



## **The Influence of Online Reviews on Consumer Decision-Making**

*Ahmed Boudouch<sup>a\*</sup>, Aabad Mohamed-Reda<sup>a\*</sup>*

<sup>a</sup> Jiangsu Normal University, China.

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study's primary objective is to investigate how optical character recognition (OCR) technology has altered the behaviors of current consumers in the digital age. Through the lenses of trustworthiness, presence, social support, and usefulness, the research investigates the dynamic world of digital marketplace decision-making and information transmission. This environment is constantly evolving. The purpose of this study is to illustrate how little is known about optical character recognition (OCR) by conducting a literature survey. This led to an investigation of the numerical and non-numerical features of OCRs. The research endeavor uses a quantitative research approach to survey a subset of internet shoppers living in Beijing. The purpose of the survey is to determine the intricate links that exist between characteristics such as trust and the intention to purchase. As a result of these findings, our understanding of the myriad of ways in which optical character recognition (OCR) affects the perspectives and choices of customers is expanded

Keywords: Online customer reviews (OCR), Digital Era, Digital Marketplace, Marketing Strategies.

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### **1. Introduction**

Since the Internet and other forms of fast technology are now widely available, there are more ways than ever to get product information out there. Online communities like newsgroups, blogs, forums, chat rooms, and opinion sites are becoming more popular places for people to share information. (Elwalda & Lu, 2014). Previously, they relied only on personal recommendations from friends and family members rather than sharing information through these online communities. According to Horrigan and Rainie (Horrigan & Duggan, 2015), for example, around 84% of people who use the internet in the United States have participated in online debates. According to (Sharifpour et al., 2016), the term "electronic word of mouth" (eWOM) describes the ability to effectively communicate information and ideas through the use of the internet. Taking this into consideration, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) could be interpreted as both a development of and a supplement to more traditional (offline) word-of-mouth communication. According to (Anuja, 2018), who may have been the first to provide a comprehensive definition of the term, "any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company which is made available to a multitude of people and institutes via the Internet" (Anuja, 2018. pp. 39) is what an eWOM is. According to this definition, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) can only be statements, comments, or reviews about a product or service that are posted online, regardless of the valence of the statements or reviews, and it can be offered by anybody, regardless of whether or not they have firsthand experience with the product or service.

Online customer reviews (OCRs), which are sometimes referred to as "user-generated content" (Zheng, 2021), are a new type of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) that has emerged as a result of the expansion of online communities. This article, (Elwalda & Lu, 2016) defines online customer reviews (OCRs) as information that is generated by customers and shared on websites belonging to either the company or third parties. Online reviews (OCRs) are considered to be one of the most prominent forms of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), as stated (PULEVSKA IVANOVSKA & MATESKA PEROVSKA, 2021). Before making a purchase, 61 percent of consumers used the internet to check for reviews, blogs, or other forms of customer feedback, according to research conducted by (Dehkordi et al., 2012). Based on the findings of (Ho et al., 2015), the selection of products is increased by a factor of two when online endorsements are considered.

The growing number of companies who are concerned about the effect that OCRs will have on sales has determined the necessity of doing this study. Online content ratings and reviews (OCRs) are the most recent addition to the marketing communication mix, as stated by (Kostyra et al., 2016). Furthermore, as stated by Dwyer (2007), OCRs have developed into an indispensable source of feedback. According to (Xhema, 2019) and (Zheng, 2021), one of the advantages of online reviews is that they enable businesses to gain insight into the opinions of their customers regarding the things they offer. Additionally, this assists in the development of products, distribution, and marketing of those products. Specifically, the purpose of this research is to investigate how the utility, trustworthiness, presence, and social support of OCRs impact trust and the intention to make a purchase. Furthermore, it will constitute an addition to the marketing content that is already available and will provide novel ideas for study.

According to (Herrero-Crespo et al., 2022), at this point, the academic literature has paid only a minimal amount of attention to the impact that OCRs have on customer purchase decisions. The author (Carter, 2018) states that there is a dearth of awareness regarding how earned media influences the

decisions that clients make. The majority of optical character recognition (OCR) research has focused on numerical assessments and other contextual metrics (Kannan, 2017). On the other hand, non-numerical aspects such as credibility, utility, and social support have been largely ignored. Even though optical character recognition (OCR) systems are widely utilized and possess a powerful ability to attract customers, the extent to which they are beneficial is still not fully understood, as stated by (Zheng, 2021).

According to (Kwon et al., 2022), consumers who buy online are subject to a greater degree of social uncertainty and risk than their counterparts who shop offline. This is because of the natural contact that exists between them and the e-vendor, as well as the absence of any guarantee or monitoring over the behavior of the e-vendor. As pointed out by (Laan, 2009), trust is extremely important in a partnership in which the trustor does not have full control over the behavior of the trustee. In light of this, it is of the utmost importance to not underestimate the significance of establishing trust ability when shopping online. Trust is the most significant feature in a connection, even more so than monetary incentives such as price discounts, according to (Yang & Peterson, 2004). Trust is the most important attribute in a relationship. Similarly, (Kim et al., 2012) found that when individuals shop online, they place a higher value on the perceived trustworthiness of the retailer than they do on the perceived cost of the item.

Therefore, additional research is required in order to examine all of the potential factors that contribute to trust in online transactions (Pavlou, 2003). It was also discovered by (Ma & Atkin, 2017) that in order for online trust models to function properly, user-generated content has to be incorporated into them. This study aims to bridge the knowledge gap that exists in the marketing literature by conducting an investigation into the ways in which the non-numerical features of oral communication (OCR) such as "credibility, usefulness, and social support" influence the trust that customers have in a product and their intention to buy it. It is essential to have a solid understanding of the impact that optical character recognition (OCR) has on trust

before attempting to comprehend the overall impact that OCRs have on buy intention and, as a result, sales. This is because the factors that influence the process are likely to have an effect on the outcome.

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## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)

(Bashar et al., 2012) polled 150 internet users to determine how social media affects purchasing decisions. They advised abandoning traditional marketing strategies in favor of tech-driven ones due to their rapid evolution. According to the survey, businesses must use social media for online marketing to stay relevant. The writers underlined the role of the internet and online business in social media-driven social change. After realizing how crucial social media was for knowledge sharing, people started using it for organic marketing. Customers who were more engaged on brand pages promoted the brand, which increased conversions and loyalty, according to research.

(Sarma & Choudhury, 2015) said that how people use social media changes their decisions about what to buy. Their research shows that social media has transformed word-of-mouth into electronic word-of-mouth through new social networks. Social media has impacted reading, searching, and content trust, according to the writers. User-generated content helped firms recognize customers as powerful online review and recommendation voices. The market enabled this. Consumer behavior is heavily influenced by online reviews and eWOM.

(Civelek & Ertemel, 2018) studied the social impact of positive eWOM among major internet users in 2018. It was shown that website social communication fostered favorable eWOM. Results demonstrated that social presence predicted positive electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) among peers, and interpersonal influences enhanced the link. This study investigated "How have online communities affected the travel industry?" by examining positive reviews and how they promote businesses and educate consumers.

(Erkan & Evans, 2016) examined how online debate affects customers' purchasing decisions. Their research focused on how social media eWOM affects consumer behavior. The Information Acceptance Model was essential to understanding how positive information affects customers' buying intentions. Positive online evaluations significantly influenced consumers' buying decisions, according to a poll of 384 college students on social media.

(Michelle, 2018) examined what motivates people to buy. The author found six drivers in 337 college student reviews. Personality attributes, website design, product review details, environmental effect, and interpersonal dynamics determined the outcome. Among these criteria, customer reviews had the largest impact on consumers' buying decisions.

### 2.2 Online Customer Reviews (OCRs)

A "one-to-many" communication style, "online customer reviews" (OCRs) include one-way and nontraditional exchanges between a reviewer or commenter and a large audience of followers or readers (Litvin et al., 2008). Any comment, good or bad, made by a previous customer and posted online about a business's product or service is considered a review, according to (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Opinions, positive or negative, could be reflected in this response.

Unstructured feedback from previous buyers about products, services, companies, or personalities is shared with current buyers. These comments could be complimentary, critical, or completely unrelated. Blog posts and other organized user-generated content, such reviews on sites like Thomson.co.uk, TripAdvisor, and Booking.com, are examples of this type of writing (Fileri, 2016).

Recently, there has been a lot of focus in the tourist industry on evaluations that discuss travel. Various studies have investigated these traits; for example, (Ye et al., 2009), (Vermeulen & Seegers, 2009), (Filieri, 2016), and Vermeulen and Seegers (2009). Research like this aims to fill gaps in our knowledge about how these factors affect hotel revenue, customer sentiment, and propensity to buy. Another area that has been studied is what makes review sites seem genuine and trustworthy (Liu & Park, 2015); (Filieri, 2016). The relevance of OCRs at different points in the journey planning process, when and how they are used, have also been examined in these research (Yoo & Gretzel, 2008).

### 2.3 Factors Influencing Trust and Purchase Intentions

A comprehensive investigation of critical aspects is required to comprehend the influence of Online Customer Reviews (OCRs) on purchasing decisions. In the context of online customer reviews (OCRs), (Pothong & Sathitwiriwong, 2016) state that four crucial factors—utility, trustworthiness, presence, and social support—shape consumer trust and buy intentions. Additional research by (Liu & Li, 2019) confirms that good online endorsements have a significant impact on product choice. (Din et al., 2018) highlight the practical insights into product features and functionality that OCRs give, highlighting their utility beyond mere information providing. The legitimacy of OCRs, especially when acquired from confirmed purchasers, is closely related to trustworthiness. Higher visibility contributes to increased trust, according to (Abou Ali et al., 2020), who investigate the effects of OCR presence. Engaging with reviews actively creates a feeling of community and has a favorable impact on consumer trust, according to (Rahayu et al., 2020), who explore the social support factor. The importance of efficiently handling negative OCRs is highlighted by (Athapaththu & Kulathunga, 2018), suggesting that recency is a key factor in influencing consumer impressions. (Van der Heijden et al., 2003) go into the cultural aspects that affect the impact of OCRs, showing how important it is to have a detailed knowledge of how cultural elements influence consumer reactions to OCRs. Taken as a whole, this body of work sheds light on the consumer decision-making process by highlighting the myriad of elements that interact within the OCR ecosystem

## 3. Research Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the structure that has been recommended, which is derived from the findings of the recent literature research. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the three key components that comprise this theoretical framework. In order for the researchers to develop the conceptual model, they utilized modified measuring items that were initially used in earlier study. For the purpose of evaluating online customer reviews, the following criteria are taken into consideration: valence (whether positive or negative), volume (whether many or few), recency (duration), and length (whether long or short). It is now possible for us to discuss the mediating variable, which is the type of online review, which can be either objective or subjective, as well as the ways in which demographic factors such as age, gender, income, and education make an impact on it.

One argument is that optical character readers strongly impact Chinese consumers' shopping decisions.

H1a claims that online review polarity strongly influences Chinese consumers' decisions. Chinese consumers' shopping decisions are heavily influenced by online reviews.

Recent online reviews strongly influence Chinese purchasing (H1c). According to H1d, Chinese customers' buying decisions are influenced by online review length. In China, OCR dimensions and purchasing decisions are strongly correlated, with review type mediating.

In the third hypothesis, age, gender, income, and education, which are distinctive to Chinese consumers, affect OCR aspects and purchases.

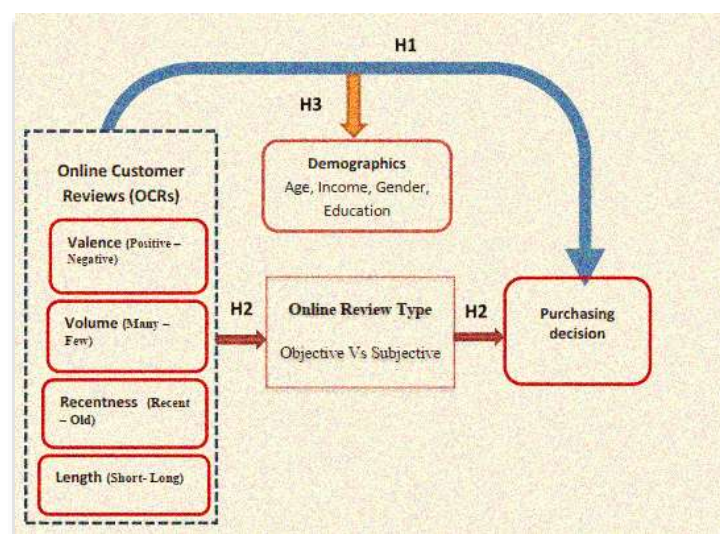


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

## 4. Research Methodology and Sampling

### 4.1 Plan for Sampling

Quantitative analysis is the defining characteristic of this work. In addition to that, the research population is depicted as follows:

- Customers who are able to make their own purchasing decisions and shop online and are between the ages of 18 and 65 are considered to be consumers.
- Every single, single Chinese online shopping website.

The sample consists of people spending money online in Beijing. For the purpose of the study, people who use the internet in Beijing were selected from a "non-probability convenience" sample. The researchers define a sample size of 500 respondents with a confidence interval of 96% and a margin of error of 4%. This is due to the fact that there is no formal framework designed specifically for this community.

### 4.2 Creating a Questionnaire

This study on internet shoppers' intentions uses primary data from a three-part online questionnaire. The first portion of the survey asks about the respondent's online habits, including their favorite websites and apps, products they like, and how often they read reviews. The dependent variable, "Purchasing Intention," in the second section only measures whether respondents will buy based on internet reviews. Section 3 examines how "Online Reviews," the independent variable, affects consumers' purchasing decisions. For every section (excluding demographics), we ask respondents to score their agreement with the assertions using a 5-point Likert scale from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree," with weights from 1 to 5.

### 4.3 Analyzing Data

For statistical analysis, SPSS is utilized. Data was subjected to a battery of tests by researchers, including correlation, regression, and reliability analyses.

#### *Variables in the Study Framework and Their Descriptive Statistics*

- Now we may look at Table 1, which displays the descriptive statistics of the study variables. Here are the findings for the Chinese group:
- Statements measuring negative valence are more commonly agreed with by respondents than positive valence statements, as indicated by the average valence of 2.7133.
- Respondents often agree with statements measuring volume (many) more than with statements measuring few, since the average volume is 3.62.
- Statements assessing both recent and old statements have a neutral agreement with an average recentness of 3.31.
- Statements measuring both short and long exhibit a neutral agreement with an average length of 3.4.
- Respondents mostly agree with comments assessing objective reviews, as indicated by the average of 3.918.
- Statements assessing subjective reviews are in agreement with the average subjective review, which is 3.54.
- With an average score of 3.27, consumers show neutral agreement with claims about purchase decisions.

### 4.4 Correlation Analysis

At the 96% confidence level, the table data shows that there is a positive and considerable correlation between purchase decisions and length, valence, volume, recentness, and subjective reviews. This claim is supported by a p-value that is less than 4 %, which indicates a statistically significant link.

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the study variables**

Correlations							
	purchasing decision	objective review	subjective review	Valence	Volume	Recentness	length
purchasing decision	1	.401**	.330**	.372**	.562**	.337**	.380**

## 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, it is evident that Online Customer Reviews (OCRs) are just one area in which the ever-evolving digital world has impacted the information-seeking and sharing behavior of customers. With a particular emphasis on the significance of practicality, dependability, proximity, and social support, this study investigated the myriad of ways in which optical character recognition (OCR) devices influence customer behavior. Through the study's illumination of the effects that OCRs have on trust and the intention to make a purchase, it demonstrates how OCRs are becoming an increasingly significant component of the online economy. The literature review demonstrates that there is a requirement for additional research into the intricate characteristics of optical character recognition (OCR) systems, which encompass both numerical and non-numerical dimensions. This is due to the fact that there are not enough studies that cover all the bases.

For the purpose of the study, a quantitative approach was utilized, and Beijing-based internet users were questioned. In the course of the research, a questionnaire that had been meticulously crafted was utilized to query about the online behaviors and preferences of the respondents, as well as the impact that optical character recognition (OCR) had on their purchasing decisions. After being subjected to statistical analysis, the findings revealed links between many components, thereby shedding insight on the intricate dynamics of online shopping

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