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The Role of Customer Reviews on M-Commerce Sales

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of customer reviews on the sales performance of mobile commerce (m-commerce) platforms. With the proliferation of smartphones and increasing internet penetration, m-commerce has revolutionized the way consumers shop. As physical interaction with products becomes less feasible, online reviews have emerged as critical tools that guide consumer decisions. This thesis investigates how customer reviews, both positive and negative, influence consumers' purchase intentions and sales outcomes. It also examines the elements of review credibility, review volume, and reviewer trustworthiness, and how these elements collectively affect sales conversion rates.

By employing a mixed-methods approach, the research gathers data through structured surveys with m-commerce users. Quantitative findings demonstrate a strong positive correlation between the presence of detailed, positive reviews and increased likelihood of purchase. Qualitative insights further reveal that review authenticity and timeliness are vital in shaping trust. The study concludes that customer reviews serve as digital word-of-mouth and significantly influence consumer trust and engagement on m-commerce platforms. Strategic recommendations are offered for businesses to optimize review management and leverage them for sales enhancement.

The rapid adoption of smartphones and the increasing reliance on mobile applications for retail transactions have transformed the landscape of consumer commerce. Mobile commerce (m-commerce) has emerged as a dominant channel for online shopping, offering unparalleled convenience and accessibility. However, the shift to mobile shopping has limited the ability of consumers to physically assess products, making them heavily dependent on digital cues such as customer reviews. This study investigates the role of customer reviews in influencing consumer behaviour and sales outcomes in the m-commerce environment, with a specific focus on quantitative survey-based research.

This study concludes that customer reviews serve as a digital form of word-of-mouth that significantly shapes consumer perceptions and influences sales performance on m-commerce platforms. The survey findings underscore the importance of review management as a strategic tool for mobile retailers. It is recommended that businesses invest in systems to encourage genuine user feedback, enhance review visibility, and mitigate the impact of misleading or fraudulent reviews.

By focusing on survey-based analysis, this research provides empirical evidence to support the hypothesis that customer reviews play a crucial role in driving m-commerce sales. The insights generated are particularly valuable for digital marketers, app developers, and online retailers seeking to optimize customer experience and improve conversion rates in the mobile commerce ecosystem.

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of mobile commerce (M-Commerce) has revolutionized how consumers engage with online shopping. With the proliferation of smartphones, apps, and mobile-friendly websites, M-Commerce platforms have made it easier for consumers to shop from anywhere at any time. According to Statista, global M-Commerce sales are expected to reach over \$4 trillion by 2025, highlighting the importance of understanding the factors that drive consumer purchasing behaviour in this space. A significant factor influencing consumer behaviour on M-Commerce platforms is customer reviews. Customer reviews have become a crucial element in modern e-commerce, providing social proof and influencing consumers' trust in products, brands, and platforms. Reviews are perceived as authentic and unbiased sources of information, offering insight into product quality, functionality, and the overall customer experience. In M-Commerce, where quick decision-making is often paramount, reviews can directly impact consumer purchasing decisions and the overall sales performance of mobile platforms. Despite the growing importance of customer reviews, their precise role in M-Commerce remains under-explored, especially in terms of how factors such as review volume, sentiment (positive vs. negative), and authenticity influence consumer behaviour and sales. This thesis seeks to fill this gap by examining the relationship between customer reviews and M-Commerce sales, focusing on the ways reviews shape purchasing behaviour in a mobile shopping environment. The rapid advancement of mobile technologies and the widespread use of smartphones have transformed the way consumers interact with businesses, giving rise to a thriving mobile commerce (m-commerce) ecosystem. M-commerce, a subset of electronic commerce (e-commerce), refers to the buying and selling of goods and services through mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets. As mobile devices become more integral to everyday life, businesses are increasingly investing in mobile platforms to reach

and engage with their customers. In this digital landscape, customer-generated content—particularly online reviews—has emerged as a powerful influence on consumer behaviour. Customer reviews, which are voluntary evaluations posted by buyers based on their purchase experiences, serve as a valuable source of information for prospective customers. These reviews can include ratings, written comments, images, and videos, offering insights into product quality, performance, and customer satisfaction. Unlike traditional advertising, which reflects a brand's own narrative, customer reviews are perceived as authentic and unbiased opinions, making them a crucial element in the decision-making process of online shoppers. The significance of customer reviews is even more pronounced in m-commerce environments, where users often have limited screen space and seek quick, reliable information before making a purchase. Positive reviews can enhance a product's credibility, reduce perceived risks, and increase the likelihood of conversion, while negative reviews can deter potential buyers and lead to loss of sales. Therefore, understanding how customer reviews influence m-commerce sales is essential for businesses aiming to optimize their mobile strategies and improve customer engagement. Despite the growing body of research on online consumer behaviour, there remains a need for deeper exploration of how customer reviews impact sales specifically within the m-commerce context. Mobile shopping presents unique challenges and behaviours that may differ from traditional desktop e-commerce, including impulsive buying tendencies, shorter browsing sessions, and a reliance on simplified information presentation. This thesis seeks to bridge this gap by examining the role of customer reviews in shaping consumer purchase decisions and driving sales performance in m-commerce platforms. By integrating theoretical frameworks from consumer behaviour, digital marketing, and mobile technology, this study aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the mechanisms through which customer reviews affect sales outcomes. Through quantitative and qualitative methods, the research will investigate the relationship between review characteristics—such as volume, valence, recency, and credibility—and their impact on consumer trust, purchase intention, and overall sales performance in mobile commerce settings. Ultimately, this thesis aspires to contribute to both academic literature and practical business strategies by offering insights into how online reviews can be effectively managed and leveraged in the mobile marketplace. The findings may aid marketers, developers, and business leaders in designing better customer feedback systems and enhancing user experience, thereby driving growth and competitiveness in the m-commerce sector.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Mobile Commerce: An Evolving Retail Channel: Mobile commerce (m-commerce) has emerged as a critical component of the digital economy, characterized by the use of mobile devices to conduct commercial transactions. According to recent studies, the convenience, portability, and real-time accessibility of mobile platforms have contributed to a rapid increase in mobile shopping activity (Wang & Liu, 2022). Compared to traditional e-commerce, m-commerce is distinguished by its context-aware environment, location sensitivity, and greater potential for personalized user experiences (Shankar et al., 2016). However, the mobile interface also imposes constraints—such as smaller screen sizes, limited input capabilities, and shorter attention spans—which influence user behaviour and decision-making processes.

2. The Psychology of Online Reviews in Consumer Decision-Making: Online customer reviews have become a fundamental source of information for consumers seeking to mitigate perceived risks associated with online shopping. The Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) and the Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) have been widely used to explain how individuals process review content and form attitudes toward products. Reviews contribute to consumers' cognitive evaluations, especially in digital environments where sensory experiences are absent. Several studies have found that online reviews function as a form of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), influencing purchase decisions more effectively than brand-generated content (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006). Trust, credibility, and perceived usefulness are key mediators in this process. The more consumers trust the reviewer or platform, the more likely they are to be influenced by the review (Filieri, 2015).

3. Dimensions of Customer Reviews and Their Impact: Research has identified multiple dimensions of customer reviews that shape their effectiveness:

- Valence (positive or negative sentiment): Positive reviews often lead to increased purchase intentions, while negative reviews can raise doubts or discourage transactions (Zhu & Zhang, 2010).
- Volume (number of reviews): A higher volume of reviews may signal popularity and reliability but can also overwhelm consumers, depending on the review format and context (Park & Lee, 2008).
- Recency: Recent reviews are generally perceived as more relevant and reflective of the current product or service quality (Xie et al., 2014).
- Reviewer Credibility: Verified purchases, detailed feedback, and perceived expertise enhance the persuasiveness of the review (Hu et al., 2008).

4. Customer Reviews in the M-Commerce Environment: Although the impact of reviews has been well documented in desktop-based e-commerce, their role in m-commerce is less thoroughly explored. Mobile users typically make faster decisions and rely more heavily on heuristic cues, such as star ratings and short summaries, rather than detailed text (Yoon et al., 2021). This behaviour can amplify the influence of review valence and visibility while diminishing the weight of in-depth content. Furthermore, mobile platforms often integrate reviews with real-time notifications, social sharing features, and AI-based recommendation engines, adding layers of complexity to how reviews affect sales. Research suggests that m-commerce users are more responsive to visuals in reviews, including user-uploaded images and videos, which can compensate for the lack of physical interaction with the product (Lim et al., 2020).

5. Trust and Purchase Intention in M-Commerce: Trust plays a pivotal role in driving m-commerce adoption. The Mobile Trust Model (Zhou, 2011) suggests that both system-related factors (e.g., app security, ease of use) and social factors (e.g., user-generated content, peer influence) determine trust formation. Reviews contribute significantly to perceived trustworthiness, which in turn affects consumers' willingness to buy. In particular, studies highlight that well-structured, balanced, and verified reviews foster greater trust, which is essential given the impersonal nature of digital transactions.

6. Gaps in the Literature: While prior research has addressed the general effects of online reviews on consumer behaviour, few studies have focused specifically on the mobile commerce context. Most existing work either generalizes across platforms or overlooks the distinctive behavioural patterns of mobile users. Additionally, there is limited research into how different review features (e.g., multimedia content, emotional tone, or linguistic style) impact m-commerce sales performance. This gap presents an opportunity to explore how businesses can optimize review presentation and management strategies for mobile users.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative research approach to examine the influence of customer reviews on mobile commerce (m-commerce) sales. The research is designed to explore how various review attributes—such as sentiment (valence), volume, recency, and reviewer credibility—affect consumer purchasing behaviour and sales outcomes in the m-commerce environment. Data is collected from popular mobile shopping platforms, focusing on product categories with a substantial number of reviews. A purposive sampling strategy is used to select relevant products, and sentiment analysis tools are applied to classify review polarity. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression techniques are employed to analyze the relationship between review characteristics and sales performance. Where applicable, qualitative content analysis supports the interpretation of review context. Ethical considerations are observed by using publicly accessible data and ensuring user anonymity. While the study aims to offer valuable insights for businesses and marketers, it acknowledges limitations such as potential data access restrictions and the exclusion of other sales-driving factors like pricing or advertising. Distribute online surveys to M-Commerce consumers to assess how customer reviews impact purchase decisions. Target of 60-70 M-Commerce consumers for the survey that will help for analysing customer trust. The research will primarily follow a **quantitative approach**, aiming to measure the relationship between customer reviews and M-Commerce sales using statistical tools.

IV. RESEARCH DESIGN

Descriptive Design: The research will be **descriptive** in nature to observe, describe, and document how customer reviews impact M-Commerce sales without manipulating variables.

Exploratory Design: The research will also explore how specific factors such as **review sentiment**, **review volume**, **review credibility**, and **engagement** influence sales within M-Commerce environments.

Primary Data Collection:

Survey/Questionnaire:

Target Group: The target respondents for surveys will be **M-Commerce consumers**. These consumers will be asked about their purchasing behaviour in relation to customer reviews.

Questionnaire Design: A structured questionnaire has been used to gather data on how consumers react to **different types of reviews** (e.g., text, multimedia, positive, negative), their **trust levels**, and how these influence their **purchase decisions**.

Survey Method: The survey will be distributed via **online platforms** like social media, M-Commerce apps, or email to ensure broad reach.

Secondary Data Collection:

E-Commerce Data: Data will be collected from popular **M-Commerce platforms** (e.g., Amazon, eBay) regarding **sales performance** and the **volume of customer reviews** for various products. This data will be analyzed to establish correlations between **reviews** and **sales**.

Academic and Industry Literature: Previous studies, **market reports**, and **academic articles** will be reviewed to understand the **theories** and **concepts** related to customer reviews and sales performance.

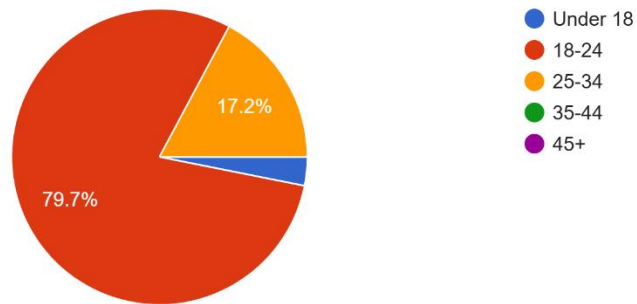
This chapter provides an extensive explanation of the techniques employed for the collection of primary data, the rationale for using the selected data collection method, the pattern and order of questions, and the measurement scales used. For the study, an online self-report questionnaire was used, created via Google Forms. Google Forms enables distribution to a large segment, particularly the digitally enabled segment that has a greater possibility of engagement in mobile commerce. Respondents in various locations were able to complete the form on smartphones, tablets, or desktops at their own convenience. With the research environment being product purchase via m-commerce, the target respondents would necessarily be technology savvy and regular online purchasers. An online environment mirrors the virtual world where the observed actions would actually occur, and hence would be contextually appropriate. A software such as Google Forms is also free and allows quick dissemination and instant collection of information. This allowed the researcher to gather lots of data within a short time while saving on printing, physical movement, and manual typing. The survey was designed to gather data in a structured manner regarding consumer demographics, use of m-commerce, attitudes towards feedback, and purchase decisions.

DATA ANALYSIS

Section A: Demographics:

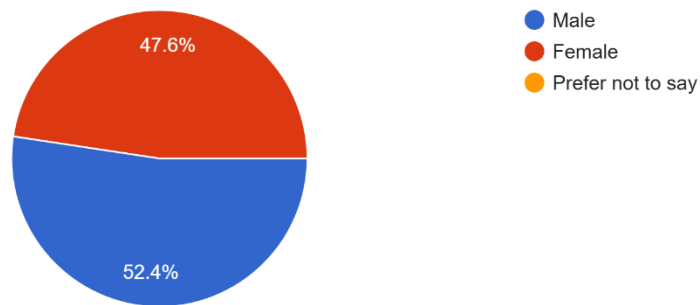
What is your age group?

64 responses



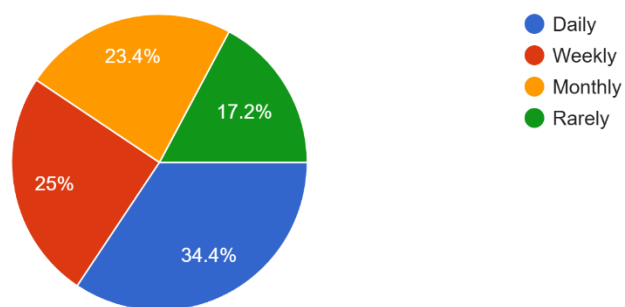
Gender

63 responses



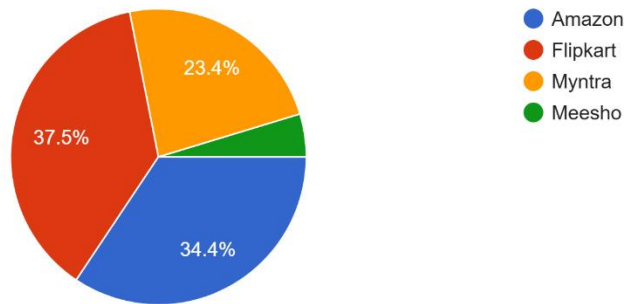
How frequently do you shop using mobile apps?

64 responses



Which mobile apps do you use most for shopping?

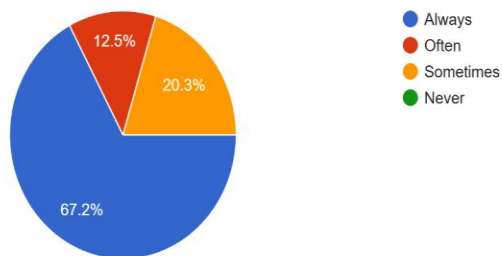
64 responses



Section B: Online Shopping Behaviour:

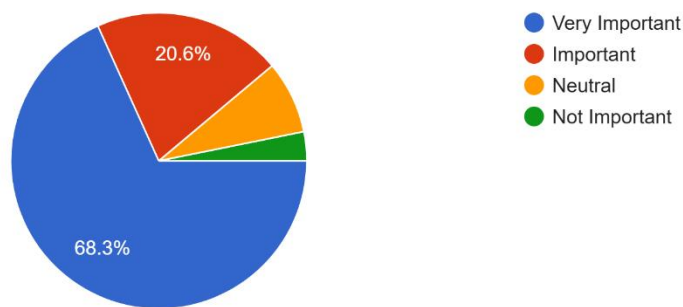
Do you read customer reviews before purchasing on mobile apps?

64 responses



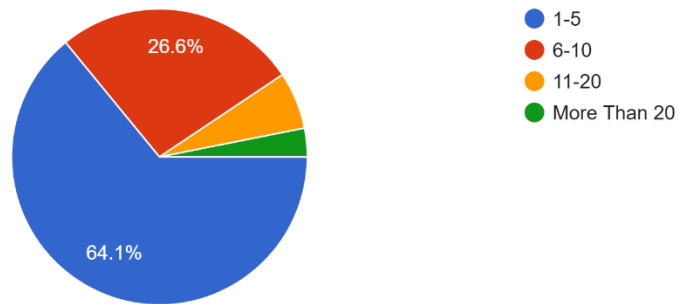
How important are customer reviews in your decision to purchase a product?

63 responses



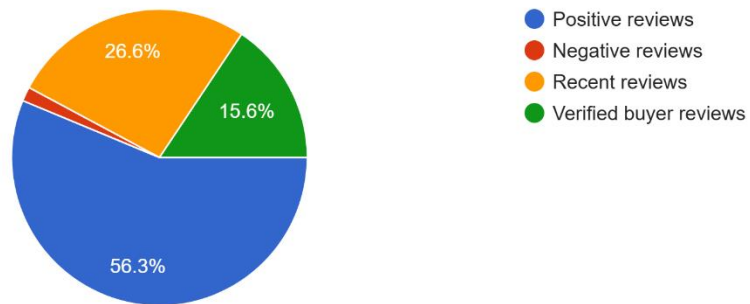
How many reviews do you usually read before making a purchase?

64 responses



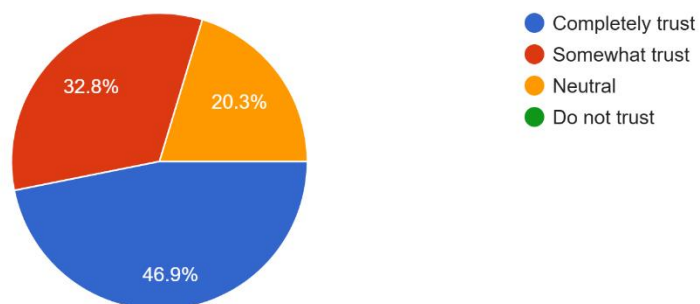
What type of reviews influences you the most?

64 responses



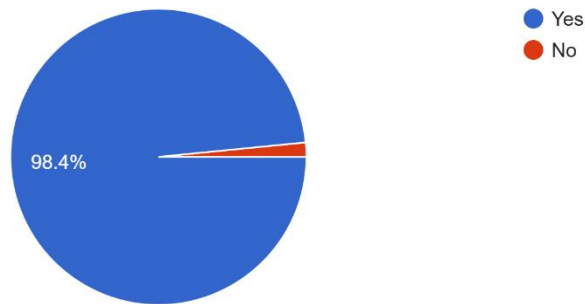
Do you trust reviews on mobile apps?

64 responses



Have you ever changed your mind after reading negative reviews?

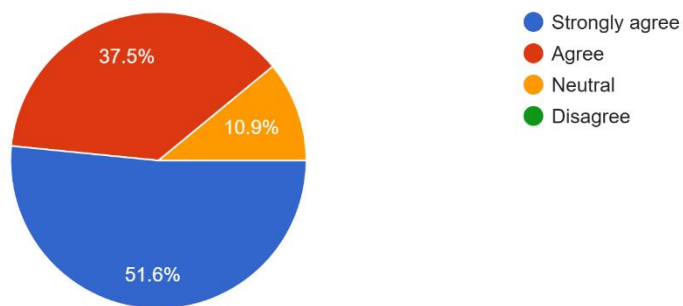
64 responses



Section C: Impact of Reviews on Purchase Decision:

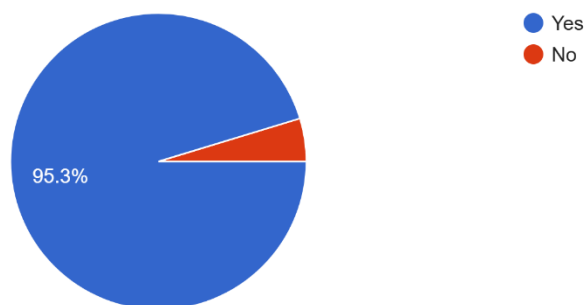
Do reviews affect your perception of product quality?

64 responses



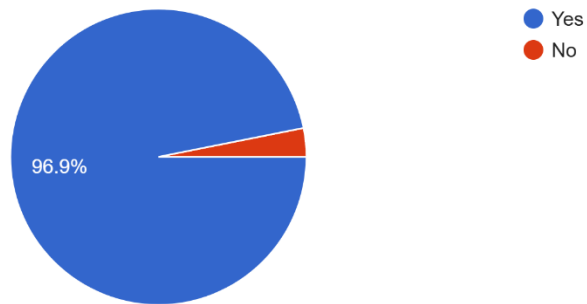
Do you consider reviewer ratings (e.g., 1 to 5 stars) before buying?

64 responses



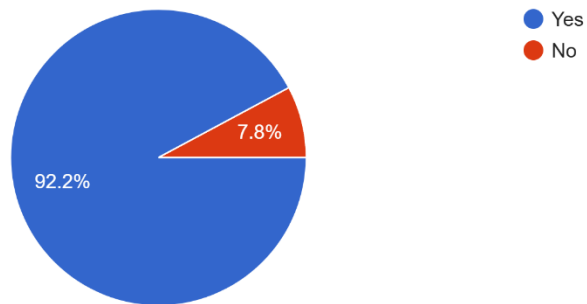
Does the number of reviews impact your trust in the product?

64 responses



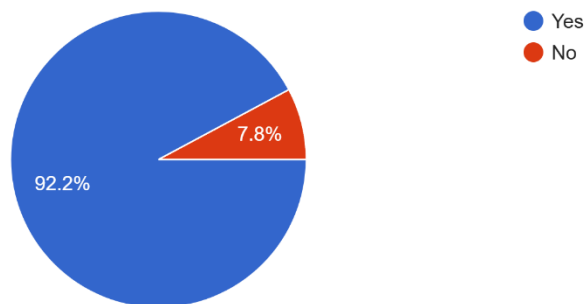
Do reviews from verified buyers influence your decision more?

64 responses



Have you ever written a review after a purchase on a mobile app?

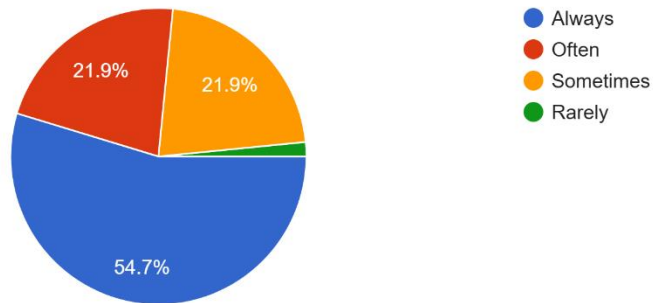
64 responses



Section D: Purchase Experience and Trust:

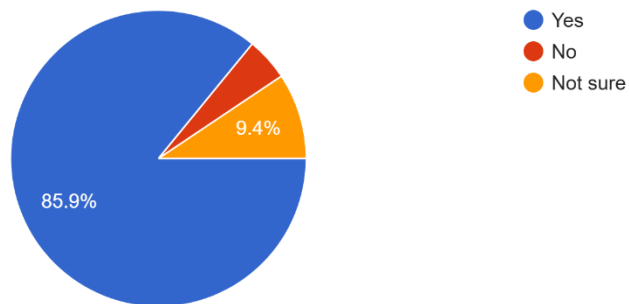
How often do you feel that reviews reflect the actual product experience?

64 responses



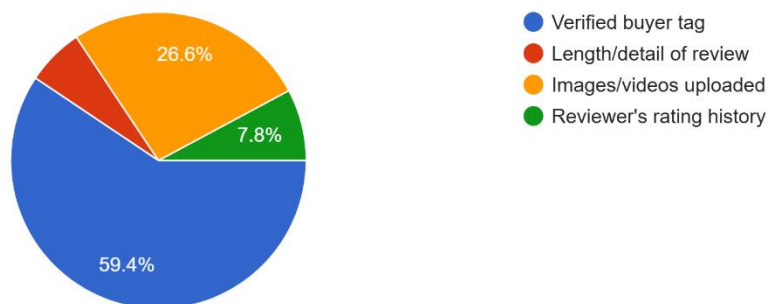
Do you think fake reviews are a concern in mobile commerce?

64 responses



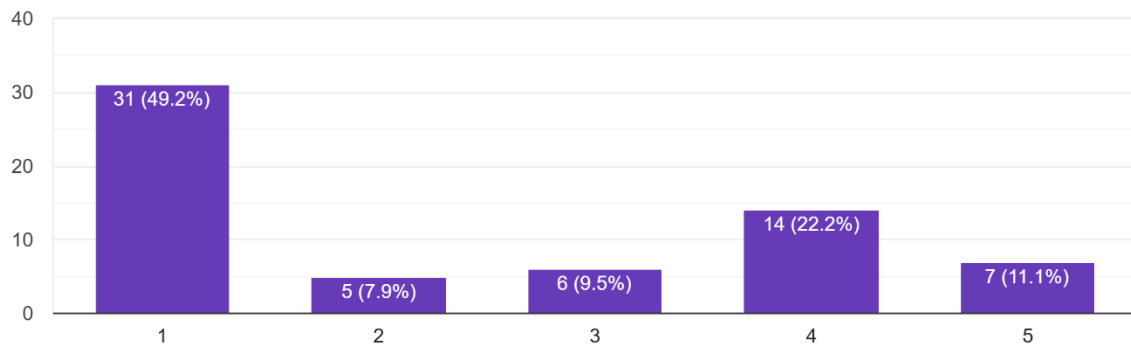
What influences your trust in a reviewer?

64 responses



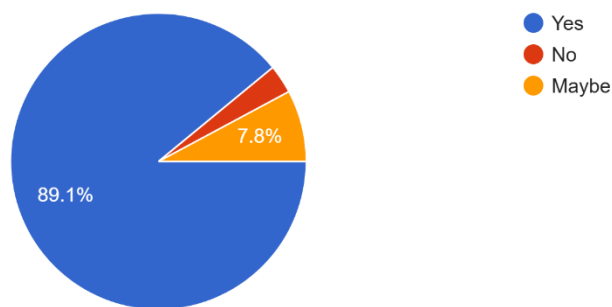
On a scale of 1 to 5, how much do reviews influence your final purchase decision?

63 responses



Would you recommend a product based on your own review experience?

64 responses



V. INTERPRETATION

This section presents a detailed analysis of the data collected through the Google Forms survey, structured to answer the research questions and validate the hypothesis. Both quantitative summaries and behavioural interpretations are included.

1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Observations
Age	79.7% of respondents are aged 18–25, indicating strong digital engagement.
Gender	Approx. 52% Male, 48% Female – both genders are actively purchasing online.
Occupation	Students and Working Professionals dominate the sample (combined ~80%).
Location	Urban and Semi-Urban areas – indicates better access to digital platforms.

2. M-Commerce Usage Patterns

Variable	Insight
Most Used Apps	FLIPKART & AMAZON most mentioned; MYNTRA also used.
Purchase Frequency	Majority purchase daily or weekly; very few rarely users.
Purchase Drivers	Discounts/Offer and Availability were top motivators.

Interpretation: While most users are not frequent buyers, they are influenced by convenience, affordability, and accessibility. This makes customer reviews crucial, especially for new or infrequent users.

3. Customer Feedback Behaviour

a. Do consumers read feedback before purchase?

- Over 80% said they read reviews "Always" or "Often".
- Verified Buyer Comments and Written Reviews were considered the most helpful.

b. Impact of Feedback on Decision-Making

Feedback Influence Question	Result
Avoided product due to negative reviews?	Yes – over 98% have avoided purchases.
Tried new product due to positive reviews?	Yes – around 98% reported doing so.
Does positive feedback lead to repeat purchases?	Over 98% said Yes.

Interpretation: Feedback is a major influence on consumer choices. Negative feedback deters purchases, while positive feedback builds loyalty and trust.

4. Feedback Contribution by Users

Question	Observation
How often do you write reviews?	Most users said "Sometimes" or "Rarely."
Why do you leave reviews?	Positive experiences, incentives, and complaints
Is the feedback system easy to use?	85% rated it Easy or Very Easy

5. Trust and Feedback Credibility

Question	Response Summary
Do you trust unknown users' feedback?	Majority said Sometimes or Rarely
Do you believe brands respond to feedback?	Most said Not Sure or No
Do you believe feedback improves platforms?	Nearly all responded Yes or Strongly Agree

VI. LIMITATIONS

This page critically assesses the assumptions, constraints, and limitations which influenced the design, implementation, and interpretation of this research. These limitations need to be placed in context to enable the findings to be contextualized and made transparent for academic integrity and managerial decision-making.

Discussion of Results within the Framework of Limitations and Assumptions

While the study gave valuable information regarding the effect of customer feedback on h m-commerce purchasing behaviour, findings should be viewed with the knowledge of the following limitations:

- 1. Sample Size Limitation:** The final sample had a 60 usable responses. Although adequate for an exploratory study, the small sample detracts from generalizability to larger populations, e.g., elderly customers, rural communities, or technologically unsophisticated consumers.
- 2. Assumption of Honest Responses:** It was assumed that all the respondents answered the survey truthfully. Social desirability bias or limited knowledge about products may have influenced some of the answers, especially those relating to self-reported satisfaction and trust.
- 3. Self-Selection-Bias:** Most participants were from technologically active backgrounds (urban, semi-urban), hence introducing selection bias. The results may not be generalizable to user behaviour in rural, less networked, or poorer areas.
- 4. Cross-Sectional Nature:** The study is cross-sectional, and patterns of customer response behaviour and patterns of purchasing behaviour may shift based on seasonal trends, promotions, or new product introductions, which have not yet been considered.

VII. CONCLUSION

As mobile commerce continues to grow rapidly, the role of digital word-of-mouth through customer reviews has become increasingly influential in shaping consumer behaviour. The findings demonstrate that reviews serve as a critical source of information for potential buyers, helping them reduce

uncertainty and build trust in both the product and the seller. Consumers are more likely to make purchases when they encounter positive reviews, particularly those that are recent, detailed, and perceived as authentic. Even negative reviews, while potentially discouraging, contribute to transparency and can improve credibility when addressed properly by sellers. Moreover, the accessibility and visibility of customer feedback on mobile platforms enhance the decision-making process, especially in environments where quick judgments are common. This makes customer reviews not just a passive feature, but an active driver of engagement and sales performance. Businesses that strategically manage and respond to reviews can foster stronger customer relationships and improve their offerings based on user feedback. Thus, customer reviews are not only a reflection of user satisfaction but also a dynamic tool that directly influences the success of mobile commerce operations. This thesis has explored the significant role that customer reviews play in shaping consumer behaviour and driving sales in M-Commerce. The findings highlight that customer reviews, particularly their volume, sentiment, and authenticity, are key factors influencing purchasing decisions in the mobile commerce environment. Positive reviews are particularly powerful in boosting consumer trust and purchase intent, while negative reviews, when coupled with seller engagement, can increase perceived credibility and transparency. Moreover, visual content in reviews, such as images and videos, significantly enhances consumer confidence and leads to higher conversion rates. Demographic factors also shape how reviews are perceived, with younger consumers placing more value on them than older demographics.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Encourage Review Volume and Quality: M-Commerce platforms should actively encourage customers to leave reviews by offering incentives like discounts or loyalty points.

Enhance Review Credibility: Implement a verified purchase system to increase the authenticity of reviews. This reassures consumers that the reviews come from genuine buyers, which can enhance trust and influence purchasing decisions.

Engage with Negative Reviews: Sellers should respond promptly and professionally to negative reviews. Addressing customer concerns transparently can turn negative experiences into positive brand perceptions and strengthen consumer trust.

Monitor and Analyze Review Trends: Regularly monitor customer reviews to identify emerging trends or product issues. This real-time feedback can be used to make product improvements or adjustments in marketing strategies.

IX. REFERENCES

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