

Is the Reality of Modern Online Marketing Reflected in Online Consumer Reviews?

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Abstract

Online shopping is a growing trend across the globe, particularly among the younger generation who can escape the crowds in stores and the time-consuming wandering to choose and purchase their preferred goods and brands by simply pressing a button on their laptop, smartphone, or computer screens thanks to technological advancement and new marketing techniques, anything we might need—food, clothing, toiletries, electronics, home furnishings, or anything else—is now only a click away. Online customer reviews are important in this context because many consumers find it useful to select a product or brand based on these reviews. Many consumers utilize these internet reviews to determine whether products are appropriate for use or to buy based on their needs. Therefore, research is done to determine whether or not online reviews are important for online buying and how much they impact consumers' perceptions of a given brand or product. Through the non-probability sampling method, 155 individuals between the ages of 18 and 50 are selected as a sample. A self-administered Google quiz gathers their opinions and preferences on web reviews. After evaluating the data, it was shown that customers primarily rely on online customer reviews to make purchases, influencing their perception of and preference for products. They discovered that unfavourable evaluations had an adverse effect on their decision to buy.

Keywords:-online marketing, online reviews, word of mouth, customer loyalty, increase sales

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Introduction

The new craze in marketing is online or digital shopping, especially among young people. With a computer browser or a mobile app, shoppers can make direct purchases from online vendors

through the practice of "online shopping," a form of automated business. Customers use a variety of shopping search engines and websites to locate a wide range of different products of their choice on the internet by simply clicking on the website of the specific retailer or marketer. Consumers can usually make use of "search" options in virtual retail outlets to trace certain types of items, brands, or commodities. A legitimate means of payment modes and Internet access help online shoppers make a transaction easily. Online transaction processing (OLTP) by IBM, which permits the handling of monetary dealings in actual time, is responsible for the initial examples of online trading. The advent of e-commerce errands as we know them today was facilitated by the growth of cyberspace. Initially, this display place was just a means for companies to promote and spread data about their materials. It rapidly advanced from this fundamental capability to genuine internet purchasing transactions thanks to the growth of vibrant Web pages and safe and sound transfers. The brand and company might not be able to sway or exert control over the behaviour of a customer when they make a buy decision that may be influenced by their interactions with search engines, endorsements, virtual appraisals, and additional materials. People are increasingly inclined to utilize their cell phones, processors, PCs, and more modern gadgets to get facts due to the rapidly segregating digital device settings. To put it another way, consumers' thoughts and purchasing habits are becoming more and more influenced by the digital environment. Interactive decision-making may impact and support customer decision-making in an online shopping environment. Customers are becoming more interactive, and through online evaluations, they can affect the actions of other prospective consumers. In addition, they rely more on other people's social media posts about products than just those reviews. The majority of shoppers say that internet shopping makes it simple for them to buy products from the comfort of their homes and offers a wide selection of goods from across the globe. In this context, risk and trust are subsequently two crucial aspects influencing people's behavior in digital marketing as people cannot assess whether a thing meets their requirements and wants before purchasing it, which is the first of three factors that may impact their choice. Second, the after-sale services may worry the buyer. The final concern for customers is that they may not fully comprehend the language used in online transactions. Based on such variables, how customers perceive risk may have a big impact on their online shopping habits and in these circumstances, internet reviews marketing, often known as word-of-mouth marketing, is common now and has become a crucial component of online enterprises that can influence customers' purchasing decisions. Perceived value, buying preferences, and brand trust are the key determinants of online shoppers' choices in numerous research. Online retailers draw customers not only for the high levels of convenience they offer, but also for the wider options, aggressive pricing, and easier access to information. Online marketplaces for marketers include Amazon, Flipkart, AJIO Mart, Blinkit, Meesho, and countless others which offer a huge selection of goods across all categories and brands, allowing customers to access them by simply browsing on their mobile devices and clicking a button to buy. Concerns about the consequences of information load are shared by designers of online stores. The information background of digital shopping is improved in comparison to traditional retail purchasing by offering extra artifact figures such as comparable goods and services, as well as countless substitutes and the assistance of each replacement through online reviews.

Thus, online reviews give shoppers the confidence to purchase a particular product digitally. Online reviews help businesses build brand reliance with the audience. When some consumers had good or positive experiences with a particular product or brand, it might Online product reviews give customers the assurance they need to make an online purchase while on this digital journey. While

physical retail stores allow customers to directly view the actual goods and the manufacturer's packaging, online stores are required to describe their offerings with text, images, and multimedia materials. Some internet retailers offer additional merchandise information, such as directions, welfare precautions, displays, or manufacturer disclaimers, or they link to it. Some offer background details, suggestions, or how-to manuals to aid consumers in making purchasing decisions. Customers have the choice of purchasing less expensive goods from around the globe without having to rely on regional stores thanks to online publications and even assured onlinediarists. Reading product reviews posted by industry professionals or other online buyers is one of the many advantages of internet purchasing. Peer references on online shopping pages or public media internet sites and online posts are important factors for digital shoppers when considering forthcoming purchases. Social media influences 90% of all purchases. Also, Online reviews are beneficial for companies in increasing consumer reliance on their brands by assisting them with the same. When some customers have pleasant or favorable experiences with a specific product or brand, it's possible that other customers may buy or acquire the same product or brand online. Reviews are therefore seen as trustworthy for both the customers and businesses. **Mayzlin & Chevalier (2006)** conducted an investigation into the impact of online book reviews on Amazon.com and Barnes and Noble.com and discovered a positive impact of word of mouth on deals. Since most internet posts come from people the recipients have never met, they differ significantly from traditional or interpersonal word of mouth in many respects. The provided information is therefore reliable and trustworthy. Additionally, there are no restrictions on time or space when creating word-of-mouth content. Users on the internet can take part in activities by publishing or reading reviews. When compared to spoken information, these can last a lot longer. Simply by pulling or dragging down the pages on the internet, online shoppers or customers can quickly and easily track the history of reviews. In a study by **Lee, S.H. (2009)** using the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) to inspect the effects of online comments, it was shown that the volume of reviews had a greater influence on consumers' decisions to purchase a certain product or brand online. Online reviews are valuable for businesses because even one good review can help a company expand and market itself. When a business has received evaluations, it motivates other customers to give you, your brand, and your business feedback. Reviews on gadgets (57%) like DVD players, smartphones, or PlayStations, etc., evaluations on vehicles (45%), and analysis on software (37%) all have a substantial influence on consumers who tend to make purchases online, according to the research. Additionally, 40% of internet customers said they would never even consider purchasing electronics without first reading online reviews.

Product recommendations have a big impact on a firm's sales. A product is more likely to be purchased if it has at least five reviews than if it doesn't. According to the **Speigel Research survey**, 95% of purchasers examine online comments beforehand to make a purchase. Reviews not only motivate but also involve consumers, assisting them in information gathering, determining the worth of a product, and validating crucial information for consumers. According to a study, the opinions of customers are the most reliable because they are more likely to be trusted than online marketing and the use of virtual comments has raised in popularity over time. In a 2019 poll, 61% of American internet consumers indicated the number of reviews was essential to them.

87% of customers will read internet reviews of nearby companies in 2020, according to BrightLocal research. In 2021, 94% of all consumptions are made for products with a mediocre rating of four stars or beyond, and 93% of consumers check online product evaluations before making a purchase.

Online evaluations are increasingly important to the general public's perception of every business. Online reviews have the most obvious advantage of making you more visible to potential customers. Reviews have both positive and negative effects on consumers as well as on businesses. And therefore, research is done to determine the future potential of reviews as well as the qualities that consumers want to consider while reading online reviews that are supplied by various market players and the effect on their buying behavior.

Aims of the Research

The reason for the study is to learn:

- Which age group favours online purchasing the most?
- How many people heavily rely on online reviews for a particular product while shopping online?
- What qualities do consumers look for while reading online reviews before making a purchase?
- If a product has bad ratings, will people still buy it?

Limitations of the study

This study's weakness is that it was conducted on a sample of 155 people, which may not yield precise results because each person's perspective is unique. Additionally, it is limited to New Delhi residents alone. People may also have different perspectives in other areas.

Review of related literature

Kawaf, F., & Istanbuloglu, D. (2019) used twenty-five repository grids to examine the importance of social media marketing, notably Facebook pages and customer reviews, in online fashion buying. Interviews that provide new information that challenges conventional wisdom about the function and importance of customer reviews in online fashion purchasing. Through it, it made a significant contribution to understanding the evolving individual desire and development of social risk on social media. According to **yinglu, wu, & j. wu**, the effect of review size on a consumer's inclination to spend may fluctuate according to the sort of uncertainty preferences the person has in addition to varying across individuals. In their 2011 paper, **Lee, T.Y. and Bradlow, E.T.** present a method to spontaneously extract commodities features and brand comparative positions from virtual shoppers' recommendations of proprietary marketplace search reports from the same period. This method supports the inquiry and visualization of market arrangement.

According to **Chen, Y., and Xie, J. (2008)** providing virtual buyer comments can help or upset an e-commerce seller subject to the articles' qualities, the usefulness of the review, the vendor's product range policy, the seller's commodity value for somewhat matched customers, and user discrepancy in the product utilization involvement. Additionally, it demonstrates how the vendor's decision to include customer references will improve its inducement to supply customers with further thorough product knowledge through conventional marketing and communication channels. Additionally, too-early consumer review availability reduces earnings. To examine the effects of digital comments on students who voiced their opinions about a product, **Lee, S. H. (2009)** used the ELM (elaboration likelihood model) to address four issues, including the amount and quality of online reviews. When attitudes are changing under high participation situations, people pursue the center route. Customers frequently take four attitudes that are on the periphery. **Pelsmacker, P.D. et**

al.(2018). In their study, virtual selling plans: online reviews and hotel management examined the relationship between review volume and room occupancy as well as the impact of review quality on revenue per available room (RevPar). the quantity & quality of virtual comments, as well as indirectly, hotel performance. In their study, "The Influence of User-Generated Content on the Traveler Behavior: An Empirical Investigation on the E-Word of Mouth to Hotel Online Bookings," **Ye, Q. et al. (2011)** researched the effect of user-created references in the tourism industry. They found that internet trades are considerably impacted by electronic posts, with a 10% increase in tourist reference scores increasing real-time reservations greater than 5%. **Ye, Q. et al. (2009)** investigated how virtual customer posts affected guesthouse room deals using information gathered from the biggest internet site in China. The results demonstrated a significant relationship between hotel company performance and digital customer reviews. **Karen, L. X. et al. (2017)**. In a study on how online reviews are changing in the hotel industry from passive listening to proactive involvement, it was discovered that reviews' ratings and volume limit the impact of management responses. More lengthy management comments must be given when the average review rating rises. The advantages of giving thorough, timely comments diminish as the volume of reviews increases. By assembling a model of one hundred seventy-eight hotels that represent different organizations and labels in the United States, **Torres, E.N. et al. (2015)** show in their study that the standard amount of each virtual hotel reservation transaction was positively correlated with trip advisor rating & the number of reviews. In their empirical study on the subject of whether and how traditional reviews and new forms of reviews affect consumers' buying decisions, **Wang, M. et al. (2016)** found that, despite information overload and review manipulation, traditional reviews are still more effective than new types of reviews. Even though reviews with images and additional reviews don't express value directly, they provide more trustworthy references to the product's quality and effectively draw customers' attention. And what's even more intriguing is that modern internet review formats offer a powerful avenue for customers to voice their unhappiness and influence future purchases. The results of **Anderson, E.W. (1998)** study on the valued-based model of the liaison connecting consumer contentment and word-of-mouth suggest that while dissatisfied customers do spread their displeasure more than satisfied ones, the magnitude of this difference might be exaggerated.

By using a movie industry approach, **Duan, W. et al. (2008)** studied the effects of onscreen comments and posts as a pioneer and a result of merchandising trade, indicating that stronger box office performances are the result of increased word-of-mouth volume, which is substantially influenced by both a film's box office returns and word-of-mouth valence. **Godes, D & Mayzlin, D. (2004)** show that word-of-mouth measurement through online interaction may be simple and affordable. Using structural equation modeling and 280 questionnaires from Taiwanese World of Warcraft players, **Liao, S. et al. (2012)** investigated the connection between brand knowledge, consumer worth, buyback purpose, and electronic word-of-mouth and came to the conclusion that brand knowledge influences buyback intention and on-screen reviews through user value. Consumer's worth is also an entirely intermediated variable in our approach. By finding a balance where internet word-of-mouth persists despite the promotional chat activities of rival businesses **Mayzlin, D. (2006)** studied whether word-of-mouth stays believable and whether organizations chose to compel more reserves to promote their substandard or top-quality items. By analyzing the social media and internet comments, **Katsoni, V., and Laloumis, D. (2013)** evaluated the effect of online statements on customers in tourism and lodging organizations that are changing in the current context.

Vermeulen, I.E. & Seegers, D. (2009) demonstrate the effect of on-screen hotel reviews on user choice using a sample size of 168 consumers and review valence, hotel know-how, and critic expertise as autonomous factors. They find that, on average, disclosure of online reviews increases consumers' concern about hotels because together affirmative & disapproving references raise user's knowledge

of hotels, although encouraging reviews also influence their decisions. **Sparks, B.A. et al. (2016)** examined the effects of four variables linked with a reply: the basis of reply, respondent speech, quickness of reply, and combat framework on 2 consequence variables i.e., consumer apprehension & faith infer to determine whether the occurrence of organizational reply to adverse consumer comments affects the implications of prospective customers' appeal about the target corporate and which attributes of replies disturb their reaction. Prompt response and the use of a human voice produced positive consumer inferences. By using an experimental design with four self-regulating variables—the goal of the comments (basic or otherwise social); the complete valence of a set of posts (affirmative or else deleterious); the inclosing of reviews (what arises foremost: adverse or helpful data); & whether or not a user-created mathematical ranking is delivered along with the printed text. **Sparks, B.A. & Browning (2011)** explored the function of 4 vital issues that control insights of belief & shoppers' selection choices. Advanced levels of faith are also noticeable when a series of recommendations are framed favorably and emphasize interpersonal service. According to research by **Smith, D. et al. (2005)** on virtual partners and journalistic suggestions, beliefs, and selection in digital markets, consumers may utilize the mere availability of a partner's suggestions as a judgment empirical, regardless of the partner recommender's qualities. Additionally, a consumer's preference for editorial vs peer recommendations depends on whether they are shopping for utilitarian or hedonistic reasons. Furthermore, customers choose editorial and peer recommendations above other forms of effort-saving indicators that could be present during an internet search. **Zheng, L. (2021)** conducted an organized evaluation of the literature on electronic user comments (OCRs) in order to know the maximum frequently cast-off characteristics, most repeatedly studied reaction-based descriptions, and succinct summaries that were provided in a total of two hundred thirty-four papers covering a publication that offered visions into OCRs in terms of publication channels, methods, and information bases. This was done to aid researchers and practitioners in understanding the multi-presented quality and difficulty of such comments.

Research Methodology

The convenience sampling method of non-probability sampling is the methodology employed for the investigation. A sample of 155 persons was chosen at random from different areas in New Delhi, and they were asked to complete a questionnaire with some questions about their preferences and options for online shopping, and the extent to which customer reviews influenced their choice to make a purchase.

A sample of the questions put out is shown below.

What is your gender?

- male
- female
- transgender

☰ other

What is your age?

- 18-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- above 50

Do you shop or purchase things online? *

- yes
- No

While doing online shopping do you see the online reviews for that particular product? *

- Yes
- No

How much do online reviews help in purchasing a particular product? *

0 1 2 3 4 5

least helpful ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ most helpful

What attributes do you consider in purchasing a product through online reviews? *

- quality of the product
- usefulness of the product
- brand popularity
- negative points of the product
- how much it liked by the consumers
- Other...

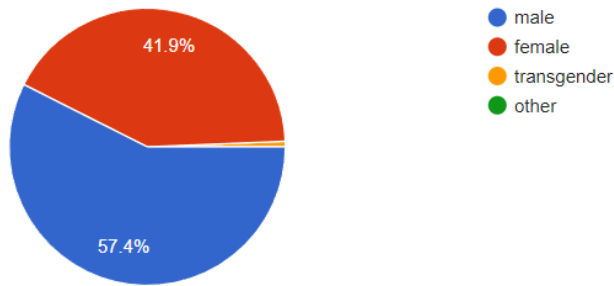
Do you purchase a product if it has negative reviews? *

- No
- Yes

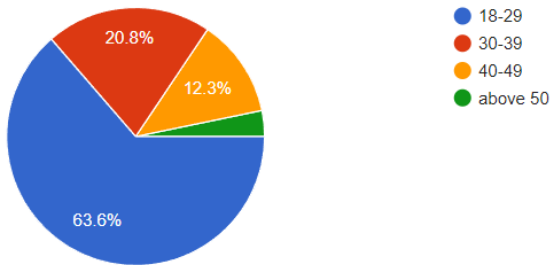
Data Collection And Analysis

Data collected and analyzed is shown underneath and after that, the conclusion is framed accordingly.

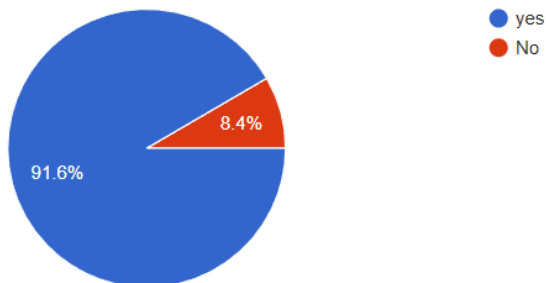
What is your gender?



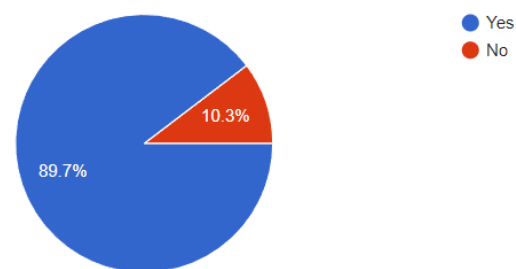
What is your age?



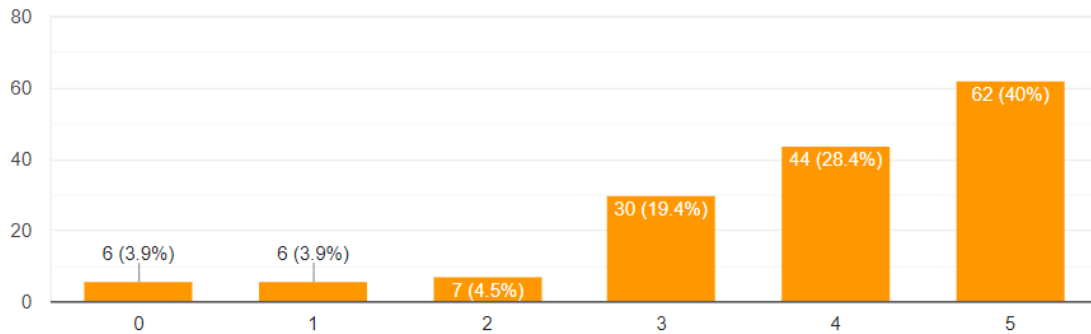
Do you shop or purchase things online?



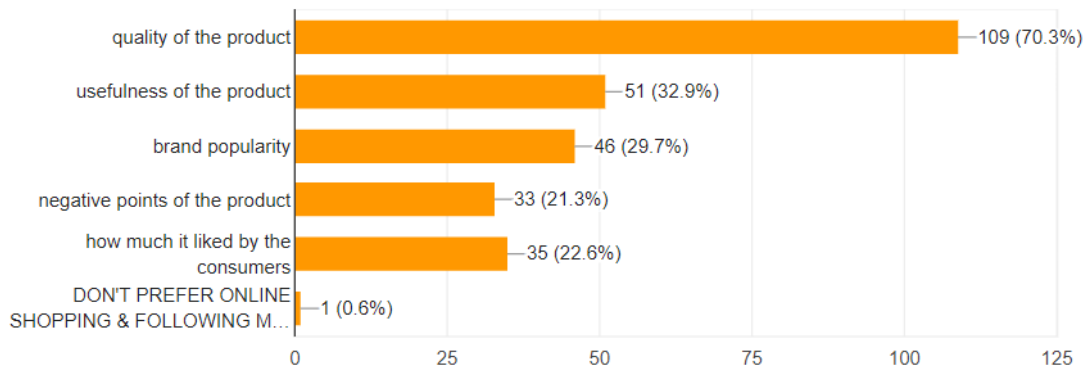
While doing online shopping do you see the online reviews for that particular product?



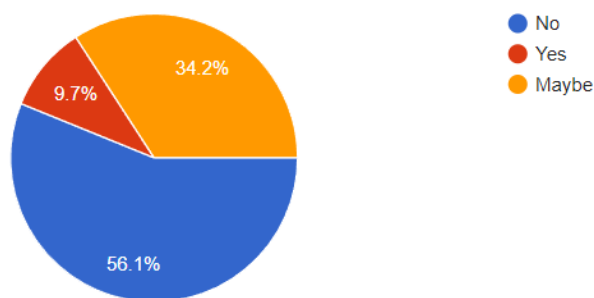
How much do online reviews help in purchasing a particular product ?



What attributes do you consider in purchasing a product through online reviews?



Do you purchase a product if it has negative reviews?



Discussion and conclusion

Today, internet shopping has become an essential aspect of life. Everyone prefers to buy products online because it eliminates the problem of crowded marketplaces and hours spent looking for your favourite brand and product. Additionally, the ease of payment alternatives which is a result of the development of various online payment programs enhances the adaptability of online marketing or shopping. Online reviews and comments made by users assist customers in making informed

purchases while buying online. Reviews not only inform consumers about the product and brand but also assist them in deciding whether or not to buy a product given that it may or may not suit their needs and preferences. By consistently providing favorable feedback for any company or marketer, reviews help to foster client loyalty and trust in your brand and product. If customers enjoy a business, they can give it a review, which is a free form of advertising. Additionally, a single bad review might influence a customer's opinion of a company and their choice to buy something.

The study's findings lead to the conclusion that consumers prefer to purchase online, with young adults (18–29 years old) showing the greatest preference. In order to make decisions about their purchasing behaviour and choose a certain brand or product in accordance, 89.7% of customers reported that they read internet reviews before making purchases while shopping online. 40% of consumers claimed that reading internet reviews influences their decision to make an online purchase. People acknowledged that the most useful information they rely on when picking a brand is found in online reviews.

The qualities of the specific brand or product are what most customers are likely to notice in online evaluations because they are the most crucial aspect of any purchase, whether it be made online or offline. Second, buyers consider a product's utility because it is crucial for a product to be useful in terms of its suitability. There is a tonne of things on the market right now whose creators claim they're valuable, but they're really nothing. Customers, therefore, seek out products that are both practical and appropriate for their requirements and interests. The third feature that most customers consider through internet reviews, after product quality and utility, is brand popularity. Even if a product is not well-liked by consumers but is of great quality, it is still preferred because it satisfies the need to purchase a quality item. The majority of consumers (56.1%) say they won't buy a product or a particular brand if other customers who have used or purchased it have complained about it. According to some, they might or might not buy it. Negative reviews don't stop people from buying a thing if they absolutely need to because they damage the brand's reputation and make people think the product or brand isn't worth it.

There is no denying that customer evaluations and comments made online about a product or brand influence consumers' buying decisions and behaviours, yet some people still choose not to shop online because they believe it is unreliable despite the many assurances and positive ratings. As there are many varying viewpoints on the same product, it is impossible to define what is good or bad, but it is undeniably true that evaluations are an essential part of modern marketing because they not only assist consumers in making purchasing decisions but also aid businesses in expanding. Since they do not need to promote themselves, one favourable post and rating help them do more.

Online commerce will undoubtedly continue to expand in the future, and so will the popularity of online reviews. Therefore, it is more possible that consumers would in the future search for additional attributes through online reviews. This study came to the conclusion that internet reviews are a crucial component of modern marketing and will continue to grow in the future to assist even more. One might conduct research on other characteristics of reading online consumer reviews. Future research will look into additional aspects and difficulties of internet marketing through online reviews.

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