Influence of Online Reviews and User-Generated Content on Customer Satisfaction Perception in E-Commerce Consumers

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Abstract: In today's digital marketplace, online reviews, and user-generated content have become powerful influences on consumer behaviour, particularly in the e-commerce sector. This study explores how online reviews, customer testimonials, product ratings, images, and videos shared by users affect customer satisfaction perception among e-commerce consumers. As consumers increasingly rely on the opinions and experiences of others before making a purchase, understanding the role of these digital inputs is critical for businesses aiming to improve customer satisfaction. The research is based on a Quantitative Methods to survey responses from 300 e-commerce users with insights through Google Forms. The results indicate that the clarity, authenticity, and helpfulness of online reviews significantly impact how consumers perceive the quality of products and services. Additionally, user-generated images and videos increase buyer confidence and satisfaction by offering real-world evidence of product performance. The study highlights the importance for e-commerce platforms to actively encourage and manage customer feedback and content sharing. Businesses that promote transparent and engaging user content can enhance consumer trust, improve satisfaction levels, and reduce purchase hesitation. These findings offer practical value to marketers and platform designers seeking to strengthen the online shopping experience.

Keywords: Consumer Behavior; Customer Satisfaction; Digital Marketing; E-Commerce; Online Reviews; Purchase Decision; User-Generated Content

Introduction

The Emergence of e-commerce has changed how customers assess things, decide what to buy, and communicate their level of happiness. Online environments mainly rely on digital feedback methods, in contrast to traditional retail settings where customers interact with real objects and sales persons. Among these, user-generated content and online reviews have become important instruments that influence how satisfied customers are seen.

Online reviews provide objective feedback from other customers and act as digital word-of-mouth. By disseminating product experiences free from seller prejudice, these reviews aid in the reduction of information asymmetry (Dellarocas, 2003). Because of this, consumers are depending more on these peer-generated reviews to judge the legitimacy and caliber of products, particularly when buying from unknown brands (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006).

The significance of user-generated material has also increased, encompassing anything from images and unboxing videos to personal accounts on social media. In contrast to commercials, user-generated content is seen as genuine and relevant, strengthening emotional bonds and impacting consumer expectations and satisfaction (Chu & Kim, 2011). Notably, user-generated content boosts purchasing trust by enabling customers to picture how products are used in authentic settings.

Numerous studies have observed that consumers' exposure to peer reviews and other people's content affects their level of satisfaction in addition to the product or service itself (Sen & Lerman, 2007). Post-purchase assessments may be impacted by the volume,

caliber, and tone of these digital contributions, which can either increase or decrease customer confidence (Park, Lee, & Han, 2007).

The purpose of this study is to investigate how user-generated content and online reviews affect how satisfied customers are with e-commerce. This study aims to provide insights into how digital peer feedback influences customer satisfaction in online markets by examining consumer responses and behavioral patterns.

Many businesses still find it difficult to comprehend how user-generated content and online reviews affect the perception of customer satisfaction, even in the face of e-commerce's explosive expansion and consumers' growing reliance on digital platforms for shopping. Businesses frequently undervalue the impact of peer reviews, customer-shared images, and internet reviews in determining customer expectations and satisfaction levels, even if they make significant investments in marketing and product development.

Consumers use online reviews and user-generated content as important decision-making tools, but it's still unclear which kinds of content such as text reviews, visual media, and emotional tone have the biggest effects on satisfaction. Furthermore, most of the material now in publication concentrates on loyalty, brand trust, or purchase intention; it pays less attention to the ways in which these digital interactions impact the sense of post-purchase satisfaction.

By investigating how different types of user-generated content and online reviews affect customer satisfaction in e-commerce platforms, this study seeks to close this gap. It aims to offer information that companies can use to better handle consumer reviews and improve the entire online purchasing experience: (1) To examine the online reviews and user-generated content influence customer satisfaction perception in e-commerce platforms; (2) To identify the key features of online reviews and user-generated content that most strongly affect consumers' satisfaction, including credibility, clarity, and emotional tone; (3) To provide insights for e-commerce businesses to enhance customer satisfaction by effectively utilizing online reviews and user-generated content.

The influence of online reviews and user-generated content on customer satisfaction in e-commerce has been widely examined through the lenses of communication and consumer behavior theories. The Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) suggests that consumers process detailed, credible reviews via the central route when highly involved, while peripheral cues such as ratings or review volume suffice for low-involvement decision-making. Social Proof Theory (Cialdini, 2009) further explains that consumers rely on others' behavior to guide their own choices, particularly in uncertain contexts, while Signaling Theory (Spence,

1973) frames reviews and ratings as quality signals in the absence of direct product experience. Online reviews are a critical form of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) that reduce information asymmetry between buyers and sellers (Dellarocas, 2003), with review credibility, quality, and perceived usefulness serving as strong predictors of customer trust and satisfaction (Filieri, 2015; Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006). Research shows that authenticity and detail in reviews not only increase purchase confidence but also influence post-purchase satisfaction (Park, Lee, & Han, 2007).

User-generated content in visual formats—such as images, unboxing videos, and social media posts—has emerged as a particularly persuasive medium due to its perceived authenticity and relatability (Chu & Kim, 2011). Visual content allows customers to see products in real-life contexts, enhancing emotional engagement and satisfaction (Liu, Karahanna, & Watson, 2011). Moreover, meta-analytical evidence indicates that UGC characteristics—including clarity, credibility, and tone— directly affect consumers' perceptions of quality and value (Ismagilova, Slade, Rana, & Dwivedi, 2020). However, the volume and valence of reviews also play an important role: while positive reviews enhance brand perception, negative reviews tend to have a disproportionate effect on satisfaction and purchase intentions (Sen & Lerman, 2007).

Biases in review systems, such as positivity bias or herding effects, can shape overall satisfaction perceptions, especially when early reviews influence subsequent ones (Muchnik, Aral, & Taylor, 2013). Businesses that engage in proactive review management—particularly by responding constructively to negative feedback can mitigate dissatisfaction and enhance trust (Zhang, Craciun, & Shin, 2010). In addition, platform-level factors such as ease of navigation, service quality, and information relevance also interact with UGC to shape overall satisfaction (Ho & Lee, 2007). Collectively, the literature underscores that online reviews and UGC are not merely supplementary marketing tools but central components in shaping e-commerce customer satisfaction, making their management a strategic priority for businesses.

Although prior studies confirm that online reviews and user-generated content influence trust, purchase intentions, and brand perception, less attention has been given to their direct impact on customers' *post-purchase satisfaction perception*. Most existing research focuses on loyalty, brand image, or sales performance rather than the nuanced ways in which different types of user-generated content such as text reviews, visual content, and emotional tone, shape satisfaction after the purchase is made. Furthermore, there is limited comparative analysis on which content characteristics (credibility, clarity, tone, authenticity) most strongly influence

satisfaction, and insufficient empirical evidence from diverse consumer segments or platform types. Finally, existing literature often examines reviews or user-generated content in isolation, but the combined effect of textual and visual peer-generated content on satisfaction remains underexplored, creating an opportunity for integrated investigation.

Method

The research followed a structured and systematic procedure to ensure reliability and validity of findings. Initially, an extensive review of existing literature was conducted to identify key constructs related to online reviews, user-generated content, and customer satisfaction. Based on this review, relevant variables such as review clarity, review credibility, emotional tone, user-generated visuals, and authenticity of user-generated content were identified and operationalized.

A structured questionnaire was then developed using previously validated scales adapted to the e-commerce context. The questionnaire consisted of two sections: demographic information and measurement items related to independent and dependent variables. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5). A pilot test was conducted with a small group of respondents to ensure clarity, wording accuracy, and content validity. Necessary modifications were made based on feedback received.

Data were collected through Google Forms using purposive sampling, targeting respondents who had made at least one online purchase within the past six months. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained prior to data collection. A total of 302 valid responses were obtained and screened for completeness and consistency.

The collected data were coded and entered into SPSS for analysis. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) were used to summarize demographic characteristics and respondents' perceptions. Pearson correlation analysis was employed to examine the relationships between the independent variables and customer satisfaction perception. Finally, multiple regression analysis was conducted to assess the combined influence of review clarity, review credibility, emotional tone, user-generated visuals, and authenticity of user-generated content on customer satisfaction perception. Statistical significance was evaluated at the 5% level ($p < 0.05$).

Ethical considerations were strictly followed throughout the study. Respondents' identities were kept confidential, data were used solely for academic purposes, and no personal identifying information was collected.

Research Flow Chart
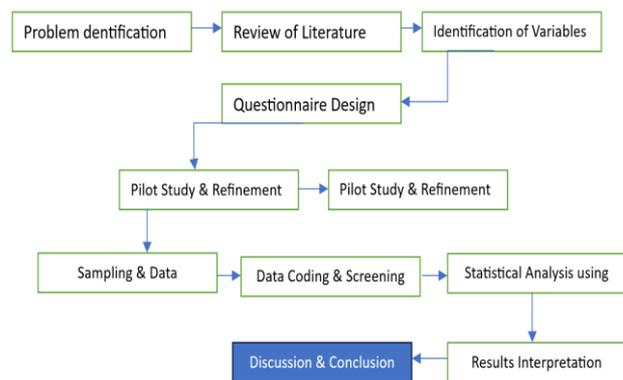
Figure 1. Research Flowchart of the Study

Results and Discussion

Analysis and Interpretation of the Study
Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Frequency

Variable	Particulars	N	%	M	SD
Gender	Female	168	55.6	1.6	0.5
Age Group	Under 20	65	21.5	3	1.5
Education Level	Diploma/ Certificate	78	25.8	2.5	1.1
Frequency of Online Shopping	More than 1 week	83	27.5	2.5	1.1
Preferred E-commerce Platform	Amazon	79	26.2	2.5	1.1
Reviews - easy to understand.	SA	67	22.2	3.1	1.4
Reviews explain product features clearly.	N	66	21.9	3	1.4
Reviews show product strengths & weaknesses.	SA	67	22.2	2.9	1.4
I trust online reviews.	N	66	21.9	2.9	1.4
Reviews come from genuine customers.	N	67	21.9	3	1.4
Verified reviews increase my trust.	SA	72	23.8	3.1	1.4
Positive reviews raise my expectations.	SD	68	22.5	2.9	1.4
Negative reviews lower my interest.	DA	62	20.5	3	1.4
Balanced reviews seem more reliable.	SA	65	21.5	3	1.5

Variable	Particulars	N	%	M	SD
Customer images help me visualize products.	DA	68	22.5	2.9	1.4
Customer videos feel authentic.	SA	71	23.5	3.2	1.4
Visual content boosts my purchase confidence.	DA	67	22.2	3	1.4
UGC shows real product performance.	N	68	22.5	3	1.4
UGC is more trustworthy than ads.	DA	69	22.8	3	1.4
Authentic UGC helps my decisions.	A	70	23.2	3	1.4
Satisfied after reading reviews/UGC.	N	73	24.2	3	1.4
Reviews/UGC match my product experience.	A	69	22.8	3.1	1.4
Reviews/UGC make me confident in purchases.	A	67	22.2	3	1.4

Valid N - 302

Interpretation

The demographic profile of the respondents shows that the majority were female (55.6%), with the largest age group being under 20 years (21.5%). Most respondents held a diploma or certificate (25.8%), and the most common shopping frequency was more than once a week (27.5%). Amazon emerged as the most preferred e-commerce platform (26.2%).

Regarding review-related perceptions, the highest agreement was seen for statements such as "Verified reviews increase my trust" (M = 3.1, SD = 1.4) and "Customer videos feel authentic" (M = 3.2, SD = 1.4). Responses indicated moderate agreement that reviews are easy to understand, explain product features clearly, and show product strengths and weaknesses. Emotional tone factors revealed that positive reviews raised expectations, while negative reviews reduced interest, and balanced reviews were viewed as more reliable. For user-generated visuals, customer images and videos were perceived as helpful and authentic, enhancing purchase confidence. In terms of authenticity, user-generated content was considered more trustworthy than advertisements and aided purchase decisions. Customer satisfaction results showed that respondents generally felt satisfied after reading reviews/UGC, found them consistent with actual product experiences, and felt more confident in purchases.

Table 2. Pearson Correlation among Study Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
Review Clarity	1					
Review Credibility	-0	1				
Emotional Tone	0.05	0.08	1			
User-Generated Visuals	-0.1	-0.1	-0	1		
Authenticity of UGC	-0	0.02	0.03	0.05	1	
Customer Satisfaction Perception	.123*	-0.1	0.01	0.01	-0.1	1

Interpretation

Pearson correlation analysis examined the relationships between review clarity, review credibility, emotional tone, user-generated visuals, authenticity of

user-generated content, and customer satisfaction perception among 302 respondents. Based on the Table findings shows that Review Clarity showed a weak but statistically significant positive correlation with Customer Satisfaction Perception (r = 0.123, p = 0.033), indicating that clearer reviews are associated with slightly higher satisfaction levels. All other correlations between variables were weak and statistically non-significant (p > 0.05), suggesting minimal or no linear relationship among them in this Variables of data. The low correlation values across the variables indicate that the constructs are relatively independent in this sample, and other factors may be influencing customer satisfaction beyond the variables measured.

Table 3. Multiple regression analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Sig. F Change
1	.163a	0.027	0.01	0.77962	0.156

a. Predictors: (Constant), Authenticity of user-generated content, Review Credibility, Review Clarity, Emotional Tone, User-Generated Visuals
b. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction Perception

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of Authenticity of user-generated content, Review Credibility, Review Clarity, Emotional Tone, and User-Generated Visuals on Customer Satisfaction Perception. Express the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable (*Customer Satisfaction Perception*) in the standard multiple regression equation form where,

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \varepsilon \quad (1)$$

Y = Customer Satisfaction Perception
X1 = Review Clarity
X2 = Review Credibility
X3 = Emotional Tone
X4 = User-Generated Visuals
X5 = Authenticity of User-generated content
β0 = Intercept

β1…β5 = Regression coefficients
ε = Error term

The Results Showes that Model R = 0.163 → Weak positive correlation between predictors and customer satisfaction perception. R^2 = 0.027 → Only 2.7% of the variance in customer satisfaction perception is explained by the model. Adjusted R^2 = 0.010 → Adjusted value shows an even lower explanatory power when considering the number of predictors.

Table 4. ANOVA Test

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.906	5	0.981	1.614	.156b
	Residual	179.911	297	0.608		
	Total	184.817	302			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction Perception
b. Predictors: (Constant), Authenticity of user-generated content, Review Credibility, Review Clarity, Emotional Tone, User-Generated Visuals

The Result of Anova Table F(5, 296) = 1.614, p = 0.156 → Model is not statistically significant (p > 0.05), meaning the set of predictors does not significantly explain variations in customer satisfaction perception.

Table 5. ANOVA Test

	Unstandardized Coefficients		S. Coefficient	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Review Clarity	0.124	0.059	0.121	2.098	0.037
Review Credibility	-0.08	0.055	-0.085	-1.467	0.143
Emotional Tone	0.008	0.057	0.008	0.136	0.892
User-Generated Visuals	0.018	0.056	0.018	0.317	0.751
Authenticity of user-generated content	-0.061	0.057	-0.062	-1.07	0.285

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction Perception

The results indicated that the model was not statistically significant, F (5, 297) = 1.614, p = 0.156, with an R^2 of 0.027, suggesting that only 2.7% of the variance in customer satisfaction perception is explained by the predictors.

Among the independent variables, Review Clarity was the only significant predictor (β = 0.124, p = 0.037), indicating that clearer reviews are associated with higher customer satisfaction perception. The remaining predictors Review Credibility, Emotional Tone, User-Generated Visuals, and Authenticity of user-generated content did not significantly contribute to the model.

Based on the analysis, the demographic profile revealed that most respondents were female (55.6%), under 20 years old (21.5%), held a diploma or certificate (25.8%), and shopped online more than once a week (27.5%), with Amazon as the most preferred platform (26.2%). Descriptive statistics showed moderate agreement across review-related items, with the highest ratings for verified reviews increasing trust (M = 3.1, SD = 1.4) and customer videos feeling authentic (M = 3.2, SD = 1.4). Correlation analysis indicated that Review Clarity had a weak but significant positive relationship with Customer Satisfaction Perception (r = 0.123, p = 0.033), while other variables Review Credibility, Emotional Tone, User-Generated Visuals, and Authenticity of user-generated content showed non-significant associations. Multiple regression results revealed that the overall model was not statistically significant F (5,297) = 1.614, p = 0.156, R^2 = 0.027), with Review Clarity emerging as the only significant predictor (β = 0.124, p = 0.037). The regression equation indicated that higher clarity in reviews slightly increased customer satisfaction, while other predictors did not contribute significantly to the model.

The present study contributes novel insights to the existing body of e-commerce and consumer behavior literature by empirically demonstrating that review clarity is a more influential determinant of post-purchase customer satisfaction than other commonly emphasized attributes of online reviews and user-generated content (UGC). While prior research has extensively highlighted the importance of review credibility, emotional tone, visual UGC, and authenticity in shaping consumer trust and purchase intention, this study differentiates itself by focusing specifically on customer satisfaction perception after the purchase, rather than pre-purchase intentions or brand-related outcomes.

Earlier studies have consistently found that review credibility and trustworthiness significantly affect consumer confidence and purchase decisions (Filieri, 2015; Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006). Similarly, emotional tone and review valence have been shown to influence expectations and attitudes toward products (Sen & Lerman, 2007; Park et al., 2007). Visual user-generated content, such as images and videos, has also been identified as a powerful tool for enhancing authenticity and emotional engagement (Chu & Kim, 2011; Liu et al., 2011). However, much of this literature emphasizes purchase intention, brand trust, or perceived usefulness, rather than post-purchase satisfaction.

In contrast, the findings of this study reveal that Review Clarity is the only variable with a statistically significant impact on customer satisfaction perception,

despite the theoretical relevance of other factors. This result extends the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) by suggesting that even after purchase, consumers continue to rely on central-route processing, where clear, structured, and informative reviews help align expectations with actual product performance. When expectations formed through clear reviews are met, satisfaction levels increase.

Moreover, the non-significant effects of Review Credibility, Emotional Tone, User-Generated Visuals, and Authenticity of UGC highlight an important distinction between decision-making influence and satisfaction formation. While these elements may play a stronger role during the evaluation and purchase stages as supported by Ismagilova et al. (2020) and Sen & Lerman (2007)—their influence may diminish once the product experience becomes the dominant reference point for satisfaction. This finding aligns with Muchnik et al. (2013), who argue that social influence cues often affect perception more than actual evaluative judgments.

The low explanatory power of the regression model ($R^2 = 0.027$) further reinforces the study's contribution by empirically demonstrating that customer satisfaction in e-commerce is a multidimensional construct influenced more strongly by operational and experiential factors such as product quality, delivery performance, and service reliability (Ho & Lee, 2007), rather than review characteristics alone. This distinction is often overlooked in earlier studies that conflate purchase intention with satisfaction outcomes.

Thus, the novelty of this research lies in: (1) Shifting the focus from purchase intention to post-purchase customer satisfaction perception; (2) Empirically isolating review clarity as a critical predictor of satisfaction, above credibility, emotional tone, and visual UGC; (3) Providing evidence that widely accepted review attributes may not uniformly influence all stages of the consumer journey; (4) Offering practical implications that prioritize structured, clear, and expectation-setting reviews over purely emotional or visual content.

These findings contribute to a more refined understanding of how digital peer-generated information functions across different phases of online consumer behavior. The findings of this study highlight the nuanced role of online reviews and user-generated content in shaping customer satisfaction perceptions in e-commerce. Among the five examined predictors Review Clarity, Review Credibility, Emotional Tone, User-Generated Visuals, and Authenticity of user-generated content only Review Clarity demonstrated a statistically significant positive effect on customer satisfaction. This suggests that consumers place high value on reviews that are clear, easy to understand, and

provide comprehensive product information, aligning with prior research that emphasizes clarity as a critical factor in consumer decision-making processes.

Interestingly, variables such as Review Credibility, Emotional Tone, User-Generated Visuals, and Authenticity of user-generated content did not significantly predict customer satisfaction in this study, despite being frequently cited in literature as influential elements. One possible explanation is that while these attributes may contribute to initial purchase consideration, they might not directly translate into post-purchase satisfaction, especially in a young and digitally experienced demographic that may prioritize concrete and actionable information over subjective impressions.

The relatively low R^2 value (0.027) indicates that while Review Clarity plays a role, other unexamined factors such as product quality, delivery experience, price fairness, or brand reputation may have stronger impacts on customer satisfaction. Furthermore, the dominance of Amazon as a preferred platform among respondents could suggest platform-specific expectations and review system familiarity, potentially influencing the weight placed on clarity over other review characteristics.

Overall, these results underscore the importance for e-commerce businesses to encourage and highlight clear, structured, and informative customer reviews. Platforms may benefit from providing guidelines or templates for reviewers to ensure clarity, which in turn could enhance post-purchase satisfaction. Future studies could extend this research by including additional variables, using longitudinal data to track satisfaction changes, and exploring platform-specific behavioral patterns.

Conclusion

This study examined the influence of various review and user-generated content attributes—namely Review Clarity, Review Credibility, Emotional Tone, User-Generated Visuals, and Authenticity of user-generated content on customer satisfaction perceptions in the e-commerce context. The results reveal that Review Clarity is the only factor with a statistically significant positive effect on customer satisfaction, highlighting the importance of providing clear, concise, and easily understandable product reviews. Other attributes, while theoretically important, did not show a significant direct impact in this analysis, suggesting that clarity in communication outweighs other stylistic or trust-related aspects when it comes to shaping post-purchase satisfaction.

Given the relatively low explanatory power of the model (R^2 = 0.027), it is evident that additional factors beyond review and user-generated content attributes such as product quality, delivery speed, and price fairness may exert a stronger influence on customer satisfaction. The findings encourage e-commerce platforms and sellers to implement strategies that promote well-structured and detailed customer reviews, as clarity can enhance the decision-making process and improve satisfaction outcomes. Future research should explore a broader range of influencing factors, consider cross-platform comparisons, and adopt longitudinal approaches to better capture the evolving nature of consumer perceptions in online marketplaces.

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The authors declare no conflict of interest

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