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# A STUDY OF ONLINE SHOPPING AND CUSTOMER FEEDBACK: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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## ABSTRACT

*The rapid growth of internet penetration, digital payment systems, and e-commerce platforms has transformed traditional buying behaviour into online shopping behaviour. Customer feedback, in the form of reviews, ratings, and comments, has emerged as a critical factor influencing purchase decisions and business performance in the digital marketplace. This review of literature examines existing studies related to online shopping behaviour, determinants of customer satisfaction, the role of customer feedback and online reviews, trust and security issues, service quality, and challenges faced by consumers. By synthesizing national and international studies, the paper highlights major findings, identifies research gaps, and provides direction for future research in the area of online shopping and customer feedback.*

**KEYWORDS:** Online Shopping, Customer Feedback, Consumer Behaviours, E-commerce, Online Reviews, Customer Satisfaction

## PAPER CITATION

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Online shopping has become an integral component of modern consumer life owing to its convenience, extensive product variety, competitive pricing, and significant time-saving advantages. The rapid evolution of e-commerce platforms has empowered consumers to compare products easily, access detailed information, and evaluate user-generated reviews before making purchase decisions. In this digital marketplace, customer feedback plays a crucial role in establishing the credibility and long-term success of online retailers. Reviews and ratings not only influence the purchase intentions of prospective buyers but also provide valuable insights to firms for improving product quality, service efficiency, and overall customer experience. As competition within the e-commerce sector continues to intensify, understanding and effectively utilizing customer feedback has become essential for achieving sustainable business growth.

A review of literature is vital for comprehending the theoretical foundations, empirical evidence, and methodological approaches employed by earlier studies. It facilitates a systematic understanding of existing research and helps identify key trends, debates, and research gaps that warrant further investigation. Accordingly, this section critically examines significant studies related to online shopping and customer feedback to establish a strong conceptual framework for the present study.

## 2. CONCEPT OF ONLINE SHOPPING

Several researchers have defined online shopping as the process of purchasing goods and services through internet-based platforms using digital devices. Studies highlight that online shopping is driven by factors such as convenience, accessibility, time efficiency, and availability of information. Researchers have emphasized that online shopping reduces geographical barriers and allows consumers to shop anytime and anywhere.

Earlier studies focused on the adoption of e-commerce, while recent studies emphasize user experience, personalization, and customer engagement. Literature suggests that technological advancement and smartphone usage have significantly increased online shopping participation, especially among young and urban consumers.

## 3. CUSTOMER FEEDBACK AND ONLINE REVIEWS

Customer feedback refers to opinions, ratings, reviews, and comments shared by consumers after using a product or service. Literature indicates that customer feedback acts as electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), which strongly influences consumer perception and purchase intention. Many studies reveal that positive reviews enhance trust and credibility, while negative reviews create hesitation among buyers.

Researchers have found that customers rely more on peer reviews than company advertisements. Star ratings, detailed reviews, and reviewer credibility significantly affect buying decisions. Some studies also point out that extreme negative feedback has a stronger impact than positive feedback, emphasizing the importance of service recovery strategies.

## 4. FACTORS INFLUENCING ONLINE SHOPPING BEHAVIOUR

Online shopping behaviour is shaped by a combination of technological, economic, psychological, and social factors. The literature consistently identifies convenience, pricing, trust, and information availability as the most influential determinants affecting consumers' decisions to purchase products online. These factors not only influence initial adoption but also play a critical role in repeat purchases and overall customer satisfaction.

### 4.1 Convenience and Ease of Use

Convenience is widely regarded as one of the strongest motivators for online shopping. Studies reveal that consumers prefer online platforms due to the ability to shop anytime and from anywhere,

eliminating the need for physical travel and long queues (Davis, 1989; Monsuwé et al., 2004). Features such as user-friendly website design, simple navigation, fast-loading pages, and streamlined checkout processes significantly enhance perceived ease of use.

Moreover, flexible delivery options, order tracking, and hassle-free return policies further increase convenience and positively influence customer satisfaction. Research indicates that when online shopping platforms minimize effort and time investment, consumers are more likely to develop favourable attitudes and engage in repeat purchases (Gefen et al., 2003).

#### **4.2 Price and Discounts**

Price plays a decisive role in shaping online shopping behaviour. The literature highlights that online consumers are highly price-sensitive and frequently compare prices across different platforms before making a purchase (Li & Zhang, 2002). Competitive pricing, attractive discounts, seasonal sales, and promotional offers act as strong incentives for online purchases.

Additionally, the availability of price comparison tools and discount notifications enhances consumers' perceived value. Studies suggest that transparency in pricing and the perception of cost savings significantly influence purchase intention and impulse buying behaviour in online environments (Kotler & Keller, 2016). However, excessive discounts may sometimes raise doubts about product quality, indicating the need for balanced pricing strategies.

#### **4.3 Trust and Security**

Trust is a critical determinant of online shopping behaviour, particularly due to the absence of physical interaction between buyers and sellers. Numerous studies emphasize that concerns related to payment security, personal data protection, and online fraud often discourage consumers from shopping online (Pavlou, 2003).

Secure payment gateways, SSL certification, transparent privacy policies, and reliable return and refund mechanisms help build consumer trust. Research also indicates that brand reputation and previous positive experiences significantly enhance trust levels. When consumers perceive an online platform as trustworthy and secure, their purchase intention and loyalty increase substantially (McKnight et al., 2002).

#### **4.4 Product Information and Reviews**

The availability and quality of product information play a crucial role in reducing perceived risk associated with online shopping. Detailed product descriptions, high-quality images, videos, and specifications enable consumers to make informed decisions in the absence of physical inspection (Park & Kim, 2003).

Customer reviews and ratings serve as electronic word-of-mouth and strongly influence buying behaviour. Positive reviews enhance credibility and confidence, while negative reviews can deter potential buyers. Studies suggest that incomplete, inaccurate, or misleading information leads to dissatisfaction, increased product returns, and negative feedback, ultimately affecting the reputation of online retailers (Cheung et al., 2009).

#### **4.5 Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty**

Customer satisfaction is a key outcome of online shopping experiences. Literature reveals that satisfaction is influenced by product quality, delivery time, customer service, and after-sales support. Satisfied customers are more likely to provide positive feedback, repeat purchases, and recommend platforms to others.

Several studies establish a strong relationship between customer satisfaction, positive feedback, and customer loyalty. Online retailers that actively respond to feedback tend to retain customers more effectively.

## 5. CHALLENGES IN ONLINE SHOPPING AND FEEDBACK SYSTEMS

Despite its advantages, online shopping faces several challenges. Literature highlights issues such as fake reviews, misleading ratings, delivery delays, damaged products, and difficulties in returns and refunds. Fake or paid reviews reduce the reliability of feedback systems and negatively affect consumer trust.

Researchers suggest that platforms must adopt advanced algorithms and verification mechanisms to ensure authenticity of reviews. Addressing customer complaints promptly is essential to maintain brand reputation.

- **Impact of Customer Feedback on Business Performance**

Studies reveal that customer feedback directly affects sales, brand image, and market competitiveness. Positive reviews increase conversion rates, while negative feedback provides opportunities for improvement. Literature emphasizes that data analytics of customer feedback helps firms understand consumer needs and enhance service quality.

Many researchers argue that feedback-driven decision-making leads to better customer relationship management and long-term profitability.

## 6. RESEARCH GAPS IDENTIFIED FROM LITERATURE

The review indicates several gaps in existing research. Limited studies focus on rural consumers and small-town shoppers. There is a lack of comparative studies across different demographic groups and regions. Few studies examine the long-term behavioral impact of negative feedback. Moreover, limited research exists on the effectiveness of feedback response strategies adopted by e-commerce firms.

### Author-wise Review of Literature (Detailed)

(i) **Davis (1989) – Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)**

Davis (1989) developed the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to explain how users come to accept and use new technologies. The model identifies two core determinants—perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use—that influence users' attitudes and behavioural intentions. In the context of online shopping, TAM has been extensively applied to understand why consumers adopt e-commerce platforms. Researchers argue that when online shopping websites are easy to navigate, require minimal effort, and provide clear information, consumers are more likely to develop a positive attitude toward online purchasing.

Subsequent studies extended Davis's model by incorporating customer feedback as an external variable influencing perceived usefulness. Online reviews, ratings, and testimonials enhance the usefulness of e-commerce platforms by reducing information asymmetry. As a result, TAM has become a foundational theory for explaining how customer feedback supports technology acceptance in online shopping environments.

(ii) **Ajzen (1991) – Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)**

Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour explains consumer behaviour through attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. In online shopping studies, TPB has been used to analyse how social influence and online peer reviews shape purchase intention. Customer feedback serves as a subjective norm, as consumers often rely on others' opinions before making online purchases.

Studies applying TPB to e-commerce reveal that favourable customer feedback strengthens positive attitudes and enhances perceived control by reducing uncertainty. Negative reviews, on the other hand, weaken purchase intention even when consumers have a favourable attitude toward online shopping. TPB thus provides a strong theoretical framework to understand the psychological impact of online feedback on consumer decision-making.

**(iii) Gefen, Karahanna, and Straub (2003) – Trust in E-commerce**

Gefen et al. (2003) highlighted trust as a crucial element in online shopping. Their research demonstrated that trust significantly affects purchase intention, particularly in environments characterized by uncertainty and risk. Customer feedback and online reviews act as trust-building mechanisms by offering reassurance regarding product quality and seller reliability. The study emphasized that trust is developed not only through secure technology but also through social cues such as reviews and ratings. Their findings encouraged further research on trust-enhancing strategies in e-commerce, making customer feedback a central variable in online shopping research.

**(iv) Chevalier and Mayzlin (2006) – Online Reviews and Sales Performance**

Chevalier and Mayzlin (2006) examined the relationship between online product reviews and sales using data from online bookstores. The study found that positive reviews significantly increase sales rank, while negative reviews have a strong adverse effect. Importantly, the authors observed that review volume and review valence both influence consumer demand. This study provided empirical evidence that customer feedback directly impacts business outcomes. It established online reviews as a credible source of information and reinforced the importance of managing customer feedback systems effectively.

**(v) Park and Lee (2009) – Review Quality and Purchase Intention**

Park and Lee analysed how review quality affects consumer trust and purchase intention. Their study revealed that detailed, informative, and experience-based reviews are perceived as more credible than short or generic comments. Consumers were found to place greater trust in reviews written by verified buyers.

The authors concluded that the usefulness of customer feedback depends on its quality and authenticity. This research shifted the focus from the quantity of reviews to the content and credibility of customer feedback in online shopping.

**(vi) Hennig-Thurau et al. (2010) – Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM)**

Hennig-Thurau et al. explored the concept of electronic word-of-mouth and identified motivations behind consumers sharing online feedback. The study found that consumers provide feedback to help others, express satisfaction or dissatisfaction, and gain social recognition.

Their research demonstrated that e-WOM plays a powerful role in shaping brand reputation and consumer perception. In online shopping, customer feedback acts as a collective knowledge base that guides future buyers and influences long-term brand value.

**(vii) Kim, Ferrin, and Rao (2011) – Trust and Risk Reduction**

Kim et al. studied the interaction between trust, perceived risk, and online purchase intention. Their findings showed that customer reviews significantly reduce perceived risk associated with online transactions. Secure payment systems combined with positive feedback were found to increase consumer confidence.

The study emphasized that trust and feedback work together to encourage online shopping adoption, especially among first-time users.

**(viii) Filieri and McLeay (2014) – Online Reviews in Service Industries**

Filieri and McLeay focused on online reviews in hospitality and retail sectors. Their research revealed that consumers rely heavily on feedback when evaluating service quality, as services cannot be physically inspected before purchase. Negative reviews were found to have a stronger impact than positive reviews.

The authors suggested that firms must actively manage customer feedback to mitigate the effects of negative reviews and enhance customer satisfaction.



**(ix) Zhu and Zhang (2015) – Product Type and Review Effectiveness**

Zhu and Zhang examined how product type moderates the influence of online reviews. The study found that reviews are more influential for experience goods than search goods. Customer feedback was shown to play a decisive role in categories such as fashion, electronics, and travel services.

This study contributed to understanding sector-specific variations in the impact of customer feedback on online shopping behaviour.

**(x) Indian Studies on Online Shopping and Customer Feedback**

Indian researchers such as Suresh and Shashikala (2016) examined online shopping behaviour in emerging markets. Their studies highlighted that price sensitivity, convenience, and trust significantly influence Indian consumers. Customer reviews were found to be particularly important for first-time buyers.

Recent Indian studies emphasize the role of mobile commerce, digital payment systems, and regional-language reviews. These studies suggest that customer feedback is a critical factor in expanding e-commerce adoption beyond urban areas.

**(xi) Recent Studies (2020–2024) – AI, Social Media, and Fake Reviews**

Recent literature focuses on the integration of artificial intelligence and social media in customer feedback analysis. Researchers highlight the use of sentiment analysis and machine learning to extract insights from large volumes of online reviews. Studies also raise concerns about fake reviews and suggest regulatory frameworks and verification mechanisms.

The growing influence of social media influencers and video reviews has further expanded the scope of customer feedback in online shopping. These developments indicate new directions for future research.

**7. CONCLUSION**

The author-wise review of literature demonstrates that online shopping behaviour is deeply influenced by customer feedback, trust, perceived risk, and technological ease of use. Classical theories such as TAM and TPB provide a strong theoretical base, while empirical studies confirm the economic and psychological impact of online reviews. Indian and recent global studies highlight emerging trends such as mobile commerce, AI-based feedback analysis, and the challenge of fake reviews. Overall, effective management of customer feedback is essential for enhancing consumer trust, satisfaction, and long-term e-commerce growth.

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