

Role of Reviews in Online Purchasing of Home Furnishing Items

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Abstract

Research study was executed in Delhi NCR region to understand the importance of reviews in the field of online home furnishing items. It is generally considered that people are wise and do not get distracted by the favourable or unfavourable reviews, they make their own decisions, use their own discretion and consult the features of the product very scientifically and they can't be influenced by emotional reviews. To understand all these things; this detail study was executed which revealed that reviews are really read by majority of the online buyers and it significantly impact on their buying behaviour too.

Keywords: Reviews, Home Furnishing, Online, Buyers

Introduction

Whenever someone buys anything it consults the previous user. It is quite common in online purchasing that after usage people do give their frank and candid opinion online. Though it is not certain and precise yet people do have a habit of reading the reviews to some extent in online purchasing.

The role of online reviews is increasing especially the overall rating is considered a lot by the online shoppers. Though they do not give that much notice to the date of reviews (Lei, Z., et al. 2012).

Earlier the customers were not all that well informed but the internet has made them more informed. Customers share their opinion related to different products and services. Others view it, read it and give importance to it. The word of mouth spreads according to these reviews. (Vimaladevi, K., and Dhanabhakaym, M., 2012).

It is important to understand that reviews alone are not significant. The reputation of reviewer is also very important so the person who is not well known to the potential customers; there reviews do not make much impact. In fact over a period of time the real product quality matters not the reviews so the companies must not bother a lot about writing good reviews through manipulations (Hu, N., Liu, L., and Zhang, J.J. 2008).

Reviews given by the previous users create a positive or negative impact related to the products image. It acts as a foundation for the others to decide whether to patronize a product or not. They do get influence at

least up to some extent. Overall impact depends on several other factors also (Forman, C.M., Ghose, A., and Wiesenfeld, B.M. 2008).

Objectives

1. To know upto what extent buyers read the reviews for online purchasing of home furnishing items.
2. To know the impact of reviews in online purchasing of home furnishing items.

Hypothesis

1. Buyers do not significantly read the reviews for online purchasing of home furnishing items.
2. There is no significant impact of reviews on in online purchasing of home furnishing items.

Sample size

Research work was done on the chosen 75 male and 75 female online home furnishing buyers who reside in Delhi national capital region i.e. New Delhi, Gurgaon, Ghaziabad, Gautama Buddha Nagar and Faridabad. Their opinion was collected with the help of self developed questionnaire.

Research analysis

As per the data collected from 150 respondents only 115 responded completely replied to the questionnaire so only 115 respondents' opinion were taken into account for research analysis.

Table 1: Read reviews for online purchasing of home furnishing items

Level	Respondents	Weightage	Value
Always	52	4	208
Frequently	39	3	117
Seldom	13	2	26
Rarely	8	1	8
Never	3	0	0
Total	115		359

The data showed that 45.22% respondents always read reviews while 33.91% frequently read reviews and just

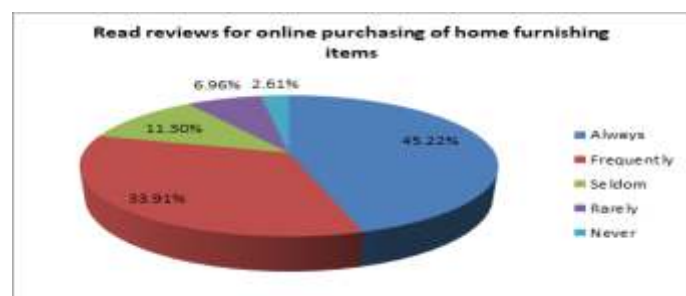
2.61% never read reviews. As per the table total score is 359 i.e. 78.04% of the overall value (460). To test its significance one sample T test was done.

Table 2: Significance level of reading the reviews for online purchasing of home furnishing items

Mean of reading the reviews	N	df	Standard Deviation	T Value	P value
78.04	115	114	12.79	7.59	0.00

As per one sample T test the calculated value of T is 7.59 which is more than the table value 1.96 so the first hypothesis is rejected.

Chart 1



The data of table 3 showed that 40.87% respondents frequently influenced by reviews while online purchasing of home furnishing items always read reviews. 26.96% always get influenced while just 6.09% never get influenced. As per the table 3 total score is 309 i.e. 67.17% of the overall value (460). To test its significance one sample T test was done.

Table 3: Influenced by reviews while online purchasing of home furnishing items

Level	Respondents	Weightage	Value
Always	31	4	124
Frequently	47	3	141
Seldom	14	2	28
Rarely	16	1	16
Never	7	0	0
Total	115		309

Chart 2

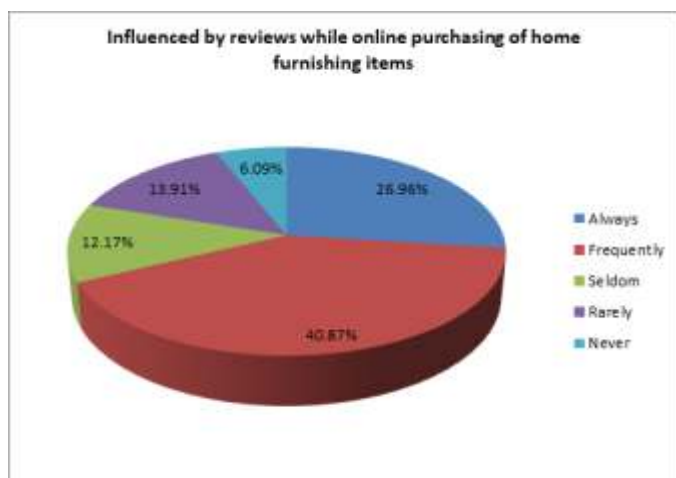


Table 4: Significance level of influence by reviews while online purchasing of home furnishing items

Mean of influence by reviews	N	df	Standard Deviation	T Value	P value
67.17	115	114	14.26	6.72	0.00

As per one sample T test the calculated value of T is 6.72 which is more than the table value 1.96 so the second hypothesis is rejected.

Conclusion

Reviews are read significantly by the online home furnishing buyers. They give importance to the reviews before coming to any decision. It significantly influence their buying decision so the companies who are involved in social media marketing or digital marketing must give utmost importance to the reviews and try to keep the existing customers' best reviews. That will lead to the more sales of home furnishings. It is nothing but just a wrong notion that reviews are not important and people do not get

influenced by others. They do not make their own decision in vacuum.

Suggestions:

Efforts should be made to invoke good reviews by the satisfied users to accelerate the sale of a home furnishing items. Feedback form has to be provided on the purchase of every home furnishing item by the vendors and that has to be uploaded on the website. Relying only on increment in sales will not serve the purpose in long term. Quality has to be complement advertising claims else the product will not fetch repeated order and the reviews will not be all that good. Standardized quality and its maintenance is required for good reviews. Further study may also be done to analyze the effectiveness of reviews shared or different social media platforms and their impact on buying behavior.

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