

How Online Reviews Affect Consumer Trust

Sanket Gaikwad¹, Aayush Kushwaha², Aditi Mhatre³, Vishwajeet Raj⁴, Dr. Anusha Priya⁵

¹PGDM-Student, Department of Management (IIEBM, PUNE)

^{2,3,4,5} Associate Professor, Department of Management (IIEBM, PUNE)

Abstract—This study explores consumer perceptions and decision-making behaviours regarding skincare product purchases, with a particular focus on the role of online reviews. Online reviews are considered an important form of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) that significantly influences consumer attitudes and purchasing decisions in digital marketplaces (Ismagilova et al., 2020; Erkan & Evans, 2018). A survey of 105 participants revealed that the majority of respondents were aged 18–25 (61.9%), highlighting the dominance of younger consumers in the skincare market. Across multiple dimensions, online reviews emerged as a critical influence on purchasing decisions. Most respondents reported reading reviews before buying skincare products, with 69.5% agreeing or strongly agreeing. Furthermore, 63.8% indicated that online reviews are their main source of information, and 74% confirmed that they compare multiple reviews prior to purchase. Previous studies have also shown that consumers rely heavily on online reviews to evaluate product quality and reduce uncertainty before making purchasing decisions (Fileri et al., 2018; Lackermair et al., 2016).

Credibility factors such as visual content (images/videos), mention of skin type, and detailed explanations significantly increased consumer confidence and trust, with over 70% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. Balanced reviews that include both pros and cons were perceived as more genuine (71.5%), while excessive positive reviews raised suspicion among 71.1% of participants. Positive reviews were shown to enhance trust (81%), whereas negative reviews reduced trust (78.6%). This aligns with previous research indicating that review credibility and content quality play a significant role in shaping consumer trust and purchase intentions (Ahn & Lee, 2024; Sinaga & Muitia, 2025). Crucially, the study highlights consumer trust as a key mediating factor connecting online reviews to purchasing choices. Reviews build trust by mitigating perceived risk, increasing product transparency, and offering social validation, which is especially pertinent in the skincare sector where assessing product effectiveness and safety before use can be challenging. Research also suggests that trust generated through credible online

reviews can lead to stronger brand loyalty and repeat purchasing behaviour (Chatterjee et al., 2021).

Index Terms—Online Reviews, Consumer Trust, Skincare Products, Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM), Consumer Purchase Behaviour, Review Credibility.

I. INTRODUCTION

Online shopping has experienced significant growth in recent years and has completely transformed the way consumers purchase skincare products. With the increasing use of smartphones, widespread internet access, and the expansion of e-commerce platforms, online shopping has become more convenient than visiting physical stores, enabling consumers to compare prices and explore a wide range of brands that might not be locally accessible (Good Firms, 2026). In the past, consumers mainly relied on traditional advertisements, brand promotions, or personal recommendations from friends and family when selecting skincare products. However, these sources often provided limited or biased information. Today, online reviews have become one of the most influential sources of information in the consumer decision-making process. Recent global research shows that 97% of consumers say online reviews influence purchasing decisions, highlighting the central role of user feedback in modern shopping behaviour. Consumer behaviour studies indicate that a vast majority of shoppers read online reviews before buying—96% of first-time purchasers check online reviews, and about 93–95% of consumers read reviews before making any purchase. Reviews help potential buyers get real-world insights into product performance, quality, and usability, reducing uncertainty and perceived risk, especially in categories like skincare where effectiveness and skin compatibility are critical.

Online reviews also play a vital role in building consumer trust. Statistics show that a large share of consumers trust online reviews as much as—or even more than—traditional personal recommendations, making user-generated content a major determinant of buying decisions. Verified purchase reviews, in particular, are noted to increase consumer trust significantly. Since skincare products are closely linked to personal health and appearance, consumers are often cautious and rely on detailed reviews, images, videos, and testimonials to understand how products perform for different skin types and concerns. Positive reviews tend to build trust and purchase confidence, while negative reviews help warn buyers about potential issues or side effects, pushing them toward safer and more informed decisions. Furthermore, online reviews enable consumers to compare brands, assess product ingredients, and weigh cost-to-benefit value before buying. As a result, understanding the influence of online reviews is crucial for brands, marketers, and consumers alike, as it impacts product transparency, reputation management, and satisfaction in the competitive skincare market.

1.2 Background of the Study

Skin care products are deeply personal items that are applied directly to the skin, making the choice of product a delicate and potentially risky endeavour. Selecting an inappropriate product can lead to skin irritation, allergic reactions, acne flare-ups, or other negative consequences. Given that individuals vary in skin type, sensitivity, and dermatological requirements, consumers often exercise caution when buying skin care products. To mitigate potential risks, they actively seek trustworthy, precise, and comprehensive information prior to making their purchasing choices. In recent years, online reviews have become a significant source of information for consumers navigating the digital marketplace. These reviews are authored by users who have direct experience with the products, offering practical insights into their effectiveness, quality, ingredients, and possible side effects. Unlike advertisements, which primarily aim to promote products, online reviews provide reflections of actual usage and results. Consequently, they assist potential buyers in gaining a better understanding of how products perform in everyday situations and whether they address their

specific skin issues. Online reviews are frequently regarded as more credible and reliable than conventional marketing messages. Consumers often perceive peer opinions as impartial, making reviews a vital resource for alleviating uncertainty and boosting confidence in purchasing decisions. Thorough and well-rounded reviews, particularly those that specify skin type and duration of use, are especially impactful in influencing consumer perceptions and expectations. The growth of e-commerce platforms and social media has significantly amplified the influence of online reviews. Shoppers can swiftly compare various brands, prices, and ratings, making reviews a crucial element of the online shopping journey. Favourable reviews can improve brand perception, foster consumer confidence, and promote repeat purchases, whereas unfavourable reviews can damage brand reputation and decrease sales. Thus, analysing the role of online reviews is vital for comprehending consumer trust and buying behaviour in the skin care sector.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Online reviews have emerged as a significant source of information for consumers purchasing skin care products via online platforms. Many consumers depend heavily on these reviews to assess product quality, effectiveness, and safety prior to making a purchase. However, the growing prevalence of fake, paid, biased, or exaggerated reviews has led to uncertainty and confusion among consumers. Consequently, it has become challenging for buyers to differentiate between authentic consumer experiences and misleading promotional content, which can adversely impact their trust in online platforms. This problem is particularly crucial in the skin care sector, where products are applied directly to the skin and may have health implications. Selecting inappropriate or ineffective products can result in skin irritation, allergies, or long-term damage, making trust in information sources especially vital. When consumers face inconsistent or unreliable reviews, their confidence in online purchasing decisions may wane, resulting in hesitation, dissatisfaction, or avoidance of specific brands or platforms.

Moreover, while online reviews are extensively utilized, there is a limited understanding of how various review characteristics such as credibility, detail level, tone, and reviewer authenticity specifically affect consumer trust in the skin care

market. The ambiguity surrounding which types of reviews consumers find most trustworthy poses challenges for both consumers and marketers. Therefore, investigating the influence of online reviews on consumer trust is crucial for gaining insights into consumer behaviour and assisting businesses in creating transparent and reliable review systems within the skin care industry.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research holds great importance for consumers who buy skin care products online, as it aids them in recognizing the necessity of thoroughly reading and assessing online reviews prior to making purchasing decisions. It raises awareness regarding the existence of fraudulent or misleading reviews and helps consumers distinguish between authentic, trustworthy, and informative feedback, thus minimizing the chances of poor product selections and dissatisfaction. For skin care companies and brands, this study underscores the significance of honest and transparent customer feedback in fostering consumer trust and sustaining a positive brand reputation. The insights gained can assist companies in enhancing product quality, addressing customer issues, and formulating more effective review management strategies. By comprehending how reviews impact trust and purchasing behaviour, brands can fortify customer relationships and promote long-term loyalty.

Online shopping platforms can also gain from this research, as it offers valuable insights into the necessity of upholding reliable and well-regulated review systems. The findings may bolster platform initiatives to identify fake reviews, enhance review credibility, and improve the overall user experience. Moreover, this study is beneficial for students, academics, and future researchers, as it adds to the existing body of literature on online reviews, electronic word-of-mouth, and consumer trust. It lays the groundwork for further exploration in digital marketing and consumer behaviour. In summary, the study serves consumers, businesses, and online platforms by fostering transparency, trust, and informed decision-making within the skin care industry.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

This research is based on Social Proof Theory, which elucidates how individuals depend on the opinions and

actions of others when making decisions in uncertain situations. This theory posits that people are more inclined to regard a product or action as valid when they see that others have already accepted or endorsed it. In online shopping contexts, where consumers cannot physically inspect or test products, the level of uncertainty is particularly elevated. In the realm of the skin care industry, consumers cannot directly evaluate product quality, effectiveness, or suitability prior to making a purchase. Consequently, they heavily rely on online reviews from other users who have previous experience with the product. These reviews serve as a type of social proof, offering guidance and reassurance to prospective buyers. Positive reviews indicate product reliability and effectiveness, thus enhancing consumer trust and confidence. In contrast, negative reviews bring attention to potential risks, side effects, or dissatisfaction, prompting consumers to exercise caution or rethink their decisions.

Social Proof Theory elucidates why online reviews significantly impact consumer trust and purchasing behaviour. When a product garners a substantial number of positive reviews, consumers interpret this collective endorsement as proof of quality and safety. Even neutral or mixed reviews add to trust by showcasing authenticity and transparency. This theoretical framework reinforces the notion that consumer trust serves as a mediator between online reviews and purchasing decisions. In summary, Social Proof Theory is highly pertinent to this research, as it offers a coherent explanation for how and why online reviews shape consumer perceptions and behaviours in the skin care market. The theory provides a robust basis for examining the influence of online reviews on consumer trust and purchasing choices.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Lately, researchers have really dug into how online reviews shape what people buy, especially when it comes to e-commerce and skincare products. If you look at studies from 2023 to 2026, it's clear—these reviews play a big role in building trust, shaping attitudes, and even pushing people toward a purchase. People treat online reviews like advice from a friend, not just another sales pitch. That's because they come from real customers, not marketers, so folks tend to trust them more when reviews are detailed, genuine, and well-written, they help people figure out if a

product actually works—super important for stuff like skincare, where you can't always tell if something's safe or effective until you try it (Ahn & Lee, 2024; Rachmiani et al., 2024). The data backs this up: Online reviews don't just nudge people toward buying—they can seal the deal. Balanced, in-depth reviews build trust, and even negative feedback can make a product seem more real and trustworthy (Clutch, 2026). But it's not always positive. Sometimes, reviews can actually make shoppers trust a product less, depending on the situation and how the information is presented. Several theories try to explain why that happens.

2.2 Research gap

Despite the growing body of literature on online reviews and consumer behaviour, several important gaps remain unaddressed, particularly in the context of the skincare industry. Firstly, most existing studies focus on general e-commerce products and services, with limited attention given specifically to skincare products. Skincare purchases involve higher levels of personal risk due to their direct impact on health and appearance, making consumer trust a more critical factor. However, this sector remains underexplored in current research. Secondly, while prior studies acknowledge the importance of online reviews, there is insufficient examination of specific review characteristics such as authenticity, level of detail, inclusion of images or videos, and the presence of balanced opinions (both positive and negative). These elements play a significant role in shaping consumer trust but have not been comprehensively analysed. Thirdly, the issue of fake, biased, or promotional reviews has been widely recognized, yet there is limited empirical research on how such reviews influence consumer trust and decision-making. The mechanisms through which consumers identify and respond to misleading reviews remain unclear.

Additionally, many previous studies rely heavily on secondary data or theoretical models, with limited use of primary data collected directly from consumers. This creates a gap in understanding real consumer perceptions and behaviours in current digital environments. Furthermore, demographic factors such as age, gender, and online shopping experience have not been sufficiently explored in relation to how consumers interpret and respond to online reviews,

particularly in emerging markets like India. Finally, although existing research establishes a link between online reviews and purchase intention, the mediating role of consumer trust in this relationship has not been adequately investigated. Therefore, this study aims to bridge these gaps by focusing on the skincare industry, analysing key review characteristics, examining the impact of fake reviews, and exploring the role of consumer trust using primary data collected from consumers.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive and quantitative research design to examine the impact of online reviews on consumer trust in skincare products. The design helps in analyzing consumer perceptions and behaviour using structured data.

3.2 Data Collection Method

The study is based on primary data collection. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire created using Google Forms.

The questionnaire included close-ended questions based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from:

1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

The questions were designed to measure: Consumer trust Influence of online reviews Review credibility (images, detail, authenticity) Impact of positive and negative reviews

3.3 Sampling Method and Sample Size

A convenience sampling method was used to collect responses. The survey was distributed online through social media and personal networks.

Sample Size: 105 respondents

Respondents mainly included online skincare product users, particularly from the younger age group.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire link was shared digitally, and responses were collected over a specific period. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose of the study. All responses were recorded automatically through Google Forms.

3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data was analyzed using:

Percentage analysis
Frequency distribution

Chi-square test (χ^2) to test the hypothesis
The analysis was used to identify patterns, relationships, and the impact of online reviews on consumer trust.

3.6 Variables of the Study

Independent Variable: Online Reviews (positive, negative, credibility)

Dependent Variable: Consumer Trust

Control Variables: Demographic factors (age, gender, experience)

3.7 Hypothesis of the Study

H₀ (Null Hypothesis): Online reviews have no significant impact on consumer trust.

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis): Online reviews significantly influence consumer trust.

IV. DATA INTERPRETATIONS & DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Demographic Profile Of Respondent

Table 1 :- Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
Under 18	9	8.4%
18-25	65	60.7%
25-40	22	20.6%
40- Above	11	10.3%
Total	105	100%

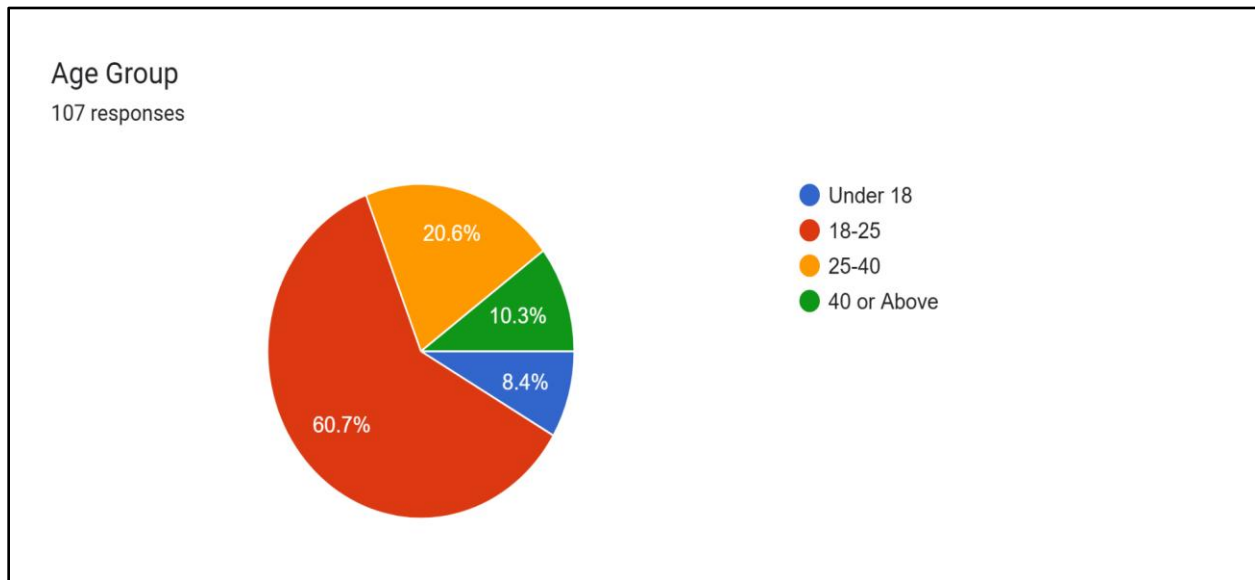


Figure 1 : Age Group Distribution of Respondents

The data shows how the respondents are spread across different age groups. Out of the total 105 respondents, most of them fall in the 18–25 age group, making up 60.7% of the sample. This clearly indicates that young adults form the largest part of the study and their opinions are likely to have a strong influence on the overall results. The next largest group is those aged 25–40, accounting for 20.6% of the respondents. This shows that a fair number of working-age individuals also took part in the survey.

On the other hand, participation from older individuals is comparatively lower. Only 10.3% of respondents are 40 years and above, while the under 18 group makes up just 8.4% of the total sample. Overall, the data suggests that the study is mostly centered around younger people, especially those between 18 and 25 years old. Since this group is generally more active online, their responses are especially relevant to understanding how online reviews affect consumer trust.

4.2 Data Analysis

Data collected from the survey were carefully analysed. The analysis showed that most consumers read online reviews. Many consumers trust products with positive reviews. Negative reviews make consumers more cautious. Reviews help buyers compare products. Trust increases when reviews seem honest. Some consumers avoid products with bad reviews. The results highlight the importance of reviews. Simple percentages were used for analysis.

This made interpretation easy. The findings support the study objectives.

Sample Size: 105 respondents

Scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

Table 2 : Respondents Sheets

Q.No	Questions	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Read online reviews before buying skincare products	4	7	21	42	31
2.	Reviews are main info source	4	9	25	41	26
3.	Compare multiple reviews	3	7	17	44	31
4.	Star ratings influence my purchase decision	3	8	22	41	31
5.	Reviews by verified buyers are trustworthy	4	7	25	41	27
6.	Reviews with images/videos are more credible	3	4	15	49	33
7.	Reviews mentioning skin type are more reliable	3	7	19	42	34
8.	Reviews with images/videos are more credible	2	3	16	58	26
9.	Detailed reviews increase my trust	5	7	15	46	31
10.	Balanced reviews (pros & cons) seem genuine	3	3	24	43	32
11.	Too many positive reviews make me suspicious	2	5	23	49	25
12.	Positive reviews increase my trust in products	1	4	15	55	30
13.	Negative reviews reduce my trust	1	4	17	51	30
14.	Fake or promotional reviews reduce trust	4	3	15	46	34
15.	Online reviews are essential in skin care buying	2	5	23	46	29

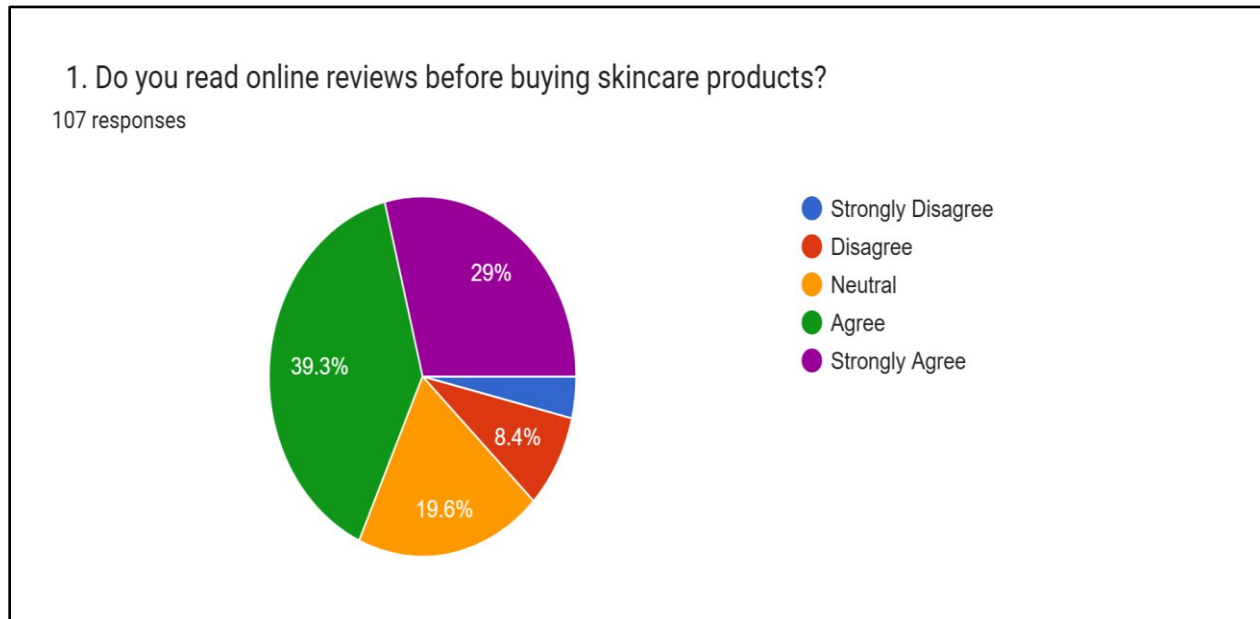


Figure 2 : Distribution of Respondents Reading Online Skincare Reviews

Most respondents (around 68%) either agree or strongly agree that they read online reviews before buying skincare products, showing a strong habit of checking reviews. A smaller portion remains neutral or disagrees, indicating that only a few consumers rely less on reviews.

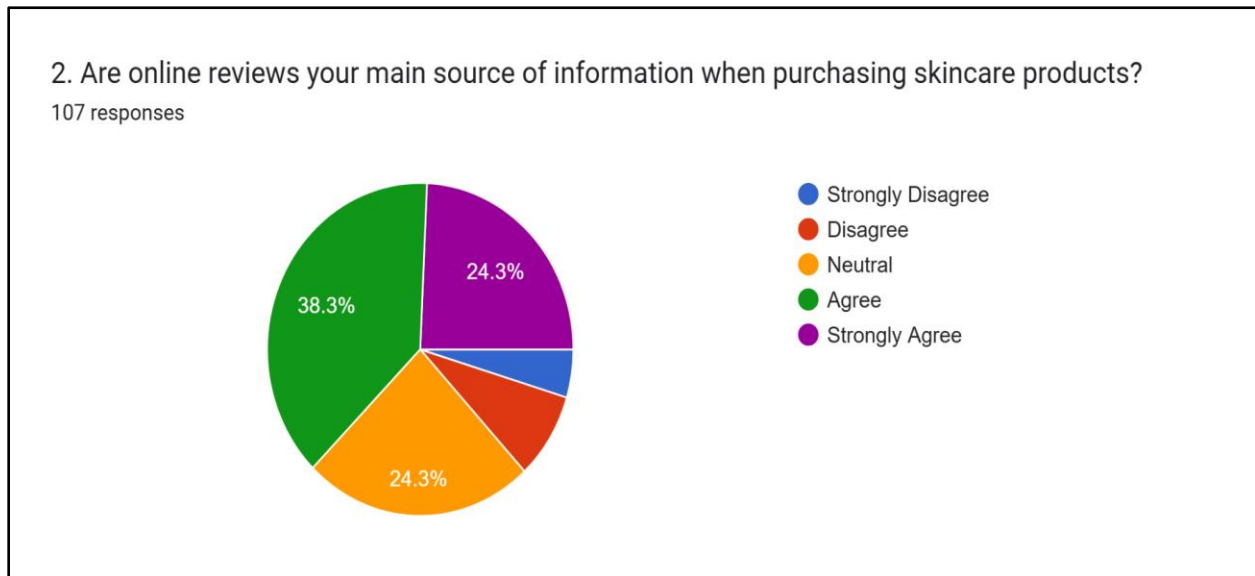


Figure 3 : Preference for Online Reviews as Primary Information Source

A significant share of respondents (over 60%) consider online reviews as their main source of information, highlighting their importance in decision-making. However, a noticeable neutral and disagreeing group suggests that some consumers still depend on alternative sources like personal recommendations or brand trust.

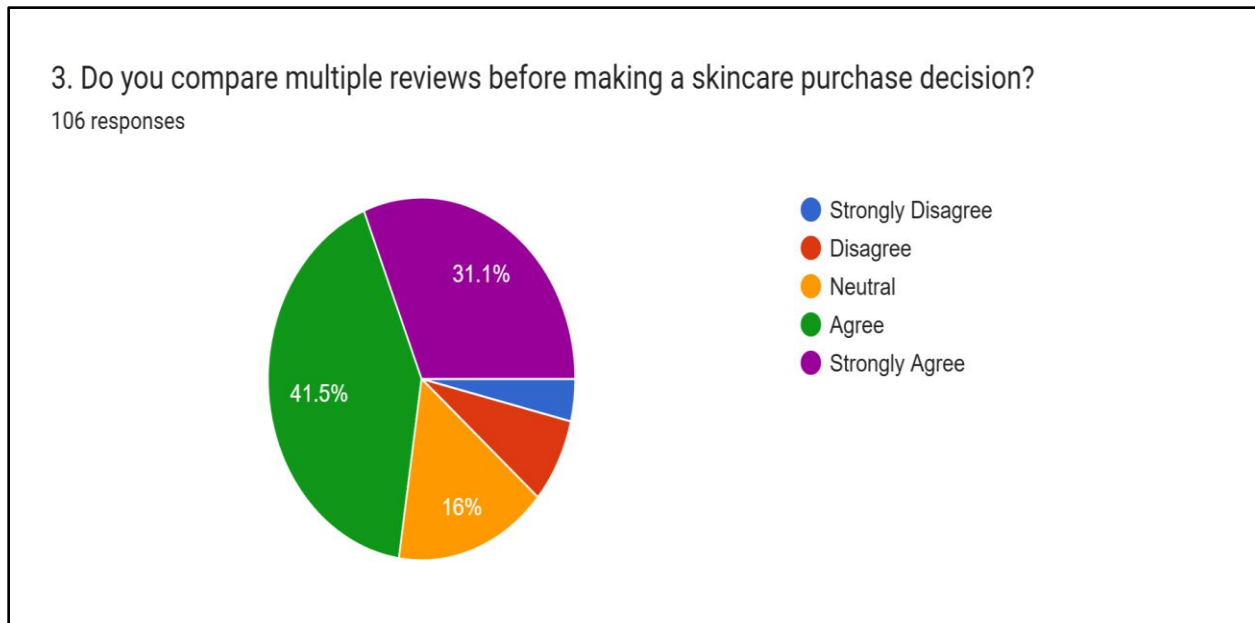


Figure 4 : Comparison Behavior of Multiple Skincare Reviews

Across all age groups, a majority of respondents agree or strongly agree that they compare multiple reviews before making a skincare purchase, confirming that cross-referencing is a common practice. However, a consistent minority remains neutral or disagrees, suggesting that some consumers still rely on simpler decision-making cues such as brand trust or personal recommendations.

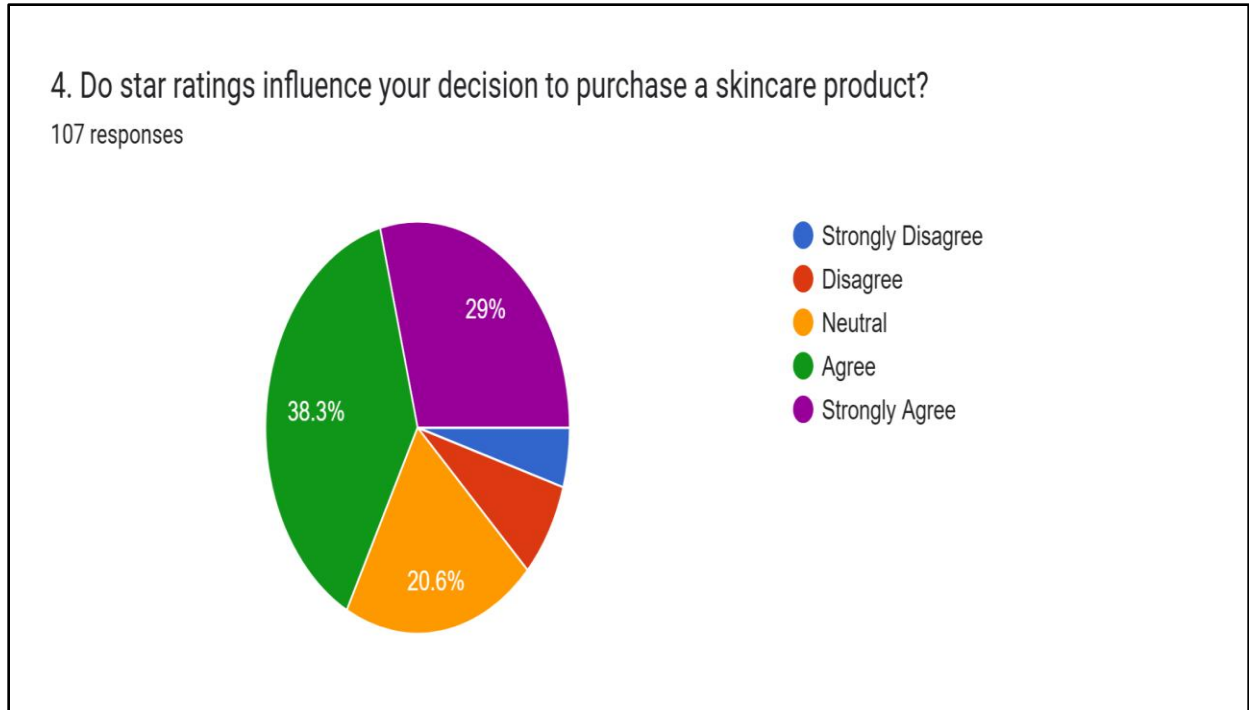


Figure 5 : Influence of Star Ratings on Purchase Decisions

Nearly 60% of respondents agree or strongly agree that star ratings influence their purchase decisions, while 29% remain neutral—indicating that ratings matter to most, but a significant group is undecided or looks at other factors.

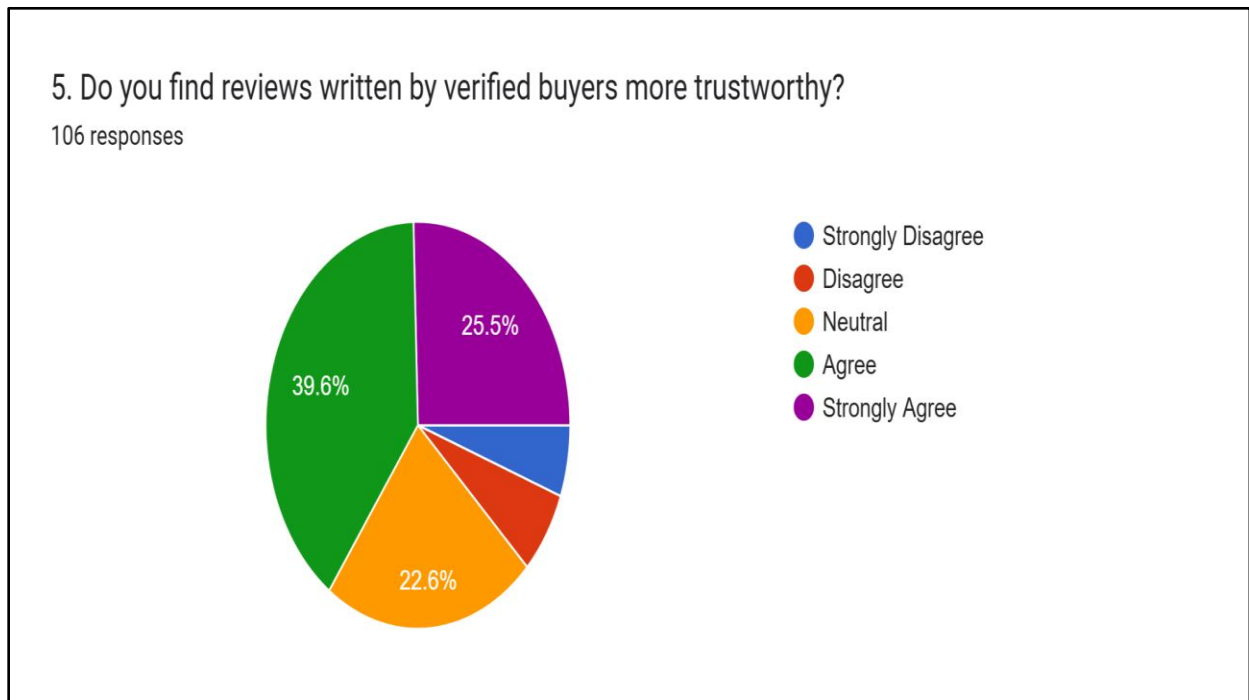


Figure 6 : Trust in Reviews by Verified Buyers

Over 62% agree or strongly agree that reviews from verified buyers are more trustworthy, making this the strongest positive response. This suggests that authenticity cues significantly boost consumer confidence in online reviews.

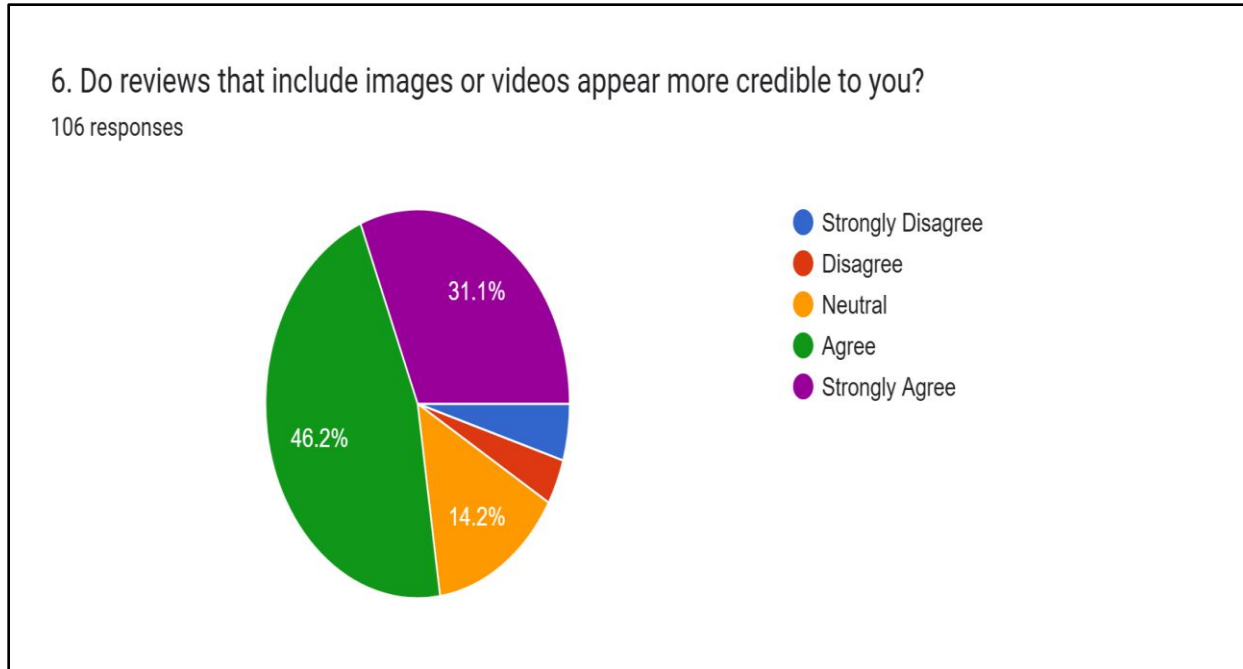


Figure 7 : Perception of Credibility of Reviews with Images/Videos

Over 46% of respondents agree, with another 14.2% strongly agreeing, meaning more than 60% find visual content credible. Only about 8% disagree, indicating that images and videos strongly enhance perceived trustworthiness across most age groups.

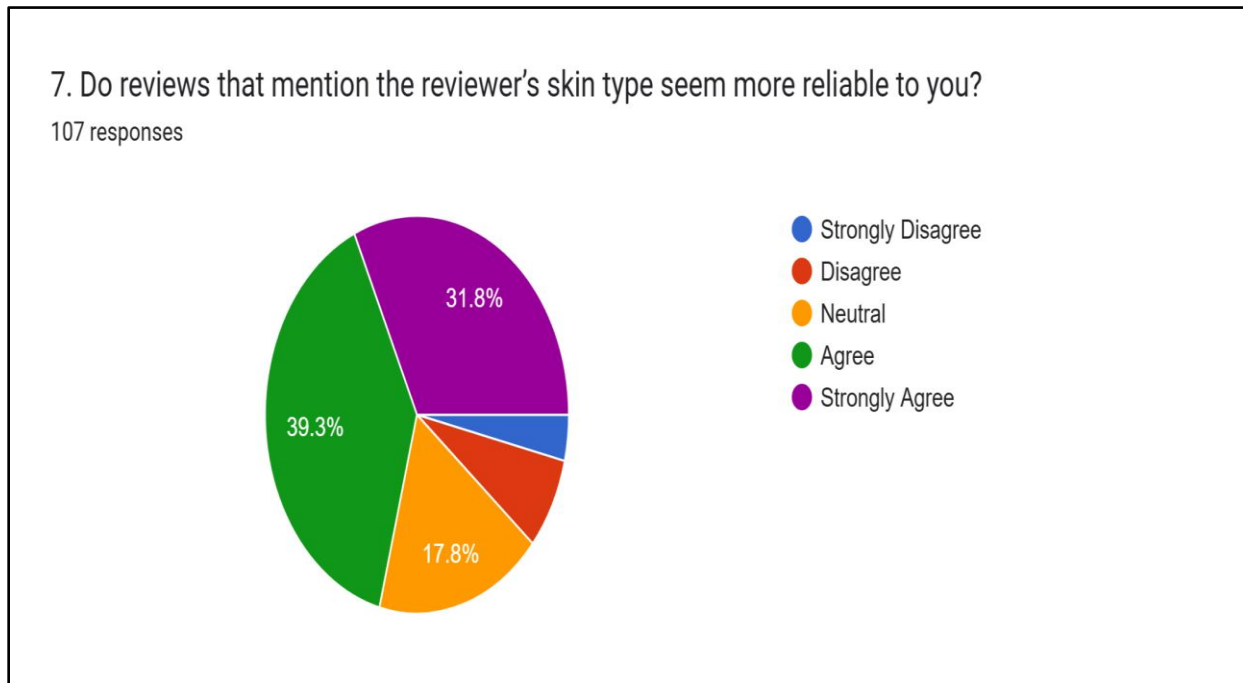


Figure 8 : Reliability of Reviews Mentioning Skin Type

Nearly 40% agree and 17.8% strongly agree, totaling close to 58% who find skin type references reliable. However, a notable 31.8% remain neutral, suggesting that while personalization helps, many consumers still require additional cues before fully trusting such reviews.

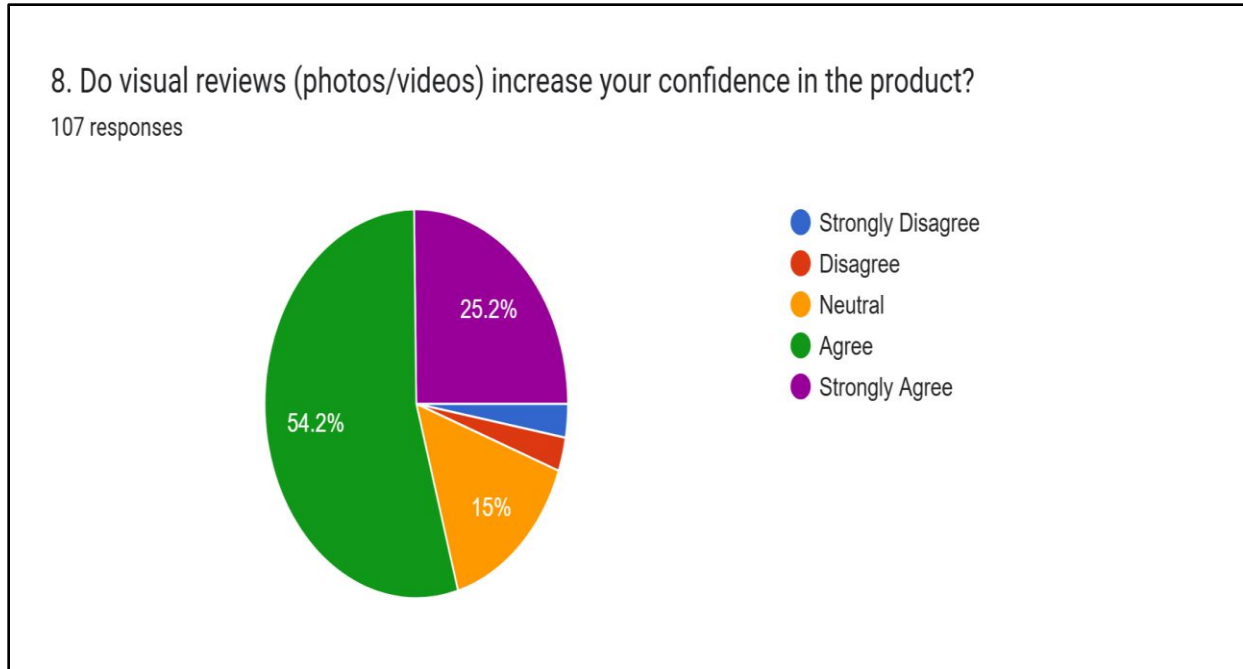


Figure 9 : Credibility of Visual Content (Images/Videos) in Reviews

Over 54% agree and 15% strongly agree, totaling nearly 70% who feel more confident with visual content. This is the highest positive response so far, confirming that photos and videos strongly boost product confidence across age groups.

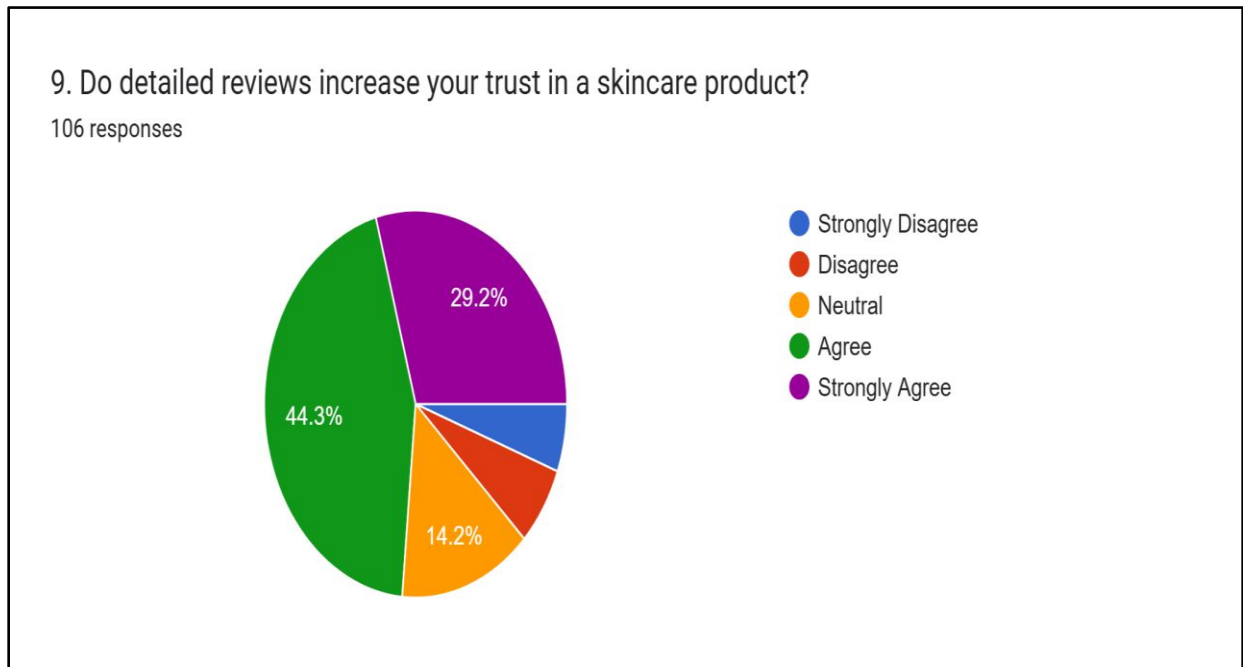


Figure 10 : Trust Based on Detailed Product Reviews

Nearly 44% agree and 14.2% strongly agree, meaning about 58% find detailed reviews more trustworthy. The strong positive majority indicates that consumers value thorough, descriptive feedback over superficial ratings or brief comments.

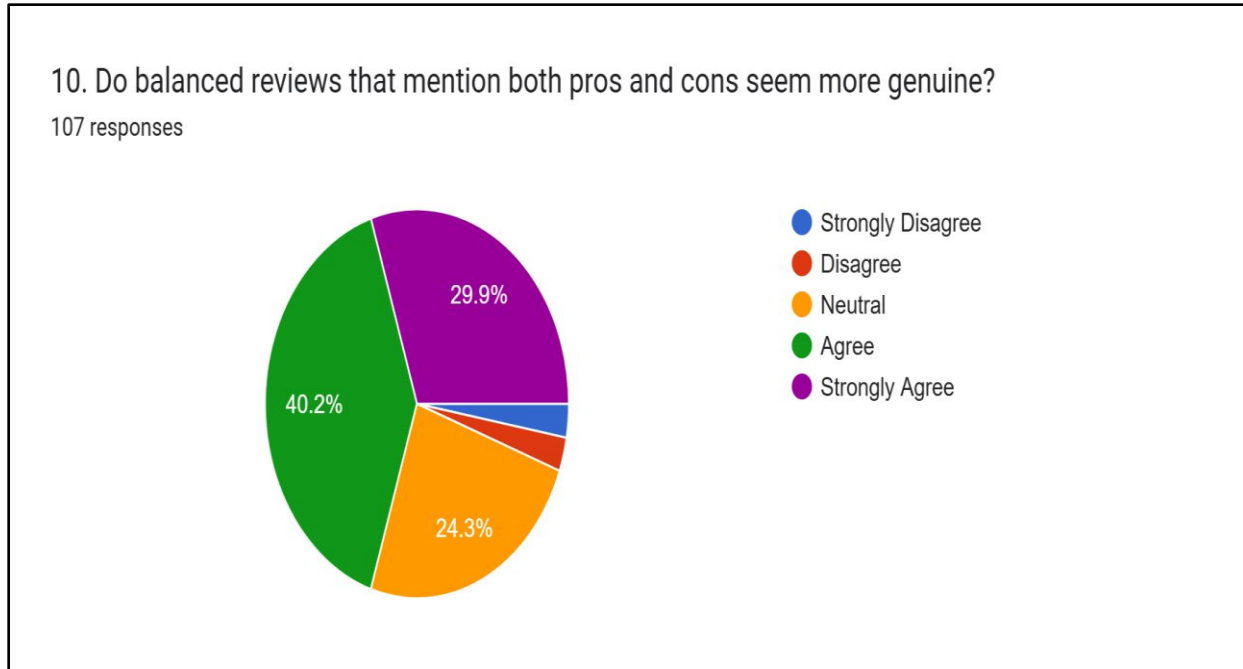


Figure 11 : Perception of Balanced Reviews (Pros & Cons)

Most respondents have a positive view, with a large number agreeing that reviews build trust. A good portion even strongly agrees, showing strong confidence in positive feedback. Some remain neutral, indicating a few people are still unsure. Very few disagreed, so overall perception is clearly favorable.

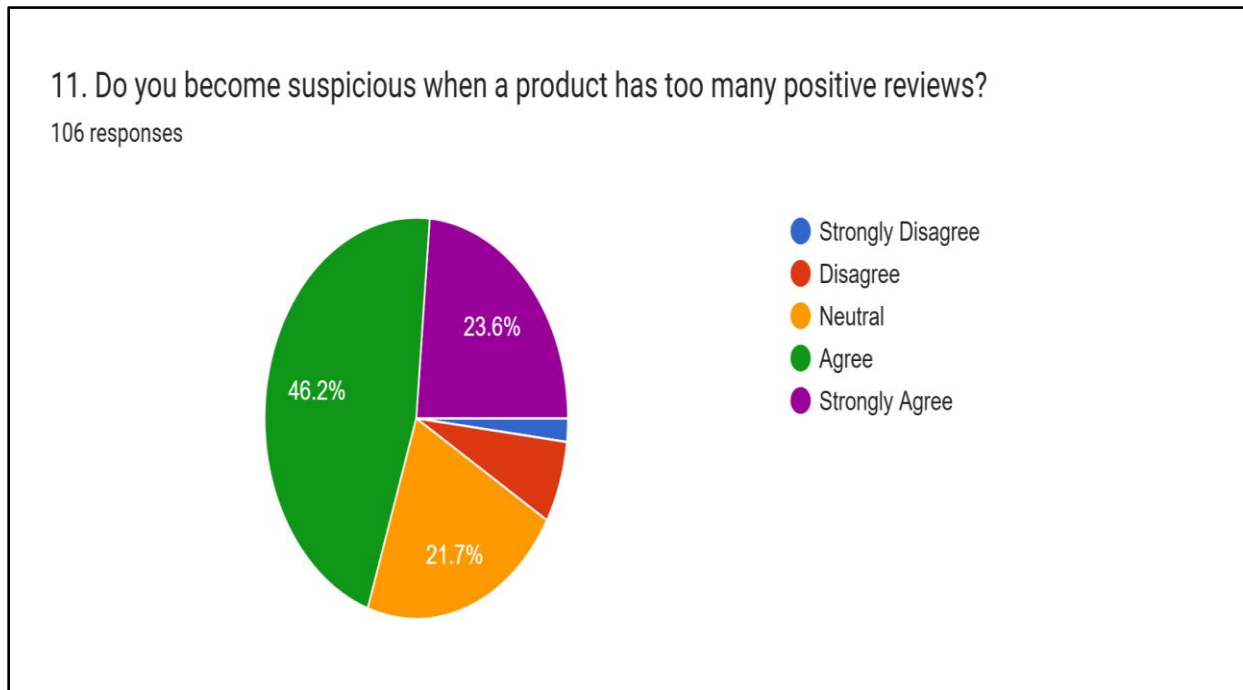


Figure 12 : Suspicion Towards Excessively Positive Reviews

A majority of respondents feel that negative reviews reduce their trust in a product. Many strongly agree, showing that bad feedback has a strong impact. A small group is neutral, possibly depending on context before judging. Very few disagreed, indicating that negative reviews generally influence buying decisions.

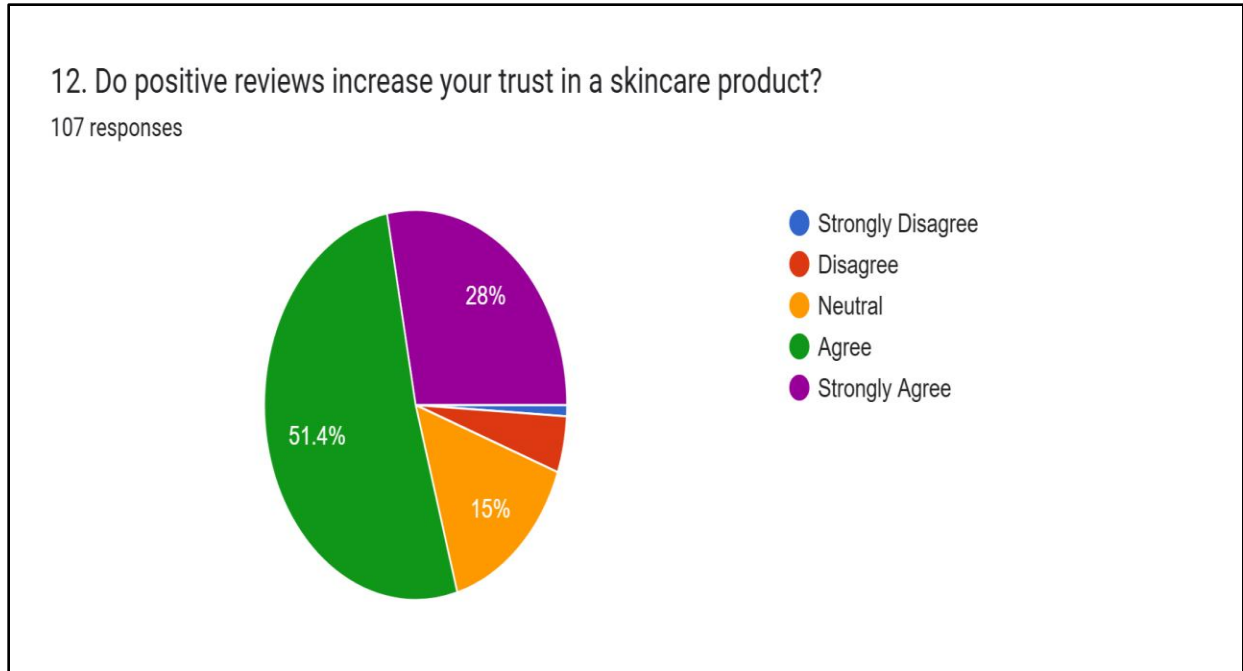


Figure 13 : Impact of Positive Reviews on Trust

Most people feel more confident about buying a skincare product when they see positive reviews. It clearly shows that good feedback from others helps build trust and encourages purchase decisions.

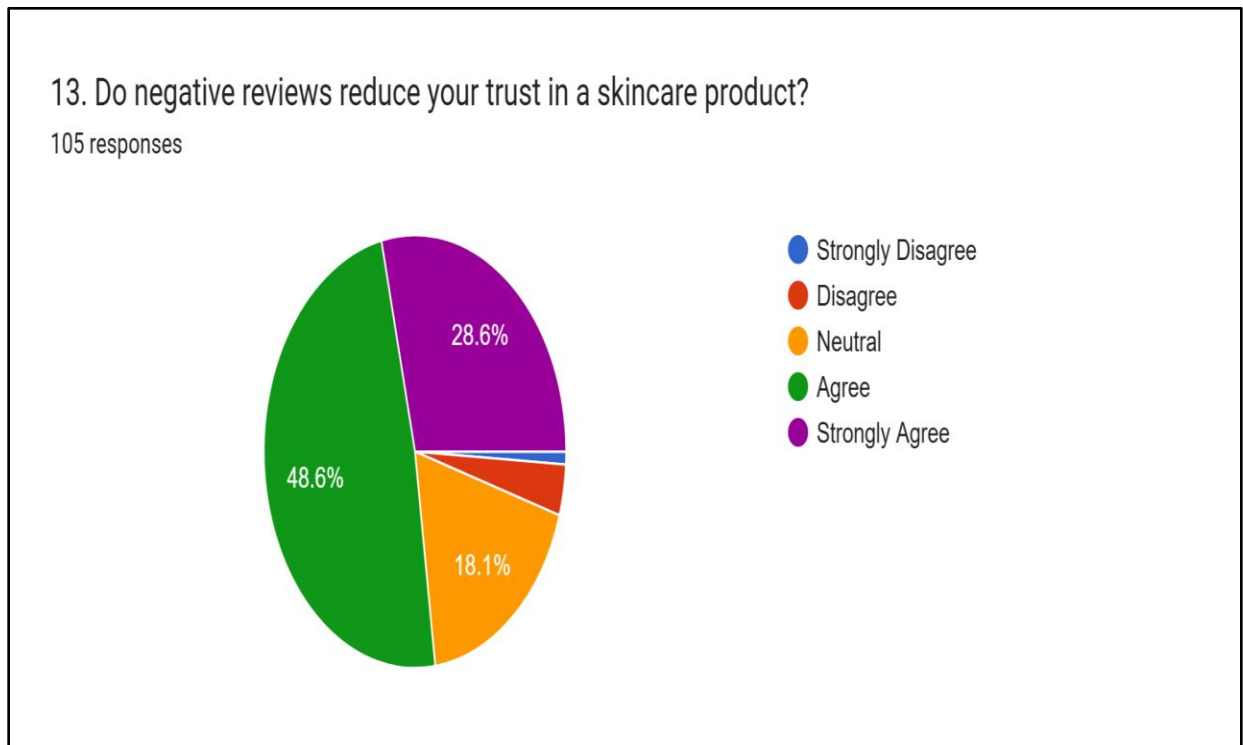


Figure 14 : Impact of Negative Reviews on Trust

At the same time, negative reviews have a strong impact, making people doubtful about the product. Many respondents said that bad experiences shared by others reduce their trust and make them think twice before buying

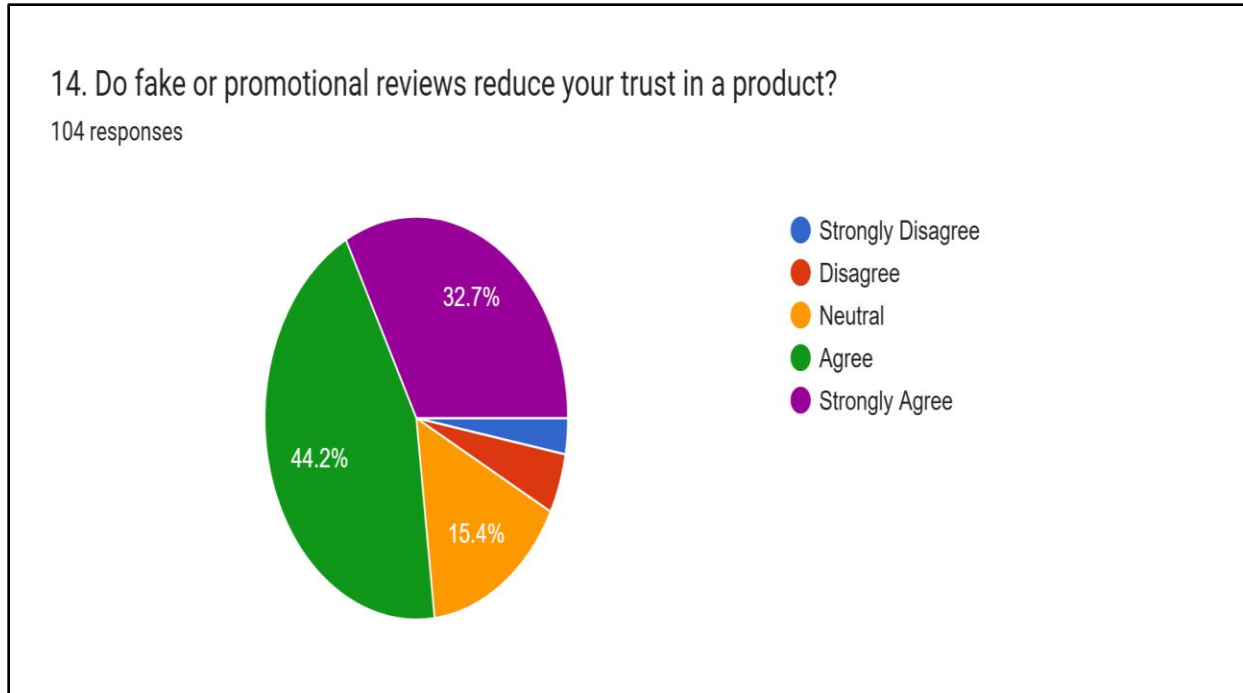


Figure 15 : Effect of Fake or Promotional Reviews on Trust

A clear majority of respondents agree or strongly agree that fake or promotional reviews reduce their trust in a product. This shows that authenticity is very important for consumers while making decisions. A smaller group remains neutral, possibly unsure about identifying fake reviews. Very few respondents disagreed, indicating that most people are negatively influenced by such reviews.



Figure 16: Importance of Online Reviews in Skincare Purchase Decisions

The majority of respondents believe that online reviews are essential when buying skincare products, with a large portion agreeing and strongly agreeing. This highlights the strong influence of reviews on consumer decisions. A moderate number of respondents remain neutral, suggesting some still rely on other factors. Very few disagreed, indicating that online reviews are widely considered important.

4.3 Data Interpretation

Online reviews function as a form of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) and play a significant role in shaping consumer perceptions and trust. While positive reviews can enhance trust, several theoretical perspectives explain how online reviews may reduce consumer trust.

Hypotheses

H₀: Online reviews have no significant impact on consumer trust in skincare products.

H₁: Online reviews significantly influence consumer trust in skincare products.

Positive reviews increase my trust in skincare products.

Response	Frequency
Strongly Disagree	1
Disagree	4
Neutral	15
Agree	55
Strongly Agree	30
Total	105

$$Expected\ Frequency = \frac{105}{5} = 21$$

$$\chi^2 = \frac{\sum(O-E)^2}{E}$$

Where

O = Observed frequency

E = Expected frequency

Calculation of Chi Square Testing

Response	O	E	(O-E)	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
Strongly Disagree	1	21	-20	400	19.05
Disagree	4	21	-17	289	13.76
Neutral	15	21	-6	36	1.71
Agree	55	21	34	1156	55.05
Strongly Agree	30	21	9	481	3.86
Total					93.43

$$\chi^2=93.43$$

C.V (93.43) > T.V (9.488), Therefore Reject H₀

There is a significant relationship between online reviews and consumer trust in skincare products.

Thus, online reviews significantly influence consumer trust and purchasing decisions.

V. DISCUSSION

This section examines the significance and consequences of the study's findings concerning the research goals and theoretical framework. The results show that online reviews significantly impact consumer trust and purchasing choices in the skin care sector. A considerable number of consumers indicated that they depend on online reviews prior to making purchase decisions, which aligns with previous studies on electronic word-of-mouth and consumer behaviour. The research also indicates that genuine and comprehensive reviews enhance consumer confidence, whereas fake, exaggerated, or misleading

reviews diminish trust in both products and online platforms. These results underscore the critical role of review credibility in shaping consumer perceptions. Both positive and negative reviews were found to be impactful; positive reviews foster trust and stimulate purchases, while negative reviews alert consumers to potential risks, enabling them to make more cautious and informed choices. Consumers expressed a preference for balanced reviews that highlight both advantages and disadvantages, as such reviews are viewed as more genuine.

The findings align with Social Proof Theory, which posits that individuals depend on the opinions and experiences of others when confronted with uncertainty. In the realm of online shopping, where physical evaluation of products is not feasible, reviews act as social proof that influences consumer behaviour. In summary, the discussion illustrates that online reviews serve as a crucial mechanism for building trust, emphasizing their significance in consumer decision-making within the skin care market.

VI. FINDINGS

The study identified several important findings. Online reviews influence consumer trust. Consumers prefer honest and detailed reviews. Positive reviews increase confidence. Negative reviews create awareness. Both types of reviews affect decisions. Trust plays a key role in buying behavior. Consumers rely on others' experiences. Reviews reduce uncertainty. These findings support previous studies. They highlight the importance of reviews.

Most respondents (around 68%) either agree or strongly agree that they read online reviews before buying skincare products, showing a strong habit of checking reviews. A smaller portion remains neutral or disagrees, indicating that only a few consumers rely less on reviews.

A significant share of respondents (over 60%) consider online reviews as their main source of information, highlighting their importance in decision-making. However, a noticeable neutral and disagreeing group suggests that some consumers still depend on alternative sources like personal recommendations or brand trust.

Across all age groups, a majority of respondents agree or strongly agree that they compare multiple reviews before making a skincare purchase, confirming that cross-referencing is a common practice. However, a consistent minority remains neutral or disagrees, suggesting that some consumers still rely on simpler decision-making cues such as brand trust or personal recommendations.

Nearly 60% of respondents agree or strongly agree that star ratings influence their purchase decisions, while 29% remain neutral—indicating that ratings matter to most, but a significant group is undecided or looks at other factors.

Over 62% agree or strongly agree that reviews from verified buyers are more trustworthy, making this the strongest positive response. This suggests that authenticity cues significantly boost consumer confidence in online reviews.

Over 46% of respondents agree, with another 14.2% strongly agreeing, meaning more than 60% find visual content credible. Only about 8% disagree, indicating that images and videos strongly enhance perceived trustworthiness across most age groups.

Nearly 40% agree and 17.8% strongly agree, totaling close to 58% who find skin type references reliable.

However, a notable 31.8% remain neutral, suggesting that while personalization helps, many consumers still require additional cues before fully trusting such reviews.

Over 54% agree and 15% strongly agree, totaling nearly 70% who feel more confident with visual content. This is the highest positive response so far, confirming that photos and videos strongly boost product confidence across age groups.

Nearly 44% agree and 14.2% strongly agree, meaning about 58% find detailed reviews more trustworthy. The strong positive majority indicates that consumers value thorough, descriptive feedback over superficial ratings or brief comments.

Most respondents have a positive view, with a large number agreeing that reviews build trust. A good portion even strongly agrees, showing strong confidence in positive feedback. Some remain neutral, indicating a few people are still unsure. Very few disagreed, so overall perception is clearly favorable.

A majority of respondents feel that negative reviews reduce their trust in a product. Many strongly agree, showing that bad feedback has a strong impact. A small group is neutral, possibly depending on context before judging. Very few disagreed, indicating that negative reviews generally influence buying decisions.

Most people feel more confident about buying a skincare product when they see positive reviews. It clearly shows that good feedback from others helps build trust and encourages purchase decisions.

At the same time, negative reviews have a strong impact, making people doubtful about the product. Many respondents said that bad experiences shared by others reduce their trust and make them think twice before buying

A clear majority of respondents agree or strongly agree that fake or promotional reviews reduce their trust in a product. This shows that authenticity is very important for consumers while making decisions. A smaller group remains neutral, possibly unsure about identifying fake reviews. Very few respondents disagreed, indicating that most people are negatively influenced by such reviews.

The majority of respondents believe that online reviews are essential when buying skincare products, with a large portion agreeing and strongly agreeing. This highlights the strong influence of reviews on consumer decisions. A moderate number of

respondents remain neutral, suggesting some still rely on other factors. Very few disagreed, indicating that online reviews are widely considered important.

VII. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that online reviews play a major role in consumer trust. Skin care products require careful selection. Reviews help consumers feel confident. Genuine reviews reduce the risk of wrong choices. Trust influences purchasing decisions. Online reviews act as guidance for buyers. Consumers rely on others' experiences. The study confirms the importance of reviews. It supports Social Proof Theory. Online reviews will remain important.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study, several recommendations are made. Online platforms should remove fake reviews. Only verified users should be allowed to review. Brands should encourage honest feedback. Consumers should read multiple reviews. Reviews should be clear and detailed. Skin care brands should proactively promote honest and transparent customer feedback. Addressing both positive and negative reviews in a professional manner reflects accountability, fosters consumer trust, and can enhance brand reputation. Furthermore, companies can supply more detailed product information, such as ingredient lists and usage instructions, to supplement online reviews and alleviate consumer uncertainty.

Consumers are encouraged to read a variety of reviews, weigh both positive and negative perspectives, and concentrate on detailed and credible feedback prior to making purchasing decisions. They should also compare reviews across various platforms to obtain a well-rounded understanding of product performance. Ultimately, emphasizing trust, authenticity, and effective review management can boost consumer confidence, diminish perceived risk, and promote informed purchasing choices. By adopting these strategies, online platforms and brands can cultivate long-term customer loyalty and enhance the overall online shopping experience in the skin care industry.

REFERENCE:

- [1] GoodFirms Research. (2026). Consumer behavior and the growing impact of online reviews in e-commerce. GoodFirms Industry Report.
- [2] Sinaga, O., & Muitia, R. (2025). The influence of online review credibility on consumer trust and purchase intention in digital marketplaces. *Journal of Marketing Analytics*.
- [3] Rathod, P. N., Tokariya, B., & Solani, K. (2025). Online consumer reviews and their influence on consumer buying behaviour: A study with reference to Gujarat. *Journal of Informatics Education and Research*.
- [4] Ahn, J., & Lee, S. (2024). The impact of online review credibility and content quality on consumer trust and purchase intention in e-commerce platforms. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*.
- [5] Rachmiani, N., Hidayat, A., & Prabowo, H. (2024). The role of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in influencing consumer trust and buying behavior in digital marketplaces. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*.
- [6] Sharma, J., Agarwal, B., & Malati, N. (2024). Examining the factors influencing eWOM through social networking sites and the effect of eWOM on consumers' purchase intention. *Indian Journal of Marketing*.
- [7] Chatterjee, S., Chaudhuri, R., Vrontis, D., & Thrassou, A. (2021). The influence of online customer reviews on customers' purchase intentions: A cross-cultural study from India and the UK. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*.
- [8] Ismagilova, E., Slade, E., Rana, N., & Dwivedi, Y. (2020). The effect of electronic word-of-mouth communications on consumer purchase intentions: A meta-analysis. *Information Systems Frontiers*.
- [9] Filieri, R., McLeay, F., Tsui, B., & Lin, Z. (2018). Consumer perceptions of information helpfulness and determinants of purchase intention in online consumer reviews of services. *Information & Management*.
- [10] Erkan, I., & Evans, C. (2018). The influence of eWOM in social media on consumers' purchase intentions. *Computers in Human Behavior*.

- [11] Lackermair, G., Kailer, D., & Kanmaz, K. (2016). Importance of online product reviews from a consumer's perspective. *Advances in Economics and Business*.
- [12] Filieri, R. (2015). What makes online reviews helpful? A diagnosticity–adoption framework to explain informational and normative influences in e-WOM. *Journal of Business Research*.