

## Research Article

# Impact of Online Reviews on Gen Z Consumer Buying Behaviour in Indian E-Commerce

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**Abstract:** The rapid expansion of digital commerce in India has significantly transformed consumer purchasing patterns, particularly among Generation Z consumers who heavily depend on online information while making purchase decisions. With the increasing penetration of smartphones, affordable internet services, and the growth of major e-commerce platforms such as Amazon and Flipkart, online reviews have emerged as a critical factor influencing consumer trust and buying behaviour. This study examines the impact of online reviews on the purchase behaviour of Generation Z consumers in the Indian e-commerce environment, with special emphasis on the mediating role of trust. The study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional research design and collected primary data from 286 Generation Z respondents aged between 21 and 26 years across different regions of India. A structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale was used to measure variables related to online review credibility, authenticity, review volume, trust, and purchase behaviour. The collected data were analyzed using multiple regression analysis and independent sample t-test through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings reveal that online review attributes have a significant and positive influence on consumer purchase behaviour ( $\beta = 0.463, p = 0.001$ ). Trust was also found to positively and significantly affect purchase behaviour ( $\beta = 0.321, p = 0.001$ ), indicating that consumers are more likely to make online purchases when they perceive reviews as credible and reliable. The regression model demonstrated substantial explanatory power, accounting for 47.9% of the variance in purchase behaviour ( $R^2 = 0.479$ ). Further, the independent sample t-test results indicate that users of Amazon exhibit significantly higher levels of trust compared to users of Flipkart. The study further highlights that review credibility, authenticity, review quantity, and perceived transparency strongly shape transactional confidence among Indian Generation Z consumers. In the Indian digital marketplace, where consumers increasingly rely on peer-generated content before making purchasing decisions, trustworthy review systems play a strategic role in enhancing customer engagement and platform loyalty. The study contributes to the growing literature on digital consumer behaviour in India by empirically validating the relationship between online reviews, trust, and purchase behaviour among Gen Z consumers. The findings provide valuable implications for e-commerce companies, marketers, and policymakers to strengthen review management systems, improve transparency, and foster long-term consumer trust in India's evolving digital economy.

**Keywords:** Online Reviews, Consumer Purchase Behaviour, Generation Z, Trust, Indian E-Commerce, Digital Consumer Behaviour, Amazon, Flipkart, Online Shopping, Consumer Decision-Making.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Indian e-commerce industry has undergone a remarkable transformation due to rapid digitalization, increased smartphone penetration, affordable internet connectivity, and changing consumer lifestyles. Over the past decade, leading e-commerce platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, and Myntra have revolutionized the retail sector by offering convenience, digital payment integration, personalized recommendations, and fast delivery services. India has emerged as one of the fastest-growing digital commerce markets globally, with young consumers playing a dominant role in online shopping

activities (Gupta & Arora, 2023). While Amazon is generally associated with premium products and electronics, Flipkart is recognized for affordability and mass-market accessibility, whereas Myntra specializes in fashion and lifestyle products. These platforms differ not only in their product offerings but also in the way consumers perceive trust, credibility, and review authenticity. Among all consumer segments, Generation Z has emerged as the most digitally connected and influential group in India's online shopping ecosystem. Generation Z, comprising individuals born between 1997 and 2012, is characterized by high digital literacy, rapid information processing, and strong dependence on social and peer-generated content (Verma & Yadav, 2023). Unlike previous generations that gradually adapted to digital environments, Gen Z consumers have grown up in a technology-driven ecosystem shaped by social media, algorithms, online communities, and platform-based interactions. Their purchase decisions are rarely impulsive and are often influenced by extensive online information searches, peer validation, and review comparisons across multiple platforms. This generation tends to trust consumer-generated reviews more than traditional advertising or brand-controlled communication (Kapoor & Vij, 2025). Online reviews have become one of the most influential determinants of consumer buying behaviour in digital marketplaces. Since consumers cannot physically inspect products before purchase, they rely heavily on review-related cues such as review valence (positive or negative tone), review volume, reviewer credibility, recency of reviews, and visual content including images and videos. Previous studies indicate that positive reviews significantly enhance consumers' perceptions of product quality and purchase confidence, whereas a higher number of reviews creates social proof and increases product acceptability (Zhang & Lin, 2024). Similarly, review recency plays an important role in shaping relevance and reliability perceptions among Gen Z consumers, who generally prefer updated and recent feedback over outdated opinions (Kim et al., 2024). In categories such as fashion, beauty, and lifestyle products, visual reviews containing customer-uploaded images and videos further strengthen trust and reduce uncertainty (Sharma & Jain, 2024). Despite the growing importance of online reviews, the rise of fake, manipulated, and sponsored reviews has created serious trust concerns in the digital marketplace. Many e-commerce platforms face challenges associated with bot-generated reviews, incentivized feedback, and misleading ratings that may distort consumer perceptions. Recent studies reveal that awareness of fake reviews increases perceived risk and reduces trust among digitally aware Gen Z consumers (Singh et al., 2025). However, rather than completely ignoring reviews, Gen Z consumers adopt verification strategies such as cross-checking reviews across platforms, prioritizing verified purchase tags, comparing reviewer profiles, and evaluating consistency in feedback (Dwivedi et al., 2024). Therefore, trust acts as a crucial mechanism that determines whether online review information is accepted or rejected during the decision-making process.

In the context of e-commerce, trust extends beyond belief in a specific product and includes confidence in platform credibility, seller reliability, payment security, and transparency of information. Trust reduces perceived uncertainty and enhances transactional confidence in online environments (Banerjee & Chua, 2022). When consumers perceive online reviews as authentic, informative, and trustworthy, their influence on purchase intention becomes significantly stronger (Erkan & Evans, 2022). Conversely, perceptions of manipulation or fake content weaken trust and increase purchase hesitation. For Generation Z consumers, trust functions not only as an outcome variable but also as a cognitive filter that shapes the interpretation of digital information and online reviews. The relationship between online reviews and trust becomes even more important when comparing different Indian e-commerce platforms. While Amazon benefits from strong global brand credibility, Flipkart's localized positioning and Myntra's specialization in fashion retail create different levels of consumer trust and review interpretation (Gupta & Arora, 2023). These variations indicate that the effectiveness of online reviews may differ across platforms depending on consumer perceptions and prior experiences. Therefore, examining the impact of online reviews on Gen Z consumer buying behaviour in the Indian e-commerce context has both academic and managerial significance.

Although previous studies have extensively examined electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) and online purchase intentions, limited research has specifically focused on Indian Generation Z consumers across major e-commerce platforms. Furthermore, recent literature highlights the growing mediating role of trust in digital consumer decision-making processes (Kapoor & Vij, 2025; Verma & Yadav, 2023). However, empirical studies integrating online review attributes, trust perception, and consumer buying behaviour within the Indian e-commerce environment remain limited. Addressing this research gap is essential for understanding how digitally sophisticated consumers evaluate and respond to online reviews in contemporary digital marketplaces. Against this background, the present study aims to examine the impact of online reviews on Gen Z consumer buying behaviour in Indian e-commerce platforms, with special emphasis on the role of trust and platform preference. The study further compares trust perceptions between users of Amazon and Flipkart to understand how platform-specific review environments influence purchase decisions among Indian Generation Z consumers.

## 1.2 Research Questions

- How do online reviews influence Gen Z consumers' buying behaviour in Indian e-commerce platforms?
- What is the role of trust in shaping the relationship between online reviews and consumer buying behaviour?
- Are there significant differences in trust and platform preference between Amazon and Flipkart among Gen Z consumers?

### 1.3 Research Objectives

- To examine the impact of online reviews on Gen Z consumer buying behaviour in Indian e-commerce platforms.
- To analyze the role of trust in influencing online purchase decisions among Gen Z consumers.
- To identify differences in trust and platform preference between Amazon and Flipkart among Generation Z consumers in India.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The rapid growth of digital commerce in India has significantly increased the importance of online reviews in shaping consumer buying behaviour, especially among Generation Z consumers. Previous studies have extensively examined the role of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), trust, review authenticity, and purchase behaviour in online shopping environments. The following review summarizes major contributions related to online reviews, trust in e-commerce, fake review awareness, and consumer purchase behaviour within the Indian digital marketplace context.

### 2.1 Conceptual Literature Review

Author(s) & Year	Study Focus	Key Findings	Relevance to Present Study
Ahmad & Sun (2022)	Influence of positive and negative online reviews on consumer decisions	Positive reviews improve purchase intention, while negative reviews increase diagnostic evaluation and risk awareness among consumers.	Highlights the importance of review valence in shaping Gen Z buying behaviour.
Banerjee & Chua (2022)	Trust formation in e-commerce platforms	Trust reduces uncertainty and perceived transaction risk in online shopping environments.	Supports the role of trust as a mediating variable in e-commerce purchase behaviour.
Dwivedi et al. (2024)	Review credibility and consumer verification behaviour	Consumers increasingly verify reviewer profiles, verified purchase tags, and review consistency before purchasing.	Explains Gen Z consumers' critical evaluation of review authenticity.
Erkan & Evans (2022)	Relationship between eWOM and online purchase intention	Trustworthy and informative reviews positively affect online purchase intention.	Demonstrates how trust strengthens the effect of online reviews on buying behaviour.
Gupta & Arora (2023)	Platform credibility in Indian e-commerce	Platform reputation significantly influences consumer trust and review effectiveness across Amazon and Flipkart.	Supports comparative analysis between Amazon and Flipkart.
Kapoor & Vij (2025)	Online reviews and trust among Indian Gen Z consumers	Trust mediates the relationship between online reviews and purchase intention among Generation Z consumers.	Provides direct theoretical support for the present study framework.
Kim et al. (2024)	Impact of review recency on online purchase decisions	Recent reviews are perceived as more relevant and reliable than older reviews.	Explains Gen Z preference for updated review information.
Liu et al. (2022)	Role of review volume in online shopping	A large number of reviews acts as social proof and enhances product acceptance.	Supports the importance of review quantity in influencing purchase decisions.
Sharma & Jain (2024)	Visual user-generated content and online trust	Customer-uploaded images and videos increase authenticity and reduce product uncertainty.	Relevant for understanding review effectiveness in fashion and lifestyle products.
Singh et al. (2025)	Fake review awareness among Indian online consumers	Awareness of fake reviews increases skepticism, perceived risk, and distrust among consumers.	Highlights the growing concern regarding review manipulation in Indian e-commerce.

Author(s) & Year	Study Focus	Key Findings	Relevance to Present Study
Verma & Yadav (2023)	Digital behaviour of Generation Z consumers in India	Gen Z consumers rely heavily on peer-generated content and credibility cues during purchase decisions.	Establishes behavioural characteristics of Indian Gen Z consumers.
Zhang & Lin (2024)	Review patterns and consumer perception	Review valence, volume, and credibility collectively influence consumer trust and purchase intention.	Supports the multidimensional nature of online review influence.

## 2.2 Online Reviews

Online reviews have emerged as one of the most influential forms of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in digital commerce environments. Unlike traditional advertising, online reviews are consumer-generated and experience-based, making them more trustworthy and relatable for potential buyers. In Indian e-commerce platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, and Myntra, consumers heavily depend on review-related information before making purchasing decisions.

Previous studies indicate that review valence, review volume, review recency, reviewer credibility, and visual content significantly affect consumers' perceptions regarding product quality and authenticity (Zhang & Lin, 2024). Positive reviews generally increase purchase confidence, while negative reviews help consumers evaluate product risks more carefully (Ahmad & Sun, 2022). Similarly, a higher number of reviews functions as social proof and enhances product popularity among online buyers (Liu et al., 2022). Review recency has become particularly important for Generation Z consumers, who prefer updated and current feedback while evaluating products online (Kim et al., 2024). Additionally, customer-uploaded images and videos improve transparency and reduce uncertainty, especially in fashion and lifestyle product categories (Sharma & Jain, 2024). Modern consumers increasingly assess review authenticity through verified purchase tags, reviewer profiles, and consistency of opinions (Dwivedi et al., 2024). Therefore, online reviews function not only as informational sources but also as mechanisms for building digital trust.

## 2.3 Trust in E-Commerce

Trust is considered one of the most important determinants of online consumer behaviour. In e-commerce environments, trust reduces perceived risk and uncertainty associated with digital transactions. Trust includes confidence in platform credibility, seller reliability, payment security, and information transparency (Banerjee & Chua, 2022). Recent studies suggest that trust mediates the relationship between online reviews and purchase intention. Kapoor and Vij (2025) found that trustworthy reviews significantly strengthen purchase intention among Indian Generation Z consumers. When online reviews are perceived as genuine, consistent, and informative, consumers develop higher transactional confidence. Conversely, fake or manipulated reviews reduce platform trust and negatively affect consumer behaviour.

Generation Z consumers are highly sensitive to trust signals because they are aware of digital manipulation techniques and sponsored content (Verma & Yadav, 2023). Therefore, trust formation among Gen Z consumers depends heavily on review credibility and platform reputation. Platform-level trust also varies across e-commerce companies. For example, Amazon's global reputation often creates stronger baseline trust compared to localized competitors such as Flipkart (Gupta & Arora, 2023).

### Hypothesis 1 (H1)

**H1: Online review attributes positively influence trust in Indian e-commerce platforms.**

## 2.4 Purchase Behaviour

Consumer purchase behaviour in e-commerce environments refers to the cognitive and behavioural process through which consumers evaluate information and make online buying decisions. Digital purchase behaviour is influenced by review quality, social validation, emotional engagement, and trust perception. Generation Z consumers generally follow a systematic decision-making process involving product comparisons, review analysis, and cross-platform verification before making purchases (Kapoor & Vij, 2025). Online reviews reduce perceived product uncertainty by providing real customer experiences and usage information. Ahmad and Sun (2022) observed that balanced exposure to both positive and negative reviews improves decision confidence among consumers. Platform algorithms also influence review visibility and consumer perceptions. According to Zhang and Lin (2024), consumers interpret review patterns as indicators of collective social consensus. Consequently, trust and online reviews jointly influence whether browsing behaviour converts into actual purchase decisions.

## 2.5 Fake Review Awareness

The increasing prevalence of fake, sponsored, and bot-generated reviews has become a major concern in digital

marketplaces. Fake reviews distort information reliability and reduce platform credibility. Singh et al. (2025) found that Indian Generation Z consumers are increasingly aware of review manipulation practices, resulting in greater skepticism and perceived risk. Rather than ignoring online reviews entirely, consumers adopt verification mechanisms such as examining reviewer profiles, identifying suspicious language patterns, and prioritizing verified purchase reviews (Dwivedi et al., 2024). This demonstrates the growing digital awareness and critical thinking abilities among Gen Z consumers. Research further indicates that fake reviews primarily damage consumer trust rather than directly reducing purchase intention. Once trust declines, consumers become hesitant and engage in extended information search behaviour before purchasing (Singh et al., 2025). Therefore, maintaining transparent and authentic review systems is strategically important for e-commerce platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, and Myntra.

## 2.6 Relationship between Online Reviews and Purchase Behaviour

Existing empirical literature consistently supports a positive relationship between online reviews and consumer purchase behaviour, particularly through the mediating role of trust. Kapoor and Vij (2025) reported that credible reviews enhance consumer trust, which subsequently increases purchase intention among Indian Generation Z consumers. Similarly, Verma and Yadav (2023) concluded that trust significantly mediates the effect of review usefulness on buying decisions.

The combined influence of review valence, review volume, recency, reviewer credibility, and visual content creates a cumulative trust-building effect in online marketplaces. According to Zhang and Lin (2024), review patterns act as indicators of collective consumer consensus, thereby reducing uncertainty and simplifying decision-making processes. When trustworthy review information aligns with strong platform credibility, the probability of purchase conversion significantly increases.

The relationship is not however in a straight line. The moderating complexity of fake review awareness could be that an increased level of skepticism can decrease automatic trust formation. Thus, the relationship among the features of reviews, perception of trust and the purchase behaviour is situation-specific and platform-sensitive.

## H2: Trust positively influences purchase behaviour among Generation Z consumers.

### 2.7 Research Gap

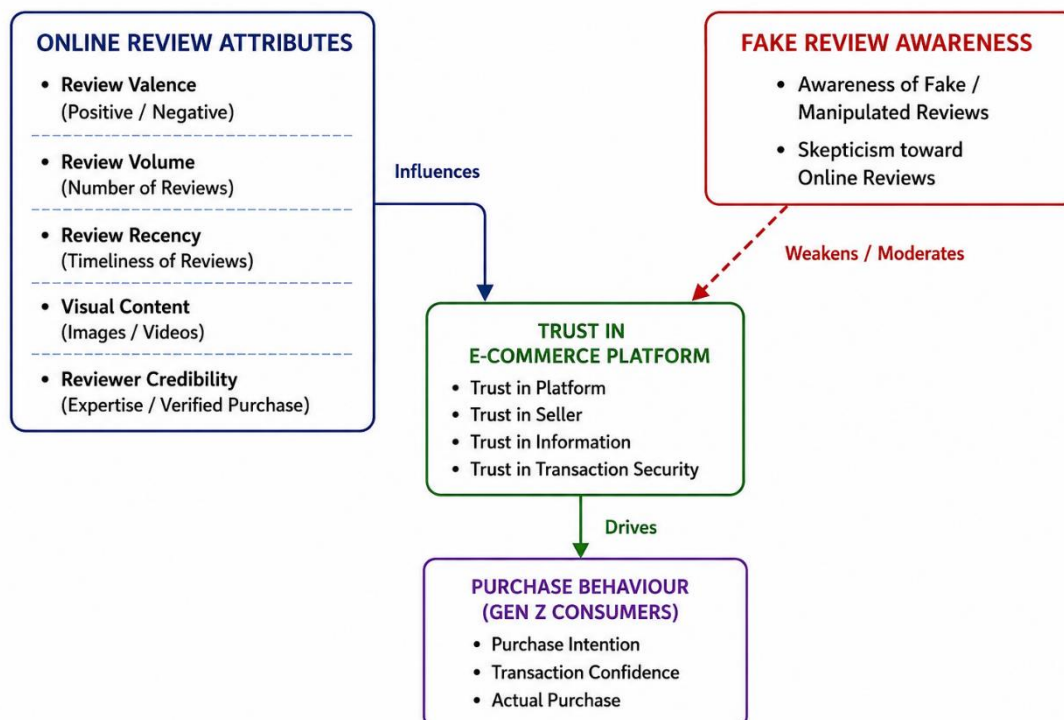
Although the existing literature on electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), online reviews, and consumer buying behaviour has expanded considerably in recent years, several conceptual and contextual gaps still remain, particularly within the Indian e-commerce environment. Most previous studies have been conducted in Western or multi-country contexts where digital infrastructure, platform governance, and consumer behaviour patterns differ significantly from those in India. As a result, the behavioural characteristics of Indian Generation Z consumers, who operate within a rapidly growing and highly competitive digital marketplace, remain comparatively underexplored. The Indian e-commerce market possesses unique characteristics such as high smartphone penetration, price-sensitive consumers, increasing dependence on digital payment systems, and strong competition among platforms like Amazon, Flipkart, and Myntra. These factors may significantly influence how consumers interpret and utilize online reviews during the purchase decision-making process. However, limited empirical research has specifically focused on the impact of online reviews on Gen Z consumer buying behaviour in the Indian e-commerce context. Another important gap in the literature is that many earlier studies have treated e-commerce platforms as structurally similar and have not adequately examined differences in platform credibility, trust perceptions, and review governance mechanisms. The distinct brand positioning and consumer perceptions associated with Amazon, Flipkart, and Myntra may influence the effectiveness of review attributes in building trust and shaping buying behaviour. Despite the importance of platform-specific trust, comparative studies examining review-induced trust formation across Indian e-commerce platforms remain limited. Furthermore, previous research has often analyzed online review attributes such as review valence, review volume, review recency, and visual content separately rather than integrating them into a comprehensive analytical framework. There is insufficient research combining multiple review dimensions to explain their collective influence on trust and purchase behaviour among Generation Z consumers. Although trust has frequently been examined as an outcome variable, relatively fewer studies have positioned trust as a central explanatory construct mediating the relationship between online review characteristics and consumer buying behaviour.

The growing issue of fake and manipulated reviews also presents a significant research gap. While several studies acknowledge the existence of fake reviews, limited empirical attention has been given to understanding how fake review awareness affects trust formation and buying behaviour among digitally literate Indian Gen Z consumers. Since Generation Z consumers are highly familiar with digital verification practices, social media influence, and algorithm-driven content, their evaluation of review authenticity may differ considerably from older consumer groups. Moreover, the majority of prior studies primarily focused on purchase intention rather than actual consumer buying behaviour. There remains a need for empirical investigation into how online reviews directly influence transactional confidence and real purchase-related behaviour in Indian digital marketplaces. Therefore, the present study attempts to address these gaps by developing an integrated framework that examines the impact of online reviews on Gen Z consumer buying behaviour in Indian e-commerce platforms. The study incorporates multiple review attributes, positions trust as a key explanatory variable, and

considers fake review awareness as an important contextual factor influencing trust and consumer behaviour. By focusing specifically on Indian Generation Z consumers across major e-commerce platforms, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of review-driven digital consumer behaviour in India's evolving online retail ecosystem.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework of the present study is designed to explain how online review attributes influence Gen Z consumer buying behaviour in Indian e-commerce platforms through the mediating role of trust. In digital marketplaces such as Amazon, Flipkart, and Myntra, consumers are unable to physically inspect products before making purchases. Consequently, they rely heavily on online reviews as important informational cues for evaluating product quality, seller credibility, and overall purchase risk. Recent studies indicate that online review attributes such as review valence, review volume, review recency, reviewer credibility, and visual content significantly reduce uncertainty and improve perceived information usefulness among online consumers (Ismagilova et al., 2023; Filieri & McLeay, 2022). Positive and detailed reviews create favourable product perceptions, while a larger number of reviews generates social proof and increases consumer confidence. Similarly, recent reviews and visual user-generated content such as images and videos improve perceived authenticity and diagnostic value among Generation Z consumers. However, online review attributes do not directly influence consumer behaviour in isolation. Instead, they contribute to the development of trust, which acts as a central psychological mechanism in digital purchase decision-making. In e-commerce environments, trust refers to consumers' confidence in the platform, seller reliability, transaction security, and authenticity of online information. According to Erkan and Evans (2022), credible online reviews significantly enhance consumer trust, which subsequently increases purchase intention and buying behaviour. Likewise, recent studies emphasize that trust mediates the relationship between electronic word-of-mouth and behavioural outcomes, particularly among digitally literate consumers such as Generation Z (Verma & Yadav, 2023). In the proposed framework, online review attributes are treated as independent variables influencing trust, while trust acts as a mediating variable affecting Gen Z consumer buying behaviour. Purchase behaviour in this study refers to consumers' likelihood of completing online transactions after evaluating digital information available on e-commerce platforms. Trust reduces perceived risk and uncertainty, thereby increasing transactional confidence and facilitating the conversion of browsing behaviour into actual purchase behaviour (Kim et al., 2024). The framework also incorporates fake review awareness as an important contextual variable influencing trust formation.



**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Online Reviews, Trust, and Purchase Behaviour**

The increasing prevalence of fake, sponsored, and manipulated reviews has created significant credibility concerns in digital marketplaces. Studies indicate that awareness of fake reviews increases perceived risk and weakens consumer trust in online platforms (Dwivedi et al., 2024). Instead of directly affecting purchase behaviour, fake review awareness primarily influences the level of trust consumers place in online reviews and e-commerce platforms. Therefore, the

proposed conceptual framework presents a systematic relationship in which online review attributes influence trust, and trust subsequently affects Gen Z consumer buying behaviour in Indian e-commerce platforms. The inclusion of fake review awareness strengthens the explanatory power of the framework by addressing contemporary concerns regarding digital credibility and review authenticity in India's evolving e-commerce ecosystem.

## METHODOLOGY

The present study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional research design to examine the impact of online reviews on Gen Z consumer buying behaviour in Indian e-commerce platforms. A quantitative approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to analyze the relationship between online review attributes, trust, fake review awareness, and consumer buying behaviour using statistical techniques. The study followed an explanatory research design to identify how online reviews influence consumer trust and purchase decisions on platforms such as Amazon, Flipkart, and Myntra. Since the data were collected at a single point in time, the study used a cross-sectional method to capture current behavioural patterns and perceptions of Generation Z consumers in the Indian digital marketplace. The target population of the study consisted of Generation Z consumers aged between 21 and 26 years who actively use Indian e-commerce platforms for online shopping. A total of 286 respondents participated in the study, and the sample size was determined using Yamane's formula with a 5% margin of error. The study employed a non-probability convenience sampling technique due to accessibility and feasibility considerations. Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire divided into two sections: demographic information and research constructs related to online reviews, trust, fake review awareness, and purchase behaviour. Questions were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). The major variables measured in the study included online review attributes such as review valence, volume, recency, reviewer credibility, and visual content, along with trust in e-commerce platforms, fake review awareness, and Gen Z consumer buying behaviour.

The collected data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondent profiles and behavioural patterns, while reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha to ensure internal consistency of the measurement scales. Correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis were applied to examine the relationship between online reviews, trust, and purchase behaviour. Additionally, an independent sample t-test was conducted to identify differences in trust levels between users of Amazon and Flipkart. These statistical tools helped in testing the proposed hypotheses and evaluating the impact of online reviews on Gen Z consumer buying behaviour in the Indian e-commerce context.

### Measurement of Variables

The measurement of variables was structured around three primary constructs: Online Review Attributes, Trust, and Purchase Behaviour. All constructs were measured using items from the structured questionnaire and assessed on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The operationalization of each construct is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Measurement of Study Constructs**

Construct	Type	Measurement Items	Scale
Online Review Attributes	Independent	Q9, Q21, Q22, Q23, Q24	5-point Likert
Trust	Mediating	Q11, Q12, Q18	5-point Likert
Purchase Behaviour	Dependent	Q21, Q24	5-point Likert

### 4.2 Data Analysis Procedure

The collected data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 27), which is widely used in behavioural and management research for performing descriptive and inferential statistical analysis (Pallant, 2022). Initially, descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, percentages, mean values, and standard deviations were calculated to understand the demographic profile and response patterns of Generation Z consumers. Variables including gender, age, monthly online expenditure, preferred platform, and shopping frequency were analyzed to summarize respondent characteristics. Reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha to test the internal consistency of the measurement scale, and a threshold value of 0.70 was considered acceptable for reliability (Hair et al., 2022).

To examine the impact of online reviews on Gen Z consumer buying behaviour in Indian e-commerce platforms, multiple linear regression analysis was performed. In the regression model, online review attributes were treated as independent variables, while purchase behaviour was considered the dependent variable. The analysis evaluated the strength and direction of the relationship using R-value, standardized beta coefficients, R<sup>2</sup> value, and significance level at  $p < 0.05$ . The regression analysis helped determine how online review characteristics such as review valence, review volume, review recency, reviewer credibility, and visual content influence consumer purchase behaviour. Additionally, an independent

sample t-test was conducted to compare trust levels between users of Amazon and Flipkart. A significance level of 0.05 was used to identify statistical differences between the two platform groups.

The study also followed necessary ethical considerations throughout the research process. Participation in the survey was completely voluntary, and respondents were informed about the academic purpose of the study before data collection. The responses were collected anonymously, and no personally identifiable information was recorded. The collected data were used strictly for academic and research purposes only. Consistent with the primary research objective, the statistical analysis mainly focused on examining the influence of online reviews on Gen Z consumer buying behaviour, while trust was incorporated as an important explanatory variable within the conceptual framework.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The data collected from 286 Generation Z respondents were analyzed using SPSS Version 27. The analysis was carried out systematically using descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, multiple regression analysis, and independent sample t-test. The primary objective of the analysis was to examine the impact of online reviews on Gen Z consumer buying behaviour in Indian e-commerce platforms.

### 5.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Descriptive statistics were initially generated to understand the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The demographic analysis included variables such as gender, age, educational qualification, occupation, monthly online expenditure, shopping frequency, and preferred e-commerce platform. The results provided a comprehensive overview of the respondent profile and helped in understanding the behavioural characteristics of Generation Z consumers participating in the study.

**Table 2 Demographic Profile of Respondents**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	170	0.59
	Female	116	0.41
Age	21–23	134	0.47
	24–26	152	0.53
Monthly Spending	< ₹5,000	121	0.42
	₹5,001–₹10,000	94	0.33
	> ₹10,000	71	0.25
Shopping Frequency	Sometimes	102	0.36
	Often	111	0.39
	Very Often	43	0.15
	Rarely/Very Rarely	30	0.1
Preferred Platform	Amazon	129	0.45
	Flipkart	87	0.3
	Myntra	52	0.18
	Others	18	0.07

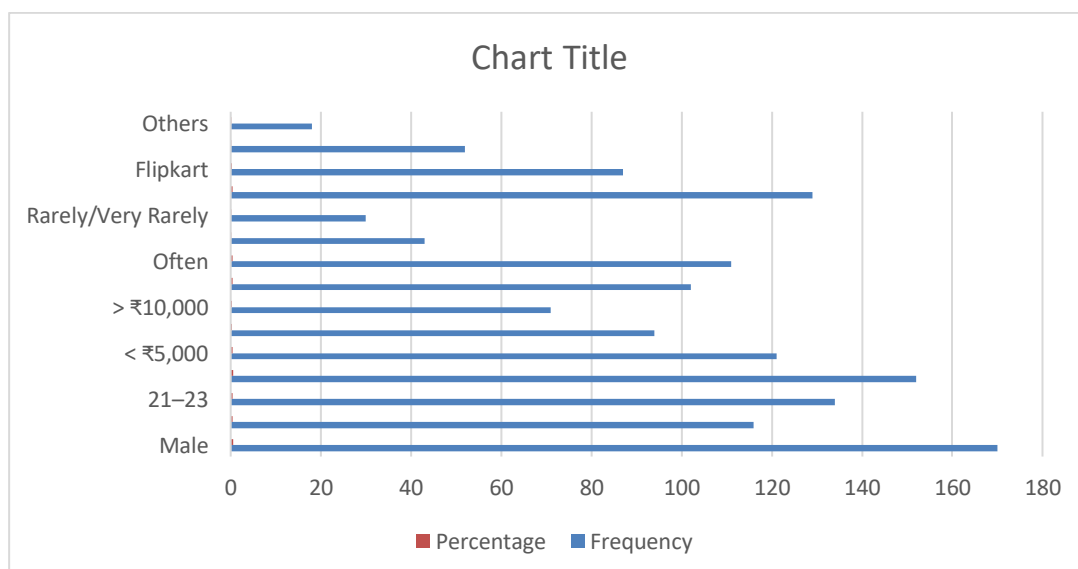


Table 2 presents the demographic distribution of the 286 Generation Z respondents who participated in the study. The gender distribution indicates that male respondents constituted the majority with 59% (170 respondents), while female respondents accounted for 41% (116 respondents). This shows relatively balanced participation from both genders, allowing the study to capture diverse perspectives regarding online reviews and buying behaviour in Indian e-commerce platforms. With respect to age distribution, 53% of the respondents belonged to the 24–26 years category, whereas 47% were between 21–23 years. This indicates that the majority of respondents were young adults with higher exposure to digital technologies, online shopping platforms, and electronic word-of-mouth systems. Since Generation Z consumers are highly active internet users, the selected age groups are appropriate for examining online review influence on consumer buying behaviour.

The monthly online spending pattern reveals that 42% of respondents spend less than ₹5,000 per month on online shopping, while 33% spend between ₹5,001 and ₹10,000, and 25% spend above ₹10,000. These findings suggest that most Gen Z consumers are moderate online spenders who actively engage in e-commerce transactions but remain price conscious. The results also indicate the growing purchasing power and digital consumption habits of Indian Generation Z consumers.

Regarding shopping frequency, 39% of respondents reported shopping online often, followed by 36% who shop sometimes, and 15% who shop very often. Only 10% of respondents indicated rare or very rare online shopping behaviour. This demonstrates that the majority of respondents are regular users of e-commerce platforms and possess adequate experience in evaluating online reviews and digital trust cues before making purchase decisions.

The findings further show that Amazon emerged as the most preferred e-commerce platform among respondents, with 45% preference, followed by Flipkart at 30%, and Myntra at 18%. Only 7% of respondents preferred other platforms. The higher preference for Amazon indicates stronger consumer trust, platform familiarity, and perceived review credibility among Generation Z consumers. Overall, the demographic profile confirms that the respondents represent active digital consumers who regularly interact with online review systems in Indian e-commerce platforms.

### Descriptive Statistics

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics of the major constructs examined in the study, namely Online Review Attributes, Trust, Purchase Behaviour, and Fake Review Awareness among Generation Z consumers in Indian e-commerce platforms. The mean score of Online Review Attributes (Mean = 4.08, SD = 0.71) indicates a high level of agreement among respondents regarding the influence of online reviews on their purchase decision-making process. This finding suggests that review characteristics such as review valence, review volume, review recency, and reviewer credibility significantly affect Gen Z consumer evaluations in the Indian e-commerce environment. The construct of Purchase Behaviour recorded a high mean value (Mean = 4.02, SD = 0.69), indicating that respondents demonstrate strong online purchasing tendencies influenced by digital review systems. Trust also reported a favourable mean score (Mean = 3.94, SD = 0.76), implying that consumers generally exhibit positive trust perceptions toward e-commerce platforms and online review mechanisms. Further, Fake Review Awareness showed a moderate mean value (Mean = 3.68, SD = 0.82), indicating that Generation Z consumers possess reasonable awareness regarding manipulated and fake reviews in online marketplaces. The standard deviation values for all variables are below 1, reflecting acceptable consistency and low variability in respondent perceptions. Overall, the descriptive statistics confirm that online reviews and trust are significant determinants of Gen Z consumer buying behaviour in the Indian e-commerce context.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables**

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Online Review Attributes Trust	4.08	0.71
Purchase Behaviour	3.94	0.76
Fake Review Awareness	4.02	0.69
	3.68	0.82

### 5.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis was conducted to examine the impact of online reviews on Gen Z consumer buying behaviour in Indian e-commerce platforms. In the regression model, Gen Z consumer buying behaviour was treated as the dependent variable, while Online Review Attributes were considered the primary independent variable. The analysis specifically examined how review-related factors such as review valence, review volume, review recency, reviewer credibility, and visual review content influence online purchase decisions among Generation Z consumers. In addition, Trust in E-Commerce Platforms was included as an explanatory predictor variable to evaluate its contribution toward consumer buying behaviour within the proposed conceptual framework.

The regression analysis was performed to determine the strength, direction, and statistical significance of the relationship between online reviews and consumer buying behaviour in the Indian e-commerce context. The model evaluated the explanatory power of online reviews and trust using R-value, R<sup>2</sup> value, standardized beta coefficients, and significance

levels at  $p < 0.05$ . The analysis helped identify the extent to which online review attributes and trust predict Gen Z consumer buying behaviour on platforms such as Amazon and Flipkart.

**Table 4: Model Summary**

R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error
0.692	0.479	0.474	0.51

Table 3 presents the model summary of the multiple regression analysis conducted to examine the impact of online reviews on Gen Z consumer buying behaviour in Indian e-commerce platforms. The R value of 0.692 indicates a strong positive relationship between the predictor variables, namely Online Review Attributes and Trust, and the dependent variable, Gen Z consumer buying behaviour. This suggests that online review-related factors have a meaningful association with consumer purchase decisions in the Indian e-commerce environment. The coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>) value of 0.479 indicates that approximately 47.9% of the variance in Gen Z consumer buying behaviour is explained by Online Review Attributes and Trust included in the regression model. The Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.474 further confirms the stability and explanatory strength of the model after adjusting for the number of predictor variables. The standard error value of 0.51 indicates an acceptable level of prediction accuracy in the regression model. Overall, the findings demonstrate that online reviews and trust significantly contribute to explaining consumer buying behaviour among Generation Z users of Indian e-commerce platforms such as Amazon and Flipkart.

**Table 5: Group Statistics**

Platform	N	Mean Trust	Std. Deviation
Amazon	129	4.08	0.68
Flipkart	87	3.82	0.74

**Table 6: Independent Sample T-Test**

t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
2.94	214	0.004	0.26

Table 5 and Table 6 present the results of the independent sample t-test conducted to compare trust levels between users of Amazon and Flipkart among Generation Z consumers in the Indian e-commerce market. The group statistics show that Amazon users reported a higher mean trust score (Mean = 4.08, SD = 0.68) compared to Flipkart users (Mean = 3.82, SD = 0.74). This indicates that Gen Z consumers perceive Amazon as relatively more trustworthy in terms of platform reliability, review credibility, and transaction confidence.

The independent sample t-test results further reveal that the difference in trust levels between Amazon and Flipkart users is statistically significant ( $t = 2.94$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ). Since the significance value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected, confirming a significant difference in trust perceptions between the two e-commerce platforms. The mean difference value of 0.26 indicates that Amazon users demonstrate comparatively higher trust levels than Flipkart users. These findings suggest that platform credibility and perceived authenticity of online review systems play a significant role in influencing Gen Z consumer buying behaviour in the Indian e-commerce environment.

## 6. Summary of Findings

The findings of the statistical analysis strongly support the primary objective of the study, which was to examine the impact of online reviews on Gen Z consumer buying behaviour in Indian e-commerce platforms. The results of the multiple regression analysis revealed that Online Review Attributes significantly and positively influence Gen Z consumer buying behaviour ( $\beta = 0.463$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). This indicates that review characteristics such as review credibility, review volume, review recency, and review usefulness increase consumers' confidence and positively affect their online purchase decisions. The findings confirm that Generation Z consumers heavily depend on online review systems while evaluating products and making transactional decisions on Indian e-commerce platforms. The analysis further revealed that Trust in E-Commerce Platforms also has a significant positive influence on consumer buying behaviour ( $\beta = 0.321$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This suggests that higher levels of platform trust, information reliability, and perceived authenticity enhance consumer willingness to purchase products online. The regression model demonstrated substantial explanatory power, as Online Review Attributes and Trust collectively explained 47.9% of the variance in Gen Z consumer buying behaviour ( $R^2 = 0.479$ ). This finding indicates that online reviews and trust are important determinants of consumer decision-making behaviour in the Indian digital marketplace. Additionally, the results of the independent sample t-test revealed a statistically significant difference in trust levels between users of Amazon and Flipkart. Amazon users reported higher trust levels compared to Flipkart users, indicating platform-based differences in perceived credibility, review authenticity, and transaction confidence among Generation Z consumers. Overall, the findings confirm that online review attributes and trust jointly play a critical role in influencing Gen Z consumer buying behaviour in Indian e-commerce platforms, thereby empirically supporting the research objective and conceptual framework of the study.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study provide significant insights into the impact of online reviews on Gen Z consumer buying behaviour in Indian e-commerce platforms. The results of the multiple regression analysis revealed that Online Review Attributes have a significant positive influence on Gen Z consumer buying behaviour ( $\beta = 0.463$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This indicates that review-related factors such as review credibility, review volume, review recency, and reviewer authenticity strongly influence online purchase decisions among Generation Z consumers. The findings support earlier studies by Kapoor and Vij (2025), which emphasized that credible online reviews enhance purchase intention among Indian Gen Z consumers. The study confirms that online reviews function not only as informational cues but also as important decision-support mechanisms that reduce uncertainty and improve consumer confidence during online shopping.

The study further identified that Trust in E-Commerce Platforms has a positive and statistically significant influence on consumer buying behaviour ( $\beta = 0.321$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This finding indicates that trust plays a critical role in strengthening online transactional confidence among Generation Z consumers. The result aligns with the observations of Verma and Yadav (2023), who stated that digitally active Gen Z consumers are highly sensitive to trust-related signals because of their awareness of algorithm-driven and manipulated online content. In the present study, trust emerged as an important explanatory factor that transforms review-based evaluations into actual purchase behaviour. Although Online Review Attributes demonstrated a comparatively stronger direct influence on buying behaviour, trust acted as an essential supporting mechanism in the online decision-making process. The findings can also be explained using the uncertainty reduction perspective in digital consumer behaviour. In e-commerce environments, consumers cannot physically inspect products before purchase; therefore, online reviews and trust act as psychological assurance mechanisms that reduce perceived risk and uncertainty. When review attributes such as positive review valence, high review volume, recent feedback, and authentic reviewer content are perceived as reliable, consumer confidence toward the platform and product increases. This observation supports the findings of Ismagilova *et al.* (2023), who argued that trust bridges the relationship between electronic word-of-mouth and consumer behavioural outcomes. Although mediation analysis was not statistically tested in the present study, the significant beta values of both Online Review Attributes and Trust indicate a strong interrelationship between these constructs in influencing Gen Z consumer buying behaviour. The study also highlights the importance of review volume and review authenticity in Indian e-commerce platforms. A higher number of reviews creates a sense of social validation and collective approval, which positively influences purchase confidence among Generation Z consumers. This finding is consistent with previous studies suggesting that review volume acts as a form of social proof that reduces perceived purchase risk and increases product acceptance in digital marketplaces. At the same time, the descriptive findings related to Fake Review Awareness indicate that consumers are moderately aware of manipulated and sponsored reviews in online marketplaces. Although fake review awareness was not directly included in the regression model, the moderate mean score suggests that Generation Z consumers critically evaluate review authenticity before making online purchase decisions. This observation supports Gupta and Arora (2023), who emphasized that perceived review manipulation negatively affects trust formation and platform credibility.

The platform comparison analysis further revealed that users of Amazon reported significantly higher trust levels compared to users of Flipkart. The higher trust perception associated with Amazon may be attributed to its global brand reputation, stronger review governance mechanisms, and perceived platform reliability. The findings support earlier literature suggesting that platform credibility enhances consumer trust and strengthens the effectiveness of online review systems in influencing buying behaviour.

Overall, the study confirms that online reviews and trust jointly play a significant role in shaping Gen Z consumer buying behaviour in Indian e-commerce platforms. The findings contribute to the growing literature on digital consumer behaviour by empirically validating the relationship between online review attributes, trust formation, and online purchase behaviour within the Indian e-commerce context.

## CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to examine the impact of online reviews on Gen Z consumer buying behaviour in Indian e-commerce platforms. The findings of the study provide strong empirical evidence that online reviews significantly influence the purchase decisions of Generation Z consumers in the Indian digital marketplace. The results of the multiple regression analysis confirmed that Online Review Attributes are significant predictors of Gen Z consumer buying behaviour, indicating that review credibility, review usefulness, review volume, and review authenticity strongly affect online purchase decisions. The regression model demonstrated substantial explanatory power, with an  $R^2$  value of 0.479, implying that Online Review Attributes and Trust collectively explain approximately 47.9% of the variance in consumer buying behaviour. The study further established that Trust in E-Commerce Platforms plays a significant role in influencing consumer purchase behaviour. Trust reduces perceived risk and enhances transactional confidence, thereby strengthening the relationship between online reviews and online buying decisions. The findings confirm that Generation Z consumers do not engage in impulsive digital purchasing behaviour; rather, their decisions are strongly influenced by systematic evaluation of peer-generated online information and perceived platform credibility. This highlights the growing importance

of authentic and reliable online review systems in shaping digital consumer behaviour in India The independent sample t-test results also revealed significant differences in trust perceptions between users of Amazon and Flipkart, with Amazon users reporting comparatively higher trust levels. This finding indicates that platform reputation and perceived credibility significantly influence trust formation and online purchase confidence among Generation Z consumers. The study therefore confirms that platform-based trust mechanisms are essential components of modern e-commerce decision-making. From a managerial perspective, the study highlights the strategic importance of maintaining transparent, credible, and authentic online review systems in Indian e-commerce platforms. E-commerce companies should focus on strengthening review verification mechanisms, reducing fake reviews, and improving platform trust in order to enhance consumer confidence and purchase behaviour. As digital competition continues to intensify, trustworthy review management systems have become an important strategic requirement for sustaining customer engagement and long-term platform credibility. Academically, the study contributes to the existing literature on digital consumer behaviour by empirically validating the relationship between online review attributes, trust, and Gen Z consumer buying behaviour within the Indian e-commerce context. The findings reinforce the importance of trust as a critical psychological mechanism in online transactions and establish that online reviews are among the most influential determinants of consumer purchase behaviour in contemporary digital marketplaces.

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