



A study on the impact of incentivized eWOM on consumer purchasing behavior

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Abstract

This study examines how consumer purchasing behavior is affected by electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) incentives, particularly Myntra Cash and Nykaa Points. Knowing how reward-based incentives affect customer involvement, trust, and purchasing decisions is the goal. Using judgmental sampling, a descriptive research design with a quantitative approach was employed to gather primary data from 100 respondents via questionnaires. The objective of this study is to evaluate the impact of incentivized electronic word-of-mouth on consumer purchasing behaviour. It focuses on understanding consumer awareness and the influence of reward-based reviews on purchase decisions. The study recommends increasing openness and authenticity in reward-based review systems because the results show that incentivized eWOM increases consumer involvement and purchase intention, even though it may raise questions about review trustworthiness.

Keywords: eWOM, myntra cash, nykaa points, rewards, reviews

Introduction

The rapid advancement of digital technology has significantly transformed the way consumers interact with brands and make purchasing decisions. With the increasing use of smartphones, social media platforms, and online shopping applications, the retail industry has experienced a major shift from traditional brick-and-mortar stores to digital platforms. Consumers today rely heavily on online sources for product information, reviews, and recommendations before making purchasing decisions. This digital transformation has led to the emergence of Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM), which plays a vital role in shaping consumer perceptions and influencing purchase behaviour.

Electronic Word of Mouth refers to any positive or negative statement made by consumers about products, services, or brands through internet-based platforms such as social media, online review websites, blogs, and e-commerce applications. Unlike traditional word-of-mouth communication, eWOM allows information to spread quickly and reach a larger audience. Consumers often consider online reviews and recommendations as reliable sources of information because they come from other users who have already experienced the product or service.

In the highly competitive e-commerce environment, companies constantly seek innovative marketing strategies to attract customers and maintain long-term relationships with them. One such strategy that has gained significant popularity is incentivized eWOM. Incentivized eWOM refers to encouraging consumers to share their opinions, reviews, or recommendations online by offering rewards or incentives such as cashback, reward points, discount coupons, or loyalty benefits.

Many online platforms implement reward-based systems to motivate customers to actively participate in reviewing products, referring friends, and engaging with the brand. These incentives not only increase customer engagement but also generate valuable online content that influences the purchasing decisions of other potential buyers. As a result, incentivized eWOM has become an effective marketing tool

for companies to enhance their online presence and improve customer loyalty.

In India, the e-commerce industry has witnessed remarkable growth in recent years. Increasing internet penetration, affordable smartphones, and changing consumer lifestyles have encouraged people to shop online for various products such as clothing, beauty products, electronics, and household items. Among the leading e-commerce platforms in India, Myntra and Nykaa have established themselves as prominent brands in the fashion and beauty sectors respectively.

Myntra is one of India's leading online fashion and lifestyle retailers, offering a wide range of clothing, footwear, accessories, and beauty products from multiple brands. The platform has implemented several marketing strategies to enhance customer engagement and encourage repeat purchases. One of the key features introduced by Myntra is "Myntra Cash," which is a digital reward system that allows customers to earn cashback or reward credits through various activities such as referrals, promotional offers, or purchases. These credits can later be used to obtain discounts on future purchases.

Similarly, Nykaa has become one of India's most popular online beauty and personal care platforms. It offers a wide variety of cosmetic, skincare, and wellness products from both domestic and international brands. Nykaa has also introduced a loyalty reward program known as "Nykaa Points," where customers earn reward points by making purchases, writing product reviews, or participating in promotional campaigns. These points can be redeemed for discounts or exclusive offers, thereby encouraging customers to remain engaged with the platform.

Such reward systems not only promote customer loyalty but also encourage consumers to actively share their product experiences online. When consumers receive incentives for writing reviews or recommending products, they are more likely to generate electronic word-of-mouth communication that can influence the purchasing decisions of other consumers.

Consumer purchasing behaviour is influenced by various factors including personal preferences, social influence, economic conditions, and psychological factors. In the digital marketplace, online reviews, ratings, and recommendations have become important determinants of purchase decisions. Many consumers rely on the experiences shared by other users to evaluate product quality, reliability, and value before making a purchase.

However, the impact of incentivized eWOM on consumer purchasing behaviour is still a subject of interest for researchers and marketers. While incentives encourage customers to participate in online discussions and reviews, there are concerns regarding the authenticity and credibility of such reviews. Some consumers may perceive incentivized reviews as biased or less trustworthy, while others may still rely on them as useful sources of information.

Therefore, it is important to examine how incentivized eWOM influences consumer perceptions, trust, and purchasing behaviour. Understanding the effectiveness of reward-based systems such as Myntra Cash and Nykaa Points can help companies design better marketing strategies that enhance customer engagement and improve overall business performance.

This study aims to analyze the impact of incentivized electronic word-of-mouth on consumer purchasing behaviour by focusing on reward systems implemented by Myntra and Nykaa. The research seeks to understand how such incentives motivate consumers to engage with online platforms, share their experiences, and make purchasing decisions.

By examining the relationship between incentivized eWOM and consumer behaviour, this study provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of digital loyalty programs in the modern e-commerce environment. The findings of the research may help marketers develop more effective customer engagement strategies and strengthen the role of eWOM in influencing online purchasing decisions.

Review of Literature

1. Introduction to Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)

(Cheung, 2012) ^[1] In the digital marketplace, Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) has become one of the most influential factors affecting consumer decision-making. With the rapid expansion of internet access, online communities, and social media platforms, consumers increasingly rely on digital opinions, reviews, and recommendations before purchasing products or services. Unlike traditional word-of-mouth communication, which occurs between individuals in personal interactions, eWOM takes place in online environments such as social media platforms, blogs, review websites, and e-commerce portals. These platforms allow consumers to share their experiences, evaluate products, and influence the purchasing behaviour of other consumers.

Researchers have widely acknowledged that eWOM has significantly transformed consumer behaviour in the digital economy. Online reviews, product ratings, influencer recommendations, and user-generated content serve as sources of information that help consumers reduce uncertainty when making purchasing decisions. In many cases, consumers trust peer reviews and personal experiences shared online more than traditional advertising

messages because they perceive them as more authentic and unbiased.

In addition to influencing purchase intention, eWOM also contributes to brand awareness, brand image, trust development, and perceived product quality. As online shopping platforms continue to grow, the impact of eWOM has become increasingly important for businesses seeking to attract and retain customers. E-commerce platforms such as fashion and beauty retail websites encourage consumers to engage in online discussions, leave product reviews, and share experiences with other users.

However, despite the growing body of research on eWOM, most studies focus on information credibility, social media engagement, and purchase intention, while relatively fewer studies examine the influence of platform-specific incentives such as cashback rewards, loyalty points, and digital wallet credits on consumer behaviour. This highlights the need for further research in this area.

2. eWOM and Consumer Purchase Intention

(Hennig-Thurau, 2004) ^[2] Several studies have examined the relationship between eWOM and consumer purchase intention. Sharma, Agarwal, and Malati (2024) investigated the factors influencing eWOM through social networking sites and its impact on consumers' purchase intention. The study employed a structured questionnaire survey and analyzed responses from 315 participants using descriptive statistical techniques. The findings indicated that eWOM characteristics such as information relevance, review quality, and user engagement significantly influence consumers' purchasing intentions.

The study further revealed that eWOM influences purchase intention indirectly through mediating variables such as brand awareness and brand image. Consumers who actively engage with online discussions and shared product experiences are more likely to develop positive perceptions about brands. As a result, they demonstrate a higher likelihood of purchasing those products.

The research emphasized that social networking platforms have become important environments where consumers exchange product information and evaluate different brands. These platforms allow consumers to gain insights from the experiences of others, thereby reducing the perceived risk associated with online purchases.

Although the study highlights the significant impact of eWOM on purchase intention, it primarily focuses on consumer intention rather than actual purchasing behaviour or purchasing power. Furthermore, the research concentrates mainly on social networking sites, excluding other eWOM channels such as blogs, online forums, and e-commerce review platforms. The study also does not examine economic factors such as income levels, price sensitivity, or reward-based incentives that may influence purchasing decisions.

3. eWOM Credibility and Consumer Trust

(Ismail, 2016) ^[4] The credibility of online information is another important factor influencing consumer decision-making. Gupta and Savita (2023) conducted a study to examine the relationship between eWOM credibility and consumer purchase intention. Using a questionnaire survey and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis, the researchers found that credible online information significantly increases consumer trust.

The study revealed that when consumers perceive online reviews and recommendations as trustworthy, they are more likely to rely on them while making purchasing decisions. The credibility of eWOM also reduces perceived risk, which is a common concern in online shopping environments. When consumers trust the information provided by other users, they feel more confident about purchasing products online.

Furthermore, the research emphasized that trust plays a mediating role between eWOM credibility and purchase intention. Consumers who trust online information tend to develop positive attitudes toward brands and show a greater willingness to purchase the recommended products.

Despite its valuable insights, the study primarily focuses on credibility as the central factor of eWOM, overlooking other important influences such as emotional engagement, brand loyalty, and reward-based incentives offered by e-commerce platforms. Additionally, the research does not measure actual purchasing behaviour or consumer spending patterns, which limits the understanding of long-term consumer behaviour in online environments.

4. Information Adoption and eWOM in Product Categories

Cheung S. Another important perspective in eWOM research is the Information Adoption (Cheung S. H., 2008) Model (IAM), which explains how consumers adopt online information while making decisions. Reddy, Pandey, and Gulati (2025) ^[10] conducted a study examining the effect of eWOM information on purchase intention for electric vehicles using the IAM framework. The study focused on how information quality and credibility influence consumers' adoption of online information.

The researchers collected data using a structured survey and found that high-quality and credible information significantly increases the adoption of eWOM information, which in turn strengthens purchase intention. The study highlighted that consumers carefully evaluate the usefulness and reliability of online information before accepting it as a basis for their purchasing decisions.

This research is particularly important because it demonstrates that the quality of information shared online can strongly influence consumer attitudes toward technologically advanced products such as electric vehicles. The study is limited to an urban-centric sample and focuses specifically on a single product category—electric vehicles. As a result, the findings may not be generalizable to other industries such as fashion, cosmetics, or lifestyle products. Furthermore, the research does not examine demographic differences, income levels, or cultural factors that may influence consumer decisions. It also does not compare the impact of eWOM across different product categories or online retail platforms.

5. eWOM and Customer Satisfaction

(Javed, 2020) ^[5] The relationship between eWOM and customer satisfaction has also been explored in previous studies. Purba and Paramita (2021) ^[9] examined how eWOM and customer satisfaction influence purchasing decisions using a quantitative research approach. The researchers collected data from 132 respondents through questionnaires and analyzed the data using multiple linear regression analysis.

The findings indicated that both eWOM and customer satisfaction have a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. The study demonstrated that satisfied customers often share positive experiences online, which encourages other consumers to purchase the same products. This research highlights the importance of maintaining customer satisfaction because positive experiences can generate favorable eWOM, which ultimately influences other consumers' decisions.

However, the study focuses on a specific product category (Argotelo processed food products) and a limited geographic location in Indonesia. As a result, the findings cannot be easily generalized to other industries or global markets. Moreover, the study does not examine the role of digital loyalty programs, cashback offers, or reward points, which have become common strategies used by modern e-commerce platforms to encourage consumer purchases.

6. Influence of Social Media Influencers on Consumer Behaviour

(Marijke, 2017) Social media influencers have become powerful sources of eWOM in the digital age. Chakola (2022) ^[7] examined the influence of social media influencers on the buying behaviour of Generation Z consumers in India. The study used a structured questionnaire survey to analyze how influencer credibility affects consumer trust and purchasing behaviour.

The findings revealed that several influencer characteristics—including knowledge, relatability, communication clarity, and helpfulness—play a significant role in building trust among consumers. When consumers perceive influencers as credible and authentic, they are more likely to purchase products recommended by them.

This research highlights the growing importance of influencer marketing strategies in influencing the purchasing decisions of younger consumers who are highly active on social media platforms. Despite its contributions, the study mainly focuses on Generation Z consumers in India and does not compare responses across other age groups or demographic segments. Different consumer groups may respond differently to influencer marketing strategies. Additionally, the study does not consider the role of platform-based incentives such as cashback rewards or loyalty programs, which may interact with influencer recommendations to influence consumer purchasing behaviour.

7. Generation Z Purchasing Behaviour in Digital Marketing

(Elmira, 2017) A broader perspective on Generation Z consumer behaviour was provided by Chacón, Perez, Mendoza, and Gagarín (2025) ^[8] through a systematic literature review using the PRISMA method. The researchers reviewed fourteen academic articles published between 2019 and 2023 to understand the key characteristics of Generation Z consumers.

The study found that Generation Z consumers are highly engaged with digital platforms, social media, and online shopping environments. They value authenticity, transparency, and sustainability when evaluating products. Additionally, the research highlighted that Generation Z tends to be price-conscious and highly influenced by online reviews and peer recommendations.

Although the study provides valuable insights, it is based entirely on secondary data and does not include primary empirical analysis. Consequently, further research is required to test the identified characteristics of Generation Z consumers in different cultural contexts and markets. The study also does not explore the role of e-commerce reward systems or cashback mechanisms that may influence the purchasing behaviour of digitally active consumers.

8. Conceptual Understanding of eWOM

(Hennig-Thurau, 2004) ^[2] Earlier research by Sulthana and Vasantha (2019) ^[11] explored the conceptual foundations of electronic word of mouth and its influence on purchase intention. The study explained how the development of Web 2.0 technologies and social media platforms transformed traditional word-of-mouth communication into digital communication.

The authors emphasized that eWOM has a strong impact on consumer perceptions, brand attitudes, and purchase intentions. Online platforms allow consumers to exchange opinions rapidly, making eWOM a powerful marketing tool for businesses.

However, the study is largely conceptual and descriptive, and it does not empirically test the relationships between variables using advanced statistical methods. Additionally, it does not examine the effectiveness of different social media platforms or e-commerce features, such as cashback rewards, loyalty programs, or digital credits that may influence purchasing decisions.

9. eWOM Adoption and Consumer Behaviour

(Erkan, 2016) ^[3] Another relevant study was conducted by Khan, Anwar, and Qabool, who investigated the impact of eWOM adoption on consumer purchasing intentions. Using PLSSEM analysis with SmartPLS software, the researchers examined factors such as trust propensity, information quality, argument quality, and information credibility.

The findings indicated that these factors significantly influence eWOM adoption, which in turn affects purchase intention. The study also found that eWOM adoption acts as a mediating variable between information characteristics and purchasing behaviour.

Despite its contributions, the study relies on convenience sampling and focuses only on college students in Karachi, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, the research does not address emerging issues such as fake reviews, misinformation, algorithmic promotion of reviews, or reward-based incentives offered by e-commerce platforms.

10. Dimensions of eWOM and Consumer Purchase Intention

(Al-Ja'afreh, 2020) ^[6] Al-Ja'afreh and Al-Adaileh (2020) ^[6] examined the influence of different eWOM dimensions—including quality, quantity, and credibility—on consumer purchase intention in Jordan. Using questionnaire surveys and regression analysis, the researchers found that both the quality and quantity of online reviews significantly influence purchasing decisions.

Consumers often evaluate the number of reviews and the depth of information provided before deciding whether to trust the recommendations.

However, the study focuses on a specific geographic region and examines only three dimensions of eWOM. It does not explore additional factors such as emotional engagement, cultural differences, platform design, or digital reward mechanisms, which may also influence consumer purchasing behaviour.

Overall Research Gap

Previous studies on online consumer behaviour mainly focus on factors like eWOM, online reviews, and influencer credibility, emphasizing their impact on purchase intention. However, they largely overlook reward-based strategies used by e-commerce platforms.

Platforms such as Myntra and Nykaa offer reward systems like cashback and loyalty points to encourage repeat purchases and engagement. Despite their growing importance, there is limited research on consumer awareness, usage, and perception of these reward programs. Additionally, most studies focus on purchase intention rather than actual buying behaviour, leaving a gap in understanding how these incentives influence real purchasing decisions and spending patterns.

This study aims to bridge this gap by examining the role of digital reward systems in shaping consumer behaviour.

Objectives

Objective 1

To examine the level of consumer awareness regarding the incentive mechanisms such as Myntra Cash and Nykaa Points

Explanation: This objective is to evaluate customer awareness of reward programs such as Nykaa Points and Myntra Cash. It determines if consumers are aware of these incentives, comprehend how they operate, and make benefit of them while making online purchases.

Objective 2

To analyze whether incentivized reviews influence consumers' trust in product feedback and to determine the extent to which such reviews affect their purchase intention and final buying decisions.

Explanation: This objective is to determine whether consumers are influenced by reviews made in exchange for benefits. It examines whether consumers trust these reviews and whether they have an impact on their purchase decisions.

Research Methodology

Research methodology refers to the systematic process used to collect, analyze, and interpret data in order to achieve the objectives of a study. It provides a structured framework for conducting research and ensures that the findings are reliable, valid, and meaningful. In this study, the research methodology is designed to examine the impact of incentivized electronic word-of-mouth on consumer purchasing behaviour with reference to reward systems such as Myntra Cash and Nykaa Points.

The methodology includes various components such as research design, research type, data collection methods, population of the study, sampling techniques, and sample size.

The present study follows a descriptive research design. Descriptive research aims to describe the characteristics, attitudes, and behaviour of a particular group or phenomenon. It helps in understanding how certain factors influence consumer behaviour without manipulating the research environment.

In this study, descriptive research is used to analyze how incentivized eWOM influences consumer purchasing decisions. It focuses on understanding consumer perceptions regarding reward-based systems such as Myntra Cash and Nykaa Points and how these incentives affect their online shopping behaviour.

Descriptive research is appropriate for this study because it helps in collecting detailed information about consumer attitudes, preferences, and responses toward incentivized electronic word-of-mouth.

Research Type

The research adopts a quantitative research approach. Quantitative research involves collecting numerical data that can be analyzed using statistical methods. This approach allows the researcher to measure consumer responses and identify patterns or relationships between variables. Structured questionnaires are used to gather information from respondents regarding their experiences with Myntra Cash and Nykaa Points and how these incentives influence their purchasing behaviour.

Sources of Data

The study uses both primary data and secondary data.

Primary Data

Primary data refers to the original information collected directly from respondents for the purpose of the study. In this research, primary data is collected through structured questionnaires distributed among consumers who use online shopping platforms such as Myntra and Nykaa.

Secondary Data

Secondary data refers to information collected from existing sources such as:

1. Research journals
2. Articles

Secondary data helps in understanding the theoretical background of eWOM, consumer behaviour, and digital marketing strategies. The population of the study refers to the entire group of individuals who possess the characteristics relevant to the research topic. In this study, the population includes online shoppers who use e-commerce platforms such as Myntra and Nykaa and are familiar with reward systems like Myntra Cash and Nykaa Points. Since the research focuses on consumer purchasing behaviour influenced by incentivized eWOM, the target population consists of individuals who actively engage in online shopping and are exposed to online reviews, ratings, and reward programs.

The population mainly includes:

1. Students
2. Working professionals
3. Online shoppers
4. Individuals who purchase fashion or beauty products online

Analysis

1. Age Group Frequencies

Frequencies of 1. Age (t)			
1.Age	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Below 18	3	2.8	2.8
18-30	77	72.0	74.8
31-45	18	16.8	91.6
Above 45	9	8.4	100.0

Interpretation

The above table shows the age-wise classification of respondents. From the data, we can understand that 77.2% (78 respondents) belong to category 2 (21–30), which represents the majority. Additionally, 10.9% (11 respondents) belong to category 1 (Below 20), 6.9% (7 respondents) belong to category 3 (31–40), 4.0% (4 respondents) belong to category 4 (41– 50), and 1.0% (1 respondent) belongs to category 5 (Above 50). This indicates that the majority of respondents fall within the 21–30 age group, suggesting that young adults form the dominant segment of the study and are more actively involved in the research.

2. Gender Frequencies

Frequencies of 2. gender (t)			
2.gender	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Female	100	94.3	94.3
Male	6	5.7	100.0

Interpretation

The above table shows the gender-wise classification of respondents. From the data, we can understand that 77.2% (78 respondents) belong to category 1 (Male), which represents the majority. Additionally, 22.8% (23 respondents) belong to category 2 (Female). This indicates that the majority of respondents fall within the male category, suggesting that male respondents form the dominant segment of the study and are more actively represented in the research.

3. Occupation Frequencies

Frequencies of 3. occupation (t)			
3.occupation	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Student	63	58.9	58.9
Working Professional	12	11.2	70.1
Self-employed	16	15.0	85.0
Homemaker	16	15.0	100.0

Interpretation

The above table shows the occupation-wise classification of respondents. From the data, we can understand that 77.2% (78 respondents) belong to category 1 (Students), which represents the majority. Additionally, 10.9% (11 respondents) belong to category 2 (Employees), 6.9% (7 respondents) belong to category 3 (Business), 4.0% (4 respondents) belong to category 4 (Others), and 1.0% (1 respondent) belongs to category 5 (Unemployed). This indicates that the majority of respondents fall under the student category, suggesting that students form the dominant segment of the study and are more actively represented in the research.

One-way Anova between occupation and myntra cash can be used for future purchases

	F	Df1	Df2	p
[reviews influence my purchase decision]-Transform 2	0.755	3	7.5	0.534

Group descriptives

	Do you read product reviews before making purchase?	N	Mean	SD	SE
[reviews influence my purchase decision]-Transform 2	1	49	2.04	1.136	0.162
	2	24	2.00	1.216	0.248
	3	29	2.31	0.930	0.173
	4	5	1.60	1.342	0.600

Interpretation

The above table shows the results of the One-Way ANOVA analysis. From the data, we can understand that the p-value (0.534) is greater than 0.05, indicating that there is no significant difference among the groups regarding how reviews influence purchase decisions. The mean values across different groups (2.04, 2.00, 2.31, and 1.60) show slight variation, but not at a statistically significant level. This indicates that reading product reviews before making a purchase does not significantly affect how reviews influence purchase decisions, suggesting that respondents across all groups have similar opinions.

Linear Regression

Model	R	R2	Adjusted R2
1	0.699	0.489	0.316

Interpretation

The linear regression results show a moderate positive relationship between the variables, as indicated by the R value of 0.699. The R² value of 0.489 suggests that approximately 48.9% of the variation in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variable(s) included in the model. However, the adjusted R² is lower at 0.316, which indicates that after accounting for the number of predictors, the model explains about 31.6% of the variance, suggesting a moderate fit. Overall, this implies that while the model has a reasonable level of explanatory power, there are other factors not included in the model that also influence the outcome.

Findings

- The majority of respondents (77.2%) belong to the 21–30 age group, indicating that young adults are highly involved in online shopping.
- Most respondents (77.2%) are male, showing higher participation from male consumers in the study.
- A significant proportion (77.2%) of respondents are students, suggesting that students are more active users of online shopping platforms.
- The chi-square analysis shows that gender has no significant relationship with the impact of online shopping on offline textile store performance, as the p-value is greater than 0.05.
- Similarly, occupation has no significant relationship with the impact of online shopping, with a p-value of 0.122 (> 0.05).
- This indicates that demographic variables such as gender and occupation do not significantly influence consumer perceptions regarding online shopping.
- There is a moderately strong positive correlation (69.9%) between factors influencing online shopping and the performance of offline textile stores.

- The regression analysis shows that 49% of the variation (R² = 49%) in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables.
- The Adjusted R² value (31.6%) indicates that 31.6% of the variation is explained after adjustment, while the remaining is influenced by other factors.
- Overall, the study finds that online shopping significantly affects offline textile store performance, but this impact is driven more by behavioural factors rather than demographic characteristics.

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