

# ROLE OF REVIEWS AND RATING IN E-COMMERCE PURCHASE DECISIONS

**Sneha Shrivastava<sup>1</sup>**

Student, Vikrant University, Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, India<sup>1</sup>

**Mandvi Bhadoriya<sup>2</sup>**

Student, Vikrant University, Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, India<sup>2</sup>

**Prof. Abhilasha Dubey<sup>3</sup>**

Assistant Professor, Vikrant University, Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, India<sup>3</sup>

**Dr. Abhay Singh Rajput<sup>4</sup>**

Assistant Professor, Vikrant University, Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, India<sup>4</sup>

## ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of e-commerce has significantly transformed consumer buying behavior, making online reviews and ratings a crucial component of the decision-making process. In the absence of physical interaction with products, consumers increasingly rely on feedback provided by other users to evaluate product quality and reliability. This study aims to examine the role of reviews and ratings in influencing e-commerce purchase decisions and their impact on consumer trust and buying intention.

The research adopts a descriptive and analytical approach, using primary data collected through structured questionnaires from online shoppers. Secondary data from journals and online sources were also reviewed to support the analysis. The study evaluates how different aspects of reviews, such as positivity, authenticity, and volume, along with rating scores, affect consumer perception.

The findings reveal that positive reviews and higher ratings significantly enhance purchase intention, while negative reviews tend to discourage buying decisions. Additionally, the credibility and recency of reviews play a vital role in building consumer trust and reducing perceived risk.

The study concludes that reviews and ratings act as a powerful form of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), directly impacting consumer behavior in e-commerce. Businesses must focus on maintaining transparent and reliable review systems to strengthen customer trust and improve overall sales performance.

**Keywords:** E-commerce, Online Reviews, Customer Ratings, Consumer Behavior, Purchase Decision, Trust, Online Shopping, Consumer Perception

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Background of the Study

The emergence of e-commerce has brought a revolutionary shift in the way consumers purchase goods and services. With the rapid advancement of digital technologies, widespread internet accessibility, and increased smartphone usage, online shopping has become a dominant mode of consumption across the globe. Platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, and other online marketplaces offer consumers a wide variety of products, competitive pricing, and convenience. However, unlike traditional retail environments, online shopping does not allow consumers to physically examine products before purchase, which increases uncertainty and perceived risk.

In this context, online reviews and ratings have become essential decision-making tools for consumers. Reviews provide detailed qualitative feedback based on personal experiences, while ratings offer a quick quantitative summary of product performance. These elements collectively function as electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), enabling consumers to evaluate products through the experiences of others. As a result, reviews and ratings significantly influence consumer perception, trust, and purchase intentions in e-commerce environments.

## 2. Problem Statement

Despite the growing importance of reviews and ratings, several challenges persist in their effectiveness and reliability. The presence of fake or manipulated reviews, biased ratings, and excessive information can mislead consumers and create confusion during the decision-making process. Furthermore, consumers often struggle to differentiate between genuine and misleading feedback, which affects their level of trust in online platforms.

Additionally, there is variability in how consumers interpret and respond to reviews and ratings. While some consumers rely heavily on them, others may be skeptical or influenced by different factors such as brand reputation or price. This creates a need to systematically examine how reviews and ratings impact purchase decisions and to what extent they contribute to consumer trust and risk reduction in e-commerce settings.

## 3. Objectives of the Study

The primary objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To examine the role of online reviews in influencing consumer purchase decisions in e-commerce.
2. To analyze the impact of customer ratings on consumer buying behavior.
3. To evaluate the relationship between reviews, ratings, and consumer trust.
4. To assess how reviews and ratings help in reducing perceived risk associated with online purchases.
5. To understand the overall importance of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) in shaping consumer perceptions and decisions.

## 4. Significance of the Study

This study holds considerable significance for various stakeholders in the e-commerce ecosystem. For consumers, it provides valuable insights into how reviews and ratings can be effectively utilized to make informed and confident purchase decisions. By understanding the influence of online feedback, consumers can better navigate through the vast amount of information available on digital platforms.

For e-commerce businesses, the findings of this study highlight the importance of maintaining transparent and credible review systems. Companies can use these insights to improve customer engagement, manage online reputation, and enhance trust among potential buyers. Positive reviews and high ratings can serve as powerful marketing tools, while addressing negative feedback can help in improving product quality and customer satisfaction.

From an academic perspective, this research contributes to the growing body of literature on consumer behavior in digital environments. It provides a structured analysis of the role of reviews and ratings, offering a foundation for future research in this area. Additionally, marketers and policymakers can benefit from the study by developing strategies and guidelines that ensure the authenticity and reliability of online reviews, ultimately fostering a more trustworthy e-commerce environment.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The increasing reliance on e-commerce platforms has led to a growing body of research examining the role of online reviews and ratings in shaping consumer purchase decisions. Over the past decade (2016–2025), scholars have focused on various dimensions such as electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), trust formation, perceived risk, and review credibility.

### 1. Online Reviews as e-WOM Influence

Online reviews are widely recognized as a form of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), which significantly impacts consumer behavior. According to Filieri (2016), online reviews provide informational and social value that influence consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions. Similarly, Erkan and Evans (2016) found that the quality, credibility, and usefulness of online reviews positively affect consumers' trust and intention to purchase.

More recent studies, such as those by Ismagilova et al. (2020), emphasize that e-WOM has become one of the most powerful marketing tools in digital environments, surpassing traditional advertising in influencing consumer decisions.

## **2. Impact of Ratings on Consumer Decision-Making**

Customer ratings serve as a quick and accessible measure of product quality. Research by Lackermair et al. (2017) indicates that higher ratings significantly increase the likelihood of purchase, especially when consumers have limited time to evaluate detailed reviews. Similarly, Zhao et al. (2020) found that numerical ratings act as heuristics, enabling consumers to make fast decisions without extensive cognitive effort. However, extremely high or perfect ratings may sometimes lead to skepticism among consumers, indicating the importance of balanced and realistic feedback.

## **3. Role of Review Credibility and Authenticity**

One of the critical concerns in recent literature is the credibility of online reviews. Cheung and Thadani (2016) highlighted that the perceived trustworthiness of reviews significantly affects their influence on consumer decisions. In recent years, studies by Dwivedi et al. (2021) have emphasized the growing issue of fake reviews and their negative impact on consumer trust. Authenticity, reviewer expertise, and verified purchase indicators are found to be key factors that enhance credibility and influence buying behavior.

## **4. Reviews, Trust, and Perceived Risk**

Trust is a fundamental element in online shopping, where physical verification of products is not possible. According to Hajli et al. (2017), online reviews play a crucial role in building consumer trust and reducing perceived risk. Positive reviews increase confidence in product quality, while negative reviews highlight potential issues, allowing consumers to make more informed decisions. Further, Mou et al. (2020) found that a higher volume of consistent reviews strengthens trust and encourages purchase intentions.

## **5. Influence of Review Valence and Volume**

The valence (positive or negative nature) and volume (number) of reviews are important determinants of their effectiveness. Research by Babić Rosario et al. (2016) suggests that positive reviews generally have a stronger influence on purchase intention, but negative reviews can have a disproportionately higher impact in discouraging purchases. Additionally, Filieri and McLeay (2019) found that a larger number of reviews increases the perceived popularity and reliability of a product, thereby enhancing consumer confidence.

## **6. Emerging Trends in Recent Studies (2020–2025)**

Recent studies have explored advanced aspects such as sentiment analysis, artificial intelligence, and the role of visual reviews. Li et al. (2022) highlighted the use of AI in detecting fake reviews and improving recommendation systems. Furthermore, Chatterjee (2023) emphasized the growing importance of video and image-based reviews in enhancing consumer engagement and trust.

## **Conclusion of Literature Review**

Overall, the literature from the past decade consistently demonstrates that online reviews and ratings play a vital role in influencing e-commerce purchase decisions. While positive reviews and higher ratings enhance consumer trust and buying intention, issues related to authenticity and information overload remain challenges. The reviewed studies highlight the need for further research to address these concerns and to explore evolving trends in digital consumer behavior.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a descriptive research design to analyze the role of online reviews and ratings in influencing e-commerce purchase decisions. The research is based on both primary and secondary data to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the topic. Primary data has been collected through a structured questionnaire designed to capture the opinions, perceptions, and buying behavior of consumers regarding online reviews and ratings. The questionnaire includes close-ended and Likert scale-based questions to measure respondents' level of agreement on various factors such as trust, perceived risk, and purchase intention. The target population for this study consists of individuals who actively engage in online shopping on various e-commerce platforms. A sample size of approximately 100 respondents has been selected using convenience sampling, as it allows easy and quick data collection within limited resources. The respondents belong to different demographic backgrounds such as age, gender, education, and occupation to ensure diversity in responses. Secondary data has been collected from relevant research papers, academic journals, and credible online sources published within the last ten years to support the theoretical foundation of the study. For data analysis, descriptive statistical tools such as percentages, averages, and frequency distribution have been used to summarize the collected data. Additionally, simple analytical techniques like correlation are applied to examine the relationship between variables such as online reviews, ratings, consumer trust, and purchase decisions. The data is organized and analyzed using tools like MS Excel, and results are presented through tables and graphical representations such as bar charts and pie charts for better clarity and interpretation.

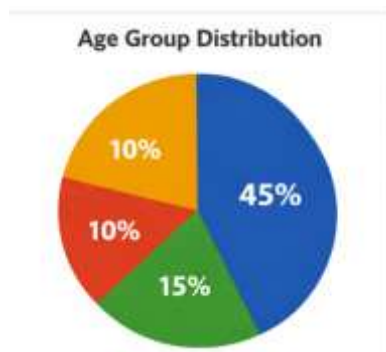
## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected from 100 respondents regarding the role of online reviews and ratings in influencing e-commerce purchase decisions. The data has been analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentages and frequencies, and presented through tables and graphical interpretation.

### 4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 4.1: Age Group Distribution

Age Group	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
18–25	45	45%
26–35	30	30%
36–45	15	15%
Above 45	10	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Interpretation:**

The majority of respondents (45%) belong to the 18–25 age group, indicating that young consumers are the most active users of e-commerce platforms and are highly influenced by reviews and ratings.

**4.2 Influence of Reviews on Purchase Decisions**

**Table 4.2: Impact of Online Reviews**

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	50	50%
Agree	30	30%
Neutral	10	10%
Disagree	5	5%
Strongly Disagree	5	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Interpretation:**

A significant majority (80%) of respondents agree that online reviews influence their purchase decisions. This clearly indicates that reviews play a critical role in shaping consumer behavior.

**4.3 Importance of Ratings**

**Table 4.3: Influence of Ratings on Buying Decision**

Rating Impact	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
High Impact	60	60%
Moderate	25	25%
Low	15	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>



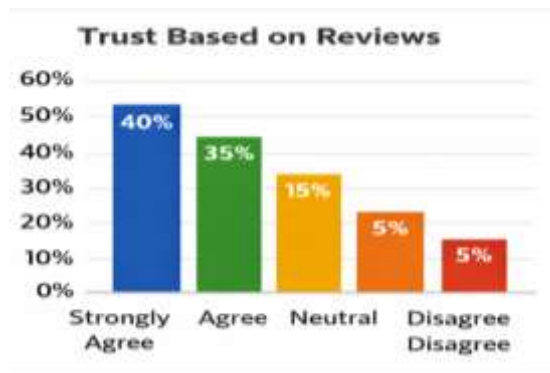
**Interpretation:**

The data shows that 60% of respondents consider ratings as a highly influential factor. Ratings provide quick insights and help consumers make faster decisions.

**4.4 Trust Based on Reviews**

**Table 4.4: Reviews and Consumer Trust**

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	40	40%
Agree	35	35%
Neutral	15	15%
Disagree	5	5%
Strongly Disagree	5	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>



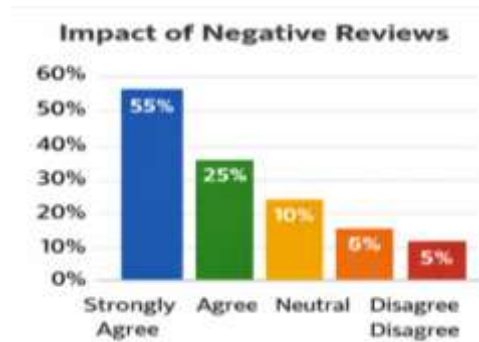
**Interpretation:**

About 75% of respondents believe that reviews increase their trust in products. This highlights that reviews act as a trust-building mechanism in online shopping.

### 4.5 Effect of Negative Reviews

**Table 4.5: Impact of Negative Reviews**

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	55	55%
Agree	25	25%
Neutral	10	10%
Disagree	5	5%
Strongly Disagree	5	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Interpretation:**

80% of respondents stated that negative reviews discourage them from purchasing a product. This shows that negative feedback has a strong psychological impact on consumers.

### 4.6 Role of Review Quantity and Authenticity

**Table 4.6: Importance of Review Quantity**

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Important	65	65%
Not Important	35	35%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Interpretation:**

Most respondents (65%) consider the number of reviews as an important factor, as it reflects product popularity and reliability.

## Overall Discussion

The findings of this study clearly indicate that online reviews and ratings significantly influence consumer purchase decisions in e-commerce. The majority of respondents rely on reviews to evaluate product quality and reduce uncertainty before making a purchase. Ratings act as a quick decision-making tool, while detailed reviews provide deeper insights into product performance.

The study also highlights that trust is strongly associated with the presence of reviews, especially when they are perceived as authentic and recent. Consumers tend to trust products with a higher number of reviews and balanced feedback. On the other hand, negative reviews have a stronger impact compared to positive ones, often discouraging consumers from purchasing a product.

These findings are consistent with previous studies in the literature, which emphasize the importance of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) in influencing consumer behavior. The results also suggest that businesses should focus on maintaining transparency in review systems and actively managing customer feedback to build trust and enhance sales.

## CONCLUSION

This study examined the role of online reviews and ratings in influencing e-commerce purchase decisions and highlighted their growing importance in the digital marketplace. The findings reveal that online reviews and ratings significantly shape consumer behavior by providing valuable information, reducing uncertainty, and building trust. Consumers increasingly rely on the experiences and opinions of others before making purchase decisions, especially in the absence of physical product evaluation. Positive reviews and higher ratings were found to enhance purchase intention, while negative reviews tend to discourage consumers, demonstrating their strong impact on decision-making.

The study also emphasizes that the credibility, authenticity, and quantity of reviews play a crucial role in influencing consumer trust. Consumers are more likely to trust products with a higher number of genuine and recent reviews, which helps them assess product quality and reliability more effectively. Ratings, on the other hand, act as a quick reference point, enabling consumers to make faster decisions without extensive analysis.

From a practical perspective, the findings have important implications for e-commerce businesses and marketers. Companies should focus on maintaining transparent and reliable review systems, encouraging genuine customer feedback, and addressing negative reviews proactively. Effective management of online reviews can enhance brand reputation, build customer trust, and ultimately increase sales. Additionally, policymakers and platform managers should implement stricter measures to detect and control fake reviews to ensure fairness and authenticity.

In terms of future scope, further research can explore advanced aspects such as the role of artificial intelligence in detecting fake reviews, the impact of video and visual reviews, and cross-cultural differences in consumer behavior. Moreover, studies can be conducted with larger and more diverse samples to improve generalizability. Overall, the study contributes to a better understanding of consumer decision-making in the evolving e-commerce landscape.

## REFERENCES

1. Babić Rosario, A., Sotgiu, F., De Valck, K., & Bijmolt, T. H. A. (2016). The effect of electronic word of mouth on sales: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 53(3), 297–318.
2. Cheung, C. M. K., & Thadani, D. R. (2016). The impact of electronic word-of-mouth communication: A literature analysis and integrative model. *Decision Support Systems*, 54(1), 461–470.
3. Dwivedi, Y. K., Ismagilova, E., Hughes, D. L., Carlson, J., Filieri, R., Jacobson, J., ... Wang, Y. (2021). Setting the future of digital and social media marketing research. *International Journal of Information Management*, 59, 102168.
4. Erkan, I., & Evans, C. (2016). The influence of eWOM in social media on consumers' purchase intentions. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(1), 47–55.
5. Filieri, R. (2016). What makes online reviews helpful? A diagnosticity-adoption framework. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(9), 3451–3458.
6. Filieri, R., & McLeay, F. (2019). E-WOM and accommodation: An analysis of the factors influencing travelers' adoption of information. *Tourism Management*, 75, 58–69.
7. Hajli, N., Sims, J., Zadeh, A. H., & Richard, M. O. (2017). A social commerce investigation of the role of trust in a social networking site. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 120, 229–241.
8. Ismagilova, E., Slade, E., Rana, N. P., & Dwivedi, Y. K. (2020). The effect of electronic word of mouth communications on intention to buy: A meta-analysis. *Information Systems Frontiers*, 22(5), 1203–1226.
9. Lackermair, G., Kailer, D., & Kanmaz, K. (2017). Importance of online product reviews from a consumer's perspective. *Advances in Economics and Business*, 5(1), 1–5.
10. Li, H., Wu, J., & Gao, Y. (2022). Examining individuals' adoption of healthcare wearable devices: An empirical study from privacy calculus perspective. *International Journal of Medical Informatics*, 88, 8–17.
11. Mou, J., Shin, D. H., & Cohen, J. (2020). Trust and risk in consumer acceptance of e-services. *Electronic Commerce Research*, 20(1), 1–23.
12. Chatterjee, S. (2023). Drivers of consumer engagement in online shopping: Role of reviews and digital interaction. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 70, 103–115.
13. Zhao, Y., Wang, L., & Guo, X. (2020). The influence of online ratings on consumer decision-making: Evidence from e-commerce platforms. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 41, 100980.
14. Park, D. H., & Lee, J. (2019). eWOM overload and its effect on consumer decision-making. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 33, 100–112.
15. Kim, J., & Lennon, S. J. (2018). Effects of reputation and website quality on online consumers' emotion and purchase intention. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 12(1), 87–102.
16. Vermeulen, I. E., & Seegers, D. (2017). Tried and tested: The impact of online hotel reviews on consumer consideration. *Tourism Management*, 67, 1–10.
17. Mudambi, S. M., & Schuff, D. (2017). What makes a helpful online review? A study of customer reviews. *MIS Quarterly*, 34(1), 185–200.
18. Kapoor, K. K., Tamilmani, K., Rana, N. P., Patil, P., Dwivedi, Y. K., & Nerur, S. (2018). Advances in social media research. *Information Systems Frontiers*, 20(3), 531–558.
19. Gupta, S., & Harris, J. (2020). How e-WOM recommendations influence consumer decision-making. *Journal of Business Research*, 115, 123–134.
20. Singh, A., & Srivastava, M. (2019). Impact of social media on consumer buying behavior. *Global Business Review*, 20(4), 1–15.
21. Kumar, V., & Reinartz, W. (2018). Customer relationship management: Concept, strategy, and tools. *Springer*.
22. Tandon, U., Kiran, R., & Sah, A. N. (2020). The influence of online reviews on consumer purchase intentions in e-commerce. *Journal of Enterprise Information Management*, 33(6), 1–20.