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RESEARCH ARTICLE

CONSUMER TRUST IN ONLINE REVIEWS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF VERIFIED VS NON-VERIFIED REVIEWS

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Abstract

In today's digital marketplace, customer reviews strongly influence buying decisions. This study compares how consumers trust verified and non-verified online reviews. A sample of 150 respondents was analyzed using simple descriptive statistics. The findings clearly show that verified reviews receive higher trust and lead to stronger purchase intention. Graphs (bar chart, boxplot, pie chart) are included to support the results. The study concludes that verified reviews play an important role in shaping consumer behavior and should be promoted by online platforms.

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Introduction:-

Online shopping is increasing rapidly, and customer reviews have become one of the most important factors for buyers. People read reviews to understand product quality, performance, and reliability. However, reviews online can be either verified (written by a confirmed buyer) or non-verified (written by anyone). This creates confusion among customers.

Therefore, this study aims to understand:

1. Do consumers trust verified reviews more?
2. Do verified reviews affect buying decisions more strongly?
3. How large is the difference in trust levels between verified and non-verified reviews?

NEED OF THE STUDY:

THIS STUDY IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE.

1. Increase in fake reviews: Many companies pay people to write positive reviews or negative reviews for their competitors. This misleads customers.
2. Importance of genuine feedback: Verified reviews help customers make safe and correct buying decisions.
3. Rising digital shopping culture: Since more people shop online, the importance of accurate reviews has grown significantly.
4. Help for marketers: Companies must understand how verified reviews influence trust so they can improve customer experience.
5. Academic importance: There is limited research comparing verified and non-verified reviews in the Indian online shopping context.

Objectives of The Study:-

1. To MEASURE THE TRUST CUSTOMERS PLACE IN VERIFIED AND NON-VERIFIED REVIEWS.
2. To compare the impact of both types of reviews on purchase intention.
3. To study customers' preferences for review types.
4. To analyze why customers believe verified reviews more.
5. To provide suggestions to e-commerce platforms for improving review credibility.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:-

INFORMATION ADOPTION MODEL (IAM): THIS MODEL EXPLAINS HOW PEOPLE ACCEPT ONLINE INFORMATION. IF INFORMATION IS:

- Clear
- Helpful
- Credible

Then people will trust and use it.

Verified reviews appear more credible; hence, customers adopt them.

Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM): Customers process information in two ways:

- Central Route: Careful reading of long, detailed reviews.
- Peripheral Route: Quick decision using simple cues like "Verified Purchase".

Verified reviews work on both levels → leading to higher trust.

Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA): If customers form a positive attitude towards a review, they are more likely to buy the product.

Verified reviews → Positive attitude → Higher purchase intention.

Research Methodology:-

Research Design: The study uses a descriptive research design, which helps describe consumer trust levels.

Population: All online shoppers who read reviews before purchasing products.

Sample: 150 respondents across different age groups (18–45+).

Sampling Method: Convenience sampling using an online questionnaire.

Data Sources: Primary Data: Survey responses

Secondary Data: Journals, articles, UGC and IOSR publications, websites, and reports

Tools Used: Mean, Percentage analysis, Graphical representation, Simple interpretation

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

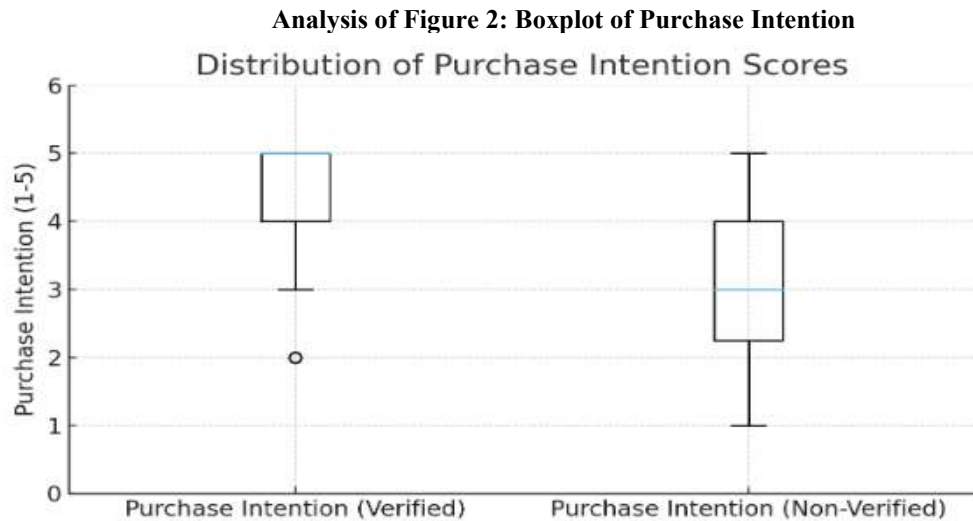
Analysis of Figure 1: Mean Trust Score



Type of Review	Mean Trust Score
Verified Reviews	4.07
Non-Verified Reviews	3.24

Interpretation:

Consumers trust verified reviews more because they are written by actual buyers.



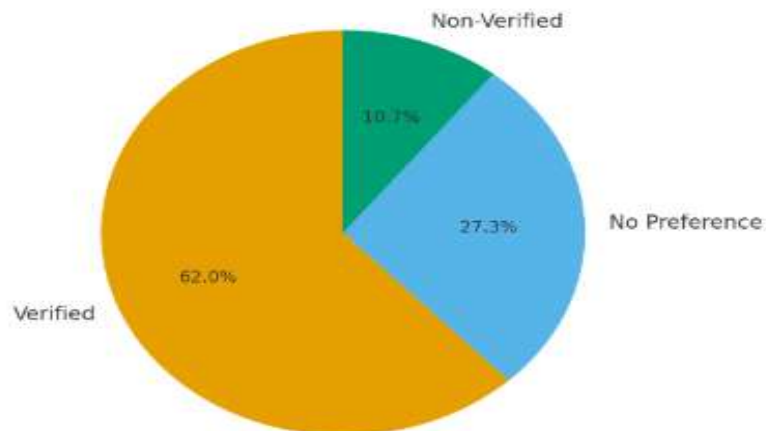
- Verified reviews show higher and more consistent purchase intention.
- Non-verified reviews show lower and uneven scores.

Reason:

Verified reviews reduce risk and make customers feel safe.

Analysis of Figure 3: Pie Chart — Preference

Respondent Preference: Verified vs Non-Verified Reviews



Preference	Percentage
Verified Reviews	62%
Non-Verified	10.7%
No Preference	27.3%

Interpretation:

Majority of customers prefer verified reviews because they look more genuine.

FINDINGS:

1. Verified reviews are significantly more trusted than non-verified reviews.
2. Verified reviews strongly increase the chances of a customer buying the product.
3. Customers feel secure when they read genuine reviews with proof of purchase.
4. Non-verified reviews are viewed with doubt and seen as less reliable.
5. A large percentage of customers prefer verified reviews when making buying decisions.

SUGGESTIONS:-

1. E-commerce platforms should highlight verified reviews more clearly.
2. Fake or suspicious reviews must be filtered or removed.
3. Customers should be encouraged to upload photos/videos as proof.
4. Companies must promote “verified purchase” tags.
5. Platforms should educate users on identifying genuine reviews.
6. Strict rules should be set for posting reviews to reduce misuse.

CONCLUSION:-

The study concludes that customers have a higher level of trust in verified reviews compared to non-verified reviews. Verified reviews are seen as authentic, reliable, and helpful. They also have a direct positive effect on purchase intention. E-commerce platforms must take steps to promote verified reviews to maintain transparency and customer satisfaction.

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