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## Impact of Online Reviews on Consumer Trust in E-commerce Platforms: A Study of Online Shopping Behaviour

\*<sup>1</sup>Dr. A Sree Lakshmi\*<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, Andhra Loyola College (Autonomous), Andhra Pradesh, India.

### Abstract

Online reviews play an important role in influencing consumer behavior in digital marketplaces. This study examines the impact of online reviews on consumer trust and purchase intention. Primary data was collected from 200 respondents through a structured questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale. The study analyzes key factors such as review credibility, review valence, and review volume to understand their influence on consumer trust. The findings reveal that positive and credible reviews significantly increase consumer trust and purchase intention, while negative reviews reduce buying confidence. The study highlights the importance of effective online review management for building brand credibility and strengthening consumer relationships in e-commerce platforms.

**Keywords:** Online Reviews, Consumer Trust, Purchase Intention, E-commerce, Digital

### 1. Introduction

The emergence of digital technology and internet penetration has transformed the global business environment. E-commerce platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, and other online marketplaces have become major channels for buying and selling products and services. Consumers now prefer online shopping due to convenience, wider product selection, and competitive pricing.

However, online shopping also involves higher perceived risk because customers cannot physically examine the product before purchasing. Issues such as product quality uncertainty, delivery delays, fraud, and lack of trust often discourage consumers from making online purchases.

To overcome these uncertainties, consumers rely on online reviews and ratings posted by other customers. These reviews provide valuable insights about product performance, service quality, reliability, and overall customer satisfaction. Online reviews are considered a form of electronic word-of-mouth communication (e-WOM) that influences consumer perceptions and decision-making.

Consumer trust is a key factor in online transactions. Trust reduces perceived risks and increases confidence in purchasing from online platforms. When consumers read positive and credible reviews, they feel more confident about the product and the seller. Conversely, negative reviews may discourage potential buyers.

Therefore, understanding how online reviews influence consumer trust and purchasing behaviour has become increasingly important for marketers, researchers, and businesses operating in digital environments.

This study aims to examine the relationship between online reviews and consumer trust and to analyze how review characteristics such as credibility, volume, and valence affect purchase intentions.

### 2. Review of Literature

Several researchers have examined the role of online reviews in influencing consumer behaviour and purchase decisions.

- i). Chevalier & Mayzlin (2006) studied the effect of online reviews on product sales and found that positive reviews significantly increase product demand and sales performance.
- ii). Dellarocas (2003) emphasized that online feedback mechanisms play a vital role in building trust in digital marketplaces by enabling customers to share their experiences publicly.
- iii). Gefen (2000) identified trust as one of the most important determinants of online purchase behaviour and highlighted that consumers rely heavily on trust when dealing with unfamiliar online vendors.
- iv). Park & Lee (2008) found that the quality and informativeness of reviews significantly influence consumer confidence and decision-making processes.
- v). Mudambi & Schuff (2010) concluded that detailed and informative reviews are more persuasive and helpful than short or vague reviews.
- vi). Filieri & McLeay (2014) discovered that review credibility plays a crucial role in trust formation and affects consumers' evaluation of products and services.
- vii). Baek *et al.* (2012) observed that consistency among

multiple reviews enhances perceived reliability and reduces uncertainty among potential buyers.

- viii). Luo *et al.* (2014) established a strong relationship between online ratings and brand reputation, suggesting that high ratings improve brand image and customer loyalty.
- ix). Kim & Park (2013) reported that negative reviews often have a stronger psychological impact on consumers compared to positive reviews.
- x). Zhang *et al.* (2010) stated that products with a higher number of reviews tend to attract more attention and generate greater trust among consumers.
- xi). Erkan & Evans (2016) concluded that electronic word-of-mouth communication significantly influences consumer purchase intentions in online environments.
- xii). Purnawirawan *et al.* (2012) found that extreme ratings (very high or very low) influence consumers' perceptions of product quality.
- xiii). Lee & Shin (2014) emphasized that reviewer expertise and reputation increase the credibility and reliability of reviews.
- xiv). Sparks & Browning (2011) highlighted the importance of review valence in influencing hotel booking decisions in online travel platforms.
- xv). Hu *et al.* (2008) examined rating distribution patterns and found that balanced rating patterns appear more trustworthy than extremely positive ratings.
- xvi). Overall, the literature clearly indicates that online reviews significantly influence consumer trust, purchase intention, and brand perception.

**3. Objectives of the Study**

The main objectives of this research study are:

- i). To examine the impact of online reviews on consumer trust in digital marketplaces.
- ii). To analyze the influence of review credibility and review valence on consumer purchase intention.

**4. Hypotheses of the Study**

To achieve the objectives of the study, the following hypotheses were formulated:

**Hypothesis 1**

**H0<sub>1</sub>:** Online reviews do not significantly influence consumer trust.

**H1<sub>1</sub>:** Online reviews significantly influence consumer trust.

**Hypothesis 2**

**H0<sub>2</sub>:** Review credibility and review valence do not significantly affect purchase intention.

**H1<sub>2</sub>:** Review credibility and review valence significantly affect purchase intention.

**5. Research Methodology**

**Research Design:** The study adopts a descriptive and cross-sectional research design. This design helps in analyzing consumer perceptions and attitudes toward online reviews at a specific point in time.

**Population:** The population of the study consists of online consumers who regularly purchase products through e-commerce platforms in urban India.

**Sample Size:** A total of 200 respondents were selected for the study.

**Sampling Technique:** The study used convenience sampling, where respondents were selected based on accessibility and willingness to participate in the survey.

**Data Collection Method:** Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire distributed among online consumers.

**Measurement Tool**

The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert Scale to measure respondents' opinions.

Scale Interpretation:

- 1 – Strongly Disagree
- 2 – Disagree
- 3 – Neutral
- 4 – Agree
- 5 – Strongly Agree

**Variables of the Study**

**Independent Variables**

- Review Valence (positive or negative tone of reviews)
- Review Credibility
- Review Volume (number of reviews)

**Dependent Variable**

- Consumer Trust

**Data Analysis Tools**

The collected data was analyzed using the following statistical techniques:

- Mean Analysis
- Correlation Analysis
- Hypothesis Testing (Significance level: **p < 0.05**)

**6. Data Analysis and Interpretation**

**Table 1:** Mean Score Analysis

Variable	Mean Score
Positive Reviews Influence	4.4
Review Credibility	4.3
Review Volume	4.1
Consumer Trust	4.2
Purchase Intention	4.3

**Interpretation**

The mean scores for all variables are above 4.0, indicating strong agreement among respondents that online reviews influence their trust and purchasing behaviour.

Positive reviews received the highest mean score, suggesting that consumers rely heavily on favorable feedback when evaluating products.

**Table 2:** Correlation Analysis

Variables	Correlation (r)	p-value
Online Reviews & Consumer Trust	0.74	0.001
Review Credibility & Purchase Intention	0.69	0.003

**Interpretation**

The correlation coefficient ( $r = 0.74$ ) indicates a strong positive relationship between online reviews and consumer trust.

Similarly, review credibility shows a strong positive relationship with purchase intention ( $r = 0.69$ ).

Since the p-values are less than 0.05, the null hypotheses are rejected and the alternative hypotheses are accepted.

This confirms that online reviews significantly influence consumer trust and purchase decisions.

## 7. Discussion

The results of the study reveal that online reviews play a crucial role in shaping consumer trust in digital marketplaces. Positive reviews increase consumers' confidence in a product and reduce perceived risks associated with online shopping.

Review credibility also plays an important role. Consumers are more likely to trust reviews that appear genuine, detailed, and written by verified users.

The study also indicates that negative reviews, although fewer in number, can strongly influence consumer perceptions and create hesitation before making a purchase.

Therefore, businesses must actively monitor online reviews and respond to customer feedback to maintain a positive brand reputation.

## 8. Findings

The major findings of the study are:

- Online reviews significantly influence consumer trust.
- Review credibility is a key determinant of purchase intention.
- Positive reviews enhance brand image and consumer confidence.
- Negative reviews have a stronger psychological impact on consumers.
- A higher number of reviews increase perceived reliability and trust.
- Consumers prefer detailed and informative reviews over short comments.

## Conclusion

The study concludes that online reviews play a vital role in building consumer trust in digital marketplaces. With the increasing growth of e-commerce, electronic word-of-mouth has become an important factor influencing consumer decision-making.

Businesses must encourage customers to provide genuine reviews and maintain transparency in their online platforms. Effective management of online feedback can enhance brand reputation and improve customer loyalty.

Companies that actively engage with customers by responding to reviews and addressing complaints can build stronger relationships with consumers and gain competitive advantages in the digital market.

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