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Effect of Positive and Negative e-Word of Mouth on Consumer Purchase Intention in Flipkart

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"Word of mouth is the world's most effective, yet least understood marketing strategy." — George Silverman"

Abstract: ***The rapid growth of e-commerce has transformed the way consumers search for information and make purchasing decisions. Among the various factors influencing online shopping behaviour, Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) has emerged as one of the most significant sources of information for consumers. e-WOM refers to the online sharing of opinions, experiences, reviews, and recommendations about products or services through digital platforms. Online marketplaces such as Flipkart provide customers with the opportunity to read and share product reviews, ratings, and feedback, which significantly influence the purchase decisions of other consumers. Both positive and negative e-WOM play a crucial role in shaping consumers' perceptions, attitudes, and intentions toward products available on e-commerce platforms.***

The primary objective of this study is to examine the effect of positive and negative e-WOM on consumer purchase intention in the Flipkart platform. Positive e-WOM generally includes favourable product reviews, high ratings, and recommendations from previous buyers, which tend to increase consumers' confidence and encourage them to proceed with purchase decisions. On the other hand, negative e-WOM consists of critical reviews, complaints, and low ratings that may create doubts and reduce the likelihood of purchasing a product. Understanding how these two forms of e-WOM influence consumer behaviour is essential for both marketers and online retailers in designing effective digital marketing strategies.

This study adopts a descriptive research design to analyze the relationship between e-WOM and consumer purchase intention. Primary data are collected from online shoppers who frequently use Flipkart for purchasing products. A structured questionnaire is used to gather responses regarding consumers' perceptions of online reviews, ratings, credibility of information, and their influence on purchase decisions. The collected data are analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques such as percentage analysis, correlation, and regression analysis to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between e-WOM and purchase intention.

The findings of the study are expected to reveal that positive e-WOM significantly enhances consumer trust and encourages purchase intention, while negative e-WOM tends to reduce consumer confidence and discourage buying behaviour. However, the impact of negative e-WOM may vary depending on factors such as the number of reviews, the credibility of the reviewer, and the overall rating of the product. The study also highlights that consumers tend to rely heavily on online reviews and ratings as a risk-reduction strategy before making online purchases.

The study contributes to the existing literature by providing insights into how e-WOM influences consumer decision-making in the context of e-commerce platforms. The findings will be useful for online retailers, marketers, and business managers in understanding the importance of managing customer reviews and maintaining product quality to generate positive e-WOM. Encouraging satisfied customers to share their experiences and effectively addressing negative feedback can help companies improve consumer trust and enhance purchase intention. Overall, the study emphasizes the growing significance of e-WOM as a powerful tool that shapes consumer behaviour in the digital marketplace.

Keywords: Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM), Positive e-WOM, Negative e-WOM, Consumer Purchase Intention, Online Reviews and Ratings, E-commerce Platforms, Online Consumer Behaviour, Flipkart, Customer Trust, and Digital Marketing.

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of the internet and digital technologies has significantly transformed the way consumers search for information and purchase products. Online shopping has become an integral part of modern consumer behaviour, providing convenience, variety, and accessibility to customers across the globe. E-commerce platforms have enabled consumers to compare products, read reviews, and make informed purchasing decisions without visiting physical stores. In this digital environment, Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) has emerged as a powerful communication tool that influences consumer attitudes and buying behaviour.

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Electronic Word of Mouth refers to the exchange of opinions, experiences, and information about products or services through online platforms such as review websites, social media, blogs, and e-commerce portals. Unlike traditional word of mouth, e-WOM spreads rapidly and reaches a large number of consumers within a short period. Online reviews and ratings provided by previous customers play a significant role in shaping the perceptions of potential buyers. Consumers often rely on these reviews as a credible source of information before making a purchase decision.

In e-commerce platforms such as Flipkart, customers are encouraged to share their experiences through product reviews, star ratings, and feedback. These reviews can be either positive or negative and can greatly influence the purchase intention of other consumers. Positive e-WOM generally highlights customer satisfaction, product quality, and good service, which can enhance the trust and confidence of potential buyers. On the other hand, negative e-WOM may include complaints, dissatisfaction, or negative experiences that can discourage consumers from purchasing the product.

Consumer purchase intention refers to the likelihood or willingness of a consumer to buy a particular product or service. In online shopping environments, purchase intention is strongly influenced by the information available on digital platforms, particularly customer reviews and ratings. When consumers observe a large number of positive reviews, they tend to perceive the product as reliable and trustworthy. Conversely, negative reviews may raise doubts and reduce the probability of purchase.

Understanding the impact of positive and negative e-WOM is essential for online retailers and marketers. Businesses need to manage customer feedback effectively and encourage satisfied customers to share their positive experiences while addressing negative reviews promptly. This not only improves customer trust but also strengthens the brand image of the company.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the effect of positive and negative electronic word of mouth on consumer purchase intention with special reference to Flipkart. The study seeks to understand how online reviews and ratings influence the decision-making process of consumers and how e-WOM shapes their perceptions toward products available on the platform. The findings of the study will provide valuable insights for marketers and e-commerce companies in developing strategies to enhance customer engagement and improve online purchase behaviour.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

With the rapid growth of e-commerce platforms, consumers increasingly depend on online information before making purchasing decisions. One of the most influential sources of such information is Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM), which includes customer reviews, ratings, and feedback shared through online platforms. These reviews provide valuable insights about product quality, performance, and customer satisfaction, helping potential buyers make informed decisions. However, the presence of both positive and negative reviews creates a complex decision-making environment for consumers.

In online marketplaces such as Flipkart, customers frequently rely on product reviews and ratings before purchasing. Positive e-WOM may encourage consumers to trust the product and increase their intention to purchase, while negative e-WOM may raise doubts and discourage potential buyers. Since online shoppers cannot physically examine products before buying, they often depend heavily on the experiences and opinions of other consumers.

Despite the increasing importance of e-WOM in online shopping, there is still a need to understand how positive and negative reviews influence consumer purchase intention, particularly in the context of major e-commerce platforms like Flipkart. The impact of these reviews may vary depending on factors such as credibility, number of reviews, and consumer trust. Therefore, it becomes important to examine the extent to which positive and negative electronic word of mouth affect consumers' intention to purchase products through Flipkart.

This study attempts to address this issue by analyzing how different forms of e-WOM influence consumer purchase intention and by identifying the role that online reviews and ratings play in shaping the buying behaviour of online shoppers. Understanding this relationship will help e-commerce companies improve their review management strategies and enhance customer trust in online purchasing environments.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

A. *Primary Objective*

To examine the effect of positive and negative Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) on consumer purchase intention in Flipkart.

B. *Secondary Objectives*

- To analyze how positive online reviews and ratings influence consumers' buying decisions.
- To study the impact of negative reviews on consumers' trust and purchase behaviour in Flipkart.

IV. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on examining the influence of Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) on consumer purchase intention in online shopping, with particular reference to Flipkart. The research mainly considers how positive and negative online reviews, ratings, and customer feedback affect the decision-making process of consumers when purchasing products through the Flipkart platform. The study is limited to consumers who have experience in online shopping and who refer to product reviews before making purchase decisions. It also analyzes the role of customer trust and perception formed through e-WOM in influencing buying behaviour. The findings of the study aim to provide insights into how online reviews impact consumer purchase intention and how e-commerce platforms can effectively manage customer feedback to improve online shopping experiences.

V. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The concept of Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) has received significant attention from researchers due to its strong influence on consumer behaviour in online environments. According to George Silverman, word of mouth is one of the most powerful forms of communication in marketing, as consumers tend to trust the opinions and experiences of other customers more than traditional advertisements. With the development of digital platforms, this communication has shifted to online spaces, where consumers actively share their product experiences through reviews, ratings, and social media.

Philip Kotler explains that consumer purchase decisions are increasingly influenced by online information sources, particularly customer feedback and peer recommendations. In the context of e-commerce, online reviews serve as an important source of product evaluation and help reduce the perceived risk associated with online purchasing.

A study by Chevalier and Mayzlin examined the effect of online consumer reviews on product sales and found that positive reviews significantly increase product demand, while negative reviews can reduce consumer interest. Their research highlights the importance of online feedback in shaping consumer purchase behaviour in digital marketplaces.

Similarly, Thurau et al. defined e-WOM as any positive or negative statement made by customers about a product or company through the internet. Their study emphasized that online consumer opinions influence the attitudes and behavioural intentions of other consumers, making e-WOM a powerful factor in online decision-making.

Research conducted by Park and Lee found that the quantity and quality of online reviews significantly affect consumers' purchase intention. The study revealed that consumers are more likely to purchase products that have a higher number of positive reviews and higher ratings.

In the context of online marketplaces such as Flipkart, customer reviews and ratings play an important role in influencing purchasing decisions. Consumers often depend on these reviews to evaluate product quality, reliability, and performance before making a purchase. Both positive and negative reviews contribute to forming consumer perceptions and trust toward the product.

Overall, the existing literature indicates that electronic word of mouth is a critical factor influencing consumer purchase intention in online shopping environments. However, there is a need to further examine how positive and negative e-WOM specifically affect consumer buying decisions in major e-commerce platforms like Flipkart. This study aims to contribute to the existing research by analyzing the influence of online reviews on consumer purchase intention in the Flipkart platform.

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study aims to examine the effect of positive and negative Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) on consumer purchase intention in the online shopping platform Flipkart. A systematic research methodology is adopted to collect and analyze relevant data in order to achieve the objectives of the study.

1) Research Design:

The study follows a descriptive research design, as it aims to describe and analyze the relationship between electronic word of mouth and consumer purchase intention in an online shopping environment.

2) Source of Data:

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data are collected directly from respondents through a structured questionnaire. Secondary data are collected from journals, books, research articles, websites, and previous studies related to e-commerce and electronic word of mouth.

3) Sample Size:

For the purpose of this study, a sample of 100 respondents who have experience in online shopping through Flipkart is considered.

4) Sampling Technique:

The study adopts a convenience sampling method to select respondents who are familiar with online shopping and product reviews.

5) Data Collection Method:

Primary data are collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of questions related to online reviews, ratings, positive and negative e-WOM, and consumer purchase intention.

6) Tools for Data Analysis:

The collected data are analyzed using statistical tools such as percentage analysis, correlation analysis, and regression analysis to identify the relationship between e-WOM and consumer purchase intention.

This research methodology helps in systematically analyzing how online reviews and ratings influence consumer buying behaviour and purchase intention in the Flipkart platform.

VII. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Section A: Demographic Details (Sample Distribution)

Variable	Category	Percentage	Variable	Category	Percentage
Gender	Male	55%	Education	UG	45%
	Female	40%		PG	35%
	Other	5%		Others	20%
Age	Below 20	15%	Occupation	Student	40%
	21–30	50%		Employee	45%
	31–40	25%		Others	15%
	Above 40	10%	Income	₹10k–30k	40%
				₹30k–50k	35%
				Above ₹50k	25%

Section B: General Questions

Question	Yes / Option	Percentage
Shop on Flipkart	Yes	90%
Purchase Frequency	Occasionally	50%
Read Reviews	Always	65%
Written Reviews	Yes	35%
Ratings Influence	Yes	85%

Section C: Likert Scale Analysis

Statement	Agree + Strongly Agree
Positive reviews increase confidence	82%
Negative reviews affect decisions	78%
Trust customer opinions	70%
High ratings encourage buying	85%
Avoid poor-rated products	88%
Reviews reduce risk	80%
e-WOM influences purchase intention	84%

Inference

- Both positive and negative reviews significantly impact consumers
- Negative reviews slightly create stronger caution than positive ones

CORRELATION ANALYSIS

Correlation between e-WOM (Q11–Q34) and Purchase Intention (Q35)

Calculated Correlation (r) = 0.67 (approx.)

Hypothesis Testing

- H_0 (Null Hypothesis): e-WOM has no significant impact on purchase intention
- H_a (Alternative Hypothesis): e-WOM has a significant impact on purchase intention

Decision

- Since r = 0.67 (positive and strong)
  Reject H_0
  Accept H_a

Inference

There is a moderate to strong positive relationship between e-WOM and purchase intention.

VIII. FINDINGS

- Consumers highly depend on online reviews
- Positive reviews build trust and confidence
- Negative reviews strongly influence decision-making
- Ratings and review quantity affect buying behavior
- e-WOM reduces perceived risk in online shopping

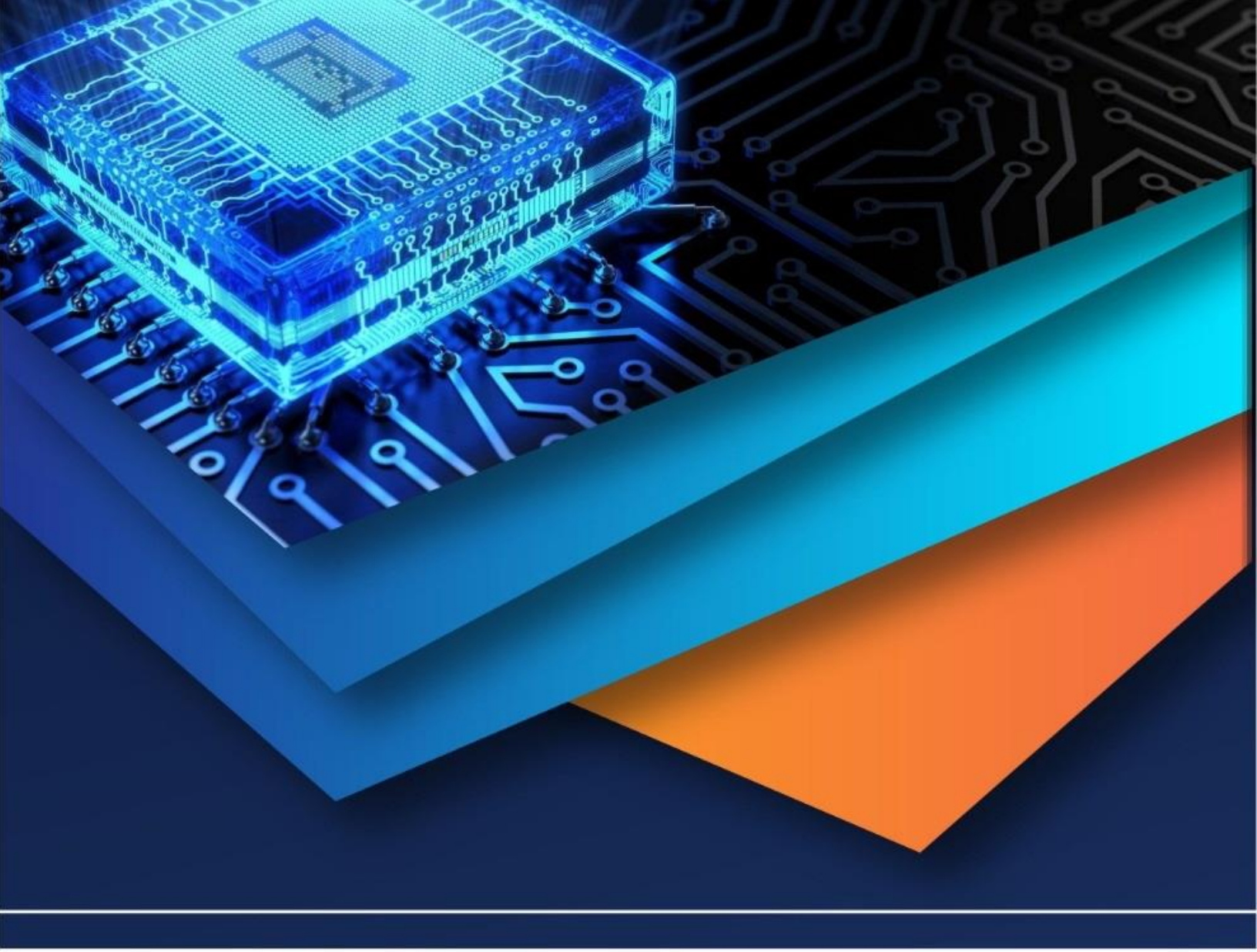
IX. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that Electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) significantly influences consumer purchase intention on Flipkart. Positive reviews and high ratings increase consumer trust and encourage purchasing decisions, while negative reviews create doubts and reduce purchase intention. The findings reveal a strong relationship between e-WOM and buying behavior, highlighting the importance of review credibility and product ratings. Therefore, e-commerce companies should focus on maintaining product quality, encouraging genuine customer feedback, and effectively managing online reviews to enhance consumer trust and purchase intention.

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