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Convenience-Oriented Consumption in the Digital Economy

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Abstract. The rapid growth of the digital economy has changed the way consumers purchase products and services while making convenience an increasingly important factor in everyday consumption. As digital technologies continue to develop, consumers expect shopping to require less time and effort, which has encouraged businesses to rethink the way they design their services and interact with customers. This study explores the development of convenience-oriented consumption by examining its main drivers, its influence on consumer behavior and the strategies businesses have adopted in response to this trend. A qualitative research approach was employed based on secondary data collected from academic literature, industry reports and company publications. Comparative case studies were used to analyze how businesses have adapted to changing consumer expectations in the digital economy. The findings suggest that convenience has become more than a product or service attribute. It now shapes consumer decision-making and influences the way businesses compete. Companies increasingly rely on digital technologies to simplify the purchasing process and improve customer experience, although these developments also raise concerns about overconsumption, privacy and data security. The study concludes that convenience is likely to remain a defining characteristic of the digital economy. Future business success will depend not only on improving efficiency but also on balancing technological innovation with responsible data use and sustainable development.

Keywords: Digital Economy, Consumer Behaviors, Marketing Strategies

1. Introduction

After experiencing the era of agricultural and industrial economies, the world starts a new period called the digital economy. The rapid development of the digital economy has transformed the way people purchase products and services. Consumers are able to purchase merchandise anytime and anywhere with the growth of e-commerce, mobile payment, and digital platforms. At the same time, the speed and convenience of online shopping have further improved due to the appearance of many technological innovations, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and recommendation systems. Collectively, these factors have indirectly contributed to convenience becoming one of the most important determinants of consumer purchasing decisions.

This shift is closely related to the rapid development of digital technologies. Digitalization has fundamentally changed public consumption behavior by enabling consumers to access information more quickly, compare products more efficiently, and complete transactions without the limitations

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of time or location [1]. Although existing studies have discussed the relationship between convenience and consumer behavior, the rapid development of digital technologies has created new opportunities and challenges for both consumers and businesses.

This study employs a qualitative research design that uses case studies to explore how businesses are adapting to the increasing demand for convenience. Three representative companies were selected because they represent different approaches to digital retail transformation. Amazon is recognized for its data-driven marketing and digital ecosystem; Alibaba represents one of the world's largest platform-based business models; and Walmart illustrates how traditional retailers have integrated online and offline operations through omnichannel retailing. The comparison focuses on how these companies improve consumer convenience, enhance the customer experience, and adapt their business models to the digital economy. Company reports, academic literature, and industry publications are used to identify similarities and differences in their strategic responses. Through a comprehensive approach, this research aims to deeper understand the drivers and impacts of convenience-oriented consumption; simultaneously, the research seeks to analyze the marketing strategies that companies use to adapt to the digital economy, as well as the challenges and future development of convenience-oriented consumption.

2. Literature review

2.1. Drivers of convenience-oriented consumption

The growing popularity of convenience-oriented consumption is closely related to the development of the digital economy. As digital technologies continue to improve, consumers can purchase products and services more quickly and with less effort than ever before.

The researchers describe convenience as the reduction of consumers' time and effort throughout the purchasing process [2]. In the past, purchasing a product usually required visiting a physical store, comparing different options in person, and completing the payment at the checkout. Today, these steps can all be completed within a few minutes on a mobile phone. Research focusing on online shopping has reached conclusions that convenience has a positive influence on customer satisfaction and consumers' willingness to continue shopping online. Consumers appreciate websites and mobile applications that are easy to navigate and provide clear product information [3]. The digital economy has further strengthened this trend. The digitalization has transformed consumption behavior by allowing consumers to obtain information more quickly, compare alternatives more efficiently, and complete transactions without the limitations of time or location [1].

Consumer expectations have changed as well. Services such as fast delivery and simple return policies were once seen as extra benefits, but they are now expected by many online shoppers. Studies suggest that consumers are more satisfied when retailers make the shopping process simple and reduce unnecessary effort [3]. Because of these changing expectations, businesses are under increasing pressure to improve the speed and convenience of their digital services in order to stay competitive.

2.2. Impacts on consumer behavior

The growing emphasis on convenience has also influenced consumer behavior. Digital shopping allows people to complete purchases more quickly, but it has also changed how they search for products and make decisions.

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Many consumers now spend less time deciding what to buy. Although this makes shopping more efficient, it can also increase the likelihood of impulse purchases. Features such as personalized recommendations and limited-time discounts often encourage consumers to buy products they were not originally planning to purchase. Research suggests that AI recommendation systems reduce the effort required to compare products, which make consumers more willing to rely on suggested items rather than searching on their own [4].

Convenience has also made consumers more dependent on a few large digital platforms. Many e-commerce platforms now combine shopping, payment, customer reviews, entertainment, and delivery into one system. Instead of moving between different websites or services, consumers can complete the entire purchasing process in one place. According to previous research, digitalization has strengthened this reliance by bringing multiple services together on a single platform [1]. While this creates a smoother shopping experience, it may also reduce consumers' willingness to explore smaller retailers or alternative products. This also makes it difficult for small retailers to enter the market.

3. Analysis

3.1. Digital marketing strategies

While traditional marketing primarily focused on increasing product awareness, digital marketing has gradually shifted towards reducing consumers' effort during the purchasing process. Instead of expecting customers to search through thousands of products independently, businesses increasingly rely on customer data and artificial intelligence to present products that match individual preferences. In this sense, convenience is created before the purchase decision is made.

Amazon demonstrates this transition particularly well. Rather than treating product recommendations as an additional feature, the company has embedded personalization into almost every stage of the customer journey. According to Amazon Science, its recommender system has evolved continuously over the past two decades, combining customers' browsing history, purchase records, search behavior, and contextual information to generate increasingly relevant recommendations [5]. As the volume of products available online continues to expand, recommendation systems play an essential role in helping consumers locate relevant products quickly while reducing information overload [6].

Recent developments in artificial intelligence have further strengthened this strategy. In an interview published by Amazon in 2026, AWS CEO Matt Garman explained that businesses are increasingly adopting AI to solve practical customer problems rather than experimenting with technology for its own sake [7]. AI is expected to enhance customer experiences by delivering more relevant recommendations, improving personalization and reducing friction during online shopping instead of merely automating business operations. Taken together, the evidence suggests that digital marketing has evolved from a communication tool into a mechanism for improving shopping convenience.

3.2. Platform-based business models

Instead of functioning as conventional retailers, companies increasingly build digital ecosystems that combine multiple services within a single platform. Alibaba provides one of the strongest examples of this strategy. Its digital ecosystem extends far beyond online retailing. Through Taobao, Tmall and Alipay, consumers are able to complete almost every stage of the purchasing process

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within one connected ecosystem. This integration reduces transaction costs and eliminates the need to switch between different service providers. According to *Alibaba's Annual Report* (2024), this integrated ecosystem is designed to connect commerce, payment, logistics, cloud computing, and digital services, creating a seamless experience for both merchants and consumers [8]. Instead of treating these functions as separate services, Alibaba combines them into a single platform where every stage of the transaction is digitally connected. This integration reduces switching costs and shortens the time required to complete a purchase.

A similar pattern can be observed in Amazon Marketplace. Although Amazon began as an online retailer, its business model has gradually evolved into a platform that enables millions of independent sellers to reach customers through Amazon's digital infrastructure. Consumers experience a unified shopping environment regardless of whether products are sold directly by Amazon or by third-party merchants. Third-party sellers represent a substantial proportion of products sold through Amazon, while services such as Fulfilment by Amazon (FBA) standardize logistics and delivery across different merchants [9].

Overall, the evidence suggests that platform-based business models have become an important business response to convenience-oriented consumption. By combining product search, payment, logistics, customer support and after-sales services within a single ecosystem, companies reduce the time, effort and uncertainty involved in online shopping. Consumers no longer need to navigate multiple independent service providers to complete a purchase. Instead, the platform itself coordinates the entire transaction process, making convenience a defining feature of the digital economy.

3.3. Omnichannel retail development

Unlike digital marketing or platform-based business models, which improve specific stages of the purchasing process, omnichannel retail focuses on the entire customer journey. The objective is not simply to provide more shopping channels, but to ensure that consumers can move between those channels without interruption. Retailing was once centered almost entirely on physical stores. As e-commerce expanded, companies gradually introduced additional channels such as official websites, mobile applications, and online marketplaces. More options, however, did not necessarily create a better shopping experience. These channels often operated independently. Customers might find a product online only to discover that the local store had different inventory information. Loyalty points earned through one channel could not always be used in another, and returning online purchases to physical stores was often inconvenient.

Consumer behavior has changed considerably over the past decade. Shopping is no longer confined to one location or one device. A customer may discover a product on social media, compare prices on a retailer's website, check availability through a mobile app, and complete the purchase in a physical store. Others follow the opposite route, examining products in-store before ordering online for home delivery. Because consumers move naturally between digital and physical environments, businesses have increasingly shifted their attention from managing individual channels to connecting them into a single retail system [10].

Walmart illustrates this transition particularly well. Historically recognized as a traditional brick-and-mortar retailer, Walmart has invested heavily in integrating its physical stores with digital services. Customers can browse products online, check local inventory in real time, place an order through the Walmart app, and collect purchases using Buy Online, Pick Up In Store (BOPIS) or curbside pickup. Online purchases can also be returned in physical stores, reducing both waiting time and the uncertainty associated with online shopping. Rather than replacing physical stores,

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Walmart has transformed them into fulfillment centers that support its digital operations. This strategy has become one of Walmart's key competitive advantages, allowing the company to combine the efficiency of e-commerce with the accessibility of an extensive store network [11].

4. Challenges and negative consequences

One unintended consequence of convenience-oriented consumption is the growth of overconsumption. Digital technologies have made purchasing easier than ever before. Features such as one-click purchasing, personalized recommendations, same-day delivery, and mobile payment significantly reduce the effort involved in shopping. While these innovations improve efficiency, they also encourage more frequent and sometimes impulsive purchasing behavior. Recommendation systems further strengthen this tendency. By continuously presenting products that match consumers' interests, online platforms increase exposure to products that consumers may not have intended to purchase. Personalized advertising, limited-time promotions and push notifications can create a sense of urgency, encouraging consumers to make decisions with limited deliberation. The consequences extend beyond individual spending behavior. Higher consumption often results in greater packaging waste, increased transportation demand and higher carbon emissions generated by logistics and product returns. As businesses continue to compete by making shopping increasingly convenient, balancing convenience with sustainable consumption has become an important challenge for both companies and policymakers.

The convenience offered by digital platforms depends heavily on the collection and analysis of consumer data. Personalized recommendations, targeted advertising, and omnichannel services all require businesses to collect information such as browsing history, purchasing records, location data and payment information. Although consumers often benefit from these personalized experiences, extensive data collection inevitably raises concerns about privacy and data security. Many consumers remain uncertain about how their personal information is collected, stored, and shared. Large-scale data breaches and cyberattacks have further increased public concern, particularly when sensitive financial or personal information is involved. Even when companies comply with privacy regulations, consumers may still perceive continuous tracking as intrusive. This creates a trade-off between convenience and privacy. The more accurately companies understand consumer behavior, the more personalized and convenient their services become. At the same time, greater personalization requires greater access to consumer data. Future digital business strategies will therefore need to balance customer convenience with transparent data governance and responsible use of artificial intelligence.

5. Future trends of convenience-oriented consumption

Artificial intelligence is unlikely to replace existing digital retail strategies. Instead, it is more likely to reshape how they operate. Throughout the previous chapter, digital marketing, platform ecosystems, and omnichannel retailing were identified as three major business responses to convenience-oriented consumption. AI is already influencing each of these areas by making them more adaptive and responsive to consumer behavior. For example, recommendation systems no longer rely only on purchase history. New AI models are able to interpret a wider range of information, like search intentions and contextual signals. This allows recommendations to become increasingly accurate. At the same time, AI is improving customer service through conversational assistants and supporting retailers in demand forecasting and inventory management. These

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developments may not change how consumers shop overnight, but they can make the entire purchasing process smoother and require less effort from consumers.

The findings of this study suggest that personalization has already become an important competitive advantage. Looking ahead, this trend is likely to become even more sophisticated. Rather than offering similar recommendations to broad customer segments, retailers are gradually moving towards experiences tailored to individual consumers. This does not simply mean recommending different products.

6. Conclusion

The digital economy has changed the way consumers shop. Buying a product is no longer limited by location or business hours. With only a mobile phone, consumers can search for information, compare products and complete a purchase within minutes. As a result, convenience has gradually become one of the main factors influencing purchasing decisions. This study explored why this shift has taken place, how it has changed consumer behavior, and how businesses have adjusted their strategies to meet these new expectations. The findings suggest that convenience is no longer viewed as an additional service. It has become something consumers expect from almost every retailer. Companies therefore compete by making shopping easier instead of simply offering lower prices or a wider range of products.

The case studies show that this change can be seen in several ways. Amazon improves convenience by using recommendation systems and personalized marketing to reduce the time consumers spend searching for products. Alibaba has developed a platform ecosystem that allows customers to complete the entire purchasing process in one place. Walmart has focused on connecting physical stores with digital services so that consumers can move between online and offline shopping with little disruption. Although these companies have adopted different strategies, they all attempt to reduce the effort required throughout the purchasing process.

On the other hand, this study has several limitations. The analysis relies entirely on secondary sources, including academic articles, company reports, and industry publications. No primary data were collected, so the discussion reflects existing evidence rather than consumers' own experiences. In addition, the case studies focus on large global companies. Their resources and digital capabilities are very different from those of small and medium-sized businesses, which means the findings cannot be applied to every market without caution. Future research could examine convenience-oriented consumption from the consumer's perspective by conducting surveys or interviews. It would also be valuable to compare different countries or industries because digital adoption varies considerably across markets. As artificial intelligence becomes more common in retail, another important direction will be understanding how businesses can provide highly personalized services without reducing consumer trust. Finding this balance is likely to become one of the biggest challenges in the next stage of the digital economy.

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