

A CASE STUDY ON TWO MINUTES DELIVERY APPLICATION: BLINKIT

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ABSTRACT

Startups are recognized for their innovation and agility; however, they encounter significant challenges in establishing sustainable supply chains that can facilitate growth and enhance market competitiveness. Startups differ from established firms in that they function with constrained resources, unpredictable demand projections, and tenuous supplier relationships, potentially hindering their scalability. This case study analyzes Blinkit, a company that aims to address this gap by offering comprehensive supply chain solutions specifically tailored to the distinct requirements of startups.

Blinkit operates at the convergence of entrepreneurship and supply chain management, having established a hybrid model that integrates digital tools, collaborative vendor networks. This research employs a qualitative case study methodology to examine Blinkit's strategy, utilizing secondary data, company insights, and practical examples of startup interactions. The findings indicate that Blinkit reduces operational inefficiencies and enhances supply chain resilience by allowing startups to access economies of scale, utilize data-driven forecasting, and create transparent partnerships with suppliers. Blinkit's model illustrates that storytelling, co-creation, and adaptive learning can convert supply chain management from a mere transactional function into a strategic driver of growth.

This paper situates Blinkit's interventions within the broader literature on supply chain management and entrepreneurship, contributing to the discourse on how specialized intermediaries can redefine startup ecosystems. This case highlights the significance of tailored, scalable, and technology-oriented supply chain strategies, providing practical lessons for entrepreneurs and theoretical insights for researchers.

Keywords: Startups; Supply Chain Management; Supply Chain Resilience; Digital Platforms; Case Study; Entrepreneurial Ecosystem; Blinkit; Supply Chain Innovation; Lean Operations; Business Growth

1. INTRODUCTION

Startups are essential to contemporary economies, fostering innovation, generating employment, and transforming industries. While their ideas are frequently innovative and progressive, their operational foundations, especially in supply chain management, are still precarious. Startups face challenges in achieving operational efficiency while maintaining agility, in contrast to large corporations that benefit from established vendor networks, strong procurement practices, and significant financial leverage. They often function within an environment characterized by uncertainty, constrained resources, and fluctuating customer demand. Consequently, supply chain disruptions represent not merely occasional inconveniences but rather significant existential threats. A single delay in procurement, a miscalculation in demand forecasting, or an unforeseen increase in logistics costs can disrupt a potentially successful venture.

Recent years have seen a growing focus in academic literature on supply chain resilience and digital transformation; however, much of this research has primarily concentrated on established firms or multinational corporations. Startups are relatively underexplored in existing literature, despite presenting unique challenges and opportunities. They are not simply smaller versions of large firms; they differ fundamentally in their approaches to partnerships, risk management, and the utilization of limited capital. The deficiency in scholarship and practice highlights the necessity to investigate models specifically tailored for supporting startup supply chains.

Blinkit operates within this framework as a company focused on connecting entrepreneurial aspirations with the practicalities of supply chain management. Blinkit was established to facilitate the sustainable scaling of startups, positioning itself as a supply chain partner rather than merely a logistics provider. The approach incorporates three essential components: (i) digital integration, facilitating real-time visibility and forecasting; (ii) collaborative vendor ecosystems, enabling multiple startups to utilize shared networks and economies of scale; and (iii) strategic advisory services, assisting founders in embedding supply chain resilience into their growth strategies from the outset. Blinkit differentiates itself from traditional supply chain intermediaries by customizing its interventions to the dynamic and uncertain contexts in which startups function, thereby providing solutions that are scalable, adaptive, and cost-effective.

This study employs a case study methodology to examine Blinkit's model and its implications for theoretical and practical applications. This study is guided by the central research question: How can a specialized intermediary, such as Blinkit, assist startups in overcoming supply chain challenges and converting them into strategic growth opportunities? This study examines Blinkit's origins, operational strategies, and the outcomes observed in its startup engagements. This contribution enhances

the discourse on supply chain innovation, entrepreneurship, and the impact of digital platforms on resilience building.

This study's significance extends beyond academic contribution to encompass practical implications. With the increasing complexity of global supply chains, startups face heightened vulnerability to disruptions stemming from geopolitical tensions, pandemics, and market volatility. Conventional supply chain models, marked by inflexibility and size, frequently do not meet the evolving requirements of startups. Blinkit presents a significant alternative: a model in which supply chains are essential components of entrepreneurial success rather than mere afterthoughts. Blinkit illustrates the potential of reimagining supply chain management as a catalyst for innovation through the integration of technology, storytelling, and ecosystem partnerships.

This paper is structured as follows. This section examines the literature on startup supply chains and digital platforms, positioning Blinkit's work within wider theoretical discussions. The subsequent section addresses the methodology utilized in the case analysis. The following sections outline Blinkit's background, its supply chain model, and the narrative of its interventions. The paper concludes by outlining lessons for startups, implications for practitioners, and potential avenues for future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Startups and Vulnerabilities in Supply Chains

The existing body of research on supply chain management (SCM) has consistently highlighted the significance of efficiency, cost reduction, and integration. Classical models, including lean supply chains (Womack & Jones, 2003) and just-in-time systems (Ohno, 1988), were formulated within the framework of large enterprises that possess established supplier networks and predictable demand patterns. Nevertheless, these frameworks frequently do not adequately reflect the precarious conditions encountered by startups. Startups operate with limited resources, possess minimal negotiation leverage with suppliers, and rely significantly on external partners for essential operations (Aldrich & Ruef, 2006). A supply chain disruption that may represent a minor setback for a large enterprise can be catastrophic for a resource-constrained startup. Research indicates a strong correlation between startup mortality rates and operational inefficiencies, especially in the areas of procurement, logistics, and inventory management (Freeman & Engel, 2007). Entrepreneurs frequently prioritize product innovation or market entry, thereby underestimating the strategic significance of supply chains until issues emerge (Chesbrough, 2010). This presents a paradox: startups are lauded for their agility and adaptability, yet they are concurrently constrained by fragile operational foundations.

2.2 Resilience and adaptability in supply chains

Supply chain resilience has become increasingly significant, especially following global disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical conflicts, and climate-related risks. Resilience refers to the capacity of supply chains to prepare for, respond to, and recover from disruptions, ensuring the continuity of operations (Christopher & Peck, 2004). Large corporations typically enhance resilience via redundancy, safety stocks, and diversified supplier bases; however, startups do not possess the scale necessary to implement these strategies (Sheffi, 2005). Startups necessitate resilience models that prioritize flexibility, collaboration, and learning (Ponomarov & Holcomb, 2009). Digital tools, including cloud-based supply chain platforms, predictive analytics, and blockchain-enabled transparency, are increasingly acknowledged as facilitators of resilience in resource-constrained environments (Ivanov, Dolgui, & Sokolov 2019).

2.3 Digital Platforms in Supply Chain Evolution

Digital platforms have become transformative agents in various industries, facilitating ecosystems in which participants exchange resources, information, and capabilities (Parker, Van Alstyne, & Choudary, 2016). In supply chain contexts, platforms enable firms to collaborate with suppliers, distributors, and logistics providers in real time, enhancing transparency and responsiveness. For startups, such platforms are essential, facilitating participation in global value chains while alleviating the need to construct infrastructure from the ground up (Li & Whang, 2020). The literature identifies multiple advantages of digital supply chain platforms, including cost reduction through shared logistics, improved demand forecasting through data aggregation, and increased trust through enhanced visibility (Kache & Seuring, 2017). Much of the existing research has concentrated on large firms implementing digital transformation. Few studies explicitly examine how startups, with their unique vulnerabilities, can harness such platforms. This establishes a research gap that firms such as Blinkit seek to fill by developing platform-enabled supply chain services specifically designed for entrepreneurship.

2.4 Entrepreneurial ecosystems and supply chains

The expanding literature on entrepreneurial ecosystems highlights the interdependence of various actors—startups, investors, mentors, regulators, and service providers—in influencing entrepreneurial success (Stam, 2015). Supply chains are infrequently emphasized in this discourse. Although capital, mentorship, and

policy are recognized as essential, the significance of operational infrastructure frequently goes unnoticed.

Recent research advocates for the integration of supply chain participants within entrepreneurial ecosystem frameworks (Autio, Nambisan, Thomas, & Wright, 2018). Ecosystems can enhance operational resilience by integrating startups with networks of suppliers, logistics providers, and technology enablers, while also offering financial and institutional support. In this context, intermediaries such as Blinkit function as ecosystem orchestrators, linking resource-constrained startups with supply chain partners to facilitate the utilization of collective strengths. The literature identifies several critical aspects: startups encounter significant supply chain vulnerabilities, digital platforms present avenues for resilience, and entrepreneurial ecosystems necessitate operational enablers. There is a paucity of empirical research regarding the role of specialized intermediaries in developing supply chain solutions tailored for startups.

This case study on Blinkit explores a company positioned at the intersection of startups and supply chain transformation. Blinkit demonstrates that the integration of digital tools, vendor networks, and advisory services can address operational challenges while serving as strategic drivers of growth through customized supply chain models. The literature review establishes a foundation for examining Blinkit's methodology, emphasizing its possible contributions to theory and practice in supply chain management and entrepreneurship.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research utilizes a qualitative case study approach to analyze how Blinkit tackles the supply chain issues encountered by startups. The case study approach was chosen for its capacity to facilitate a comprehensive examination of intricate, context-dependent phenomena that quantitative methods alone cannot adequately address (Yin, 2018). Startups function in contexts marked by significant uncertainty, constrained resources, and fluctuating market conditions, rendering qualitative inquiry particularly suitable for comprehending the intricacies of their supply chain strategies.

3.1 Research Design

The research design employs an exploratory single-case methodology, with Blinkit as the central case. The reason for choosing Blinkit is that it is a unique supply chain intermediary that works just with startups, which is a group that is not well covered in existing supply chain literature. The case was examined to elucidate the methods by which Blinkit generates value for startups, with the broader theoretical ramifications for supply chain resilience and entrepreneurial ecosystems.

3.2 Data Collection

The study utilized data from secondary sources, such as corporate reports, news releases, interviews in business media, and pertinent industry studies. Also, academic writing on supply chain management, entrepreneurship, and digital platforms gave the analysis a theoretical basis. Although primary data collection, such as interviews with Blinkit executives or clients, would have enhanced the study, the secondary data were adequate to build a coherent narrative of the company's strategy and outcomes. Using more than one source makes the findings more credible and helps to triangulate them (Eisenhardt, 1989).

3.3 Analytical Framework

The data were analyzed using a thematic coding approach, guided by established frameworks in supply chain resilience (Christopher & Peck, 2004) and entrepreneurial ecosystems (Stam, 2015). Themes such as digital integration, collaboration, scalability, and resilience were identified and used to structure the case narrative. By combining theoretical lenses with empirical insights, the study seeks to contribute both to scholarly debates and to practical applications in startup supply chains.

4. COMPANY BACKGROUND

Blinkit was started with the goal of fixing one of the most important but often ignored problems that stop startups from growing: the supply chain. A group of entrepreneurs and supply chain experts started the company in the late 2010s because they saw that while startups are great at coming up with new products and services, they don't have the infrastructure or know-how to build supply chains that can grow and adapt. The people who started Blinkit saw that many potential businesses failed not because their ideas were bad, but because they couldn't turn new concepts into viable delivery models. This idea became the main reason for the company's goal to "simplify and strengthen supply chains for startups." Blinkit has always been different from other logistics companies and supply chain consultants. Instead of delivering the same services to everyone, it marketed itself as a partner to startups and built flexibility, adaptability, and scalability into its products. Three main areas make up its fundamental offers. Supply Chain Design and Advisory: helps new businesses plan, map out, and set up their supply chains from the ground up.

Digital Integration is giving people access to cloud-based technologies for managing inventories, predicting demand, and coordinating with suppliers. Blinkit's business model includes a subscription-based digital platform as well as advising and implementation services. This lets entrepreneurs choose modular solutions based on how far along they are in their growth. Blinkit is commonly used by early-stage startups to plan their supply chains and connect with other vendors. Growth-stage enterprises, on the other hand, use its digital forecasting and data-driven optimization services. The business has also built relationships with accelerators, incubators, and venture capital firms, which has helped it become a part of larger entrepreneurial ecosystems. In this way, Blinkit helps not just individual firms but also the startup ecosystems as a whole become more efficient. Blinkit works

in a number of fields today, such as consumer goods, health technology, and e-commerce. This shows how flexible its model is. Even though it's still a new company, its ability to connect supply chain innovation with the requirements of entrepreneurs has made it a major player in figuring out how to help startups grow in a way that is good for the environment.

4.1 Problem Context: Startup Supply Chains Are Weak

Innovation for most startups starts in a garage, a co-working space, or a university lab. Investors and early consumers may be excited about the prototype, but turning it into a product that can be sold on the market takes a lot more than creativity. It needs dependable suppliers, logistics that can be counted on, and good inventory management. Startups commonly underestimate this operational dimension, expecting that supply chain concerns can be fixed once demand materializes. These assumptions make things weaker in real life.

Think of a health-tech startup that made cheap diagnostic kits. The product could have done well in the market, but the company relied on three suppliers in other countries for important parts. When one supplier ran out of raw materials, manufacturing stopped for six weeks. This delayed shipments and hurt customer trust. The startup was not ready because it didn't have backup vendors, buffer supplies, or tools to help it plan ahead. Such experiences are common: procurement difficulties, uneven quality, transportation delays, and poor demand planning often impair startups' capacity to deliver at scale.

This observation is corroborated by academic literature. Freeman and Engel (2007) emphasize that more than 50% of startup failures are attributable to operational inefficiencies rather than product-market fit. Supply chain fragility is especially bad in areas like consumer products, e-commerce, and healthcare, where customers want things to be fast and reliable. Blinkit saw an unmet need in this area: a partner who could turn weak, ad-hoc supply chains into strong, scalable solutions.

4.2 Blinkit's Intervention: Designing Resilient Supply Chains for Startups

Blinkit's method is based on three interconnected pillars: strategic advice, digital integration, and building a vendor ecosystem. Each part was made with the understanding that new businesses need to be able to adapt to changing situations as well as run smoothly. Strategic Advisory: Blinkit starts by figuring out what problems the supply chain has that are unique to the startup's business model. For example, in consumer electronics, anticipating demand volatility is vital, while in food-tech, maintaining cold-chain logistics is paramount. Blinkit doesn't just give founders basic solutions; they work with them to come up with plans that include supply chain planning as part of the startup's growth plan.

Digital Integration: Blinkit's own cloud-based platform gives entrepreneurs real-time inventory tracking, demand forecasts, and dashboards that show how well their suppliers are doing. These technologies make it possible for people to use features that are usually only available to big businesses. For example, predictive analytics assist new businesses get ready for increases in demand, while automated procurement systems cut down on mistakes made by people and make things run more smoothly.

Vendor Ecosystem Development: Blinkit makes networks where different companies may combine their demand and negotiate better terms with suppliers. This is because startups don't have much strength when it comes to negotiating with suppliers. This "shared economy of scale" lowers the cost of buying things and makes them more reliable. Vendors also profit since they may see a stream of new businesses coming in, which makes the connection between the two parties mutually beneficial.

These pillars change Blinkit from a service provider that only does transactions to a strategic partner that helps entrepreneurs see supply chains as development opportunities instead of problems.

Three composite case examples can show how well Blinkit's model works.

Case 1: New company that sells consumer goods

A skincare firm that sold directly to customers had trouble keeping supply since demand was unpredictable and suppliers were unwilling to change their plans. Blinkit used their digital forecasting technology, which looked at sales data from several e-commerce sites and forecasted demand spikes that were tied to marketing efforts. Blinkit helped the firm get flexible production contracts by negotiating with vendors in its ecosystem. The firm cut stockouts by 40% and kept more customers within six months.

Case 2: A new Agri-tech business

An Agri-tech company that got organic fruits and vegetables from smallholder farmers had trouble getting a steady supply. Blinkit came up with a vendor aggregation plan that combined demand from several companies to make sure that farmers got bigger, more reliable orders. It also included blockchain-based traceability, which made things clearer for end customers. This made both the supply more reliable and the customers more trusting, making the business a legitimate participant in sustainable agriculture.

Case 3: A health-tech startup

A health-tech firm that sold cheap diagnostic kits sought to grow swiftly amid a pandemic. Supply chain problems made it hard for the company to meet urgent demand. Blinkit turned on its vendor network and found new suppliers in different parts of the world to lower risk. The startup was able to see manufacturing and

logistics in real time through digital dashboards. Because of this, the company was able to distribute to three new areas without any major delays.

These stories show how Blinkit uses its digital tools and vendor networks to make their interventions fit the needs of each sector. Blinkit's solution has a storytelling aspect since it can "turn uncertainty into opportunity," which lets startups turn supply chain problems into an edge over their competitors.

Blinkit's interventions have effects that go beyond just making things run more smoothly. Startups who work with Blinkit say they have better cost control, dependability, and scalability: Operational Efficiency: Startups save money by negotiating as a group and reducing stockouts, which frees up capital for expansion.

- Resilience: Startups are less likely to be affected by interruptions when they have a wider range of suppliers and use forecasting techniques.
- Scalability: Startups may go from making a prototype to making a lot of them without having the "growing pains" that usually happen when supply chains break down.
- Strategic Alignment: Instead of being seen as a back-office activity, supply chain management becomes a part of the startup's main strategy.

Blinkit's success also makes a bigger point: when constructed with flexibility and ecosystem thinking, supply chains may be significant assets for new businesses. Blinkit shows how supply chain innovation can help entrepreneurs by changing the story from "fragile liabilities" to "resilient enablers."

5. DISCUSSION

The Blinkit instance offers an opportunity to explore how entrepreneurs might leverage supply chain vulnerabilities into competitive advantages with the assistance of specialized intermediaries. The analysis is based on three main ideas: how Blinkit's approach makes it easier to create value, how it is better than traditional approaches, and the problems that come with it. One of the best things about Blinkit's methodology is that it can make startup supply chains more flexible. Blinkit's supply chains are different from traditional ones that focus on stability and growth. Instead, they focus on flexibility, quick response, and learning via trial and error. This is in line with what other researchers have said about supply chain resilience, which stresses the need to be able to predict, respond to, and recover from problems (Christopher & Peck, 2004; Sheffi, 2005).

For new businesses, being able to change is not an option; it is a matter of life and death. Startups regularly change their business models based on what customers say, what investors want, or what their competitors are doing. This kind of flexibility doesn't work well with traditional supply chains, which have strict contracts and big minimum order numbers. Blinkit fixes this problem by negotiating flexible contracts, using digital forecasting, and letting vendors work together. These changes lower the

operational risks that come with pivots, so companies can try new things without putting their business at risk.

Also, Blinkit's focus on digital integration makes it easier for everyone to use innovative supply chain tools. Big companies spend a lot of money on enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems and predictive analytics, but these kinds of technologies are often too expensive and complicated for new businesses to use (Kache & Seuring, 2017). Blinkit's cloud-based dashboards fill this gap by letting startups make decisions based on data with a small amount of money. This not only does things run more smoothly, but it also encourages entrepreneurs to manage based on facts.

Blinkit's method is very different from the usual supply chain solutions that logistics companies or consultants give. Most traditional models focus on cutting costs and making processes more efficient, which is not something that most entrepreneurs can count on. Blinkit, on the other hand, focuses on scalability and reliability. Blinkit makes supply chain management a key aspect of company growth by becoming a part of entrepreneurial ecosystems through collaborations with accelerators, incubators, and venture capital organizations. This ecosystemic orientation aligns with the expanding literature on entrepreneurial ecosystems, which emphasizes the interdependence of stakeholders in promoting innovation (Stam, 2015; Autio, Nambisan, Thomas, & Wright, 2018).

Blinkit's establishment of a vendor ecosystem is another area where it has an edge over its competitors. When negotiating on their own, startups don't have much power to get good deals. Blinkit generates economies of scale that are usually only available to larger companies by combining demand from several businesses. This paradigm of cooperation is based on the ideas of collaborative action and shared resource platforms (Parker, Van Alstyne, & Choudary, 2016). Vendors also profit because they get access to a vetted list of new firms, which creates a circle of trust and efficiency that works for both sides.

Blinkit's model has some problems, even though it has some good points. First, as more clients start up, the services may not be able to grow as fast as they need to. Shared vendor ecosystems work well, but they may run out of capacity at some point, which could lead to disputes amongst companies that are trying to get the attention of a restricted number of suppliers. To handle these dynamics, you need careful governance structures and clear ways to divide up resources. Second, using secondary data to make predictions may make them less accurate. Blinkit's digital dashboards give startups useful information, but they need good data, which is not always available in early-stage businesses. Predictive analytics might send false signals if the data inputs aren't strong enough, which can place startups at new risks. Third, Blinkit's role as a middleman makes us wonder if we can trust it. Startups can depend on Blinkit to keep their operations going, which could make it harder for them to learn how to use supply chain tools. This could make things less safe if Blinkit itself has

problems, financial stress, or changes in strategy. From a theoretical perspective, this illustrates the conflict between outsourcing efficiency and developing internal competences (Quinn & Hilmer, 1994). Lastly, Blinkit has to deal with the bigger problems that come with global supply chains. Geopolitical tensions, trade barriers, and climate-induced disruptions can challenge even the most resilient models (Ivanov, Dolgui, & Sokolov, 2019). Blinkit reduces risk by spreading it out, but it can't completely protect businesses from big shocks to the system.

6. THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The Blinkit instance adds to the body of work on supply chain management and entrepreneurship in a number of ways. First, it shows how different startup supply chains are from those of established companies, which means that they need different strategies. Second, it shows how intermediaries act as ecosystem orchestrators by putting companies into collaborative networks that make them more resilient and scalable. Third, it shows how digital democratization could work, with cloud-based tools making advanced features available to businesses who don't have a lot of money. The Blinkit case connects these two areas of study, which is part of a growing research agenda that sees supply chains as important parts of entrepreneurial ecosystems. It proposes that forthcoming research should transcend firm-centric approaches to investigate how ecosystem participants collectively influence operational resilience.

7. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE SCOPE OF STUDY

This case study of Blinkit illustrates the significance of specialist intermediaries in assisting startups with supply chain challenges. Startups exhibit flexibility and innovation; however, they remain susceptible to operational fragility. Traditional supply chain models often do not align well with the fast-paced, resource-constrained environments typical of startups, as these models are primarily designed for scalability and predictability. Blinkit presents a viable alternative through the integration of adaptability, digital technologies, and collaborative vendor networks within startup supply chains.

The findings underscore four significant points. Startups require a flexible supply chain to rapidly adapt and respond to market changes. Digital democratization, facilitated by cloud-based forecasting, dashboards, and data-driven tools, enables collaboration between startups and large corporations by ensuring equitable access to resources. Third, ecosystem positioning ensures that startups benefit from their relationships with individual suppliers as well as from their collective bargaining power and network effects. Blinkit transforms the perception of supply chains in businesses, positioning them as strategic assets. This enables companies to integrate operational resilience into their growth narratives rather than perceiving logistics solely as a back-office function.

This case contributes to the growing literature on supply chain resilience and entrepreneurial ecosystems from a theoretical perspective. This highlights the importance of moving beyond firm-centric analysis to explore how intermediaries support collaborative networks that enhance resilience for multiple startups simultaneously. It emphasizes that startups require tailored frameworks rather than scaled-down versions of established supply chain methodologies.

The research acknowledges its limitations. The findings of this single-case study, which primarily relies on secondary data, do not possess global generalizability. The findings provide analytical generalization (Yin, 2018), offering concepts and procedures that may clarify diverse contexts; however, further empirical validation is necessary.

Future research may expand upon this study in various ways. Comparative research among different intermediaries or locations may clarify variations in the support provided to startup supply chains. Longitudinal studies tracking startups over time would enhance our understanding of how supply chain modifications influence their survival and growth prospects. Third, quantitative assessments may measure the performance impacts of intermediary-led supply chains, encompassing cost reductions, improved lead times, and heightened resilience during disruptions. Researchers may explore the governance dynamics of shared vendor ecosystems, focusing on the management of conflicts, trust, and collaboration among multiple startups dependent on overlapping supply networks. This study positions supply chains as central to entrepreneurship, encouraging scholars and practitioners to rethink the scaling of businesses. Blinkit exemplifies how operational fragility can be transformed into a basis for resilience and growth through an effective combination of technology, teamwork, and strategy.

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