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THE INFLUENCE OF ONLINE REVIEWS ON CONSUMER PURCHASE DECISIONS IN E-COMMERCE PLATFORMS: A STUDY OF BANGALORE AND KOLAR REGIONS

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ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of e-commerce platforms has significantly transformed consumer purchasing behavior, with online reviews emerging as a critical influencing factor. This study investigates the role of online reviews in shaping consumer purchase decisions, focusing on consumers in Bangalore and Kolar regions. The research examines how review quality, rating systems, credibility, and sentiment affect consumer trust and buying intention. A structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from 120 respondents. The findings reveal that verified reviews and positive ratings significantly enhance trust and influence purchase decisions, while negative and fake reviews create hesitation among consumers. The study concludes with recommendations for improving transparency and authenticity in online review systems.

KEYWORDS: Online Reviews, Consumer Behavior, E-Commerce, Purchase Decision, Trust, Digital Marketing, India

1. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of e-commerce platforms has revolutionized the retail landscape, offering consumers convenience, variety, and competitive pricing. In this digital environment, online reviews have become a powerful tool influencing consumer decision-making. Consumers increasingly depend on peer opinions and ratings before purchasing products online.

Platforms such as Amazon and Flipkart provide detailed customer feedback, enabling buyers to evaluate product quality and reliability. However, the growing presence of fake reviews and manipulated ratings raises concerns regarding credibility and trust.

This study focuses on understanding how online reviews impact consumer purchase decisions in Bangalore (urban) and Kolar (semi-urban), offering insights into regional consumer behavior patterns.



2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Several studies have explored the impact of online reviews on consumer behavior:

1. Gupta & Verma (2020) observed that consumers rely more on peer reviews than advertisements.
2. Mehta (2021) highlighted that fake reviews negatively affect trust and brand perception.
3. Kumar (2021) noted that star ratings simplify decision-making but may oversimplify product evaluation.
4. Sharma (2022) found that positive online reviews significantly increase purchase intention and consumer confidence.
5. Singh & Rao (2023) emphasized that verified reviews play a crucial role in enhancing credibility.

Despite extensive research, limited studies focus on regional differences in India, particularly comparing urban and semi-urban consumers.

3. RESEARCH GAP

Most existing studies focus on metropolitan cities, with limited attention to semi-urban regions like Kolar. Additionally, there is a lack of comparative analysis on how different aspects of online reviews (such as authenticity and sentiment) influence consumer trust.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyze the influence of online reviews on consumer purchase decisions
2. To examine the role of trust in online shopping behavior
3. To evaluate the impact of positive, negative, and verified reviews
4. To study consumer awareness of fake reviews

5. Hypotheses

- H1: Online reviews have a significant impact on consumer purchase decisions
H2: Verified reviews positively influence consumer trust
H3: Negative reviews significantly reduce purchase intention
H4: There is a relationship between review credibility and buying behavior

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Descriptive research design



Data Collection

- 1. Primary Data:** Structured questionnaire
- 2. Secondary Data:** Journals, articles, reports

Sample Size- 120 respondents

Sampling Technique -Convenience sampling

Study Area

- Bangalore (Urban)
- Kolar (Semi-Urban)

Tools Used

- Percentage analysis
- Tables and charts

7. Conceptual Framework (Explanation)

Independent Variables:

- Review Quality
- Star Ratings
- Verified Reviews
- Review Sentiment

Mediating Variable:

- Consumer Trust

Dependent Variable:

- Purchase Decision

Flow:

Online Reviews → Trust → Purchase Decision

8. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1: Influence of Review Factors

Factor	Influence (%)
Positive Reviews	85%
Star Ratings	78%
Verified Reviews	82%
Negative Reviews	65%

Interpretation:

- Majority of consumers rely on **positive reviews (85%)**
- Verified reviews (82%) strongly influence trust
- Negative reviews (65%) discourage buying decisions

Table 2: Consumer Trust Factors

Factor	Response (%)
Trust Verified Reviews	88%
Concern About Fake Reviews	72%
Prefer High Ratings	80%

9. FINDINGS

1. Online reviews significantly influence purchase decisions
2. Verified reviews are the most trusted source
3. Negative reviews strongly impact buying behavior
4. Consumers are aware of fake reviews but still rely on ratings
5. Urban consumers rely more on detailed reviews, while semi-urban consumers focus on ratings

10. DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that online reviews play a crucial role in reducing uncertainty in online shopping. Trust acts as a mediating factor between reviews and purchase decisions. While positive reviews encourage buying, negative reviews create hesitation.



The study also highlights the need for platforms to improve review authenticity, as fake reviews can damage consumer trust.

11. CONCLUSION

Online reviews have become an essential component of consumer decision-making in e-commerce. Consumers heavily depend on peer feedback to evaluate products and reduce risk. Ensuring transparency and authenticity in review systems is critical for maintaining consumer trust.

12. SUGGESTIONS

- E-commerce platforms should implement stricter verification systems
- Fake reviews should be identified and removed
- Consumers should be educated about review credibility
- Platforms should highlight verified purchase reviews

13. LIMITATIONS

- Limited sample size
- Study restricted to Bangalore and Kolar
- Time constraints

14. FUTURE SCOPE

- Comparative studies across different states
- Analysis of video reviews and influencer reviews
- Impact of AI-generated reviews

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