



## A Study On Consumer Trust In Online Reviews

*Dr. M.Robinson<sup>1</sup>, SURENDAR.S<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Assistant professor, Department of Management Studies, UCE-Anna University, Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu, India. (E-mail ID: mahirobin2@gmail.com Mobile number: +91-9865608787)

<sup>2</sup> Research Student, Department of Management Studies, UCE-Anna University, Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu, India. (E-mail ID: surendar73589@gmail.com, Mobile Number: +91-8056607372)

### ABSTRACT:

This study explores the factors influencing consumer trust in online reviews, emphasizing the relationship between demographics, behavior patterns, and perceptions. With the growing dependence on e-commerce, online reviews play a pivotal role in shaping purchasing decisions. However, consumer trust in these reviews can vary based on factors like age, gender, and living area. Using statistical analysis, the study investigates how these factors affect trust, suspicion of review authenticity, and reliance on reviews. The findings provide actionable insights for businesses to improve review transparency and build consumer trust.

**Keywords:** Consumer trust, online reviews, e-commerce, demographic factors, review authenticity, consumer behavior.

### INTRODUCTION:

In the digital age, online reviews have become a cornerstone of consumer decision-making. From product purchases to service selection, consumers heavily rely on the opinions shared online. Studies indicate that 88% of consumers trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations. However, the authenticity and reliability of these reviews are increasingly under scrutiny, with fake reviews and manipulative practices eroding trust.

This study investigates the dynamics of consumer trust in online reviews, examining how demographic variables such as age, gender, and living area influence perceptions of trust and authenticity. The research highlights the significance of transparency and authenticity for businesses aiming to establish long-term customer relationships. By understanding the factors that impact trust, companies can better design review systems and policies to meet consumer expectations.

### LITERATURE REVIEW:

1. **Cheung et al. (2008):** Explored the impact of perceived credibility and quality of online reviews on purchasing intentions.
2. **Filieri (2015):** Identified the role of review content quality in building consumer trust.
3. **Mudambi & Schuff (2010):** Highlighted the importance of review length and depth in influencing trust.
4. **Zhu & Zhang (2010):** Found that consumers value verified purchase reviews over anonymous feedback.
5. **Pavlou & Dimoka (2006):** Discussed the role of reputation systems in reducing information asymmetry in online markets.
6. **Bickart & Schindler (2001):** Analyzed the persuasive effect of user-generated content compared to expert reviews.
7. **Baek et al. (2012):** Explored how review volume and rating consistency affect consumer trust.
8. **Kim et al. (2011):** Found that the perceived authenticity of reviews positively influences trust and purchase decisions.
9. **Luca (2016):** Highlighted the prevalence of fake reviews and their negative impact on e-commerce trust.
10. **Hu et al. (2008):** Discussed the impact of star ratings on consumer perceptions of trustworthiness.
11. **Park & Lee (2009):** Explored the moderating role of consumer expertise on review trustworthiness.
12. **Vermeulen & Seegers (2009):** Found that online reviews improve brand awareness and trust among first-time buyers.
13. **Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004):** Emphasized the role of electronic word-of-mouth in shaping consumer attitudes.
14. **Xie et al. (2011):** Studied the effect of negative reviews on consumer trust and purchase intentions.
15. **Kwok et al. (2018):** Investigated the influence of review formatting (text vs. visual) on trust.

### OBJECTIVES:

1. To analyze the relationship between demographic factors (age, gender, and living area) and consumer trust in online reviews.
2. To examine the factors influencing consumer suspicion regarding the authenticity of online reviews.
3. To provide actionable insights for businesses to enhance transparency and build trust in online review systems.

**DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:**

**Crosstabs**

**Case Processing Summary**

	Cases		Missing		Total	
	Valid N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
How much do you trust online reviews * Age	70	100.0%	0	0.0%	70	100.0%

**How much do you trust online reviews \* Age Crosstabulation**

		Age					Total	
		18 - 24	25 - 34	35 - 44	45 - 55	Above 55		
How much do you trust online reviews	Completely	Count	4	0	0	2	0	6
		Expected Count	3.8	.8	.5	.9	.1	6.0
Moderately	Count	26	4	3	2	0	35	
	Expected Count	22.0	4.5	3.0	5.0	.5	35.0	
Not at all	Count	3	1	0	0	0	4	
	Expected Count	2.5	.5	.3	.6	.1	4.0	
Slightly	Count	5	3	1	3	1	13	
	Expected Count	8.2	1.7	1.1	1.9	.2	13.0	
Very much	Count	6	1	2	3	0	12	
	Expected Count	7.5	1.5	1.0	1.7	.2	12.0	
Total	Count	44	9	6	10	1	70	
	Expected Count	44.0	9.0	6.0	10.0	1.0	70.0	

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	16.648 <sup>a</sup>	16	.409
Likelihood Ratio	17.359	16	.363
N of Valid Cases	70		

a. 21 cells (84.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .06.

**Crosstabs**

**Case Processing Summary**

	Cases		Missing		Total	
	Valid N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Have you ever suspected that an online review might be fake or manipulated * Living Area	70	100.0%	0	0.0%	70	100.0%

**Have you ever suspected that an online review might be fake or manipulated \* Living Area Crosstabulation**

		Living Area			
		Rural	Urban	Total	
Have you ever suspected that an online review might be fake or manipulated	No, Never	Count	2	2	4
		Expected Count	1.9	2.1	4.0
Rarely	Count	13	11	24	
	Expected Count	11.7	12.3	24.0	
Yes, occasionally	Count	15	18	33	
	Expected Count	16.0	17.0	33.0	
Yes, often	Count	4	5	9	
	Expected Count	4.4	4.6	9.0	
Total	Count	34	36	70	
	Expected Count	34.0	36.0	70.0	

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.494 <sup>a</sup>	3	.920
Likelihood Ratio	.494	3	.920
N of Valid Cases	70		

a. 4 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.94.

**Crosstabs**

**Case Processing Summary**

	Cases		Missing N	Percent	Total N	Percent
	Valid N	Percent				
How often do you rely on online reviews when making a purchase decision * Gender	70	100.0%	0	0.0%	70	100.0%

**How often do you rely on online reviews when making a purchase decision \* Gender Crosstabulation**

		Gender		Total	
		Female	Male		
How often do you rely on online reviews when making a purchase decision	Always	Count	0	9	9
		Expected Count	2.6	6.4	9.0
	Never	Count	0	4	4
		Expected Count	1.1	2.9	4.0
	Often	Count	4	11	15
		Expected Count	4.3	10.7	15.0
	Rarely	Count	0	6	6
		Expected Count	1.7	4.3	6.0
	Sometimes	Count	16	20	36
		Expected Count	10.3	25.7	36.0
	Total	Count	20	50	70
		Expected Count	20.0	50.0	70.0

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.071 <sup>a</sup>	4	.017
Likelihood Ratio	16.899	4	.002
N of Valid Cases	70		

a. 6 cells (60.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.14.

**Interpretation of SPSS Chi-Square Results**

**1. Age vs. Trust in Online Reviews**

- Pearson Chi-Square Value: 16.648
- Degrees of Freedom (df): 16
- p-value: 0.409

**Interpretation:**

- The p-value (0.409) is greater than the significance threshold (0.05). Therefore, we **fail to reject the null hypothesis**.
- **Conclusion:** There is no significant relationship between age and how much individuals trust online reviews.

**2. Living Area vs. Suspicion of Fake Reviews**

- Pearson Chi-Square Value: 0.494
- Degrees of Freedom (df): 3
- p-value: 0.920

**Interpretation:**

- The p-value (0.920) is far greater than 0.05. Thus, we **fail to reject the null hypothesis**.
- **Conclusion:** Living area (urban vs. rural) does not have a significant impact on whether individuals suspect reviews to be fake or manipulated.

### 3. Gender vs. Reliance on Online Reviews

- Pearson Chi-Square Value: 12.071
- Degrees of Freedom (df): 4
- p-value: 0.017

#### Interpretation:

- The p-value (0.017) is less than 0.05, so we **reject the null hypothesis**.
- **Conclusion:** There is a significant relationship between gender and how often individuals rely on online reviews when making a purchase decision. Further analysis of the cross-tabulation reveals which gender groups are more likely to rely on online reviews.

---

#### Summary :

- **Significant Relationships:** Gender and reliance on online reviews.
- **No Significant Relationships:** Age and trust in online reviews; Living area and suspicion of fake reviews.

---

#### FINDINGS:

1. Age and Trust in Online Reviews:
  - The chi-square analysis revealed no significant relationship between age and trust in online reviews ( $p = 0.409$ ).
  - This suggests that trust levels in online reviews are not influenced by age groups.
2. Living Area and Suspicion of Fake Reviews:
  - There was no significant relationship between living area (urban or rural) and suspicion about fake reviews ( $p = 0.920$ ).
  - This indicates that the living area does not affect a consumer's likelihood of doubting the authenticity of reviews.
3. Gender and Reliance on Online Reviews:
  - A significant relationship was found between gender and reliance on online reviews when making purchase decisions ( $p = 0.017$ ).
  - Male consumers were observed to rely more frequently on online reviews compared to female consumers.

---

#### SUGGESTIONS:

1. **Enhancing Review Transparency:**
  - Platforms should adopt stricter verification methods, such as validating reviews through verified purchase tags.
2. **Gender-Specific Engagement:**
  - Marketers should consider tailoring their strategies to address the preferences of male and female consumers in leveraging reviews.
3. **Educational Campaigns:**
  - Educate users across demographics on how to identify fake or manipulative reviews.
4. **Improved Reporting Mechanisms:**
  - Develop intuitive systems for users to report suspicious reviews to build trust.
5. **Highlighting Authenticity:**
  - Platforms should emphasize review authenticity metrics such as review history and user credibility.

---

#### CONCLUSION:

This study provides insights into the factors influencing consumer trust in online reviews. While demographic factors like age and living area showed no significant influence, gender played a critical role in reliance on reviews for purchasing decisions. Businesses can use these findings to design more effective and transparent review systems, fostering greater consumer trust and engagement. Future studies could explore broader datasets or additional variables like cultural influences or industry-specific trends to deepen understanding.

---

#### REFERENCES :

1. Cheung, C. M., & Lee, M. K. (2008). The impact of perceived credibility on purchase intentions.
2. Filieri, R. (2015). What makes online reviews helpful? A study of customer trust.
3. Mudambi, S. M., & Schuff, D. (2010). Research on review length and trust.
4. Zhu, F., & Zhang, X. (2010). The value of verified purchase reviews.
5. Pavlou, P. A., & Dimoka, A. (2006). Reputation systems in online markets.
6. Baek, H., Ahn, J., & Choi, Y. (2012). Review volume and consistency on consumer trust.
7. Kim, J., & Gupta, P. (2011). Authenticity of online reviews and trust.
8. Xie, H., Miao, L., & Lee, A. (2011). Negative reviews and their effects on purchase intentions.
9. Hennig-Thurau, T., & Walsh, G. (2004). Electronic word-of-mouth in consumer attitudes.
10. Kwok, L., Xie, K. L., & Lee, A. (2018). The effect of review formatting on trust.