

Views From the Indian Market on The Effect of User-Generated Content on Brand Perception and Consumer Purchase Intentions

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Abstract

User-generated content (UGC) has become a potent instrument in the digital age for influencing consumer views and influencing purchasing decisions. It is imperative for marketers to comprehend the impact of online reviews, ratings, and social media interactions on consumer attitudes towards businesses and buy intentions, given the widespread usage of these elements. The research survey includes targeted questions that aim to elicit a collection of quantitative replies that, when analysed, can yield quantifiable data that clearly answers the research questions. It was designed to be self-administered. The research survey was completed by 200 respondents in the sample. This paper's main goal is to determine whether user-generated material affects consumers' intentions to buy, the factors that affect their experience with electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), and how they perceive a related brand.

Keywords: User-Generated Content (UGC), Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM), Consumer attitudes, Brand Perception, Purchase intentions

1. INTRODUCTION

The consumer market underwent another wave of upgrading with the introduction of web 2.0, and the structure shifted from subsistence to enjoyment and development. Today's shoppers use search engines to find the path of purchase. They actively review material created by other consumers (images, text, videos, etc.) as a reference for purchasing decisions instead of passively accepting information from corporations. A new network for organizing and creating information was born: user-generated content (UGC). User-generated content (UGC) encompasses text, images, videos, and other types of user-generated material that are published on the network in any format. This includes user-shared shopping experiences on websites or applications, which are an example of how new media is empowering and decentralizing society.

1.1. Influence of UGC on Brand Attitude

A lot of analysts have defined brand as "an ongoing universal assessment of people, articles, promotions, or issues." Mitchell and Olson, on the other hand, defined brand demeanor as "a buyer's general assessment of a brand." Attitudes toward advertising seemed to be directly linked to the goal of buying. Brand attitude is how people feel about the brand as a whole. It includes things like brand affirmation, brand picture, and brand-based assessments of qualities and good situations. added that marketers can also use characters because they give a summary of how a customer feels about a product, service, or brand.

Brand perspectives, and similarly shaped ones, both have an impact on the ultimate goal of creating a buy expectation among shoppers. The company creates inspiring perspectives through fulfilled or traditional media in the form of advertising, likely because they have a lot of control over the age and delivery of this kind of content. UGC has greatly increased the options and tools used for customer communication, which has increased the impact that conversations between customers have on the business world. When it comes to UGC through web-based networking media, firms have more control than they do over traditional media. So, it's likely that this source of information can be both good and bad. This means that user-generated content (UGC) can either paint a positive or negative picture of a brand, which can change how people feel about it. People have said that user-generated content (UGC) on these kinds of web-based social networks should be practiced separately from regular or company-made content, since both have a big impact on the success of a brand.

1.2. eWOM (Electronic Word of Mouth)

The notion of electronic word-of-mouth, or eWOM, emerged in the mid-1990s, as the Internet started to transform how customers communicated with one another. Consumers exchanging and sharing information about a company or product via social media, mobile communication,

and the Internet is known as electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). Since it's so simple for customers to start talks online, eWOM has been shown to increase retransmission intentions. It also makes it possible for information to spread fast and widely. Academic studies on eWOM have been published in fields like advertising, marketing, communication, management, and electronic commerce due to the influence of eWOM on customer behavior.

"Any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the Internet" is the conceptual definition of electronic word-of-mouth. Consumers exchanging information online is known as electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), and it manifests itself in a number of ways, including user-generated content, product evaluations, private emails, and posts on social media. eWOM has been recognized as a key subject in research on marketing, communication, and advertising as digital media and new technologies develop. eWOM is thought to have greater influence in today's congested world than marketing and advertising messaging. Positive eWOM communications have been identified as a key promotional technique since eWOM shared by friends and family is seen as more reliable and credible by consumers than advertising.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Singh, A. (2022) The consumer market underwent another wave of upgrading with the introduction of web 2.0, and the structure shifted from subsistence to enjoyment and development. Today's shoppers use search engines to find the path of purchase. They actively review material created by other consumers (images, text, videos, etc.) as a reference for purchasing decisions instead of passively accepting information from corporations. A new network for organizing and creating information was born: user-generated content (UGC). User-generated content (UGC) encompasses text, images, videos, and other types of user-generated material that are published on the network in any format. This includes user-shared shopping experiences on websites or applications, which are an example of how new media is empowering and decentralizing society.

Einwiller, S., & Naderer, B. (2020) exposed users to openly disclosed brands, ads, and user-generated content, enabling us to identify influences on affective response, persuasion knowledge, and ultimately, purchase intention. Moreover, writers employed strategies to divert readers' focus from the posts. They discovered that user-generated content did not lead to persuasion knowledge and an adverse effect, which is consistent with the Persuasion Knowledge Model. User-generated content, as opposed to disclosed advertisements and brand posts, therefore increased purchase intention.

Priya, R. P., & Nawaz, N. (2020) discovered that consumers use online platforms to conduct informational searches during the pre-purchase phase of their behavior. The study also revealed that consumers in Chennai City are familiar with the practices of online reviews before making a purchase, and that user-generated content has a substantial influence on their attitudes toward brands and their intentions to make online purchases.

Mir, I. A., & Ur REHMAN, K. (2013) evaluates the impact of the number of posts, views, and reviews (QPVR) on the product content that users create on YouTube in terms of perceived usefulness (PU) and credibility (PC). Additionally, it looks at how PC and PU affect consumers' perceptions of UGC and whether or not they plan to use it to inform their purchases. A total of 231 Pakistani university students from Islamabad provided the data. The findings show that QPVR has a favorable impact on the PC and PU of user-generated product content on YouTube. Additionally, they demonstrate how PC and PU positively impact consumer perceptions of product content created by other users on YouTube. The results of this study have important ramifications for social media marketers.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A quantitative research approach was used to determine how eWOM and UGC affected consumers' inclinations to buy. Thirty survey topics focused on how eWOM affects purchase intentions, and the second section of the questionnaire asked about the respondents'

demographics. The majority of the variables use multiple choice questions using a four-point Likert scale from Strongly Agree (1) to Strongly Disagree (5). To ensure the study instrument was clear, 15 Delhi University respondents participated in a pre-test of the survey. It was duplicated using the test results, with some questions added, changed, and eliminated. The Tata India group oversaw the data collection procedure, which involved contacting 400 respondents in total via an online survey that got 200 responses.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

The demographics of the respondents:

Table 1 - Reports the Demographics of the Respondents:

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	102	59.0
Female	98	41.0
Total	200	100
Age Category		
< 18 Years	6	3.0
18 – 25 Years	52	26.0
26 – 34 Years	100	50.0
35 – 44 Years	32	16.0
≥ 45	10	5.0
Total	200	100
Nationality		
Indian	104	52.0
Non-Indian	96	48.0
Total	200	100
Education		
Less than High School	6	3.0
High School Completed	18	9.0
Bachelor Degree	106	53.0
Advance Degree	34	17.0
Associate Degree	36	18.0
Total	200	100

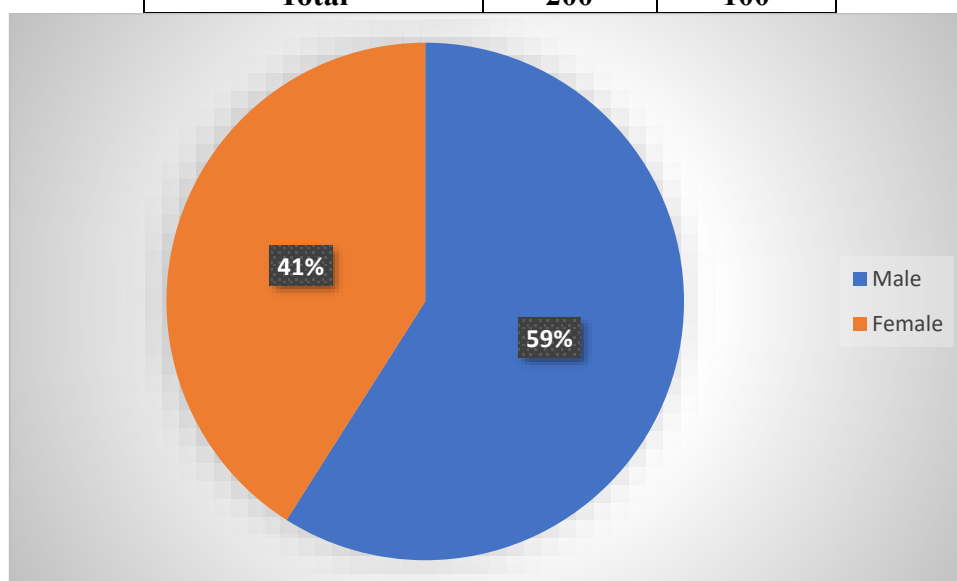


Figure 1: Gender

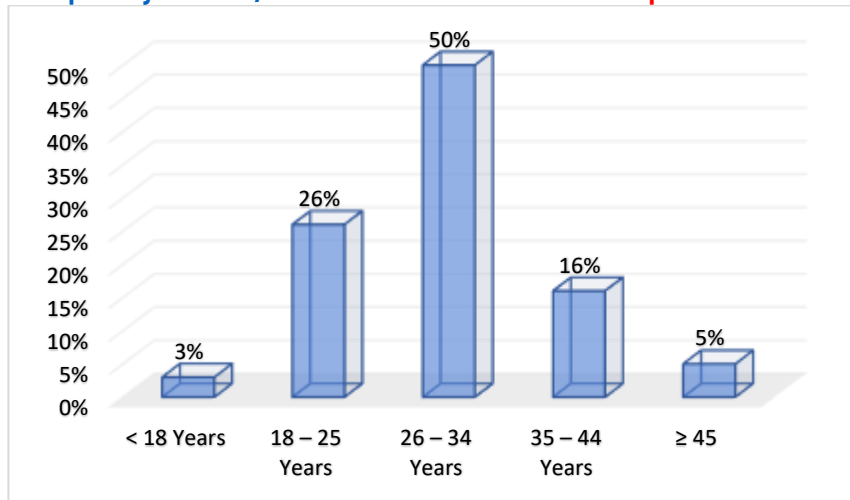


Figure 2: Age

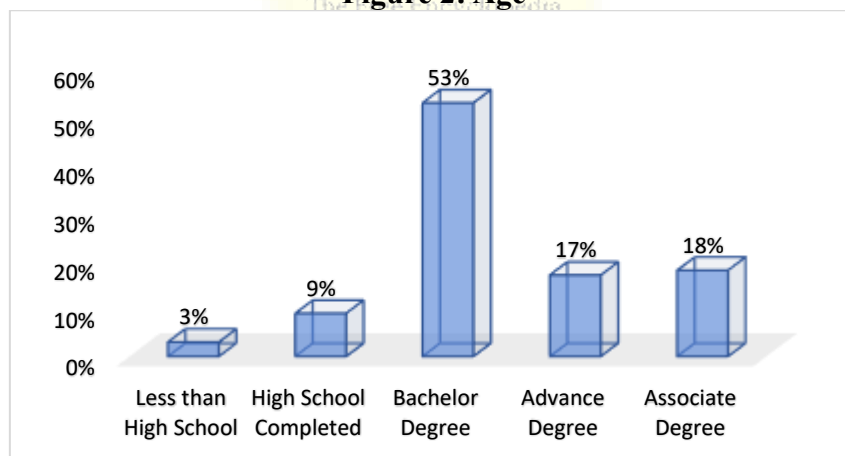


Figure 3: Educational

A thorough demographic breakdown of the 200 respondents is shown in Table 1. There are 41% female and 59% male participants in the sample. In terms of age, the largest group is between the ages of 26 and 34 (50%) and 18 to 25 (26%), followed by those between the ages of 35 and 44 (16%) and 45 and above (5%). Of the total population, 52% are Indian and 48% are not. The majority of people in terms of educational attainment have a bachelor's degree (53%), which is followed by associate's degrees (18%) and advanced degrees (17%). The least represented groups are those who have completed high school (9%), and those who have less than a high school education (3%).

Table 2: – Pre-Purchasing behaviour - Information search

I frequently search for online reviews and ratings before making a purchase decision.	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	34	17.0
Agree	40	20.0
Neutral	80	40.0
Disagree	24	12.0
Strongly Disagree	22	11.0
Total	200	100
I trust user-generated content (such as reviews and ratings) more than traditional advertisements when evaluating a product.	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	6	3.0
Agree	12	6.0
Neutral	64	32.0

Disagree	56	28.0
Strongly Disagree	62	31.0
Total	200	100
Online reviews and ratings significantly influence my choice of brand or product.	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	44	22.0
Agree	102	51.0
Neutral	30	15.0
Disagree	16	8.0
Strongly Disagree	8	4.0
Total	200	100

Table 2 looks at information search and trust in online reviews as pre-purchasing behaviors. When it comes to regularly looking up internet reviews and ratings before making a purchase, a sizable percentage of respondents (40%) are indifferent, 37% agree or strongly agree, and 23% disagree or strongly disagree. When it comes to respondents' levels of trust in user-generated material versus traditional marketing, 31% strongly disagree, 28% disagree, and the majority of respondents (32%) are either neutral or doubtful. On the other hand, 73% of respondents agreed (51%) or strongly agreed (22%), indicating a considerable influence of online reviews on their purchasing decisions, while just 12% disagreed or strongly disagreed when asked about the impact of online reviews and ratings on brand or product choice.

Table 3 – The impact of UGC on Purchasing Intentions

Survey Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
User Reviews Influence	3.20	0.65
Rating Accuracy	3.09	0.72
Trust in Recommendations	3.11	0.69
Impact of Positive Reviews	3.05	0.58
Negative Reviews Impact	3.01	0.60
Review Credibility	2.99	0.65
Frequency of Reading Reviews	2.95	0.70
Influence of Detailed Reviews	2.95	0.58
Reviewer Expertise	2.84	0.66
Overall User Sentiment	2.74	0.59
Photo and Video Content	2.71	0.79
Review Volume Effect	2.67	0.70
Social Proof	2.63	0.68
Comparison of Products	2.51	0.72
Influence of Verified Purchases	2.48	0.81

Table 3 uses a variety of survey items to evaluate the influence of user-generated content (UGC) on purchase intentions. Lower scores indicate less impact and higher scores indicate greater influence. The mean scores range from 2.48 to 3.20. With the highest mean (3.20) and standard deviation (0.65), "User Reviews Influence" indicates that people believe they have a significant influence on their intentions to make purchases. With values above 3.00, which denote a moderate to strong influence, "Rating Accuracy," "Trust in Recommendations," and "Impact of Positive Reviews" likewise receive quite high scores. On the other hand, lower ratings for elements like "Social Proof" (2.63), "Influence of Verified Purchases" (2.48), and "Comparison of Products" (2.51) suggest that they have less of an impact on consumers' intentions to make purchases. Different perspectives on the impact of these aspects are reflected in the standard deviation variability, with some elements—such as "Photo and Video Content" (2.71) and "Review Volume Effect" (2.67)—exhibiting higher variability among respondents than others.

5. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates the important role that electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and user-

generated content (UGC) play in influencing purchase intentions. The data show that although a significant proportion of respondents are neutral about regularly searching for online reviews and believing that UGC is more reliable than traditional advertisements, there is a preference for the influence of online reviews on brand or product choice. The high mean scores for "User Reviews Influence," "Rating Accuracy," and "Trust in Recommendations" highlight the significant influence these factors have on purchasing decisions; however, other aspects of UGC, such as "Comparison of Products" and "Influence of Verified Purchases," show lower influence, indicating that not all aspects of UGC are equally important.

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