

Customer Reviews And Bamboo Product Selection: A Green Market Study In Pune City

¹Shipra Mishra, ²Dr. Peeyush Ranjan Upadhyay

¹Ph.D Scholar, SRK University, Bhopal.

²Associate Professor, SRK University, Bhopal.

Abstract

This research investigates the impact of customer reviews on the purchase of bamboo products in Pune City, with a focus on green marketing. A survey conducted using Google Forms and disseminated through various online channels garnered 183 responses, primarily from the 18 to 30 age demographic. The study explores demographic backgrounds, perceptions of online reviews, shopping preferences, and the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on purchasing habits. Results indicate that customer reviews significantly affect buying decisions for bamboo products, particularly in the online shopping environment. Participants show a preference for online shopping, especially in the 18 to 25 age group, when it comes to bamboo items. The study also highlights the emotional connection participants have with customer reviews, underlining their significance in the green product market. While acknowledging study limitations, these findings shed light on the role of customer reviews in shaping consumer behavior towards bamboo products in Pune City's green market.

Keywords: Customer reviews, Bamboo products, Purchasing habits, Green marketing, Online shopping

1. Introduction

Green marketing is an indispensable facet for organizations across various industries. The American Marketing Association (AMA) provides a comprehensive definition, stating that green marketing encompasses the promotion of products that are perceived to be environmentally friendly and safe. This multifaceted approach to green marketing includes a spectrum of initiatives, such as product enhancements, alterations in production methodologies, packaging refinements, and adjustments to advertising strategies. The concept of green

marketing is not easily confined to a singular definition, as it encompasses a multitude of interpretations that often overlap and sometimes even contradict each other. In addition to the term "green marketing," several related phrases are used interchangeably within the field, including "environmental marketing," "sustainable marketing," and "ecological marketing." [1] In essence, green marketing represents a commitment to environmental responsibility and sustainability in the realm of commerce. It involves a proactive approach by organizations to align their products and practices with ecological principles, thereby meeting the evolving demands of environmentally conscious consumers and contributing to a more sustainable future. Green Marketing is a multifaceted approach that revolves around three core principles: firstly, it advocates for the promotion of pure and high-quality products; secondly, it emphasizes fair and equitable treatment of both customers and society at large; and thirdly, it places a strong emphasis on environmental preservation [2]. Environmental problems have gained importance in business and personal life of people across globe. Everybody wealthy or poor would have an interest in quality life and health so would the corporate category. Therefore during this situation of worldwide concern , corporate homes has taken green-marketing as a part and parcel of their strategy to push product by using environmental claims either regarding their attributes or regarding the systems, policies and processes of the corporations that manufacture or sell them. Alongside manipulating the standard selling combine (product, price, promotion and place). The concept of Green Marketing covers a broad range of activities. Green Marketing encompasses a broad range of activities as well as product modification, modification to production method, packaging modification and modifying advertising [3]. In today's complex business landscape, organizations have a significant impact on economic and societal behaviors, playing a crucial role in the entire process from product creation to consumption. These businesses not only contribute to economic growth but also hold the responsibility of enhancing the overall quality of life, which encompasses the quality and quantity of goods and services available to consumers as well as the environmental quality. Green Marketing serves as a guiding philosophy that urges businesses to prioritize responsible production, equitable customer relations, and environmental sustainability, recognizing their significant influence on society's well-being and the planet's health [4]. Initially, the study aims to analyze

how customer reviews influence purchasing decisions, comparing the dynamics between online and traditional shopping methods. This inquiry sets the stage for a deeper exploration into how these reviews specifically affect the selection of green products among consumers in Pune City. Building on this foundation, the study further examines the significance of published customer reviews, scrutinizing their impact across both online and traditional platforms of green marketing within the same urban setting. This comprehensive approach aims to unravel the multifaceted relationship between consumer feedback and green product marketing strategies, highlighting the evolving consumer behavior in the digital age.

2. Literature Review

This synthesis explores the evolving landscape of green marketing within small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and its broader implications on organizational sustainability, consumer behavior, and market dynamics across various sectors and geographical contexts.

The research underscores the significance of green marketing as a strategic imperative for SMEs, particularly in the face of globalization's challenges and opportunities. **Chester et al. (2023) [5]** emphasize the need for innovative approaches to navigate green marketing obstacles, highlighting the potential for enhanced productivity and market competitiveness through environmentally conscious practices in Tamil Nadu, India. This regional focus sheds light on the practical applications and benefits of green marketing strategies for local SMEs, suggesting a path toward economic and environmental synergy.

Further analysis extends to the organizational impacts of green marketing within the developing world, notably in Palestinian food industries. **Ala Braik et al. (2023) [6]** show that the adoption of green marketing practices contributes variably to firms' environmental, economic, and social performance, pointing to a nuanced relationship between green initiatives and organizational outcomes. This insight broadens the understanding of green marketing's role in fostering sustainable development within emerging market contexts. Additionally, the discourse explores the consumer perspective, examining the effectiveness of green marketing in influencing purchasing intentions and behaviors. Studies from Algeria and Pakistan, among others, reveal a complex interplay of factors

including environmental awareness, attitudes, and green labeling, that shape consumer responses to green marketing efforts, as reported by **Alalei, A., & Jan, M. T. (2023) [7]** and **Iqbal, A., et al. (2023) [8]**. These findings underscore the importance of tailored marketing strategies that resonate with the evolving consumer values towards sustainability. **Alkandi, I., et al. (2023) [9]** propounds the comparative analysis of green product buying behaviors in Saudi Arabia and India offers a cross-cultural view on the determinants of eco-friendly purchasing decisions, highlighting the role of environmental concern and awareness. This comparative approach provides valuable insights for policymakers and marketers aiming to encourage green consumption across diverse demographic segments. Moreover, the exploration of green marketing strategies by **Nair, S. B., & Aithal, P. S. (2023) [10]** in the context of green personal care products among millennials in emerging economies reveals significant correlations between green marketing mix strategies and consumer buying intentions, mediated by environmental attitudes. This demographic-specific study adds depth to the understanding of how green marketing can effectively engage younger consumers, a critical target segment for sustainable products. The recent focus on green marketing and sustainable consumption has ignited significant interest, revealing a dynamic interplay between environmental awareness and consumer behavior across various sectors. **Geng and Maimaituerxun's (2022) [11]** study employs CiteSpace for a comprehensive bibliometric analysis, illustrating the burgeoning interest and collaboration in green marketing's role within sustainable consumption. Their findings indicate a growing publication trend and highlight emerging research directions, emphasizing the need for a multidisciplinary approach to deepen the understanding of green marketing's impact. Parallel to this, **Reddy et al. (2023) [12]** explored the consumer perspective on green marketing towards eco-friendly fast-moving consumer goods. Their research, conducted through surveys among 702 respondents, reveals a high level of environmental awareness and preference for eco-friendly products among consumers, underlining the increasing importance of green marketing strategies in influencing consumer choices and promoting sustainable development. **Mishal et al. (2017) [13]** further explore the relationships between environmental consciousness, green purchase behavior, and various influencing factors. Their empirical study uncovers the direct impacts of environmental

consciousness on purchase attitudes and behaviors, though it also notes challenges such as product availability, cost, and brand reputation as barriers to green purchasing. This study emphasizes the gap between environmental consciousness and actual green purchasing behavior, suggesting areas for further research and intervention. In an urban food market context, **Xara-Brasil et al. (2023) [14]** investigate the green orientation of consumers, retailers, and producers. Their findings reveal a high level of green orientation among consumers and retailers, but a lesser degree among producers, suggesting a need for targeted marketing efforts and training programs to enhance sustainability practices across the food production and retail sectors. Lastly, **Qayyum et al. (2023) [15]** addressed the complexities of green marketing, greenwashing, and their effects on green brand equity. Through an experimental study, they identify the detrimental impact of greenwashing and excessive product packaging on brand equity, while also highlighting the moderating role of brand credibility in mitigating these negative effects. This research underscores the critical balance between genuine green marketing efforts and the risks of greenwashing, pointing towards strategic implications for marketers aiming to uphold environmental integrity and consumer trust.

Collectively, these studies offer valuable insights into the evolving landscape of green marketing and sustainable consumption. They reflect a consensus on the need for integrated, multidisciplinary research to further understand and leverage green marketing's potential in driving sustainable consumer behavior and organizational practices.

3. Methodology

To explore the impact of customer reviews on the purchase of green products in Pune City, a survey was conducted using Google Forms and disseminated via social media channels like Facebook and Instagram, as well as through direct messaging platforms including email, Messenger, and WhatsApp. Snowball and convenience sampling methods facilitated a broad participant engagement, yielding 183 responses predominantly from the 18 to 30 age demographic over the period from October 30 to December 6, 2023. The survey explored the demographic backgrounds, perceptions on online reviews, preferences between online and offline shopping habits, and the COVID-19 pandemic's influence on purchasing habits, employing a seven-point Likert scale for response

evaluation. Supporting the primary survey data, secondary sources from scholarly articles, books, and prior studies were utilized to enhance the research context, demonstrating the efficiency and expansive reach of online surveys in collecting unbiased data across diverse demographics. Data analysis, executed with SPSS and Excel, was instrumental in translating survey responses into actionable insights. It involved categorizing data into independent variables, such as demographic information, and dependent variables like purchasing intentions and motivations towards bamboo products. Descriptive and comparative analyses, facilitated by a detailed Likert scale, visually presented through pie, bar, and combination charts, illuminated consumer preferences and attitudes toward bamboo products (i.e., Organic bamboo toothbrush, Bamboo Utensils, Bamboo Straws, Bamboo Furniture, Bamboo Kitchenware) in Pune's green market. This methodical data collection and analysis approach provided a nuanced understanding of the dynamics between consumer reviews, green marketing tactics, and purchasing decisions, revealing significant insights into Pune City's green product consumption behavior.

In the digital age, the influence of customer reviews on purchasing decisions cannot be understated, particularly in the realm of green marketing. This study delves into the comparative impact of customer reviews on green product purchases in Pune City, hypothesizing that online customer reviews have a more profound effect than those in traditional shopping environments.

H1: Customer reviews more strongly affect online than traditional green product purchases in Pune City.

This hypothesis, designated as H1, posits that the digital platform amplifies the power of customer feedback, significantly shaping consumer behavior towards green products.

4. Results & Analysis

The first section provides a detailed overview of the demographic characteristics of the surveyed sample. Following this, we delve into the factors that play a role in the decision-making process between online and offline shopping. Subsequently, a thorough exploration is conducted to understand the influence of customer reviews.

A. Sample Characteristics

A total of 541 individuals took part in the survey. Among the respondents, 51.4% were male, while 48.6% were female. Additionally, Figure-1 illustrates the frequency distribution of gender among the participants.

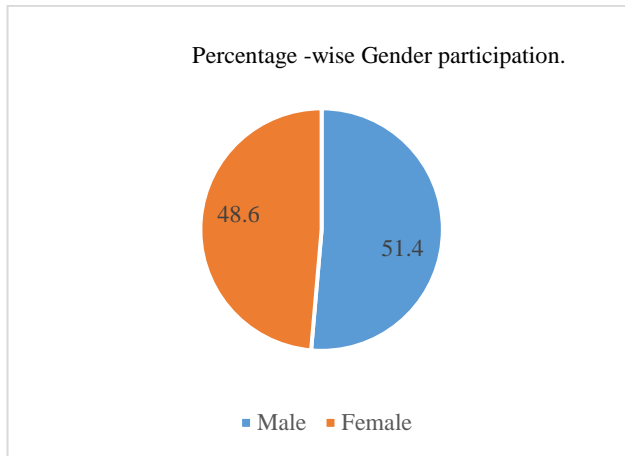
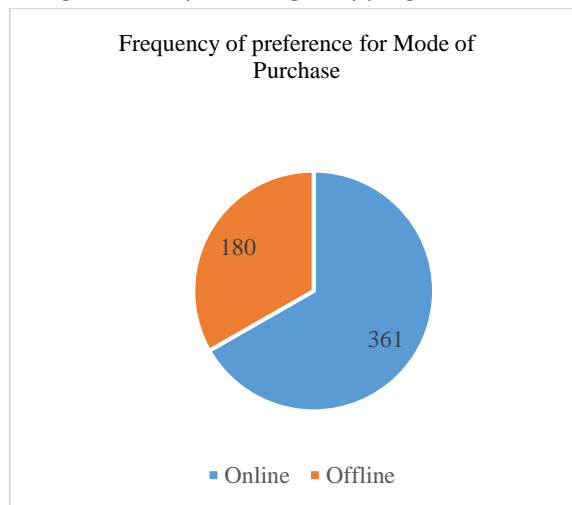


Fig. 1 Percentage -wise Gender participation

The sample encompasses responses from various age brackets, with a notable 95% of participants falling within the age range of 18 to 25. The remaining age groups are less represented, with 3.5% for the 26-35 age group, 1.5% for the 36-45 age group, and no participants aged 45 and above. Another crucial aspect of the study is understanding the participants' shopping preferences. Notably, 361 respondents indicated a preference for online shopping, accounting for 66.73% of the total participation, while 180 respondents expressed a preference for offline shopping, representing 33.37% of the responses. Consequently, online shopping emerges as the prevailing shopping mode within the sample.



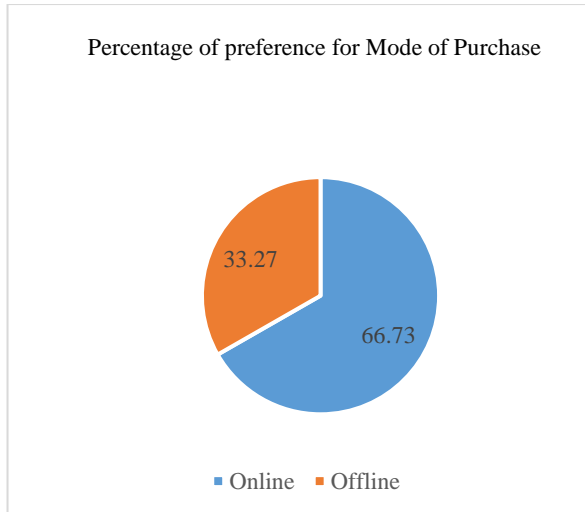


Fig. 2 Preferred Shopping Mode of the Respondents

As shopping and choice of buying is an aspect or behavior of a person depends on pocket and status as well. Researcher have asked questions on that as well. The marital status and Occupation of the participants were also studied. 510 participants are unmarried which makes 94.3% of the participants and 31 participants are married which makes 5.7% of the total participation.

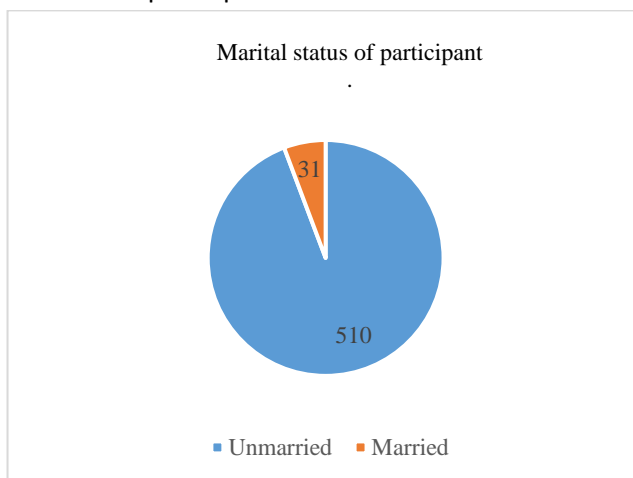


Fig. 3 Marital status of participant

When it comes to Occupation, four categories were mentioned in the questionnaire which is Student/Scholar, Service, Self-employed, and Others. 93.5% are students/scholars, 2.6 are involved in service, 2.0% are self-employed & the least one is 1.8% from others

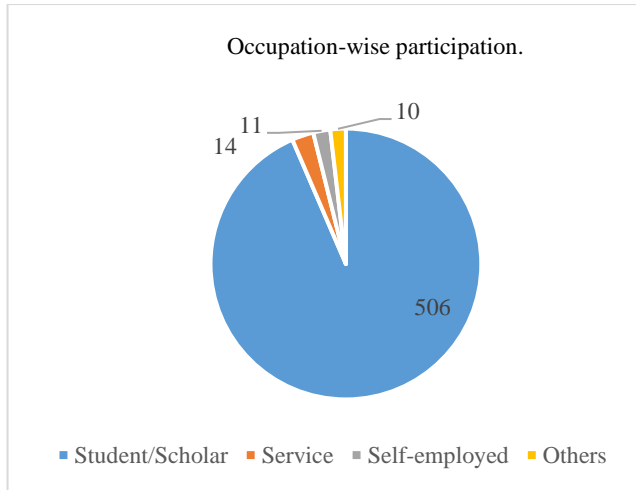


Fig. 4 Occupation-wise participation

Considering the Monthly income of the participants also, Researcher made four categories which are Up to 15000, 15000 to 30000, 30000 to 50000, and 50000 Above. The statistics show that 52.9% of participants are earning up to 15000, 19.6% are earning between 15K to 30K, 21.4% of them are earning between 30K to 50 K, and Only 6.1% of them are earning more than 50,000.

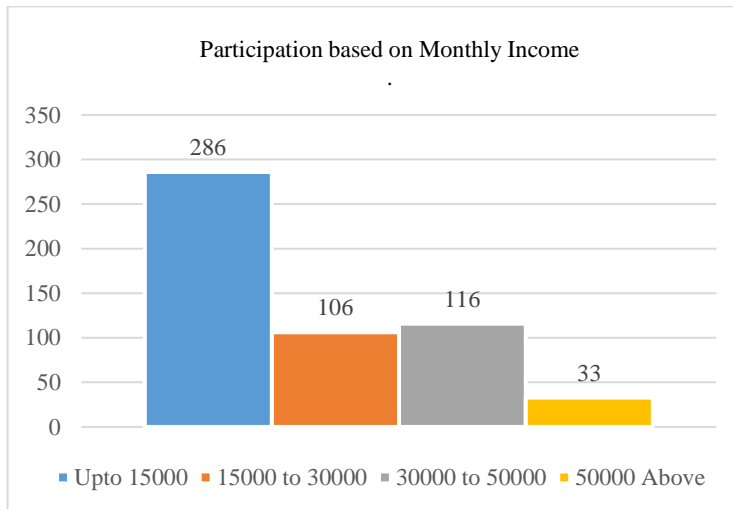


Fig. 5 Participation based on Monthly Income

The primary aim of this study centers around investigating the influence of reviews on online purchases of green products compared to traditional purchases. To derive conclusive insights, several hypotheses were formulated, as outlined below:

Upon conducting the test, the results yielded a p-value of 0.589 for online shopping and 0.825 for offline shopping, both of which are greater than 0.05. Consequently, we fail to accept

the null hypotheses and instead accept the alternate hypothesis, which indicates that gender does not significantly influence the mode of shopping preference. The graph below illustrates the frequency of male and female preferences for both modes.

The findings reveal that customer reviews hold substantial importance in decision-making for item purchases, as evidenced by the highest weighted average of 3.93. Additionally, with the second-highest weighted average of 3.88, there is a clear consensus among respondents regarding the direct influence of customer reviews on obtaining necessary information and enhancing productivity during purchases. Similarly, the third-highest weighted average, also at 3.87, indicates unanimous agreement on the role of customer reviews in facilitating product searches and improving shopping performance. In summary, these results collectively underscore the significant impact of customer reviews on both online and traditional shopping, emphasizing their pivotal role in shaping consumer choices.

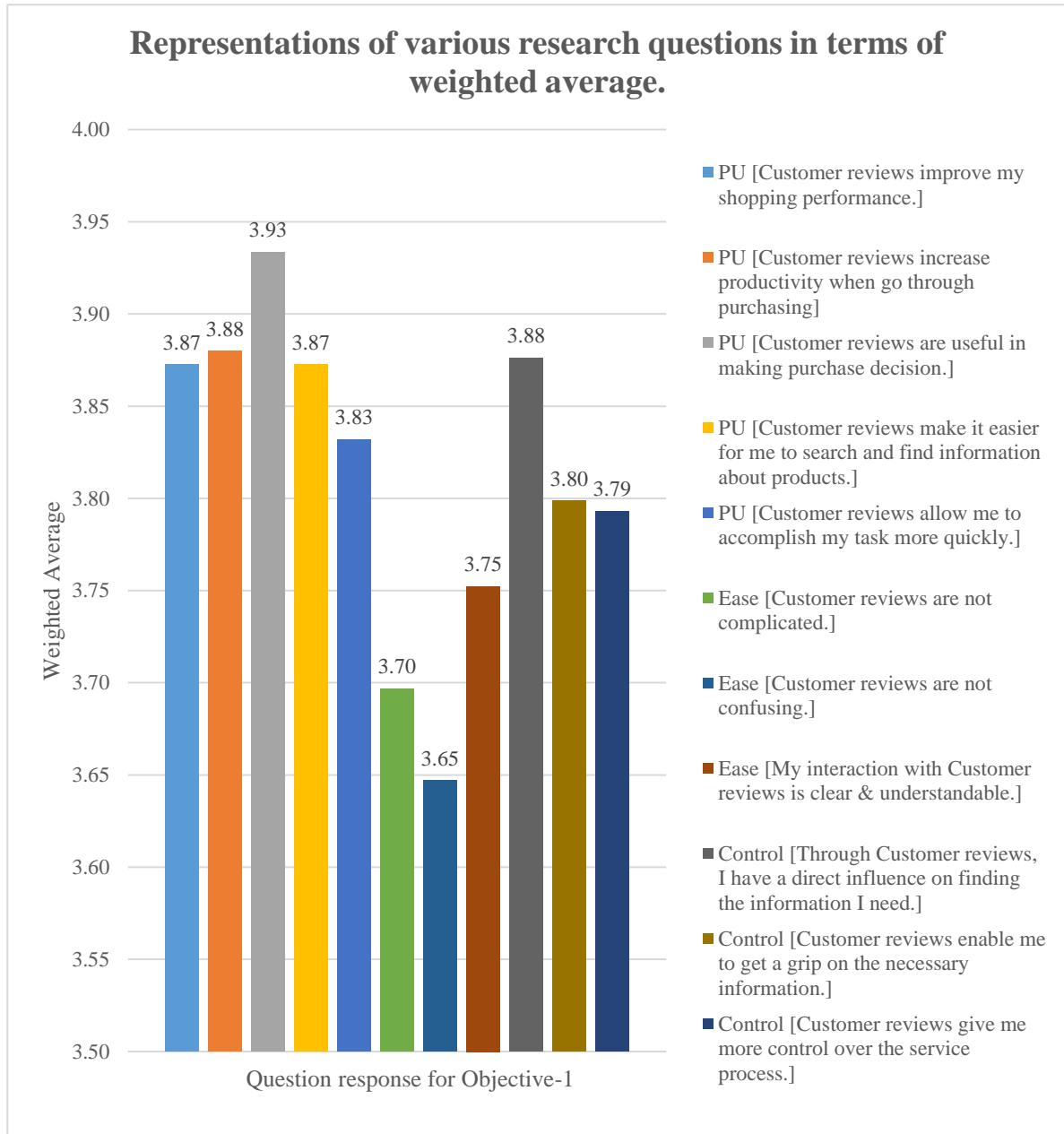


Fig. 6 Representations of various research questions in terms of weighted average

To analyze the influence of customer reviews on product selection, a suitable statistical test, such as a one-sample t-test, can be employed. This test allows for the comparison of the mean score of statements related to the impact of customer reviews on product selection (e.g., "I find the experience of reading customer reviews is enjoyable") to a hypothesized value. The hypothesized value can be set at the neutral point on the Likert scale (3.0) or another relevant value, such as the average score of all statements. Alternatively, a paired samples t-test can be utilized to assess changes in the mean score of

statements before and after reading customer reviews, providing insights into how customer reviews affect product selection. It is important to note that the t-test assumes normal distribution of data and an adequately large sample size, and these assumptions should be verified prior to conducting the test.

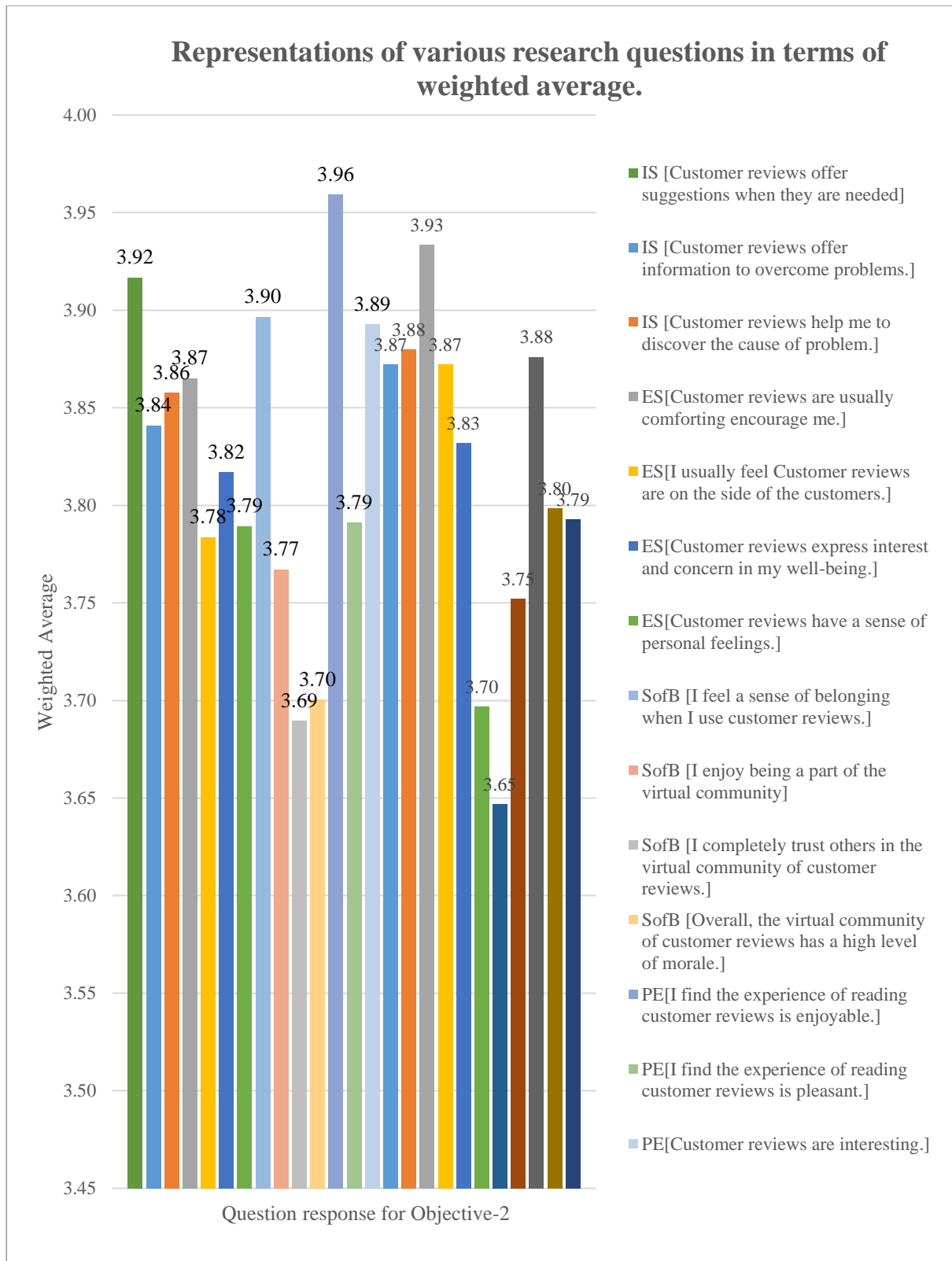


Fig. 7 Representations of various research questions in terms of weighted average

The analysis of customer reviews (SE, SP) reveals that participants generally agree with statements indicating that people who post online reviews are knowledgeable about the

products being reviewed (weighted average 3.97) and are experts in evaluating those products (weighted average 3.77). Additionally, participants perceive a sense of human contact (weighted average 3.81) and personal touch (weighted average 3.71) in customer reviews. In terms of brand-related statements (BRAND), participants express liking products because they are affordable (mean 3.92) and feeling proud of possessing high-quality items (mean 3.90). They also emphasize purchasing for personal satisfaction rather than making an impression on others (mean 3.87). Regarding purchase intention (PI), participants prioritize emotions over benefits while purchasing (mean 3.82) and consider visual and aesthetic factors (mean 3.68). They emphasize making decisions based on their feelings (mean 3.89) and are influenced by their social group (mean 3.65). Finally, in attitude statements (ATTITUDE), participants like the idea of shopping from vendors with customer reviews (mean 3.92), hold positive thoughts about such shopping (mean 3.79), and generally enjoy shopping (mean 3.90). Standard deviations indicate the level of variation in responses across these statements.

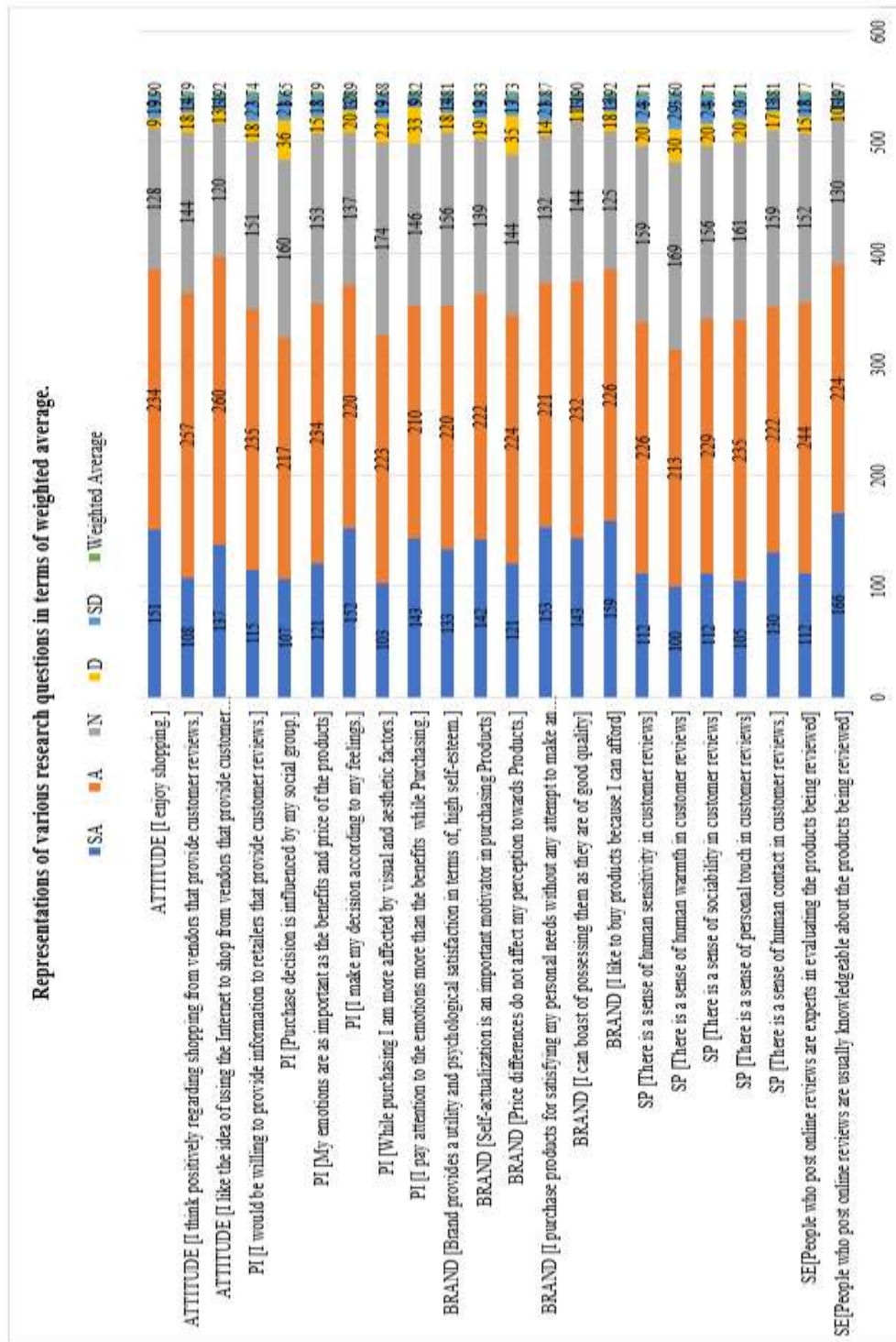


Fig. 8 Representations of various research questions of weighted average

5. Findings

For Objective 1, the study used a table to measure customers' perceptions of the usefulness, ease of use, and control of customer reviews in their shopping experience. The table

included items related to perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and perceived control. Participants' responses were categorized into strong agreement, agreement, neutrality, disagreement, and strong disagreement. Weighted averages were provided for each item, indicating participants generally agreed that customer reviews are useful and improve their shopping experience, are easy to use and understand, and give them a sense of control.

The chi-square test was conducted to determine the association between age range and shopping mode preference, and the results showed a significant association.

For Objective 2, the study analyzed participants' responses to statements related to customer reviews, brand perception, purchase intention, and attitudes towards online shopping. The analysis included mean scores and standard deviations for each category of statements. Participants generally perceived customer reviews positively and found them useful, easy to use, and enjoyable.

A t-test was performed to compare the means of product selection for two groups: one influenced by customer reviews and the other not influenced by customer reviews. The results indicated a significant difference in product selection between these two groups.

For Objective 3, the study examined participants' responses to statements related to customer reviews, emotional responses, a sense of belonging, and the overall experience of reading customer reviews. Participants generally had positive perceptions of customer reviews, emotional connections, a sense of belonging, and an enjoyable experience. The findings were presented in tables with mean scores and standard deviations.

The study's findings suggest that customer reviews play a significant role in influencing purchasing decisions in both online and traditional modes, with age being a factor in shopping mode preference. Participants generally have positive attitudes towards customer reviews, brands, purchase intention, and online shopping with vendors that provide customer reviews, indicating the importance of customer reviews in the decision-making process. However, it is essential to consider the study's limitations, including a small sample size and potential biases, when interpreting these findings.

6. Conclusion

In the digital age, customer reviews play a significant role in influencing purchasing decisions, especially in the context of bamboo products and green marketing. This study explored the impact of customer reviews on bamboo product purchases in Pune City and found that online customer reviews have a more profound effect than traditional shopping environments when it comes to bamboo items. The analysis of 183 survey responses revealed that customer reviews significantly influence decision-making, with online shopping being the preferred mode among participants, particularly the 18 to 25 age group, for bamboo products. The study also highlighted the emotional connections participants have with customer reviews related to bamboo items, emphasizing their importance in influencing purchase decisions within the green product market. However, it acknowledges the study's limitations, such as a relatively small sample size. Future research can further explore these dynamics to gain a more comprehensive understanding of bamboo product consumption behavior in Pune City's green market.

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