# Intrinsic Incentives for Online Business Reviews: Driving Knowledge Transfer Across Businesses

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**Abstract:** The present paper aims to analyze business-to-business feedback, where managers and customers provide reviews for partners or client organizations, as this practice has become increasingly common in the present business environment. However, the intrinsic motivations that drive managers and individuals to engage in this practice are not yet fully understood. Previous research has highlighted potential reasons for issuing feedback, but our study highlights some new perspectives on the significance of online reviews, the reasons why individuals issue them, and their potential impact on the decision-making process of consumers and business partners. Our findings suggest that improving customer service and interactions is essential for encouraging positive reviews. Our data also indicate that age might play a crucial role in attitudes toward leaving online reviews. Older individuals appear to perceive their reviews to be more objective and fairer, while younger individuals are more easily convinced by the opinions of others. The frequency of leaving reviews can also vary a lot depending on the age of the individual, possibly due to a lack of time or belief that their opinion may not have any valuable impact on other people's lives or decisions. One of the most significant factors that encourage individuals to offer feedback is good interaction with a company representative, highlighting the importance of customer service. The possibility of obtaining a discount and the quality of services and products offered were also important factors in the business-to-business review exchange. Although the data collected is based on a relatively small sample size and may not be representative of the wider population, this study provides valuable insights into the behavior of those who issue online reviews and can contribute to future research directions in this area.

**Keywords:** knowledge transfer; intrinsic incentives; reviews; online business.

## Introduction

Interorganizational feedback for businesses where managers and customers provide reviews for partners or client organizations has become an increasingly common practice in today's business environment. Despite the obvious benefits of providing feedback and the fact that usually, it is a win-win type of interaction, the intrinsic motivations that drive managers to engage in this practice are not yet fully understood. So far, previous research has highlighted several potential reasons that might cause a manager to issue a review for another company or partner. Such an example is the *social exchange theory (SET),* which implies that individuals engage in reciprocal behaviors in order to maintain positive relationships with others (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Integrating SET in the context of inter-organizational feedback may show us that a manager may provide feedback in order to build and maintain positive and productive relationships with partners and client organizations. Similarly, the *theory of planned behavior (TPB)* suggests that individuals are usually motivated by their subjective norms, and attitudes and by their perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 2011). Moving back to the context of business-to-business feedback, a manager's attitude towards the value of providing feedback, subjective norms inside his organization and the perceived behavioral control of the other managers may

all impact one's decision to offer or not offer feedback following a B2B interaction. Some additional reasons that might cause a manager to issue a review might come in the form of maintaining the quality of the services provided by their partners and not necessarily further developing them. Additionally, managers can provide feedback in order to demonstrate their own expertise and knowledge to their partners or clients, enhancing their self-esteem and boosting their professional image.

Despite all these findings, there are still gaps in the literature regarding the underlying motivations for inter-organizational feedback. For example, is the age of the manager/individual an important factor when it comes to issuing a B2B review? Are there specific industries or sectors where inter-organizational feedback is more common? By conducting a systematic literature review on the reasons that may cause a manager or an individual to issue a review for another company and also by analyzing data gathered using an online questionnaire, this paper aims to contribute to the ongoing conversation about how organizations can effectively collaborate and support each other's success. The subsequent sections of this paper will encompass a comprehensive literature review, outline the paper methodology and present the findings and results of this research. Additionally, our conclusions section will delve into a critical analysis of the findings, providing valuable insights into understanding the intrinsic incentives for online business reviews and driving knowledge transfer across businesses.

**Literature review**

The massive rise of e-commerce companies that took place in recent years has not only revolutionized the way people do business by providing comfort and ease for consumers (allowing them to buy whatever they want, wherever and whenever they want), but it has also created new opportunities for sellers, distributors and tradespeople while posing new challenges, particularly in the area of sustainable development and trust (Dincă et al., 2021). Sharing opinions and the growth that can result from that is probably one of the most important factors that allowed humans to evolve and construct the society we have today. In any group, individuals tend to share their opinions (whether they are positive or negative), creating a "soup" of ideas, opinions and perspectives that we can refer to as "opinion dynamics". In this scenario, after the group as a whole analyzes the information and the knowledge shared by individuals, usually one of the following three outcomes occurs: the group forms a consensus, the group is being polarized or the group is getting fragmented (Yucheng et al., 2018).

There are many factors that might influence the outcome of "group thinking", such as previous experiences, the first idea that an individual has heard or group bias. Group bias can form under many circumstances, but more often it is formed when a certain perspective has a higher "firing rate" among the group members, enforcing a bias against the niche opinion rather than allowing the members to come up with new and original approaches for that particular situation (Anagnostopoulos et al., 2022). Other studies (Murphy & Sashi, 2018) have shown that for promoting satisfaction and acceptance in the case of business-to-business relations, communication should prioritize task-related information while encouraging feedback, with a preference for personal communication mostly when immediate feedback is necessary. When applying the European Customer Satisfaction Index (ECSI) model in the B2B context, we also find out that corporate image is one of the most important drivers of loyalty, followed by satisfaction, trust, and complaint handling. Also, trust has a direct impact on loyalty and mediates the relationship between satisfaction and loyalty, while perceived quality, perceived value and expectation indirectly influence business loyalty through satisfaction (Askariazad & Babakhani, 2015).

Getting back to the scope of the present paper, similar behaviors can also be observed in business-to-business interactions. Purchasing managers from companies all around the world need to identify the most suitable suppliers and most of the available data that

allows them to choose between suppliers is found in the form of B2B online reviews (external reviews) or other known professionals/colleagues (internal reviews). Studies (Steward et al., 2017) have shown that having a single positive review shows no real difference in purchasing decision making while having two or more positive reviews can enhance the level of engagement. It is interesting however that a negative external review combined with a positive internal review can yield a better attitude, an enhanced purchasing intention, more learning and more sharing when compared to a situation where the purchasing manager had a positive external review and a negative internal review. Although it is common sense that internal reviews will weigh more when it comes to making a decision, it was also found that managers are aware of the potential bias that might occur due to long-term professional relationships or hidden interests. Sharing data and information between companies is not just important for the purchasing managers that need to make a quick decision about some suppliers, but it can also have an important impact on entire businesses and even interconnected international industries (Andrei et al., 2021).

Modern concepts such as Industry 4.0 have managed to prove that both vertical and horizontal information sharing between companies can generate new business and rewards for all the entities involved. Besides operational improvements across the entire supply chain, new business models that are focused on real-time information sharing can be put in place, generating additional income and creating great incentives for sharing information between businesses (Muller et al., 2020). From a business perspective, the rationales for information sharing are simple, but from a human perspective, the incentives can get somewhat complicated. The competitive nature of human behavior combined with societal dynamics can often cause managers to restrict or hide information. This gets us closer to the main scope of the present paper, which is to try and identify the internal rationales of the managers that may cause them to share or hide meaningful information. Usually, information and knowledge sharing are motivated by enjoyment and meaning, while hiding information is usually the result of external pressures or a very competitive environment. In a surprising manner, when a worker or a manager perceives that other individuals rely on them in order to get their job done, it triggers a strange form of competitiveness combined with selfishness that causes the person in question to hide information (Gagné et al., 2019).

**Methodology**

This study used a questionnaire-based survey to explore the intrinsic incentives that might cause a manager to issue a review or share information. The questionnaire was composed of 13 specifically designed questions, including two open-ended questions and 11 multiple-choice questions. Google Forms was the platform of choice for creating the questionnaire, as it is easy to use and trusted by individuals. The survey was distributed online using social media niche business groups and WhatsApp groups, where participants were invited to complete the questionnaire and share their opinion. The sample group consisted of 104 participants from various industries and job positions. As you can see in Figure 1 below, our respondents work preponderantly in industries that are service-oriented or related to the digital economy, with food/services, IT and marketing making up more than 50% of the research group's job sectors.
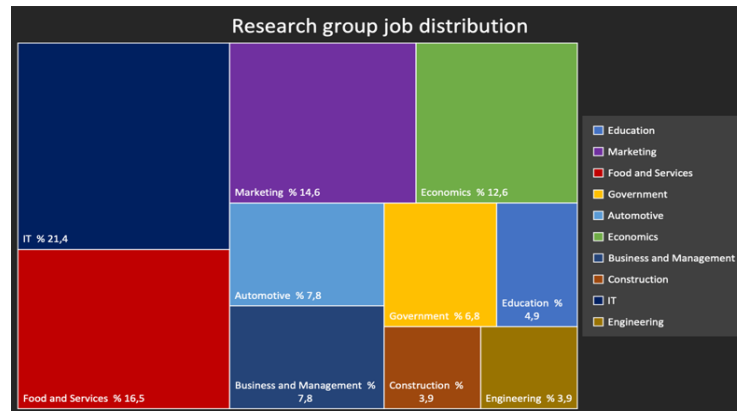
*Figure 1. Research group work sectors distribution*
Source: own processing

Moreover, as it can be seen in Figure 2 below, the age distribution of our research group is relatively evenly spread across four age brackets, with the highest percentage falling in the 31-40 age range. Despite the diverse professional backgrounds showcased, the sample group can be considered somewhat homogenous due to the relatively even distribution of age ranges, which may indicate similar life stages and perspectives.
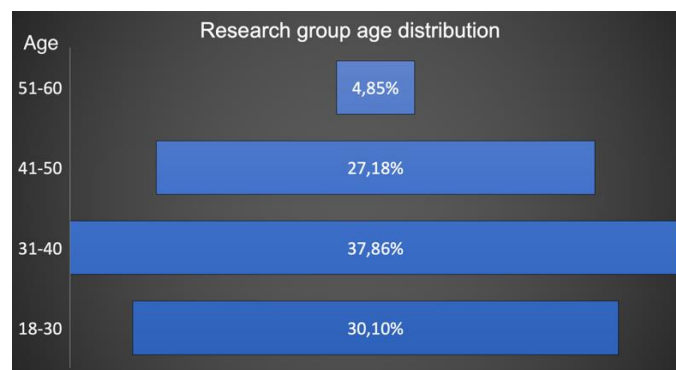


*Figure 2. Age distribution for our research group*
Source: own processing

Additionally, it is important to note that the sample size is relatively small, which means that any outliers are less likely to significantly impact the overall results. It is however important to note that this sample group may not be representative of the larger population and that the results of the study should be interpreted with caution. Future studies may benefit from a larger and more diverse sample group to increase the generalizability of our findings. The data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics while also being correlated with other scientific papers related to that particular topic. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages, were used to summarize the responses to the multiple-choice questions. Inferential statistics were used to determine if there were any significant differences in responses based on demographic variables, such as age and industry.

For the open-ended questions, qualitative data analysis techniques, such as content analysis, were used to identify common themes and patterns in the responses. Understanding the incentives that motivate managers to issue a review or share information can help organizations improve the quality of the reviews and the information being shared. By identifying the factors that influence managers' willingness to share information, organizations can work to improve the quality of the information that is shared and its accuracy, thus creating a more efficient and profitable company. Our methodology aims to identify various factors that might hinder business growth, such as lack of trust and negative reviews that are being shared in the digital environment, especially for small and medium-sized companies (Muller et al., 2020).

**Results and discussion**

To gain fresh perspectives on the central hypothesis of this paper, the researchers devised a questionnaire to evaluate the incentives that prompt individuals to publish a review or disseminate information following an interaction with a company or business. Recognizing the prevailing circumstances of the current online environment in which people are bombarded with information and inundated with advertisements, the questionnaire was streamlined to include only 13 research inquiries, comprising two open-ended and 11 multiple-choice questions. This was done to ensure that respondents would not be discouraged by the questionnaire length and that the survey would yield optimal results in terms of the number of responses generated (Dewaele, 2018).

The first question of the questionnaire, "*In what age category do you find yourself*?" is relevant for our study as it can help provide insight into whether age is a factor that influences a person's or a manager's willingness to issue a review or share information. For example, if younger managers are more likely to issue reviews or share information than older managers, this could suggest that younger managers place greater importance on intrinsic incentives, such as the desire for personal growth or even the possibility of obtaining satisfaction when helping others. Alternatively, if older managers are more likely to issue reviews or share information, this could suggest that they have more experience and knowledge in their field and therefore feel more confident in sharing their insights. Furthermore, age can also be a proxy for other factors that may influence an individual's likelihood to issue a review or share information. For example, younger managers may be more likely to have grown up with social media and be more comfortable sharing information online, while older managers may have different communication preferences, usually in the form of direct interaction. Including a question about age category in our questionnaire helped us provide valuable context for understanding the factors that motivate individuals to issue reviews or to share their knowledge. However, it is important to keep in mind that age is just one of many factors that can influence human behavior and must always be analyzed in the right context. As you can see in *Figure 2*, out of our 104 respondents, we had 37.86% in the 31-40 years of age category, 30.10% in the 18-30 years of age category, 27.18% in the 41-50 years of age category and 4.85% in the 51-60 years of age category. As more than two-thirds of our respondents are under 40 years of age, this study is likely to provide insights into the intrinsic incentives that motivate younger managers or individuals to issue reviews or share information about their business interactions. As younger people may have different values and motivations compared to their older counterparts, studying this age group can help shed light on the unique factors that drive behavior in this demographic (Costanza & Finkelstein, 2015).

Our second question, "What is the industry in which you operate?" is particularly relevant for this study because it provides valuable insights into how different industries may impact a manager's motivation to issue a review or share information. The responses from 104 participants indicate that there is a diverse range of industries represented in the sample. Out of the respondents, 25 work in the economic sector, 20 in the IT sector, 10 in the hospitality sector, 6 in the media sector, 5 in the government sector, and 4 in the research and engineering sector. The remaining respondents are from various domains, mostly services. Understanding the industry in which a manager operates is important because different industries may have their own unique cultures, norms, and expectations that could impact a manager's behavior. For example, in the IT sector, there may be a greater emphasis on collaboration and knowledge-sharing, which could motivate managers to issue reviews or share information with their subordinates. On the other hand, in industries with a more competitive culture, such as the economic or hospitality sectors, managers may be more motivated to issue reviews as a way to retain their top-performing employees. By analyzing the responses to this question, we can gain a better understanding of how different industries may impact a manager's motivation to issue reviews or share information about the company he interacted with. This can help organizations tailor their strategies for motivating managers to issue reviews or share

information based on the particular culture and norms of the industry in which they operate. Additionally, understanding the impact of industry on a manager's behavior can help organizations better anticipate potential challenges and adjust their management strategies accordingly (Majchrzak et al., 2015).

The third question in our questionnaire, "*What is the main factor you consider when issuing a review for a company?*" can help provide insights into the motivation behind a manager's or a person's decision to issue reviews. As you can see in Figure 3 below, the responses from the 104 participants revealed that the most common factor that motivates managers to issue reviews is to provide information for potential clients or collaborators, with 32.7% of respondents choosing this option. The second most common factor is personal experience, with 29.8% of respondents indicating that they issue reviews based on their personal interactions with other company representatives.
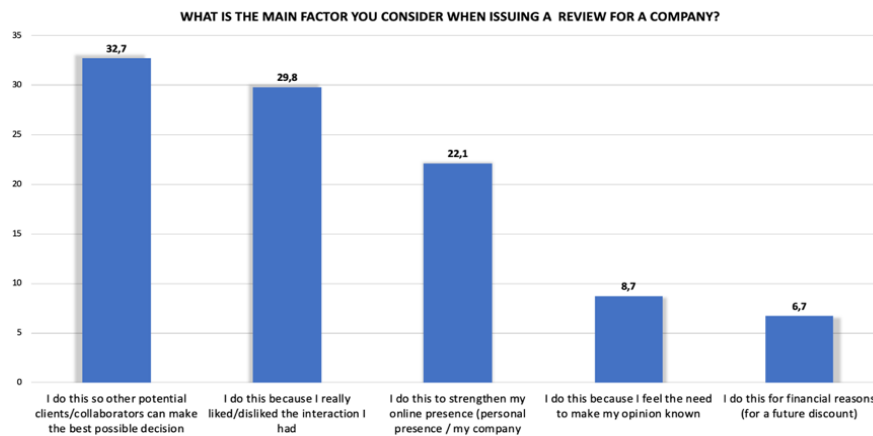


***Figure 3. What is the main factor you consider when issuing a review for a company?***
Source: own processing

By analyzing the responses, we can identify some key drivers behind review issuance. For example, a large percentage of managers are motivated to issue reviews based on their personal experiences with other company representatives, meaning that in order to obtain more reviews, organizations may need to focus on improving their peer-to-peer interactions with clients and collaborators, as that is one of the factors that can generate positive reviews. Similarly, if managers are primarily motivated to issue reviews in order to provide information for other potential clients or collaborators, organizations may need to invest in building a strong online presence so they can maximize the impact of positive reviews. Furthermore, the data obtained from this question can help organizations better understand the different incentives that motivate managers to issue reviews. For example, the finding that some managers issue reviews in order to strengthen their own online presence suggests that personal growth is an important factor that needs to be addressed in order to encourage reviews from managers.

Additionally, the finding that some managers and individuals issue reviews for financial reasons highlights the importance of ensuring that incentives for reviews, such as discounts or rewards should exist (Cheung & Lee, 2012). Overall, the responses to the third question of our questionnaire provide valuable insights into the factors that motivate managers to issue reviews and can help organizations develop more effective strategies for improving their online reputation and customer satisfaction.

Our fourth question "Are you more likely to provide a review or feedback following an interaction that is positive or negative?" is a crucial question in understanding the nature of an individual's feedback behavior. The responses from the 104 participants revealed that the majority (69.2% of the responses) are more likely to provide feedback following a negative interaction, while only 30.8% are more likely to provide feedback following a positive interaction. This finding highlights the importance of understanding the negative

feedback bias, a phenomenon in which individuals are more likely to provide feedback or reviews when they have had a negative experience. The bias is prevalent across various domains and is particularly relevant in the customer service industry. Thus, organizations should be prepared to handle negative feedback and complaints effectively, as they are more likely to receive negative feedback from their customers than positive feedback (Fong et al., 2019). Moreover, this question provides valuable insights into the drivers of personal feedback behavior. The high percentage of individuals who are more likely to provide feedback following a negative interaction with a company suggests that they could be more likely to share their negative experiences with others. This information can be used by organizations to develop strategies that encourage managers to provide feedback following positive experiences in order to obtain some overall balance. For example, offering incentives or rewards for positive feedback or creating a positive feedback culture within the organization can help to balance out the negative feedback bias.

Additionally, this question can help organizations understand the impact of negative feedback on their online reputation. Negative reviews can have a significant impact on an organization's reputation and can potentially deter customers from buying. By understanding the drivers of individuals feedback behavior, organizations can take steps to mitigate the negative impact of reviews by addressing the issues that led to that particular negative feedback and responding promptly to negative feedback. In summary, the responses to the fourth question provide valuable insights into the nature of personal feedback behavior and the drivers of negative feedback bias. These insights can help organizations develop strategies to encourage positive feedback, mitigate the damaging impact of negative feedback and improve their overall online reputation.

The fifth question in our questionnaire, "*Did you ever issue a review just to associate your name or your company's name with that of another company?*", is an important question with the purpose of shedding light on the reasons why managers and individuals provide reviews. The responses revealed that 26.9% of them had issued at least one review solely to associate their name or their company's name with that of another company. This finding highlights the importance of understanding the underlying motivations behind providing reviews and the potential impact of such behavior on the long-term credibility of reviews (Wu et al., 2020). Thankfully, the data obtained also indicates that the majority of the participants, 73.1% of them, had not issued a review just for the purpose of associating their own name or their company's name with another company. This suggests that most managers are motivated by genuine reasons when providing reviews, such as helping others make informed decisions or expressing their own personal view.

The breakdown of respondents who had issued reviews solely for the purpose of association also provides valuable insights into the industries where such behaviour may be more prevalent. For example, out of the 28 respondents who answered "yes" to this question, 10 worked in advertising, media, and marketing, suggesting that there is probably a greater prevalence of this behavior in these industries. The responses we managed to obtain to the fifth question provided us with valuable insights into the motivations behind business review behavior and the potential impact of such behavior on the long-term credibility of reviews. By understanding the underlying motivations and the industries where this may be more prevalent, organizations can take steps to encourage more genuine reviews and increase the credibility of the review system. This may include implementing measures to verify the authenticity of reviews, creating a positive feedback culture and incentivizing genuine reviews.

The sixth question of the questionnaire, "*Do you think that providing reviews can "enhance" your company's public image?*" aimed to identify whether our respondents believed that providing reviews could enhance their company's public image. The results showed that 76% of respondents believed that providing reviews could indeed enhance their company's public image, while 24% did not believe so. This question is relevant for the study because it provides insights into the attitudes and beliefs of individuals regarding

the impact that reviews can have on their company's image. However, after correlating and analyzing the additional data, we managed to identify some interesting patterns. Out of the 25 respondents who answered "no", 60% were working in industries like engineering, IT, or finances. This suggests that individuals working in STEM industries (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) may have a different perspective on the importance of reviews compared to those working in other sectors (human-oriented industries). Additionally, 64% of the respondents who answered "no" were 30 years old or older. This could indicate that older individuals may have a different attitude towards the impact of reviews compared to younger individuals. This shows that the age of the individuals can be an important factor when it comes to issuing feedback, as older individuals may have a different attitude towards the impact of reviews compared to younger individuals.

Also, the specific industry or sector can play a crucial role in feedback issuing, as human-oriented sectors do focus more on communication and STEM industries such as engineering, IT or finance focus more on the actual results than on improving the communication. Moreover, 76% of the 25 respondents who answered "no" to the question about enhancing their company's public image through reviews also answered the fourth question of the questionnaire saying they are more likely to provide a review only if their interaction with that particular company was negative. This suggests that negative experiences may have a more significant impact on their decision to provide feedback than the potential benefits of enhancing their company's public image.

The prevalence of online reviews and their widespread influence make them a modern form of "word of mouth". The social visibility of consumption can and often does lead to cognitive, affective and even evaluative identifications that might influence individual and group behavior (So et al., 2018). The sixth question together with the additional data suggests that while the majority of individuals do recognize the potential that online reviews have to enhance their company's public image, a significant minority does not share this belief, particularly among certain industries and age groups. Understanding these differences is crucial for developing effective strategies to manage online reviews and feedback in different contexts.

The data that we managed to obtain from the seventh question, "*Do you think feedback or reviews can be used to "punish" disrespectful company behavior?*" together with the additional information obtained previously highlights the importance of understanding the motivations behind providing feedback. As you can see in Figure 4 below, 80,8% of respondents believe that reviews can be used to punish disrespectful company behavior, while a significant minority of 19,2% does not share this view. Also, 70% of the respondents who answered 'no' to this question claimed that they usually issue feedback only to help others make better decisions or if they really liked/disliked the interaction with a particular company, suggesting that for some individuals, providing feedback is not about punishment or revenge but about helping others and making a positive contribution to the online community. Moreover, 75% of respondents who answered 'no' to the seventh question are under 40 years of age, raising questions about the potential generational differences in attitudes towards feedback and reviews.
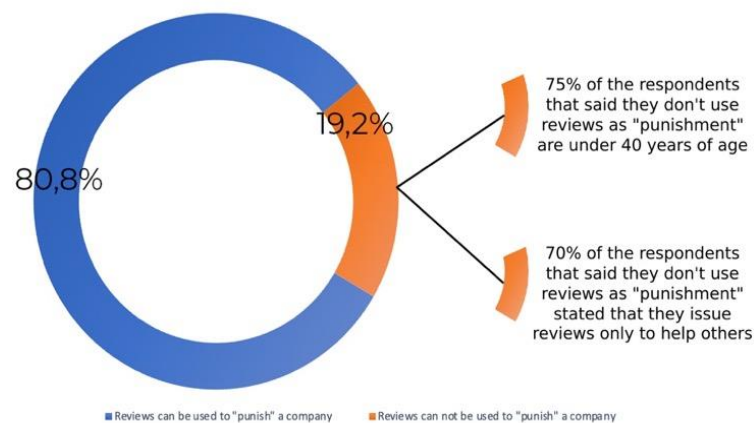
*Figure 4. Can feedback be used as "punishment" for companies?*
Source: own processing

It is possible that younger generations are less motivated by the desire to punish disrespectful behavior and more focused on creating a more transparent and accountable marketplace where companies are held accountable for their actions. It is also worth noting that there was no clear industry-related pattern in the data for this question. This suggests that attitudes towards feedback and reviews are not necessarily driven by the type of industry someone works in but rather by personal motivations and beliefs. As such, understanding the individual motivations and beliefs of consumers and partners is crucial for developing effective strategies for managing online reviews and feedback. The data from the seventh question and the additional information provided by the respondents underscore the complexity of consumer motivations and the importance of taking a nuanced approach to manage online reviews. By understanding the various factors that influence human behavior, companies can develop more effective strategies for building and maintaining their online reputation while also creating a more transparent and trustworthy marketplace.

The eighth question in our questionnaire is "*When reading the reviews a company has, you might consider that:* "with the following answer possibilities: *"1. the negative reviews were mostly issued in a subjective way; 2. the negative reviews are honest and they reflect an objective reality; 3. it is natural that a certain percentage of the total reviews a company has might be negative*". Correlation with our additional data indicates that the perception of negative reviews varies in a rather equal way among our respondents.

While 28.8% of the respondents believe that negative reviews are subjective and might not reflect an objective reality, a significant proportion of respondents (34.6%, to be more precise) consider negative reviews to be honest and reflect an objective reality. Furthermore, 36.5% of our respondents believe that it is natural for a certain percentage of total reviews of any business to be negative. These differences in perception might stem from various factors, such as personal experiences with companies, age or attitudes toward providing feedback. Interestingly, the data shows that 83% of respondents who believe that negative reviews reflect an objective reality are over 30 years of age. This might suggest that older individuals have higher expectations while being more critical of the companies they interact with. On the other hand, respondents who think that negative reviews are mostly subjective were evenly distributed across different age groups.

It is also noteworthy that a significant proportion, measuring 74% of the respondents who believe negative reviews are natural, previously stated that they are more likely to leave a review only if they had a negative interaction with a company. This might indicate that negative reviews are not necessarily a reflection of poor performance by a company but rather a consequence of dissatisfaction on the part of the customer or business partner. Therefore, companies might benefit from addressing negative feedback by identifying the root causes of customer dissatisfaction and implementing measures to prevent future

negative interactions. Overall, the eighth question helped us highlight the complexity of interpreting online reviews and the need for companies to adopt a nuanced approach when analyzing and responding to feedback. Understanding the different perceptions of negative reviews can help companies develop effective strategies for managing online feedback and improving their reputation.

The ninth question of the questionnaire, "Do *you consider the reviews you have issued so far to be subjective or objective?*" was focused on our respondents' perceptions of their own reviews. The majority of the respondents (66.3%) considered their reviews to be objective, while the remaining 33.7% considered their reviews to be subjective.

Interestingly, over 72% of those who identified their reviews as objective were over the age of 30, suggesting that age may play a role in the perception of the feedback's objectivity. This information is important for understanding how individuals view and approach writing reviews, as it may affect the weight and credibility that readers give to their reviews. Furthermore, this data provides insights into the potential biases that may exist in online reviews and highlights the importance of considering the perspective and background of the reviewer when evaluating the usefulness of a review. By analyzing the age demographics, companies can tailor their feedback management strategies to better engage with particular demographics and improve the overall quality of their online interactions.

The data collected from the tenth question of the questionnaire, *"What is the approximate number of reviews you issue in a typical month?"* provides insights into the frequency of review writing by our respondents. As it can be seen in Figure 5 below, the data shows us that the majority of respondents, 70.2%, issue between 0 and 5 reviews per month following an interaction with a business or firm. This could indicate that individuals do not frequently engage in providing feedback unless there is a specific experience that stands out. Moreover, it is interesting to note that a higher percentage of adult respondents over the age of 30 (76.7%) fall into this category. At the opposite end, only 7.7% of the respondents said that they issue between 11 and 20 reviews a month, indicating that frequent reviewers are not as common. The data shows that younger individuals, under the age of 30, are more likely to issue higher numbers of reviews each month, with only 25% of those issuing more than 11 reviews a month being over 30 years old. This information is crucial to understanding the frequency of review writing across different age groups and can potentially help businesses tailor their review management strategies accordingly.
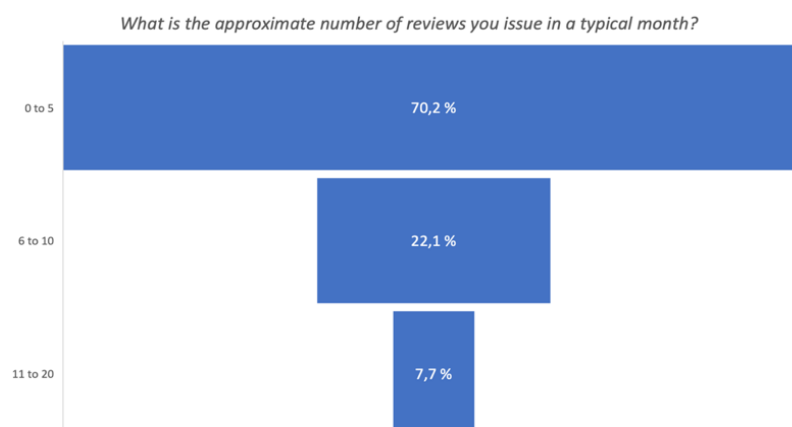


**What is the approximate number of reviews you issue in a typical month?**

| | |
|---|---|
| 0 to 5 | 70,2 % |
| 6 to 10 | 22,1 % |
| 11 to 20 | 7,7 % |

**Figure 5. The approximate number of reviews issued in a typical month**
Source: own processing

The eleventh question of the questionnaire, "*Is your opinion of the products or services marketed by a company generally the same as the majority of opinions offered in reviews?*" aimed to determine whether individuals' opinions of a company's products or services are in line with the majority of opinions expressed in reviews. The results showed that 66.3%

of the respondents answered yes, indicating that their opinions were generally in line with the majority of opinions expressed in reviews, while 33.7% answered no. The additional data showed that more than 56% of the respondents who answered "Yes" were under 30 years old, suggesting that younger individuals may be more likely to be influenced by other people's opinions. This could be due to their limited experience and knowledge, as well as their tendency to rely more on social validation and peer approval.

On the other hand, the fact that a significant number of respondents answered with No indicates that individual opinions may not always align with the majority of opinions expressed in reviews. This could be due to various factors, such as differences in personal preferences, expectations and experiences. Additionally, the fact that there was no industry-related pattern in the responses suggests that people's opinions are likely to be subjective and vary from person to person, regardless of the industry or product category. Overall, the results of this question highlight the need for further investigation into the factors that influence people's perceptions of products and services.

The twelfth question in our questionnaire was "*Do you think your feedback is usually fairer or more well-argued than the average online opinion?*". The data obtained showed that the majority of respondents, 56.7%, believed that their feedback was indeed fairer or more well-argued than the average online opinion, while 43.3% did not. Interestingly, a closer look at the data reveals that a significant majority of respondents who believed their feedback was fairer or more well-argued was over 30 years old, with over 79% falling into this age group. This suggests that older individuals may have a greater sense of confidence in their opinions and are more likely to believe that their feedback is valuable and well thought out compared to the average online opinion. This knowledge is relevant to the current study as it provides insights into the self-perception of individuals when it comes to their feedback and reviews. The fact that a majority of respondents believe their feedback is fairer or more well-argued than the average online opinion indicates that individuals may have a sense of pride and confidence in their ability to provide valuable feedback. Moreover, the finding that older individuals are more likely to hold this belief may reflect a generational difference in attitudes towards online reviews and feedback, with older individuals valuing their opinions and feedback more highly. Overall, this data helps to build a more nuanced understanding of the attitudes and behaviors of individuals when it comes to providing business feedback and online reviews.

The thirteenth question of the questionnaire was an open one: *"What do you think is the main factor that would encourage you to leave a review after interacting with a business?".* It provided us with valuable insights into what factors could encourage individuals to leave a review after interacting with a business. As we can see in Figure 6 below, we can observe that the majority of individuals (38%) would be more inclined to leave a review if they had a good interaction with the company representative. This could suggest that businesses should focus on providing excellent customer service and interactions to encourage individuals to leave reviews.
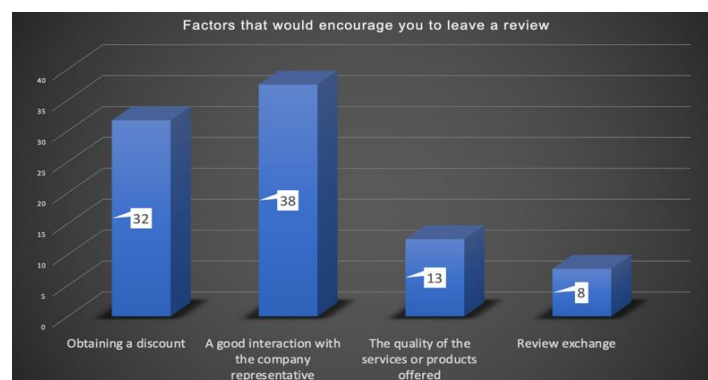


**Figure 6. Factors that would encourage you to leave a review**
Source: own processing

Additionally, 32% of our respondents said that obtaining a discount would encourage them to leave a review, which could indicate that incentivizing individuals with discounts or promotions for leaving reviews could be an effective strategy for businesses to increase feedback both from their customers but also from other business partners and managers that the company is engaging in business interactions with (Dincă, 2020). It is also important to note that only 13% of customers said that the quality of products or services offered would encourage them to leave a review, suggesting that businesses should focus on creating a positive overall experience for their customers rather than solely on the quality of their products or services. Lastly, the responses also highlighted that review exchanges (8%) may not be a significant motivating factor for customers to leave reviews. Correlating all the information above, we can observe that some of our findings align with previous research suggesting that age can be a significant factor that can shape individuals' attitudes and behaviors. For example, other studies have also found that younger individuals may be more comfortable with online communication and more likely to engage in interactive activities such as providing online reviews (Costanza & Finkelstein, 2015).

On the other hand, older individuals may have different communication preferences (usually choosing a more personal approach) and also other motivations for issuing reviews (Cheung & Lee, 2012). Moreover, our findings regarding the motivations behind providing reviews, such as helping others make informed decisions or expressing personal experiences resonate with existing literature. Studies have identified various motivations for individuals to issue reviews, including altruism, personal satisfaction and the desire to contribute to the online community. Additionally, our study recognizes the role of financial incentives and the potential impact of personal growth as motivators for issuing reviews, which is consistent with prior research (Wu et al., 2020). Overall, this data provides businesses with important insights into what factors could encourage customers to leave reviews and could help them develop effective review management strategies.

## Conclusions

The scope of the present study was to investigate the factors that might motivate individuals to issue feedback or reviews for businesses following a B2B or B2C interaction. The results have shown that online reviews are becoming an increasingly important factor in the decision-making process of consumers and business partners, with the findings suggesting that businesses should focus on improving the quality of their customer service and interactions with customers in order to encourage more positive reviews. Furthermore, the data has indicated that the age of the reviewer could potentially play a significant role in their behavior and attitudes toward leaving online reviews. Older individuals are more likely to consider their reviews to be more objective and fairer than the average opinions that are found online. Despite some of the individuals having limited skills, many older adults engage in various online activities and some are even more involved in learning as they navigate the digital world, being more than willing to share their opinions in a public way (Quan-Haase et al., 2018). On the other hand, younger individuals are more easily convinced by the opinions of others and may be more likely to leave a review based on a good interaction with a company representative. In terms of the frequency of leaving reviews, the data showed that the majority of respondents only leave between 0 and 5 reviews per month. This could be due to a lack of time or a belief that their individual opinion may not have a significant impact.

One of the most interesting findings was the main factor that would encourage an individual to leave a review. A good interaction with a company representative was the most significant factor, with 38% of respondents stating that this would be the main reason why they would leave a review. This highlights the importance of customer service and the impact it can have on the online reputation of a business. In addition, obtaining a discount was also found to be a significant factor in encouraging individuals to leave a review. This shows the power of incentives when it comes to encouraging customers to

leave reviews and engage with a business. The quality of services or products offered was also considered to be a factor, albeit a less significant one, in encouraging individuals to leave a review. One limitation of our study is the relatively small sample size, which may limit the generalizability of the present findings. Additionally, it is also possible that the reliance on self-reported data through a questionnaire may introduce response bias and subjective interpretations. The focus on a specific geographical area (Romania in our case) may also limit the applicability of the findings to other populations or countries with different characteristics or consumer behavior. Future research could explore the role of cultural and geographical factors in influencing individuals' motivations to issue B2B reviews or share information.

Additionally, longitudinal studies could also be conducted in order to examine how motivations and behaviors change over time and identify possible long-term effects of online reviews on the well-being of businesses. Therefore, caution should be taken when drawing conclusions from this study. However, the results provide valuable insights into the behavior of the people who use and issue online reviews, which is also useful for developing other research directions in this area. The organizational implications of our study highlighted the need for companies to prioritize customer satisfaction and engagement in order to build and maintain a strong customer relationship in the long run.

Furthermore, the study emphasizes the importance of aligning marketing strategies with the evolving digital landscape in order to effectively reach and engage modern customers. Theoretical implications of the present study could involve extending and refining the current theories of customer engagement and satisfaction by considering the huge impact of digital platforms and social media on these constructs. The study also emphasizes the need for further research on the role of customer engagement in driving long-term business success.

In conclusion, the data collected in this study has provided interesting insights into the behavior and motivations that stand behind online feedback. The overall results suggest that online reviews are becoming an increasingly important factor in the decision-making process of consumers, with the age of the reviewer playing a significant role in their attitude towards leaving online reviews. All these findings, together with the data that we managed to obtain, highlight the importance of customer service and incentives in encouraging customers to engage with a business and leave a review. While we would like to emphasize again the fact that caution should be taken when drawing conclusions from this study, as it is based on a limited set of respondents from a relatively small geographic area (Romania), the results still provide valuable insights into the behavior of online reviewers that can be used to further distil the research in the future.

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