

The Impact of E-Word of Mouth (E-Reviews) from Family and Friends on E-Shoppers' Purchase Decisions in Emerging Markets: An Amazon.in Study

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ABSTRACT

Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WoM) is available to customers in various forms of online consumer reviews, which play a significant role in supporting e-commerce purchase decisions. It primarily emphasizes person-to-person communication, particularly the influence of family and friends, and how such interpersonal interactions within households affect online shopping behavior. A key characteristic of e-WoM is its digital nature, where information is transmitted through written text, images, and videos. This enables it to reach a large audience simultaneously and increases its potential to go viral. The present study was undertaken to examine the effectiveness of e-WoM on consumer purchase intention of electronic goods, with specific reference to Amazon. The scope of the study was limited to residents of Bangalore; however, it still provides valuable insights into the impact of e-WoM on consumer purchase behavior in the electronic goods segment. Customers generally recognize that online consumer reviews help them assess the credibility of e-WoM and assist in making informed purchase decisions. The primary objective of the study was to analyze the influence of family and friends on the acceptance of e-WoM and its impact on consumer purchase intention. The study also examined various demographic factors that may influence the usage and acceptance of e-WoM. Data for the study was collected from residents of Bangalore using an online sampling method. The collected data was analyzed using appropriate statistical tools, and the results were systematically tabulated. Key findings of the study indicate that most respondents tend to purchase the same brand products as those recommended by their social contacts when buying new products. Additionally, many respondents feel more confident in their purchase decisions when they receive opinions from their contacts on social media. It was also observed that when respondents receive product-related information or opinions from friends, they often share it further within their social network.

Keywords: e-WoM, influence of family and friends, persuasion, e-shoppers, Amazon.in

1. Introduction

Clients study electronic word of mouth (e-WoM) to choose obtaining alternatives. Studies display that social component impact acknowledgment of e-WoM. This e-WoM may be found in digital networks: customer audits, web journals, discussions, and informal communities. Social standards or suppositions in virtual networks affect acknowledgment of e-WOM, amongst everyday net customers. Mastery and contribution can assist customers with identifying e-WOM high-quality. Trust is a widespread precursor of practices, for example, tolerating steering, that require reliance on others (Thoti, 2024). Clients rely on to believe to overcome elevated stage dangers related to web-based shopping. Accordingly, belief impacts shopping for alternatives. Believability is a component of consideration. Inside the event that customers receive that counsel is stable, they may be even extra geared up to well-known and utilize the e-WOM to decide shopping for choices (Nieto *et al.*, 2014).

1.1. Influence of electronic word of mouth

With the blast and improvement of insights and verbal trade advances, investigating computerized expression of mouth has developed in current years. For instance, Dellarocas (2003) tried online comments instruments (i.e., eBay) and found that such a web medium where shoppers and sellers can meet is a basic dispatch channel for developing purchaser trust and collaboration in those virtual networks (Fong and Burton 2006). and item improvement. As computerized networks offer buyers a helpful channel to set up connections, trade item information, and widen web-based business, those gatherings have come to be an incredible stock of electronic expressions of mouth for the two buyers and advertisers. Further, Senecal and Nantel (2004) tried the effect of online item pointers on buyers' item decision (Kumar Thoti, 2023). Discoveries from their examinations affirmed that points who counseled item recommendations settled on the upheld stock multiple times as regularly as themes

who didn't counsel any clues, which again shows the powerful power of computerized informal exchange and on-line item proposals on clients' item related choices. Various investigations have added to the information on computerized verbal exchange by method for looking at the outcomes of advanced expression of mouth on item accomplishment (e.g., salary) (Chevalier and Mayzlin 2006; Godes and Mayzlin 2004), components that move buyers to explain themselves through benefactor assessment frameworks (Hennig and Thureau, 2004), buyer reactions and inspiration to skip close by messages (Phelps, 2004), the effect of computerized expression of mouth on line.

1.2. Studies on purchase intention

Word-of-mouth refers returned to the act of changing advertising data amongst purchasers. Word of mouth is frequently characterized as oral, man or woman-to-character verbal exchange between a receiver and a communicator in which the communicator guarantees a non-industrial message (Thoti & Vyshnavi, 2019). As customers often use word of mouth as soon as they are seeking data about brands, products, offerings, businesses and word of mouth is mentioned as an essential supply of files that influences client product choices (Smith, et al, 2005).

Despite the reality that marketer generated information and industrial organization sources play an enormous function in developing client interest in merchandise, word of mouth is the finest source of statistics impacting clients' actual adoption of new merchandise (Gilly, 2002). Word of mouth is often more effective than traditional mass media or advertising and marketing in converting customers' attitudes and behaviors (East, *et al*, 2008). As an instance, early studies observed that the impact of word of mouth on consumer wish is more than print advertisements, TV advertisement, and radio-based marketing (Herr et al 2001). Conceptually, opinion leaders are the records turbines or carriers in word-of-mouth communications. Opinion leaders act as statistical transmitters who omit records from social media on their peers and affect their opinions and alternatives typically associated with merchandise or services (Watts and Dodds, 2007). Precisely, it is miles what structure of product to purchase on the subsequent event. A buy intention is an estimated result behavior.

Purchase intention has been measured extensively inner advertising and marketing and monetary studies and is often used to predict the earnings of new packaged products. Inside the research completed by means of the usage of charge and Feick (2004), it grew to become positioned that a client's buy intention is strongly prompted via the usage of the evaluations of friends, circle of relatives, spouse and children or pals. A product's recognition can be set up by capability of the quantity of recommendations it has generated (Park, 2007). Statistics generated from customers are effective in forming others purchase intentions and the buy intention of a specific product is better internal high worried consumers.

1.3. Customer involvement

Awad & Ragowsky (2008) reports that this paper centers around the social impact of sexual orientation on the relationship of online informal exchange and trust in web-based business. To empower online trade, numerous online retailers utilize online informal frameworks, where shoppers can rate items offered available to be purchased. Until this point, how such evaluations influence trust and reception of web-based business crosswise over sexual orientations has been generally unexplored. We survey whether the impact of online trust on aim to shop online is directed by sexual orientation. Our outcomes show that the impact of trust on expectation to shop online is more grounded for ladies than for men. Moreover, we find that men esteem their capacity to post content on the web, while ladies esteem the responsive interest of different buyers to the substance they have posted. At long last, we locate that online verbal quality influences online trust distinctively crosswise over orientations. Bansal and Voyer (2000) This article explores the procedures of verbal (WoM) inside an administration buy choice setting. The creators contend that to comprehend these procedures, analysts must inspect the job of relational impacts in the conventional WoM models based inside the no interpersonal worldview. Because of the present examination, three unmistakable relations develop: first, the impact of the no interpersonal powers (collector's mastery, recipient's apparent hazard, and sender's skill) because of WOM on administration buy choices; second, the impact of the relational powers (ties quality and how effectively WOM is looked for) because of WOM on administration buy choices; and third, the impacts of non-interpersonal powers on relational powers. Administrative ramifications and roads for future research are tended to.

1.4. E-WoM and consumer loyalty

A study by Ngoma and Ntale (2019) showed that WOM became a binding of courting advertising and consumer loyalty. Similarly, Septiari (2018) showed that e-WoM mediated the relationship between internet sites exceptional and believe. That is like the findings of Rawal and Saavedra (2017) which also showed that phrase-of-mouth mediated the connection between pre- launch studio actions (stars, production, price range, and variety of screens).

Malik and Hadi (2019) investigated the mediating influences of e-WoM with regards to usefulness and on-line purchases, and it was proven that e-WoM did have a mediating effect. Rahim (2016) analyzed e-WoM assessment adoption of source credibility elements against green buy intentions, as defined earlier, with comparable outcomes. Also, this could practice the link between impartial variable and mediation, in addition to the relationship between mediation and dependent variables. Due to the sooner discussions regarding content variables and e-WoM, in addition to e-WoM and green purchase intentions, the modern examine puts ahead the following speculation.

1.5. Purchase Intention

Pedersen *et al.* (2014) argues that e-WoM is the improvement of phrase of mouth verbal exchange that utilizes the power of virtual persuasion from clients about a product. e-WoM may be described as high-quality or poor verbal exchange toward brand records through the net primarily based on generation (Atika *et al.*, 2016). e-WoM is considered as a source of correct and reliable information that shapes expectancies of consumer goals and buy aim is a purchaser behavior that arises as a response to objects that imply the patron's preference to make a purchase (Kotler & Keller, 2009: 137). Buy purpose is part of the behavioral issue in a ingesting mindset (Alatas and Tabrani, 2018). The digital word of mouth (e-WoM) are the statements (either fantastic or bad) about a product or a corporation, that is on the internet (Xue and Zhou, 2010). It is a phenomenon that takes opinion location over the internet and most of the people of the associated folks who opined there continue to be nameless (Cheung & Thadani, 2012; Shan, 2016). With the complete use of the electronic word of mouth (e-WoM), gift-day clients can examine different human reviews approximately services and products regardless of their geographical limits (Makrides *et al* 2020). studies conducted on e-WoM have hooked up the reality that e-WoM is a crucial idea for both purchasers and marketers.

1.6. Consumer behavior

Cheung & Thadani (2012) divided e-WoM into two wide segments, which can be: marketplace- stage evaluation and character-degree evaluation. The marketplace-degree analysis deals with the organizational outcome inclusive of product sales, because of e- WOM and individual degree analysis deals with the effect of e-WoM on distinctive aspects of consumer behavior inclusive of purchase intention. in recent times, e-WoM has established a dedication to the issue of strategic importance in each research and practice (Wilson, *et al* 2017).

1.7. E-Word of Mouth

e-WoM is wherein marketing data is shared amongst consumers to the extent that it affects their behavior and mindset regarding services or products (Huete-Alcocer, 2017). e-WoM costs of informal communication across the internet aimed at clients and related with the usability or key properties of a products or services, or the emblem in the back of them. The advantage of this device is the truth that each single patron can be involved, as anyone can percentage and enjoy on- line and post an evaluation of a product for other customers to study (Huete-Alcocer, 2017).

2. Objectives of the study:

- To examine the influence of family and friends on the acceptance of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WoM) and its impact on customer purchase intention.
- To analyse the relationship between brand image and customers' purchase decision-making behaviour.

3. Scope of the study:

The study aims to gauge customer reviews and satisfaction towards the available online E- commerce website (Amazon.in). The study further finds various aspects of the online shopping services in the area. Based on these factors the findings of the study can help service providers meet customer expectations in a better way and increase sales. About the company: All Amazon teams and businesses, from Prime delivery to AWS, are guided by four key tenets: customer obsession rather than competitor focus, passion for invention, commitment to operational excellence, and long-term thinking. We are driven by the excitement of building technologies, inventing products, and providing services that transform the way our customers live their lives and run their businesses.

4. Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Lower levels of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WoM) acceptance are associated with a lower level of consumer purchase intention. This implies that when consumers show limited trust in, or engagement with, online reviews, recommendations, and digital peer communications, their likelihood of making a purchase decision decrease correspondingly. In such cases, reduced credibility or influence of e-WoM weakens its role as an external information source, thereby negatively affecting consumers' confidence and willingness to proceed

with a purchase.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Higher levels of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WoM) acceptance are associated with a higher level of consumer purchase intention. This suggests that when consumers actively accept, trust, and rely on online reviews and recommendations shared through digital platforms, their purchase intention significantly increases. Strong acceptance of e-WoM enhances perceived credibility, reduces uncertainty, and reinforces consumer confidence in product evaluation, ultimately leading to a greater likelihood of purchase decisions.

5. Type of Research Design

The present study adopts a descriptive research design, which is considered appropriate for systematically examining and describing the relationship between electronic word-of-mouth (e-WoM) and consumer purchase intention. This design enables the researcher to understand existing behavioral patterns without manipulating any study variables. To this study, respondents were selected based on specific inclusion criteria. The study considered only those customers who regularly visit the Amazon.in website and who have completed a minimum of three visits to the platform, ensuring that respondents have sufficient exposure to online shopping behavior. In addition, respondents were required to possess the ability to communicate in English, Kannada, or Telugu to facilitate effective data collection and accurate response interpretation. At the same time, certain exclusion criteria were applied to maintain the relevance and reliability of the data. Customers who do not regularly use the Amazon.in website or who have not completed at least three visits were excluded from the study, as they may lack adequate experience with the platform. Furthermore, individuals who were unable to communicate in English, Kannada, or Telugu were not considered for participation, to ensure clarity and consistency in the responses collected.

6. Sampling procedure

Universe, Sampling Design and Data Collection: The universe of the present study comprises users of the Amazon.in website. In addition, the study context is supported by the presence of an Amazon Fulfillment Centre located at Whitefield, Bengaluru, which provides operational relevance to the research setting. The study adopted a convenience sampling technique for the selection of respondents, considering accessibility and feasibility of reaching active online customers. A total sample size of 120 respondents was selected for the study.

Sources of Data: The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire designed to capture responses from Amazon.in customers. In addition, interviews were conducted with employees, managers, and other relevant stakeholders associated with Amazon.in and the Amazon Fulfillment Centre in order to gain deeper insights into the operational and consumer-related aspects of the study. The questionnaire consisted of twenty-seven items, including statements and questions with predefined response options. The initial five items were focused on socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, while the remaining items addressed variables related to electronic word-of-mouth (e-WoM), consumer perceptions, and purchase intention on Amazon.in.

Administration of the Research Instrument: The data collection process involved direct interaction with e-customers. The researcher first introduced himself to the respondents and explained the purpose of the study, along with details of the research objectives. Contact information of selected e-customers was obtained through the support of Amazon staff. A convenient time was scheduled for each respondent, and data collection was conducted accordingly through telephonic or online interaction. Prior informed consent was obtained from all participants before commencing the interview. Each session involved a guided administration of the questionnaire, where respondents were assisted in understanding and answering all items. On average, each interaction lasted between thirty to forty minutes.

Psychometric Properties of the Tool: The reliability of the research instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient to determine internal consistency. The observed Cronbach's alpha value for the tool was 0.821, indicating a good level of reliability. This suggests that the items in the questionnaire demonstrate strong inter-correlation and effectively measure a common underlying construct.

The validity of the instrument was established through both face validity and content validity. Face validity was confirmed by obtaining feedback from participants regarding the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the questionnaire. Respondents indicated that the instrument was well-structured and appropriately reflected consumer experiences related to shopping on Amazon.in. Content validity was ensured by evaluating whether the individual items adequately represented the intended constructs of the study. Participants reviewed the relevance of each question to the overall objectives and confirmed that the items effectively measured the intended dimensions without bias, thereby ensuring neutrality in responses.

Secondary Data: Secondary data for the study was obtained from published sources including academic journals,

research articles, books, and credible online resources such as websites and blogs related to Amazon and e-commerce practices. These sources were used to support the theoretical foundation and contextual understanding of the study.

7. Pilot and Main Study-

A Pilot study was planned and conducted on ten samples. Certain changes were made to the statements of the questionnaire, after the pilot study. Further, the main study was conducted, and the data was collected from a hundred and fifty samples. The steps that were followed to complete the main study are as follows: The researchers personally visited the Amazon Fulfillment Centre, from which prior permission was obtained, in order to approach the e-customer, in order to collect relevant data. The respondents were met through tele calling, appraised regarding the purpose and need of the research study. Thus, the interaction would continue and focus on the questions.

8. Analysis of data-

The data collected was checked for its consistency. Those of the questionnaires, in which they were incomplete / wrongly filled with data, such questionnaires were discarded. Finally, the data collected from a hundred and twenty samples were finally set for further analysis and interpretation. Given below are the statistical tools used to analyze the data and interpret the results.

Chi-square- The Chi-Square test procedure helps in making predictions about the larger population from which the sample is drawn by tabulating variables into categories. Thus, compares the observed and expected frequencies in each category to test whether all categories contain the same proportion of values or that each category contains a user-specified proportion of values. In the present study, chi-square test was applied to find out the significance of difference between various groups of frequencies of selected variables, amongst various types of stakeholders.

Contingency Co-efficient analysis- Contingency table analysis was applied to find out the association between two sets of variables employed in the present study amongst various stakeholders. A contingency table is a type of table in matrix format. The crosstab demonstrates the frequency distribution of variables thereby provides the picture of the interrelation between two variables and helps to find out the interactions between variables, amongst various types of stakeholders. Using the above-mentioned statistical measures, the data was analyzed using IBM SPSS 25.0.1 version. The results obtained were tabulated and interpreted. The tables are given below.

Table 1: Frequency and percentage responses for “I often identify with other people by purchasing the same products and brands they purchase” along with results of Test statistics.

I often identify with other people by purchasing the same products and brands they purchase		Occupation				Test Statistics
		Student	Professional	Business	Total	
Strongly Disagree	F	2	0	0	2	$X^2=6.073$ $P = .639$ $CC =.219$ $P=.639$
	%	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%	
Disagree	F	5	1	0	6	
	%	4.2%	0.8%	0.0%	5.0%	
Neutral	F	12	6	3	21	
	%	10.0%	5.0%	2.5%	17.5%	
Agree	F	22	14	7	43	
	%	18.3%	11.7%	5.8%	35.8%	
Strongly Agree	F	29	9	10	48	
	%	24.2%	7.5%	8.3%	40.0%	
Total	F	70	30	20	120	
	%	58.3%	25.0%	16.7%	100.0%	

Occupation wise comparison amongst the respondents with respect to the aspect of I often identify with other people by purchasing the same products and brands they purchase has revealed that 40.8% and 35.8% of the respondents have opined that they often identify with other people by purchasing the same products and brands they purchase as in strongly agree and agree respectively; and on the other hand 17.5% of the respondents have reportedly remained neutral regarding the same, along with a small minority of the respondents reported to strongly disagree and disagree at 5% and 1.7% respectively. Chi-square revealed no significant difference between the frequencies ($X^2 = 6.073$; $p = .639$), thus leading to an understanding that most of the respondents were in favor of I often identify with other people by purchasing the same products and brands they purchase. Contingency co-efficient revealed that no significant association exists amongst the sets of frequencies ($CC = .219$, $P = .639$) indicating that the students as a group at 24.2% and 18.3% have revealed that they ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’ to I often identify with other people by purchasing the same products and brands they purchase, whereas 10% have reported that they are ‘neutral’ regarding there I often identify with other people by purchasing the same products and brands they purchase. Further, the professionals as a group have revealed that they “strongly agree” and ‘agree’ at 7.5% and at 11.7% and with 5% remaining neutral to I often identify with other people by purchasing the same products and brands they purchase. The Businesspersons as a group have reported that at 8.3% and 5.8% that they “strongly agree” and “agree” to I often identify with other people by purchasing the same products and brands they purchase.

Table 2: Frequency and percentage responses for “To make sure I buy the right product or brand; I often observe what others are buying and using based on their reviews on the websites” along with results of Test statistics.

To make sure I buy the right product or brand, I often observe what others are buying and using based on their reviews on the websites		Occupation				Test Statistics
		Student	Professional	Business	Total	
Strongly Disagree	F	3	1	0	4	$X^2 = 7.12$ $P = .524$ $CC = .237$ $P = .524$
	%	2.5%	0.8%	0.0%	3.3%	
Disagree	F	0	1	1	2	
	%	0.0%	0.8%	0.8%	1.7%	
Neutral	F	15	5	1	21	
	%	12.5%	4.2%	0.8%	17.5%	
Agree	F	18	8	5	31	
	%	15.0%	6.7%	4.2%	25.8%	
Strongly Agree	F	34	15	13	62	
	%	28.3%	12.5%	10.8%	51.7%	
Total	F	70	30	20	120	
	%	58.3%	25.0%	16.7%	100.0%	

Occupation wise comparison amongst the respondents with respect to the aspect of To make sure I buy the right product or brand, I often observe what others are buying and using based on their reviews on the websites has revealed that 51.7% and 25.8% of the respondents have opined that they To make sure I buy the right product or brand, I often observe what others are buying and using based on their reviews on the websites as in strongly agree and agree respectively; and on the other hand 17.5% of the respondents have reportedly remained neutral regarding the same, along with a small minority of the respondents reported to strongly disagree and disagree at 1.7% and 3.3% respectively concerning their To make sure I buy the right product or brand, I often observe what others are buying and using based on their reviews on the websites. Chi-square revealed no significant difference between the frequencies ($X^2 = 7.120$; $p = .524$),

thus leading to an understanding that most of the respondents were in favor of making sure I buy the right product or brand, I often observe what others are buying and using based on their reviews on the websites. Contingency co-efficient revealed that no significant association exists amongst the sets of frequencies (CC=.237, P=.524) indicating that the students as a group at 28.3% and 15% have revealed that they ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’ to make sure I buy the right product or brand, I often observe what others are buying and using based on their reviews on the websites, where as 12.5% have reported that they are ‘neutral’ regarding To make sure I buy the right product or brand, I often observe what others are buying and using based on their reviews on the websites. Further, the professionals as a group have revealed that they “strongly agree” and ‘agree’ at 12.5% and at 6.7% and with 4.2% remaining neutral to make sure I buy the right product or brand, I often observe what others are buying and using based on their reviews on the websites. The Businesspersons as a group have reported that at 108% and 5.2% that they “strongly agree” and “agree” to make sure I buy the right product or brand, I often observe what others are buying and using based on their reviews on the websites

Table 3: Frequency and percentage responses for “It is important that others like the products and brands that I purchase” along with results of Test statistics.

It is important that others like the products and brands that I purchase		Occupation				Total	Test Statistics
		Student	Professional	Business			
Strongly Disagree	F	5	0	0	5	$X^2=8.038$ P = .430 CC =.251 P=.430	
	%	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%	4.2%		
Disagree	F	3	1	0	4		
	%	2.5%	0.8%	0.0%	3.3%		
Neutral	F	12	9	4	25		
	%	10.0%	7.5%	3.3%	20.8%		
Agree	F	19	9	4	32		
	%	15.8%	7.5%	3.3%	26.7%		
Strongly Agree	F	31	11	12	54		
	%	25.8%	9.2%	10.0%	45.0%		
Total	F	70	30	20	120		
	%	58.3%	25.0%	16.7%	100.0%		

Occupation wise comparison amongst the respondents with respect to the aspect of It is important that others like the products and brands that I purchase has revealed that 45% and 26.7% of the respondents have opined that they It is important that others like the products and brands that I purchase as in strongly agree and agree respectively; and on the other hand 20.8% of the respondents have reportedly remained neutral regarding the same, along with a small minority of the respondents reported to strongly disagree and disagree at 3.3% and 4.2% respectively concerning their It is important that others like the products and brands that I purchase. Chi-square revealed no significant difference between the frequencies ($X^2=8.038$; $p=.430$), thus leading to an understanding that most of the respondents were in favor of It is important that others like the products and brands that I purchase. Contingency co-efficient revealed that no significant association exists amongst the sets of frequencies (CC=.251, P=.430) indicating that the students as a group at 25.8% and 15.8% have revealed that they ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’ to It is important that others like the products and brands that I purchase, where as 10.0% have reported that they are ‘neutral’ regarding their It is important that others like the products and brands that I purchase. Further, the professionals as a group have revealed that they “strongly agree” and ‘agree’ at 9.2% and at 7.5% and with 7.5% remaining neutral to It is important that others like the products and brands that I purchase. The Businesspersons as a group have reported that at 10% and 3.3% that they “strongly agree” and “agree” to It is important that others like the products and brands that I purchase.

Table 4: Frequency and percentage responses for “I only purchase the latest fashion styles when I am sure my friends approve of them” along with results of Test statistics.

I only purchase the latest fashion styles when I am sure my friends approve of them		Occupation:				Test Statistics
		Student	Professional	Business	Total	
Strongly Disagree	F	3	1	0	4	$X^2=8.445$ $P = .391$ $CC =.256$ $P=.391$
	%	2.5%	0.8%	0.0%	3.3%	
Disagree	F	5	2	1	8	
	%	4.2%	1.7%	0.8%	6.7%	
Neutral:	F	13	3	0	16	
	%	10.8%	2.5%	0.0%	13.3%	
Agree	F	15	11	6	32	
	%	12.5%	9.2%	5.0%	26.7%	
Strongly Agree	F	34	13	13	60	
	%	28.3%	10.8%	10.8%	50.0%	
Total	F	70	30	20	120	
	%	58.3%	25.0%	16.7%	100.0%	

Occupation wise comparison amongst the respondents with respect to the aspect of I only purchase the latest fashion styles when I am sure my friends approve of them has revealed that 50% and 26.7% of the respondents have opined that they only purchase the latest fashion styles when I am sure my friends approve of them as in strongly agree and agree respectively; and on the other hand 13.3% of the respondents have reportedly remained neutral regarding the same, along with a small minority of the respondents reported to strongly disagree and disagree at 6.7% and 3.3% respectively concerning their I only purchase the latest fashion styles when I am sure my friends approve of them. Chi-square revealed no significant difference between the frequencies ($X^2=8.445$; $p=.391$), thus leading to an understanding that the majority of the respondents were in favor of I only purchase the latest fashion styles when I am sure my friends approve of them. Contingency co-efficient revealed that no significant association exists amongst the sets of frequencies ($CC=.256$, $P=.391$) indicating that the students as a group at 28.3% and 12.5% have revealed that they ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’ to I only purchase the latest fashion styles when I am sure my friends approve of them, where as 10.8% have reported that they are ‘neutral’ regarding there I only purchase the latest fashion styles when I am sure my friends approve of them. Further, the professionals as a group have revealed that they “strongly agree” and ‘agree’ at 10.8% and at 9.2% and with 2.5% remaining neutral to I only purchase the latest fashion styles when I am sure my friends approve of them. The Businesspersons as a group have reported that at 10.8% and 5% that they “strongly agree” and “agree “to I only purchase the latest fashion styles when I am sure my friends approve of them.

Table 5 : Frequency and percentage responses for “ Whether a product is recommended on social networking sites from my contacts, is important to me making my own purchase decision” along with results of Test statistics.

Whether a product is recommended on social networking sites from my contacts is important to me making my own	Occupation			Total	Test Statistics
	Student	Professional	Business		

purchase decision						
Strongly Disagree	F	4	1	1	6	$X^2 = 7.311$ $P = .503$ $CC = .240$ $P = .503$
	%	3.3%	0.8%	0.8%	5.0%	
Disagree	F	5	1	2	8	
	%	4.2%	0.8%	1.7%	6.7%	
Neutral	F	13	8	1	22	
	%	10.8%	6.7%	0.8%	18.3%	
Agree	F	12	9	6	27	
	%	10.0%	7.5%	5.0%	22.5%	
Strongly Agree	F	36	11	10	57	
	%	30.0%	9.2%	8.3%	47.5%	
Total	F	70	30	20	120	
	%	58.3%	25.0%	16.7%	100.0%	

Occupation wise comparison amongst the respondents with respect to the aspect of Whether a product is recommended on social networking sites from my contacts, is important to me making my own purchase decision has revealed that 47.5% and 22.5% of the respondents have opined that they Whether a product is recommended on social networking sites from my contacts, is important to me making my own purchase decision as in strongly agree and agree respectively; and on the other hand 18.3% of the respondents have reportedly remained neutral regarding the same, along with a small minority of the respondents reported to strongly disagree and disagree at 6.7% and 5.0% respectively Whether a product is recommended on social networking sites from my contacts, is important to me making my own purchase decision. Chi-square revealed no significant difference between the frequencies ($X^2 = 7.311$; $p = .503$), thus leading to an understanding that most of the respondents were in favors of Whether a product is recommended on social networking sites from my contacts, is important to me making my own purchase decision. Contingency coefficient revealed that no significant association exists amongst the sets of frequencies ($CC = .240$, $P = .503$) indicating that the students as a group at 30.0% and 10.0% have revealed that they ‘strongly agree’ and ‘agree’ to Whether a product is recommended on social networking sites from my contacts, is important to me making my own purchase decision, where as 10.8% have reported that they are ‘neutral’ regarding their Whether a product is recommended on social networking sites from my contacts, is important to me making my own purchase decision. Further, the professionals as a group have revealed that they “strongly agree” and ‘agree’ at 9.2% and at 7.5% and with 6.7% remaining neutral to Whether a product is recommended on social networking sites from my contacts, is important to me making my own purchase decision. The Businesspersons as a group have reported that at 8.3% and 5% that they “strongly agree” and “agree” to the same.

9. Main findings

The analysis of the collected data reveals several important insights into the influence of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WoM) on consumer purchase behavior. It was observed that most respondents tend to purchase products of the same brand that are recommended or used by their social contacts, particularly when making new purchase decisions. This indicates a strong influence of social reference groups on brand selection behavior. Further, most respondents reported feeling more confident and comfortable in selecting products when they receive opinions or recommendations from their social contacts through social networking platforms. This highlights the role of interpersonal trust and peer influence in reducing uncertainty during online purchasing decisions. The study also found that when respondents receive product-related information or opinions from friends or acquaintances, they are likely to further share this information within their own social networks. This demonstrates the presence of a positive information diffusion cycle, where e-WoM contributes to continuous sharing and amplification of consumer opinions. In addition, a significant number of respondents stated that product recommendations received through social networking sites play an important role in shaping their purchase decisions. This indicates that e-WoM serves as a critical decision-making factor in evaluating product alternatives and finalizing purchases. The

findings also suggest that past purchase decisions of many respondents were influenced by opinions shared on social networking platforms by their contacts. This confirms the impact of e-WoM on actual consumer behavior rather than just perceived intention. Finally, it was observed that respondents are likely to modify or change their opinion about a product after viewing positive or negative comments shared by their contacts on social networking sites. This reflects the strong persuasive power of e-WoM in shaping and reshaping consumer attitudes and perceptions toward products.

10. Suggestions

Based on the findings of the study, several important managerial implications can be drawn for e-commerce platforms. It is recommended that e-commerce websites focus on increasing the volume of product reviews by encouraging participation from a larger number of users. A higher volume of reviews enhances credibility and provides potential customers with more comprehensive information for decision-making. It is also advisable for organizations to allocate fewer resources toward aggressively promoting products that consistently receive negative ratings, as such efforts may yield limited returns and could impact brand perception. Instead, greater emphasis should be placed on promoting products with higher ratings, as positive reviews significantly influence consumer trust and have a stronger impact on sales performance. Furthermore, e-commerce platforms should improve the visibility, persistence, and accessibility of online reviews across product pages. Ensuring that reviews remain easily observable and permanently available enhances transparency and supports informed consumer decisions. To address potential bias in review systems, mechanisms should be implemented to reduce under-reporting of feedback, since typically only highly satisfied or dissatisfied customers tend to provide reviews. Encouraging broader participation will help create a more balanced representation of consumer opinions. In addition, it is important for organizations to systematically analyze negative reviews to identify recurring issues and develop appropriate corrective strategies. Such feedback can be used constructively to improve product quality, service delivery, and overall customer satisfaction. Finally, e-commerce platforms should introduce robust verification systems to assess the authenticity and reliability of user-generated reviews. Ensuring that reviews are genuine and free from manipulation will enhance trust in the platform and strengthen the overall effectiveness of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WoM).

11. Conclusion

This study examines the influence of social factors, personal attributes, and cultural factors on the usage and acceptance of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WoM) in the context of online consumer behavior. It specifically explores how these factors collectively shape consumers' perceptions and their reliance on online reviews while making purchase decisions in e-commerce environments. The findings of the study clearly indicate that perceived credibility of e-WoM plays a crucial role in determining its acceptance among consumers. When online reviews are considered authentic, trustworthy, and unbiased, consumers are more likely to rely on them during their decision-making process. Similarly, the acceptance of e-WoM significantly influences customers' purchase intentions, suggesting that greater trust and engagement with online reviews leads to a higher likelihood of converting browsing behavior into actual purchases. Overall, the study highlights that consumer trust in online retailers is strongly influenced by the quality and credibility of online consumer reviews. Positive and reliable e-WoM not only enhances customer confidence in product evaluation but also strengthens their overall trust in the retailer. This increased trust ultimately contributes to improved purchase intention and reinforces the importance of managing and maintaining credible online review systems in the digital marketplace.

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