

The Impact of Consumer Reviews in Buying Behavior: A Case of Kathmandu

Upasana Rupakheti and Gangadhar Dahal, Ph.D.*

Abstract

This study examines the impact of consumer reviews in buying behavior: A case of Kathmandu. Consumer buying behavior is the dependent variable. The selected independent variables are product review quality, product review quantity, source of review, review consistency, and reviewer credibility. The primary source of data is used to assess the opinions of respondents regarding product review quality, product review quantity, source of review, review consistency, reviewer credibility, and consumer buying behavior. The study is based on the primary data of 126 respondents. To achieve the purpose of the study, a structured questionnaire was prepared. The correlation and multiple regression models are estimated to test the significance and importance of the impact of consumer reviews in buying behavior: A case of Kathmandu.

The study showed a positive impact of product review quality on consumer buying behavior. It indicates that higher the product review quality, higher would be the consumer buying behavior. Similarly, the study showed a positive impact of product review quantity on employee commitment. It indicates that total number of reviews or ratings that a product leads to influence the consumer buying behavior. Likewise, the study also revealed a positive impact of source of review on consumer buying behavior. It indicates that authentic source of review leads to increase in consumer buying behavior. Further, the study observed a positive impact of review consistency on consumer buying behavior. It indicates that higher the consistency in review of the products, higher would be the consumer buying behavior. In addition, the study observed a positive impact of review credibility on consumer buying behavior. It indicates that higher the credibility of the contents of the reviews, higher would be the consumer buying behavior.

Keywords: product review quality, product review quantity, source of review, review consistency, reviewer credibility, consumer buying behavior

1. Introduction

Consumer reviews have a significant influence over purchasing decisions in contemporary markets. As consumers increasingly turn to online platforms for product information and recommendations, the role of consumer reviews has become paramount in shaping buying behavior. Schneider and Zielke (2020) highlighted the importance of online customer reviews in providing valuable insights into product quality, aiding consumers in making informed decisions. Online consumer reviews are widely used as an effective tool that can improve the efficiency of finding product information. Online consumer reviews can provide new information from the perspective of customers who have purchased and used the desired product (Park *et al.*, 2007). Many consumers tend to regard product information in online consumer reviews as being more persuasive and trustworthy compared to seller-created information. Due to these characteristics, online consumer reviews have been verified by several studies to affect consumers' decision-making processes and can play an important role in raising product sales by influencing consumers' purchasing intentions (Chevalier and Mayzlin, 2006). According to Chakraborty (2019), online reviews help consumers to make a quick decision as they have less time and when they want to make the right choice. This makes digital reviews relevant. Online product reviews allow consumers to share their thoughts and experiences of a particular product. Customers seek for online reviews to understand the

* Ms. Rupakheti is a Freelance Researcher, Kathmandu, Nepal and Dr. Dahal is the Managing Director, Uniglobe College (Pokhara University Affiliate), Kathmandu, Nepal

value of a brand, which unintentionally increases their desire to make a purchase.

Kevin *et al.* (2020) examined the impact of online consumer reviews dimension on online purchase intentions in Tokopedia. The study found that source credibility, review quality and review valence partially have a significant impact on purchase intentions, while the review quantity has no significant impact on purchase intentions. Similarly, Wang *et al.* (2018) found that review valence (positive, negative, and neutral) significantly influences purchase intention. Ha *et al.* (2015) investigated the impact of online consumer reviews on product sales by quantitative analysis of the source effect. The study found that online consumer reviews that came from different sources had differential impacts on product sales and the manner by which consumers used online consumer reviews varied with the source of reviews. Similarly, Tahir and Khan (2020) examined the online review and customer purchase intention in social E-Commerce context by keeping the role of trust as a mediator and source credibility as moderator. The study revealed that trust and source credibility plays a significant role in shaping the online reviews and purchase intention relationship. Sharma (2020) investigated the impact of online customer reviews on consumer perception and buying behavior and highlighted the major elements of OCSR responsible for influencing a consumer to make the final purchase decision. The research found that the factors contributing to making any online review more relevant and responsible are trust and the authenticity of a review. In addition, Cheong *et al.* (2020) investigated the online reviews and its relationship to online purchase intention for electronic products among the millennial in Malaysia. The study revealed that among the three elements of online reviews, review timeliness, review quantity, and review valence review timeliness emerged as the most influential factor affecting Malaysian millennial' online purchase intention for electronic products. Wani and Ali (2016) analyzed the determinants of online purchase intentions on Indian buyers. The study revealed that attitude towards e-WOM and previous favorable experience are the main drivers of online purchase intention. The study also revealed that social influence and brand image have no significant impact on consumers' intention to buy online. In addition, the impact of sources of credible online reviews on purchase intention by mediating roles of brand equity dimensions was analyzed by Chakraborty (2019). The study revealed that marketers should concentrate more on brand awareness and perceived value, which ultimately influence the purchase intention of the consumers.

Zhang *et al.* (2018) analyzed the online reviews and impulse buying behavior: the role of browsing and impulsiveness. The study revealed that consumers' perceived utilitarian and hedonic value from reading online reviews enhance their browsing behavior. Browsing positively affects consumers' urge to buy impulsively and finally affects their impulse buying behavior. Further, this study found that consumers with high impulsiveness focus more on hedonic value of online reviews, whereas consumers with low impulsiveness put more emphasis on utilitarian value and browsing demonstrates a stronger effect on the urge to buy impulsively for consumers with high impulsiveness. Mo *et al.* (2015) examined the effect of online reviews on consumer purchase behavior. The study revealed that positive reviews, describing ratings, picture reviews, appended reviews, and cumulative reviews have a positive impact on consumer buying behavior, but moderate reviews, negative reviews, logistics ratings, and service ratings have a negative but significant impact on consumer buying behavior. In addition, Erkan and Evans (2016) investigated the influence of eWOM on social media on consumers' purchase intentions. The study revealed that quality, credibility, usefulness and adoption of information, needs of information, and attitude towards information are the key factors of eWOM in social media that influence consumers' purchase

intentions. Furthermore, Obeidat (2013) analyzed the impact of online consumer reviews on the buying intentions of consumers in the UK. The study revealed that the buying intention of online consumers who have high cognitive needs was affected by quality of online review or argument as compared to quantity of online argument or reviews. Similarly, Bae and Lee (2011) concluded that a review from an online community is the most credible for consumers seeking information about an established product. In addition, Mudambi and Schuff (2010) analyzed what makes a helpful online review? A study of customer reviews on Amazon. The study revealed that since reviews are comments from consumers' perspectives and often describe their experience using the product, it is easier for other consumers to accept them, thus assisting their decision-making process.

Thomas *et al.* (2019) examined the influencing factors of online reviews: an empirical analysis of determinants of purchase intention. The study found that ease of comprehension, accuracy, opposing viewpoints, completeness, relevance and timeliness are significant dimensions of argument quality, whereas review quantity and consistency, reviewer reputation and expertise, product/service rating, as well as website reputation are crucial peripheral cues. Lin and Xu (2017) examined the effectiveness of online consumer reviews with the influence of valence, reviewer ethnicity, social distance and source trustworthiness. The study found that while review valence, reviewer ethnicity and social distance each had a significant effect on perceived reviewer trustworthiness, only review valence had an influence on brand attitude and purchase intention. The interaction between reviewer ethnicity and review valence also had a significant effect on perceived reviewer trustworthiness, brand attitude and purchase intention. Likewise, Gaytan *et al.* (2020) examined the impact of internal and external promotional variables on consumer buying behavior in an emerging economy. The study found that all the promotion-mix variables have a significant impact over the consumer buying and decision making behavior, but surprisingly there are no takers for the word of mouth variables. It further illustrated that the advertising, internet, direct marketing and others have more impact while sales promotions and external variables have less impact. In addition, factors affecting customer buying behavior in online shopping were investigated by Davidaviciene *et al.* (2021). The study revealed that the most influencing product features related to customer buying behavior in online shopping were product design and packaging, product price.

In the context of Nepal, Kharel (2018) examined the factor influencing online brand trust: Evidence from online buyers in Kathmandu Valley. The study found that a majority of the respondents believe trust is an important factor for online purchase. Similarly, Shrestha (2023) analyzed the online shopping attitude and purchase intention of Nepalese consumers with a moderate mediation of social media and the study showed that trust plays a crucial role in influencing online shopping intentions. The study also showed that when customers have trust in online websites, products, and the online shopping business as a whole, they were found to develop a positive attitude which led to their willingness to make online purchases. In addition, Rana (2018) investigated the Facebook marketing and its influence on consumer buying behavior in Kathmandu. The study revealed that people are more influenced by word of mouth and opinion given by the people they know on Facebook.

The above discussion shows that empirical evidence varies greatly across the studies on the impact of consumer reviews in buying behavior. Though there is above mentioned empirical evidence in the context of other countries and in Nepal, no such findings using more recent data exist in the context of Nepal. Therefore, in order to support one view or the

other, this study has been conducted.

The major objective of the study is to examine the impact of consumer reviews in buying behavior: A case of Kathmandu. Specifically, it examines the relationship of product review quality, product review quantity, source of review, review consistency, and reviewer credibility with consumer reviews in buying behavior.

The remainder of this study is organized as follows: section two describes the sample, data, and methodology. Section three presents the empirical results and the final section draws the conclusion.

2. Methodological aspects

The study is based on the primary data which were collected from 126 respondents through questionnaires. The study employed a convenience sampling method. The respondents' views were collected on product review quality, product review quantity, source of review, review consistency, reviewer credibility, and consumer buying behavior. This study is based on descriptive as well as causal comparative research designs.

The model

The model used in this study assumes that consumer buying behavior depends upon consumer review. The dependent variable selected for the study is consumer buying behavior. Similarly, the selected independent variables are product review quality, product review quantity, source of review, review consistency, and reviewer credibility. Therefore, the model takes the following form:

Consumer buying behavior = f (product reviews quality, product review quantity, source of review, review consistency, and review credibility)

More specifically,

$$CBB = \beta_0 + \beta_1 PRQ + \beta_2 PRQN + \beta_3 SR + \beta_4 RC + \beta_5 RCRD + e$$

Where,

CBB = Consumer buying behavior

PRQ = Product review quality

PRQN = Product review quantity

SR = Source of review

RC = Review consistency

RCRD = Review Credibility

Consumer buying behavior was measured by using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include "I often make purchasing decisions based on the quality of product reviews", my buying behavior is influenced by the quantity of reviews available for a product" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.875$).

Product review quality was measured by using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly

disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include “The product reviews I come across are written by individuals with relevant expertise in the product category” “The product reviews I read provide sufficient information for me to make an informed decision” and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.789$).

Product review quantity was measured by using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include “I believe that the more product reviews there are for a product, the more reliable they are”, “I tend to read multiple product reviews before making a purchase decision” and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.823$).

Source of review was measured by using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include “Reviews from professional review websites carry more weight in my purchasing decisions”, “I tend to trust product reviews shared on social media platforms and e commerce platforms” and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.838$).

Review credibility was measured by using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include “I am more likely to trust product reviews written by individuals who have actually purchased and used the product”, “Reviews written by experts in the product category are more valuable to me” and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.885$).

Review consistency was measured by using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 5 for strongly agree and 1 for strongly disagree. There are 5 items and sample items include “Inconsistent product reviews make it difficult for me to trust the overall quality of the product”, “I prefer to see a consistent opinion among multiple reviewers before making a purchase” and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing Cronbach’s alpha ($\alpha = 0.892$).

Product review quality

Review quality is the important factor that influences the consumer buying behavior. Product review quality refers to the perceived value, reliability, and credibility of reviews provided by consumers or experts regarding a particular product or service. Review quality contains reviews that are objective and logical, understandable and have relevant information on related products and services (Park *et al.*, 2007). Park *et al.* (2007) examined the effect of online consumer reviews on consumer purchasing intention. The study found that quality of a review has a direct impact on consumer purchase intention. According to Park *et al.* (2007) high quality reviews are reasonable and can be compelling towards consumers and have a significant effect on consumer purchase intention. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₁: There is a positive relationship between product review quality and consumer buying behavior.

Product review quantity

Product review quantity refers to the number of reviews available for a particular

product or service. The more information available the higher will be the confidence of the consumer. The greater the amount of eWOM information, the greater the level of consumer confidence, and the stronger the consumer's purchase intention (Xiaorong *et al.*, 2011). Lee and Youn (2009) found that products with a higher number of comments are perceived as more attractive, indicating that consumer perception of a product's popularity and desirability is positively influenced by the volume of reviews. Park *et al.* (2007) suggested that the number of reviews determines whether a product is considered famous or not, thereby influencing consumer perception and subsequent buying desire. And the study also revealed that there is a significant relationship between review quantity and purchasing intention, i.e. purchasing intention increases as the number of reviews increases. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₂: There is a positive relationship between product review quantity and consumer buying behavior.

Source of review

Source review refers to the degree of interaction, involvement, and connection between the reviewer and their audience as highlighted by (Kiecker and Cowles, 2002). Nekmat and Gower (2012) emphasized the importance of word of mouth consistency in engagement with review content. Review sources that consistently provide updates and engage with their audience are more likely to influence consumer buying decisions positively. This consistency builds trust and reliability, as consumers perceive the source as dedicated and reliable. The relationship between the source of review and consumer buying behavior is significant and consumers rely on these sources to make informed purchasing decisions (Dou *et al.*, 2012). Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₃: There is a positive relationship between source of review and consumer buying behavior.

Review consistency

Review consistency refers to the degree of agreement or alignment among reviews of a particular product or service across different sources or platforms. Quaschnig *et al.* (2015) stated that review consistency has a significant effect on shaping consumer buying behavior. Similarly, Cheung *et al.* (2012) examined the impact of electronic word-of-mouth communication and revealed that review consistency can significantly impact consumer trust and decision-making processes. When multiple reviews consistently convey similar opinions or assessments of a product, consumers are more likely to perceive those reviews as credible and reliable. This consistency signals consensus among reviewers and reinforces the validity of the information presented. Therefore, a review content that is consistent is more likely to be useful and people make purchase decisions based on it. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₄: There is a positive relationship between review consistency and consumer buying behavior.

Reviewer credibility

Reviewer credibility is a degree to which people believe and trust what other people and organizations tell them about a particular product or service. Source credibility relates to the message recipient's perception of whether or not the source of the message can be trusted (Schepers, 2015). Reviewer credibility is also an important factor affecting persuasion

effectiveness (Wu and Wang, 2011). Wu and Wang (2011) found that there is a direct and positive relationship between message source credibility and purchase intention. The better the source (reviewer) credibility of a review, it will increase consumer purchase intentions (Atika *et al.*, 2017). Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H₅: There is a positive relationship between reviewer credibility and consumer buying behavior.

3. Results and discussion

Correlation analysis

On analysis of data, correlation analysis has been undertaken first and for this purpose, Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients along with mean and standard deviation has been computed and the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients matrix

This table presents Kendall's Tau coefficients between dependent variable and independent variables. The correlation coefficients are based on 126 observations. The dependent variable is CBB (Consumer buying behavior). The independent variables are PRQ (Product review quality), PRQN (Product review quantity), SR (Source of review), RC (Review consistency), and RCRD (Review credibility).

Variables	Mean	S.D.	CBB	PRQ	PRQN	SR	RC	RCRD
CBB	1.956	0.767	1					
PRQ	1.889	0.748	0.494**	1				
PRQN	1.948	0.805	0.532**	0.556**	1			
SR	1.859	0.708	0.583**	0.342**	0.526**	1		
RC	1.928	0.743	0.475**	0.454**	0.505**	0.597**	1	
RCRD	1.988	0.856	0.460**	0.483**	0.497**	0.579**	0.535**	1

Notes: The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that the results are significant at one percent and five percent level respectively.

Table 1 shows the Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients of dependent and independent variables. The study shows that product quality is positively correlated to consumer buying behavior. It indicates that higher the product quality, higher would be the consumer buying behavior. Similarly, product review quantity is positively correlated to consumer buying behavior. It indicates that total number of reviews or ratings that a product leads to influence the consumer buying behavior. Likewise, source of review is positively correlated to consumer buying behavior. It indicates that authentic source of review leads to increase in consumer buying behavior. Further, review consistency is also positively correlated to consumer buying behavior. It indicates that higher the consistency in review of the products, higher would be the consumer buying behavior. In addition, review credibility is positively correlated to consumer buying behavior. It indicates that higher the credibility of the contents of the reviews, higher would be the consumer buying behavior.

Regression analysis

Having indicated the Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients, the regression analysis has been carried out and the results are presented in Table 2. More specifically, it shows the regression results of product review quality, product review quantity, source of review, review consistency, and reviewer credibility on consumer buying behavior

Table 2

Estimated regression results of product review quality, product review quantity, source of review, review consistency, and reviewer credibility on consumer buying behavior

The results are based on 126 observations using linear regression model. The model is $CBB = \beta_0 + \beta_1PRQ + \beta_2PRQN + \beta_3SR + \beta_4RC + \beta_5RCRD + e$ where the dependent variable is CBB (Consumer buying behavior). The independent variables are PRQ (Product review quality), PRQN (Product review quantity), SR (Source of review), RC (Review consistency), and RCRD (Reviewer credibility).

Model	Intercept	Regression coefficients of					Adj. R_bar ²	SEE	F-value
		PRQ	PRQN	SR	RC	RCRD			
1	0.678 (4.403)**	0.757 (9.889)**					0.474	0.463	74.337
2	0.664 (3.653)**		0.708 (8.999)**				0.452	0.537	99.884
3	0.775 (6.397)**			0.668 (9.432)**			0.399	0.551	156.102
4	0.895 (7.030)**				0.513 (8.104)**		0.325	0.568	148.588
5	0.798 (6.356)**					0.489 (6.697)**	0.261	0.579	121.853
6	0.798 (6.356)**	0.399 (4.591)**	0.322 (3.651)**				0.466	0.471	74.014
7	0.242 (1.173)	0.389 (3.998)**	0.189 (1.296)	0.261 (4.108)**			0.535	0.476	53.459
8	0.197 (1.418)	0.250 (3.767)**	0.178 (1.606)	0.261 (4.108)**	0.123 (1.861)		0.569	0.444	50.010
9	0.146 (1.721)	0.262 (3.826)**	0.212 (1.535)	0.235 (3.489)**	0.098 (1.635)	0.066 (1.059)	0.568	0.448	46.056

Notes:

- i. Figures in parenthesis are t-values.
- ii. The asterisk signs (**) and (*) indicate that the results are significant at one percent and five percent level respectively.
- iii. Consumer buying behavior is dependent variable.

Table 2 shows that the beta coefficients for product review quality are positive with consumer buying behavior. It indicates that product review quality has a positive impact on consumer buying behavior. This finding is consistent with the findings of Bataineh (2015). Likewise, the beta coefficients for product review quantity are positive with consumer buying behavior. It indicates that product review quantity has a positive impact on consumer buying behavior. This finding is consistent with the findings of Park *et al.* (2007). In addition, the beta coefficients for source of review are positive with consumer buying behavior. It indicates that sources of reviews have positive impact on consumer buying behavior. This finding is consistent with the findings of Dou *et al.* (2012). Further, the beta coefficients for review consistency are positive with consumer buying behavior. It indicates that review consistency has a positive impact on consumer buying behavior. This finding is consistent with the findings of Cheung *et al.* (2012) and Quaschnig *et al.* (2015). In addition, the beta coefficients for review credibility are positive with consumer buying behavior. It indicates that review credibility has a positive impact on consumer buying behavior. This finding is similar to the findings of Bataineh (2015) and Wu and Wang (2011).

4. Summary and conclusion

Consumer reviews have a significant influence over purchasing decisions in contemporary markets. As consumers increasingly turn to online platforms for product information and recommendations, the role of consumer reviews has become paramount in shaping buying behavior. The importance of online customer reviews in providing valuable insights into product quality, aiding consumers in making informed decisions. Online

consumer reviews are widely used as an effective tool that can improve the efficiency of finding product information. Online consumer reviews can provide new information from the perspective of customers who have purchased and used the desired product. Many consumers tend to regard product information in online consumer reviews as being more persuasive and trustworthy compared to seller-created information. Due to these characteristics, online consumer reviews have been verified by several studies to affect consumers' decision-making processes and can play an important role in raising product sales by influencing consumers' purchasing intentions. Online consumer reviews are widely used as an effective tool that can improve the efficiency of finding product information. Online consumer reviews can provide new information from the perspective of customers who have purchased and used the desired product. Many consumers tend to regard product information in online consumer reviews as being more persuasive and trustworthy compared to seller-created information. Due to these characteristics, online consumer reviews have been verified by several studies to affect consumers' decision-making processes and can play an important role in raising product sales by influencing consumers' purchasing intentions. Consumers tend to perceive WOM as more trustworthy and credible compared to marketing messages. E-WOM seems to have a bigger influence than traditional word of mouth due to the rapid growth of internet user and platform availability in spreading the information.

This study attempts to examine the impact of consumer review in buying behavior among the consumers of Kathmandu. The study is based on primary data of 126 respondents.

The major conclusion of the study is that product review quality, product review quantity, source of review, review consistency, and reviewer credibility have positive impact on consumer buying behavior. It indicates that higher the product review quality, product review quantity, source of review, review consistency, and reviewer credibility, higher would be the consumer buying behavior. Likewise, the study also concludes that product review quality is the most significant factor followed by product review quantity that determine the changes in consumer buying behavior.

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