

# Investigating the effect of online consumer reviews on purchase intention among Gen Y and Z

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – This research explains inconsistencies in research findings regarding the effect of online consumer reviews dimension (review timeliness, review quantity, review positive valence, review quality) and trust on purchase intentions, using a social influence theory approach.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The sample in this study was 213 respondents, who were generation Y and generation Z, who had read online reviews of cosmetic products.

**Findings** – The results reveal that online consumer reviews influence purchase intention primarily through the formation of consumer trust. Review quantity, review positive valence, and review quality have significant positive effects on trust and purchase intention, suggesting that consumers place greater importance on the credibility, positivity, and informativeness of review content when evaluating products online. Trust serves as an important mediating mechanism in transmitting the influence of review dimensions on purchase intention. Review timeliness does not exhibit a significant direct or indirect effect, suggesting that consumers usually rely more on the content and quality of reviews than on their recency when forming purchase intention.

**Research limitations/implications** – This study has several limitations. The sample was dominated by Generation Z respondents, which may limit the generalizability of the findings across generations. The focus on cosmetic products also restricts the applicability of the results to other product categories. In addition, this study only examined four dimensions of online reviews and one mediating variable, namely trust. Future research is recommended to further explore the relationship between review timeliness and trust, as well as to include additional variables such as perceived credibility and consumer engagement.

**Practical implications** – The managerial implication in this research is that online reseller should be able to encourage consumers to give positive reviews of their market offerings, because online consumer reviews can have an impact on increasing company sales.

**Originality/value** – This study contributes to examine the social influence theory approach linked to the dimensions of online reviews. It specifically focuses on generations Y and Z because these generations dominate the internet population and are more familiar with e-commerce than earlier generations. The value provided in this paper is that it is able to provide insight for companies and researchers in order to improve product reputation and explore future research.

**Keywords:** Online Consumer Review, Purchase intention, Trust, Gen Y, Gen Z

## Introduction

Technological advances have transformed marketing activities, including transactions, information search, promotion, and other strategic processes. These developments have also reshaped consumer behavior, particularly in information-seeking practices, leading to the increasing influence of online consumer reviews on purchase intention. Online reviews represent a form of electronic word of mouth that provides extensive information, including consumer feedback and ratings, which enhances the consumer decision-making experience (Jurafsky et al., 2014). Compared to traditional advertising, online consumer reviews are perceived as more credible and trustworthy, thus exerting a stronger influence on purchase intention (Bickart & Schindler, 2001; Godes & Mayzlin, 2004a). Globally, more than half of consumers report that recommendations from others are more reliable than other forms of advertising (Conner, 2013).

Online consumer reviews play an important role in consumer decision-making because they provide experiential information and reduce uncertainty in purchasing decisions (C. M. K. Cheung et al., 2008; Lantzy & Anderson, 2020). Reviews serve as trusted sources of information for potential consumers. Evidence shows that 90% of consumers consult business reviews before making purchases, and 88% trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations. Similarly, PwC (2016) reports that nearly half of consumers read reviews, comments, and feedback before choosing products or services. Prior studies have consistently shown online review recommendations significantly influence consumer purchase intentions and behaviors (Chang & Chin, 2010; Erkan & Evans, 2016; Zhao et al., 2015). Review features, particularly valence intensity, have been identified as key determinants of purchase intention (Chen & Ku, 2021; Floh et al., 2013; Lackermair et al., 2013). Reviews and ratings function as essential information sources that facilitate consumer decision-making by reflecting real user experiences (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010).

Although earlier research has extensively examined the direct relationship between online consumer reviews and purchase intention, limited attention has been given to the mediating mechanisms that explain how review information is processed and translated into behavioral intention. In online purchasing environments characterized by uncertainty and information asymmetry, consumers are unable to directly evaluate product quality and rely heavily on online reviews to assess product reliability and seller credibility (Cheung et al., 2008; Jarvenpaa et al., 2000). Positive, informative, and credible reviews enhance perceptions of product accuracy, integrity, and reliability, thus fostering consumer trust (Kim & Park, 2013; Racherla et al., 2012). Trust plays a critical role in reducing perceived risk and increasing consumer confidence in online transactions and has been consistently shown to significantly influence purchase intention (Gefen et al., 2003; Sheikh et al., 2019). This study proposes trust as a mediating variable to explain how online consumer review dimensions influence purchase intention.

Social influence theory further explains how attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors are shaped through compliance, identification, and internalization processes (Kelman, 1958). Social influence refers to the extent to which individuals are affected by the behaviors and opinions of others within their social networks (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000). Previous studies indicate that social influence plays a significant role in shaping consumer attitudes, behaviors, and relationships with others in purchasing contexts (Godes & Mayzlin, 2004b). Social influence contributes to trust formation and encourages consumers to adopt products or services based on others' recommendations (Venkatesh et al., 2012).

The cosmetics industry provides a particularly relevant context for examining the role of online consumer reviews and trust, as it is classified as an experience or credence goods sector in which product quality and effectiveness are difficult to evaluate prior to use (Chen et al., 2022). Cosmetic products are also considered high-involvement goods with elevated perceived risk, as outcomes depend on individual suitability, quality, and subjective perceptions (Chen & Chang, 2018; Salim Khraim, 2011). In such contexts, consumers rely heavily on online reviews to reduce uncertainty before making purchasing decisions (Erkan & Evans, 2016; Mudambi & Schuff, 2010). This study focuses on Generation Y and Generation Z, who dominate internet usage and are more familiar with e-commerce than earlier generations (Muda et al., 2016). These generations are highly influenced by social media, technologically oriented, and seek trending information, while also sharing reviews through digital platforms (Beneke et al., 2015; Kim & Park, 2013).

## **Literature Review and Hypotheses**

### **Online Consumer Review Dimension and Purchase Intention**

Consumer reviews reflect user experience and satisfaction, which is utilized as a source of product information (Sa'ait et al., n.d.). Online consumer reviews have become an important means of marketing communication because many consumer look for reviews online as the first step in the shopping process (Dellarocas et al., 2007). Nowadays, online reviews are viewed as having a greater impact on purchasing decisions than conventional marketing tools such as advertisements or promotions (Breazeale, 2009).

#### **Review Timeliness**

Review timeliness is determined by whether information is current, updated, and relevant (Sa'ait et al., n.d.). Timeliness refers to the availability of information at a proper time for its use (Bailey & Pearson, 1983) and is commonly measured by the recency of reviews posted in online environments (Wahyuarini et al., 2022). Previous research shows that 59.3% of respondents consider recent online reviews more important than older ones because they are perceived as more current and trustworthy (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008). In e-commerce contexts, Chen et al. (2022) found that consumers pay greater attention to recently published reviews, as they are viewed as more valid and reflective of current product performance. Their eye-tracking study revealed that review timing influences cognitive processes in trust formation and purchase intention. Similarly, Ramadhan et al. (2022) reported that review timeliness positively affects purchase intention, particularly among Millennials and Generation Z who value real-time information. Yuan and Xu (2024) further confirmed that review timeliness enhances booking intention in the hotel industry. Overall, timely reviews strengthen perceived relevance, trust, and purchase intention.

H<sub>1</sub>: Review timeliness has positive effect on purchase intention

#### **Review Quantity**

The quantity or number of reviews could influence consumers' previous opinions and attitudes towards consumers' purchase intentions (Lascu et al., 1995). According to previous study, the popularity of a product may be inferred from the large number of online reviews for that product (Cheung & Thadani, 2010). This might help consumers feel more confident in their purchasing decisions. Consumers consider the number of testimonials as the number of reviews/comments may show the extent to which valuable and popular a product (Bataineh, 2015). Recent studies highlight that the quantity of online reviews serves as a critical informational cue that influences consumers' perceptions and behavioral intentions. Filieri and McLeay (2014) found that a greater number of reviews increases the perceived credibility and usefulness of information, thus strengthening purchase intention. Qiu et al. (2024) confirmed through a meta-analysis that review quantity consistently positively influences purchase intention across contexts and cultures, as it provides social validation and reduces uncertainty. Similarly, Lyu and Huang, (2024) demonstrated that a higher volume of reviews stimulates olfactory and mental imagery, leading to stronger emotional engagement and purchase intention.

H<sub>2</sub>: Review quantity has positive effect on purchase intention

#### **Review Positive Valence**

Review valence refers to positive and negative evaluations of products expressed in online reviews (Cheung & Thadani, 2010). Although valence is widely used by consumers to assess products, this study focuses on positive valence because positive reviews exert a stronger influence on purchase decisions and intentions than negative ones (Cheung & Thadani, 2010; López & Sicilia, 2014; Park & Lee, 2009). Negative reviews tend to discourage consumer interest and weaken purchase decisions, whereas positive reviews emphasize product strengths and quality (Dellarocas et al., 2007). Positive reviews also enhance perceptions of product reliability and credibility, serving as persuasive cues that encourage purchasing behavior (Filieri & McLeay, 2014). Park and Nicolau (2015) found that positive

reviews significantly increase product demand in the tourism industry, producing stronger effects than negative reviews. Similarly, Qiu et al. (2024) confirmed that positive valence is a key predictor of purchase intention across product categories and cultures. Overall, positive reviews reduce perceived risk and strengthen consumer confidence in online purchasing decisions.

H<sub>3</sub>: Review positive valence has positive effect on purchase intention

### **Review Quality**

In online environments, consumer purchase behavior is strongly influenced by the quality of information received (Cheung et al., 2008). The quality of online reviews depends on the persuasive strength of the arguments contained in review messages (Bhattacherjee & Sanford, 2006). Consumers increasingly evaluate the quality of information provided by sellers and other consumers to assess product reliability (Chen & Chang, 2018). Review quality refers to the extent to which review information is perceived as accurate, relevant, helpful, current, and comprehensive (Ferran & Watts, 2008; Stvilia et al., 2005). When information is unclear, inconsistent, or random, consumers are less likely to accept and rely on it (Ratchford et al., 2001). Prior studies also suggest that the quality of communication in online reviews significantly influences purchase intention. Reviews that are fair, understandable, and logically consistent with other opinions are more likely to enhance consumer confidence and positively affect purchasing decisions (Zhu et al., 2020).

H<sub>4</sub>: Review quality has positive effect on purchase intention

### **Online Consumer Review, Trust and Purchase Intention**

Building relationships on a foundation of trust is essential, as mutual trust enables sustainable interactions between parties. Trust must be earned over time and demonstrated through consistent behavior, rather than merely acknowledged. In online purchasing contexts, trust refers to consumers' belief that sellers will fulfill their promises without exploiting their vulnerability (Jarvenpaa et al., 2000). Consumer reviews are considered more credible than seller-provided information because they are based on direct user experiences, thereby reducing uncertainty in e-commerce environments (Yeap et al., 2014). Aljukhadar et al. (2017) found that extensive internet usage enhances trust due to the availability of diverse information sources that influence purchase intention. Consumers who read online reviews often become more confident after understanding product attributes, which strengthens trust in products or services (Akhtar et al., 2020). Moreover, consumers tend to rely on recommendations from others when selecting products (Senecal & Nantel, 2004). Trust in online reviews is therefore a critical factor in successful online transactions and significantly enhances the effectiveness of online reviews in shaping consumer decisions (Cox et al., 2009).

H<sub>5</sub>: Review timeliness has positive effect on trust

H<sub>6</sub>: Review quantity has positive effect on trust

H<sub>7</sub>: Review positive valence has positive effect on trust

H<sub>8</sub>: Review quality has positive effect on trust

H<sub>9</sub>: Trust has positive effect on purchase intention

H<sub>10</sub>: Trust mediate the effect of review timeliness toward purchase intention

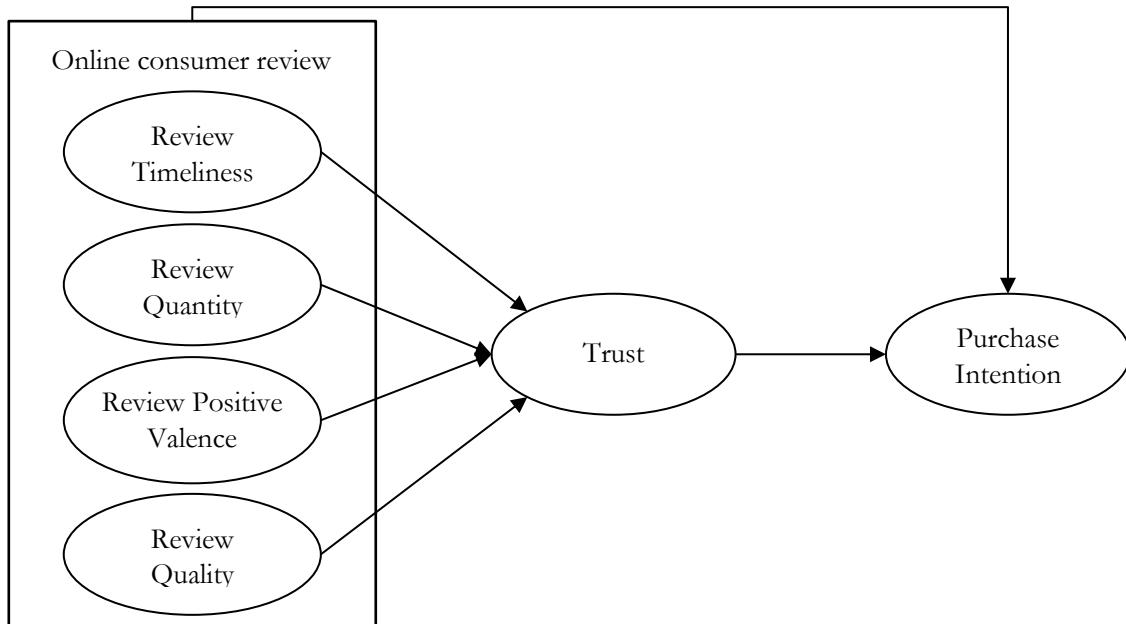
H<sub>11</sub>: Trust mediate the effect of review quantity toward purchase intention

H<sub>12</sub>: Trust mediate the effect of review positive valence toward purchase intention

H<sub>13</sub>: Trust mediate the effect of review quality toward purchase intention

### **Research Methods**

This research employs a quantitative approach using structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis with SmartPLS 3.0. A non-probability sampling technique was applied, with respondents selected based on two criteria: (1) belonging to Generation Y (born between 1981–1996) or Generation Z (born between 1997–2012), following generational classifications proposed by Dimock (2019) and McCrindle Research (2022); and (2) having previously accessed online reviews of cosmetic products on digital platforms. Data were collected through an online questionnaire, yielding a final sample of 213 respondents.

**Figure 1.** Conceptual research Model

Generation Y and Generation Z were selected as the research subjects because they dominate the internet population and are more familiar with e-commerce than earlier generations (Muda et al., 2016). These generations are highly influenced by social media (Dima et al., 2025), technologically oriented (Huwaida et al., 2024), and inclined to seek trending information (Chang & Chang, 2023; Click & Schwartz, 2018). Beyond information acquisition, they also actively share reviews through digital platforms, contributing to electronic word-of-mouth dynamics (Beneke et al., 2015; Kim & Park, 2013).

**Table 1.** Item Indicators

Variable	Item code	Item Indicator
Review Timeliness	TIME1	Up-to-date reviews are important for obtaining valid product information.
	TIME2	Recently posted reviews contain more accurate product information.
	TIME3	The latest reviews are more relevant in providing an overview of the product's current performance.
Review Quantity	QUAN1	I tend to choose products that have a large number of reviews.
	QUAN2	Products that are frequently reviewed indicate that they are popular among consumers.
	QUAN3	Products with many reviews suggest that they are purchased by a large number of consumers.
Positive Review valence	QUAN4	Products that receive many reviews are perceived to have good quality.
	VAL1	I tend to pay more attention to positive reviews than to negative ones.
	VAL2	Positive reviews are more valuable to me in obtaining information about a product.
	VAL3	I prefer products that have positive reviews.
	VAL4	Positive reviews make a product more appealing to me.
Review quality	QUAL1	The online reviews provide complete and detailed information about the product.
	QUAL2	The reviews contain relevant information that matches my information needs.
	QUAL3	The reviews are useful and help me evaluate the product effectively.
Trust	TRUST1	I believe that the product review information on the platform is reliable.
	TRUST2	I believe that the product review information on the platform is trustworthy.
	TRUST3	I believe that the product review information on the platform is honest.
	TRUST4	I believe that the product review information on the platform is accountable.
Purchase intention	PURCH1	I will consider buying products that are reviewed online.
	PURCH2	I am willing to purchase a product based on the reviews I have read.
	PURCH3	I will buy a reviewed product when I need it.
	PURCH4	I intend to purchase a reviewed product in the future.

The measurement of constructs was adapted from established studies. Indicators of review timeliness were adopted from Wixom and Todd (Wixom & Todd, 2005). Review quantity indicators were derived from Duan et al. (2008), Chevalier and Mayzlin (2006), and Cheung and Thadani (2010). Positive review valence items were adopted from Sparks and Browning (2011), while review quality indicators were drawn from Wixom and Todd (2005) and Citrin (2001). Trust indicators were adapted from Sichtmann (2007) and Kim et al. (2003). Finally, purchase intention measures were sourced from Jiang and Benbasat (2007), Chevalier and Mayzlin (2006), and Park et al. (2007). All constructs were measured using a five-point Likert scale (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 2 summarizes the demographic profile of 213 respondents. The sample is dominated by female respondents (84.5%), which is appropriate given the cosmetic context, where female consumers are more active in using and evaluating products through online reviews. Most respondents are aged 20–25 years, representing young adults who are digitally literate and accustomed to relying on online reviews in purchase decisions. Students constitute the largest occupational group (42.25%), followed by government employees and entrepreneurs, indicating a digitally active and economically engaged sample. Most respondents belong to lower to middle-income categories, suggesting price sensitivity and risk aversion, which highlights the critical role of online reviews and trust in shaping purchase intention.

**Table 2.** Respondent Characteristics

Demographic variable	N	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	180	84.50%
Male	33	15.50%
<b>Age</b>		
20 – 25	166	77.93%
26 – 30	39	18.31%
31 – 35	5	2.35%
36 – 40	3	1.41%
<b>Occupation</b>		
Student	90	42.25%
Government employees	54	25.35%
Entrepreneur	32	15.02%
Private employees	23	10.80%
Others	8	3.76%
<b>Income</b>		
<b>(million IDR)</b>		
< 1.000.000	82	38.50%
1.000.001 – 3.000.000	43	20.19%
3.00.001 – 5.000.000	46	21.60%
5.000.001 – 7.000.000	29	13.62%
7.000.001 – 10.000.000	8	3.76%
≥10.000.001	5	2.35%

## Result

SmartPLS 3.0 was used to test the model with a component-based partial least squares structural equation modeling approach (PLS-SEM). The collected data were analyzed in two steps. The first step is the measurement of outer and inner models utilized through the PLS algorithm. The second step to analyze the hypothesis among the constructs will be tested by utilizing the bootstrapping method. The outer model determines the validity and reliability by assessing the values of convergent validity, composite reliability, and average variance extracted. While inner model testing is done through coefficient of determination and predictive relevance.

Table 3 presents the results of the measurement model evaluation. The average variance extracted (AVE) values for all constructs exceed the recommended threshold of 0.50, suggesting that each construct explains more than half of the variance of its indicators and shows adequate

convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In addition, all constructs show composite reliability values above the minimum threshold of 0.70, confirming satisfactory internal consistency reliability (Hair et al., 2022).

**Table 3.** Measurement Model Evaluation

Variables	Item	Convergent Validity		
		Outer Loading	Composite Reliability	AVE
Timeliness	3	0.793	0.859	0.671
		0.812		
		0.851		
Quantity	4	0.872	0.915	0.729
		0.811		
		0.859		
		0.872		
Valence	4	0.878	0.941	0.799
		0.895		
		0.906		
		0.898		
Quality	3	0.691	0.848	0.654
		0.890		
		0.831		
Trust	4	0.851	0.923	0.749
		0.865		
		0.880		
		0.876		
Purchase intention	4	0.871	0.901	0.695
		0.789		
		0.852		
		0.821		

Regarding indicator reliability, the outer loading values are generally above the recommended threshold of 0.70. One exception is Item 1 of the review quality construct, which shows an outer loading of 0.691. However, following the PLS-SEM measurement model evaluation guidelines proposed by Hair et al. (2022), indicators with outer loadings between 0.40 and 0.70 may be kept if the convergent validity of its construct is established. In this study, the review quality construct shows adequate convergent validity (AVE = 0.654). Therefore, as suggested to Hair et al. (2022), item 1 of the review quality was kept, as they meet the recommended threshold and remain consistent with the theoretical definition of the construct.

Table 4 presents the results of discriminant validity testing using the Fornell–Larcker criterion. The square root of the AVE for each construct is greater than its correlations with all other constructs, suggesting that each construct is empirically distinct and that discriminant validity is established (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Although some inter-construct correlations—particularly among Purchase Intention, Trust, and Valence—are relatively high, they remain below the corresponding square roots of AVE. This confirms that the shared variance between constructs is lower than the variance explained by their respective indicators, thereby supporting adequate discriminant validity in the measurement model.

**Table 4.** Discriminant Validity Testing Results

Variables	Root of AVE	Purchase	Quality	Quantity	Timeliness	Trust	Valence
Purchase	0.834		1				
Quality	0.808	0.559		1			
Quantity	0.854	0.687	0.445		1		
Timeliness	0.819	0.556	0.426	0.552		1	
Trust	0.866	0.728	0.482	0.686	0.520		1
Valence	0.894	0.707	0.459	0.600	0.503	0.604	

**Table 5.** Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

	Purchase	Quality	Quantity	Timeliness	Trust	Valence
Purchase						
Quality	1.436					1.391
Quantity	2.252					1.846
Timeliness	1.623					1.596
Trust	2.248					
Valence	1.877					1.759

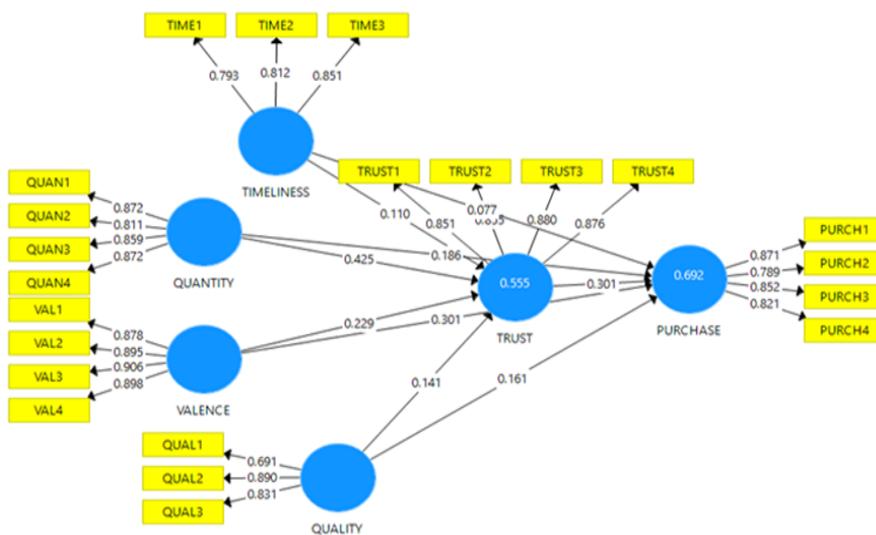
**Table 6.** Coefficient of determination

Construct	R Square	Adjusted R-Square
Purchase	0.692	0.684
Trust	0.555	0.547

**Table 7.** Predictive Relevance

Construct	R Square
Purchase	0.468
Trust	0.406

As presented in Table 5, an additional multicollinearity assessment using the variance inflation factor (VIF) was conducted to address potential bias. All VIF values range between 1.391 and 2.252, which are below the recommended threshold of 3.3, suggesting that multicollinearity is not a concern in the model (Hair et al., 2022; Kock, 2015). Moreover, the measurement of the inner model is then evaluated using the R-square of the endogenous variables. According to Table 6. The value of  $R^2$  on the purchase intention construct has a value of 0.692. Therefore, the formation and explanation of the purchase intention variable by exogenous variables in the model as many as 69.2%. These exogenous variables include review timeliness, review quantity, review positive valence, review quality, and trust. In addition, it can be understood that exogenous variables include review quality. Meanwhile, 0.55, which means that 55.0% of the confidence variables can be explained by the constructs that affect these variables, namely the review timeliness, review quantity, review positive valence, and review quality. The results can be concluded that in testing the coefficient of determination generally the ability to predict the research model is good, as seen from all constructs with an  $R^2$  value above 50%. Furthermore, predictive relevance examines Q square to determine how excellent the observed value is. If Q square is above 0, it has a good observation value. If Q square is below 0, the observed value is bad (Hair et al., 2022). As shown at the Table 7, the purchase intention construct's Q-Square was 0.468, while Trust was rated 0.406. Hence, this study's model has a good predictive value.

**Figure 2.** Structural Model (PLS-SEM results)

**Table 8.** The direct effect

Paths	Path Coeff.	T-stats	P-value	Results
Timeliness → Purchase	0.077	1.352	0.177	H1 Not Supported
Quantity → Purchase	0.186	2.460	0.009	H2 Supported
Valence → Purchase	0.301	4.316	0.000	H3 Supported
Quality → Purchase	0.161	3.016	0.003	H4 Supported
Timeliness → Trust	0.110	1.657	0.098	H5 Not Supported
Quantity → Trust	0.425	6.648	0.000	H6 Supported
Valence → Trust	0.229	2.847	0.005	H7 Supported
Quality → Trust	0.141	2.517	0.012	H8 Supported
Trust → Purchase	0.301	4.948	0.000	H9 Supported

PLS path modeling was employed to examine the direct relationships among the nine hypotheses tested in this study. A hypothesis was considered supported when the p-value was below 0.05 and the t-statistic exceeded 1.96. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 8. The findings indicate that review quality has a significant effect on purchase intention, as evidenced by a t-statistic greater than 1.96 and a p-value below 0.05, thus supporting Hypothesis 4. Similarly, review quality also significantly influences trust, with a t-statistic exceeding 1.96 and a p-value below 0.05, confirming Hypothesis 8. Review quantity was found to have a significant effect on purchase intention, with a t-statistic of 2.640 and a p-value of 0.009, supporting Hypothesis 2. Review quantity also significantly affects trust, as shown by a t-statistic of 6.648 and a p-value of 0.000, thereby supporting Hypothesis 6.

Review timeliness does not significantly influence purchase intention, as indicated by a t-statistic of 1.352 and a p-value of 0.177, leading to the rejection of Hypothesis 1. Likewise, review timeliness does not significantly affect trust, with a t-statistic of 1.657 and a p-value of 0.098, resulting in the rejection of Hypothesis 5. Trust was found to significantly influence purchase intention, with a t-statistic exceeding 1.96 and a p-value below 0.05, supporting Hypothesis 9. Review valence significantly affects purchase intention, with a t-statistic of 4.316 and a p-value below 0.05, supporting Hypothesis 3. Review valence also significantly influences trust, with a t-statistic greater than 1.96 and a p-value below 0.05, confirming Hypothesis 7. Overall, Hypotheses H2, H3, H4, H6, H7, H8, and H9 are supported, but H1 and H5 are not supported.

**Table 9.** Indirect effect

Paths	Path Coeff.	T-stats	P-value	Results
Timeliness → Trust → Purchase	0.033	1.521	0.129	H10 Not Supported
Quantity → Trust → Purchase	0.128	3.943	0.000	H11 Supported
Valence → Trust → Purchase	0.069	2.382	0.018	H12 Supported
Quality → Trust → Purchase	0.042	2.372	0.018	H13 Supported

A mediation test was conducted to examine the role of trust in the relationship between review timeliness, quantity, positive valence, and quality and purchase intention. The results show that trust significantly mediates the effect of review quality on purchase intention ( $t = 2.372$ ;  $p = 0.018$ ), supporting Hypothesis 13. Trust also mediates the effect of review quantity on purchase intention ( $t = 3.943$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ), supporting Hypothesis 11. However, trust does not mediate the effect of review timeliness on purchase intention ( $t = 1.521$ ;  $p = 0.298$ ), thus rejecting Hypothesis 10. Finally, trust significantly mediates the effect of review valence on purchase intention ( $t = 2.382$ ;  $p = 0.018$ ).

## Discussion

The results indicate that the effects of consumer review attributes on trust vary. Review quantity, positive valence, and review quality significantly enhance consumer trust, whereas review timeliness does not have a significant effect. These findings indicate that consumers rely more on the richness, tone, and credibility of information than on its recency when forming trust in cosmetic products.

Prior studies have shown that a greater volume of reviews increases perceived reliability and reduces uncertainty, thereby strengthening trust (Fu et al., 2011; McCloskey, 2006). Similarly, positive review valence has been found to foster consumer confidence and reduce perceived risk (Ladhari & Michaud, 2015; Sparks & Browning, 2011), while high-quality reviews enhance cognitive processing and credibility of information (Choi et al., 2011; Xie et al., 2017). Conversely, the non-significant effect of review timeliness is consistent with earlier findings suggesting that recency is not always a determinant of trust, particularly in product categories with relatively stable attributes (Cheung et al., 2008; Fu et al., 2011; Hoehle et al., 2012). Given that cosmetics are classified as experience or credence goods, consumers prioritize informative and persuasive content over temporal cues when evaluating product reliability (Chen et al., 2022).

The findings also demonstrate that consumer review attributes exert varying effects on purchase intention, with review quantity, positive valence, and review quality showing significant influences, whereas review timeliness does not. The positive effect of review quantity supports the argument that a large number of reviews serves as a signal of product popularity and social validation, thereby accelerating purchase decisions (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006). This finding contrasts with studies reporting non-significant effects of review quantity (Arora et al., 2018; Kevin et al., 2020), suggesting that the influence of review volume may be context-dependent. Furthermore, positive review valence has been widely recognized as a key determinant of favorable consumer attitudes and purchase intentions (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Floyd et al., 2014; Gopinath et al., 2014; Tata et al., 2020). Likewise, review quality enhances consumers' evaluation processes and reduces perceived risk, leading to stronger purchase intentions (Arora et al., 2018; Bataineh, 2015; Cheung & Thadani, 2010; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). The absence of a significant effect of review timeliness further confirms that, in the cosmetic industry, consumers do not necessarily prioritize recent reviews because product characteristics and benefits are perceived as relatively stable over time (Chen et al., 2022).

Moreover, this study confirms the mediating role of trust in the relationship between consumer review attributes and purchase intention. Trust significantly mediates the effects of review quantity, positive valence, and review quality on purchase intention, indicating that these review characteristics influence consumer behavior indirectly through the formation of trust. This finding aligns with earlier research emphasizing trust as a critical mechanism in online purchasing decisions (Kim & Park, 2013; Sheikh et al., 2019; Tran, 2020). When consumers encounter numerous, positive, and high-quality reviews, they develop greater confidence in the product, which subsequently leads to stronger purchase intentions. Prior studies have similarly reported that trust mediates the relationship between online reviews and consumer behavioral outcomes (Fang et al., 2014; Hajli, 2019; Matute Vallejo et al., 2015). Review timeliness does not exert an indirect effect through trust, reinforcing the conclusion that temporal aspects of reviews are less salient in the cosmetic context. These findings highlight trust as a pivotal psychological mechanism linking online review information to consumer decision-making, thereby extending the literature on electronic word-of-mouth and online trust formation.

## Conclusion

This study develops an integrated model linking consumer review dimensions, trust, and purchase intention. The findings indicate that positive valence, review quantity, and review quality significantly influence consumers' purchase intentions for cosmetic products. Trust also mediates the relationships between these review dimensions and purchase intention. In contrast, review timeliness does not significantly affect either trust or purchase intention. These results suggest that consumers prioritize the substance and evaluative tone of online reviews over their recency when making purchase decisions. Furthermore, social influence theory helps explain how consumer review dimensions shape attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, ultimately driving purchasing decisions.

## Suggestion for future research

This study has several limitations that should be considered in future research. First, the sample

composition shows an imbalance in generational and gender representation, with Generation Z and female respondents dominating the sample. Although this reflects their active participation in online review platforms, it may limit the generalizability of the findings. Differences in digital literacy, information-processing styles, and online engagement between Generation Y and Generation Z, as well as gender-based differences in review interpretation and trust formation, suggest that the results may disproportionately represent Generation Z and female consumers. Therefore, future studies should adopt more proportionate sampling strategies to ensure balanced representation across generations and genders, thereby enhancing external validity.

Second, this study focuses on cosmetic products, which are classified as experience or credence goods, limiting the applicability of the findings to other product categories with different levels of involvement, risk, or time sensitivity. Future research should extend the model to other product types, such as search goods or durable products, to test the robustness of the relationships across contexts.

Third, the analysis is limited to four review dimensions—valence, quality, quantity, and timeliness—and a single mediating variable, trust. Future studies should further examine the relationship between review timeliness and trust and consider second-order constructs and additional mediating or moderating variables, such as perceived credibility, perceived risk, and consumer engagement. Finally, cross-cultural studies and updated datasets are recommended to capture evolving digital consumer behavior and strengthen external validity.

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