory tracking, predictive demand forecasting, customer analytics, digital payment systems, and GPS-based delivery management into its operations.

3.5 Consumer Behaviour in India

Consumers in Indian metropolitan cities generally prioritise affordability, rapid delivery, discount offers, and convenience. Competitive pricing and promotional campaigns strongly influence purchasing decisions.

4. Literature Review

Researchers have increasingly examined the growth of digital commerce and quick commerce platforms within urban economies. Kapoor and Vij (2018) explained that digital convenience applications significantly influence consumer purchasing behaviour by reducing time and improving accessibility.

Ray et al. (2019) observed that customer satisfaction in digital delivery services depends heavily on service reliability, pricing, speed, and application interface quality. Gupta and Duggal (2020) emphasised the importance of secure digital payment systems in encouraging consumer trust and online purchasing behaviour.

Alalwan (2021) highlighted that customer loyalty within Middle Eastern digital platforms is strongly influenced by service quality and delivery reliability. Sharma and Singh (2022) noted that Indian digital commerce platforms rely extensively on promotional campaigns and discounts because of intense market competition.

Patel (2023) found that artificial intelligence and predictive analytics improve operational efficiency, customer personalisation, and inventory management within digital commerce businesses. Existing literature suggests that although digital commerce platforms operate globally, regional differences in purchasing behaviour significantly influence operational strategy.

5. Research Methodology

5.1 Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and comparative research design.

5.2 Sources of Data

The research is based on secondary data collected from company reports, research journals, industry publications, newspaper articles, customer reviews, and market analysis reports.

5.3 Scope of Study

The study focuses specifically on Noon operations within the UAE and Zepto operations within India. The analysis includes customer behaviour, logistics systems, technological integration, service quality dimensions, and business strategies.

5.4 Research Approach

Comparative analysis has been used to identify similarities and differences between both companies in terms of operational efficiency, customer expectations, technology adoption, and market positioning.

6. Comparative Analysis of Noon UAE and Zepto India

The comparative analysis of Noon Minutes UAE and Zepto India demonstrates how regional economic conditions, consumer lifestyles, infrastructure capabilities, and competitive environments influence quick commerce platform strategies.

Noon Minutes operates within the UAE, a market recognised for strong digital infrastructure, high purchasing power, and premium consumption behaviour. Consumers within the UAE often prioritise convenience, service quality, and reliability over price sensitivity. Noon Minutes has therefore positioned itself as a premium quick commerce platform that emphasises efficient logistics, customer experience, and diversified services.

Zepto operates within India, one of the world's largest and most competitive digital commerce markets. Indian metropolitan consumers are generally more price conscious and strongly influenced by affordability and promotional discounts. Zepto has therefore focused heavily on rapid delivery, market expansion, customer acquisition, and operational scale.

The contrast between these two platforms demonstrates that digital business models must adapt according to local economic structures, consumer expectations, and infrastructure conditions.

6.1 Market Environment

The UAE represents a high-income economy with strong digital readiness and premium urban consumption patterns. Consumers generally expect convenience, service quality, and reliable delivery experiences.

India represents a highly competitive and price-sensitive market characterised by dense urban populations and strong demand for affordability and rapid service.

6.2 Pricing Strategy

Noon Minutes follows a comparatively premium pricing strategy supported by service quality and integrated digital commerce benefits.

Zepto focuses more strongly on competitive pricing, promotional discounts, cashback offers, and customer acquisition campaigns.

6.3 Delivery Infrastructure

Noon Minutes benefits from advanced urban infrastructure, organised road systems, and relatively efficient logistics conditions.

Zepto operates within highly congested urban environments where traffic management and delivery efficiency remain significant operational challenges.

6.4 Consumer Expectations

Consumers in the UAE generally prioritise premium service quality, reliability, secure digital payments, and convenience.

Consumers in India focus more heavily on affordability, speed, discount offers, and product availability.

6.5 Technology Usage

Both companies utilise artificial intelligence, mobile applications, GPS tracking systems, customer analytics, and digital payment technologies. Noon focuses more strongly on integrated ecosystem management, whereas Zepto prioritises inventory optimisation and rapid delivery efficiency.

6.6 Marketing Strategies

Noon Minutes relies on premium branding, partnerships, digital campaigns, and integrated marketplace promotions.

Zepto uses aggressive social media marketing, promotional campaigns, referral programmes, and discount-based customer acquisition strategies.

6.7 Customer Support

Noon Minutes provides multilingual customer support aligned with the UAE's multicultural consumer environment.

Zepto focuses on rapid complaint resolution and operational responsiveness due to high transaction volumes and customer expectations regarding delivery speed.

7. Role of Technology in Platform Success

Technology represents the foundation of modern quick commerce operations. The success of Noon Minutes and Zepto depends heavily on their ability to integrate advanced digital technologies into logistics management, customer engagement, inventory systems, and strategic decision-making.

Artificial intelligence plays a major role in customer personalisation and demand forecasting. Both companies utilise AI-based recommendation systems that analyse purchasing behaviour, order history, and customer preferences to improve engagement and encourage repeat purchases.

Big data analytics supports operational planning and inventory management. Customer data related to purchasing behaviour, peak demand periods, geographic concentration, and payment patterns helps companies optimise delivery operations and promotional strategies.

GPS-enabled tracking systems improve transparency and operational efficiency by allowing customers to monitor delivery status and estimated arrival times. Route optimisation technologies help reduce delivery delays and improve rider productivity.

Cloud computing infrastructure supports digital scalability by managing data processing, inventory systems, payment gateways, and customer databases efficiently during periods of high transaction volume.

Digital payment integration has accelerated online purchasing behaviour by improving convenience and reducing dependence on cash transactions. Secure payment systems strengthen customer trust and improve transaction efficiency.

Emerging technologies such as robotics, predictive analytics, drone delivery systems, and automated warehouse management may further transform the future of quick commerce operations.

8. Consumer Behaviour Analysis

8.1 Consumer Behaviour in the UAE

Consumers within the UAE generally prioritise convenience, reliability, and premium service quality. Many consumers are willing to pay higher prices for efficient and time-saving digital services.

The multicultural population within the UAE also creates demand for product variety and international retail options.

8.2 Consumer Behaviour in India

Indian consumers are highly influenced by affordability, promotional discounts, and delivery speed. Young urban consumers increasingly depend on quick commerce services for groceries and household essentials because of busy urban lifestyles.

9. Challenges Faced by Quick Commerce Platforms

Quick commerce platforms face several operational and financial challenges. Delivery delays, inventory shortages, rider management issues, and high logistics costs affect operational performance.

Aggressive discounting strategies often create profitability pressures, particularly within highly competitive markets. Companies must balance customer acquisition with financial sustainability.

Regulatory challenges include labour laws, data protection requirements, taxation policies, and product safety regulations that vary across countries.

Technological risks including cybersecurity threats, system failures, and payment fraud may negatively affect customer trust and operational continuity.

Environmental sustainability also represents a growing concern because rapid delivery systems increase packaging waste, fuel consumption, and carbon emissions.

10. SWOT Analysis

10.1 Noon UAE

Noon Minutes' major strengths include strong regional brand presence, diversified digital services, integrated logistics systems, and premium customer experience. However, dependence on urban markets and higher operational costs represent important weaknesses.

The company has opportunities to expand quick commerce operations, AI-based automation, and regional partnerships. Major threats include increasing competition, changing regulations, and economic fluctuations.

10.2 Zepto India

Zepto benefits from strong brand visibility, rapid delivery systems, operational flexibility, and large urban customer demand. However, dependence on aggressive expansion strategies and high logistics costs create operational challenges.

Opportunities include expansion into additional metropolitan markets, subscription-based growth models, and technological innovation. Threats include intense competition, profitability pressure, workforce management challenges, and customer switching behaviour.

11. Findings and Analysis

The comparative analysis conducted in this study reveals several important insights regarding the operational strategies, customer engagement models, and technology-driven approaches adopted by Noon Minutes UAE and Zepto India.

Noon Minutes has successfully positioned itself as a premium quick commerce platform within the UAE's advanced urban economy. The company benefits from consumers who value convenience, reliability, and service quality. Noon Minutes' operational strategy therefore focuses strongly on delivery efficiency, integrated services, logistics management, and customer experience.

Zepto operates within a highly competitive and rapidly evolving Indian market characterised by price-sensitive consumers and extremely high transaction volumes. The company has adapted by implementing aggressive delivery strategies, promotional campaigns, operational scaling, and rapid market expansion.

One major finding of the study is that customer behaviour differs substantially between the UAE and India. Consumers within the UAE are generally more willing to pay for premium convenience services, whereas Indian consumers actively compare prices and search for affordability and discounts.

The study also indicates that technological integration plays a critical role in platform competitiveness. Artificial intelligence, GPS tracking systems, predictive analytics, digital payments, and automated inventory management systems significantly improve operational efficiency and customer satisfaction.

Operational challenges including traffic congestion, rider shortages, fluctuating fuel prices, inventory management complexity, and delivery delays continue to affect service quality within the quick commerce industry.

Another significant finding is the growing importance of hyperlocal delivery systems and dark store infrastructure. Both companies increasingly depend on strategically located fulfilment centres to reduce delivery time and improve customer convenience.

Customer trust and brand loyalty have emerged as major determinants of long-term sustainability. Consumers are more likely to repeatedly use platforms that provide reliable delivery experiences, transparent pricing, secure payment systems, and responsive customer support.

The study further demonstrates that localisation remains essential for platform success. Consumer expectations, purchasing power, and infrastructure conditions differ considerably across regions. Noon Minutes' premium positioning aligns effectively with the UAE's affluent consumer market, while Zepto's affordability-focused strategy aligns more closely with India's highly competitive urban environment.

Environmental sustainability has also become an important issue within the quick commerce industry. Increased packaging waste and delivery-related emissions have encouraged companies to explore eco-friendly packaging materials and sustainable logistics practices. Overall, the findings indicate that the long-term sustainability of quick commerce businesses will depend on operational efficiency, technological innovation, financial sustainability, workforce management, and strategic adaptability.

CONCLUSION

The expansion of quick commerce platforms has transformed urban purchasing behaviour and strengthened the relationship between technology and convenience within modern digital economies. Noon Minutes UAE and Zepto India represent two successful but distinct models operating within different economic and cultural environments.

Noon Minutes has developed a premium quick commerce ecosystem supported by integrated logistics systems, diversified services, and advanced technology infrastructure. Its operational strategy aligns with the expectations of the UAE's high-income and convenience-oriented consumer market.

Zepto has adapted successfully to India's highly competitive and price-sensitive market through rapid delivery systems, aggressive expansion strategies, and customer-focused convenience services. The company's ability to manage large transaction volumes and operational scale has contributed significantly to its market growth.

The study demonstrates that localisation is essential within the quick commerce industry. Consumer expectations, infrastructure conditions, and purchasing behaviour vary considerably across markets, requiring companies to adapt their operational and marketing strategies accordingly.

Technology continues to remain the driving force behind quick commerce growth. Artificial intelligence, predictive analytics, route optimisation systems, digital payments, and automated inventory management are improving operational performance and customer experience.

Future opportunities within the quick commerce industry include autonomous delivery systems, sustainable packaging solutions, AI-based inventory optimisation, and deeper integration with smart city infrastructure. However, companies must also address challenges related to profitability, labour management, cybersecurity, and environmental sustainability.

Overall, the comparative analysis highlights that while Noon Minutes and Zepto operate within the same quick commerce industry, their strategic priorities are shaped by regional economic conditions, consumer purchasing behaviour, and urban market characteristics.

LIMITATIONS

The study is based primarily on secondary data sources, and customer opinions may change over time due to evolving market conditions. Financial and operational data available in the public domain may also be limited. The research focuses specifically on the UAE and India and may not fully represent all international quick commerce markets.

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