

The Influence of Online Customer Reviews and Ratings on Consumer Purchase Decisions: Trust and Credibility Perspectives

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Abstract. The significance of trust and credibility on online review and ratings which influence customers purchase decision is studied in this research. It is focused on customer reviews and rating in online. Social proof: On the digital side, reviews and ratings were especially crucial, which is provided by e-commerce platforms and online social platforms to positively or negatively impact consumer behaviour in buying encounters. This research applies a quantitative study. The primary data collected via a structured questionnaire. Were used on statistical analysis methods to find relationships between key variables. This research found that most of the consumers agreed that reviews and ratings heavily impacted their decision. Positive and negative reviews are equally important and factors like content length, verified buyer status and star ratings shows a online review and ratings more convincing. This research proven that these factors influence buying behaviour, the online reviews and ratings also has its down side that fake reviews, paid reviews and manipulation of informations are the challenge. The reviews and ratings require more transparency and regulation. The research can help firms build the trust among consumers by leveraging and encouraging credible review practices, and its insights should valuable to marketers, e-commerce platforms and policy makers.

Keywords: Review and Ratings, Social Proof, Customer Ratings, Consumer Purchase Decisions, Online Customer Reviews.

1 Introduction

With the arrival of digital era, E-commerce platforms and social platforms have become more valuable sources of information for consumers in purchase decision-making. In purchasing decision making process online customer reviews and ratings are significantly contributed more. These are social proofs that build trust, credibility and purchase intent. The benefit of online reviews greatly democratized consumer opinions, allowing people to share their experience on products and services around the globe.

Amazon, Flipkart and other e-commerce platforms and social media platforms like YouTube, Instagram and X are become kind collectively shared consumer knowledge. Star ratings and text-based customer reviews in online serve as proxies for product quality and reliability, and they influence the buyers. But reviews are for more than just the information. they affect emotions, feelings and contribute to brand credibility and influence the purchase risk. A single

Negative review will keep potential buyers away while a whole some positive reviews will see sales skyrocket. Recognising this dual status provides insights.

This paper investigates the influence of customer reviews and ratings on purchase behaviour with emphasis on examining how trust, credibility and trust affect consumer behaviour. The research will analyse primary data to determine the key characteristics that make review influential, examine the varying influence of positive and negative feedback. This will add to the existing literature regarding digital consumer behaviour and offer practical insights for businesses that are keen on using reviews as a strategic marketing tool.

2 Literature Review

[1] E. Maslowska et al. (2017). The research questions whether customer reviews influence purchase choice and the contribution/moderation of review exposure and price sensitivity. Their findings reveal that if customers are exposed to reviews for a long period of time, reviews are more effective on the customer, and anything that is pricey, consumers become thrifty and make extensive use of good reviews before purchasing. Consumer faith in a more and more networked marketplace.

[2] Tao Chen et al. (2022). Eye-tracking study illustrates the impact of online reviews on consumer buying intention. Based on the study, online reviews of a product were better in influence created by negative review as individuals had trusted its prophecy under visual consciousness. It is concerned with presentation and credibility context of reviews' influence on influencing consumer trust and buying intention.

[3] Junpeng Guo et al. (2020). The research describes positive emotion bias in customer reviews and its effect on buying decisions. The research validates that emotionally positive reviews increase consumer trust and buying intention, which indicates the importance of sentiment-based decision-making when shopping online.

[4] Minjung Kang (2022). The research examines the impact of online reviews on JD.com on consumers' purchasing behavior. Empirical findings from them show reviewing quantity and sentiment strongly influence purchasing behavior, whereas aggregated consumer sentiment influences opinions regarding new products.

[5] Sekar Ayu Agustina, Ralina Transistari (2023) The research describes the concomitant influence of reviewers, ratings, and influencers on purchasing decisions. Based on them, although individuals are introduced by influencers, customer rating and review also play an influential role in end-of-the-road decisions of customers to boost the belief factor of web-based shopping.

[6] Nina Nurhaliza et al. (2024) The paper describes the influence of online reviews and ratings on purchasing decisions in terms of trust as an intervening variable. Their study determines that trust, created by genuine reviews and quality ratings, is a turning point in bridging customer interest and purchases.

[7] Wilda Dwitya Putri Natasya et al. (2024) The research examines the influence of customer ratings and reviews on Shopee e-commerce shopping. The study finds customers prefer more

numbers of reviews over ratings, and qualitative reviews are more influential for purchasing decisions than numerical ratings.

[8] Zhanfei Lei et al. (2022) The paper explains how individual reviews and average ratings cross-influence with word-of-mouth online. According to their research, average ratings influence first impressions while individual individual reviews influence end purchase intentions more, where collective as well as solitary feedback needs to be balanced.

[9] F. Weisstein et al. (2017) The research investigates how negative reviews influence consumer decision-making according to purchase goals. The research confirms that the consumer with a prevention goal is vulnerable to negative reviews, and hence risk perception is a vital factor in decision-making.

[10] R. Pugal Maala (2024) The research explores the role of product information factors in shaping purchasing behavior. Long product descriptions, high ratings, and good reviews, according to the study, have a significant impact on the confidence and purchasing likelihood of consumers.

[11] Febby Herlambang et al. (2023) The research describes the effect of customer ratings on buying decisions with trust acting as an intermediary. The research comes to the fact that trust is an intermediary factor that makes the effect of positive ratings possible and has an effect on consumer trust in online consumption.

[12] Feyza Muhammad Ikhsan et al. (2023) The article describes the influence of online ratings and reviews on purchasing electronic products. Research indicates that informative, real reviews exert strong influence on customers, particularly via technologically skilled customers.

[13] Arif Rahman et al. (2022) Here's an article on how reviews and ratings affect customer behaviour. Reviews has more of a part than the rating does, given that is what consumers use for good educated decisions on purchasing.

[14] Abdulaziz Elwalda et al. (2016) "Influence of the Dimensions Used for Judgments and Posture when Evaluating Online Reviews" This study addresses the dimensions customers employ to make judgments about online reviews. The investigation identifies trust, credibility, depth and sentiment of reviews as the most important factors to establish e-commerce (e-shopping) trust and purchasing behavior.

[15] Anisha Mani et al. (2023) The study shows how customer ratings can be effective in driving purchase. The research can reveal the following information: even though rated higher may attract users' attention, but longer text review has more influences in purchasing decisions of the product.

[16] Márton Varga et al. (2023) The paper explores the effect of negative consumer reviews on consumer search behavior. Negative reviews lengthen search time, but also increase trust as the follow-up from management interfere; aids in making more informed decisions continues the paper.

[17] S.A.N. Shazuli Ibrahim (2023) "Impact of online reviews towards consumer trust and purchasing behaviour". The study confirms that descriptive, truthful reviews are more vital than overall rating star ratings and argues for the usefulness of review credibility.

[18] Hongfei Liu et al. (2019) The review discusses the after-purchase impact of reviews. Word-of-mouth and brand loyalty, as well as long-term customer review effects are suggested to be influenced by after-purchase reviews.

[19] Jia Chen et al. (2018) The paper analyzes how the consumer choice evolves with the dynamic online feedback. The paper brings into focus the fact that new, descriptive feedback is more influential than previous feedback, emphasizing the dynamic influence of feedback.

[20] M. Wikantari (2023) The research tests the interaction between reviews, price, and service quality. The research establishes that brand image acts as a moderator, and powerful brands minimize the effects of negative reviews. Powerful brands minimize the effects of negative reviews.

[21] Steven Steven et al. (2023) The research considers the interaction between online customer reviews and consumer buying behavior. The research affirms that high ratings with positive reviews enhance consumer trust, which initiates purchasing behavior.

3 Objectives of The Study

- To examine how online reviews and ratings shape consumer trust and credibility.
- To analyse the impact of both negative and positive reviews on purchases.
- To identify key factors that make online reviews influential.

4 Research Gap

There are many studies investigating the significance of online customer reviews and ratings on customer purchasing behaviour, but the current literature has primarily examined either the emotional sentiment of the reviews or the role of influencers in the consumer purchase decision. Limited research has would fully examine the relationship between trust, credibility and other review characteristics that influence buying behaviour like star ratings, verified buyer labels and contents of review. Additionally, most of these studies are contextual to platforms or geographies, resulting in a lack of insights regarding how such dynamics operate in diverse e-commerce environments in the case of India. Also, few studies develop the statistical test to define the significance of the relationships between the review elements and purchase intentions. This study aims to bridge this gap by quantitatively analysing the effects of both positive and negative reviews on trust and purchase intention, and considering worries concerning fraudulent reviews.

5 Research Methodology

The current research adopts a quantitative approach to study how Internet reviews and ratings affect consumer purchasing behavior and trust. The research design used to study is analytical and descriptive based on primary data from a structured questionnaire. The research aims to

measure consumers' beliefs and response as they trust online reviews. The research uses a non-probability convenience sample. This method was used because Time and Cost Efficiency and Accessibility and Reachability Online consumers who are frequently using sites such as Amazon, Flipkart and Zomato were targeted. Convenience sampling enables it to collect data in a short period of time from easily accessible respondents.

The study takes into account different independent, dependent, and control variables to examine the impact of online reviews and ratings on purchasing behavior and consumer confidence. Information gathered was quantitatively analyzed for patterns, relationships, and trends. Descriptive statistics gave a general picture of consumer behavior, while inferential analysis took into account the impact of reviews on purchase intention and trust. Such deeper significance, guaranteed to deliver perceptive utility to business and academic research.

In research, Google Forms was used in designing and sending the survey to gather data quickly and in a structured form from 253 participants. Microsoft Excel was utilized to remove duplicates, insert missing values, and format the answers for analysis. Statistical testing using computer software Jamovi was conducted through the use of tests such as descriptive statistics, ANOVA, chi-square test, correlation and regression analysis to test validity and research hypotheses relationships. The Schematic Flow of Theoretical Structure is shown in Fig 1 (Source: author) 3.

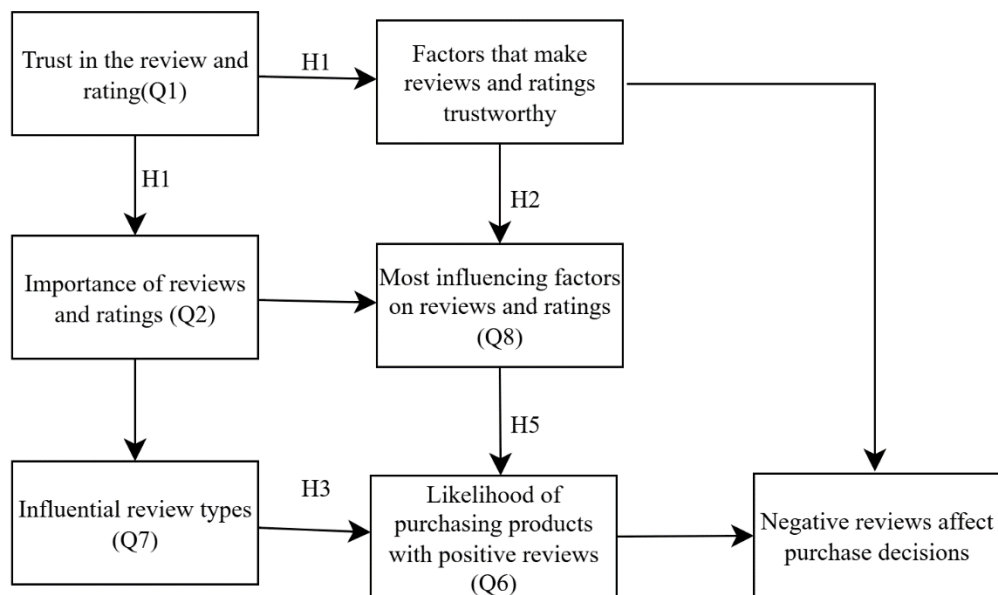


Fig. 1. Schematic Flow of Theoretical Structure (Source: author).

6 Limitations

This research has some limitations that might impact the external validity of its findings. Sample Size and Representation: The research applied a convenience sampling method involving 253 respondents, which can hardly be a representation of diverse consumers. Research was carried

out in India, and results may not be universally applicable to worldwide markets with unique consumer behavior and e-commerce conduct. The research captures the opinion of consumers at one moment in time but not how trust in reviews changes over time or between different shopping experiences.

The research fails to control for external influences such as advertising campaigns, sales, brand image, or word-of-mouth endorsement, which may also influence purchasing decisions. Although platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, and Zomato were named, the research fails to distinguish between how review credibility differs on different platforms or industries (electronics, fashion, food delivery, etc.).

7 Findings of The Study

The research highlights the crucial influence of online product ratings and reviews on determining consumer buying behavior.

- Out of the 253 participants surveyed, 88.5% found reviews and ratings moderately to very important in decision-making, and 90% said they trusted products with higher ratings and good feedback affirming social proof's effect on building consumer trust.
- A Chi-square test identified a statistically significant correlation ($p < 0.001$) between consumers' perceived importance of reviews and how much trust they have in them, showing that greater importance is linked to more trust.
- When it comes to the aspects that lead to credibility in reviews, the respondents valued informative review content (32.4%), star ratings (25%), and verified buyer badges (22.9%) most as trust drivers. Interestingly, 52.6% of respondents found both positive and negative reviews to be equally influential, indicating a preference for balanced information.
- The One-Way ANOVA test ($p > 0.8$), however, revealed no significant difference in purchase likelihood depending on the type of review (positive, negative, or both), indicating that consumers are not necessarily influenced by the tone of the review, but by its overall credibility and content.
- Demographically, 56.1% of the respondents were in the 18–34 age range, making young adults the key audience affected by online comments. Education levels were also significant, with 47.4% having undergraduate degrees and 26.8% having postgraduate qualifications, reflecting a well-educated sample.
- Gender split was even, with 53% male and 47% female respondents. A second Chi-square test ($p < 0.001$) also supported a strong association between trustable review-making factors (e.g., content quality, recency, verification) and most impactful things that consumers consider (e.g., quantity of reviews, reviewer profile), reinforcing transparency and review genuineness.
- Correlation analysis revealed a significant relationship ($r = 0.226$, $p < 0.001$) between reading reviews' frequency and sensitivity to negative feedback, suggesting that customers who read more reviews are more sensitive and affected by negative reviews. Lastly, a multiple linear regression model accounted for 19.3% of the variance in consumer trust with three predictors: review importance, influencing factors, and review reading frequency.
- It found that high-frequency review readers are more likely to believe reviews ($p = 0.008$), whereas high-review-valuing individuals may read reviews more skeptically ($p < 0.001$). Together, these results indicate that although online reviews and ratings strongly influence

consumers, their effectiveness is moderated by review sincerity, review quality, and consumer usage patterns.

8 Conclusions

The study determines that online product reviews and ratings are a significant determinant of consumers' purchase choices, mainly due to the generation of trust and perceived credibility. Consumers are likely to trust reviews that are long form, composed by authenticated consumers, and with high star ratings backing them. Even though sentiment of reviews (negative or positive) does influence the decision-making process, according to the research, review authenticity and quantity trump tone alone.

The conclusions highlight the increasingly critical role online reviews play in the digital age marketplace. Both businesses and review platforms need to focus on authentic reviews and transparent review processes as a way of establishing long-term consumer trust. Stopping review manipulation and fake reviews is needed to preserve e-commerce platforms' integrity and ensure an overall higher quality consumer experience.

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