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A STUDY ON CONSUMER TRUST: AMAZON VS. GOOGLE REVIEWS – WHICH PLATFORM DO PEOPLE RELY ON MORE AND WHY?

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ABSTRACT

In today's digital landscape, online reviews significantly influence consumer decisions. Among the most widely used platforms, Amazon and Google Reviews serve different yet overlapping purposes—Amazon for product feedback and Google for service-based business evaluations. This study explores which platform consumers trust more and why, focusing on the key factors that shape perception and credibility. Through primary data collection and secondary research, the study reveals that Amazon Reviews are generally trusted for product purchases due to their verified buyer system, detailed feedback, and direct purchase link. In contrast, Google Reviews are often preferred for local services because of their integration with search and map tools. However, both platforms face challenges such as fake reviews, lack of transparency, and algorithmic biases. Consumers consider factors like review authenticity, relevance, reviewer identity, and platform design when deciding which reviews to trust. The study provides insights into how trust in online reviews is formed and offers strategic direction for businesses to manage their online reputation. It also educates consumers on how to evaluate review credibility. These findings are valuable for marketers, platform developers, and businesses aiming to enhance customer trust.

KEYWORDS: Consumer Trust, Amazon Reviews, Google Reviews, Review Authenticity, Online Feedback

INTRODUCTION

Online reviews have become a cornerstone of consumer decision-making. Whether purchasing a product or choosing a service, people increasingly turn to digital platforms for feedback from other users. Two platforms stand out in this domain—Amazon Reviews and Google Reviews. Each serves a unique purpose, but both are influential in shaping consumer behavior. **Amazon Reviews** are commonly associated with e-commerce, offering insights into the quality, performance, and reliability of products. Verified purchase tags and media uploads make these reviews highly credible for consumers. As shoppers seek authentic experiences, Amazon provides an environment where buyers can trust the source of the feedback. **Google Reviews**, on the other hand, dominate local business evaluations. From restaurants and clinics

to salons and retail stores, consumers rely on Google's integration with Maps and Search to explore real-time, location-based opinions. The platform's visibility and accessibility make it a go-to source for quick service-related judgments. Despite their widespread usage, both platforms face challenges—fake reviews, incentivized feedback, and lack of verification. These issues raise important questions: Which platform do consumers trust more? What influences their trust? This study investigates these questions, aiming to uncover the psychological, technical, and behavioral factors that shape trust in Amazon and Google Reviews. The findings will help both consumers and businesses make informed decisions.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1. **Review Authenticity Concerns:** Both Amazon and Google Reviews face growing concerns over fake or manipulated reviews, which reduce consumer trust and mislead purchasing decisions.
2. **Platform-Specific Trust Dynamics:** There is a gap in understanding the psychological and behavioral factors that drive consumer trust in Amazon vs. Google Reviews.
3. **Lack of Verified Identity in Google Reviews:** Unlike Amazon, Google doesn't always ensure that reviewers have used the service, leading to trust issues in unverified opinions.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out what makes people trust reviews on Amazon and Google.
2. To compare which review platform people trust more – Amazon or Google.
3. To understand how real or fake reviews affect what people decide to buy.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

1. **Guides Consumer Awareness:** Helps consumers differentiate between credible and non-credible reviews, enabling smarter decision-making.
2. **Supports Business Strategy:** Assists businesses in identifying the right platform to focus their digital reputation efforts on.
3. **Contributes to Academic Research:** Adds value to the growing field of consumer psychology and digital marketing by offering comparative insights.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. **Subjective Interpretations:** Consumer trust is subjective and may vary based on individual perception, which may limit generalizability.
2. **Sample Size Constraints:** The study is based on a limited number of respondents which may not represent global trends accurately.
3. **Rapidly Changing Digital Landscape:** Platforms frequently update algorithms and policies, which can quickly change consumer behavior beyond the study's timeframe.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

MEANING

Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem. The research is the studying his research problem along with the logic behind them. It is necessary for the researcher to know not only the methods, techniques but also the methodology.

DATA COLLECTION

Data refers to information and facts. The task of data collection begins after the research problem has been defined and the research plan been decided.

There are two types of data collected

1. **Primary data**
2. **Secondary data**

SAMPLE SIZE: Sample size refers to the number of respondents drawn out for the purpose of study. The sample size selected for this study is 100. Based on these respondents' answers, the rest of the study is conducted.

STATISTICAL TOOLS: Statistical tools refer to the equipment that aid in conducting a research successfully. The statistical tools that aided in this research are charts like bar column, pie, cone, pyramid, line and cylinder

The other tools aided in this analysis are as follows;

- Percentage method
- Weighted average method

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. **Chevalier & Mayzlin (2006)** Their study on online book reviews revealed that positive customer reviews significantly impact sales on platforms like Amazon. The research also emphasized the influence of review quantity and content quality on consumer trust and purchase decisions.
2. **Luca (2016)** Luca found that online ratings on platforms such as Yelp and Google can directly affect business revenue. A one-star increase on rating platforms could lead to 5–9% increase in revenue, showing the real-world impact of trusted reviews.
3. **Forman, Ghose & Wiesenfeld (2008)** Their study concluded that disclosure of reviewer identity (e.g., verified buyers, profile pictures, etc.) improves credibility and perceived authenticity. This directly ties into why Amazon reviews might be more trusted than Google reviews.
4. **Flanagin, Metzger et al. (2014)** This research focused on the credibility of online consumer reviews and highlighted that users tend to trust well-written, detailed reviews more than shorter, vague ones. It also pointed out that platform reputation influences trustworthiness.
5. **Hu, Liu & Zhang (2008)** They analyzed the effect of fake reviews and suggested that platforms like Google, which allow unverified user comments, may suffer from lower perceived trust compared to platforms like Amazon that restrict reviews to verified buyers.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

TABLE 1. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Male	42	42	42
Female	58	58	58
Total	100	100	100
Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
18-30	90	90	90
31-45	5	5	5
46-60	5	5	5
Total	100	100	100
Occupation	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Student	20	20	20
Homemaker	3	3	3
Salaried	64	64	64
Business	13	13	13
Total	100	100	100
Education	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
SSLC	2	2	2
HSC	12	12	12
UG	19	19	19
PG	60	60	60

Others	7	7	7
Total	100	100	100

Objective 1: To find out what makes people trust reviews on Amazon and Google

TABLE :1 Key Elements in a Trusted Review

Review Element	Response Count	Percentage (%)
Verified buyer tag	40	40%
Length of the review	20	20%
Number of upvotes	15	15%
Star rating only	25	25%
Total	100	100%

Table 2 – Weighted Average for Trust-Building Factors in Reviews

Trust Factor	Weighted Average Score
Verified Purchase	415 / 100 = 4.15
Detailed Explanation	397 / 100 = 3.97
Reviewer Profile	365 / 100 = 3.65
Star Rating	335 / 100 = 3.35

TABLE :3 Type of Reviewer You Trust

Type of Reviewer	Response Count	Percentage (%)
Experienced users	35	35%
First-time buyers	10	10%
Anonymous users	5	5%
Verified local guides	50	50%
Total	100	100%

Objective 2: To compare which review platform people trust more – Amazon or Google

TABLE : 4 First Preference for Review Check

Preferred Platform	Review Response Count	Percentage (%)
Amazon Reviews	45	45%
Google Reviews	35	35%
Both equally	15	15%
None	5	5%
Total	100	100%

TABLE : 5 Platform with More Trustworthy Reviews

Most Trusted Platform	Response Count	Percentage (%)
Amazon	48	48%
Google	22	22%
Neither	10	10%
Both	20	20%
Total	100	100%

TABLE : 6 Trust Level Across Review Platforms

Platform	Weighted Average Score
Amazon	425 / 100 = 4.25
Google	380 / 100 = 3.80
Flipkart	365 / 100 = 3.65

Mouthshut	$325 / 100 = 3.25$
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Objective 3: To understand how real or fake reviews affect what people decide to buy

TABLE:7 Impact of Fake Reviews on Purchase Decisions

Reaction to Suspected Fake Review	Response Count	Percentage (%)
Yes, many times	30	30%
Occasionally	40	40%
Rarely	20	20%
Never	10	10%
Total	100	100%

TABLE :8 Impact of Fake Reviews

Aspect Affected	Weighted Average Score
Product Ratings	$414 / 100 = 4.14$
Service Feedback	$384 / 100 = 3.84$
Brand Image	$350 / 100 = 3.50$
Return Policy Confidence	$310 / 100 = 3.10$

TABLE:9 Reaction to Suspected Fake Review

Action Taken by Consumer	Response Count	Percentage (%)
Ignore it	15	15%
Report it	10	10%
Read more reviews to verify	60	60%
Avoid the product/service	15	15%
Total	100	100%

FINDINGS

Objective 1: Factors Influencing Trust in Reviews

1. Verified purchase tags are the most important factor for building trust, with 40% of respondents preferring reviews from verified buyers.
2. Reviewers identified as local guides or experienced users gained more credibility than anonymous users.
3. The weighted average score for "Verified Purchase" was the highest (4.15), indicating that authenticity plays a major role in trust formation.

Objective 2: Platform Trust Comparison

1. Amazon Reviews were the most preferred review source for online shopping, with 45% checking Amazon first before buying.
2. 48% of respondents believed Amazon reviews are more trustworthy than Google reviews.
3. The highest weighted average trust score was given to Amazon (4.25), followed by Google (3.80), showing a clear trust gap between the platforms.

Objective 3: Impact of Fake Reviews on Decisions

1. 70% of respondents admitted to changing their decisions due to suspected fake reviews.
2. Reading more reviews to cross-check was the most common action when a fake review is suspected (60%).

3. Fake reviews had the strongest influence on product ratings (WAM = 4.14), followed by service feedback (WAM = 3.84).

SUGGESTIONS

1. Amazon and Google should enhance transparency by clearly marking verified reviews and reducing the visibility of potentially fake content.
2. Google Reviews could introduce a verified transaction feature, similar to Amazon, to improve trust.
3. Businesses should actively respond to reviews, especially negative or suspected fake ones, to improve credibility and reputation.
4. Consumers should be educated to identify review patterns, such as repetitive language or extreme positivity/negativity, to detect fake reviews.
5. Platforms should implement AI-based review authenticity tools to flag suspicious feedback early.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that while both Amazon and Google are trusted platforms, Amazon leads in consumer trust due to its verified review system and platform design. Consumers value transparency, reviewer identity, and authenticity when making decisions based on reviews. Although Google is preferred for local services, its lack of verified purchases makes its reviews appear less credible. Fake reviews remain a major concern, affecting purchasing behavior significantly. Most users change decisions or seek more reviews when in doubt. Overall, consumer trust is closely tied to the perceived authenticity and verification of reviews, making it essential for platforms and businesses to prioritize review quality and transparency.

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