A Study on Influence of Reviews and Ratings on Purchase Decisions

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Abstract:

The rapid development of online shopping has meant that this issue is becoming a decisive aspect of persuading buyers. This paper will look at the degree to which online reviews and ratings affect consumer buying behaviour and discuss some of the psychological mechanisms that are driving their effects. Previous studies show that online reviews and ratings influence the consumer's level of trust in the product, perceived quality of the product, and, finally, the purchase intention. Overall, positive reviews and high ratings enhance consumer confidence, while negative reviews and low ratings reduce buying intentions. In addition, understanding consumer behaviours working in conjunction with reviews provides further insight into decision-making processes in digital marketplaces. The research aims to add knowledge by conducting a more in-depth analysis of the impact of reviews and ratings on consumers' choices. It is also expected that the results will assist companies and e-commerce platforms in managing online reviews and ratings effectively to improve customer engagement, build perceived credibility, and, ultimately, increase sales growth

INTRODUCTION

The exponential growth of e-commerce platforms worldwide has resulted in an increase in the use of online review/rating systems to influence consumer buying behavior. With the growing trend toward consumers depending on the reviews and experiences of others when evaluating product quality and minimizing risk, review systems will continue to grow in importance. Online reviews provide consumers with easy access to a variety of reviews and many other individuals' opinions about the same product giving rise to non-biased reviews for consumers to review throughout their shopping journey. Star ratings and customer reviews give businesses a clear idea of what customers think, helping them build trust and shape how people see their products. These also reveals the level of customer's satisfaction and guide companies in improving their products and services. That's why it's important for marketers, platform designers, and researchers to understand how reviews and ratings affect customer's purchasing decisions.

Yet another critical role that reviews play relates to their impact on online shopping, attempting to reduce uncertainty and perceived risk. Consumers cannot inspect the products personally, so online reviews replace direct experience with consumer opinions and experiences. Comprehensive reviews with explanations, ratings, images, or videos will increase understanding of product features, functionality, performance, value for money, and appropriate use. Reduced hesitation and increased confidence in purchase decisions are thus fostered. Consistent patterns found in repeated positive feedback or complaints also greatly influence customers' decisions. Online reviews thus support customers in selecting the best products and emotionally making them feel more secure and satisfied with the purchase decision.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The impact of online reviews and ratings in digital marketplaces was examined by **Vijayashree Machindra Gurme (2025)[1].** It was found that greater attention and trust are received by products with a

higher number of reviews and better ratings. Such products are often viewed as popular and reliable. It was also pointed out that product quality, performance, and durability are understood more clearly through honest and detailed reviews. Better purchasing decisions are supported by this information. The study further explained that uncertainty is reduced and confidence in online shopping platforms is increased through reliable reviews. Overall, it was confirmed that customer trust, satisfaction, and purchase intention in digital marketplaces are greatly influenced by online reviews and ratings.

The effect of online reviews on consumer buying decisions was explored by **Lee (2024)**[2] with special attention given to the similarity between reviewers and buyers. It was found that reviews are trusted more when similarity in needs, preferences, or usage patterns is perceived. Trust is built and a stronger connection is created through this similarity. When the reviewer's experience is related to by buyers, greater confidence in the product is felt. It was also shown that the perceived reliability of a product is increased by relatable reviews. As trust increases, hesitation is reduced and the likelihood of purchase is raised. The research emphasized that online consumer decisions are strongly influenced by reviews that are relatable and trustworthy.

The effect of online reviews and ratings on the purchase decisions of TikTok Shop users was examined by **Devi Puspita Sari and Agustina Yamini Era (2023)**[3]. The importance of customer feedback in shaping buying behavior on social commerce platforms was highlighted. A strong influence of reviews and ratings on customer choices was revealed, especially among users who shop regularly through social media. Opinions shared by users who have already used the product are generally trusted. These reviews are used to compare products, sellers, and prices before a final decision is made. It was also noted that interactive content such as comments and user reviews makes products appear more trustworthy. As a result, customers are made to feel more informed and confident while shopping. The study concluded that online reviews are used as a valuable source of information and play a major role in influencing purchase decisions on TikTok Shop.

The influence of online reviews and ratings on the buying choices of Shopee users was examined by **Agustina and Transistari (2022)**[4] It was found that reviews and ratings form an important part of the decision-making process. Customer reviews and star ratings are read by most shoppers before a product is purchased. Since products cannot be seen or tried in person during online shopping, the experiences shared by other buyers are depended upon. Confidence in product quality is increased by positive reviews, while doubt is created by negative reviews and the interest in buying is reduced. It was also explained that confusion is avoided and risk is lowered through the use of reviews while shopping online. By reading feedback from other users, customers are able to understand the product's features, details how it works, and if it is worth the price. Overall, it was shown that online reviews and ratings strongly affect customer trust and buying decisions on Shopee.

Statement of the Problem

Nowadays, many people check online reviews or ratings before buying a product because reviews help them understand the quality of the product. However, many online reviews are too simple, misleading, or even fake, which can confuse customers and affect their buying decisions. Online product reviews are an important source of information that helps consumers compare products and choose what suits them best, and websites that display customer reviews usually gain more trust and confidence from buyers. At the same time, negative reviews can reduce a company's sales, as unhappy customers may avoid repeat purchases and discourage others from buying. Fake or false reviews also create wrong impressions about products, making it difficult for consumers to make accurate and confident purchase decisions.

Objectives of the Study

- To identify the different online platforms consumers use to check reviews before making a purchase.

- To examine the key factors that affect customer purchase decisions based on the influence of online reviews and ratings.
- To explore the impact of companies' responses to customer reviews on consumer perception and buying decisions

Research Methodology

Source of Data
The Data is Based on Primary and Secondary Data.

Data Collection Method
a) Primary Data
Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire consisting of 20 close-ended questions, which was distributed to 100 respondents using Google Forms.
b) Secondary Data
Secondary data were collected from journals, research articles, case studies, and reliable online sources related to online reviews, ratings, and consumer purchase decisions.
Area of the Study
The area of the study covers online shoppers using various e-commerce platforms. It examines how online reviews and ratings affect consumer perceptions, trust, and purchase decisions in the digital marketplace.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size
Sampling Technique- this research, a non-probability sampling method has been employed, which is convenience sampling. This is a suitable sampling approach since it is easy to obtain the data from the participants who are available. This research is primarily concerned with online consumers, which makes convenience sampling a suitable approach in getting participants who might have shopped online frequently and might have been influenced by the ratings prior to making purchases. Both time constraints and accessibility of the participants might have been the factors that led to the choice of convenience sampling.
Sample size-The study was conducted with the sample of 100 respondents.

Period of the study
November 2025 to January 2026

Statistical tools of the study
- Percentage analysis
- Friedman Ranking Analysis
- Average score

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY
❖ The findings of this study are based on a sample of 100 respondents; therefore, it may not be possible to generalize the results of this research to all online consumers.
❖ Data was collected via an online survey using self-report, so there is the potential for personal bias or inaccurate responses to affect the results
❖ The study only looked at online purchasing behaviour so the results cannot be applied to offline purchasing behaviours.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

TABLE NO. 1
Personal Outline of the Respondance

Personal Profile	Particulars	No of Respondance	Percentage%
Gender	Male	32	32.0
	Female	68	68.0
Age	Below 18	15	15.0
	18-25	52	52.0
	26-35	25	25.0
	Above 35	8	8.0
	Undergraduate	40	40.0

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Educational Qualification	Postgraduate	35	35.0
	Professional/Others	25	25.0
Occupation	Student	45	45.0
	Private Employee	30	30.0
	Business/Self Employed	15	15.0
	Others	10	10.0
Online Shopping Frequency	Frequently	48	48.0
	Occasionally	38	38.0
	Rarely	14	14.0

SOURCE: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION:
The table shows that 68% of the respondents are female, while 32% are male, indicating higher participation of female consumers in online shopping activities.With regard to age, the majority of respondents (52%) fall in the 18–25 years category, followed by 25% in the 26–35 years group. This indicates that young adults form the largest segment of online shoppers. Respondents below 18 years account for 15%, while only 8% are above 35 years, showing lower representation of older age groups.In terms of educational qualification, 40% of the respondents are undergraduates, 35% are postgraduates, and 25% belong to professional or other categories, reflecting a well-educated respondent base. Regarding occupation, students constitute the largest group (45%), followed by private employees (30%). Business/self-employed respondents account for 15%, while 10% fall under other occupations. This suggests that students and salaried employees are the primary users of online platforms. Concerning online shopping frequency, 48% of respondents shop frequently, 38% shop occasionally, and only 14% shop rarely, indicating a generally high level of engagement with online shopping among the respondents**.**

TABLE NO.2

Friedman Ranking Analysis
Comparative Ranking of Online Review and Rating Factors

S No.	Factors	Mean	Rank
1	Overall Star Rating	4.72	1
2	Positive Customer Reviews	4.60	2
3	Detailed Written Reviews	4.45	3
4	No. of Reviews	4.30	4
5	Reviewer Creditablity	4.18	5
6	Negative Reviews	4.05	6
7	Recent Reviews	4.02	7

SOURCE: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION
Rank 1 Overall Star Rating has the highest influence with a mean value of 4.72. Rank 2 Positive Customer Reviews are the next most important factor with a mean of 4.60. Rank 3 Detailed Written Reviews rank third with a mean score of 4.45. Rank 4 Number of Reviews holds the fourth position with a mean value of 4.30. Rank 5 Reviewer Credibility ranks fifth with a mean score of 4.18. Rank 6 Negative Reviews occupy the sixth rank with a mean value of 4.05. Rank 7 Recent Reviews rank last with a mean score of 4.02.

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TABLE NO. 3
Impact of Reviwes and Ratings on Purchase Decision

S.no	Factors	No. of Respondance	Percentage
1	Attractive product images	3	2.9
2	Price and Discounts	5	4.8
3	Recommendations form friends/family	8	7.7
4	No. of reviews	10	9.6
5	Detailed Customer Reviews	18	17.3
6	Product quality perception	26	25.0
7	Overall Rating and Trust	30	28.8
	Total	100	100

SOURCE: Primary Data

INTERPRETATION:
The table shows that Overall Rating and Trust is the most influential factor, accounting for 28.8% of the responses. This is followed by Product Quality Perception (25.0%), indicating that trust and perceived quality strongly influence buying decisions. Detailed Customer Reviews contribute 17.3%, highlighting the importance of in-depth information in understanding products. The number of reviews (9.6%) and recommendations from friends and family (7.7%) have a moderate influence on purchase decisions. Price and discounts (4.8%) and attractive product images (2.9%) have comparatively lower influence. Overall, the results indicate that trust-related and information-based factors play a more significant role than visual appeal or price offers in consumer decision-making.
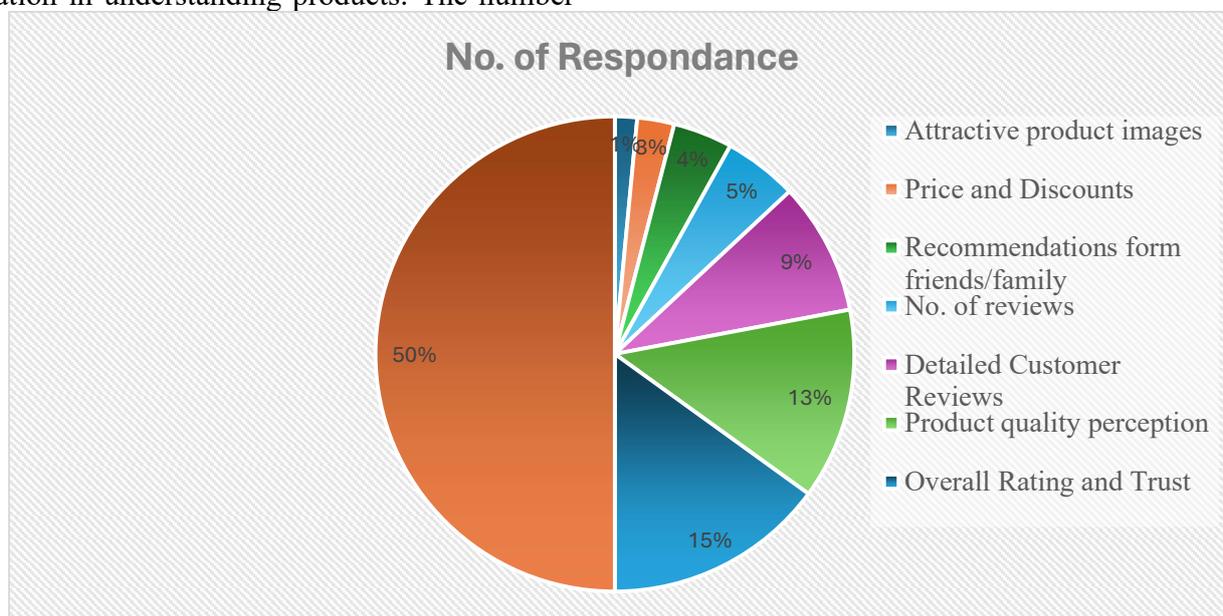
Suggestions
- Online business platforms should allow their customers to easily leave their reviews after making any purchase. Reminding customers through text or emails can help maximize customer reviews.
- Customer reviews can easily be accessed on the product page. Displaying the total number of customer reviews and the average rating of the

product helps a customer quickly determine its popularity.

- The business should also allow consumers to filter reviews, for example, by the newest ones, most helpful reviews, or the highest rated one. It ensures the consumer can access the most helpful reviews promptly.
- The business can award badges, for example, the 'verified buyer' badge, which enhances the reliability of the reviews. The business should monitor the reviews to eliminate the fake ones, ensuring the business model maintains honesty.
- At last, companies can utilize customer feedback to improve their products and services. Reading customer feedback helps a company understand what a customer likes or dislikes in a product or service. Using customer feedback in an appropriate manner can boost customer satisfaction and boost business sales.

Conclusion

According to this research, reviews and ratings are among the most impactful aspects of buying behaviour for consumers. Online reviews and ratings are beneficial for consumers as they allow them to gauge the quality of a product before purchasing it. Online reviews and ratings also act as learning platforms for buyers, as they help them judge a product based on the feedback they have received from various customers. Conversely, if a product has negative reviews, it prompts consumers to reconsider purchasing that product. According to this study, younger internet users are more reliant on reviews and ratings when buying online. As well as providing information about a product, reviews and star ratings increase buyer confidence during the online shopping experience. When other consumers leave feedback about their own experiences with a product, it is easier for potential buyers to feel confident in a purchase and in the seller. Reviews give consumers an idea of whether a product has good or bad reviews and whether a given product is worth purchasing from a financial point of view. The existence of reviews also alleviates some of the fear associated with making a wrong purchase decision because consumers will learn from the experiences of previous buyers. Because of the number of reviews available online, consumers who read reviews during their research phase can eliminate many hours of searching for product information. Younger adult internet users rely heavily on reviews and star ratings, as these individuals tend to shop more frequently online and are accustomed to using the internet as a form of research. Prior to completing a final purchase decision, these consumers frequently look for the star rating assigned to a product, as well as other customers' feedback. Because reviews and star ratings significantly influence purchasing behaviour, they are also very important tools for building consumer trust, reducing perceived purchase risk, and increasing overall customer satisfaction when shopping online.

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