Effect of Online Consumer Review toward Purchase Intention: A Case of Premium Cosmetics in Nepal

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Abstract

This study examines the effect of online consumer review toward purchase intention in the context of premium cosmetics in Nepal. Purchase intention is the dependent variable. The selected independent variables are source credibility, review quality, review valance, product knowledge, and benefit gaining. The primary source of data is used to assess the opinions of the respondents regarding source credibility, review quality, review valance, product knowledge, benefit gaining, and purchase intention. The study is based on primary data of 100 respondents. To achieve the purpose of the study, structured questionnaire is prepared. The correlation coefficients and regression models are estimated to test the significance and importance of online consumer review toward purchase intention: A case of premium cosmetics in Nepal.

The study showed that source credibility has a positive impact on purchase intention. It indicates that trustable and credible source of information leads to increase in purchase intention. Similarly, review quality has a positive impact on purchase intention. It indicates that product's completeness and adherence to quality standards leads to inverse in purchase intention. Likewise, review valance has a positive impact on purchase intention. It indicates that positivity contained about the products lead to increase in purchase intention. In addition, product knowledge has a positive impact on purchase intention. It indicates that better knowledge of the product lead to increase in purchase intention. Further, benefit gaining has a positive impact on purchase intention. It indicates that higher the benefit of the products, higher would be the purchase intention.

Keywords: source credibility, review quality, review valance, product knowledge, benefit gaining, purchase intention

1. Introduction

Consumer reviews have a significant influence over purchasing decisions in contemporary markets. As consumers increasingly turn to online platforms for product information and recommendations, the role of consumer reviews has become paramount in shaping buying behavior. Schneider and Zielke (2020) highlighted the importance of online customer reviews in providing valuable insights into product quality, aiding consumers in making informed decisions. Online consumer review could be very useful for other consumers or could be just disfigurement about certain products. People could write a positive or negative article about a certain product and there is no reliable standard for it. Similarly, Nieto *et al.* (2014) asserted that consumers place greater trust in online reviews from anonymous individuals than in manufacturer or seller claims. Online consumer reviews are widely used as an effective tool that can improve the efficiency of finding product information. Online consumer reviews can provide new information from the perspective of customers who have purchased and used the desired product (Park *et al.,* 2007). Many consumers tend to regard

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product information in online consumer reviews as being more persuasive and trustworthy compared to seller-created information. Consumers tend to perceive words of mouth (WOM) as more trustworthy and credible compared to marketing messages (Sen and Lerman, 2007). Electronic words of mouth (E-WOM) seems to have a bigger influence than traditional word of mouth due to the rapid growth of internet user and platform availability in spreading the information (Beneke *et al.,* 2015). With the advent of digital platforms, traditional WOM has evolved into electronic word of mouth (E-WOM), encompassing online consumer reviews.

Al-Abbadi *et al.* (2022) examined the impact of online consumer reviews on purchasing intention through product mental image. The study showed that product mental image mediated the relationship between online consumer review and purchasing intention. Similarly, Tran (2020) analyzed the marketing managers has realized that online reviews were an essential element in customer decision-making. The study showed a positive impact of online reviews on purchase intention through the perceived impactiveness of social media platforms (PESMP) and online trust while confirming the moderating role of cosmopolitanism. Likewise, Kittikowit *et al.* (2018) assessed the factors influencing purchase intention on cosmetic products of female consumers in Yangon, Myanmar. The study found that brand, quality, and price of a product, including social influence, all has an influence on purchase intention. Moreover, the country of origin have a positive influence on perceived quality among consumers. Further, Puspita and Imronudin (2022) investigated the impact of online customer reviews and celebrity endorsements on purchase intention. The results of the study indicated that online customer reviews has a positive and significant impact on purchase intentions. The study also indicates that celebrity endorsements has a positive and significant impact on purchase intentions. In addition, Ganisasmara and Mani (2020) analyzed internet existence altered traditional interactions between companies, customers, and how social media transformed the way customers interact with brands. The research results demonstrated that celebrity endorsement, review, and viral marketing influenced cosmetic purchasing decision.

Sutanto and Aprianingsih (2016) analyzed the impact of online consumer review toward purchase intention: A study in premium cosmetic in Indonesia. The study found that source credibility, review quality, review quantity, and review valence have a positive and significant impact on purchase intention. Likewise, Tran and Nguyen (2020) examined the consumer attitudes towards beauty bloggers and paid blog advertisements on purchase intention in Vietnam. The results indicated that the similarity between the consumer and the ad creator are an important psychological reason. Further, Shimul *et al.* (2021) investigated the female shoppers' attitudes and purchase intentions towards green cosmetics. The results showed that subjective norm has a significant positive impact on consumers' purchase intention for green cosmetics. In addition, Kevin *et al.* (2020) examined the impact of online consumer reviews dimension on online purchase intentions in Tokopedia. The study found that source credibility, review quality and review valence partially have a significant impact on purchase intentions, while the review quantity has no significant impact on purchase intentions. Moreover, Wang *et al.* (2018) found that review valence (positive, negative, and neutral) significantly influences purchase intention.

Kevin *et al.* (2020) examined the impact of online consumer reviews dimension on online purchase intentions in Tokopedia. The study found that source credibility, review quality and review valence partially have a significant impact on purchase intentions, while

the review quantity has no significant impact on purchase intentions. Similarly, Wang *et al.* (2018) found that review valence (positive, negative, and neutral) significantly influences purchase intention. Likewise, Ha *et al.* (2015) investigated the impact of online consumer reviews on product sales by quantitative analysis of the source effect. The study found that online consumer reviews that came from different sources had differential impacts on product sales and the manner by which consumers used online consumer reviews varied with the source of reviews. Similarly, Tahir and Khan (2020) examined the online review and customer purchase intention in social E-Commerce context by keeping the role of trust as a mediator and source credibility as moderator. The study revealed that trust and source credibility plays a significant role in shaping the online reviews and purchase intention relationship. Mo *et al.* (2015) examined the effect of online reviews on consumer purchase behavior. The study revealed that positive reviews, describing rating, picture reviews, appended reviews and cumulative reviews have positive impact on consumer buying behavior but the moderate reviews, negative reviews, logistics rating and service rating have negative but a significant impact on consumer buying behavior. Similarly, Chakraborty (2019) investigated the impact of sources of credible online reviews on purchase intention by mediating roles of brand equity dimensions and the study found that brand awareness and perceived value ultimately influence the purchase intention of the consumers.

Lin and Xu (2017) examined the effectiveness of online consumer reviews with the influence of valence, reviewer ethnicity, social distance and source trustworthiness. The study found that while review valence, reviewer ethnicity and social distance each had a significant effect on perceived reviewer trustworthiness, only review valence had an influence on brand attitude and purchase intention. The interaction between reviewer ethnicity and review valence also had a significant effect on perceived reviewer trustworthiness, brand attitude and purchase intention. In addition, Erkan and Evans (2016) investigated the influence of eWOM in social media on consumers' purchase intentions. The study revealed that quality, credibility, usefulness and adoption of information, needs of information and attitude towards information are the key factors of eWOM in social media that influence consumers' purchase intentions.

Thomas *et al.* (2019) examined the influencing factors of online reviews: An empirical analysis of determinants of purchase intention. The study found that ease of comprehension, accuracy, opposing viewpoints, completeness, relevance and timeliness are significant dimensions of argument quality, whereas review quantity and consistency, reviewer reputation and expertise, product/service rating, as well as website reputation are crucial peripheral cues. Furthermore, Obeidat (2013) analyzed the impact of online consumer reviews on buying intention of consumers in the UK. The study revealed that the buying intention of online consumers who have high cognitive needs was affected by quality of online review or argument as compared to quantity of online argument or reviews. Similarly, Bae and Lee (2011) concluded that a review from an online community is the most credible for consumers seeking information about an established product. In addition, Mudambi and Schuff (2010) analyzed what makes a helpful online review? A study of customer reviews on Amazon. The study revealed that since reviews are comments from consumers' perspectives and often describe their experience using the product, it is easier for other consumers to accept them, thus assisting their decision-making process.

In the context of Nepal, Kharel (2018) examined the factor influencing online brand

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

The above discussion shows that empirical evidences vary greatly across the studies on the effect of online consumer review toward purchase intention of premium cosmetics. Though there are above mentioned empirical evidences in the context of other countries and in Nepal, no such findings using more recent data exist in the context of Nepal. Therefore, in order to support one view or the other, this study has been conducted.

The major objective of the study is to examine the effect of online consumer review toward purchase intention: A case of premium cosmetics in Nepal. Specifically, it examines the relationship of source credibility, review quality, review valance, product knowledge, and benefit gaining with purchase intention of premium cosmetics.

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

2. Methodological aspects

The study is based on the primary data. The data were gathered from 100 respondents through questionnaire. The study employed convenience sampling method. The respondents' views were collected on source credibility, review quality, review valance, product knowledge, benefit gaining, and purchase intention. The study is based on descriptive and causal comparative research designs.

The model

The model estimated in this study assumes that purchase intention depends on source credibility, review quality, review valance, product knowledge, and benefit gaining. Therefore, the model takes the following form:

$$PI = \beta_0 + \beta_1\,SC + \beta_2\,RQ + \beta_3\,RV + \beta_4\,PK + \beta_5\,BG + e$$

Where,

PI = Purchase intention

SC = Source credibility

RQ = Review quality

RV = Review valance

PK = Product knowledge

BG = Benefit gaining

Purchase intention was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There were 5 items and sample items include "I feel more confident in my purchase decision for premium cosmetics after reading positive online consumer reviews", "Online consumer reviews help me make informed decisions about premium cosmetics" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.876$).

Source credibility was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There were 5 items and sample items include "I trust online reviews more when they are posted by reputable beauty bloggers or influencers", "I am more likely to trust online reviews from verified purchasers compared to anonymous reviewers." and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.816$).

Review quality was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There were 5 items and sample items include "Online consumer reviews significantly influence my intention to purchase premium cosmetics", "I trust online consumer reviews when making purchasing decisions for premium cosmetics" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.886$).

Review valance was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There were 5 items and sample items include "Negative online consumer reviews discourage me from purchasing premium cosmetics", "I am influenced by the number of online consumer reviews when deciding to purchase premium cosmetics" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.866$).

Product knowledge was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There were 5 items and sample items include "I trust online consumer reviews when considering purchasing premium cosmetics in Nepal", "I often compare online consumer reviews of different premium cosmetics brands before making a purchase decision in Nepal" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.882$).

Benefit gaining was measured using a 5-point Likert scale where the respondents were asked to indicate the responses using 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree. There were 5 items and sample items include "I trust online consumer reviews as much as personal recommendations from friends or family when buying premium cosmetics", "I believe that online consumer reviews play a crucial role in shaping the reputation of premium cosmetic brands" and so on. The reliability of the items was measured by computing the Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.862$).

The following section describes the independent variables used in this study along with the hypothesis formulation:

Source credibility

Hui (2017) examined the effect of source credibility on consumers' purchase intention in Malaysia online community. The study revealed that source credibility has a significant impact on consumer purchase intention. Similarly, Rahmi *et al.* (2016)assessed the influence of beauty Vlog on consumers' purchase intention through consumers'perceptions. The study showed that source credibility and expertise, have positive influence on purchase intention. Likewise, Nowak and McGloin (2014) analyzed the effect of product reviews and their different images on perceived credibility. The study concluded that source trustworthiness has a positive impact on purchase intention. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H_1: There is a positive relationship between source credibility and purchase intention.

Review quality

Arora and Mail (2018) examined the influence of review quality, review quantity and review credibility on purchase intention in context of high involvement products. The study revealed that there is a significant influence of online review quality and review credibility on purchase intention of high involvement products. Similarly, Hong *et al.* (2018) found that consumers' negative perceptions of review quality decreased online purchase intentions by deterring the reading behavior of reviews while consumers' positive perceptions of the usefulness of reviews increased reading activity. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H_2: There is a positive relationship between review quality and purchase intention.

Review valance

Hajli (2020) examined the impact of positive valence and negative valence on social commerce purchase intention. The study showed that institution-based trust influences social media communication, leading to elevated purchase intention on social commerce websites. Similarly, Jia and Liu (2018) found that review valence provides more diagnostic value than review usefulness. A crucial role of review valance is demonstrated when reviews are perceived as positive Likewise, Langan *et al.* (2017) found that when review variance is high, the influence of reviewer credibility on consumers' purchase intentions is moderated by brand equity. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H_3: There is a positive relationship between review valance and purchase intention.

Product knowledge

Lee *et al.* (2019) examined the understanding purchase intention of university students towards skin care products. The study showed that there is a positive relationships between brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and brand loyalty and consumers' purchase intention towards skin care products. Similarly, Abd Rahman *et al.* (2015) assessed the effects of knowledge and religiosity on attitudes towards Halal cosmetics products. The study found that there is a positive relationship between product knowledge and purchase intention. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H_4: There is a positive relationship between product knowledge and purchase intention.

Benefit gaining

Al-Abbadi *et al.* (2022) examined the effect of online consumer reviews on purchasing intention through product mental image. The study stated that good review of the product influence the purchase intention of the customer and customer purchase those products that add some positive value. Similarly, Brand and Kopplin (2023) assessed the effective return prevention measures in the post-purchase stage: A Best-Worst scaling approach. The study found that benefit gaining has a positive and significant impact on purchase intention. Likewise, Blandon and Ishihara (2021) revealed that there is a positive relationship between benefit gaining and purchase intention. Based on it, this study develops the following hypothesis:

H_5: There is a positive relationship between benefit gaining and purchase intention.

3. Results and discussion

Correlation analysis

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

Table 1

Kendall's Tau correlation coefficient matrix

This table presents Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients between dependent variable and independent variables. The correlation coefficients are based on 121 observations. The dependent variable is PI (Purchase intention). The independent variables are SC (Source credibility), RQ (Review quality), RV (Review valance), PK (Product knowledge), and BG (Benefit gaining).

Variables	Mean	S.D.	PI	SC	RQ	RV	PK	BG
PI	3.851	0.438	1					
SC	3.792	0.426	0.383**	1				
RQ	3.864	0.513	0.409**	0.457**	1			
RV	3.843	0.517	0.414**	0.344**	0.281**	1		
PK	3.926	0.456	0.356**	0.320**	0.370**	0.298**	1	
BG	3.918	0.464	0.473**	0.384**	0.401**	0.314**	0.319**	1

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

Table 1 shows that source credibility is positively correlated to purchase intention. It indicates that credible and trustable source of information leads to increase in purchase intention. Similarly, review quality is positively correlated to purchase intention. It indicates that product's completeness and adherence to quality standards leads to inverse in purchase intention. Likewise, review valance is positively correlated to purchase intention. It indicates that positivity contained about the products lead to increase in purchase intention. In addition, product knowledge is positively correlated to purchase intention. It indicates that higher the product knowledge, higher would be the purchase intention. Further, benefit gaining is positively correlated to purchase intention. It indicates that higher the benefit of the products, higher would be the purchase intention.

Regression analysis

Having analyzed the Kendall's Tau correlation coefficients matrix, the regression analysis has been carried out and the results are presented in Table 2. More specifically, it presents the regression results of source credibility, review quality, review valance, product knowledge, and benefit gaining on purchase intention.

Table 2

Estimated regression results of source credibility, review quality, review valance, product knowledge, and benefit gaining on purchase intention

The results are based on 121 observations using linear regression model. The model is $PI = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SC + \beta_2 RQ + \beta_3 RV + \beta_4 PK + \beta_5 BG + e$ where the dependent variable is PI (Purchase intention). The independent variables are SC (Source credibility), RQ (Review quality), RV (Review valance), PK (Product knowledge), and BG (Benefit gaining).

Model	Intercept	Regression coefficients of					Adj. R_bar²	SEE	F-value
		SC	RQ	RV	PK	BG			
1	1.417 (5.022)**	0.641 (8.667)**					0.384	0.344	75.116
2	1.866 (7.648)**		0.514 (8.194)**				0.357	0.351	67.138
3	1.866 (7.648)**			0.511 (8.225)**			0.359	0.350	67.657
4	1.507 (5.527)**				0.597 (8.644)**		0.382	0.344	74.711
5	1.220 (5.084)**					0.673 (11.032)**	0.504	0.308	121.698
6	1.217 (4.410)**	0.408 (4.191)**	0.281 (3.465)**				0.436	0.329	47.063
7	0.864 (3.213)**	0.271 (2.824)**	0.222 (2.902)**	0.287 (4.414)**			0.513	0.305	42.827
8	0.659 (2.396)*	0.224 (2.548)*	0.222 (2.902)**	0.224 (3.269)**	0.215 (2.513)*		0.535	0.299	35.170
9	0.360 (1.399)	0.109 (1.212)	0.222 (2.902)**	0.153 (2.407)*	0.208 (2.665)*	0.383 (5.016)**	0.615	0.271	39.079

Notes:

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

Table 2 shows that the beta coefficients for source credibility are positive with purchase intention. It indicates that source credibility has a positive impact on purchase intention. This finding is similar to the findings of Hui (2017). Similarly, the beta coefficients for review quality are positive with purchase intention. It indicates that review quality has a positive impact on purchase intention. This finding is consistent with the findings of Arora and Mail (2018). Likewise, the beta coefficients for review valance are positive with purchase intention. It indicates that review valance has a positive impact on purchase intention. This finding is consistent with the findings of Hajli (2020). Further, the beta coefficients for product knowledge are positive with purchase intention. It indicates that product knowledge has a positive impact on purchase intention. This finding is consistent with the findings of Abd Rahman *et al.* (2015). In addition, the beta coefficients for benefit gaining are positive with purchase intention. It indicates that benefit gaining has a positive impact on purchase

intention. This finding is consistent with the findings of Brand and Kopplin (2023).

4. Summary and conclusion

Consumer reviews have a significant influence over purchasing decisions in contemporary markets. As consumers increasingly turn to online platforms for product information and recommendations, the role of consumer reviews has become paramount in shaping buying behavior. Online customer reviews in providing valuable insights into product quality, aiding consumers in making informed decisions. Online consumer review could be very useful for other consumers or could be just disfigurement about certain products. People could write a positive or negative article about a certain product and there is no reliable standard for it. Consumers place greater trust in online reviews from anonymous individuals than in manufacturer or seller claims. Online consumer reviews are widely used as an effective tool that can improve the efficiency of finding product information. Online consumer reviews can provide new information from the perspective of customers who have purchased and used the desired product. Many consumers tend to regard product information in online consumer reviews as being more persuasive and trustworthy compared to seller-created information. Consumers tend to perceive WOM as more trustworthy and credible compared to marketing messages. E-WOM seems to have a bigger influence than traditional word of mouth due to the rapid growth of internet user and platform availability in spreading the information. With the advent of digital platforms, traditional WOM has evolved into electronic word of mouth (E-WOM), encompassing online consumer reviews.

This study attempts to analyze the effect of online consumer review toward purchase intention: A case of premium cosmetics in Nepal. The study is based on primary data with 100 observations.

The major conclusion of this study is that source credibility, review quality, review valance, product knowledge, and benefit gaining have positive impact on purchase intention. It indicates that source credibility, review quality, review valance, product knowledge, and benefit gaining, higher would be the purchase intention. Likewise, the study also concluded that benefit gaining followed by source credibility is the most influencing factor that explains the changes in the purchase intention in the context of premium cosmetic products.

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