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The impact of online reviews and recommendations on consumer culture.

Ines Akacha

Master Thesis

presented as a partial requirement for obtaining a master's degree in data-driven Marketing

NOVA Information Management School
Instituto Superior de Estatística e Gestão de Informação
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Consumer culture

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by

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Master Thesis presented as a partial requirement for obtaining the master's degree in data-driven Marketing, with a specialization in Digital Marketing

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STATEMENT OF INTEGRITY

I hereby declare having conducted this academic work with integrity. I confirm that I have not used plagiarism, any form of undue use of information, or falsification of results during the process leading to its elaboration. I further declare that I have fully acknowledged the Rules of Conduct and Code of Honor from the NOVA Information Management School.

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ABSTRACT

Consumer culture changed nowadays due to digitalization. The theoretical background of this thesis will examine how recommendations and reviews become an important part of our daily lives by influencing consumer choices, social norms, and the community dynamic. This thesis focuses on the influence of online reviews and guidance on consumer culture. The purpose is to examine the influence that online reviews and recommendations have on consumer culture. Structured interviews were conducted with twenty consumers and ten psychologists to collect information. A thematic analysis was made on interviews to point out the patterns and ideas. With the results, it was identified that online reviews and recommendations have an important impact on consumers' perceptions and the choices of their purchases. Respondents admitted to putting a lot of trust in digital opinion and prioritizing them over traditional sources of information. Experts in psychology came up with valuable ideas about psychological mechanisms backing up this behavior, highlighting the importance of herd mentality and bias. In this study, it was observed that online reviews and recommendations highly influence consumer culture. That influences personal behaviors but also market trends. Showing the importance of managing an online reputation with adequate strategies.

KEYWORDS

- Online reviews; Culture; Recommendations; Impact; Consumer

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG):



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Acronym A Q*number* is a question and the number of the concerned question. For Example, *Q10* refers to Question number 10 in the interviews.

1. INTRODUCTION

In our contemporary society, consumer culture plays the role of a central force, linking in a complex way the universe of individual behavior by assimilating values, personal aspirations, and expectations (Rokka, 2021). However, the impact changed and took different proportions indeed. Historically, word-of-mouth, which was reserved for exclusive circles, has undergone a profound metamorphosis in the Internet era, where opinions, evaluations, and recommendations are shared digitally (Berger & Iyengar, 2013). The emergence of social media thus requires a fundamental rethink of marketing practices. (Lund, Cohen, & Scarles, 2018, p. [2]). Opinions, evaluations, and recommendations, once relegated to the quiet realm of intimate conversations, now travel across the vast expanse of the digital (Mayzlin & Chevalier, 2003). What once relied on personal networks and close-knit communities has now become a global dialogue in which the voices of strangers carry considerable weight in shaping consumer perceptions. As the Internet reaches unprecedented heights, consumers become active and interconnected participants in a vast network of information and opinions, redefining the parameters of their decision-making paradigms (Smith, 2012).

From a business perspective, it is no longer enough to simply recognize the existence of consumer opinions; it has become imperative to actively integrate them into service and reputation management strategies (Verhoef, 2009). This tactical integration aims not only to build customer loyalty but also to stimulate strong endorsement of products, raw materials, and services. The once linear relationship between consumers and brands has evolved into a dynamic interaction where the consumer's voice resonates more than personal interactions.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the influence that online reviews and recommendations have on the consumer culture the goal is to understand the evolution of consumer culture, the importance of online reviews and recommendations, and the consequences it had on the relationship between the consumers and brands. By showing how the change in accessibility has democratized the ability for individuals from all backgrounds to share their opinions on products, companies, or various entities (Abbey, 2018). The ramifications of this democratization are profound and fundamentally restructuring consumer decision-making processes (Cova, 2007). This study embarks on a scientific journey, ready to explore this issue in depth by carefully examining the multifaceted influence of opinions, evaluations, and online social recommendations on contemporary consumer culture. In an era defined by the omnipresence of digital practices, where transformative trends continually shape the landscape of consumer culture, understanding the subtle nuances that govern consumer values, purchasing behaviors, preferences, and interactions is of capital importance.

Thanks to a meticulous and in-depth qualitative approach, the aspiration is not only to capture but also to analyze the nuanced and rich interactions between the recommendations in line and cultural elements specific to digital consumption (Belk, 2013). This study, therefore, does not simply aim to provide superficial information but rather to provide an in-depth understanding of the cultural mechanisms at play. By filling this theoretical gap through rigorously conducted research and in-depth analysis, this thesis aspires to contribute significantly to a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of these online opinions on our consumer culture in the digital age. In this research, the goal is to provide a

comprehensive picture of the influences that shape and inform our decision-making and interventions in this ever-changing consumer landscape.

Although the existing literature on online recommendations undoubtedly provides valuable information, it is not without an obvious theoretical gap. The primary focus on individual consumer behaviors tends to overshadow the broader impact on consumer culture. In response, this study undertakes the ambitious task of bridging this theoretical gap by focusing on digital consumer culture, an area where online recommendation practices exist. By exploring the complex interplay of online reviews and social recommendation practices within contemporary digital consumer culture.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. CONSUMER CULTURE AND ITS EVOLUTION IN THE DIGITAL CONTEXT

The idea of culture as a constantly evolving system of meanings is crucial, for example, for understanding how brands are. They are used by consumers to express taste, lifestyle ideals, class, and gender within their specific contexts (Rokka, 2021). Traditionally reserved for exclusive circles, the word-of-mouth paradigm has undergone a profound metamorphosis in the Internet era. This transformation era has catalyzed the emergence of digital consumer culture, challenged established notions, and reshaped the dynamics of how products and services are perceived. Indeed, reviews can move shoppers from consideration to purchase (Moro & Guerreiro, 2019). In the contemporary landscape, critiques, assessments, and recommendations, once whispered in intimate conversations, now travel across the vast expanse of the digital domain. The evolution of accessibility has democratized the possibility for individuals from all backgrounds to share their opinions on products, companies, or various entities. They especially know that opinions are at the heart of almost all human activities and represent key influences on human behavior. Our beliefs and perceptions of reality and the choices we make are conditioned upon how others see and evaluate the world (Moro & Guerreiro, 2019). What once relied on personal networks and close-knit communities has now become a global dialogue, in which the voices of strangers carry considerable weight on consumer perceptions. As the Internet reaches unprecedented heights, the momentum of consumer influence has accelerated. Consumers become active and interconnected participants in a vast network of information and opinions, redefining the parameters of their decision-making paradigms.

In this constantly evolving digital landscape, the complex interaction between consumer culture and the emergence of online reviews and social recommendations shapes the way individuals perceive and interact with products and services. Understanding this evolution is crucial to navigating the complexities of contemporary consumer behavior and developing effective marketing strategies that resonate with digital consumer culture which can be summarized in the transformation of needs to desires, utilitarian/hedonic needs-values, commodity fetishism, conspicuous leisure and consumption, cultural values, aestheticization, alienation, differentiation and speed (Arıkan Saltık et al., 2013).

2.2. SIGNIFICANCE OF ONLINE REVIEWS AND SOCIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The importance of online reviews and social recommendations in the contemporary consumer landscape is profound, marking a paradigm shift in the way individuals make and form purchasing decisions, and perceptions about products and services. In the complex fabric of contemporary society, the emergence of online opinions and social recommendations has become a transformative force, calling into question traditional models of dissemination of information. Indeed, Because of its pervasiveness in society, Social Media has also affected the way marketers connect with consumers and, in turn, the way consumers connect with brands and products (Sheth, 2018).

The growing importance of online reviews and social recommendations is closely linked to the democratization of expression in the digital sphere. Once confined to exclusive circles and quiet conversations, opinions on products and services are now broadcast across the vast expanses of the Internet. This democratization allows individuals from diverse backgrounds

and experiences to share their points of view, thereby contributing to a global dialogue that significantly influences consumer perceptions. According to Mensah (2019), social recommendations are a key driver of sustainable development, influencing consumer choices and promoting environmentally conscious behavior. Social recommendations from friends, family, and online influencers have been found to influence consumer attitudes towards sustainable and ethical products, reflecting the impact of social recommendations on consumer culture. That is why the shift from traditional sources to digital interactions marks a seismic impact on the consumption landscape.

The transformative impact of online reviews and social recommendations extends beyond individual transactions. It has become a powerful tool for shaping consumers' perceptions of products, companies, and various entities. Furthermore, (Leung, 2013) highlights the influence of social media in tourism and hospitality, where social recommendations from peers and influencers on platforms such as Instagram and Facebook shape consumer perceptions and travel decisions. The power of social recommendations in influencing travel choices underscores their significance in consumer culture beyond the realm of product consumption.

From a business perspective, recognizing and responding strategically to online reviews and social recommendations is no longer optional but imperative. The authenticity inherent in real consumer experiences, shared openly in reviews, helps shape a brand's image in a way that traditional advertising cannot reproduce. Indeed, online customer review systems are one of the most powerful channels to generate online word-of-mouth. With the popularity of online word-of-mouth activity, an increasing number of businesses have started to offer online word-of-mouth services (Duan, 2008).

In conclusion, the importance of online reviews and social recommendations does not lie only in their informative value but also in their transformative power to reshape consumer decision-making processes. In the age of digital consumer culture, these online components constitute the threads that weave the fabric of contemporary perceptions and preferences.

2.3. THEORY AND CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE DIGITAL CONSUMER

To understand the complexity of the digital consumer world, it is essential to further study the basic theories and conceptual frameworks that influence our understanding of this constantly evolving field. By delving into existing theories, such as the theory that explains how digital consumer culture facilitates digital acculturation where it shows that “ a conceptual framework that explains the reciprocal, iterative and dynamic interrelationships between digital consumer culture and digital acculturation and spells out the three inherence characteristics of digital consumer culture” Dey, (2016, p.1), or consumer culture theory which is an area of inquiry that seeks to unravel the complexities of consumer culture itself, not just consumer behavior (Arnould and al., 2021).

These theories have long been instrumental in analyzing consumer behavior, but as the digital age expands, they face the challenge of adapting to the transformative impact of online reviews and social recommendations on consumer culture (Cheung and al., 2008).

In this context, there is a possibility that classic models of consumer behavior are not adapted to the new dynamics offered by the digital domain. Indeed, In the current world, consumers' perspectives towards purchasing goods have got a sharp transformational shift from traditional to modern purchasing behavior. This has impacted the mindset of industrialists to remodel the pattern of merchandising goods, reaching the products to the doorstep of consumers with the adaptation of various social media platforms in digital marketing (Dsouza & Panakaje, 2023).

Beyond theoretical exploration, a qualitative approach becomes essential. Our goal is not only to capture but to analyze the nuanced and rich interactions between online recommendations and cultural elements specific to digital consumption. In this section, we lay the foundation for our exploration by reviewing existing theories, identifying gaps, and emphasizing the unique characteristics of digital consumer culture.

2.4. BRIDGING THE THEORETICAL GAP: NAVIGATING DIGITAL CONSUMER CULTURE

This chapter aims to address theoretical gaps by focusing on online consumer culture. With a defined study objective focused on unifying theoretical perspectives in this area, this involves an exhaustive review of the literature meticulously tailored to the intricacies of the culture. digital consumption.

The evolving landscape of digital consumer culture necessitates a move away from conventional theoretical frameworks, prompting a dedicated exploration of the unique dynamics introduced by online reviews and social recommendations (Cheung, 2008). As we explore this field, the focus remains firmly on the conceptual constructs that govern consumer choices and attitudes in the specific context of digital consumption (Lee & Youn, 2009).

The importance of understanding cultural nuances in online consumption emerges as a recurring theme, guiding the exploration of unique patterns, behaviors, and subtleties within the digital domain (Hofstede, 1984). By exploring the complex interplay of online opinions and cultural elements, the aim is to transcend simple observation and unravel the underlying mechanisms that shape digital consumer culture.

Through this concerted effort to fill theoretical gaps, the study aspires to provide a coherent framework that elucidates the intertwined tapestry of online opinions, social recommendations, and the evolving dynamics of consumer culture. The journey takes place with the recognition that digital consumer culture is a dynamic field, requiring a nuanced and holistic theoretical basis for comprehensive understanding (Kusawat & Teerakapibal, 2021).

2.5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

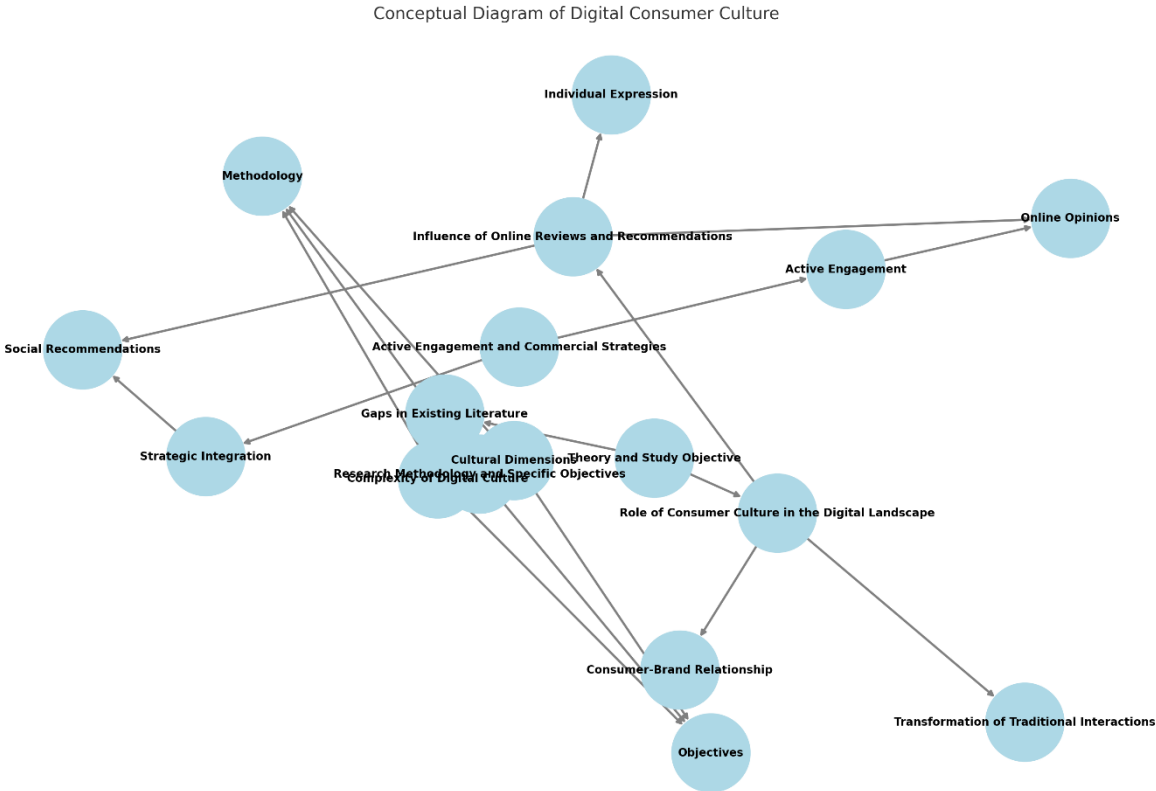
In closing the literature review, the transition to an explanation of the theoretical framework is put up, aligning with the study's objective of bridging the theoretical gap within digital consumer culture. This theory provides a framework to examine how cultural factors such as individualism-collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity-femininity, and long-term orientation influence consumer behavior (Zimu, 2023). The literature review emphasizes the central role of consumer culture in the digital landscape, where the transformation from traditional mouth-to-ear dynamics to digital interactions has reshaped the consumer-brand relationship (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The democratization of individual expression in the digital sphere has amplified the influence of online opinions and social

recommendations, challenging conventional notions of consumer decision-making. Online reviews and social mentions are recognized as powerful agents that shape consumer perceptions and preferences within contemporary consumer culture (Duan, 2008). This dynamic interaction reflects a shift towards active engagement and strategic integration of consumer opinions into commercial strategies. However, as we delve into the complexities of digital consumer culture, it becomes evident that the existing literature often neglects the intricate cultural dimensions influencing online consumer behavior.

Bridging this gap requires a deeper exploration of cultural nuances and a more comprehensive understanding of how they intersect with online reviews and social recommendations. Critiquing the existing literature underscores the importance of recognizing the limitations of previous research efforts to fully grasp the cultural impact of online interactions by acknowledging these gaps and bridging them through rigorous empirical verification and cross-cultural analysis, we aim to develop a more nuanced understanding of digital consumer culture.

As a diagram is seen below, it shows all the links between the ideas and concepts of consumer culture. This will allow us to visualize how the themes connect to answer the thesis question.

Figure 1 : Conceptual Diagram of Digital Consumer Culture



Summarizing the key points of the literature review: the research methodology and specific study objectives highlight the transformative power of consumer culture in shaping digital reactions and information development collaborative research efforts and nuanced analysis of cultural nuances are crucial for better understanding and developing strategies that

resonate with today's consumers within the complexities of digital consumer cultures (Hargittai, 2001).

3. METHODOLOGY

This thesis takes a qualitative approach and according to Creswell (2017), a qualitative approach in research is characterized by way of its cognizance of exploring and understanding complex phenomena through the collection and evaluation of non-numerical statistics this method allows us to deepen our expertise of the impact of online evaluations and social suggestions on patron tradition. These factors, such as personal experience, social influence, cultural attitudes, and industry norms are inherently prevalent in the fabric of our lifestyle, our habits, values, consumption choices, and social interactions, but also our political preferences, our health habits, our implicit biases, our past experiences, our exposure to media and technology as well as our aspirations and goals. They are a broad result of different cultural and personal contexts, ranging from dietary preferences and pastime choices to religious and work attitudes.

Particular importance has been placed on a deeper understanding of stories, and attitudes that according to Eagly, (1993), refer to people's evaluations, emotions, and beliefs toward items, human beings, or ideas. It can even permit us to recognize the norms that encompass formal policies, such as laws, and informal expectations, like manners and etiquette. Norms form social interactions, defining what is considered suitable or irrelevant within a given context, and they play a critical position in retaining social order and brotherly love, as exemplified by Henslin, (2011) in his evaluation of consumers throughout exclusive cultures.

The research makes a specialty of carrying out in-depth interviews that are consistent with Rubin, (2012), conducting in-intensity interviews is a qualitative research method characterized by using its consciousness to elicit rich and specific records from members via open-ended questions and probing. In-depth interviews involve one-on-one interactions between the researcher and the player, considering a deep exploration of the participant's reports, perspectives, and critiques on a specific topic. With clients from special cultural backgrounds, as well as specialists with expertise in purchaser behavior theory.

Taking this approach is intended to capture personal views and studies that shape how people interact with online evaluations and social pointers. Semi-established interviews are conversations wherein the interviewer has a fixed set of predetermined questions. However, topics can be discovered in-depth based on the player's responses, as seen with Babbie, 2016. Indeed, this form of interview is the number one facts series approach which is a manner of collecting data or records for studies or evaluation.

This approach allows us to explore topics and ensures that key issues are regularly covered. Interviews will be held with the participants, both in person and on the Internet, to provide an open and informal conversation about the influence of virtual research and recommendations on the life of our consumer culture. Receptionists in the study will be tasks drawn from a variety of cultural backgrounds to ensure fairness. Consumers from different demographic groups which are categories of people who share common characteristics such as age, gender, education, income, or ethnicity, as seen in Bryman, 2016 were involved intentionally, alongside psychologists who specialize in consumer behavior for the credibility of and widening horizon of the research. This diversity allows us to examine interpersonal

differences and cultural differences in how I perceive and use online reviews and social recommendations. As you can see below:

Table 1: Table of Profiles of Interviewees

Name	Age	Gender	Origins	Residence	Profession
Bechir	23	Man	Tunisian	Portugal	Student
Eya	23	Women	Tunisian	Tunisia	Graphic designer
Manel	23	Women	Tunisian	Tunisia	Graphic designer
Lila	24	Women	French	Portugal	Customer support
Sebastien	26	Man	French	Portugal	Customer support
Taoufiq	23	Man	Bangladesh	Portugal	Student
Kevin	30	Man	French	Portugal	Customer support
Isa	23	Women	Algerian	France	Student

Table 2: Table of Interviews with Experts

Name	Age	Gender	Origins	Residence	Profession
Dr. Merabet	28	Women	Algeria	Canada	Psychologist
Imen	24	Women	Tunisia	Tunisia	Influencer
Dr yakoubi	33	Women	Algeria	Algeria	Psychologist
Dr. Ternois	41	Women	France	France	Psychologist

Data collected during the interviews was transcribed with the consent of the participants and recorded for later analysis. It was intended to achieve rich and nuanced facts about the stories and perspectives of members, to similarly express the expertise on the impact of those factors on the customer subculture.

Then, the different parts of the interview were designed strategically. The first part was focused on the participant in a general way to better understand their background. The second part helped us identify and elucidate the conceptual constructs that delineated consumer choices and attitudes in the domain of online reviews and social recommendations in contemporary digital consumer culture.

Part three focuses on cultural sensitivity in online reviews and social recommendations. Understanding Consumer Behavior, Cultural Norms, and Perspectives; the part focuses on changes in cultural preference rather than purchasing behaviors. Lastly, the last section of the interview covers the topic regarding the analysis of the evolution of consumer culture in the digital age. Understanding adaptation societal values and transformation. Thus, the interview

is arranged to allow collection of the appropriate data that is true to the research question not discussing issues that may not involve our topic of the study.

Data could be analyzed interpretively, with an emphasis on gaining deeper expertise on the issues emerging from the interviews. Qualitative study methods have been used and more precisely content evaluation which is a research approach used to research textual, visible, or audio content systematically. For that, those categories have been used that can help organize the data which are as follows: Review Credibility, Influence on Brand Perception, and Cultural Influence. Then we have Product Types Influence, Review Utilization and Overall Consumer Experience We continue with, Trends, Review Strategies, Technology Access and Digital vs Traditional. And finally, Influencer Impact.

Researchers examine and categorize content based on predefined criteria to identify patterns, themes, or trends, according to Krippendorff, (2018), to favor the exploration of the participants' perspectives and identify important patterns in their stories. By taking this approach, it is hoped to gain valuable insights that will help enhance the understanding of this thesis. As for the analysis of the interviews, Close reading and taking notes were given high priority: noting recurring themes, emotional expressions, perceived influence, and purchase behavior profiles. The issues were identified and analyzed at hand, by using the impact of online reviews on consumer culture, cultural differences in perceptions of social recommendations, or how consumers evaluate online reviews can be accepted. Group responses from participants based on these themes to better understand trends and patterns from their experience and perspective. Furthermore, participant data should be analyzed to understand how they were influenced by online research and social recommendations in their culture.

So, story elements like special moments were identified for information analysis, interactions with other customers, and experiences of satisfaction or disappointment with products or services.

And it was finalized with visual representation which becomes pivotal at this stage, with the creation of visualizations by using charts and graphs to illustrate sentimental trends and their cultural impact. Drawing insights from the analysis, the methodology connects sentiment trends to shifts in consumer culture, culminating in actionable recommendations for brands. As for the interview manual, I will begin with a cautiously crafted creation to establish the context of the interview and place the player comfortably. This step is critical because it unites the tone of the discussion and guarantees that the participant is familiar with the topic.

Figure 2 is a detailed graph used to represent the encoding reference numbers, it is more specifically used to separate and classify in a clear, clear, and precise manner the interviews which have been carried out beforehand.

Some conclusions can be drawn from this figure that will facilitate the visualization of the results, thanks to the graph above. We can see that the major category is "Review Credibility". It is followed by "Influence on Brand P" and "Cultural Influence" which are tied. Then we have "Product Types Influence", "Review Utilization" and "Overall Consumer Exp" which are equivalent. We continue with these 4 categories, "Trends", "Review Strategies", "Technology Access » and "Digital vs Traditional". And finally, "Influencer Impact" which happens to be the lowest number.

We can also refer to Figure 2 which is the word cloud, it will help us see which words are used during interviews. We can note 6 main words in red:

- Communication
- Thrilled
- Online
- Reviews
- Product
- Recommendations

We then have on the periphery in bold other less used words but just as important but with less use. These are: "Detailed", "move", "consumer buy", "quality", "opinions", "purchasing", "influencers", "culture amount", "give judge someone", "positive" and "constructive".

All other words that remain and gravitate have been identified and noted as words used several times but on a smaller scale.

4.1. THE POWER OF ONLINE REVIEWS

4.1.1. OVERALL ONLINE EXPERIENCE AS A CONSUMER

The totality of consumer experiences is taken into account, and a large part is positive, which allows us to conclude that the overall experience is effective. This then means that a large majority or even almost all of consumers are satisfied with the product or service they obtained. Like Dr Yakoubi said, "I will describe the experience as a constant 'seduction' to chase this or that product because it will fill a need in us (which is not a need, but a desire awakened via advertising)."

It is imperative to understand that consumer reviews bear a major responsibility. They play a significant role in this analysis. Reviews make it possible to evaluate customer satisfaction, to improve the products and services they request, which are part of their needs, and to build a certain trust on which to base themselves and flawless credibility. They also help influence purchasing decisions.

The results indeed demonstrated a positive customer experience. Isa said "My experience as an online consumer so far is satisfying! I buy a lot of everyday items on the internet, and I've never been disappointed." However, it is crucial not to stop there, to continue and take consumer opinions, analyze them to maintain such a positive pace and thus aim for better results, a level of satisfaction. Companies must give value to this feedback to optimize their offers and guarantee customers an incredible customer experience.

4.1.2. PRODUCT CATEGORIES MOST INFLUENCED BY ONLINE REVIEWS

Online reviews have a significant impact on consumers' purchasing decisions, especially in the area of tech gadgets, home appliances, and beauty products. These particular categories require careful consideration before making a purchase, making online reviews particularly influential. One study participant highlighted the importance of reviews, saying, "Mostly for visits, like bad reviews saying, 'don't go there' I will not go there don't want to waste my time, last time I wanted to go visit a building, everybody was saying it was closed, I just didn't waste my time". We can therefore deduce that the categories that are the most influenced by online reviews are the products that are important to the consumer in different ways: can be important because it's expensive or because it's a product they use on their skin (beauty products example) so they are scared of the side effects the product can cause on their health etc. As far as home appliances, electronic products, skincare products, and fashion items are concerned, customers' decisions are the most influenced by reviews. According to Dr. Yakoubi, "Home appliances and electronics are the goods for which the reviews have the most influence on consumers". For all these product categories, consumers first read the reviews to understand the quality and performance and then decide whether or not to buy; thus, reviews have a decisive role.

4.1.3. ONLINE REVIEWS AND SOCIAL PROOF

Online reviews play the role of proof in the eyes of consumers, they influence and guide them. The more positive the opinion, the more confidence is strengthened, and sales increased, because the consumer's choice is, so to speak, validated. Reviews allow consumers to experience a partially real purchase, reduce their anxiety at the idea of spending money on an unknown product, and prevent them from post-purchase regret. Overall makes it easier for them to make decisions and the purchasing process linked to the final decision becomes faster, and stress is thus reduced thanks to the experiences in the choices of others. Online reviews, therefore, are active social proof tools. "Peer or influencer recommendations tap into the need for social compliance and build confidence in purchasing decisions," says Dr. Merabet. There is such lessening here of the anxiety of decision-making, and such trust is instilled that the consumer emulates other people's behavior in the face of uncertainty.

Figure 4 : Impact of Online Reviews on Consumer Behavior



This Diagram shows the different ways that online reviews can influence consumer culture through several social and psychological mechanisms.

We first have the social proof which is “the idea that people make decisions based on the actions and opinions of others. In other words, if someone sees a group of people doing something, they are more likely to follow.” (Gupta, 2023) This concept has two components:

- Conformity: “People usually want to fit in and follow the crowd to gain acceptance.” (Gupta, 2023) In our context, the consumer usually conforms to the sentiment shown in the reviews to avoid making the wrong choices
- And then we have the approval that shows that the consumer relies on the reviews to approve the buying decision by doing that they feel reassured and have the “community” approval.

The second point is about cognitive dissonance “occurs when a person holds contradictory beliefs, ideas, or values, and is typically experienced as psychological stress when they participate in an action that goes against one or more of them.” (Cognitive Dissonance, s.d.). In our case, online reviews help align consumers' expectations therefore reducing that dissonance. Plus, positive reviews can reassure the client by showing that they are making the right choice which reduces anxiety and post-purchase regrets.

Finally, we have heuristics which “is a problem-solving technique that helps people make decisions quickly and efficiently through mental shortcuts.” (Liem, s.d.). It can be said that online reviews serve as heuristics hints by highlighting the trust in experiences since consumers often rely on shared experiences to evaluate the reliability, and quality of products/services. This brings us to simplified decision-making since online reviews bring a lot of information which allows consumers to make easily and an informed decision easily.

These mechanisms collectively shape contemporary consumer culture, highlighting the essential role of online reviews in the digital age.

4.2. TRUST AND CREDIBILITY IN THE DIGITAL AGE

4.2.1. PERCEPTION OF CREDIBILITY OF ONLINE REVIEWS

Participants had varying perceptions about the trustworthiness of online reviews. Most people find reviews generally trustworthy but are wary of the possibility of fake reviews. Bechir said: "I would say they are credible 90% of the time ». However, this confidence has been undermined by doubts about the veracity of certain opinions. Consumers don't want to be scammed so they give special attention to the reviews and to the details present in the reviews they take into account: the source, the coherence of the review, and the number of reviews the website has.

According to psychologists, there is a powerful effect of online reviews and social recommendations on purchasing decisions because of several psychological outfits. Perception, as a process creating consumers' attitudes towards the product, strongly affects perceived quality and hence the purchasing choices: "Perception is the process by which an individual chooses, organizes, and interprets information from his environment" (Dr. Yakoubi). They facilitate social proof, which makes the decision more accessible for the individual: "Following others' behavior is a widespread phenomenon expressed in the observation that people follow the behavior of others in situations of uncertainty" (Dr. Merabet). They also make more accessible the adjustment of cognitive dissonance to support the decision-making; "Reviews make easier the adjustment of cognitive dissonance because the expectations are aligned with the experiences reported, leaving no room for psychological discomfort creation after the purchase" (Dr. Merabet). The buyer is seeking to get reassurance about the choice when buying and validation in consumption: "Seeking reassurance about the choice implies 'finding' oneself in a community that has shared or is sharing the same experiences:" (Dr. Ternois), and the positive review thereby becomes persuasive upfront: "The positive review describing the impact or the consumption of the product by a different individual makes the online reviews relevant" (Imene). All these points prove that online reviews foster trust and reduce uncertainty for the sake of validation in terms of purchase.

4.2.2. CONSUMER STRATEGIES FOR ASSESSING REVIEW RELIABILITY

Reviewers use different strategies to assess the credibility of reviews. This includes examining the review author's profile, the language used in the review, and whether or not the helpfulness rating appears justified. Lila mentioned, " I try to take into account detailed opinions based on concrete facts. The better the product is rated the more I am inclined to trust". Consumers use various means to establish the reliability of reviews. Dr Merabet stresses: "cross-reference information across multiple sources, assess some history and expertise of the reviewer, as well as look for ample and balanced feedback", thereby These practices would minimize impacts from gathering wrong information resulting from biased or fake reviews and serve as a foundation for an informed purchase.

Figure 5 : Key Strategies for Assessing Review Reliability



The “Key Strategies for Assessing Review Reliability” diagram outlines various strategies consumers use to assess the reliability of online reviews. This diagram is crucial to understanding how consumers find that a review is relevant or not or whether it is even fraudulent or not. Here is a description of the diagram elements:

- Firstly, there is the Number of Reviews which indicates the popularity and credibility of the good/service. Consumers tend to trust products or services with a large number of reviews more, as this suggests widespread usage and diverse feedback.
- Additionally, in the Detailed Reviews the quality of the reviews counts as much as the quantity. Detailed reviews provide specific information about user experiences, which helps consumers make informed decisions.
- Moreover, Verified Purchases are perceived as more trustworthy because they confirm that the reviewer purchased and used the product or service.
- Besides, Consistency is also an important factor. If reviews are generally consistent in their assessments, this reinforces the credibility of the information provided.
- In addition, Photos/Videos Indeed Reviews that include photos or videos can be particularly useful because they provide visual evidence of the quality and authenticity of the product or service.
- And finally, Checking Authenticity Consumers must also check the authenticity of reviews to avoid fake reviews. This may include checking the profiles of review authors.

This diagram (figure: 5) highlights the different methods consumers use to assess the trustworthiness of online reviews, demonstrating the importance of these strategies in the decision-making process and the impact of online recommendations on consumer culture.

4.3. CULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND REVIEW INTERPRETATION

Cultural sensitivity affects the perception of online reviews, as we often deal with different and varied communication styles across cultures.

Social norms impact opinions, and some cultures offer positive methods that allow harmony to be maintained. We know that the source is the essential element in the credibility and trust of an opinion. The more we feel that the opinion comes from an expert or a person benefiting from community trust, the more credible the opinion is. This is why companies must understand these points and these dynamics to create adequate strategies and capture consumers' attention.

Figure 6 : cultural sensitivity



This diagram (figure: 6) titled “Cultural Sensitivity and Review Interpretation” highlights the importance of cultural sensitivity in consumers’ evaluation of online reviews. Here is a description of the diagram elements:

Communication Styles:

This diagram outlines how cultural sensitivity influences the interpretation and use of online reviews, highlighting key factors that shape consumer behavior across different cultures.

1. Communication Styles

- **Detailed vs. Concise Communication:** Communication styles vary widely. Some cultures prefer detailed reviews, providing comprehensive information and context. Others favor concise and direct comments, getting straight to the point.

2. Social Norms

- **Positive Bias:** In certain cultures, there's a tendency to maintain a positive tone in reviews. This approach helps preserve a harmonious atmosphere and avoids confrontation.
- **Group Harmony:** The importance of maintaining harmony within a group can significantly influence how reviews are written and perceived. To avoid disrupting group cohesion, consumers may shy away from harsh criticism.

3. Trust and Credibility

- **Expert Opinions:** Reviews from experts are often valued more highly, especially in cultures where authority and expertise are respected. These expert opinions are seen as more credible and trustworthy.
- **Community Trust:** Trust within the community is crucial. Reviews from well-known community members or those who share similar values are often considered more reliable. This trust can significantly influence purchasing decisions.

4.3.1. IMPACT OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCES ON REVIEW INTERPRETATION

The interpretation of online reviews differs from culture to culture. This cultural difference creates variation in communication style and social norms.

We can take as an example the fact that politeness and indirectness are communication traits that have a lot of value in certain cultures. However other cultures may prefer more direct and detailed language.

For example, one respondent commented: "I think it affects me very much. If am not synced with culture, I will not perceive the task with the same perspective. So, I think cultural differences affect greatly."

Cultural differences significantly affect how people interpret online reviews. According to Dr. Ternois, "variations in language, communication styles, and social norms shape review interpretation". It is, therefore, crucial to understand those differences if businesses are to get their messages across to a diverse global audience successfully.

4.3.2. INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL BACKGROUND ON VALUED ASPECTS IN REVIEWS

Specifically, some cultural differences may show up in aspects of online reviews that participants may appreciate.

Speaking of not only politeness and language but also the friendliness that can be felt in the tones of the author or even in the sense of detail and precision when sharing information.

For example, Manel said, "Some cultures may be more direct and critical, while others might emphasize politeness and positive aspects."

The way participants interpret, and trust opinions given online also comes from the cultural context which has a great influence.

Manel also explained: "I tend to trust reviews that reflect thorough testing and honest feedback, aligning with the values of diligence and trustworthiness prevalent in my culture."

What is certain is that cultural differences probably determine the importance we give to opinions in certain aspects, as seen previously, politeness, attention to detail, or even humor sometimes.

In some cultures, politeness is emphasized and seen as crucial, while in others humor takes more place within credibility.

The level of detail also varies long, precise, and well-argued opinions are valued in some cultures but in others the shorter and more direct the opinion the better.

Cultural background plays a crucial role in consumers' perceptions as well as levels of trust in online reviews. Dr. Ternois says, "Cultural norms, values, and communication styles influence the interpretation of reviews and the degree of trust placed in them". Knowing of these cultural differences gives businesses the ability to meet a comprehensive and global patronage.

Companies must learn to take into account every point and every detail, analyze situations, and take into account every variable of cultural differences to better meet the expectations and needs of their customers.

4.4. THE ROLE OF ONLINE REVIEWS IN SHAPING BRAND IMAGE

The impact of online reviews transcends product choices: they shape brand image. As one Bechir noted: "Yes, because sometimes I thought that I knew a lot about a brand before buying but when reading the reviews and recommendations I have second thoughts and start digging more into that brand. "This influence is crucial for brands because it has the power to strengthen or erode their identity. The influence of social recommendations, whether from friends or influencers, cannot be underestimated in defining a brand's image. At the same time, influencers can shape brand perception due to their large audiences and apparent trustworthiness.

4.4.1. CONSUMER CULTURE AND BUSINESS ADAPTATION

The diagram titled "Consumer Culture" highlights how businesses are adapting to these cultural changes. Here is a description of the diagram elements:

With Digital Consumption which contains two categories

- Convenience which is one of the main advantages of digital consumption. Consumers can access products and services easily and quickly.
- As well as Immediate Access which allows immediate access to goods and services, without delays linked to travel or opening hours.

The second element is Traditional Consumption:

- Which also has two categories Social Interaction which explains that Traditional consumption often involves direct social interactions, such as chatting with sellers or other customers.

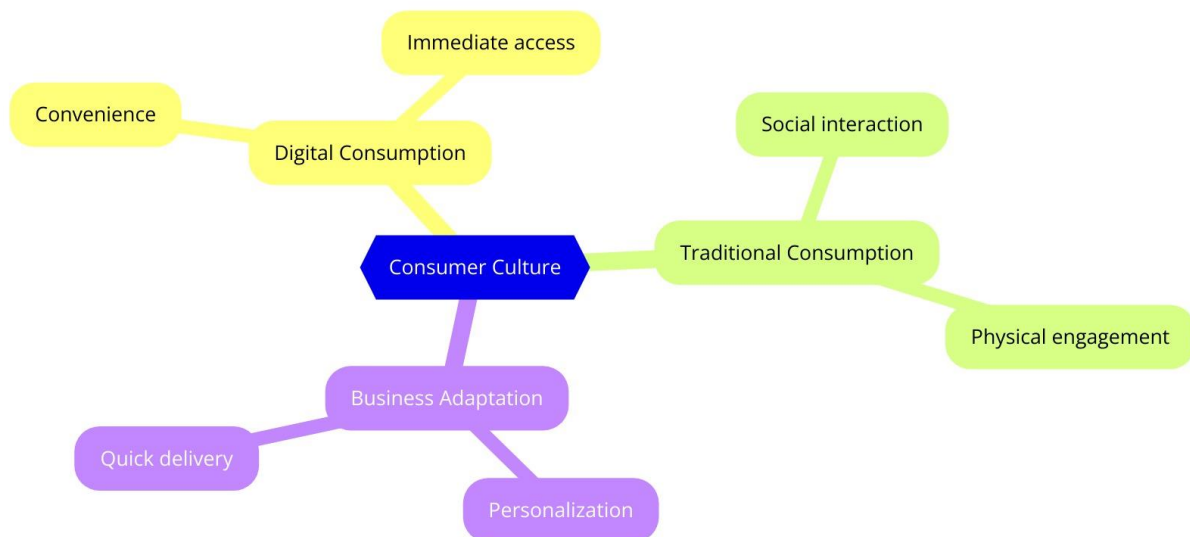
- Physical Engagement which demonstrates the possibility of physically touching, testing, and seeing products before purchasing is a major advantage of traditional consumption.

And finally, Business Adaptation:

- The first element of this category is Quick Delivery. To adapt to consumer expectations, companies are setting up rapid delivery systems.

- The Personalization of products and services according to consumer preferences is essential to attract and retain customers.

In general, this diagram illustrates how businesses must adapt to changes in consumer habits to remain competitive. It also shows how consumer culture is evolving with the rise of digital technology, favoring convenience and immediate access while valuing social interactions and physical engagement specific to traditional consumption.



Online recommendations make digital consumption easier. This allows the consumer to have immediate access to the products. We have noted that social interactions are evolving from physical to virtual interactions. This entire virtual community plays an important role because it greatly influences purchasing decisions. Personalized services and fast deliveries must be offered by companies to successfully adopt and maintain a place at the top of the podium in this digitalized market. Consumer culture, as propelled by online reviews, makes it imperative for firms to be dynamic. In concurrence, Dr. Ternois says, "Companies have to be responsive towards the reviews and keep improving their products to remain relevant and competitive".

4.4.2. SIGNIFICANT IMPACT OF ONLINE REVIEWS ON PURCHASING DECISIONS

Consumer purchasing decisions can be influenced in a positive or negative direction by online reviews. A notable example from *Q4* demonstrates that a meticulously crafted negative review has the power to deter a purchase, while a thoroughly positive review can persuade consumers to make a purchase. Like Lila said: "I compared the reviews of several models, as well as asking opinions from some people who had tested these models. I turned to the one who had the best online reviews and the one whom I had asked for advice had advised me to take "This serves as a great example of how the quality and completeness of opinions play a crucial role in the decision-making process. Most of the interviewees gave big importance to the recommendations and online reviews to make a purchasing decision. Of course, not all of them use them in the same way or for the same product but they all experienced it at some point. Online reviews play a very determinate role in the decision-making process by providing social proof and credibility. According to Dr Merabet, "Online reviews as social proof reinforce the tendency of people to follow the behavior of others in circumstances of uncertainty." Reviews decrease uncertainty and anxiety, bringing sureness about product quality from other consumers' experiences, making the decision easy to make, and reinforcing consumer confidence.

4.4.3. INFLUENCE OF TRUST ON PURCHASING BEHAVIOR

Real examples from *Q10* show that trust or distrust in reviews can strongly influence purchasing decisions. One participant mentioned canceling a purchase after reading several negative reviews from dissatisfied customers, while another purchased a product after discovering detailed and consistent positive reviews. The more they trust the reviews and they judge it as credible the more likely they are going to be influenced and make a decision based on the online review and recommendations. Online review trust impacts purchasing behavior very strongly. According to Dr. Merabet, "By reducing the uncertainty and anxiety associated with decision-making in the context of virtual buying ". The more consumers trust reviews, the more confident they will be in what they are selecting, and the higher their level of satisfaction will be. The more this particular element of trust will enhance repetitions of loyalty.

4.5. NAVIGATING THE DIGITAL MARKETPLACE: STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES

4.5.1. IMPACT OF ACCESS AND AVAILABILITY OF TECHNOLOGY

The use and availability of technology have a significant impact on reliance on online reviews. Individuals who can easily use technology prefer to use online reviews to make purchasing decisions. Manel noted, "High availability and accessibility of technology increase my reliance on online reviews, as I can easily access multiple sources and comparisons. " The availability of technology also influences consumers' usage and reliance on online reviews as Dr. Ternois, "adequate consumer access to digital tools increases the chance that they will use online reviews for purchase decisions". Inequality in access, therefore, is an exciting determinant and another level of trust concern for online reviews.

4.5.2. ONLINE REVIEWS CHALLENGE

Participants face difficulties navigating online reviews, particularly due to the excessive amount of information and confusion between genuine and fake reviews. One participant remarked, "There are so many opinions, sometimes it's overwhelming to read them all and figure out which ones are truly beneficial." Too much information can complicate and stress the decision-making process. But in general, people have a positive sentiment toward the digital consumer culture because it helps them have information in an easier and faster way than the traditional consumer culture. Indeed, Eya said: "Everything is easier, faster, and organized, the information is fully written, and we have everything in front of us." So irrespective of the reviews, people tend and should be extra careful while purchasing products.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Therefore, the results derived from this study enable the conceptualization of how online reviews impact consumer culture, especially in society. Today where reviews play a crucial role in decision-making. Several important points can be identified here, and each provides an understanding of the phenomenon from different angles. For example: One of the key themes that emerged from the analysis is 'Review Credibility' which is derived from the high value placed by consumers on the authentic and credible information they find in reviews. The credibility of a review is established based on the author's profile, the logical flow, and the quality of detail of the comments, as well as the total number of reviews that have been made on a given product. Like Toufiq said for example: "I think it depends on the sites, and the reviews, if I see the review looks fake, the credibility would be low. If I see the reviews are detailed and mixed experience, I would rate the credibility high. "

It is widely important to mention the category of "Influence on Brand Perception" because online reviews play a very dramatic role in deciding how a particular brand is viewed by potential buyers. The study showed that brands that had increased positive reviews would be more likely to be perceived positively, thus affecting the consumers' propensity to interact or transact with the brands. Like Bechir said, "Yes, because sometimes I thought that I knew a lot about a brand before buying but when reading the reviews and recommendations I have second thoughts and start digging more into that brand."

"Cultural Influence" insists on the fact that cultural differences matter much when it comes to believing in reviews. Let's take what Manel said as an example "Cultural differences significantly affect how people write and understand online reviews. For example, communication styles vary widely; some cultures may be more direct and critical, while others might emphasize politeness and positive aspects." So indeed, Reviewing based on culture, one realizes that different topics within the review emphasize different things such as politeness, details, and tone. For instance, while one culture is used to reading elaborate critiques with good justification, another expects concise advice. As this is a culturally sensitive piece of information, it influences not only the perception of the reviews but also the credibility consumers assign to them.

'Product Types Influence' suggests that the effect of online reviews by customers depends on the family of products in question. Electronics and household appliances are most affected by online recommendations according to Manel " , tech gadgets, home appliances, and beauty products are particularly influenced by online reviews and social recommendations.", most probably because customers feel a higher level of risk when buying technological items, hair products, and other home appliances, so they need some approval from other consumers before making a purchase.

Review utilization refers to how people use reviews to help them make decisions. The study that was conducted revealed that consumers often want to compare several different reviews and sources to have a complete opinion. Like Lila said "I like to make my own opinion, but I always look at the overall opinions to get an idea of the quality, reliability.

and if they are mostly negative, I do not buy or go to this place “ which shows that it is essential to have detailed and complete feedback. Using reviews in this way helps consumers reduce risk and feel more confident in their purchases.

When we talk about the overall consumer experience, we can say that things have taken a positive turn. We have for example Isa who said “My experience as an online consumer so far is satisfying! I buy a lot of everyday items on the internet, and I’ve never been disappointed” Most consumers have had good experiences. In addition, positive reviews strengthen consumer confidence on the one hand, and on the other hand, they also constitute solid social proof. Which encourages others to follow suit. This is highlighted by psychological theories that show how social proof and herd behavior provide greater ease in decision-making by reducing uncertainty and anxiety.

Now let's talk about "Trends" in digital consumer culture. How Influencers Affect Consumer Behavior. More specifically micro - micro-influencers are perceived as more authentic and trustworthy as they are more linked to their audience people like unboxing videos and photos that showcase real-life proof of how well the product works. They only help to further build trust. According to Isa “UGC: people on social media that promote articles: TikTok, Instagram? Social recommendations are going through the roof these days, we keep seeing products all the time, and these platforms are slowly becoming huge publicity Pannels “

The focus of "Review Strategies" is on how customers determine the reliability of reviews. They examine aspects like the language used, the reviewer's background, and cross-referencing with other sources. Customers' decision-making process while making purchases is greatly influenced by their ability to believe reviews. In Bechir's case, he does both “reading all reviews and checking communities’ reviews.

it affects my opinion in a good way because in my experience when I purchased a perfume depending on influence review I was satisfied, and my hopes were in their place”

The second item "Technology Access" refers to how access to technology can have an effect on consumers' use of online reviews and experience people who have access to technology also have access to endless information Like Sebastien said “It helps for sure; we don’t have to move to know everything about a product“ and in this case, reviews compared to people who don’t have access to it and experience this but differently more like recommendation from friends and family Like for the technology access Digital vs Traditional Review Comparison The balance between original word-of-mouth recommendations and digital reviews is shifting towards the latter. They are accessible and allow people from all walks of life to express themselves and be heard.

Finally, how people review and recommend things online can highly impact the perception of a brand and the decision a purchase. Well-managed and utilized Internet reviews help businesses increase sales by fostering customer happiness and confidence. In addition, companies will need to be abreast of emerging trends and cultural phenomena to thrive in this cutthroat market as the digital landscape continues to evolve.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

6.1. CONCLUSION

This research highlights the importance of online comments and social recommendations in contemporary consumer society. Buyers use these comments to guide their purchasing choices, emphasizing the reliability and originality of the information. Online reviews are of crucial importance in the customer purchasing process. They are used to examine the quality and reliability of products before purchasing them.

Survey participants indicated that they see reviews as a crucial element in reducing uncertainty and making informed decisions. Social suggestions, like those from friends or influencers, amplify this process by providing additional validation and improving perceptions of brands and products. The importance of credibility and authenticity of reviews is paramount for consumers when making decisions. Participants showed overall trust in online reviews but remained cautious about the risk of fake reviews. They employ different methods to judge the credibility of reviews, such as reviewing reviewer profiles, analyzing language used, and checking helpfulness ratings. The search for credibility and authenticity highlights the importance of detailed and well-structured reviews in influencing consumer opinions. Cultural differences influence how online reviews are interpreted and trusted or distrusted. Participants shared that their perception and evaluation of reviews are affected by their cultural background. For example, some cultures may prefer politeness and indirectness in reviews, while others opt for direct, detailed language. This shift highlights the need for a subtle approach to managing opinions and advice, including cultural sensitivities and consumer expectations.

Psychologists have found that online reviews satisfy a crucial need for social validation and reduced uncertainty. Customers seek reviews to validate their decisions and reduce the stress associated with their decision-making. Additionally, influencers play a vital role in how reviews are perceived in terms of credibility. Maintaining consumer trust and positively influencing their purchasing decisions requires essential authenticity and transparency.

6.2. FUTURE RESEARCH IN THE FIELD

This research has certain limitations that could be improved in future studies. First of all, the sample of the participants could not be representative of all the consumers, limiting the generalization of the results. The participant who comes from diverse cultures could interpret it differently than others. Which makes it complicated the uniformity of the conclusion. And finally, this thesis didn't discuss the influence the platforms and the recommendation algorithms have on the perception of the reviews which gives a vast unexplored field of research. Those limitations show that some additional research is necessary to understand fully the impact of online reviews and recommendations on consumer culture and purchasing decisions in a global, diversified context.

To deepen this study, it would be wise to explore the fields below for example The effect of fraudulent reviews and methods to identify them. It is crucial to analyze and examine how false reviews impact purchasing decisions and develop techniques and even technologies that identify them. future research should focus on the psychological impact that false reviews have on the consumer and how the consumer detects them.

They can also explore the impact of evaluation platforms and algorithms indeed those platforms have a crucial role in how the consumer perceives online reviews. In-depth research is necessary to understand how those platforms influence consumer purchasing decisions. Plus, it should be interesting to explore how the algorithm changes the visibility of the reviews and the impact that it has on the consumer.

The cross-cultural comparison of online assessment methods could also be an interesting field to explore. Indeed, online reviews are used and perceived differently according to the cultures. By examining those differences, we can identify the similitudes and the differences. And give important information to the companies that work internationally. Future researchers should have a look at the cultural variation and see how for example the consumer perceives politeness or the review credibility and how it influences purchasing decisions. All of this will improve the management strategies of online reviews.

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APPENDIX A

As part of this thesis, the research was submitted for review and approval by the Ethics Committee. The official approval of the Ethics Committee is presented below:

NOVA IMS Ethics Committee - APPROVED

This is to certify that

Project No.: **DDMKT2024-4-156202**

Project Title: **The impact of online reviews and recommendations on the consumer culture**

Principal Researcher: **Ines Akacha**

according to the regulations of the Ethics Committee of NOVA IMS and MagIC Research Center this project was considered to meet the requirements of the NOVA IMS Internal Review Board, being considered **APPROVED** on 4/15/2024.

It is the Principal Researcher's responsibility to ensure that all researchers and stakeholders associated with this project are aware of the conditions of approval and which documents have been approved.

The Principal Researcher is required to notify the Ethics Committee, via amendment or progress report, of

- Any significant change to the project and the reason for that change;
- Any unforeseen events or unexpected developments that merit notification;
- The inability of the Principal Researcher to continue in that role or any other change in research personnel involved in the project.

Lisbon, 4/15/2024

NOVA IMS Ethics Committee
ethicscommittee@novaims.unl.pt

APPENDIX B:

Here are the questions that can be asked during interviews:

Part 1: Icebreaker question

1. How would you describe your overall experience as an online consumer so far?

Part 2: General Interview Questions

2. How do you typically use online reviews and social recommendations in your purchasing decisions?
3. What aspects are most important to you when reading online reviews or looking at social recommendations?
4. Have you ever faced a situation where online reviews or social recommendations had a significant impact on your purchasing decision? Can you describe this experience?
5. How do you rate the credibility of online reviews and social recommendations?

Part 3: Identify and elucidate the conceptual constructs that delineate consumer choices and attitudes in the domain of online reviews and social recommendations in contemporary digital consumer culture:

6. How do online reviews and social recommendations influence your perception of products or services?
7. What types of products or services are particularly influenced by online reviews and social recommendations in your experience?
8. Do you think online reviews and social recommendations impact your perception of brands and businesses?

Part 4: Examining Cultural Sensitivity in Online Reviews and Social Recommendations: Understanding Consumer Behavior, Cultural Norms and Perspectives:

9. How much do you think cultural differences affect the way people write and understand online reviews? (Note: By 'cultural differences,' I mean variations in language, communication styles, social norms, perceptions of quality and value, trust, and whether individuals prioritize group harmony or personal autonomy.)
10. How does the level of trustworthiness in online reviews influence your purchasing decisions? Can you provide an example of a time when you trusted (or distrusted) an online review, and how did it impact your buying behavior?
11. In what ways do you think your cultural background shapes your perception of online reviews and social recommendations? Are there specific cultural aspects that make you more inclined to trust certain reviews or recommendations over others?
12. How does the availability and accessibility of technology influence your reliance on online reviews and social recommendations when making purchasing decisions? Have you noticed any disparities in access to technology that affect how individuals engage with consumer culture online?

Part 5: Analyze the evolution of consumer culture in the digital age: understanding adaptation, societal values, and transformation:

13. Can you identify any emerging trends in digital consumer culture related to online reviews and social recommendations?
14. How does digital consumer culture differ from traditional consumer culture, and what implications does this have for businesses and consumers?
15. Could you describe the tactics or strategies you employ to incorporate online reviews into your consumption routine? For example, do you look for specific review criteria, compare multiple sources, or seek out reviews from particular reviewers or communities? How do

these tactics influence your overall purchasing experience and satisfaction with products or services?

The question has been rephrased to be more general and analytical since I interviewed some specialists. The questions for the specialists are as follows:

Part 1: Icebreaker question

1. As a psychologist, do you think that online consumption has an impact on consumer behavior? If so, how? And how would you describe the overall experience?

Part 2: General Interview Questions

2. As a specialist, how do you see the importance of online reviews and social recommendations in individual purchasing decisions?

3. What psychological aspects do you find most relevant when people read online reviews or consult social recommendations?

4. Do you think online reviews have an impact on consumer culture? If so, how?

5. How do you assess the credibility of online reviews and social recommendations from a psychological perspective?

Part 3: Identify and elucidate the conceptual constructs that delineate consumer choices and attitudes in the domain of online reviews and social recommendations in contemporary digital consumer culture:

6. In your opinion, how do online reviews and social recommendations influence consumers' perception of products or services?

7. Based on your observations, what types of products or services are particularly influenced by online reviews and social recommendations?

8. Do you think online reviews and social recommendations have an impact on consumer perceptions of brands and businesses?

Part 4: Examining Cultural Sensitivity in Online Reviews and Social Recommendations: Understanding Consumer Behavior, Cultural Norms and Perspectives:

9. To what extent do you think cultural differences affect the way people write and understand online reviews? (Note: by "cultural differences" we mean variations in language, communication styles, social norms, perceptions of quality and value, trust, and whether individuals favor group harmony or personal autonomy.)

10. How do you think the cultural origins of consumers influence their perception of online reviews and social recommendations? Are there specific cultural aspects that encourage some consumers to trust certain opinions or recommendations more than others?

11. How does the availability and accessibility of technology influence consumer dependence on online reviews and social recommendations when making purchasing decisions? Have you noticed disparities in access to technology that affect how people engage with the culture of online consumption?

12. Can you identify emerging trends in digital consumption culture related to online reviews and social recommendations?

Part 5: Analyze the evolution of consumer culture in the digital age: understanding adaptation, societal values, and transformation:

13. How does digital consumption culture differ from traditional consumption culture, and what implications does this have for businesses and consumers?

14. Could you describe the tactics or strategies you observe among consumers to integrate online reviews into their consumption routine? For example, do they look for specific evaluation criteria, compare multiple sources, or seek opinions from specific evaluators or communities? How do these tactics influence their overall buying experience and satisfaction with products or services?

