

Original Article

A Study on How Online Reviews and Ratings Influence Buying Decisions in Mayiladuthurai

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ABSTRACT: *The rapid growth of e-commerce platforms and digital technology has significantly transformed consumer buying behaviour. Online reviews and ratings have become important factors influencing customer purchase decisions in online shopping platforms. Consumers depend on customer feedback, product ratings, and online recommendations before purchasing products and services. The present study focuses on analysing how online reviews and ratings influence buying decisions among consumers in Mayiladuthurai. The study aims to understand the importance of online reviews, the impact of product ratings, customer trust in review systems, and the influence of positive and negative reviews on purchase decisions. Primary data were collected from 160 respondents through a structured questionnaire using convenience sampling technique. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, mean analysis, correlation analysis, chi-square analysis, and One-Way ANOVA were used for analysing the collected data with the help of SPSS software. The findings reveal that most consumers check online reviews before purchasing products and prefer products with higher ratings. Positive reviews increase customer confidence, while negative reviews discourage purchase decisions. The study concludes that online reviews and ratings play a significant role in influencing consumer buying behaviour and purchase decisions in the digital marketplace.*

KEYWORDS: *Online Reviews, Product Ratings, Consumer Buying Behaviour, E-Commerce, Customer Trust, Online Shopping, Digital Marketing, Purchase Decision.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of internet technology and digital communication has changed the traditional shopping behaviour of consumers. Online shopping platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, Myntra, AJIO, Nykaa, and Meesho provide customers with easy access to products and services through digital platforms. Consumers increasingly depend on online reviews and ratings before purchasing products because reviews provide information regarding product quality, customer satisfaction, delivery service, and reliability.

People talk about products online. This helps others decide what to buy. Online reviews are like talking to someone about a product. If the reviews are good people are more likely to buy the product. If the reviews are bad people do not want to buy it. Ratings make it easy to compare products and make a decision fast.

However some reviews are not real. This is a big problem for people who shop online. In the few years people in Mayiladuthurai have started shopping online more and more. So it is important for companies to know how online reviews affect what people buy. This study looks at what people in Mayiladuthurai think about reviews and how they make decisions when they shop online. The study is about reviews and ratings and how they affect people, in Mayiladuthurai when they are buying things.

2. NEED OF THE STUDY

Online shopping has become an important part of modern life because it provides convenience, time-saving, and easy access to products. Consumers increasingly depend on online reviews and ratings before making purchase decisions. Reviews and ratings help customers understand product quality, customer satisfaction, and reliability.

The study is needed to understand how online reviews and ratings influence consumer buying decisions in Mayiladuthurai. Positive reviews encourage customers to purchase products, while negative reviews reduce purchase intention. Ratings also help consumers compare products and select better options.

The study helps businesses understand customer expectations and improve their marketing strategies. It also helps identify the impact of fake reviews on customer trust and satisfaction. Understanding consumer behaviour helps e-commerce companies improve their review systems, customer service, and product quality.

The study is useful for businesses, marketers, researchers, and online shopping platforms because it provides knowledge about digital consumer behaviour and customer preferences in online shopping.

3. RESEARCH GAP

Most previous studies focused on the influence of online reviews and ratings among urban consumers and large metropolitan cities. Limited research has been conducted regarding the influence of online reviews and ratings on consumer buying behaviour in semi-urban areas such as Mayiladuthurai. Moreover, earlier studies mainly focused on customer satisfaction and online shopping behaviour, while limited attention was given to customer trust, fake reviews, and the psychological impact of negative reviews on buying decisions. Therefore, the present study attempts to fill this research gap by analysing how online reviews and ratings influence buying decisions among consumers in Mayiladuthurai.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the influence of online reviews on buying decisions.
- To analyse the impact of product ratings on consumer product selection.
- To assess the level of trust in online reviews.
- To examine the effect of negative reviews on purchase decisions.
- To suggest ways to improve the effectiveness of online review systems.

5. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study focuses on analyzing the influence of online reviews and ratings on consumer buying decisions in Mayiladuthurai. It examines consumer opinions, preferences, and buying behaviour on online shopping platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, Myntra, AJIO, Nykaa, and Meesho.

The study also analyzes how positive and negative reviews, product ratings, and fake reviews affect customer trust and purchase decisions. Further, it examines the role of online reviews in product comparison, customer satisfaction, and online shopping experiences among consumers from different demographic backgrounds.

6. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Balaji (2025) examined the influence of online customer reviews on consumer buying behaviour and found that positive reviews improve customer confidence and purchase intention in online shopping platforms.

Priya and Karthik (2025) analysed the impact of product ratings on customer product selection and concluded that higher ratings significantly influence customer trust and satisfaction.

Manoj Kumar (2025) studied the effect of fake reviews on customer trust and identified that manipulated reviews negatively affect customer confidence in online shopping platforms.

Harini and Surya (2025) identified that negative reviews have a stronger impact on purchase intention than positive reviews.

Yogesh Kumar (2026) analysed the influence of online reviews on purchase decisions in small towns and found that digital trust among consumers is increasing rapidly.

Aarthi and Divya (2026) concluded that online review systems and product ratings play an important role in modern consumer buying behaviour and customer decision-making.

7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

7.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study adopts a descriptive research design to examine how online reviews and ratings influence consumer buying decisions. The study focuses on understanding consumer attitudes towards online reviews, product ratings, trust in review systems, and the impact of positive and negative reviews on purchase behaviour among online shoppers.

7.2. DATA COLLECTION

The study is primarily based on primary data collected through a structured questionnaire administered to respondents. Secondary data were collected from journals, books, research articles, websites, and other related sources to support and strengthen the research study.

7.3. SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

A sample of 160 respondents was selected for the study using the simple random sampling method. The respondents were selected from different age groups, genders, educational qualifications, occupations, and preferred online shopping platforms to obtain diverse opinions regarding online reviews and ratings.

7.4. TOOLS USED FOR ANALYSIS

The collected data were analysed using SPSS software with the help of appropriate statistical tools.

- Percentage Analysis – To study the demographic profile of respondents and their opinions towards online reviews and ratings.
- Chi-Square Analysis – To examine the relationship between demographic variables and consumer opinions regarding online reviews and purchase decisions.
- Correlation Analysis – To analyse the relationship between respondent characteristics and consumer perceptions towards online reviews and ratings.
- One-Way ANOVA – To examine the differences in consumer opinions towards online reviews and ratings based on educational qualification and occupation of respondents.

8. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

8.1. PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

TABLE 1 Age Group of the Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
18–20 Years	26	16.3
20–25 Years	69	43.1
26–30 Years	40	25.0
Above 30 Years	25	15.6
Total	160	100.0

Interpretation

The table shows that a majority of the respondents (43.1%) belong to the age group of 20–25 years, followed by 25.0% in the 26–30 years category. Respondents aged 18–20 years account for 16.3%, while 15.6% belong to the above 30 years category. This indicates that young adults form the major respondent group in the study.

TABLE 2 Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	75	46.9
Female	81	50.6
Prefer not to say	4	2.5
Total	160	100.0

Interpretation

The table reveals that female respondents constitute the majority with 50.6%, while male respondents account for 46.9%. A small percentage of respondents (2.5%) preferred not to disclose their gender. This indicates that female consumers participated slightly more in the study.

TABLE 3 Educational Qualification of the Respondents

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Higher Secondary	5	3.1
Diploma	32	20.0
Undergraduate	83	51.9
Postgraduate	40	25.0
Total	160	100.0

Interpretation

The table shows that a majority of the respondents (51.9%) are undergraduate degree holders, followed by 25.0% postgraduate respondents. Diploma holders account for 20.0% of the sample, while only 3.1% have completed higher secondary education. This indicates that most respondents are well educated and possess undergraduate qualifications.

TABLE 4 Occupation of the Respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Student	57	35.6

Private Employee	63	39.4
Self-Employed	32	20.0
Others	8	5.0
Total	160	100.0

Interpretation

The table indicates that private employees form the largest occupational group with 39.4% of the respondents, followed by students at 35.6%. Self-employed respondents account for 20.0%, while only 5.0% belong to other occupations. This suggests that salaried employees and students are the major participants in the study.

TABLE 5 Preferred Online Shopping Platform

Online Platform	Frequency	Percentage
Amazon	46	28.8
Flipkart	22	13.8
Myntra	24	15.0
Meesho	56	35.0
Ajio	6	3.8
Nykaa	6	3.8
Total	160	100.0

Interpretation

The table shows that Meesho is the most preferred online shopping platform among respondents, accounting for 35.0% of the sample. Amazon follows with 28.8%, while Myntra and Flipkart account for 15.0% and 13.8% respectively. Ajio and Nykaa are the least preferred platforms, each representing 3.8% of the respondents. This indicates the growing popularity of Meesho among online consumers.

8.2. CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS

The Chi-square analysis was used to examine the relationship between demographic factors and consumer opinion towards online reviews and ratings in online shopping.

8.2.1. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS AND CHECKING ONLINE REVIEWS BEFORE BUYING

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant relationship between age of the respondents and checking online reviews before buying.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between age of the respondents and checking online reviews before buying.

TABLE 6 Cross Tabulation Analysis

Age Group	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
18–20	3	2	6	15	26
20–25	12	9	20	28	69
26–30	4	6	14	16	40
Above 30	8	1	3	13	25
Total	27	18	43	72	160

Interpretation

The cross tabulation table shows that respondents from different age groups mostly agree that they check online reviews before purchasing products. The majority of respondents in the age group 20–25 years and above 30 years strongly agree that online reviews are important before buying products. This indicates that online reviews influence consumers across all age groups.

TABLE 7 Chi-Square Test

Particulars	Value
Pearson Chi-square	12.137
Degrees of Freedom	9
Significance Value	0.206
Number of Valid Cases	160

Interpretation

The significance value obtained from the Chi-square analysis is 0.206, which is greater than the standard significance level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

Result

The study concludes that there is no significant relationship between age of the respondents and checking online reviews before buying products.

8.2.2. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER OF THE RESPONDENTS AND PRODUCT RATINGS AFFECTING PRODUCT CHOICE

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant relationship between gender of the respondents and product ratings affecting product choice.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between gender of the respondents and product ratings affecting product choice.

TABLE 8 Cross Tabulation Analysis

Gender	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Male	6	13	23	33	75
Female	8	13	33	27	81
Prefer not to say	1	2	1	0	4
Total	15	28	57	60	160

Interpretation

The cross tabulation table shows that both male and female respondents agree that product ratings affect their product choice while purchasing products online. A large number of respondents strongly agree that ratings influence their buying decisions. This indicates that product ratings play an important role among consumers irrespective of gender.

TABLE 9 Chi-Square Test

Particulars	Value
Pearson Chi-square	7.687
Degrees of Freedom	6
Significance Value	0.262
Number of Valid Cases	160

Interpretation

The significance value obtained from the Chi-square analysis is 0.262, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

Result

The study concludes that there is no significant relationship between gender of the respondents and product ratings affecting product choice.

8.2.3 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION AND RATINGS HELPING QUICK PURCHASE DECISIONS

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant relationship between educational qualification of the respondents and ratings helping quick purchase decisions.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between educational qualification of the respondents and ratings helping quick purchase decisions.

TABLE 10 Cross Tabulation Analysis

Educational Qualification	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Higher Secondary	0	2	1	2	5
Diploma	6	5	10	11	32
UG	12	20	34	17	83
PG	3	13	11	13	40
Total	21	40	56	43	160

Interpretation

The cross tabulation table shows that respondents with different educational qualifications mostly agree that ratings help them make quick purchase decisions. Undergraduate and postgraduate respondents show a higher level of agreement compared to other educational groups. This indicates that educational qualification influences awareness about online ratings to some extent.

TABLE 11 Chi-Square Test

Particulars	Value
Pearson Chi-square	9.666
Degrees of Freedom	9
Significance Value	0.378
Number of Valid Cases	160

Interpretation

The significance value obtained from the Chi-square analysis is 0.378, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

Result

The study concludes that there is no significant relationship between educational qualification and ratings helping quick purchase decisions.

8.2.4. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OCCUPATION AND NEGATIVE REVIEWS STOPPING PURCHASE DECISIONS**Hypothesis**

H₀: There is no significant relationship between occupation of the respondents and negative reviews stopping purchase decisions.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between occupation of the respondents and negative reviews stopping purchase decisions.

TABLE 12 Cross Tabulation Analysis

Occupation	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Student	10	8	25	14	57
Private Employee	6	13	27	17	63
Self-employed	1	4	19	8	32
Others	2	3	2	1	8
Total	19	28	73	40	160

Interpretation

The cross tabulation table shows that respondents from different occupational groups mostly agree that negative reviews stop them from purchasing products. Private employees and students show a higher level of agreement towards the influence of negative reviews. This indicates that negative reviews strongly affect buying decisions across occupations.

TABLE 13 Chi-square Test

Particulars	Value
Pearson Chi-square	10.910
Degrees of Freedom	9
Significance Value	0.282
Number of Valid Cases	160

Interpretation

The significance value obtained from the Chi-square analysis is 0.282, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

Result

The study concludes that there is no significant relationship between occupation of the respondents and negative reviews stopping purchase decisions.

8.2.5. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ONLINE PLATFORM PREFERRED AND TRUST IN PLATFORMS REMOVING FAKE REVIEWS**Hypothesis**

H₀: There is no significant relationship between online platform preferred by the respondents and trust in platforms removing fake reviews.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between online platform preferred by the respondents and trust in platforms removing fake reviews.

TABLE 14 Cross Tabulation Analysis

Online Platform	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Amazon	5	5	11	25	46
Flipkart	2	3	7	10	22
Myntra	4	7	4	9	24
Meesho	3	7	24	22	56
Ajo	0	0	2	4	6
Nykaa	1	0	1	4	6
Total	15	22	49	74	160

Interpretation

The cross tabulation table shows that respondents using different online shopping platforms mostly agree that they trust platforms which remove fake reviews. Respondents using Amazon and Meesho show higher agreement levels compared to other platforms. This indicates that removing fake reviews helps improve customer trust in online shopping platforms.

TABLE 15 Chi-Square Test

Particulars	Value
Pearson Chi-square	17.547
Degrees of Freedom	15
Significance Value	0.287
Number of Valid Cases	160

Interpretation

The significance value obtained from the Chi-square analysis is 0.287, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

Result

The study concludes that there is no significant relationship between online platform preferred by the respondents and trust in platforms removing fake reviews.

8.3. CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between demographic variables and consumer perception towards online reviews and ratings.

TABLE 16 Relationship between Age and Checking Online Reviews before Buying

Variables	Correlation Value	Significance Value	N
Age and Checking Online Reviews	-0.078	0.327	160

Interpretation

The correlation value of -0.078 indicates a weak negative relationship between age of the respondents and checking online reviews before buying. The significance value is 0.327, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the relationship is not statistically significant.

Result

The study concludes that there is no significant relationship between age of the respondents and checking online reviews before buying products.

TABLE 17 Relationship between Gender and Avoiding Products with Low Ratings

Variables	Correlation Value	Significance Value	N
Gender and Avoiding Low Rated Products	0.001	0.987	160

Interpretation

The correlation value of 0.001 indicates a negligible positive relationship between gender and avoiding products with low ratings. The significance value is 0.987, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the relationship is not statistically significant.

Result

The study concludes that there is no significant relationship between gender of the respondents and avoiding products with low ratings.

TABLE 18 Relationship between Educational Qualification and Belief that Online Reviews are Genuine

Variables	Correlation Value	Significance Value	N
Educational Qualification and Genuine Reviews	-0.053	0.506	160

Interpretation

The correlation value of -0.053 indicates a very weak negative relationship between educational qualification and belief that online reviews are genuine. The significance value is 0.506, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the relationship is not statistically significant.

Result

The study concludes that there is no significant relationship between educational qualification and belief that online reviews are genuine.

TABLE 19 Relationship between Occupation and Effect of Few Negative Reviews on Decision Making

Variables	Correlation Value	Significance Value	N
Occupation and Few Negative Reviews Affect Decision	0.009	0.907	160

Interpretation

The correlation value of 0.009 indicates a negligible positive relationship between occupation and the effect of few negative reviews on decision making. The significance value is 0.907, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the relationship is not statistically significant.

Result

The study concludes that there is no significant relationship between occupation and the effect of few negative reviews on decision making.

TABLE 20 Relationship between Online Platform and Rewards Improving Review Quality

Variables	Correlation Value	Significance Value	N
Online Platform and Rewards Improve Review Quality	0.167	0.035	160

Interpretation

The correlation value of 0.167 indicates a weak positive relationship between online platform preference and the opinion that rewards improve review quality. The significance value is 0.035, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the relationship is statistically significant.

Result

The study concludes that there is a significant relationship between online platform preference and the perception that rewards improve review quality.

8.4. ONE-WAY ANOVA**8.4.1. EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION AND TRUST TOWARDS ONLINE REVIEWS****Hypothesis**

H₀: There is no significant difference in trust towards online reviews among respondents based on educational qualification.

H₁: There is a significant difference in trust towards online reviews among respondents based on educational qualification.

TABLE 21 Descriptive Statistics

Educational Qualification	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Strongly Disagree	13	3.23	0.599
Disagree	22	2.68	0.780
Agree	63	2.98	0.772
Strongly Agree	62	3.05	0.756
Total	160	2.99	0.761

Interpretation

The descriptive statistics table shows that respondents have almost similar mean scores regarding trust towards online reviews. Respondents who strongly disagree recorded the highest mean value, while respondents who disagree recorded a comparatively lower mean value. This indicates that educational qualification does not create major differences in trust towards online reviews.

TABLE 22 Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Test	Significance Value
Levene's Test	0.736

Interpretation

The significance value of Levene's Test is 0.736, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the assumption of homogeneity of variances is satisfied.

TABLE 23 ANOVA Table

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F Value	Significance Value
Between Groups	3.056	3	1.019	1.787	0.152
Within Groups	88.919	156	0.570		
Total	91.975	159			

Interpretation

The significance value obtained from the ANOVA analysis is 0.152, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

Result

The study concludes that there is no significant difference in trust towards online reviews among respondents based on educational qualification.

8.4.2. OCCUPATION AND OPINION TOWARDS ONLINE REVIEWS AND RATINGS**Hypothesis**

H₀: There is no significant difference in occupation among respondents based on their opinion towards online reviews and ratings.

H₁: There is a significant difference in occupation among respondents based on their opinion towards online reviews and ratings.

TABLE 24 Descriptive Statistics

Occupation Opinion	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Strongly Disagree	24	1.83	0.868
Disagree	39	2.00	0.858
Agree	56	1.80	0.840
Strongly Agree	41	2.15	0.910
Total	160	1.94	0.871

Interpretation

The descriptive statistics table shows that respondents from different occupational groups have almost similar opinions towards online reviews and ratings. The mean values do not vary significantly among the groups. This indicates that occupation does not highly influence consumer opinion towards online reviews and ratings.

TABLE 25 Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Test	Significance Value
Levene's Test	0.679

Interpretation

The significance value of Levene's Test is 0.679, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the assumption of homogeneity of variances is satisfied.

TABLE 26 ANOVA Table

Sources	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F Value	Significance Value
Between Groups	3.199	3	1.066	1.418	0.240
Within Groups	117.295	156	0.752		
Total	120.494	159			

Interpretation

The significance value obtained from the ANOVA analysis is 0.240, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative hypothesis is rejected.

Result

The study concludes that occupation does not significantly influence respondents' opinion towards online reviews and ratings.

9. FINDINGS

- Majority of the respondents belong to the age group of 20–25 years.
- Female respondents actively participate in online shopping activities.
- Most respondents check online reviews before purchasing products.
- Product ratings significantly influence product selection and buying decisions.
- Consumers prefer products with high ratings and avoid products with low ratings.
- Online reviews strongly influence consumer purchase decisions.
- Positive reviews improve customer confidence and trust.
- Negative reviews discourage consumers from purchasing products.
- Consumers compare multiple reviews before making purchase decisions.
- Fake reviews negatively affect customer trust in online shopping platforms.

10. SUGGESTIONS

1. E-commerce companies should improve transparency in review systems.
- Online platforms should identify and remove fake reviews regularly.
 - Verified purchase review systems should be encouraged to improve customer trust.
 - Businesses should respond to customer reviews and complaints effectively.
 - Online shopping platforms should improve product quality and customer service.
 - Companies should encourage genuine customer feedback to improve customer satisfaction.

11. CONCLUSION

The present study concludes that online reviews and ratings significantly influence consumer buying decisions in Mayiladuthurai. Consumers highly depend on customer feedback, ratings, and online recommendations before purchasing products through e-commerce platforms. Positive reviews and higher ratings improve customer confidence and encourage purchase decisions, while negative reviews reduce trust and discourage consumers from purchasing products.

The study also reveals that product ratings simplify product comparison and influence consumer buying behaviour. Customer trust in online review systems plays an important role in determining purchase intention. However, fake reviews and manipulated ratings negatively affect customer confidence and satisfaction.

Therefore, businesses and e-commerce platforms must maintain transparency, improve review authenticity, and provide quality customer service to improve customer trust and long-term customer relationships in the digital marketplace.

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