

An Analytical Study on User Experience on E-Commerce Platforms in India

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Abstract:

India's digital economy has expanded at a remarkable pace over the past decade, propelled by rising smartphone penetration, cheaper mobile data, and a series of government-led digital initiatives. As of 2024, the country counted over 950 million internet subscribers and more than 270 million online shoppers, figures that placed it among the largest e-retail markets in the world alongside China and the United States. Within this fast-growing digital marketplace, platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, Meesho, and Myntra compete not only on price and product range but increasingly on the quality of the experience they deliver to the end user. This paper undertakes an analytical examination of user experience (UX) on e-commerce platforms operating in India, viewed through the lens of established UX and service-quality frameworks including the Technology Acceptance Model, SERVQUAL, and the DeLone and McLean information-systems success model. Drawing on secondary data from industry and regulatory sources together with a structured review of the academic literature, the study examines six core dimensions of UX — usability and navigation, visual design, personalisation, trust and payment security, mobile responsiveness, and post-purchase support — and considers how well current platforms address the needs of an increasingly diverse user base drawn from metropolitan, Tier II, and Tier III markets. The analysis further considers the roles that emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, conversational commerce, and the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) are likely to play in reshaping UX standards going forward. The paper concludes that while Indian e-commerce platforms have made substantial gains in functional usability, meaningful gaps remain in personalisation, regional-language support, and post-purchase service, and it offers a set of practical recommendations for platform designers, businesses, and policymakers seeking to build more inclusive and user-centric digital commerce.

Keywords: E-Commerce; User Experience; Online Platforms; Digital India; Consumer Behaviour; ONDC; Usability.

INTRODUCTION

The convergence of affordable smartphones, low-cost mobile data, and a series of coordinated government programmes has turned online shopping in India from a niche urban habit into a mainstream mode of consumption. What began as a convenience for a relatively narrow, English-speaking, metropolitan user base has, within roughly a decade, become a routine part of daily life for consumers across income groups, age brackets, and geographies. The COVID-19 pandemic acted as a further accelerant, pulling first-time users — many of them older, rural, or previously hesitant about digital payments — onto e-commerce platforms out

of necessity, and a large share of them have stayed on as regular users once the immediate crisis passed. As the market has matured, the basis of competition among platforms has shifted. In the early years of Indian e-commerce, price discounting and product assortment were the primary levers used to win customers. Today, with most major platforms offering broadly comparable prices and catalogues, the quality of the user's interaction with the platform itself — how easily they can find what they want, how much they trust the platform with their money and data, and how the platform treats them after a sale is made — has become a decisive factor in customer acquisition and, more importantly, retention. User Experience (UX), understood broadly as the sum of a person's perceptions and responses resulting from the use of a digital product, therefore sits at the centre of platform strategy rather than at its periphery.

It is worth noting at the outset that user experience, as a construct, is broader than interface design alone. It encompasses the user's entire journey with a platform — from initial discovery through a search engine or advertisement, through browsing and comparison, to the moment of payment, and onward through delivery and any post-purchase interaction such as a return or a customer-service query. A narrow focus on interface aesthetics, while important, risks overlooking the structural and infrastructural factors — payment rail reliability, logistics performance, network quality, and language accessibility — that shape how that journey actually unfolds for a very large and heterogeneous national user base. This paper therefore treats UX as a multi-dimensional construct, spanning usability, visual design, personalisation, trust, mobile performance, and post-purchase service, and examines each in turn against the backdrop of India's distinctive digital-commerce environment.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Understanding user experience on Indian e-commerce platforms is important for several interlocking reasons, each of which is elaborated below.

1. **First impressions and initial trust:** A user typically forms a judgement about a website or app within the first few seconds of landing on it. A visually coherent, well-organised interface encourages further exploration, whereas a cluttered or slow-loading one prompts an immediate exit — often to a competitor's platform.
2. **Credibility and confidence:** An intuitive interface and predictable navigation signal professionalism and reliability, which matters disproportionately in a market where many users are still relatively new to transacting online and remain cautious about sharing payment details.
3. **Cart abandonment:** Complicated or lengthy checkout flows remain one of the largest sources of lost sales for e-commerce businesses everywhere; a simplified, low-friction checkout process measurably improves conversion.
4. **Engagement and loyalty:** Features such as personalised recommendations, verified customer reviews, and responsive customer support keep users engaged with a platform well beyond the point of a single transaction, which is central to building repeat custom in a market where switching platforms carries very little cost to the consumer.
5. **Mobile-first behaviour:** With the large majority of e-commerce traffic in India now originating from mobile devices, a mobile-optimised experience is no longer a differentiator but a baseline requirement; platforms that treat mobile as an afterthought risk losing access to a large and growing segment of the market. Taken together, these considerations mean that UX is not simply a design concern but a factor with direct commercial and, in the case of financial inclusion and digital literacy, social consequences. A study that maps the current state of UX on Indian platforms therefore has value for platform designers, business strategists, and policymakers alike.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The academic study of how individuals adopt and evaluate digital technologies offers several frameworks that are directly relevant to the analysis of e-commerce UX. Davis (1989) proposed the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which argues that a user's intention to use a system is shaped primarily by their perception of its usefulness and its ease of use; the model has since been applied extensively to online shopping contexts, where perceived ease of use maps closely onto what UX researchers now call usability. Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, and Davis (2003) extended this line of work into the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), adding performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions as determinants of technology adoption — a framework well suited to a market like India's, where social influence and infrastructural factors such as network quality play an outsized role in shaping digital behaviour.

On the service-quality side, Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) developed the SERVQUAL instrument, which measures the gap between customer expectations and perceptions of service across dimensions such as reliability, responsiveness, and assurance. Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Malhotra (2002) later adapted this thinking specifically to websites, introducing the concept of e-service quality and highlighting dimensions — efficiency, fulfilment, system availability, and privacy — that map closely onto the UX dimensions examined in this paper. DeLone and McLean (2003) offered a complementary information-systems success model in which system quality, information quality, and service quality jointly determine user satisfaction and the intention to continue using a system, a formulation that is particularly useful for thinking about the post-purchase stage of the e-commerce journey. Nielsen (1994) contributed a set of usability heuristics — visibility of system status, match between system and the real world, user control, consistency, and error prevention among them — that remain a standard reference point for interface designers evaluating navigation and layout. Hoffman and Novak (1996) examined the concept of 'flow' in computer-mediated marketing environments, arguing that a seamless, absorbing online experience increases the likelihood of both exploratory browsing and purchase.

A separate strand of literature addresses the structural conditions of Indian digital commerce specifically. Industry analyses published by the India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF, 2025) document the scale of the market over 950 million internet subscribers and more than 270 million online shoppers as of 2024 and note that growth is increasingly concentrated in Tier II and Tier III cities rather than the metropolitan centres that historically drove adoption. Reports by Bain & Company in partnership with Flipkart (2025) similarly highlight that a growing share of new shoppers and orders originates outside the largest cities, which has direct implications for UX design: users in these markets often have lower digital literacy, stronger preference for regional languages, and less certainty about digital payment mechanisms than the early adopters that platforms were originally designed around. Work on the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) — a state-backed initiative launched in 2022 to build an interoperable, platform-agnostic digital commerce infrastructure — points to the possibility of a structurally different UX landscape emerging over the coming years, one in which buyers are not locked into a single platform's interface and small sellers can participate on more equal terms alongside large marketplaces. Together, these strands of literature — technology acceptance, service quality, and the structural specificities of the Indian market — form the conceptual backbone against which the present study examines UX on Indian e-commerce platforms.

Table 1 — Key Growth Indicators of India's E-Commerce Sector

Indicator	Value	Source
Internet subscribers (Mar 2024)	954.4 million	IBEF, 2025
Online shoppers (2024)	270+ million (2nd largest e-retail market)	IBEF, 2025

E-commerce market size (2024)	~US\$125 billion	IBEF, 2025
Projected market size (2030)	US\$345 billion	IBEF, 2025
E-retail GMV projection (2030)	US\$170-190 billion	Bain & Company and Flipkart, 2025
Share of new shoppers from Tier III+ cities (since 2020)	~60%	Bain & Company and Flipkart, 2025
D2C market projection (2030)	US\$60 billion	IBEF, 2025

Source: Compiled by authors from IBEF (2025) and Bain & Company and Flipkart (2025).

Table 1 illustrates the scale and pace of India's e-commerce expansion, and two features of the data are especially relevant to the UX discussion that follows. First, the market's sheer size means that even small percentage-point improvements or shortfalls in user experience translate into very large absolute numbers of satisfied or dissatisfied users. Second, and more importantly for this study, the growing share of new shoppers originating from Tier III and smaller towns confirms that the centre of gravity of the Indian e-commerce user base is shifting away from the digitally experienced, English-speaking, metropolitan segment for which most platforms were originally designed.

A further strand of research relevant to this study concerns consumer behaviour specifically within emerging digital markets, where infrastructural, linguistic, and socio-economic conditions differ markedly from the mature markets in which many classical UX and technology-acceptance frameworks were first developed and tested. Textbook treatments of digital commerce, such as those by Turban, Whiteside, King, and Outland (2017) and Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019), emphasise that the effectiveness of any given UX strategy is contingent on the broader digital ecosystem within which it operates — including payment infrastructure, logistics networks, and device penetration — rather than on interface design in isolation. This ecosystem-level view is particularly pertinent to India, where the interaction between UX design choices and structural factors such as UPI's rapid growth, variable mobile network quality, and the emergence of open, interoperable commerce infrastructure through ONDC arguably matters as much to the end-user experience as any single design decision made within an individual app.

Table 2 — UX Dimensions Mapped to Theoretical Frameworks

UX Dimension	Primary Framework	Key Construct(s) Applied
Usability & navigation	Nielsen's usability heuristics (1994)	Visibility of system status; consistency; error prevention
Visual design	Flow theory (Hoffman & Novak, 1996)	Perceived ease of use; absorbing, low-friction interaction
Personalisation	TAM / UTAUT (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh et al., 2003)	Perceived usefulness; performance expectancy
Trust & payment security	e-SERVQUAL (Zeithaml et al., 2002)	Privacy; system reliability; assurance
Mobile responsiveness	TAM (Davis, 1989)	Perceived ease of use; facilitating conditions
Post-purchase support	IS Success Model (DeLone & McLean, 2003)	Service quality; user satisfaction; continued use

Source: Compiled by authors.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

India's e-commerce sector is on a well-documented growth path, with industry estimates placing the market at roughly US\$125 billion in 2024 and projecting expansion to somewhere between US\$345 billion and US\$550 billion by the early 2030s (IBEF, 2025). Yet this rapid expansion of scale has not been matched, in every respect, by an equivalent improvement in the quality of the experience delivered to the end user. While leading platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, and Meesho have transformed access to goods and services across the country, users continue to encounter recurring friction points: interfaces that are not fully optimised for regional languages, product discovery and search functions that struggle with the scale of catalogues now on offer, checkout and payment flows that still generate hesitation among newer users, and post-purchase processes — returns, refunds, and grievance redressal — that are frequently cited as sources of dissatisfaction. This gap is becoming more consequential precisely because the next wave of growth is coming from users who differ meaningfully from the early adopter base. Bain & Company and Flipkart (2025) report that roughly 60 percent of new online shoppers since 2020 have originated from Tier III cities and smaller towns, a segment for which simplified interfaces, stronger multilingual support, and more visible trust signals are not optional extras but preconditions for sustained engagement. At the same time, mobile devices now account for the large majority of e-commerce traffic in the country, which means that any UX shortcoming on a mobile interface has an outsized effect on the overall customer base. Consumer-loyalty patterns compound the problem: industry research indicates that a substantial share of Indian online shoppers move between platforms relatively freely, driven less by price than by considerations of usability, customer support, and delivery reliability — evidence that price alone can no longer be relied upon as a durable source of competitive advantage.

The emergence of new tools — AI-driven personalisation engines, conversational commerce through chatbots and voice assistants, and government-backed infrastructure initiatives such as ONDC — adds a further dimension to the problem. It is not yet well understood, within the Indian context specifically, how effectively current platforms are integrating these tools into a coherent user experience, nor how the shift toward an open, interoperable network architecture under ONDC might reshape the baseline expectations that users bring to any given platform. This study is positioned to address that gap: it analyses, in a structured way, how well Indian e-commerce platforms currently meet user expectations across the principal dimensions of UX, and what this implies for platforms, businesses, and policymakers working to make Indian digital commerce more inclusive and user-centric.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study pursues the following objectives:

- To examine the principal dimensions of user experience — usability, visual design, personalisation, trust and payment security, mobile responsiveness, and post-purchase support — as they apply to e-commerce platforms operating in India.
- To identify the gaps between user expectations and the experience currently delivered by major Indian e-commerce platforms, with particular attention to users in Tier II and Tier III cities.
- To assess the extent to which emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence and conversational commerce, are being used to strengthen UX on Indian platforms.
- To evaluate the potential implications of the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) for the future structure of UX in Indian digital commerce.
- To offer practical, evidence-based recommendations for platform designers, businesses, and policymakers seeking to improve user experience and deepen financial and digital inclusion through e-commerce.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is confined to business-to-consumer (B2C) e-commerce platforms operating in India, encompassing horizontal marketplaces such as Amazon and Flipkart, vertical and social-commerce platforms such as Meesho and Myntra, and quick-commerce services, insofar as published industry data and academic literature address them. The analysis is conducted at a national level, with specific attention paid to the emerging distinction between metropolitan and Tier II/III user segments given the latter's growing share of new user acquisition. The study draws on secondary data — government and regulatory statistics, industry reports, and peer-reviewed academic literature — combined with an analytical framework grounded in established technology-acceptance and service-quality models; it does not report new primary survey or interview data, and its conclusions should be read as an analytical synthesis of the existing evidence base rather than as findings from an original empirical fieldwork exercise.

Temporally, the study centres on the period following India's post-pandemic e-commerce acceleration through to the present, a window during which user demographics, payment infrastructure, and platform competition have all shifted markedly relative to the earlier phase of Indian e-commerce growth. Cross-border e-commerce, business-to-business marketplaces, and highly specialised vertical platforms (such as those focused on groceries alone or on business supplies) are referenced only where they intersect directly with the broader UX themes under discussion, and a dedicated treatment of each would be a natural direction for follow-on research.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive-analytical research design suited to synthesising and interpreting existing secondary evidence on a fast-evolving subject. Descriptive analysis is used to document the scale, growth trajectory, and structural characteristics of India's e-commerce sector, drawing on statistics published by bodies such as the India Brand Equity Foundation, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, and industry consultancies including PwC India and Bain & Company. An analytical layer is then built on top of this descriptive base by applying established UX and technology-adoption frameworks — the Technology Acceptance Model, SERVQUAL/e-SERVQUAL, and the DeLone and McLean information-systems success model — to interpret what the available evidence implies for each core dimension of user experience.

DIMENSIONS OF USER EXPERIENCE ON INDIAN E-COMMERCE PLATFORMS

1. Usability and Navigation

Usability — the ease with which a user can locate products, compare options, and complete a transaction — remains the foundation on which every other UX dimension is built. Nielsen's (1994) usability heuristics, particularly visibility of system status and consistency of design, continue to offer a useful benchmark: platforms that provide clear feedback at every step of the shopping journey (order confirmation, delivery tracking, return status) and that maintain consistent navigation patterns across categories tend to score well on user satisfaction. The scale of catalogues now carried by major Indian platforms, however, places considerable strain on search and filtering functions; users frequently report that search results do not adequately reflect regional preferences, local sizing conventions, or price sensitivity, which points to an area where usability has not kept pace with catalogue growth.

2. Visual Design and First Impressions

Visual design shapes the user's initial and often lasting impression of a platform's credibility. Clean layouts, appropriately sized product imagery, and readable typography — particularly on smaller mobile screens — support the kind of immediate trust that Hoffman and Novak (1996) associate with an absorbing, low-friction online experience. Indian platforms have generally converged on broadly similar visual conventions (grid-

based product listings, prominent discount badges, and festival-themed promotional layouts), which aids familiarity but can also result in limited visual differentiation between competing platforms.

3. Personalisation

Personalised product recommendations, tailored search results, and customised promotional offers are increasingly central to how leading platforms seek to differentiate themselves. AI-driven recommendation engines are now standard on major marketplaces, but their effectiveness for India's more linguistically and culturally diverse user base — spanning multiple languages, religious and regional festivals, and widely varying price sensitivities — remains uneven. Personalisation strategies calibrated primarily on metropolitan, English-language user data risk under-serving the Tier II/III segment that now accounts for a growing share of new users (Bain & Company & Flipkart, 2025).

4. Trust and Payment Security

Trust remains a decisive factor in Indian e-commerce, reflecting both the historical prevalence of cash-on-delivery as a preferred payment method and continuing concerns about data privacy and payment fraud. The rapid growth of the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) as a payment rail has done much to build confidence in digital transactions, but visible trust signals — secure-payment badges, transparent return policies, and verified customer reviews — remain important, particularly for first-time digital shoppers. Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Malhotra's (2002) e-service-quality dimensions of privacy and system reliability are directly applicable here: platforms that communicate clearly about data use and that maintain consistent transaction reliability tend to convert hesitant users into repeat customers more effectively than those that do not.

5. Mobile Responsiveness

With the substantial majority of Indian e-commerce traffic now originating from mobile devices, mobile responsiveness has moved from being a desirable feature to a baseline requirement. This includes not only responsive layout design but also performance under variable network conditions — a significant consideration given that a meaningful share of India's internet users, particularly outside major cities, continue to rely on lower-bandwidth mobile connections. Platforms that optimise for lightweight app builds, offline or low-connectivity browsing modes, and fast page-load times are better positioned to retain users in bandwidth-constrained regions.

6. Post-Purchase Support

The post-purchase phase — order tracking, returns, refunds, and grievance redressal — is consistently identified in industry commentary as one of the weaker links in the Indian e-commerce UX chain. DeLone and McLean's (2003) emphasis on service quality as a determinant of continued system use is particularly relevant here: a positive pre-purchase experience can be undone by a slow or opaque returns process, and dissatisfaction at this stage is strongly associated with platform switching. Responsive customer service — whether through human agents, chatbots, or a hybrid of both — and transparent communication about refund timelines are central to closing this gap.

A COMPARATIVE SNAPSHOT OF MAJOR PLATFORMS

While a detailed platform-by-platform audit lies outside the scope of this analytical review, it is useful to note, in broad terms, how differently positioned Indian e-commerce players have approached UX. Horizontal marketplaces such as Amazon and Flipkart have invested heavily in search and logistics infrastructure, reflected in features such as fast, reliable delivery tracking and increasingly granular product filtering, and both have expanded seller-support programmes explicitly aimed at Tier II and Tier III cities. Social and reselling-oriented platforms such as Meesho have taken a different approach, building UX around low-priced catalogues, vernacular-language interfaces, and reseller-driven discovery that leans on social trust rather than brand trust alone, a design choice well suited to price-sensitive, first-time digital shoppers. Fashion-focused

platforms such as Myntra have concentrated UX investment on visual merchandising, size and fit guidance, and personalised style recommendations, reflecting the more discretionary, browsing-heavy nature of fashion purchases. Quick-commerce entrants, meanwhile, have built their entire UX proposition around speed and minimal friction, compressing the traditional discovery-to-delivery journey into a narrow, highly optimised flow. This diversity of approach suggests that there is no single template for good UX in the Indian context; rather, effective design choices appear to follow closely from the specific user segment and category a platform is targeting, reinforcing the case for the kind of segment-sensitive personalisation discussed in Section 8.3.

CHALLENGES AND GAPS IN CURRENT UX PRACTICE

Table 3 — Common UX Pain Points by User Segment

User Segment	Most-Cited Pain Points	Likely Underlying Cause
Metropolitan, experienced shoppers	Search relevance at scale; delivery-window precision	Catalogue size outpacing search/filter refinement
Tier II/III, newer shoppers	Language barriers; hesitancy at payment step; unclear return process	Interfaces designed around metropolitan, digitally experienced users
Mobile-only users in low-bandwidth areas	Slow page loads; app crashes on older devices	Insufficient optimisation for variable network conditions
First-time digital payment users	Distrust of saving card/UPI details; fear of fraud	Limited visible trust signals and unfamiliarity with digital payment rails
Price-sensitive social-commerce users	Inconsistent seller quality; unclear grievance redressal	Reseller-driven models with variable seller standards

Source: Compiled by authors from industry commentary and the literature reviewed in Section 3.

Several structural challenges cut across the individual UX dimensions discussed above. Regional and linguistic diversity remains only partially addressed: while major platforms have introduced multilingual interfaces, depth of translation and cultural localisation (beyond simple language switching) is still limited relative to the scale of India's linguistic diversity. Digital literacy varies considerably across the user base, meaning that interfaces designed around the assumptions of digitally experienced metropolitan users can create real barriers for first-time shoppers in smaller towns. Trust deficits persist around data privacy and the security of digital payments, notwithstanding the rapid growth of UPI-based transactions. Infrastructure constraints — variable network speeds and device capabilities outside major cities — continue to affect the practical experience of using even a well-designed mobile interface. Finally, post-purchase service quality, particularly around returns, refunds, and grievance redressal, remains inconsistent across platforms and is repeatedly identified as a driver of platform switching.

THE ROLE OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGY AND ONDC

Artificial intelligence is increasingly embedded across the e-commerce user journey, from product recommendation and dynamic pricing to visual search and fraud detection. Conversational commerce — chatbots and, increasingly, voice-based assistants — is being positioned as a way to lower the barrier to entry for users less comfortable navigating a traditional interface, including support in regional languages. The extent to which these tools genuinely improve UX, as opposed to adding a further layer of complexity, depends heavily on the quality of their implementation and their sensitivity to the diversity of the underlying user base.

The Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC), a government-backed initiative launched in 2022 to build an open, interoperable protocol layer for digital commerce, has the potential to reshape UX expectations in a more structural way. Rather than requiring buyers and sellers to transact within a single platform's proprietary ecosystem, ONDC allows any compliant buyer-facing application to discover and transact with any compliant seller on the network (ONDC, 2024; Press Information Bureau, 2024). For users, this raises the possibility of a more consistent, comparably priced shopping experience across a wider range of sellers, including small and local retailers who have historically found it difficult to establish an online presence. For UX researchers and designers, it also raises new questions: as commerce becomes less tied to individual platform interfaces, the consistency and quality of the underlying network protocols, rather than any single app's design choices, may increasingly determine the baseline user experience across Indian digital commerce.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis presented in the preceding sections points toward a set of practical steps that platform designers, e-commerce businesses, and policymakers could take to close the gaps identified in current UX practice. These recommendations are organised loosely from the most immediately actionable, interface-level changes through to broader, ecosystem-level considerations that will play out over a longer time horizon.

1. Deepen regional-language and cultural localisation: platforms should move beyond surface-level translation toward genuinely localised search, recommendation, and customer-support experiences for Tier II and Tier III users.
2. Simplify onboarding for first-time digital shoppers: streamlined registration, clear visual cues, and guided first-purchase flows can reduce the drop-off commonly seen among less digitally experienced users.
3. Strengthen visible trust signals: clear communication about data privacy, secure-payment indicators, and transparent return policies should be prioritised, particularly for users transacting digitally for the first time.
4. Invest in low-bandwidth and offline-friendly mobile design: lightweight app architectures and graceful degradation under poor network conditions will help retain users in less-connected regions.
5. Improve post-purchase service consistency: faster, more transparent returns, refunds, and grievance-redressal processes should be treated as a core UX priority rather than a peripheral operational function.
6. Calibrate AI-driven personalisation to India's diversity: recommendation engines and conversational tools should be trained and tested across regional, linguistic, and income segments rather than optimised primarily for metropolitan user data.
7. Engage constructively with ONDC and related infrastructure initiatives: businesses and platform designers should track how open-network protocols evolve and consider how their own UX strategies will need to adapt as commerce becomes less tied to single-platform ecosystems.
8. Expand the evidence base through primary research: future studies should complement the secondary-data analysis presented here with structured surveys and qualitative fieldwork across a stratified sample of Indian e-commerce users, particularly from underrepresented Tier II/III and rural segments.

Implications for Stakeholders

For platform designers and product teams, the central implication of this analysis is that UX investment aimed solely at the existing, digitally experienced user base is likely to yield diminishing returns as the market's growth increasingly comes from users with different needs and expectations. Design and testing processes would benefit from deliberately incorporating Tier II and Tier III users, rather than treating their needs as an afterthought to be addressed once metropolitan design patterns have already been finalised. For business leaders and strategists, the recurring finding across the literature that price alone no longer guarantees customer loyalty suggests that UX quality — particularly around trust, personalisation, and post-purchase

service — deserves to be treated as a core strategic investment rather than a cost centre subordinate to logistics or marketing spend. For policymakers, the parallel evolution of payment infrastructure (through UPI), digital-inclusion programmes (through Digital India), and open-network initiatives (through ONDC) suggests that UX outcomes in Indian e-commerce are not solely the product of private-sector design choices but are also shaped significantly by public digital infrastructure; continued investment in that infrastructure, and careful attention to how ONDC's interoperable model affects baseline UX consistency across sellers, will remain an important complement to platform-level design efforts.

CONCLUSION

India's e-commerce sector has grown from a modest, urban-centred niche into one of the largest digital retail markets in the world within the space of a decade, a trajectory that shows no sign of slowing. As this analytical review has argued, the sustainability of that growth increasingly depends not on price or catalogue breadth alone but on the quality of the user experience that platforms deliver across the entire shopping journey — from first impression and product discovery through to payment, delivery, and post-purchase support. Viewed through established frameworks such as the Technology Acceptance Model, SERVQUAL, and the DeLone and McLean success model, the evidence suggests that Indian e-commerce platforms have made substantial progress on functional usability and mobile accessibility, but that meaningful gaps persist in personalisation for non-metropolitan users, depth of regional-language support, and the consistency of post-purchase service. As growth increasingly comes from Tier II and Tier III cities, and as structural shifts such as the Open Network for Digital Commerce begin to reshape the underlying architecture of digital commerce, these gaps are likely to become more, rather than less, consequential. Closing them will require sustained attention from platform designers, businesses, and policymakers alike — not as a matter of competitive differentiation alone, but as a precondition for genuinely inclusive digital commerce in India.

More broadly, this analysis suggests that the next phase of competition in Indian e-commerce is likely to be defined less by which platform can offer the lowest price or the widest catalogue, and more by which platform can build the most trustworthy, accessible, and genuinely user-centred experience for a rapidly diversifying national user base. Platforms that treat regional-language support, first-time-user onboarding, and post-purchase service as core design priorities — rather than secondary features layered onto an interface built for an earlier, narrower user base — are likely to be best positioned to convert India's continuing digital expansion into durable customer relationships. In that sense, the study of UX in Indian e-commerce is not a peripheral design concern but a central strategic and, arguably, developmental question for one of the world's largest and fastest-growing digital markets.

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