

BEHAVIORAL ANALYSIS OF ONLINE CONSUMERS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO eWOM

Project Report

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Under the guidance of

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In partial fulfillment of requirements for award of the degree of
Bachelor of Commerce



ST.TERESA'S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), ERNAKULAM
COLLEGE WITH POTENTIAL FOR EXCELLENCE

Nationally Re-Accredited at 'A++' Level (Fourth Cycle)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the project report titled '**BEHAVIORAL ANALYSIS OF ONLINE CONSUMERS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO eWOM**' submitted by **DONA SOJI, GOPIKA KRISHNAN AND GOPIKA V S** towards partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of degree of Bachelor of Commerce is a record of bonafide work carried out by them during the academic year 2023-24.

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
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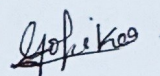
We, DONA SOJI, GOPIKA KRISHNAN, GOPIKA V S, do hereby declare that this dissertation entitled, '**BEHAVIORAL ANALYSIS OF ONLINE CONSUMERS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO eWOM**' has been prepared by us under the guidance of **Ms.Elizabeth Rini K F** , Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, St Teresa's College, Ernakulam.

We also declare that this dissertation has not been submitted by us fully or partly for the award of any Degree, Diploma, Title or Recognition before.

Place: Ernakulam

Date: 29-04-2024


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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Technological developments over the past years have changed the communication environment, leading to the emergence of electronic word of mouth (eWOM). eWOM has been defined as all informal communications directed at consumers, through internet-based technologies, related to the usage or characteristics of particular goods and services. Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), also often referred to as online reviews, online recommendations, or online opinions, has gained importance with the emergence of new technology tools. Litvin et al. (2008) define eWOM as “all informal communications directed at consumers through Internet-based technology related to the usage or characteristics of particular goods and services, or their sellers.” They add that this includes communication between producers and consumers as well as those between consumers themselves. Their typology is two-dimensional: a) communication scope: from one to one (emails), one to many (review sites) or many to many (virtual communities); and b) level of interactivity: from asynchronous (emails, review sites, blogs) to synchronous (chat rooms, newsgroups, instant messaging). Some researchers have labeled it as word of mouse (Helm, 2000; Goldenberg, Libai & Muller, 2001), since consumers can access such word of mouth at the click of a mouse button in online platforms.

eWOM travels with immense rapidity and can have sweeping effects as compared to traditional WOM (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Litvin, Goldsmith & Pan, 2008). This has facilitated consumers to exchange product and brand related information easily and quickly breaking the barriers of time and distance. Also it does not demand any direct face to face interaction. Consumers now have access to diverse eWOM platforms to amplify their opinions and experiences in an unprecedented manner. These include online consumer review websites, blogs, social media, e-commerce platforms, company websites, media sharing sites etc.

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE

It may be positive or negative comments made by actual potential or former buyers of a product online via the internet .It helps businesses to identify customers' needs and also a cost effective way to communicate with them.

It plays a major role in consumers purchasing decisions as today people are more likely to purchase products online rather than direct visit in stores as the online sites provide many interesting offers ,discounts and rewards on every purchase . From local brands to high end luxury brands , a wide variety of products can be seen.Thus it encourages the customers to leave an online review after buying and using a product or service and it would be really tactful for people who are intended to purchase the product.

1.3 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

From 1970's itself Word OF Mouth has been entrusted by the consumers . At that time the satisfied customers would provide a positive feedback orally or handwritten. Thus it will attract other customers to pursue the product . According to word of mouth theory , marketing is when a positive experience of a consumer is shared with their family and friends. Majority of consumers rely on the positive opinions from their family and friends rather than advertisements . EWOM has been highly entrusted by the consumers for making purchasing decisions . Nowadays 99% of consumers purchase goods and services online. Almost 93% of the consumers make purchases by referring to the reviews and feedback on the online sites made by other satisfied customers. The marketers use social media platforms such as instagram , facebook etc for influencing customers . The social media Influencers make a positive Review about a certain product and highly recommend it to their followers. Thus the followers get attracted to the product and purchase the product .

1.4 OBJECTIVES

- To study the Significance of Reviews in Purchase Decisions.
- To determine Preferred eWOM Platforms.
- To understanding Reasons for Reading and Sharing Online Reviews.
- To analyzing Demographic Variables Affecting Purchase Decisions.
- To study the influence of Online Bloggers on Purchase Decisions.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is both descriptive and analytical in nature .

- **Descriptive Approach**

To understand the behavioral patterns of online consumers with respect to electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), a descriptive approach will be employed. This will involve the collection of primary data through structured surveys distributed among a sample of online shoppers. The survey will cover demographics, online shopping habits, frequency of accessing eWOM platforms, trust levels in online reviews, and perceived influence of eWOM on purchase decisions. Additionally, qualitative data will be gathered through in-depth interviews to provide insights into consumers' attitudes and perceptions towards eWOM.

- **Analytical Approach**

Following the descriptive phase, an analytical approach will be adopted to delve deeper into the collected data. Statistical techniques such as regression analysis will be utilized to identify significant predictors of eWOM effectiveness on consumer behavior. Factors such as age, gender, income level, and frequency of online purchases will be examined to determine their impact on the influence of eWOM. Furthermore, sentiment analysis will be conducted on online reviews to gauge the overall sentiment and polarity of eWOM messages, thereby assessing their persuasive power on consumer decision-making.

1.5.1 DATA COLLECTION

Data for this study was collected through primary as well as secondary sources.

A) PRIMARY DATA

Primary data is collected through the response of conveniently selected 71 people through questionnaires which were exclusively prepared for this study. The questionnaire

contains Questions Related to general, social, economic characteristics of respondents along with questions along with questions that are relevant for the study.

B) SECONDARY DATA

Secondary data are Collected from various articles that are published in journals, paper works ,websites etc.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The sampling technique we have used is convenience sampling convenience sampling is a type of non probability Sampling that includes the sample being drawn from the part of the population that's close to hand.

SAMPLE SIZE : A sample size of 71 consumers are used in this study.

POPULATION : Population under this study is very limited as it's only analyzing the consumers residing in Ernakulam.

STATISTICAL TOOLS OF ANALYSIS

The collected data was analyzed with the help of statistical tools like percentage Analysis. Percentage analysis quantified the prevalence of different attitudes and opinions among participants. The collected data were presented with the help of tools like pie charts and bar diagrams. Pie charts were used to visually represent the distribution of responses and highlight key findings. Bar diagrams compared the frequency and distribution of various factors influencing purchasing attitudes among respondents. Additionally, ranking methodology prioritized and identified the most significant factors influencing consumers' attitudes towards eWOM. Five point scale were also used to analyze different answer choices of respondents easily.

1.6 SCOPE OF STUDY

The study is conducted on the basis of Online review of consumers about a certain product and how these reviews are influenced by future customers. Through eWOM consumers can make an efficient decision during purchasing a product. The study includes different platforms where consumers add their genuine review mostly. This

study focuses on how the eWOM influences the young generation. According to studies, youth are more likely to make online purchases. Ernakulam city is considered as an area of study .

1.7 LIMITATIONS

- EWOM information is less useful for search goods than for experienced goods as experience goods cannot be evaluated before purchase.
- Level of involvement with the product also moderates the impact of EWOM quality and quantity on purchase intentions where low-involvement consumers are affected by the quantity rather than the quality of reviews, but high involvement consumers are affected by review quantity mainly when the review quality is high.
- EWOM affects individual level outcomes such as consumers' willingness to spend in a product category , levels of trust and loyalty and consumer engagement.
- EWOM also affects many firm-level outcomes, like product sales, revenues and stock prices.

1.8 KEYWORD

Ewom

eWOM (electronic word of mouth) is a communication network where consumers exchange their reviews about a product purchased online .

Online Customer Review

Customer reviews are customer's opinions shared online about a particular product or service .

Online Rating

Online rating is the rating of the customer about how much the product or service has satisfied them.

1.9 CHAPTERISATION

- **Chapter 1- Introduction**

This chapter gives a brief introduction about the topic, its significance in the research area, problem statement, scope of study ,methodology adopted, objectives to be achieved and limitations of the study.

- **Chapter 2- Literature review**

This chapter deals with the literature relating to the influence of ewom . It also includes analysis of secondary data relating to the influence of ewom on consumers.

- **Chapter 3 – Theoretical framework**

This chapter introduces the theory of the research topic such as purchase intentions, limitations, components etc.

- **Chapter 4 .- Data analysis and interpretation**

It includes analysis and interpretation of significance of reviews on purchase decision, effect of demographic variables etc.

- **Chapter 5- Summary, findings, recommendations and conclusion**

It deals with a brief summary of what the researcher has found out from the study and the final conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER-2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, understanding online consumer behavior is essential for businesses striving to stay competitive and relevant. With the prevalence of social media platforms, online reviews, and e-commerce sites, consumers now have unprecedented access to information and opinions that influence their purchasing decisions. Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) has emerged as a powerful force in shaping consumer perceptions and driving purchasing behavior. This chapter aims to explore the existing literature on online consumer behavior with a specific focus on eWOM, shedding light on its impact, drivers, and implications for businesses. Through a comprehensive review of relevant studies, this chapter will delve into key themes such as the influence of online reviews on consumer decision-making, factors affecting the credibility of eWOM, and strategies for leveraging eWOM to enhance brand reputation and customer engagement.

1. **ABUBAKAR A M AND MUSTAFA ILKAN (2016)** in their study “**IMPACT OF ONLINE WOM ON DESTINATION TRUST AND INTENTION TO TRAVEL : A MEDICAL TOURISM PERSPECTIVE** “ says that eWOM is a source of information domain all over the web. This research studies the impact of eWOM on destination trust and intention to travel in medical tourism .The study is conducted on the basis of income of consumers. For examining various variables structural equation modeling is used here . Abubakar and Mustafa Ilkan came to a conclusion that eWOM positively influences destination trust and intention to travel. Also higher income makes the relationship between eWOM and travel stronger .
2. **CANTALLOPS A S AND SALVI F (2014)** “**NEW CONSUMER BEHAVIOR : A REVIEW OF RESEARCH ON EWOM AND HOTELS**” . This study aims at analyzing the publications regarding eWOM in hotels. The study findouts that eWOM has been widely influenced in the hotel industry .This is done by analyzing different articles .It studies the influence of eWOM from the perspective of both consumers and hotels. They also analyzed the previous factors that led consumers to write online reviews.This study also helps in understanding the eWOM and its future articles .

3. DAUGHERTY T AND HOFFMAN E (2014) " IMPORTANCE OF CAPTURING CONSUMER ATTENTION WITHIN SOCIAL MEDIA "

.The consumer behavior is affected by word of mouth both traditional and electronic . But in the current situation electronic word of mouth is most used by the consumers with the help of social media. Through this study the authors created a framework for analyzing the behavior of consumers and their response to ewom .They considered both luxury and non luxury items for study and the positive and negative response of consumers within different brands in social media.The found out that the consumers response to each brand type was differently affected .

4. LAU AND NG (2001) "INDIVIDUAL AND SITUATIONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING NEGATIVE WORD OF MOUTH BEHAVIOR "

. The consumers express their dissatisfaction about a product by posting a negative review . This Will affect the reputation and future activities of a business. This study is conducted for examining the negative word of mouth and its factors. Singapore and Canada are taken for the ground of study . Nature of product , worthiness, decision making etc . Are factors affecting negative word-of-mouth. Consumers' attitude and reputation of business is also a factor affecting negative word-of-mouth.

5. As per DELIAROCAS (2003) " THE DIGITALIZATION OF WORD OF MOUTH :PROMISE AND CHALLENGES OF ONLINE FEEDBACK MECHANISMS "

. Ewom has been a ground breaking technology for consumers where they can share their individual point of view, their impact on the product after using it and so on. Thus the consumers thoughts as well as reactions to the products are spread through the internet around the globe, as shared communication led to electronic contrivance of response to support numerous activities that include developing brands, advancements of products, acquisition of customers, control of quality as well as guarantee of resource quality.

6. **FORMAN et al. (2008) “THE ROLE OF REVIEWER IDENTITY DISCLOSURE IN ELECTRONIC MARKETS”** highlights the influence of a connected environment on consumers, emphasizing factors like disclosed identity and online community recognition in shaping perceptions of reviews. Additionally, previous studies, such as Poston and Speier (2005), Duan et al. (2008), and Todd and Benbasat (1992), highlights the importance of numerical assessments in understanding the impact of consumer reviews on buying decisions, product sales, and search costs.
7. **LUO AND ZHONG'S (2015) “SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS TO EXPLAIN COMMUNICATION CHARACTERISTICS OF TRAVEL -RELATED ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH ON SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES”** study reveals that eWOM on virtual social platforms is influenced by social relations and interactions of social bonds—whether strong, neutral, or poor—which in turn affects the impact of electronic word-of-mouth. Furthermore, their findings indicate that eWOM through strong social connections has the potential to impact attitudes and influence decision-making processes.
8. **CHEUNG AND THADANI(2012) “THE IMPACT OF ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH COMMUNICATION : A LITERATURE ANALYSIS AND INTEGRATIVE MODEL”** said that the internet had provided some very suitable platforms for eWOM forms such as blogs, forums, review websites, and shopping websites. Some previous studies have shown the impact of eWOM from the above foundation for the adoption of consumer eWOM information (BICKART; SCHINDLER, 2001; PARK et al., 2007; SEE-TO; HO, 2014). Therefore, this has created a diverse electronic word of mouth.
9. **ISMAGILOVA, ELVIRA; RANA, NRIPENDRA P.; SLADE, E.; DWIVEDI (2021) “A META-ANALYSIS OF THE FACTORS AFFECTING EWOM PROVIDING BEHAVIOR ”**the aim of this study is to synthesize findings from

existing studies on eWOM by employing meta-analysis, which will help to reconcile conflicting findings of factors affecting consumers' intention to engage in eWOM communications. - Factors affecting eWOM providing behavior were divided into four groups: personal conditions, social conditions, perceptual conditions, and consumption-based conditions. The results of meta-analysis showed that out of 20 identified relationships, 16 were found to be significant (opinion seeking, information usefulness, trust in web Ewom services, economic incentive, customer satisfaction, loyalty, brand attitude, altruism, affective influence, tie strength, homophily, and community identity).

10. GOBINDA ROY ,BIPLAB DATTA , SRABANTI MUKHERJEE (2018)

“ROLE OF ELECTRONIC WORD-OF-MOUTH CONTENT AND VALENCE IN INFLUENCING ONLINE PURCHASE BEHAVIOR ”

This study provides three major contributions to the extant literature. First, it explores the importance of mixed neutral WOM and discusses how managers can use it to enhance customers' online purchase intention. Second, it presents the increasing importance of rich media online review in influencing online purchase intention, and how the manager can influence customers to write rich media review content. Third, it clearly defines how managers can form actionable marketing strategies based on the insight developed from customers' voice in the form of eWOM valence and eWOM content.

11. GOBINDA ROY , BIPLAB DATTA , SRABANTI MUKHERJEE &

RITUPARNA BASU (2020)“EFFECT OF EWOM STIMULI AND EWOM RESPONSE ON PERCEIVED SERVICE QUALITY AND ONLINE RECOMMENDATION”

This study conceptualized the significant triadic effects of the eWOM stimuli on perceived service quality of customers in the context of online hotel booking services. The simple S-O-R framework was used to explain the impact of eWOM stimuli on customer perceptions of hotel services

leading to his recommendation intention response in the online environment. This study takes an innovative approach to capture the agility of hotel managers while forming their response strategies to hotels reviews, and how their engagement with customers develop a favorable perception about service quality.

12. RAFFAELE FILIERI (2021) “THE EFFECT OF VISUAL AND VERBAL CUES IN EWOM ON TOURISTS ’ ACTUAL AND INTENDED

VISITATION”. This study is one of the first that applies Dual Coding Theory (Paivio, 1986; 1991) to measure the influence of verbal and visual features of eWOM on consumers’ intention and behavior. This study reveals that consumers’ interest in a destination and actual visit of its attractions are influenced mainly by visual cues and by the verbal cues indicating their popularity. This study also shows that user-generated pictures did have a significant influence on visit intention and behavior.

CHAPTER - 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In order to comprehensively analyze the behavioral dynamics of online consumers, it is imperative to establish a theoretical framework that provides a structured lens through which to interpret and understand their actions. This chapter aims to construct such a framework by synthesizing key theories from the fields of consumer behavior, psychology, and marketing, with a particular emphasis on electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). By integrating relevant theoretical perspectives, this framework will serve as a guiding structure for the subsequent empirical investigation into the behavioral patterns of online consumers and their interactions with eWOM. Through an exploration of concepts such as social influence theory, information processing theory, and the elaboration likelihood model, this chapter seeks to elucidate the underlying mechanisms driving consumer engagement with eWOM and its impact on purchasing decisions. By grounding our analysis in established theoretical frameworks, we aim to provide a robust foundation for understanding the complexities of online consumer behavior in the digital age.

3.1 ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH

Electronic word of mouth refers to communicating information about a product or service through online platforms . eWOM is the most efficient way for collecting information about a product or service . Through ewom consumers can analyze and evaluate different products or services of a particular brand . Information is provided at any time or any place without any formalities at lower cost.

The rapid growth of social media such as instagram, facebook etc. broadly influenced the growth of electronic word of mouth. Advanced technology also creates a new way of communication between consumers. Advanced technology includes social media such as youtube, facebook, instagram , online retailers, online comment boxes etc. Through these sites different forms of information such as videos,pictures,text etc. are made available to consumers and get an overall view about a product or service .

3.2 PURCHASE INTENTION

Purchase decisions are influenced by ewom in many ways . Purchase intention means the urge to buy something in the future. Having purchase intentions on social media is

very much similar to traditional ways of shopping. Social media users want to purchase products and services through sites like instagram and facebook.

User-generated content and online word-of-mouth are important things that create purchase intention on social media. Mainly , youth use social networks actively to get up-to-date Information about products and services from their peers. Peer conversations help to share information about what's actively available . Customer reviews and recommendations from friends leads people towards suitable products when there are many options.

Social media users also want to purchase digital and virtual products through different social sites. For marketers to stay trending on social media, they need to provide high quality products and services to target customers. Good quality products and services themselves build a good reputation and loyalty among social media users. Customers who are satisfied with their will naturally share positive reviews and recommend to their friends.

3.3 HEDONIC AND UTILITARIAN SHOPPING

Peter and Olson (2010) says that when a customer decides to purchase any product or service , their decision is influenced by thoughts, feelings, or environmental factors . This may vary throughout the day and make the decision complex . Customers actively choose products, as shown in studies like Furner et al. (2016), which explore why one product is chosen over others. Additionally, the level of risk involved in a purchase is very important, especially online, where customers rely on information to reduce uncertainty. Some customers shop for their own pleasure such customers are called hedonic buyers. They focus on enjoying the experience and prioritizing convenience. This may lead to impulsive purchases. In other hands , utilitarian buyers prioritize fulfilling a need and focus on the usefulness of a product. They carefully analyze, evaluate and compare options, for seeking reliable information to make ultimate decisions. Their aim is to get the best value for their money, as highlighted by Understanding these motivations is difficult for understanding the decision process.

3.4 HIERARCHY OF EFFECT MODEL

The Hierarchy of Effects Model (HOE) was proposed by Lavidge and Steiner (1961), which outlines six steps in the buying process: Awareness, Knowledge, Liking, Preference, Conviction, and Purchase. Initially, customers become aware of a product or service, by gaining knowledge and opinions, often by factors like advertising and electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM). The phases of Liking and Preference gauge the customer's emotional attachment to the product. If positive, it leads to intention to purchase, ultimately resulting in a purchase decision (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961).

Regarding eWOM's impact on the Knowledge step, Park and Lee (2008) suggest that online reviews serve two main functions: informative and recommendatory. However, dealing with a large quantity of reviews can lead to bulky information. Additionally, the content of recommendations varies, ranging from insightful and emotional to superficial. Some reviews prioritize accuracy and facts, while others focus on emotional appeal.

Researchers like Deutsch and Gerard (1955) suggest two additional processes that contribute to the Knowledge phase of behavior of customers. Firstly, the impact on information occurs when customers are receptive to suggestions and agree to act on them. Secondly, influence from norms or prevailing social behaviors can also mold buying decisions, as customers may conform to the expectations of a group or individual. Understanding these triggers for purchase intention is vital for business owners.

3.5 EWOM COMPONENTS

Marketers aim is to understand the factors affecting purchase intentions, with reference of eWOM being crucial as consumers seek additional information before making purchase decisions. In the following section, we scabble into the literature concerning three specific eWOM components, they are Valence, Length, and Channels.

3.5.1 VALENCY

Valence refers to the degree to which information portrays a positive or negative image of the product (Adjei et al. (2010).Amblee and Bui (2011) further intricate that Valence resolves whether the information is neutral, positive, or negative. Sparks and Browning (2011) portrays positive reviews as favorable and appealing content, while negative reviews utter dissatisfaction.

Previous studies of Hamby et al. (2005), Jones et al. (2009), and Lee & Young (2009), have discovered the presence of Valence in eWOM. Lee and Yoon (2009) discovered that although negative reviews affect consumers, they are unlikely to share them to avoid a negative brand image. Conversely, Lin and Xu (2017) found that positive reviews are more likely to be shared by consumers to their peer as they enhance brand perception. Lopez and Sicilia (2014) note that positive eWOM is more pervasive and accessible, which influences purchase intention of consumers.

Practically, eWOM Valence also affects business operations, as shown by Mauri and Minazzi (2013) swaying hotel bookings and Elaziz et al. (2015) promising further online purchases. eWOM Valence's influence on purchase intentions is inconclusive, with some studies proposing significant effects (Ladhari and Michaud, 2015; Mauri and Minazzi, 2013), while others find less notable effects (Teng et al., 2017). Thus, Valence is an essential component examined in this study to provide new insights into its influence on purchase intentions.

3.5.2 CHANNEL

Speedy internet access has empowered customers to actively participate in spreading product-related content. Gvili and Levy (2016) describes the speciality of eWOM channels in terms of their application, capacity to meet customer demand . Social media platforms serve various purposes, including social networking, collaboration, and entertainment.

Kudeshia and Kumar (2017) state that due to these channel differences, their audiences may vary. This leads firms to adopt diverse communication strategies. They categorize eWOM channels into four types: Specialized, Affiliated, Social, and Miscellaneous. Specialized eWOM mainly focuses on feedback and comparison, while Affiliated eWOM focuses on consumer reviews linked to retail websites like eBay or Amazon etc. Social eWOM includes product discussions on platforms like Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook, and Miscellaneous refers to exchanges of information on personal blogs or forums.

Gvili and Levy (2016) put forward different channels that facilitate eWOM differently, with some being more personalized, such as group chats, and others more general, like social media. The credibility of messages depends on the source and affects customer attitudes toward different eWOM channels. Gvili and Levy (2016) identify five determinants influencing customer attitudes : Entertainment, Irritation, Value, Credibility, and Informativeness

According to Gvili & Levy (2016, p. 1031), Informativeness indicates the deepness and reliability of the information conveyed. Entertainment measures the extent to which the information fulfills consumers' needs for enjoyment or emotional relief. This assesses the perceived level of deception or manipulation in the message. The Value of the message is subjectively analyzed and evaluated by each customer, determining its usefulness. Credibility indicates the degree to which facts are conveyed in a review or recommendation and influences customer attitudes toward eWOM.

3.5.3 LENGTH

Length is another crucial component of eWOM communications. Previous studies, such as Mudambi and Schuff (2010), have found that lengthy reviews tend to receive higher usefulness ratings, particularly for utilitarian products, as they provide more detailed information that helps consumers in purchase decisions. However, other researchers, like Ghoes & Ipeiritis (2007), suggest that not all consumers are interested in lengthy reviews due to the mental effort required to process them efficiently. Park and Lee (2008) states that some consumers prefer shorter reviews for key points rather than

delve into detailed analysis, which may potentially leading to uncertainty in their purchasing decisions.

Furner et al. (2016) says that popular products usually generate lengthy reviews, leaving a challenge for consumers to sift through relevant information. Conversely, overly brief reviews may leave consumers feeling dissatisfied and unsure about their purchase decisions.

The length of eWOM content provides practical implications for marketers, as suggested by King et al. (2014), who discovered that it influences the perceived usefulness of eWOM. Additionally, Lee et al. (2017) identified lengthier reviews as influential in the movie industry. However, the effects of review length on consumers' decision-making is not conclusive, with some studies suggesting a linear relationship and others proposing a diminishing connection. This uncertainty underscores the importance of including Length as one of the factors to be examined.

3.6 LIMITATIONS

Although the reviewed literature shows a similar trend in terms showing effects of eWOM components and their influence on purchase intentions, certain constraints such as age, gender, and culture may sometimes reduce such an impact. For instance, since eWOM operates in the digital world, people of different ages differ in their use of time spend on the internet, as Reigner (2007) find out that customers above 45 could be less affected by online reviews than youth. Societal norms can also be influenced since Pentina et al. (2015) have revealed that people from different cultural norms might react differently to new information.

Although such limitations are of colossal significance for determining the focus of future eWOM research.

3.7 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework creates a theoretical foundation for achieving relevant conclusions to fulfill the study's purpose. Through literature review on eWOM, it's

evident that various factors can influence consumer purchase intentions. In this study, eWOM is defined as any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or service , available on the internet" (Thorsten et al., 2004, p. 39). With the rise of the digital era, consumers increasingly share their purchase experiences on social media platforms and eWOM encompasses product reviews and other forms of customer feedback or reviews available online, often helping the customers before making buying decisions (Kim et al., 2015; Lin & Xu, 2017).

This study examines how eWOM components influence consumer purchase intentions. The first component, Valence, defined by Adjei et al. (2010), states the extent to which information reflects positively or negatively on the product. Research, by Kudeshia and Kumar (2017), indicates that Valence significantly impacts purchase intentions. Both positive and negative aspects of Valence will be considered in this study. The next component is eWOM Channels, as described by Gvili and Levy (2016), which highlights that variations in message delivery methods may lead to different attitudes of consumers. Channels are recognized differently and serve different purposes, prompting an investigation into how eWOM channel preferences impact purchase intentions. This research categorizes channels into four types: Specialized, Affiliated, Social, and Miscellaneous. The final aspect is eWOM Length, where Schindler and Bickart (2012) suggest that lengthy reviews are majorly considered more useful.. Therefore, the study will explore how length of review influences purchase intentions.

3. 8 PURCHASE DECISION PROCESS

The purchase decision process is the decision-making process used by consumers regarding the market transactions before, during, and after the purchase of a good or service.it is also known as consumer buying process which goes through a sequence of steps that the individuals go through when making a purchasing decision.

This is the process by which consumers evaluate making a purchasing decision.

The decision making process indeed consists of 5 keys. They are explained below:-

1. Problem recognition,
2. Information search,
3. Alternatives evaluation,
4. purchase decision
5. post-purchase evaluation.

1) Problem recognition is the first and foremost step in consumer decision making process. It picks out the problems and identifies the product or type of product which is needed. Without understanding what the customer needs, they will not be allured to purchase a particular product. All the needs are prompted internally or externally, internally through personal desires and externally through advertisements or other stimulus.

This process sets for further decision making step in the consumer's journey.

2) Information search is the second step in purchase decision process. At this stage the consumers take down a research on products which would satisfy their needs. It is a crucial stage for the customers in making purchasing decisions. Consumers often consider internal factors such as personal preferences and their past experiences in company with external factors in this stage. They browse through physical locations or they rely on online sources such as Google, consumer reviews, blogs and so on to collect informed decisions.

3) Alternatives Evaluation is the third step in the process of consumer decision making. During this stage, the consumers evaluate numerous elements such as price, features, availability and personal preferences. Consumers carefully analyze the brands and products based on their recognised ability to deliver desired benefits. The level of customers involvement also dictates brand evaluation. Negative feedback from other customers

4) Purchase decision This is the climax stage of the purchase decision process. A well executed marketing strategy which matches with positive reviews and logical appraisal increases the chance for the customers to purchase the product. In this stage, the

consumer makes the final decision to purchase the specific product or service of a specific brand. There are certain factors which have an effect on the consumer's purchase decision and may include the consumer's personal preferences, pricing, promotion, brand reputation etc .

5) post-purchase evaluation This is the critical stage that occurs after making the purchase. The consumer will have the opportunity to use and experience the product or service where the consumer evaluates their fulfillment with the product or service. If the product links up with the consumer's expectations or beyond their expectations, it contributes to positive purchase satisfaction and if the products or services offered were not able to encounter with their expectations it may lead to dissatisfaction. It is important to note that not all the consumers will go through every stage of in every purchase decision.

3.9 INFORMATION PROCESSING THEORIES (eg; ELABORATE LIKELIHOOD MODEL - ELM)

Information processing theories offer a framework for grasping how individuals obtain, process and use information. These theories are broadly exercised in various fields, including communication studies, cognitive behavioral analysis (cognitive psychology) and marketing to understand the cognitive processes that occur when consumers are exposed to various stimuli or messages.

ELM stands for Elaborate likelihood model, developed by Richard E. Petty and John T. Cacioppo in 1980. This model explains how individuals process convincing messages and make decisions. The two main routes of processing in the ELM are The Central Route and The Peripheral Route.

3.9.1 THE CENTRAL ROUTE PROCESSING

The central Route processing happens when individuals take part in deep and thorough cognitive (analytical) processing of information.

Central Route processing is more likely when consumers are extremely motivated, have a direct involvement in the topic, and are willing to invest reasonable effort in processing the information. Or in simple terms, it is more likely when the consumers are concerned about the product and are motivated to think about it to a great extent. Here the consumer scrutinizes the messages rather than reading casually.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CENTRAL ROUTE PROCESSING

1) HIGH INVOLVEMENT:- individuals are highly motivated or to pay interest in the information presented.

2) SYSTEMATIC PROCESSING:- consumers critically evaluate the contents, understand the strength and arguments and consider the relevance of information received.

3) PERSUASION THROUGH STRONG ARGUMENTS:- consumers doubtlessly persuade when the content matches with their interest, beliefs, norms.

3.9.2 PERIPHERAL ROUTE PROCESSING

Peripheral route processing demand more shallow and less detailed analysis of information. It involved low level of elaboration. The consumer will not scrutinize the messages for its effectiveness. They are influenced by peripheral cues like attractiveness and such without thinking about the content. (In short we can say that these users want an item but they do not know any single details of the item).

CHARACTERISTICS OF PERIPHERAL ROUTE PROCESSING

1) LOW INVOLVEMENT:- Individuals have low motivation or interest in the information. Consumers will not have a strong intention to make a purchase.

2) HEURISTIC PROCESSING:- Rather than a deep analysis, consumers use mental shortcuts or heuristics to make judgments.

3) PERSUASION THROUGH PERIPHERAL CUES:- without cognitive engagement consumers persuade through peripheral cues such as attractiveness, source credibility etc.

3.10 FACTORS AFFECTING EWOM

As per the study conducted by Ismagilova, Elvira; Rana, Nripendra P.; Slade, E.; Dwivedi in 2021, The factors affecting eWOM providing behavior in this study are categorized into four groups: personal conditions, social conditions, perceptual conditions, and consumption-based conditions. The Meta analysis results that out of 20 identified relationships, 16 were significant.

3.10.1 PERSONAL CONDITIONS

Understanding personal conditions enables researchers and marketers to know how individual differences and subjective experiences contribute to ewom landscape.

Major components of personal conditions include their individual characteristics, past experiences, psychological factors, cognitive factors, emotional factors. These are explained below:-

Individuals characteristics include demographics factors such as age, gender, education, occupation which may pave way to know how individuals engage in ewom

Past experiences as if the individual has any previous interaction or prior experience with a product or service as it may lead to willingness to post their opinions on the product online.

Psychological factors include personal beliefs, attitudes towards a product or service, personal values and ethical considerations plays a vital role in leveling ewom.

Cognitive factors such as the level of knowledge about a specific product or service or industry can act on the accuracy of ewom. Individuals will be willing to share their opinions if they view themselves as experts.

Emotional factors such as emotional attachment to a particular product or service may lead individuals to post their responses online.

3.10.2 SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Social conditions play a pivotal role in ewom behaviour. people are influenced by their social relations and may recommend to their friends, families or even post it on online. This contains the influence of social networks, peer opinions and group dynamics.

These are explained below:-

SOCIAL NETWORKS: Opinions are recommendations from close connections such as friend , family can influence ewom behavior.

PEER OPTIONS: Opinions and recommendations from peers or friends can influence ewom behavior and help in shaping the activities.

GROUP DYNAMICS: Social groups have certain expectations or norms with respect to posting their judgements online, influencing individual behavior.

3.10.3 PERCEPTUAL CONDITION

Perceptual condition refers to how individuals realize and explain information. This includes source credibility, perceived risk and benefits and platform perception.

These are explained below:-

3.10.4 SOURCE CREDIBILITY

It refers to the skillfulness and trustworthiness of the person providing information.

If the source of ewom is accepted and recognised as credible, individuals are to be expected to share their true and valuable opinions online.

3.11 PERCEIVED RISK AND BENEFITS

It involves the evaluation of prospective positive end results and negative upshot while posting their opinions online. Individuals consider potential risk against the benefits before engaging in ewom. A deemed balance between risk and benefits influence the decision to share opinions.

PLATFORM PERCEPTION

It refers to how people judge online platforms where ewom is communicated such as social media, review websites etc.

PRODUCT SATISFACTION:- A positive or negative comments affect the ewom behavior without an intermediary.

PERCEIVED QUALITY:- the product or service quality has an effect on recommendations.

VALUE DERIVED:- individuals will share their experience if they found values worth of attention.

3.12 ANTECEDENTS of EWOM

Antecedents of electronic word of mouth refers to the conditions that comes before and influence the generation of ewom communication. These are the things that comes before posting a products reviews. By thoroughly examining the factors affecting ewom,

business can make certain modifications in their products and their marketing strategies to uplift positive comments and for overall improvement.

Regular antecedents of ewom are :-

1) PRODUCT INVOLVEMENT

Product involvement means the customers are highly interested in the product and invest more in it. This can lead to sharing their honest reviews, opinions and favors through ewom.

2) CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Customer satisfaction is the most important aspect. When a customer is most satisfied with the product or service, customer may become brand advocates and tends to share more positive reviews and opinions. On the other side if the customer is not happy with the product, the customer may express their negative feedback which can influence the perception of other potential customers.

3) BRAND LOYALTY

When customers make regular purchases from the same brand, there tends to be an increase in customers' emotional attachment and commitment to the brand which will lead to sharing positive reviews and comments about the brand.

4) TRUST IN ONLINE PLATFORM

Trust is the fundamental component that promotes the customers to share their true experiences, opinions, advantages etc. It indicates the level of confidence that the customer place in online platforms such as social media, review platforms, forums etc for sharing information and reviews. Positive ewom can influence buyers whereas negative ewom can put off.

5) PERCEIVED INFORMATION QUALITY

Ewom plays a crucial role in customers' decision making process.

6) SOCIAL INFLUENCE

Social connections and commitments play a major role in eWOM. social network and social norms may have an impact on the customers which lead them to share their personal opinions online.

7) EMOTIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Emotional experience or attachment to a brand or product will lead to eWOM. When a consumer is totally satisfied about the product and has a positive emotional attachment, it leads to sharing positive experience and if the customer is dissatisfied about the particular product, it tends to have a negative emotional attachment which leads to share negative experience on ewom.

8) PERCEIVED RISK

If the consumer is aware of the risk inherent with the product, then it can have an impact on ewom. If the amount of risk is higher, then it will lead the consumers to share accordingly and tends to provide a statutory warning.

9) EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE

Consumers are more likely to be active on ewom if they have more experience and expertise with the specific domain. It will lead them to provide more detailed information, opinions, recommendations based on their expertise.

10) MOTIVATION AND COMMUNICATION

Motivation and communication is the key element. Through motivation there creates a new identity for the customer, they help others by providing genuine opinion and so on which can influence ewom behavior.

11) TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION

Customers who are familiar with online technologies may tend to be more active on ewom. their familiarity will help them to share their experience online easily without any fail.

12) CULTURAL FACTORS

Cultural factors may influence how and what consumers share online. It refers to the impact on cultural influences, norms and values on how individuals with different communities engage in ewom behavior.

3.13 HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Hypotheses are developed based on a review of relevant literature on social relationship variables. Five hypotheses are proposed to examine the relationships between social relationships and eWOM communications among social networking site users.

3.13.1 SOCIAL CAPITAL

The first social relationship variable that is of concern in this study is social capital. Substantial research has provided evidence that personal communication leads to actual decisions to purchase products and services, whereas advertising increases awareness of them. According to Putnam's (1993) influential work concerning Italian democracy, network qualities, norms of reciprocity, and trust are three elements that compose the basic dimensions of social capital in Italian society. These dimensions have been applied in the later analysis of American society. Other studies have also identified main clusters of social capital based upon its many attributes (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998; Onyx and Bullen 2000). Another important classification developed by Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) suggests that social capital contains three dimensions: structural, relational, and cognitive, and each dimension facilitates the creation and share of knowledge. First, the structural dimension associates with social and network relationships, reflecting the potential resource available to an actor and relates to factors that measure the network pattern and density (i.e., tie strength) (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998). Secondly, the relational dimension involves the nature of social relations, such as the level of trust,

developed through an interaction among the group members (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998). Lastly, the cognitive dimension refers to shared understanding and interpretations increased through resources. Wasko and Faraj (2005), for instance, suggest that shared culture and goals are important factors.

3.13..2 TIE STRENGTH

To further enhance the knowledge of the role of social relationships in influencing eWOM in social networking sites, exploring the relationships between tie strength and eWOM is needed. According to Granovetter (1973), social ties can be classified as strong and weak ties. Strong ties emphasize the reciprocity nature of social relationships whereas the values of weak ties lie in those loosely connected individuals who give a broader sense of perspectives to others (Pigg and Crank 2004). Granovetter's (1973) conceptualization of tie strength suggests that the more important, frequent, and durable the tie, the stronger it is. Operationally, tie strength has also been measured through a variety of variables, such as the importance an individual attaches to the ties, the frequency of social contacts, the intimacy and the reciprocal communications, and the emotional intensity of the ties (Granovetter 1973; Keister 1999; Nelson 1989; Weimann 1983). For example, in Weimann's (1983) study examining the role of conversational ties in the flow of information and influence, the importance attached to the social relation, the frequency of contacts, and the duration of the time were used to characterize the strength of ties.

3.14 ATTITUDE TOWARDS WOM COMMUNICATION

The formation of attitudes toward marketing communication is preceded by several variables. It presents five perceptual antecedents of attitude toward traditional as well as digital advertising: informativeness, entertainment, irritation, value, and credibility. Informativeness refers to the extent to which the advertising message includes informational content. This is the ability of WOM messages to inform consumers of product alternatives, so that they may make purchases yielding the greatest possible

satisfaction. Digital communication technology and the internet have facilitated the informativeness of marketing communication by enabling marketers to provide users with extensive information, tailored to their interests, and in a timely manner. Digital message informativeness has been found to be positively related to perceived advertising value and attitude toward the ad. In the context of digital media, enhanced message informativeness may not be costless, and may involve some consumer disutility due to concerns of privacy invasion and intrusiveness which in turn may translate into a negative attitude toward the ad and advertising avoidance by consumers.

3.15 WORD OF MOUTH (WOM) AND ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH (EWOM)

Traditional WOM information can affect many receivers since it passes through a chain of consumers. In the online case, however, eWOM can diffuse faster amongst hundreds, thousands, or sometimes even millions of consumers. The fact that the Internet makes the dissemination of eWOM information extremely faster is the most prominent difference between WOM and eWOM. Secondly, eWOM provides visually supported information for consumers. People can use media content, such as pictures or videos, while talking about products and services in order to support their opinions and experiences. In the offline case, sometimes oral communications do not allow people to visualize the information being transmitted; nevertheless, eWOM makes it easier for consumers. Furthermore, WOM and eWOM are also not similar in terms of tracking their influence. Due to its natural structure, tracking WOM is considered to be very difficult. The Internet, on the other hand, provides some facilities for marketers to track their customers' conversations. For instance, social media websites, discussion forums, and review websites are useful platforms for tracking eWOM conversations

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

DATA ANALYSIS

In this chapter, we delve into the empirical analysis of data collected from our study on the behavioral analysis of online consumers, with a specific focus on electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). Through rigorous data collection and analysis, we aim to uncover insights into the intricate dynamics of online consumer behavior and the role of eWOM in shaping their purchasing decisions. Utilizing quantitative and qualitative methods, we examine various aspects of consumer behavior, including their engagement with online reviews, perceptions of eWOM credibility, and the influence of eWOM on brand attitudes and purchase intentions. By interpreting the findings within the context of relevant theoretical frameworks established in Chapter 3, we seek to derive meaningful conclusions and actionable insights that contribute to our understanding of the modern consumer landscape. This chapter serves as a critical juncture in our research journey, bridging the gap between theory and practice as we unravel the complexities of online consumer behavior in the digital era.

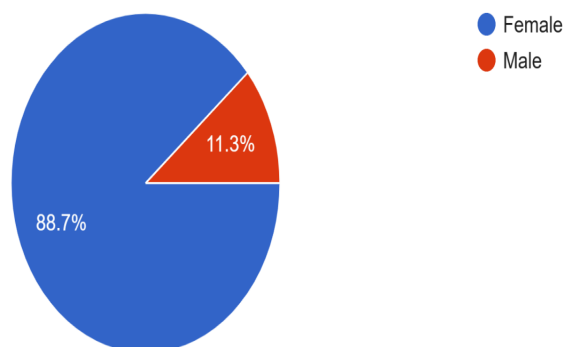
Table 4.1 Gender of respondents

PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Male	8	11.3
Female	63	88.7
TOTAL	71	100

Source: Primary Data

Chart 4.1: Gender of respondents

Gender
71 responses



INTERPRETATION

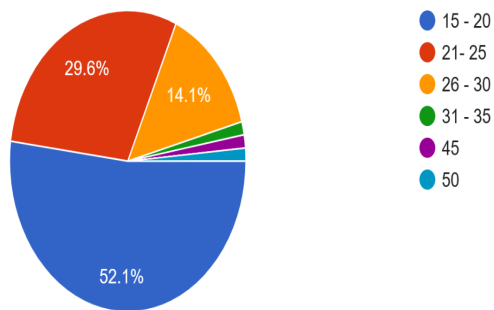
As per table and chart 4.1, a total of 71 respondents filled the google form out of which 63 are female respondents and 8 are male respondents. Female and male respondents constitute 88.7 and 11.3 percent respectively. Majority of the respondents are female.

Table 4.2: Age of respondents

PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
15-20	37	52.1
21-25	21	29.6
26-30	10	14.1
31-35	1	1.4
45	1	1.4
50	1	1.4
TOTAL	71	100

Source : primary data

Chart 4.2: Age of respondents



INTERPRETATION

According to table and chart 4.2, most of the respondents 72.1% (71 respondents) of them are from the 15-20 age category, 29.6% are from the 21-25 age category, 14.1% are from the 26-30 age category, 1.4% are from 31-35, 1.4% from the age of 40 and 1.4% from the age of 50.

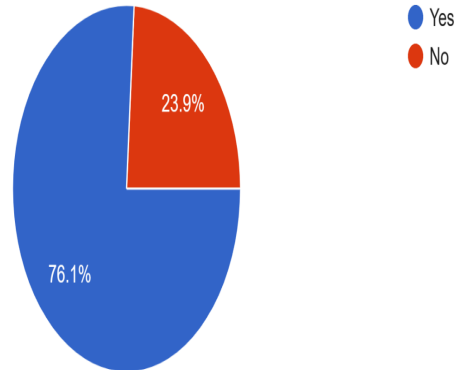
So it is clear that the majority of the respondents belong to the age category between 15 and 20.

Table 4.3 Preference for online shopping rather than offline shopping

PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Yes	56	76.1
No	17	23.9
TOTAL	71	100

Source : primary data

Chart 4.3 Preference for online shopping rather than offline shopping



INTERPRETATION

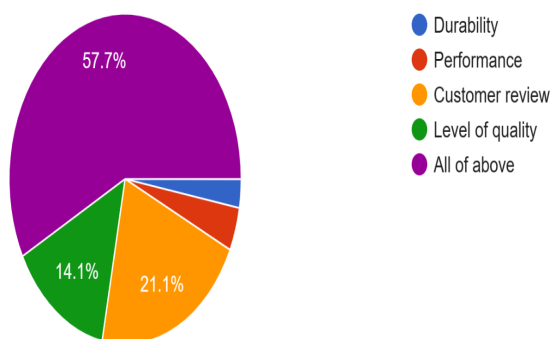
As per table and chart 4.3, a total of 71 respondents 76.1% of respondents prefer online shopping than offline shopping , whereas 23.9% of respondents don't prefer online shopping . Most Of the respondents prefer online shopping.

Table 4.4 Purchase decision regarding products /brand

PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Durability	2	2.8
Performance	3	4.2
Customers Review	15	21.1
Level of Quality	10	14.1
All of Above	41	57.7
TOTAL	71	100

Source : primary data

Chart 4.4 Purchase decision regarding products /brand



INTERPRETATION

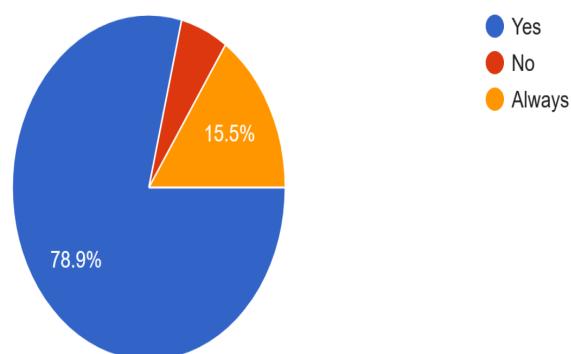
As per table and chart 4.4 , 2.8% of respondents make purchase decisions on the basis of durability, 4.2% on performance, 21.1% on Customer review, 14.1% on level of quality and 57.7% on the basis of all these. So majority of the respondents make purchases on the basis of all the above factors.

Table 4.5 Usage of internet for researching the products

PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Yes	56	78.9
No	4	5.6
Always	11	15.5
TOTAL	71	100

Source : primary data

Chart 4.5 Usage of internet for researching the products



INTERPRETATION

As per table and chart 4.5, a total of 71 respondents 78.9% of respondents use the internet for researching the product , whereas 5.6% of respondents don't use the internet for researching the product . 15.5% always use the internet for researching the product. so it's clear that most of the respondents use the internet for researching the product.

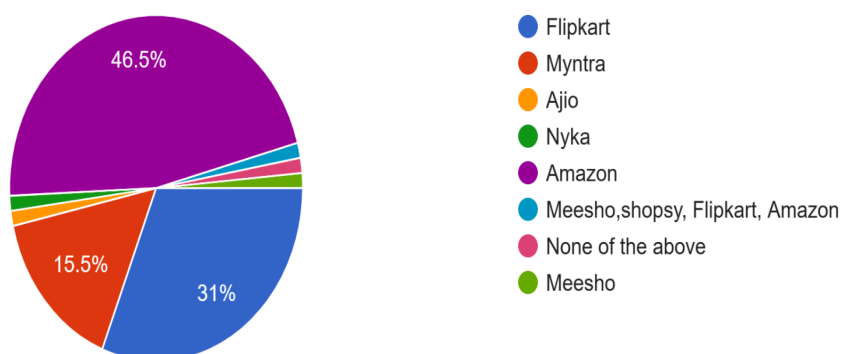
Table 4.6 Online site mostly preferred by consumers for online shopping

PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Flipkart	22	31
Myntra	11	15.5
Ajio	1	1.4
Nykaa	1	1.4
Amazon	33	46.5
Meesho,shopsy, Flipkart, Amazon	1	1.4
None of the above	1	1.4
Meesho	1	1.4

TOTAL	71	100
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Source: primary data

Chart 4.6 Online site mostly preferred by consumers for online shopping



INTERPRETATION

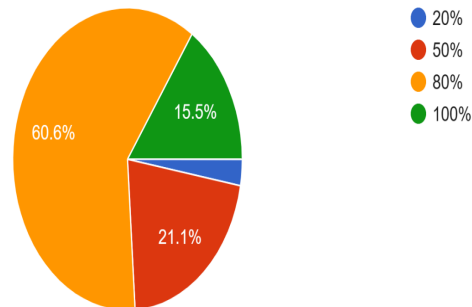
As per table and chart 4.6, a total of 71 respondents 31% use flipkart, 15.5% use myntra, 1.4% use ajio, 1.4% use nykaa, 46.5% use amazon, 1.4% use meesho, shopsy, flipkart,amazon, 1.4% use none of these, and 1.4% use meesho. Amazon is the most preferred online shopping platform.

Table 4.7 The number of reviews available online about brand to make purchase decision

PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
20%	2	2.8
50%	15	21.1
80%	43	60.6
100%	11	15.5
TOTAL	71	100

Source : primary data

Chart 4.7 The number of reviews available online about brand to make purchase decision



INTERPRETATION

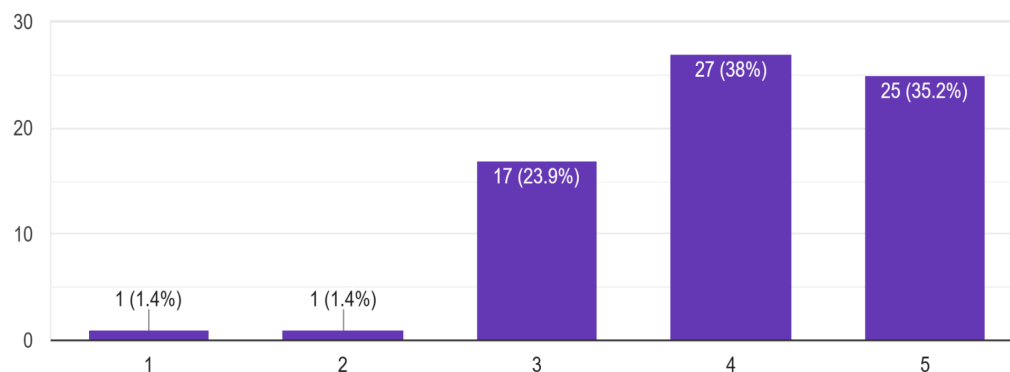
As per table and chart 4.7, a total of 71 respondents 2.8% says 20% of the reviews are available online about brands in order to make a purchase decision, 21.1% says 50%, 60.6% says 80% and 15.5% says 100%. Majority of the respondents belongs to 80% category.

Table 4.8 The number of positive /negative reviews available online about any brand for you to make your purchase decision

PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Not at all important	1	1.4
Low importance	1	1.4
Neutral	17	23.9
Important	27	38
Very Important	25	35.2
PARTICULARS	71	100

Source : primary data

Chart 4.8 The number of positive /negative reviews available online about any brand for you to make your purchase decision



INTERPRETATION

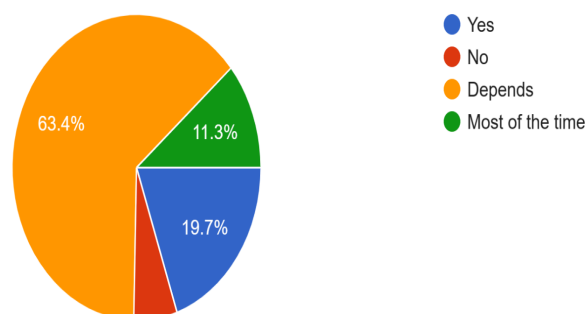
As per table and chart 4.8, out of 71 respondents, For 25 respondents its very important the number of positive/negative reviews for purchase decision. For 27 respondents, a number of negative/ positive reviews are important for purchase decisions. Most of the respondents, 38%, consider the number of positive or negative reviews important for purchase decisions.

Table 4.9 Choosing brands based on positive reviews.

PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Yes	14	19.7
No	4	5.6
Depends	45	63.4
Most of the time	8	11.3
TOTAL	71	100

Source : primary data

Chart 4.9 Choosing brands based on positive reviews.



INTERPRETATION

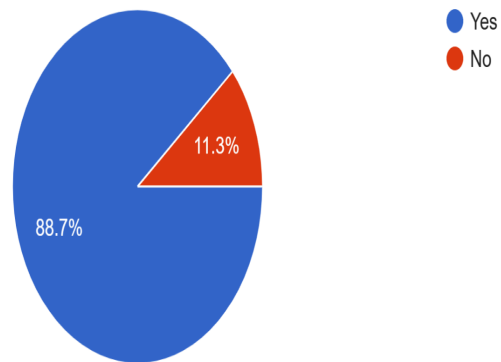
As per table and chart 4.9, a total of 71 respondents 19.7% buy brands after reading good reviews about it, 5.6% don't buy brands after reading good reviews about it, 63.4% depend upon it and 11.3% buy most of the time. Majority of 63.4%, comes under category depends .

Table 4.10 Reading the review completely to judge the content quality

PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Yes	63	88.7
No	8	11.3
TOTAL	71	100

Source : primary data

Figure 4.10 Reading the review completely to judge the content quality



INTERPRETATION

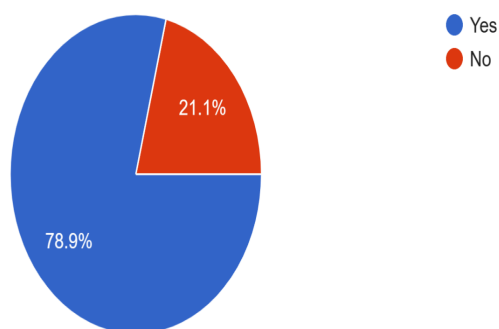
As per table and chart 4.10, a total of 72 respondents 88.9% of respondents read the review completely to judge the content quality , whereas 11.1% of respondents don't Read the review completely . Of the respondents, 88.7% prefer reading complete reviews for judgment.

Table 4.11 Purchase of fashion products after Reading reviews

PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Yes	56	78.9
NO	15	21.1
TOTAL	71	100

Source : primary data

Figure 4.11 Purchase of fashion products after Reading reviews



INTERPRETATION

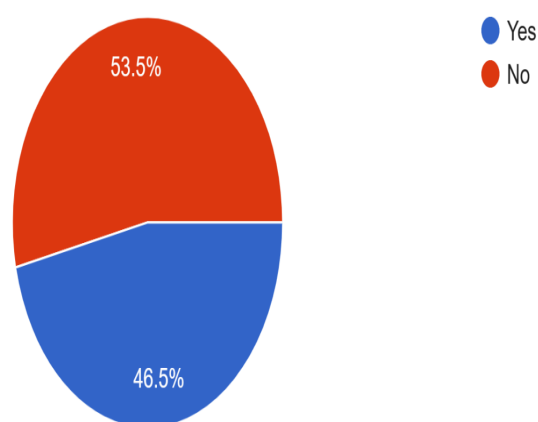
As per table and chart 4.11, 78.9% of people purchase fashion products after Reading reviews on online platforms, whereas 21.1% of people don't Read reviews before purchasing fashion products. This itself shows that the majority of the people purchase online products after Reading reviews.

Table 4.12 Deceived experience in online purchases

PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Yes	33	46.5
NO	38	53.5
TOTAL	71	100

Source : primary data

Figure 4.12 Deceived experience in online purchases



INTERPRETATION

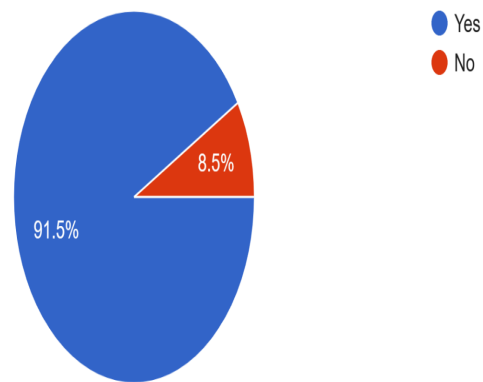
As per the table and chart 4.12 , 46.5% (33 respondents) of people have faced fraudulent activity from online purchases and 53.5 % (38 respondents) people haven't faced any Fraudulent activity from online purchases. Nearly half of the people didn't have any deceived experience And another half had deceived experience.

Table 4.13 Recommendations to friends and family

PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Yes	65	91.5
NO	6	8.5
TOTAL	71	100

Source : primary data

Figure 4.13 Recommendations to friends and family



INTERPRETATION

As per the table and figure 4.13 , 91.5% of respondents recommend brands to their friends and family whereas 8.5% don't recommend brands to friends and family. Majority are positive responses and a few people have negative responses.

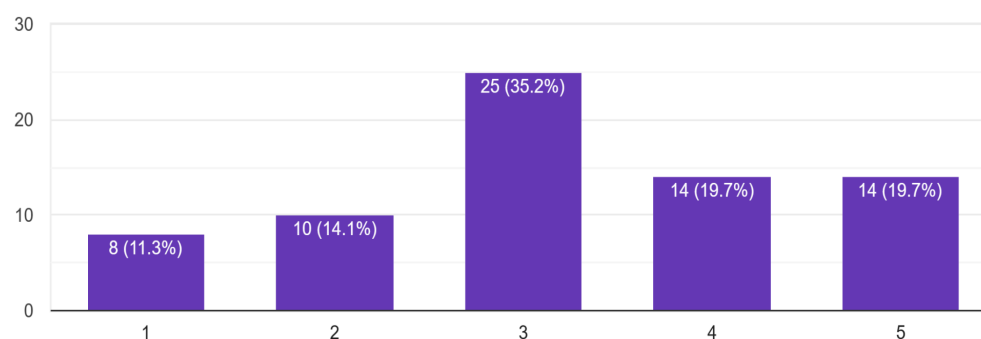
Table 4.14 Rating of number of online purchases

PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Not at all	8	11.3
Slightly unlikely	10	14.1
Neutral	25	35.2
Likely	14	19.7

Extremely likely	14	19.7
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Source:primary data

Figure 4.14 Rating of number of online purchases



INTERPRETATION

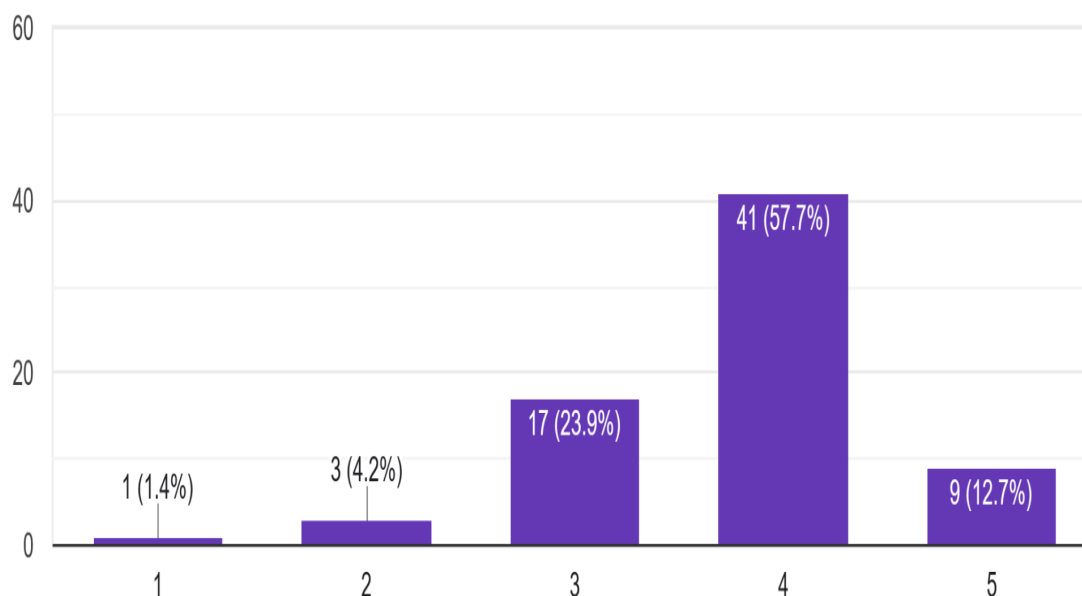
As per the table and chart 4.14 , 11.3% not at all do online purchases, 14.1% are Slightly unlikely to online purchases, 35.2% have a neutral attitude towards online purchases, 19.7 are likely to online purchases and 19.7 % are extremely likely to online purchases. Majority Are neutral Opinion on this statement.

Table 4.15 Rating of level of satisfaction from online purchase

PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Highly dissatisfied	1	1.4
Dissatisfied	3	4.2
Neutral	17	23.9
Satisfied	41	57.7
Highly satisfied	9	12.7

Source:primary data

Figure 4.15 Rating of level of satisfaction from online purchase



INTERPRETATION

As per table and chart 4.15 , 1.4% of respondents are highly dissatisfied aboutsat online purchases, 4.2% are dissatisfied towards online purchases, 23.9 % have a neutral attitude towards Satisfaction ,57% are satisfied and 12.7 are highly satisfied with online purchases. From this It's clear that most of them are satisfied with online purchases.

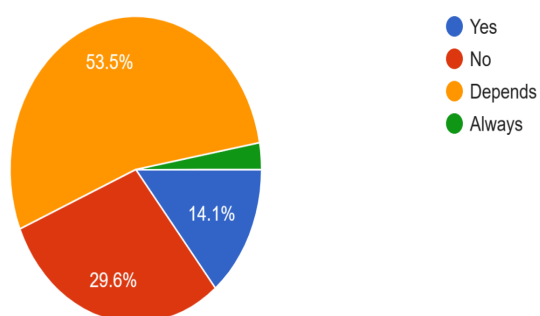
Table 4.16 Posting of shopping experience in online platform

PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Yes	12	16.9

No	20	28.2
Depends	37	52.1
Always	2	2.8
Total	71	100

Source : primary data

Figure 4.16 Posting of shopping experience in online platform



INTERPRETATION

As Per table and chart 4.16 , 16.9% post their shopping Experience on the online platforms, 28.2% don't post reviews, 52.1% may or may not post and 2.8% always post reviews on online platforms. Most of them post reviews depending on the product and situation.

Table 4.17 Reasons for posting review in online platform

PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	RANK
To share reality	30	3
To Share personal experience	33	2
To Prevent future buyers	37	1

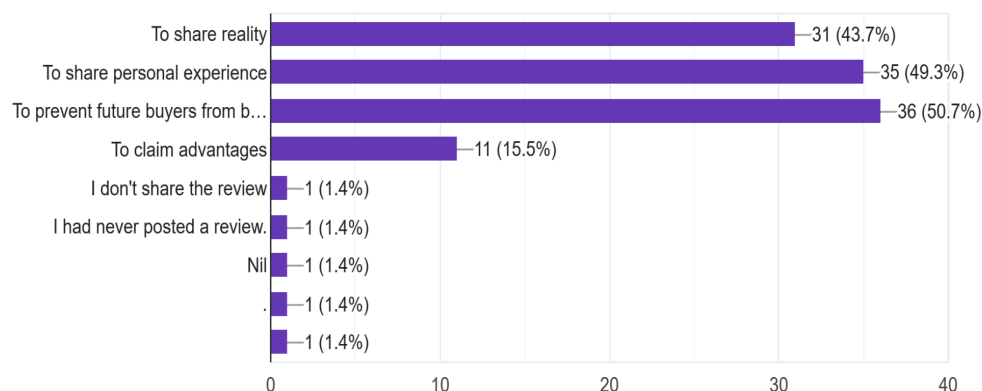
from being scammed		
To claim advantages	11	4
Others	5	5

Source : primary Data

Figure 4.17 Reasons for posting review in online platforms

15. Why do you post reviews of products on online platforms?

71 responses



INTERPRETATION

As per table and chart 4.17 , the majority of the respondents post their review to prevent future buyers from being scammed and thus it ranked first position. 33 respondents post their reviews to share personal experience thus it ranked second position. Other options such as to share reality , to claim advantages and others are positioned third, fourth and fifth.

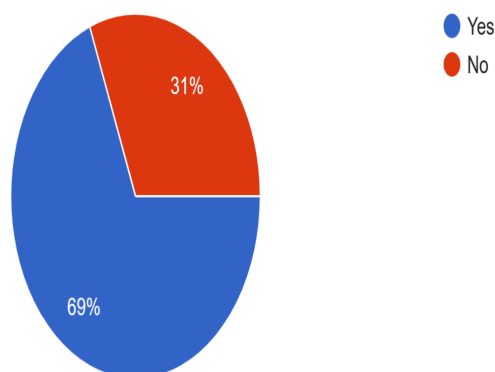
Table 4.18 Purchase of product recommended by an online blogger

PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
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Yes	48	67.6
NO	23	32.4
TOTAL	71	100

Source : primary data

Figure 4.18 Purchase of product recommended by an online blogger



INTERPRETATION

As Per table and chart 4.18 , 67.6 % of respondents Purchase products recommended by Online bloggers. And 32.4% don't buy products recommended by online bloggers. Majority of respondents prefer products recommended by Online Bloggers.

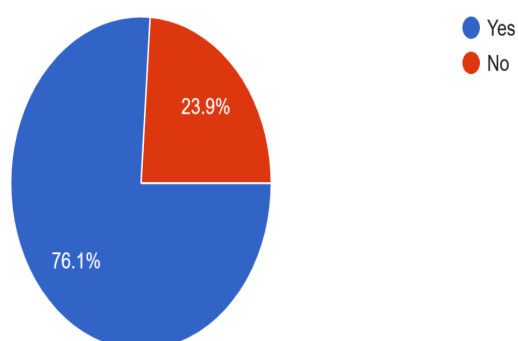
Table 4.19 Feedback on Online Blogger-Recommended Products

PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Yes	52	77.6

No	15	22.4
TOTAL	67	100

Source: primary data

Figure 4.19 Feedback on Online Blogger-Recommended Products



INTERPRETATION

As per Table and Chart 4.19 , 77.6 % of respondents post their sincere feedback on a product purchased after the recommendation of an online blogger whereas 22.4% don't post feedback. Most of the respondents post reviews of products bloggers recommend .

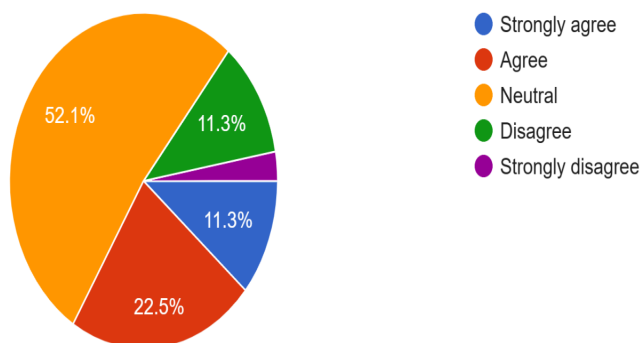
Table 4.20 Influence of reviewers age on purchase decision

PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Strongly Agree	8	11.3

Agree	18	25.4
Neutral	35	49.3
Disagree	8	11.3
Strongly Disagree	2	2.8
TOTAL	71	100

Source : primary data

Figure 4.20 Influence of reviewers age on purchase decision



INTERPRETATION

As per table and chart 4.20 , 11.3% of respondents strongly agree that reviewers age influences their purchase decision . 25.4% of respondents agree with the statement , 49.3% have a neutral opinion, 11.3% Disagree to the statement and 2.8 % strongly Disagree to the statement. Majority have a neutral opinion .

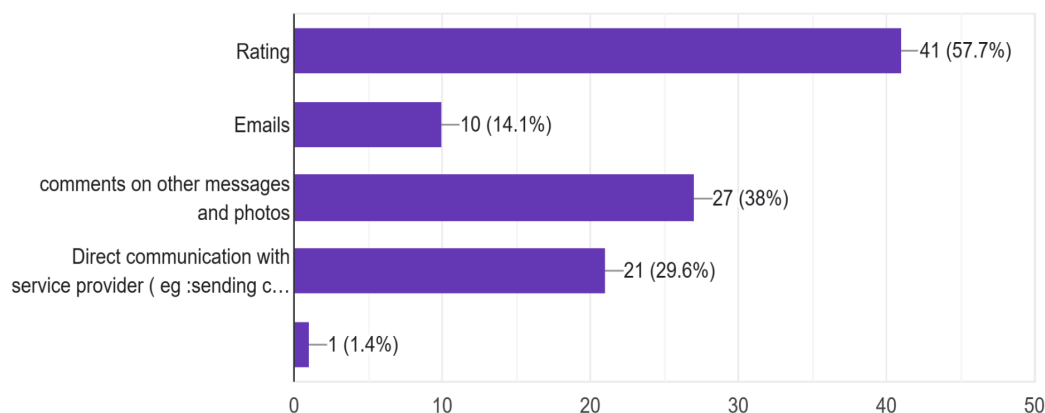
Table 4.21 Types of ewom used for communicating travel and tourism experience

PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	RANK
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Rating	42	1
Email	8	4
Comments	27	2
Direct communication	21	3

Source : primary data

Figure 4.21 Types of ewom used for communicating travel and tourism



INTERPRETATION

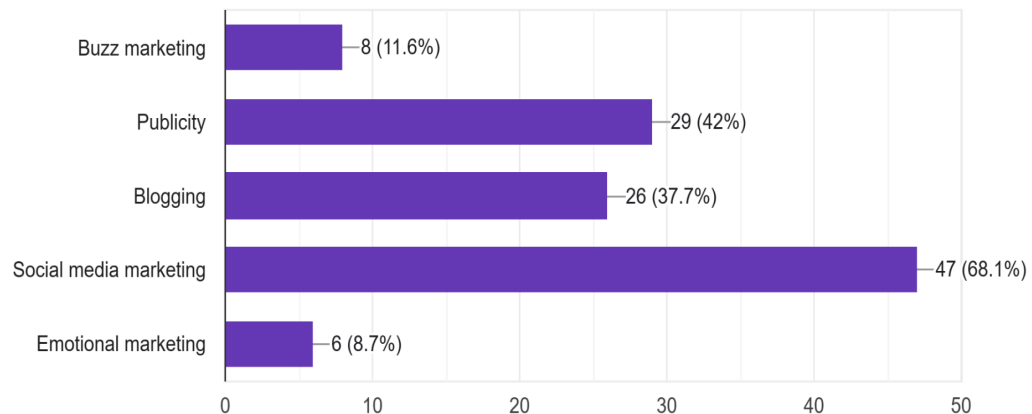
As per Table and chart 4.21 , The ewom used by majority of the respondents for communicating travel and tourism experience is rating system, thus its Ranked first position. The rest options such as comments,direct communication, email are ranked second, third and fourth.

Table 4.22 Noticable Ewom marketing

PARTICULARS	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	RANK
Buzz marketing	8	4
Publicity	29	2
Blogging	26	3
Social Media marketing	47	1
Emotional marketing	6	5

Source:primary data

Figure 4.22 Noticeable Ewom marketing



INTERPRETATION

As per Table and chart 4.22 , Social media Marketing is more noticeable ewom marketing and thus its Ranked first position. Second most noticeable marketing is publicity . Blogging , buzz marketing, emotional marketing are ranked third, fourth and fifth

CHAPTER 5

**SUMMARY , FINDINGS,
RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

5.1 SUMMARY

This study investigates the impact of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) on online consumer behavior, particularly among youth. Conducted in Ernakulam, the study gathered 71 responses from young individuals.

The research underscores the significant influence of eWOM on online purchasing decisions. A notable trend emerged, with a preference for online shopping over traditional offline methods. Key insights reveal that consumers often rely on reviews, comments, and ratings before making purchase decisions. Notably, positive or negative sentiments expressed on various online platforms, including social media channels like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, significantly shape consumer perceptions and choices.

This study concludes that eWOM exerts a considerable influence on the purchasing behavior of youth, highlighting its pivotal role in mitigating risks associated with online transactions. By leveraging eWOM, brands can effectively manage their online reputation and foster consumer trust. Overall, this research sheds light on the crucial aspects surrounding the topic, contributing a deeper understanding of online consumer behavior dynamics.

5.2 FINDINGS

The examination of data gathered from diverse age groups via a meticulously designed questionnaire has yielded compelling insights into the behavioral patterns of online consumers. Here are the noteworthy observations derived from the responses:

General Observations:

- A predominant majority, constituting 88.7% of the respondents, are identified as women.
- Among the respondents, 57.7% are satisfied with online shopping.

- A significant 76.1% of the participants exhibit a preference for online shopping.
- Prior to making online purchases, a substantial 60.6% of the respondents consult online reviews.
- Among various ewom marketing , social media marketing is most noticeable.

These findings illuminate key trends in online consumer behavior, providing valuable insights for further analysis and strategic considerations in the realm of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) marketing.

Findings Based on objectives

Objective 1: The Significance of Reviews in Purchase Decisions

- 60.6% of respondents deem the quantity of reviews crucial, with approximately 80% relying heavily on them for purchase decisions.
- Both positive and negative reviews impact the purchase choices of 38% of respondents.
- Positive reviews play a pivotal role in influencing purchase decisions, guiding individuals towards making purchases.
- An overwhelming majority (88.7%) of respondents thoroughly read reviews to form judgments.
- Fashion products are favored post-review reading, as indicated by 78.9% of respondents.

Objective 2: Determining Preferred eWOM Platforms

- Online purchases outnumber offline ones, with a preference shown by 78.9% of respondents.

- A significant portion (78.9%) of respondents utilizes the internet for product searches.
- Amazon emerges as the top choice for online purchases, followed closely by Flipkart.

Objective 3: Understanding Reasons for Reading and Sharing Online

Reviews

- Over half (53.5%) of respondents actively contribute reviews about purchased products online.
- Among those who share reviews, 50.7% aim to prevent potential customers from deception, while 49.3% share personal experiences, and 43.7% aim to portray reality.
- A vast majority (91.5%) of respondents recommend brands to friends and family.
- Purchase decisions are predominantly influenced by factors like durability, performance, customer reviews, and quality levels.

Objective 4: Analyzing Demographic Variables Affecting Purchase

Decisions

- Age and gender are the demographic variables under scrutiny.
- The 15-20 age category constitutes 52.1% of respondents.
- Women comprise the majority (88.7%) of respondents.
- Age neutrality in reviews significantly influences the purchase decisions of 52.1% of respondents.

Objective 5: Influence of Online Bloggers on Purchase Decisions

- A substantial majority (69%) of respondents purchase products endorsed by online bloggers.

- Post-purchase, 76.1% of respondents provide sincere feedback on products recommended by online bloggers.

5.3 CONCLUSION

This study on Behavioral Analysis of Online Consumers with Special Reference to eWOM underscores the paramount importance of online reviews in shaping purchase decisions among consumers, with a significant reliance on both the quantity and sentiment of reviews. The preference for online purchases, coupled with the dominance of platforms like Amazon and Flipkart, highlights the pervasive influence of eWOM platforms in the consumer landscape. Moreover, the motivations behind reading and sharing online reviews shed light on the altruistic tendencies of consumers to guide others and advocate for brands they trust. Demographic variables, particularly age and gender, also play a role in shaping consumer behavior, emphasizing the need for targeted marketing strategies. Lastly, the substantial impact of online bloggers in driving purchase decisions underscores the evolving role of influencers in shaping consumer preferences and behaviors in the digital age. Overall, these findings provide valuable insights into the behavioral dynamics of online consumers and offer actionable implications for businesses seeking to leverage eWOM and influencer marketing strategies to enhance brand perception and drive sales.

5.4 SUGGESTIONS

1. *Enhancing Review Quantity and Quality* : Encourage more customers to leave reviews by implementing incentives or rewards for feedback. Additionally, ensure that reviews are detailed, genuine, and provide valuable insights to potential buyers.

2. *Addressing Negative Reviews Effectively* : Develop strategies to handle negative reviews constructively, such as offering solutions to customer issues and demonstrating responsiveness to feedback. This can help mitigate the impact of negative reviews on purchase decisions.

3. *Diversifying eWOM Platforms* : While Amazon and Flipkart are popular platforms, consider expanding to other eWOM channels, such as niche review websites, social media platforms, or industry-specific forums, to reach a wider audience and gather diverse perspectives.

4. *Encouraging More User-Generated Content* : Implement initiatives to encourage customers to share their experiences and recommendations on social media platforms, blogs, and other online forums. This can increase the authenticity and reach of eWOM content.

5. *Improving Product Search Experience* : Enhance the online product search experience by optimizing search algorithms, providing detailed product descriptions, and integrating user-friendly filters to help customers find relevant information quickly and efficiently.

6. *Increasing Transparency and Authenticity* : Emphasize transparency in eWOM communications by encouraging genuine, unbiased reviews and disclosures of any incentives or partnerships with influencers. This builds trust and credibility among consumers.

7. *Utilizing Influencers Effectively* : Collaborate with online influencers who resonate with your target audience and align with your brand values to ensure authenticity and relevance in their recommendations. Monitor post-purchase feedback from influencer-promoted products to gauge customer satisfaction and address any issues promptly.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE

1 Gender

- Male
- Female
- Others

2. Age

- 15 - 20
- 21 - 25
- 26 - 30
- 31 - 35
- Others

3. Do you prefer online shopping rather than offline shopping ?

- Yes
- No

4. If “NO” , why?

- Short answers from respondents

5. How do you decide what product/brand to buy?

- Durability
- Performance
- Customer review
- Level of quality
- All of above

6. Do you use the internet for researching the product?

- Yes
- No
- Always

7. Which is the online site you mostly prefer for online shopping?

- Flipkart
- Myntra
- Ajio
- Nykaa
- Others

8. How important is the number of reviews available online about any brand for you to make your purchase decision?

- 20%
- 50%
- 80%
- 100%

9. How important is the number of positive/negative reviews available online about any brand for you to make your purchase decision?

- 1- Not at all important
- 2- Low importance
- 3- Neutral
- 4- Important
- 5- Very Important

10. Do you buy more brands after reading good reviews about it?

-
- Yes
- No
- Depends
- Most of the time

11. Do you read the review completely to judge the content quality?

- Yes
- No

12. Do you think fashion products must be bought only after reading others reviews?

- Yes
- No

13. Have you ever been deceived (fraud) in an online purchase?

- Yes
- No
-

14. Will you recommend the brand to your friends and family?

- Yes
- No

15. Out of 5 purchases, how many times do you make an online purchase ?

- 1 Not at all
- 2
- 3
- 4

- 5 Extremely likely

16.State your level of satisfaction that you achieved from purchasing a product online?

- 1 Least satisfied
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 Most satisfied

17.Do you post your shopping experience / review on an online platform?

- Yes
- No
- Depends
- Always

18.Why do you post reviews of products on online platforms?

- To share reality
- To share personal experience
- To prevent future buyers from being scammed
- To claim advantages
- Others

19.Do you like to buy a product that is recommended by an online blogger?

- Yes
- No

20. Will you post your sincere feedback on a particular product that you have purchased after being recommended by an online blogger?

- Yes
- No

21. Does the reviewer's age affect any purchase decision?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

22. What time of EWOM have you used for communicating with others about your travel and tourism related experiences?

- Rating
- Emails
- Comments on other messages and photos
- Direct communication with service provider
- Others

23. What kind of word of mouth marketing you would notice?

- Buzz marketing
- Publicity
- Blogging
- Social media marketing
- Emotional marketing

