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## Influence Of Online Ratings And Reviews On Pre-Purchase Behavior Of Consumers In Durable Products With Reference To Coimbatore City

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**Abstract:** In the digital age, online ratings and reviews have emerged as crucial factors influencing consumer decision-making, particularly in the purchase of durable products. This study explores the impact of online reviews and ratings on the pre-purchase behavior of consumers in Coimbatore city, a major industrial and commercial hub in South India. Durable goods, which typically involve high investment and long-term use, prompt consumers to seek extensive information before purchase. The research examines how consumers in Coimbatore access and interpret online feedback, the degree of trust they place in user-generated content, and how such content shapes their buying intentions. A combination of primary data collection through surveys and secondary data analysis has been used to understand behavioral patterns. The findings indicate a strong correlation between positive online reviews and increased purchase intent, while negative feedback often leads to reconsideration or brand-switching.

**Index terms:** Online Ratings, Online Reviews, Consumer Behavior, Pre-purchase Decision, Durable Products, E-commerce, Buying Intention.

### INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, online ratings and reviews play a crucial role in shaping consumer purchasing behavior, especially in the durable goods sector. With the rapid expansion of e-commerce and digital platforms, consumers rely heavily on online reviews to make informed decisions before purchasing products. Durable products, such as electronics, home appliances, and automobiles, involve significant financial investment and long-term usability, making consumer evaluations more critical than ever. Unlike fast-moving consumer goods (FMCGs), durable products have longer lifespans, and consumers tend to be more cautious and diligent in their research before making a final purchase.

Coimbatore, a rapidly growing industrial and commercial hub, is witnessing an increasing reliance on digital platforms for purchasing durable goods. Consumers in this city are becoming more tech-savvy, utilizing online reviews to compare products, analyze brand reputations, and assess overall value before making a purchase. The presence of numerous electronic and home appliance retailers, coupled with growing online shopping

trends, makes Coimbatore an ideal location to study the impact of online reviews on consumer behavior.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The rapid growth of e-commerce and digital platforms has significantly altered consumer purchasing behavior, particularly in the durable goods sector. Online ratings and reviews have become critical determinants in the decision-making process, influencing consumer perceptions and preferences. With the increasing reliance on digital information, consumers in Coimbatore, like in other urban areas, actively seek product reviews before making a purchase.

Despite the widespread availability of online reviews, there remains a gap in understanding how these reviews specifically shape consumer pre-purchase behavior in the durable goods segment. Consumers often face challenges such as fake reviews, biased ratings, and information overload, which may impact their trust in online platforms.

This study aims to analyze the extent to which online ratings and reviews influence consumer behavior in the durable goods sector in Coimbatore. It seeks to explore how consumers interpret and trust online reviews, their impact on purchase intention, and the role of demographic factors in moderating this influence.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyze the impact of online ratings and reviews on consumer decision-making.
- To identify key factors influencing consumer trust in online reviews.
- To evaluate the role of e-commerce platforms in shaping purchase decisions.
- To determine the significance of positive and negative reviews in the buying process.
- To assess consumer preferences for different types of reviews.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### **Chatterjee (2001) – Trust in E-Commerce Platforms**

The study emphasized the role of e-commerce platform credibility in determining the trustworthiness of online reviews. It found that consumers are more likely to trust reviews on reputable platforms with strong moderation policies. The research highlighted that trust in e-commerce sites directly influences purchase decisions. Platforms that enforce strict guidelines for review authenticity gain a competitive advantage. This study underscored the need for transparency and accountability in online review systems.

### **Dellarocas (2003) - Evolution of Online Reputation Systems**

This research examined the development of online review platforms and their role in shaping consumer trust over time. It discussed how the shift from word-of-mouth recommendations to digital platforms transformed consumer decision-making. The study found that review aggregation and rating systems provide valuable insights for buyers. However, it also raised concerns about fake reviews and reputation manipulation. The research emphasized the need for continuous improvement in moderation and verification techniques.

### **Senecal & Nantel (2004) - Comparison Between Online and Offline Word-of- Mouth**

This study analyzed the influence of online reviews compared to traditional word-of-mouth recommendations. The findings suggested that online reviews had a stronger impact on purchase decisions due to their accessibility and widespread reach. Consumers were more likely to trust detailed, experience-based reviews rather than brief personal recommendations. The research highlighted that businesses need to engage actively with online communities. It concluded that digital word-of-mouth plays a significant role in shaping brand perception.

**Chevalier & Mayzlin (2006) - Online Reviews and Sales Impact** This study analyzed the influence of online reviews on book sales, revealing a strong correlation between positive ratings and increased purchases. Conversely, negative reviews deterred potential buyers, affecting overall sales figures. The research emphasized the importance of managing online reputation and addressing negative feedback. It suggested that businesses should encourage satisfied customers to leave reviews. The findings underscored the growing role of consumer-generated content in influencing sales performance.

**Mayzlin (2006) - Effect of Competitor Fake Reviews** The study investigated how brands engage in fake negative reviews to damage competitors' reputations, ultimately affecting consumer trust in both brands. It found that companies using deceptive tactics often faced long-term consequences. Consumers became more skeptical of overly negative or excessively positive reviews. The research recommended stricter moderation policies to curb unethical practices. It highlighted the need for transparency to maintain credibility in online reviews.

## LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

1. The impact of online reviews may vary across different durable product categories (e.g., electronics vs. home appliances).
2. Some consumers may rely more on brand reputation than online reviews.
3. Consumer behavior in Coimbatore may differ from other cities due to regional preferences, economic factors, and cultural influences.
4. Some consumers may rely more on brand reputation than online reviews.
5. Elderly and less tech-savvy consumers may not be adequately represented
6. The impact of emerging technologies, such as AI-driven recommendations, may not be fully captured in the study.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### RESEARCH DESIGN

This study follows a descriptive research design to analyze how online ratings and reviews impact consumer pre-purchase behavior regarding durable products in Coimbatore. The research aims to identify trends, patterns, and correlations between online reviews and consumer decisions.

### RESEARCH APPROACH

A quantitative approach is adopted, collecting primary data through structured surveys. Additionally, secondary data from previous studies, journals, and online sources will supplement the findings. This will include both quantitative and qualitative research methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior.

## SAMPLING METHOD

- Population: Consumers in Coimbatore who purchase durable products (e.g., electronics, home appliances, furniture).
- Sampling Technique: Convenience sampling
- Sample Size: 121

## TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS

- Simple percentage analysis
- Ranking method
- Weighted average
- Chi-Square
- Annova

## DATA ANALYSIS

### SIMPLE PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

#### GENDER OF THE RESPONDENTS

S.NO	CATEGORY	NO. OF THE RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE%
1	Male	66	54.5%
2	Female	55	45.5%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### INTERPRETATION:

From the above table, 54.5% of the respondents are male and 45.5% of respondents are Female.

#### INFERENCE:

Majority 54.5% of the respondents are Male.

## ANNOVA

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is a statistical technique used to determine if there are significant differences between the means of three or more groups. It helps identify whether variations in a dataset are due to the factor being studied or simply by chance. ANOVA examines the variability within groups (due to random factors) and between groups (caused by the independent variable) to assess the significance of the observed

differences. By calculating the F-ratio, which compares the variance between and within groups, ANOVA provides a clear indication of whether the group means are statistically distinct.

ANOVA is widely used in fields such as business, psychology, agriculture, and medicine for comparing multiple categories. For example, a business might use it to evaluate the effectiveness of different marketing strategies on sales, while a researcher might use it to study the impact of various treatments on patient outcomes. The method is especially valuable for its ability to analyse multiple groups simultaneously, saving time and reducing potential errors from repeated tests. ANOVA ultimately aids in making informed decisions based on empirical evidence.

### ANOVA BETWEEN EDUCATION QUALIFICATION AND CONSUMERS TRUSTWORTHY

**ANOVA**

Education Qyalification of the respondents

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.211	4	.803	1.013	.404
Within Groups	87.996	111	.793		
Total	91.207	115			

#### INTERPRETATION:

The ANOVA results indicate no significant difference between age group ( $p = 0.404$ ), suggesting the independent variable has no significant effect on the dependent variable. Since the p-value (Sig.) is 0.404, which is greater than 0.05, We fail to reject the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ), Thus,  $H_1$  is rejected.

#### INFERENCE:

There is no statistical difference between the Education qualification and online review do you trust most.

### RANK ANALYSIS

Ranking in statistics and data analysis refers to ordering data points from least to greatest (or vice versa) and giving each data point an ordinal number (i.e. 1, 2, 3, ...). Ranking data are frequently collected when individuals are asked to rank a set of items according to a certain preference criterion. Ranking provides an incentive for better data collection within institutions, they can expose pockets of institutional weakness and confirm area of strength, and they are useful for bench marking against like institution. Rankings encourage institutions to re-examine mission statement.

**WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR WHEN CHOOSING AN ONLINE SELLER**

S.NO	CATEGORY	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	RANK
	<b>FACTORS</b>	<b>1(5)</b>	<b>2(4)</b>	<b>3(3)</b>	<b>4(2)</b>	<b>5(1)</b>		
1	Selling price	52 260	22 88	16 48	10 20	21 21	437	1
2	Fast & reliable delivery	12 60	37 148	42 126	27 54	3 3	391	2
3	Genuine & high quality products	6 30	30 120	52 156	25 50	8 8	364	3
4	Trusted brand/seller	4 20	31 124	44 132	37 74	5 5	355	4
5	Secure payment options	11 55	26 104	27 81	24 48	33 33	321	5

**INTERPRETATION:**

From the Rank Analysis, It is found that the highest rank score Selling price and the lowest rank score is Secure payment options.

**INFERENCE:**

Majority of the respondents consider Selling price.

**FINDINGS****FINDINGS OF ANNOVA:**

There is no statistical difference between the Education qualification and online review do you trust most.

**FINDINGS OF RANK ANALYSIS:**

Majority of the respondents consider Selling price.



## SUGGESTION

- Strengthening Consumer Trust by Enhancing the Credibility of Online Reviews.
- Building Brand Reputation and Enhancing Seller Credibility to Influence Purchase Decisions
- Improving Delivery Services and Packaging Standards to Address Consumer Concerns
- Managing Negative Reviews and Their Impact on Brand Perception Among Consumers
- Leveraging Social Media Influence and Digital Advertisements to Drive Consumer Engagement
- Understanding the Limited Influence of Online Reviews on Certain Consumer Segments
- Encouraging Balanced Customer Feedback Instead of Only Negative Experience-Based Reviews

## CONCLUSION

In today's digital marketplace, consumer trust plays a critical role in shaping purchase decisions. Strengthening the credibility of online reviews is essential to building a brand's reputation and enhancing seller credibility. By improving delivery services and packaging standards, businesses can address key consumer concerns, leading to higher satisfaction and fewer negative reviews. While negative reviews can impact brand perception, effective management strategies—such as prompt responses and proactive issue resolution—can help mitigate their effects. Additionally, leveraging social media influence and targeted digital advertisements can drive consumer engagement and foster brand loyalty. However, it is important to recognize that online reviews may have a limited influence on certain consumer segments, making it necessary to adopt a well-rounded marketing approach. Encouraging balanced customer feedback, rather than reviews solely based on negative experiences, can provide a more accurate representation of a product's quality and service. By focusing on these strategies, businesses can enhance consumer trust, strengthen brand credibility, and ultimately drive sustainable growth in an increasingly competitive digital landscape. From this study, I have gained key insights into consumer behavior, brand reputation management, and the role of online reviews in influencing purchasing decisions.