



## **Examining the Impact of User-Generated Online Reviews on Consumer Purchase Behaviour in Finland**

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## Abstract

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<p>User-generated online reviews are a powerful tool for consumers to evaluate quality, performance, and value of products or services. While their impact on consumer behaviour has been extensively studied in various contexts, their specific influence in the Finnish consumer market remained relatively unexplored. This research-based thesis aimed to bridge this gap by examining the relationship between online reviews and the purchase behaviour of Finnish consumers.</p> <p>The research goals were to determine the level of importance that Finnish consumers place on online reviews when making purchasing decisions, examine the factors influencing consumers' perceived helpfulness of these reviews, and explore how their influence varies among different demographic groups and product categories.</p> <p>The study was underpinned by a detailed theoretical framework that interconnected various elements within the research topic, including consumer behaviour theory, prior research on online reviews, as well as the distinct characteristics of the Finnish consumer market. Using a questionnaire-based survey, the study gathered responses from 38 Finnish consumers. Additionally, to validate findings regarding factors affecting perceived helpfulness of online reviews, a case study analysed online reviews on Verkkokauppa.com that users found either helpful or unhelpful to identify recurring patterns and themes among them.</p> <p>Survey results revealed that online reviews can significantly impact the purchase behaviour of Finnish consumers. 81.6% of respondents considered online reviews to be "Very important" or "Somewhat important" part of their decision-making process, and 86.8% had been directly influenced by online reviews when making their purchasing decisions. The results remained consistent across selected demographic groups, including age, gender, education level, and annual household income. Among the selected product categories, electronics and household appliances were the ones for which consumers most commonly sought online reviews.</p> <p>The case study revealed that Finnish consumers tend to find lengthy reviews that are not excessively negative and offer detailed information to be more helpful. Conversely, highly negative reviews infused with anger were more likely to be considered unhelpful. However, the findings regarding the influence of different emotions, particularly regret and anxiety, on perceived helpfulness remained inconclusive, necessitating further research.</p> <p>This study holds vital implications for businesses operating in Finland, emphasizing the impact user-generated online reviews have on consumer purchasing decisions. The study suggests that businesses operating in Finland should prioritise managing and encouraging positive and detailed online reviews to enhance their performance and build consumer trust.</p>
<b>Key words</b> online reviews, purchase behaviour, Verkkokauppa.com, Finland

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# 1 Introduction

This research-based Bachelor thesis examines the impact of user-generated online reviews on consumer purchase behaviour in Finland. It is conducted as part of the degree program in Business Service Solutions and Languages at Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, with the author specializing in Marketing, Sales, and Service.

This chapter of the thesis discusses the background of the study, defines the key concepts, and outlines the research objectives.

## 1.1 Background of the study

The thesis is responding to the growing importance of user-generated content in consumer decision-making processes. With the rise of e-commerce and digital platforms, consumers increasingly rely on user-generated online reviews to assess quality, reliability, and value of products or services (Watson & Wu, 2021).

The role of online reviews in shaping consumer decision-making processes has been extensively studied and empirically validated over the years. Positive comments, for example, have been found to generate emotional trust and increase consumer confidence in a product (Chen, Samaranayake, Cen, Qi & Lan, 2022, 3). Conversely, negative and neutral reviews can have a strong negative impact on consumer purchase intention (Zhang, Zheng & Wang, 2020, 84). Those studies demonstrate that consumers in the online shopping tend to place great value on social proof, seeking and considering opinions and experiences of fellow customers to guide their purchasing choices. This reliance on user-generated online reviews necessitates that businesses understand and effectively leverage their potential to influence consumer behaviour.

While previous studies have examined the impact of user-generated online reviews in various contexts, their specific influence on consumer purchase behaviour in the Finnish market remains relatively unexplored. This research seeks to address this gap and shed light on the unique dynamics at play in Finland.

The findings of this research contribute to the existing body of knowledge regarding the impact of online reviews on consumer behaviour. By uncovering the specific dynamics and preferences of the Finnish consumers, this study provides actionable insights for businesses operating in Finland. These insights can help businesses effectively leverage user-generated online reviews to enhance their marketing strategies and gain consumer trust.

## 1.2 Key concepts

Before delving into the specific objectives of the study, it is essential to introduce and define key concepts that underpin the research.

**Consumer behaviour** is a field of study focused on researching the buyer decision-making process and studying characteristics of individual consumers as well as groups in an order to understand their wants and needs (Bakshi, 2012).

**Purchase intention** is the degree to which a consumer is willing to buy a product (Peña-García, Gil-Saura, Rodríguez-Orejuela & Siqueira-Junior, 2020, 2).

**Consumer purchase behaviour**, also known as *consumer buying behaviour*, refers to the observable actions of individuals or groups when it comes to selecting, purchasing, and utilizing products or services (Rasool Madni, 2014, as cited in Janathanan & Nizar, 2018, 1).

**Consumer decision-making process** refers to the entire process that individuals go through when making a purchasing decision, from recognizing a need or want to evaluating alternatives and making a final decision. It involves cognitive and psychological factors, such as information processing, evaluation of options, and decision-making strategies. (Stankevich 2017, 10-11)

**Online review** is a statement, whether positive, neutral, or negative, that is written by a consumer regarding a product or a company based on their personal experience and shared publicly on the Internet (Zhang, Zheng & Wang, 2020, 75). It should be noted that this study only focuses on *user-generated* online reviews, and the impact of online reviews produced by influencers or professional media will not be researched. For the sake of brevity, the terms "online reviews" and "user-generated online reviews" are used interchangeably throughout the study.

**Perceived helpfulness of an online review** refers to the subjective assessment made by individuals regarding the extent to which an online review provides valuable and helpful information. (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010). Online review platforms often provide users with the option to rate the helpfulness of reviews, typically through a simple voting system by allowing users to mark a review as "helpful" or "not helpful".

**Perceived trustworthiness of an online review** refers to the degree to which readers perceive the review as an honest, sincere, and truthful expression of a customer's experience with a product or service, devoid of any commercial or personal biases (Filieri, 2015).

Each of the key concepts is discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

### 1.3 Research objectives and questions

Two research objectives are as follows:

1. To investigate the impact of online reviews on the decision-making process of Finnish consumers and to assess the overall significance and effectiveness of online reviews in influencing purchase behaviour in Finland.
2. To identify the specific factors that play a role in shaping the influence and perception of online reviews within the Finnish consumer market. By exploring these factors, the study aims to achieve a deeper understanding of the research topic.

The overarching research question for the study is: "What impact do user-generated online reviews have on consumer purchase behaviour in Finland?"

To investigate this research question, the following investigative questions (IQ) will be addressed:

IQ1. What is the level of importance that Finnish consumers place on user-generated online reviews when making purchase decisions?

IQ2. What criteria do Finnish consumers use to evaluate the helpfulness of an online review?

IQ3. Are there any differences in the impact of online reviews across different demographic groups or product categories?

Table 1 presents the investigative questions of the research in the overlay matrix.

Table 1. Overlay matrix.

Investigative questions	Theoretical framework (chapter)	Research methods	Results (chapter)
IQ1. What is the level of importance that Finnish consumers place on user-generated online reviews when making purchase decisions?	2.2 2.2 2.3	Survey	4.1.1
IQ2. What criteria do Finnish consumers use to evaluate the helpfulness of an online review?	2.1.4 2.2.1 2.2.2	Survey; case study	4.1.2 4.2
IQ3. Are there any differences in the impact of online reviews across different demographic groups or product categories?	2.2.3 2.3	Survey	4.1.3

## **2 Theoretical framework**

This chapter presents the theoretical framework employed in this study that clarifies the central concepts related to the research topic. It draws upon relevant academic literature and previous studies to define and explore key elements of the research, such as consumer behaviour, consumer decision-making process, online reviews, perceived helpfulness, and more. Through examining existing literature, a solid foundation for understanding the key concepts and their interconnections within the research topic can be established. This foundation will serve as a guide for collecting, analysing and interpreting empirical data, contributing to a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

### **2.1 Consumer behaviour**

Consumer behaviour is a field of study focused on researching characteristics of individual consumers as well as groups in an order to understand their wants and needs (Bakshi, 2012). It is an interdisciplinary field that combines insights from sociology, psychology, management, and economics. Consumer behaviour research examines various factors that influence consumer choices, including individual characteristics such as demographics and behavioural variables. Additionally, it considers the impact of social influences from family, friends, social groups, and society at large on consumer behaviour. (Singh, Sailo, 2013, 45-46.)

This thesis is most interested in three areas of study within the broader field of consumer behaviour research. Those areas are consumer decision-making process, purchase intention, and consumer purchase behaviour. Those are related but distinct concepts representing different aspects of consumer behaviour.

#### **2.1.1 Consumer decision-making process**

Consumer decision-making process refers to the entire process that individuals go through when making a purchasing decision, from recognizing a need or want to evaluating alternatives and making a final decision. Consumer decision-making process involves cognitive and psychological factors, such as information processing, evaluation of options, and decision-making strategies. (Stankevich 2017, 10-11)

According to Stankevich (2017, 10-11), the traditional model of consumer decision-making process, often referred to as the "Five-stage model of the consumer buying process", provides a framework to understand the steps involved in the decision-making process. This model outlines



five key stages that consumers typically move through during their buying journey for a product or service. These stages are as follows:

1. **Problem Recognition.** Consumers identify a discrepancy between the current state and the desired state, which triggers the consumer's motivation to seek a solution.
2. **Information Search.** Consumers engage in an information search to gather relevant information about the available options to satisfy their needs.
3. **Evaluation of Alternatives.** Consumers evaluate the different options available to them based on various criteria.
4. **Purchase Decision.** Consumers select a product or service that best aligns with their needs and preferences.
5. **Post-purchase Evaluation.** Consumers engage in a post-purchase evaluation to assess their satisfaction.



Figure 1. Five-stage model of consumer decision-making process (Stankevich, 2017)

### 2.1.2 Purchase intention

Purchase intention refers to the degree of willingness displayed by a consumer to purchase a particular product or service. It is an integral part of the consumer decision-making process, as it serves as the guiding force throughout its various stages. (Peña-García & al. 2020.)

Purchase intention can be influenced by a large number of factors. In their study, Mirabi, Akbari-yeh, and Tahmasebifard (2015) investigated some of the determinants of purchase intention. Specifically, the study confirmed that consumers' purchase intention is influenced by the reputation of the brand name, the perceived quality of the product, the effectiveness of advertising efforts, as well as considerations related to packaging and price.

There are some factors influencing the purchase intention that are unique to the online space. In the study by Kim, Lee & Kim (2004), the perceived benefits of online shopping, such as time efficiency, accessibility, lower prices, and information comparability, are highlighted as determinants of purchase intention, as these benefits influence consumers' intentions to use the internet for making purchases. According to Akar & Nasir (2015), trust and perceived risk are significant factors influencing consumers' purchase intentions online. When customers have confidence in vendors or websites and believe that the online environment is secure, they tend to engage in more online shopping transactions.

### 2.1.3 Purchase behaviour

Consumer purchase behaviour (or consumer buying behaviour) refers to the observable actions of individuals or groups when it comes to selecting, purchasing, and utilizing products or services in order to fulfil their needs and desires (Rasool Madni, 2014, as cited in Janathanan & Nizar, 2018, 1). According to Tao, Sun, Liu, Tian & Zhang (2022, 4), consumer purchase behaviour encompasses the various stages of acquiring and using a product or service, from the initial decision to purchase, to the actual acquisition and consumption, and potentially even post-purchase evaluation and follow-up actions. As such, consumer purchase behaviour could be understood as the culmination of the different stages of the consumer decision-making process, as it encompasses the actual acts of selecting and acquiring products or services.

According to Ramya & Ali (2016), consumer purchase behaviour can be influenced by several factors or forces. These factors are as follows:

1. Cultural factors. including culture, subculture, and social class. Culture is the fundamental determinant of wants and behaviour, acquired through family and institutions, and it impacts consumption patterns and decision-making. Social class, determined by various factors such as income, occupation, education, and lifestyle, also plays a role in consumer behaviour.
2. Social factors. Families, whether nuclear or joint, play a key role in shaping individual preferences and decision-making. Reference groups, consisting of people individuals associate with, also strongly impact attitudes and behaviours. Additionally, a person's role and status within various social groups influence their choice of products and brands.
3. Personal factors. Those include age, occupation, income and lifestyle. For instance, consumers' product preferences evolve as they move through different life stages, and income plays a pivotal role in shaping consumption patterns.
4. Psychological factors. The most important ones are motivation and perception.
5. Economic factors. Behaviour of the consumer can be influenced significantly by his economic situation. Economic factors that influence consumer behaviour are personal or family income, income expectations, liquid assets of the consumer, etc.

Figure 2 presents these factors in a tree chart.

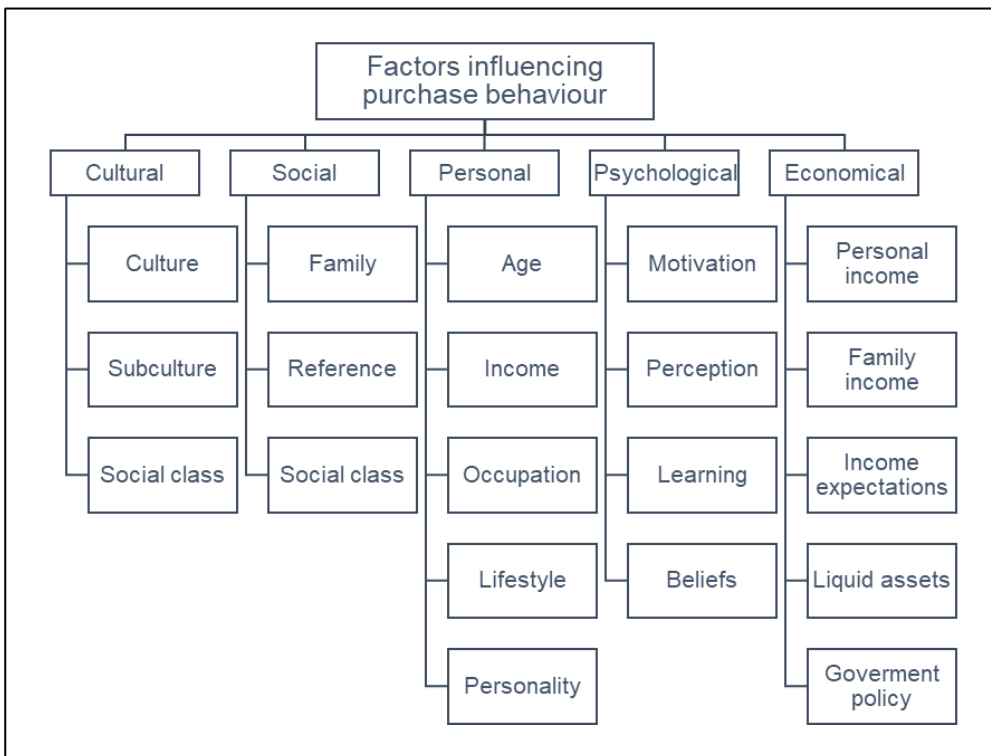


Figure 2. Factors influencing decision-making process (Ramya & Ali, 2016)

#### 2.1.4 Consumer behaviour in the online context

Sunitha & Gnanadhas (2014) define online shopping as “a process of purchasing goods or services directly from a seller over the Internet without the need for an intermediary service”. Online shopping has emerged as a significant and convenient mode of shopping, particularly for individuals with busy schedules and fast-paced lifestyles (Singh & Sailo, 2013, 48).

The study conducted by Khurana & Kaur (2017) investigated the factors driving individuals' purchasing decisions within the context of online shopping. One crucial finding from the study is the desire to save time, money, and efforts. Consumers strive for convenience and efficiency when engaging in online shopping, seeking to maximize the value of their resources and streamline the overall purchasing process. Another significant aspect highlighted by the study is the importance of establishing trust in online shopping websites. In the online shopping environment, the consumer does not interact with the seller or the product directly, and because of this trust plays a pivotal role in shaping consumers' attitudes and influencing their intentions to make purchases.

An interesting concept introduced in the literature is that of a "prosumer" (Khurana & Kaur, 2014). A prosumer is an individual who exhibits an exceptionally high level of interest in a brand's products or services. These individuals actively engage in sharing their opinions, reviews, and feedback

about the products they purchase. By assuming the role of both a consumer and a producer of content, prosumers play a significant role in shaping online consumer behaviour.

## 2.2 Online reviews as sources of information

This subchapter examines the available academic literature and statistical findings concerning online reviews and their potential influence on consumer behaviour. The reviewed studies have been conducted in diverse contexts, but no study has been conducted in Finland. These studies can serve as a valuable point of reference to contextualize and interpret the data collected in the current study to better understand the effects of online reviews on consumer behaviour specifically in the context of Finland.

First, it is important to define what is meant by an online review in this study. According to Zhang, Zheng & Wang (2020, 75), online review is a statement, whether positive, neutral, or negative, that is written by a consumer regarding a product, or a company based on their personal experience and shared publicly on the Internet. This study is specifically interested in *user-generated* online reviews. Many retail websites offer their customers ability to leave online reviews of their products or services in the form of numerical ratings, open-ended reviews, or both. For this study, online reviews are defined as *testimonials or recommendations provided by individuals who have purchased or used a product or service, shared publicly on the internet to inform potential buyers in their decision-making process.*

Online reviews are a powerful tool for consumers to evaluate quality, performance, and value of products or services. They offer consumers valuable insights and diagnostic value and play a crucial role in various stages of the decision-making process: when consumers recognize a need, online reviews become an essential tool particularly during *information search* and *evaluation of alternatives*. (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010, 186.) The availability of customer reviews throughout the purchase decision process enables consumers to make more informed choices and enhance their overall shopping experience.

Extensive research has consistently demonstrated that online reviews wield substantial influence over consumers in the digital space, shaping their decision-making processes and overall perceptions of products or services. Positive comments, for example, have been found to generate emotional trust and increase consumer confidence in a product (Chen & al. 2022, 3). Conversely, negative and neutral reviews can have a strong negative impact on consumer purchase intention (Zhang, Zheng & Wang, 2020, 84). In a study conducted by Lackermair, Kailer, and Kanmaz (2013), a survey was administered among 103 German online shoppers, revealing the significance of online reviews as a valuable information source for consumers. The results indicated that

74.04% of the participants considered online reviews to be an “Important” or “Very important” source of information.

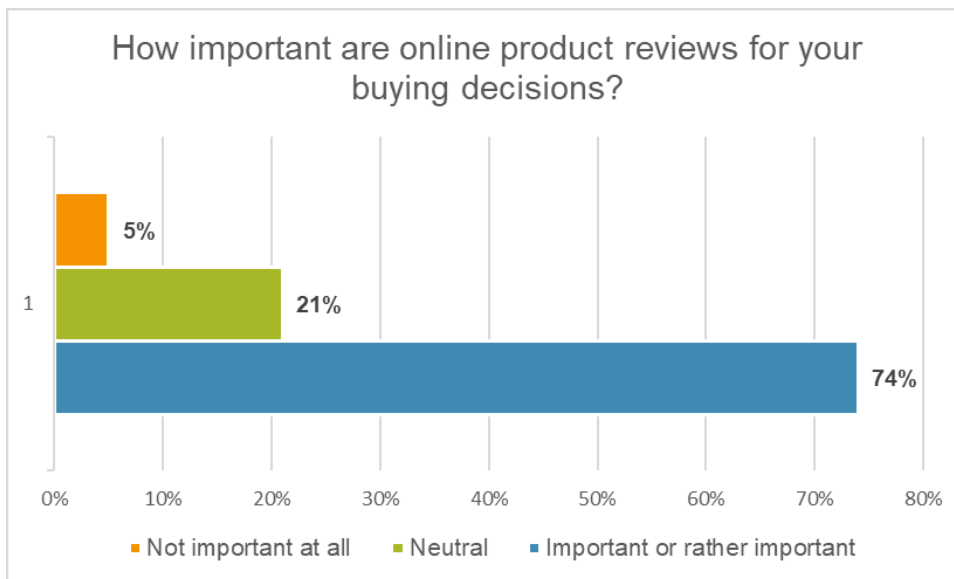


Figure 3. Results of the survey “How important are online product reviews for your buying decision?” (Lackermair, Kailer, and Kanmaz, 2013)

According to Soares, Dolci, & Lunardi (2022), consumers often rely on testimonials from fellow consumers as their primary or even sole source of information when making purchasing decisions. This signifies a shift in the dynamics of consumer trust and decision-making, as traditional marketing messages can now be overshadowed by the authentic voices of fellow consumers. As discussed in the previous subchapter, trust is a significant concern for consumers when shopping online. The increased focus on online reviews can be attributed to this, as consumers actively seek the opinions of previous customers to validate their purchasing decisions. Consumers appear to value the perspectives of others as a means of gathering information and forming opinions about products or services they are considering. Businesses need to understand and effectively leverage online reviews in their marketing strategies. Mudambi and Schuff (2010) suggest that online retailers can greatly benefit from encouraging quality customer reviews, as they offer a source of differentiation and create greater potential value for customers.

Two key terms that play a crucial role in understanding the impact of online reviews on consumer behaviour are "helpfulness" and "trustworthiness". While these terms are closely related, they have distinct connotations and focus on different aspects of online reviews. Trustworthiness relates to the reliability and credibility of the information, while helpfulness focuses on the value and usefulness of the information in aiding decision-making (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010). Perceived trustworthiness can be viewed as one of the factors influencing perceived helpfulness (Qin & Kong, 2015).

### 2.2.1 Perceived helpfulness of online reviews

Perceived helpfulness of online reviews is the subjective assessment made by individuals regarding the extent to which online reviews provide valuable and helpful information. It refers to the extent to which an online review aids the consumer during one or more stages of the product decision-making process (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010). Online review platforms often provide users with the option to rate the helpfulness of reviews, typically through a simple voting system by allowing users to mark a review as "helpful" or "not helpful". Measuring the perceived helpfulness of online reviews has become a prevalent approach for online retailers to assess how consumers evaluate the value and impact of a review.

According to the study by Mudambi & Schuff (2010), the perceived helpfulness of an online review is dependent on several factors, including the type of product being evaluated, the extremity of the review and the depth of the review. The extremity of a review is defined as the star rating of the review, which is a measure of the reviewer's overall sentiment towards the product. The depth of a review is measured by the total number of words in the review.

The study found that the impact of extremity and depth on the perceived helpfulness of a review differs depending on the type of product being reviewed. The study distinguishes between search goods and experience goods. Search goods are products that can be evaluated based on objective characteristics such as price, size, and weight. On the other hand, experience goods can only be evaluated based on the subjective experiences of consumers, such as taste, comfort, and aesthetics. The findings reveal that moderate reviews, with star ratings ranging from 2 to 4, tend to be more helpful than extreme reviews (star rating of 1 or 5) for experience goods, but not necessarily for search goods. Additionally, while the depth of a review generally increases its perceived helpfulness, this effect is more pronounced for search goods compared to experience goods.

Furthermore, Liu and Park (2015) have identified several additional factors that contribute to the perceived helpfulness of online reviews. One such factor is perceived enjoyment. According to their findings, reviews that are perceived as enjoyable to read are more likely to be considered helpful by readers. Additionally, they found that reviewer characteristics such as expertise and demographic information can also impact the helpfulness of reviews. Reviewers who are perceived as knowledgeable and experienced in the product category are more likely to be seen as credible sources of information.

Several studies have investigated the influence of emotions on the perceived helpfulness of online reviews. Yin, Bond, and Zhang (2014) conducted research in this area and found that reviews containing anxiety are perceived as more helpful compared to those containing anger. The study

defines anxiety as “an emotional state that motivates a person to avoid potential harm arising from ambiguous threat”, and anger as “an emotional state that motivates a person to alleviate personal harm to others”. The authors suggest that anxiety, which is associated with a higher level of perceived cognitive effort, may lead readers to view the review as more informative and valuable.

In another study by Ismagilova, Slade, Rana & Dwivedi (2019), it was discovered that the emotion of regret has a positive effect on the perceived helpfulness of both product and service reviews. Reviews expressing regret were deemed more helpful by readers, potentially because they convey a sense of genuine reflection and personal experience. On the other hand, the emotion of frustration had a negative effect on the perceived helpfulness of reviews, indicating that readers may perceive frustrated reviews as biased or unhelpful in providing relevant information. Furthermore, the perceived rationality of the reviewer was found to have a positive effect on the perceived helpfulness of an online review.

Table 2 presents the summary of factors influencing perceived helpfulness of an online review, according to reviewed literature.

Table 2. Factors influencing perceived helpfulness of an online review (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010; Liu and Park, 2015; Yin, Bond, and Zhang, 2014; Ismagilova & al. 2019).

Can increase perceived helpfulness	Can decrease perceived helpfulness
Review is moderate	Review is extreme
Review is lengthy	Review is angry
Reviewer is knowledgeable	Review is frustrated
Review is regretful	

### 2.2.2 Perceived trustworthiness of online reviews

A trustworthy online review is a review that the reader perceives as an honest, sincere, and truthful expression of a customer's experience with a product or service, devoid of any commercial or personal biases (Filieri, 2016). Trustworthiness of an online review can then be defined as *the degree to which readers perceive the review as credible and unbiased*. It is a measure of the trust or confidence that readers place in the information and opinions presented in the review. Trustworthiness is essential because it influences readers' willingness to rely on the review when making purchasing decisions. Consumers often depend on online reviews to make well-informed decisions about their purchases, and the perceived credibility of these reviews plays a crucial role in forming purchase intentions (Thomas, Wirtz & Weyerer, 2019). Perceived trustworthiness can positively and significantly influence the perceived helpfulness of the review (Qin & Kong, 2015). Conversely, the study by Reimer and Benkenstein (2016) found that reviews perceived as untrustworthy exhibit a

"boomerang effect," leading to a decrease in purchase intention for positive reviews and an increase in purchase intention for negative reviews due to reactant behaviour.

The study conducted by Thomas, Wirtz, and Weyerer (2019) aimed to investigate the determinants of online review credibility. The findings revealed that several factors can contribute to the credibility of online reviews.

Firstly, the quality of the arguments presented in the reviews, including their accuracy, completeness, and quantity, was found to significantly influence the perceived credibility of the reviews. Consumers tended to attribute greater credibility to reviews that provided more details and depth of information. Lengthier reviews were often perceived as more authentic and were associated with higher levels of trustworthiness. In addition to argument quality, the study uncovered the significance of peripheral cues in influencing review credibility. One important peripheral cue was the reviewer expertise, with reviews authored by individuals who were perceived as knowledgeable and experienced in the product category garnering higher levels of credibility. The rating of the product or service under review was another crucial peripheral cue that impacted review credibility. Positive ratings were found to elevate the credibility of the review, as consumers often attributed higher trust to positive evaluations. On the contrary, negative ratings were associated with lower levels of credibility, as consumers tended to be more sceptical of reviews that conveyed negative sentiments, possibly because they viewed them as biased. Additionally, the reputation of the website where the review was posted also played a pivotal role in shaping review credibility. Online platforms with a reputation for reliability and trustworthiness were more likely to enhance the perceived credibility of the reviews hosted on their platform. (Thomas, Wirtz, and Weyerer, 2019)

Table 3 presents the summary of factors influencing perceived trustworthiness of an online review, according to reviewed literature.

Table 3. Factors influencing perceived trustworthiness of an online review (Thomas, Wirtz, and Weyerer, 2019).

Can increase perceived trustworthiness	Can decrease perceived trustworthiness
Review is lengthy	Review is negative
Reviewer is knowledgeable	
Review is positive	
Review platform is reputable	

### 2.2.3 Online reviews and demographic characteristics

Understanding how demographic characteristics influence consumer responses to online reviews is essential for comprehending the diverse perspectives and behaviours exhibited by different



consumer segments. Overall, previous studies have consistently shown that all demographic groups tend to exhibit a propensity to engage with online reviews, with some discrepancies between them.

The study by Product Review Monitoring (2020) examined the extent of engagement with online reviews among online shoppers in the United States, exploring how it varies across different demographic categories. According to the study's findings, the trend of reading reviews is consistent across various demographic groups. Both men and women, with equal percentages of 78%, consider online reviews before making purchases. Similarly, age does not significantly impact review consumption, and both millennials and boomers exhibit similar likelihoods to engage with online reviews. Even among seniors aged 55 and above, three out of four shoppers now consult online reviews. However, the household income does play a role in the extent of online review consumption. Affluent households earning \$80,000 or more have the highest likelihood of reading online reviews, with a rate of 89%, while those with incomes below \$40,000 have a lower rate of 74%. Furthermore, household structure influences review consumption, with households having children under 18 showing a higher preference (81%) for online reviews compared to households without children (76%).

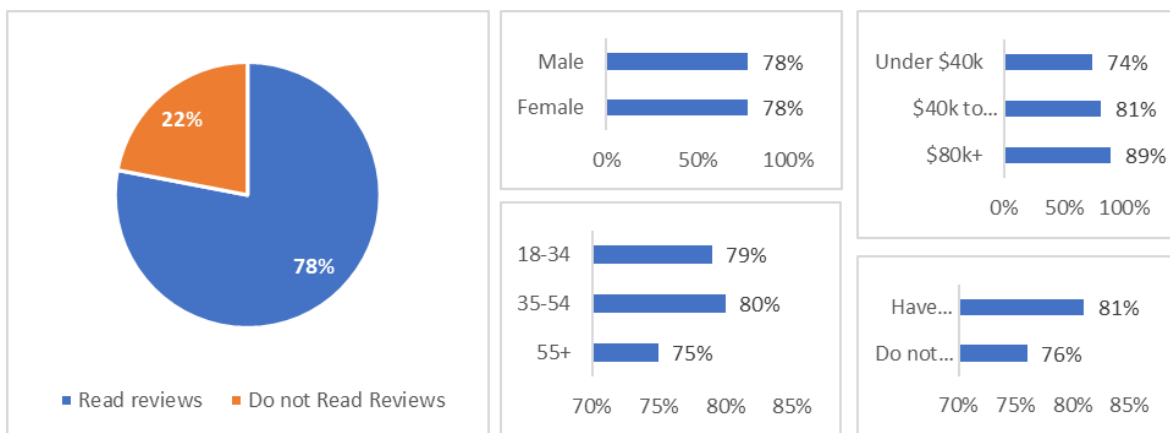


Figure 4. Demographic breakdown of shoppers who read online reviews (Product Review Monitoring, 2020)

A more recent study conducted by BrightLocal (2022) analysed the demographic data of approximate 1,000 US-based respondents. The results showed that women read online reviews more regularly than men, however only by a small margin, with 79% of women reading online reviews either 'Always' or 'Regularly', compared to 75% of men.

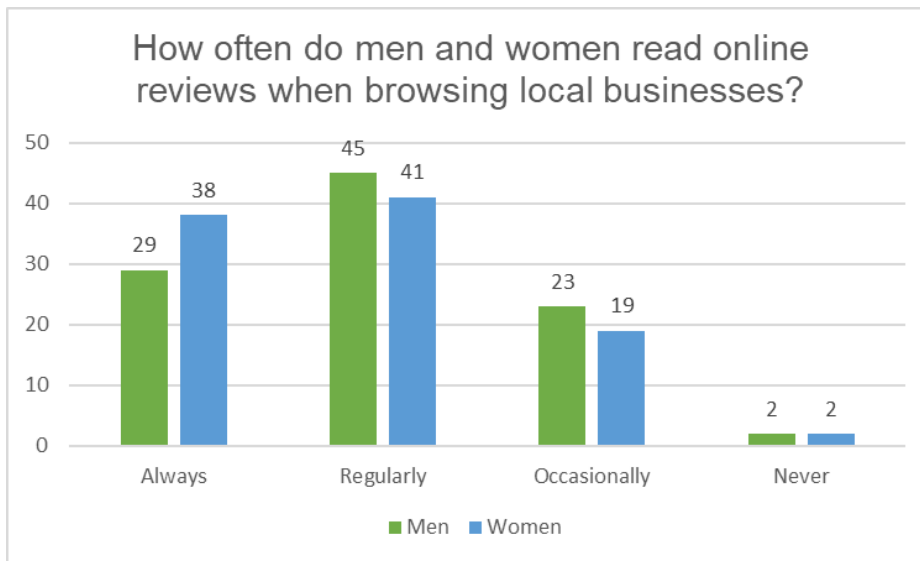


Figure 5. Online review engagement by gender (BrightLocal, 2022)

Overall, online review engagement seems to be a prevalent practice across various demographic groups. Regardless of age and gender, consumers are increasingly relying on online reviews to inform their purchase decisions. However, the studies on the subject are very limited and no study has been conducted in Finland so far.

### 2.3 Finland as a consumer market

This subchapter delves into the key characteristics of the Finnish consumer, examining their preferences, habits, and expectations when engaging in online shopping.

Finnish consumers place considerable emphasis on sustainability and ethical considerations. According to a survey by FIBS (2022), about 46% of consumers consider themselves at least partially responsible consumers, and up to 65% take responsibility into account when making purchasing decisions. This heightened awareness of environmental and social issues, according to FIBS (2022), has led to an increased demand for eco-friendly and socially responsible products and services.

Another critical aspect that resonates with the Finnish consumer is the emphasis on facts and values. According to Advertising Finland (2021), Finns are information seekers: they tend to gravitate towards brands that can provide substantial evidence of their offerings, creating a sense of trust and credibility. For businesses seeking success in the Finnish market, it is essential to present sufficient and accurate information, as this can significantly impact consumers' perception and willingness to engage with a brand. Failure to meet this expectation might result in Finnish consumers swiftly moving on to other options.

Trustworthiness and familiarity with brands are vital aspects that shape the purchasing decisions of Finnish consumers. In the Finnish market, separating brand from performance is not advisable, as Finns tend to trust brands that they are familiar with, so establishing a recognizable brand presence is essential. (Advertising Finland, 2021)

The Finnish market is highly digitalized, with e-commerce experiencing rapid growth, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic (Statistics Finland, 2021). According to a report by Clausnitzer (2023), a substantial proportion of Finnish men and women have embraced online shopping, with 58% having shopped online at least once in 2022. Online shopping is particularly popular among individuals aged between 25 and 44, reaching a 79% penetration rate.

In conclusion, the Finnish customer is a blend of conscious consumerism, information-driven decision-making, and desire for trust and familiarity. As such, user-generated online reviews should have a significant impact on the purchase behaviour of Finnish consumers. Given their preference for facts and values, online reviews can serve as a valuable source of information and social proof. In order to test this theory and delve deeper into specific factors that may influence Finnish consumers' perceptions of online reviews, a comprehensive study was conducted.

### 3 Research design

This chapter outlines the research design employed in this thesis. It presents an overview and rationale for the chosen research methods, sampling strategy and sample size, as well as the methods employed for data collection and data analysis.

#### 3.1 Research methods

Research methods play a crucial role in the scientific investigation and are essential for gathering data, analysing information, and drawing conclusions. Qualitative and quantitative research methods are the two primary approaches used in research studies, each offering distinct perspectives and techniques for data collection and analysis. A combination of the two methods, known as mixed research method, can also be employed. (Williams, 2007.)

Quantitative research is a method for testing objective theories by examining the relationships among variables. It involves measuring variables using numerical data, collected through various instruments, and analysing the data using statistical procedures. (Creswell & Creswell, 2017.)

Types of quantitative research include field experiments, simulation, surveys, correlational studies, and multivariate analysis (Queirós, Faria, & Almeida, 2017).

On the other hand, qualitative research is an exploratory approach that aims to understand the meaning individuals or groups attribute to a social or human problem. It involves asking open-ended questions, collecting data in the natural settings of participants, analysing data to identify patterns and themes, and interpreting the meaning behind the data. (Creswell & Creswell, 2017.)

Types of qualitative research include observation, ethnography, field research, focus groups, case studies, in-depth, structured and semi-structured interviews (Queirós & al. 2017).

In this study, a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods was employed. The use of mixed research method, which incorporates both qualitative and quantitative approaches, can usually lead to more reliable and comprehensive results (Choy, 2014, 104). Specifically, the study employed the convergent mixed methods design, which is the common type of mixed research design. According to Creswell & Creswell (2017), in the convergent mixed methods design, researchers collect both quantitative and qualitative data independently and at the same time, with the intention of comparing and contrasting the results to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

For the quantitative part, a survey was conducted as the primary research method to explore investigative questions 1-3 and to get a broad overview of how important online reviews are to Finnish consumers in their decision-making process.

For the qualitative part, a case study approach was employed as a secondary research method to explore the IQ2 specifically (What criteria do Finnish consumers use to evaluate the helpfulness of an online review?) in more detail and validate the survey results on that question in a real-life context.

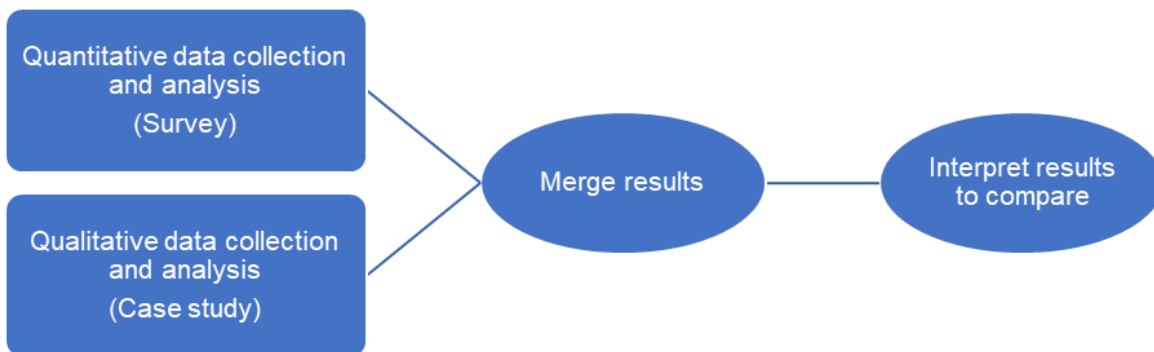


Figure 6. Convergent mixed methods design employed in this study (Based on Creswell & Creswell, 2017)

### 3.1.1 Survey

The study began by conducting a survey in the form of questionnaire among Finnish consumers. The primary objective of the survey was to gather quantitative data to enable a broader understanding of consumer perspectives and behaviours. The survey aimed to explore all of the investigative questions.

The survey incorporated multiple-choice and rating scale questions encompassing various aspects related to online reviews and their influence on consumer behaviour. The insights gathered from the reviewed literature played a vital role in formulating the survey questions. By drawing from existing research, the survey questions were carefully crafted to target relevant metrics and explore the investigative questions.

Table 4 presents the survey questions sorted by corresponding investigative question of the research. For the sake of brevity, the table does not include the answer options that were available to the survey participants. The entire questionnaire with all of the answer options included can be found in the study appendix.

Table 4. Investigative questions and corresponding survey questions.

Investigative question	Survey questions
IQ1. What is the level of importance that Finnish consumers place on user-generated online reviews when making purchase decisions?	6. When considering purchasing a product online, how important are online reviews in your decision-making process? * 7. How frequently do you read online reviews before making a purchase? * 8. Have online reviews ever influenced your decision to purchase a product or service? *
IQ2. What criteria do Finnish consumers use to evaluate the helpfulness of an online review?	10. How do you feel about long reviews? * 11. How do you feel about extreme reviews (very positive or very negative)? * 12. Do you consider the reviewer's expertise when evaluating its helpfulness and trustworthiness? * 13. Do you consider the reviewer's reputation when evaluating its helpfulness and trustworthiness? * 14. How do you feel about online reviews that contain the emotion of anger? * 15. How do you feel about online reviews that contain the emotion of anxiety? * 16. How do you feel about online reviews that contain the emotion of regret? * 17. How do you feel about online reviews that contain the emotion of satisfaction? *
IQ3. Are there any differences in the impact of online reviews across different demographic groups or product categories?	1. Age * 2. Gender * 3. Where in Finland do you live? (Region) * 4. Education level * 5. Annual Household Income 9. For which types of products do you usually seek out online reviews? *

### 3.1.2 Case study

The IQ2 deals with consumers' perceptions and their subjective assessments of online reviews. Given the intricate nature of this topic, qualitative research approach is warranted. As such, to gain a deeper understanding of the factors influencing consumers' assessments of online reviews' helpfulness to validate the survey results in real-life context, a case study approach was employed. The company chosen for the study was Verkkokauppa.com.

Verkkokauppa.com is a prominent Finnish e-commerce platform that specializes in offering a wide range of products to consumers online. It allows customers to browse and purchase items ranging

from electronics, home appliances, and computers to leisure and lifestyle products. With 4,3 million visitors in January 2023, it is fifth most visited retail website in Finland (Coppola, 2023).

Verkkokauppa.com is an ideal case for this study due to its big variety of product categories and its prominence of user-generated reviews. Customers have the option to provide detailed reviews for products they have purchased and can assign an overall star rating, as well as individual star ratings for various aspects or features of the product. Other customers have the ability to mark a review as helpful or unhelpful, depending on if they agree or disagree with its sentiment, thereby increasing or decreasing its importance and relevance for future consumers.

The study involved a detailed analysis of online reviews on Verkkokauppa.com. The focus was on analysing the reviews that customers considered helpful or unhelpful, aiming to identify common patterns and themes and then compare them to the average reviews found on the platform.

### **3.2 Sampling strategy and sample size**

Sampling refers to selecting a limited number of individuals from a population in order to represent that population accurately. When conducting survey research, it is necessary to decide which population to focus on. This choice can involve reporting on either the entire country or a specific subgroup (Saris & Gallhofer 2014, 9).

In order to ensure the integrity and objectivity of the research, both the survey respondents and online reviews to be analysed were selected using a random sampling approach. Random sampling, as recommended by Saris & Gallhofer (2014), helps minimize bias and increase the representativeness of the sample. By employing this method, every potential survey respondent and each online review had an equal opportunity to be part of the study, enhancing the overall validity of the findings.

The aim of the survey was to gather approximately 40 responses, and the final number of participants ended up being 38. For the case study, a total of 120 reviews were randomly selected and analysed. This set consisted of 40 reviews perceived as helpful, 40 reviews perceived as unhelpful, and 40 reviews of any kind used for comparison. This sample size was determined based on practical considerations, such as the available resources and time constraints, while ensuring that a substantial dataset could still be obtained.

### **3.3 Data collection and data analysis**

The questionnaire was sent to potential respondents via Reddit and LinkedIn, two prominent online platforms with large communities, representing a diverse range of demographic groups. These

channels offered a convenient and efficient way to reach out to potential respondents, especially since the study focused primarily on individuals who actively engage in online shopping. By leveraging these online platforms, the research aimed to attract the desired demographic and increase the likelihood of obtaining relevant responses. The survey was conducted using Webropol, which is a platform for conducting online surveys and collecting data. To analyse survey findings, descriptive statistical methods were applied. Statistics such as shares and percentages were used to summarize the survey responses and provide a clear overview of the data. The conclusions drawn from the data were informed by the theoretical framework.

In the case study, reviews were selected randomly from a variety of products and product categories across the website. To analyse the collected reviews, content analysis was employed. Content analysis is a research method that involves systematically examining and interpreting textual data to uncover patterns, themes, and underlying meanings (Drake & Salmi 2018).

The reviews were selected and then sorted based on their features which commonly affect consumers' perceptions of online reviews, according to studies and literature reviewed in the previous chapter. Those features are as follows:

1. Review length (Long/Short): Taking into consideration the median review length on Verkkokauppa.com, a long review was defined as one containing 100 or more words, while a short review was defined as one containing 30 or less words.
2. Review extremity (Very Positive/Moderate/Very Negative). A review with a perfect rating of 5/5 was categorized as "Very Positive", while a review with the lowest rating of 1/5 was categorized as "Very Negative". Reviews falling within the range of ratings between 2/5 and 4/5 were considered "Moderate".
3. Reviewer expertise (Knowledgeable/Not knowledgeable). Reviewer's expertise here refers to the extent to which the reviewer demonstrates knowledge and experience related to the product being reviewed.  
Indicators: 1) technical details, 2) industry jargon, 3) references to past experiences with similar products, 4) depth and clarity of the review. Review needs to at least two of those to fall under this category.
4. Emotion of anger. Refers to the reviewer's strong negative feelings or dissatisfaction with the product.  
Indicators: 1) aggressive language, 2) harsh criticism, 3) expressions of frustration and annoyance.
5. Emotion of regret. Refers to the reviewer's feelings of disappointment or remorse about their decision to purchase.



Indicators: 1) phrases like "I wish I hadn't...", "I regret buying...", or "I should have gone with...", 2) expressions of dissatisfaction and disappointment.

6. Emotion of anxiety. Refers to the reviewer's feelings of doubt and uncertainty about their purchase.

Indicators: 1) concerns about product quality and performance, 2) expression of scepticism and uncertainty.

7. Emotion of satisfaction. Represents a positive response to a product, indicating that the reviewer is content with their experience.

Indicators: 1) positive language, 2) expressed contentment.

Table 5 categorises the features that were assessed during the analysis of online reviews. It serves as a roadmap for understanding how different aspects within reviews contribute to the overall perception of their helpfulness and trustworthiness. The updated table populated with gathered data can be found in the following chapter.

Table 5. Planned analysis of key features affecting consumer perceptions of online reviews.

<b>Review type</b>	<b>Found helpful</b>	<b>Found unhelpful</b>	<b>All reviews</b>
Long	-Percentage-	-Percentage-	-Percentage-
Short	-Percentage-	-Percentage-	-Percentage-
Very positive	-Percentage-	-Percentage-	-Percentage-
Moderate	-Percentage-	-Percentage-	-Percentage-
Very negative	-Percentage-	-Percentage-	-Percentage-
Knowledgeable reviewer	-Percentage-	-Percentage-	-Percentage-
Angry	-Percentage-	-Percentage-	-Percentage-
Regretful	-Percentage-	-Percentage-	-Percentage-
Anxious	-Percentage-	-Percentage-	-Percentage-
Satisfied	-Percentage-	-Percentage-	-Percentage-

## 4 Results

This chapter covers the results of the study. It presents the analysis of the survey results categorized in accordance with the thesis's investigative questions, as well as the findings of the case study.

### 4.1 Survey results

Table 6. Distribution of respondents across demographic categories.

Survey question	Answer option	Percentage
1. Age (n=38)	<18	0.0%
	18-24	13.2%
	25-34	60.5%
	35-44	23.7%
	45-54	0.0%
	>54	2.6%
2. Gender (n=38)	Male	28.9%
	Female	47.4%
	Other	10.5%
3. Region (n=38)	Uusimaa	55.3%
	Pirkanmaa	7.9%
	Varsinais-Suomi	13.2%
	Pohjois-Pohjanmaa	2.6%
	Keski-Suomi	5.3%
	Pohjois-Savo	0.0%
	Satakunta	0.0%
	Päijät-Häme	2.6%
	Etelä-Pohjanmaa	0.0%
	Pohjanmaa	2.6%
	Lappi	0.0%
	Kymenlaakso	2.6%
	Kanta-Häme	5.3%
	Pohjois-Karjala	2.6%
	Etelä-Savo	0.0%
	Etelä-Karjala	0.0%
	Kainuu	0.0%
	Keski-Pohjanmaa	0.0%
	Ahvenanmaa	0.0%
3. Education level (n=38)	High School or below	13.2%
	College/University (Bachelor's Degree)	50.0%
	Graduate/Postgraduate Degree	36.8%
4. Annual Household Income (n=30)	€0 - €15,000	16.7%
	€15,001 - €35,000	33.3%
	€35,001 - €55,000	20.0%
	€55,001 - €75,000	13.3%
	€75,001 - €95,000	6.7%
	€95,000+	10.0%

The survey was administered over a period from August 5th to August 26th, 2023. In order to achieve a wide reach and collect input from a diverse range of participants, the questionnaire was distributed through two prominent online platforms, LinkedIn and Reddit. A total of 38 responses was received. The distribution of respondents across demographic categories is detailed in table 6.

Disparities exist in the level of representation of different demographic groups, especially in terms of age and geography. Age groups below 18 and above 45, as well most of the geographical regions, are either minimally represented or entirely absent. That aspect will be acknowledged in the forthcoming analysis of the survey results.

The following subchapters present the survey results categorized in accordance with the thesis's investigative questions.

#### 4.1.1 Impact of online reviews on consumer behaviour

Table 7. Results of the survey questions on the impact of online reviews on consumer behaviour (n=38)

Survey question	Answer option	Percentage
6. When considering purchasing a product online, how important are online reviews in your decision-making process?	Very important	31.6%
	Somewhat important	50.0%
	Neutral	5.2%
	Not so important	5.3%
	Not important at all	7.9%
7. How frequently do you read online reviews before making a purchase?	Always	28.9%
	Often	47.4%
	Sometimes	10.5%
	Rarely	5.3%
	Never	7.9%
8. Have online reviews ever influenced your decision to purchase a product or service?	Yes	86.8%
	No	13.2%

Table 7 presents the results of the survey questions on the impact of online reviews on consumer behaviour.

The survey demonstrates that online reviews play a significant role in the decision-making process for Finnish consumers. A combined 81.6% of respondents indicated that online reviews are either "Very important" or "Somewhat important" when considering purchasing a product online. This number is comparable and even slightly higher than observed in the reviewed studies. Conversely, only 7.9% of respondents claimed to find online reviews not important at all.

Furthermore, a significant portion of participants, accounting for 76.3%, indicated that they consistently read online reviews, categorizing their behaviour as "Always" or "Often", while only 7.9% claimed that they never read online reviews before making a purchase. Additionally, the data

highlights that 86.8% of respondents have been influenced by online reviews at least once before when deciding whether to make a purchase.

These results demonstrate that Finnish consumer behaviour in regard to online reviews aligns with global trends observed in other regions. The inclination of Finnish consumers to thoroughly re-search their choices, as exemplified by the regular reading of online reviews, mirrors a behaviour that is consistent with digital consumers worldwide. This consistency also resonates with the well-established Finnish preference for informed and reliable decision-making.

#### **4.1.2 Factors influencing perceived helpfulness and trustworthiness**

Table 8 presents the results of the survey questions on the factors influencing perceived helpfulness and trustworthiness of an online review.

The survey revealed that a substantial majority (71.4%) of respondents do not consider the length of a review, whether long or short, to significantly impact their perception of its helpfulness and trustworthiness. The reputation of the reviewer was also found to be largely inconsequential, with 74.3% of respondents claiming that it does not impact their perception of online reviews.

The expertise of the reviewer, however, emerged as a crucial factor influencing perceptions. 71.4% of respondents considered reviews from knowledgeable reviewers to be more helpful and trustworthy. In contrast, only 2.9% believed that knowledgeable reviewers are less helpful and trustworthy, and a notable fraction 25.7% asserted that the expertise of the reviewer does not impact their perception.

51.4% of participants indicated that they view extreme reviews as less helpful and trustworthy than moderate ones. A smaller portion of 31.4% expressed indifference towards the extremeness of a review, while 8.6% perceived extreme reviews as more helpful and trustworthy.

Different emotions had different levels of impact on the perception of online reviews. A significant majority (62.9%) of participants perceived angry reviews as less trustworthy, while only a small percentage of 5.7% considered them more trustworthy. Anxiety in the review also seem to decrease its perceived helpfulness and trustworthiness, as 42.8% of respondents found them to be less helpful and trustworthy. On the other hand, regretful reviews were deemed more helpful by 40.0% of participants, while 17.1% saw them as less helpful. Satisfied reviews were viewed as more helpful by 57.2%, with only 11.4% finding them less helpful.

The factors influencing consumers' perceptions of online reviews will be discussed in more detail when analysing the results of the case study.

Table 8. Results of the survey questions on the factors influencing perceived helpfulness and trustworthiness of an online review. (n=36)

Survey question	Answer option	Percentage
10. How do you feel about long reviews?	I find long reviews to be more helpful and trustworthy than short ones	25.7%
	I find long reviews to be less helpful and trustworthy than short ones	2.9%
	It doesn't matter to me if the review is long or short	71.4%
11. How do you feel about extreme reviews (very positive or very negative)?	I find extreme reviews to be more helpful and trustworthy than moderate ones	8.6%
	I find extreme reviews to be less helpful and trustworthy than moderate ones	51.4%
	I find very positive reviews to be helpful and trustworthy, but not very negative ones	2.9%
	I find very negative reviews to be helpful and trustworthy, but not very positive ones	5.7%
	It doesn't matter to me if the review is extreme or moderate	31.4%
12. Do you consider the reviewer's expertise when evaluating its helpfulness and trustworthiness?	I find knowledgeable reviewers to be more helpful and trustworthy	71.4%
	I find knowledgeable reviewers to be less helpful and trustworthy	2.9%
	It doesn't matter to me if the reviewer is knowledgeable or not	25.7%
13. Do you consider the reviewer's reputation when evaluating its helpfulness and trustworthiness?	I find reputable reviewers to be more helpful and trustworthy	25.7%
	I find reputable reviewers to be less helpful and trustworthy	0.0%
	It doesn't matter to me if the reviewer is reputable or not	74.3%
14. How do you feel about online reviews that contain the emotion of anger/frustration?	I find angry reviews to be more helpful and trustworthy	5.7%
	I find angry reviews to be less helpful and trustworthy	62.9%
	It doesn't matter to me if the review contains anger or not	31.4%
15. How do you feel about online reviews that contain the emotion of anxiety?	I find anxious reviews to be more helpful and trustworthy	8.6%
	I find anxious reviews to be less helpful and trustworthy	42.8%
	It doesn't matter to me if the review contains anxiety or not	48.6%
16. How do you feel about online reviews that contain the emotion of regret?	I find regretful reviews to be more helpful and trustworthy	40.0%
	I find regretful reviews to be less helpful and trustworthy	17.1%
	It doesn't matter to me if the review contains regret or not	42.9%
17. How do you feel about online reviews that contain the emotion of satisfaction?	I find satisfied reviews to be more helpful and trustworthy	57.2%
	I find satisfied reviews to be less helpful and trustworthy	11.4%
	It doesn't matter to me if the review contains satisfaction or not	31.4%

### 4.1.3 Variations across demographics groups and product categories

Table 9 presents responses to the survey question regarding the types of products for which individuals typically seek out online reviews.

Table 9. Results of the survey question on the types of products for which consumer tend to seek online reviews. (n=38)

Survey question	Answer option	Percentage
9. For which types of products do you usually seek out online reviews? (Select all that apply)	Electronics	86.8%
	Travel & Holiday	39.5%
	Clothing & Fashion	36.8%
	Household Appliances	68.4%
	Beauty & Personal Care	23.7%
	Food & Grocery	10.5%
	Other (please specify)	13.2%

The table reveals that online reviews are predominantly sought for electronics and household appliances, with 86.8% and 68.4% of respondents respectively indicating that they typically seek out online reviews for these categories. Online reviews also appear to play a significant role in consumer decision-making when it comes to travel and fashion categories, although to a lesser extent, with 39.5% and 36.8% of respondents respectively. A smaller margin of 23.7% of respondents expressed an inclination to seek online reviews for beauty and personal care products. Influence of online reviews on consumer decision-making process appears to be the smallest for food and grocery items out of all the considered product categories, with only 10.5% of respondents. 13.2% of respondents have also identified additional product categories for which they actively seek online reviews. These included restaurants and streaming services.

The subsequent tables illustrate the variations in responses to questions regarding the influence of online reviews among different demographic segments. Comparisons across various regions in Finland were not conducted due to insufficient participant representation for most of the regions, making it impossible to derive meaningful insights. Comparisons including age categories below 18 and above 45 were omitted for the same reason.

Table 10 demonstrates how the influence of online reviews varies across different age groups.

Overall, the influence of reviews on purchase decisions appears to be universal across the represented age groups. 18-24 and 25-34 age groups indicate a higher susceptibility to the influence of online reviews, with 100% of respondents aged 18-24 and 95.7% of respondents aged 25-34 having been influenced by an online review in their decision-making process before, compared to only 66.7% of respondents aged 35-44. Younger respondents display a higher reliance on online

reviews overall, but not by a significant margin. The prevailing trend indicates that online reviews significantly impact consumer behaviour regardless of age.

Table 10. Variations across age groups. (n=38)

Survey question	Answer option	18-24	25-34	35-44
6. When considering purchasing a product online, how important are online reviews in your decision-making process?	Very important	20.0%	47.8%	0.0%
	Somewhat important	80.0%	34.8%	77.8%
	Neutral	0.0%	8.7%	0.0%
	Not so important	0.0%	4.4%	11.1%
	Not important at all	0.0%	4.3%	11.1%
7. How frequently do you read online reviews before making a purchase?	Always	0.0%	39.1%	22.2%
	Often	80.0%	43.5%	44.5%
	Sometimes	20.0%	8.7%	11.1%
	Rarely	0.0%	4.4%	11.1%
	Never	0.0%	4.3%	11.1%
8. Have online reviews ever influenced your decision to purchase a product or service?	Yes	100.0%	95.7%	66.7%
	No	0.0%	4.3%	33.3%

Table 11 demonstrates how the influence of online reviews varies across gender categories.

As can be seen in table, the significance of online reviews in influencing the decision-making process seems to also remain largely consistent across gender categories. Most notable difference there is that female appear to find online reviews important more commonly than other genders and read them more frequently, however only by a small margin. There are some other minor variations between categories, however most of them could be attributed to the respondent pool being rather small.

Table 11. Variations across gender categories. (n=38)

Survey question	Answer option	Male	Female	Other
6. When considering purchasing a product online, how important are online reviews in your decision-making process?	Very important	37.5%	26.3%	33.4%
	Somewhat important	37.5%	63.1%	33.3%
	Neutral	6.2%	5.3%	0.0%
	Not so important	6.3%	5.3%	0.0%
	Not important at all	12.5%	0.0%	33.3%
7. How frequently do you read online reviews before making a purchase?	Always	25.0%	31.6%	33.4%
	Often	56.3%	47.4%	0.0%
	Sometimes	0.0%	15.8%	33.3%
	Rarely	6.2%	5.2%	0.0%
	Never	12.5%	0.0%	33.3%
8. Have online reviews ever influenced your decision to purchase a product or service?	Yes	81.3%	94.7%	66.7%
	No	18.7%	5.3%	33.3%

Table 12 demonstrates how the influence of online reviews varies across education levels.

The impact of online reviews on purchasing decisions demonstrates consistent patterns across all education levels. A substantial majority of respondents across all education categories acknowledge that reviews have influenced their purchasing choices in the past. However, respondents with advanced education appear to assign greater importance to online reviews and read them more frequently, with half of respondents in this group considering online reviews to be “Very important” and reading them “Always” before making a purchase, compared to about 20% in both of the other groups.

Table 12. Variations across education levels. (n=38)

Survey question	Answer option	High School or below	Bachelor's degree	Graduate or Postgraduate
6. When considering purchasing a product online, how important are online reviews in your decision-making process?	Very important	20.0%	21.0%	50.0%
	Somewhat important	60.0%	68.4%	21.4%
	Neutral	0.0%	5.3%	7.2%
	Not so important	20.0%	0.0%	7.1%
	Not important at all	0.0%	5.3%	14.3%
7. How frequently do you read online reviews before making a purchase?	Always	20.0%	15.8%	50.0%
	Often	60.0%	63.1%	21.4%
	Sometimes	0.0%	15.8%	7.2%
	Rarely	20.0%	0.0%	7.1%
	Never	0.0%	5.3%	14.3%
8. Have online reviews ever influenced your decision to purchase a product or service?	Yes	80.0%	89.5%	85.7%
	No	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%

Table 13 provides insights into how online reviews influence consumer decisions across different income levels.

It's important to note that the respondent pool here is smaller compared to other demographic categories, because the question about the income level was not mandatory.

Across all income groups, respondents tend to acknowledge that they have been influenced by online reviews in the past. However, individuals in the €35,001 - €55,000 and €75,001 - €95,000 income brackets appear to have a heightened interest in online reviews compared to other income groups. They are more likely to "Always" read reviews before making a purchase and are more inclined to consider online reviews as "Very important" in their decision-making process. While the smaller respondent pool prevents definitive conclusions, these trends align with broader patterns observed in other contexts, where higher income individuals appeared more inclined to consider online reviews in their decision-making process. In general, however, all income groups display some level of reliance on online reviews with slight variations.



Table 13. Variations across income level. (n=30)

Survey question	Answer option	€0 - €15,000	€15,001- €35,000	€35,001 - €55,000	€55,001 - €75,000	€75,001 - €95,000	€95,000+
6. When considering purchasing a product online, how important are online reviews in your decision-making process?	Very important	20.0%	20.0%	50.0%	0.0%	50.0%	33.4%
	Somewhat important	60.0%	60.0%	16.6%	75.0%	50.0%	33.3%
	Neutral	0.0%	0.0%	16.7%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Not so important	20.0%	0.0%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Not important at all	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%
7. How frequently do you read online reviews before making a purchase?	Always	0.0%	10.0%	50.0%	0.0%	100.0%	33.4%
	Often	80.0%	60.0%	33.3%	75.0%	0.0%	33.3%
	Sometimes	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Rarely	20.0%	0.0%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Never	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
8. Have online reviews ever influenced your decision to purchase a product or service?	Yes	80.0%	80.0%	100.0%	75.0%	100.0%	66.7%
	No	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	33.3%

Overall, the analysis of the survey data suggests that there is a relatively consistent perception of online reviews among Finnish consumers across various demographic groups. Whether examining age, gender, education level, or annual household income, the data indicates that the role of online reviews in influencing purchasing decisions always remains a significant factor. While some differences do emerge, the general trend underscores the enduring impact of online reviews on consumer behaviour. These findings also align with the global trends observed in consumer behaviour research, but the very small respondent pool for most of the categories still needs to be taken into consideration.

## 4.2 Case study results

A total of 120 online reviews on Verkkokauppa.com were analysed, comprising 40 reviews that users found helpful, 40 reviews that users found unhelpful, and 40 reviews of any kind used for reference. These reviews were collected over the period from August 5th to August 31st, 2023. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 14.

While multiple individuals participated in the review analysis process on some occasions, the author predominantly acted as the sole researcher. This introduces a level of subjectivity into the results, which should be considered when interpreting the findings.

Table 14. Analysis of key features affecting consumer perceptions of online reviews on Verkkokauppa.com

Review type	Found helpful	Found unhelpful	All reviews
Long (100+ words)	32.5%	17.5%	15.0%
Short (25 or less words)	27.5%	30.0%	27.5%
Very positive (5/5)	52.5%	25.0%	52.5%
Moderate (2/5 – 4/5)	40.0%	45.0%	42.5%
Very negative (1/5)	7.5%	30.0%	5.0%
Knowledgeable reviewer	37.5%	12.5%	17.5%
Angry	2.5%	12.5%	5.0%
Regretful	17.5%	22.5%	15.0%
Anxious	5.0%	12.5%	10.0%
Satisfied	60.0%	25.0%	50.0%

Similarly to survey's results, reviewer's expertise emerges as the most significant determinant of online review's helpfulness. A total of 37.5% of helpful reviews featured knowledgeable reviewers, in contrast to only 12.5% among unhelpful reviews and 17.5% among all reviews. This once again demonstrates that reviewers demonstrating familiarity with the product and using technical language to provide detailed insights significantly increases the likelihood of their review being considered helpful.

It's evident that a substantial proportion of reviews deemed helpful express satisfaction and carry a 5/5-star rating, at 60% and 52.5%, respectively. However, this discrepancy is not substantial when compared to the data for all reviews, where 50% expressed satisfaction and the exact same number of 52.5% featured a 5/5-star rating. This suggests that very positive and satisfied reviews are prevalent on the platform, but these features do not significantly affect the perceived helpfulness of the review. In contrast, unhelpful reviews are notably more likely to be very negative, with 30% receiving a 1-star rating compared to 7.5% for helpful reviews and 5% for all reviews. Moderate reviews exhibit similar representations across all three categories, with minor variations. Overall, this indicates that reviews expressing extreme negativity are significantly more prone to being perceived as unhelpful.

The length of reviews also appears to significantly influence consumer perceptions. Among helpful reviews, 32.5% contain 100 words or more, compared to only 15% among all reviews. While the proportion of lengthy reviews among unhelpful reviews is slightly higher than among all reviews, the difference is minimal. Conversely, short reviews seem to have similar representation across all three groups, with a slightly higher prevalence among those deemed unhelpful. This data is not entirely consistent with the survey findings, where approximately 70% of respondents considered review length inconsequential to their perceptions, while only 25% deemed lengthy reviews more helpful. This inconsistency could be explained by assuming that review length was not the primary reason for perceiving them as helpful. The prevalence of long reviews among those found helpful

may be explained by the fact that reviews from knowledgeable reviewers tend to be longer on average, as they contain a greater amount of detail, and such reviews are more prevalent among helpful reviews.

Assessing the influence of anger, anxiety, and regret on the perception of online reviews proved rather challenging, as most reviews on Verkkokauppa.com do not overtly express these emotions. Many reviews in these categories only express these emotions subtly. As a result, it is plausible that the expressed emotion may not be the primary factor determining whether a review is found helpful or unhelpful. This should be acknowledged before discussing these categories, and the results should be regarded with some scepticism.

Regarding anger, 12.5% of unhelpful reviews contained this emotion, compared to 2.5% of helpful reviews and 5% of all reviews, indicating that expressing anger in a review increases the likelihood of it being perceived as unhelpful. These findings align with both the survey results and previous studies.

Reviews containing regret are distributed similarly across all three groups but are most pronounced among unhelpful reviews, at 22.5%, compared to 17.5% for helpful reviews and 15% for all reviews. This contradicts both the survey results and previous studies, where the emotion of regret was associated with increased perceived helpfulness. Therefore, these results should be approached with caution. One possible explanation for this discrepancy is that very negative and angry reviews are more prevalent among unhelpful reviews, and both of these categories are closely associated with the expression of regret. The number of reviews expressing regret still appears to be higher among reviews found helpful than among all reviews, but only slightly so.

Reviews expressing anxiety are more commonly found among those considered unhelpful, at 12.5%, compared to 5% among reviews considered helpful and 10% among all reviews. This aligns with the survey results, where the majority of participants considered anxious reviews to be unhelpful. The difference in the representation of anxious reviews between helpful and unhelpful reviews is also smaller than the difference in the representation of angry reviews between helpful and unhelpful reviews. This finding is consistent with the research by Yin, Bond, and Zhang (2014), which suggested that anxious reviews are generally more likely to be perceived as helpful than angry ones.

## 5 Discussion

This chapter serves as an exploration of the research results. It draws final conclusions from the empirical findings, examines the validity and reliability of the study and offers recommendations for future research, as well as shares the author's personal reflections on the thesis process.

### 5.1 Interpretation of the results

The main objectives of this study were to determine the impact of user-generated reviews on the purchasing behaviour of Finnish consumers and identify the factors affecting this impact. The investigative questions of this study were:

“What is the level of importance that Finnish consumers place on user-generated online reviews when making purchase decisions?”

“What criteria do Finnish consumers use to evaluate the helpfulness of an online review?”

“Are there any differences in the impact of online reviews across different demographic groups or product categories?”

Overall, the study successfully achieved these objectives and addressed the investigative questions.

It can be concluded that online reviews are an important element of the decision-making process of many Finnish consumers. The vast majority of participants admitted to frequently reading online reviews before making a purchase and having been influenced by them when deciding whether to make purchase or not. This suggests that online reviews can directly impact purchase intentions and, consequently, purchase behaviour. These findings indicate that the attitudes of Finnish consumers towards online reviews align with what was observed in other regions and contexts. The behaviour of Finnish consumers in this regard further supports the idea of Finns as responsible consumers and information seekers, as discussed in the theoretical framework part.

Both the survey and the case study illustrate that the knowledgeability and expertise of the reviewer are among the most significant factors in enhancing the perceived helpfulness of online reviews, consistent with previous studies. Additionally, both the survey and the case study indicate that negative extremity and the expression of anger decrease perceived helpfulness, which also aligns with prior research findings. When it comes to extremely positive reviews, the results are somewhat less conclusive. While a notable portion of survey participants considered extremely positive reviews to be less helpful than moderate ones, the case study demonstrated that positive

extremity has no effect on perceived helpfulness. Nevertheless, it is evident from both studies that positive extremity does not increase perceived helpfulness, in line with previous research.

Notably, the majority of survey respondents found that the expression of satisfaction enhances perceived helpfulness. This notion was partially supported by the case study, as satisfied reviews were most common among helpful reviews, albeit by a small margin, with 60% compared to 50% among reviews of any kind. While these findings cannot be directly compared to previous studies discussed in the theoretical framework, as those did not assess satisfaction, they do reinforce the idea that positive reviews are generally considered more helpful than negative ones. The analysis of the impact of emotions such as regret and anxiety on perceived helpfulness showed discrepancies between the two research methods, as well as with previous studies, making it challenging to draw meaningful conclusions.

Overall, it can be concluded that reviews that are lengthy, not excessively negative, and provide detailed and relevant information about the product are more likely to be considered helpful by Finnish consumers. The remaining findings remain inconclusive and necessitate further research.

The survey showed electronics and household appliances are the most common types of products for which Finnish consumers seek online reviews. Demographic analysis of the survey findings indicates that the impact of online reviews on consumer behaviour remains consistent across various demographic categories, with only slight variations among them. The majority of respondents in all of the investigated demographic groups considered online reviews to be a significant source of information and reported being influenced by them in the past. However, due to the limited sample size, it is impossible to draw more detailed conclusions from these results. These findings are in line with studies conducted in the United States, which examined the same demographic groups.

The study findings offer valuable insights into the impact of online reviews on consumer behaviour in Finland and can serve as a guide for marketing and e-commerce strategies, particularly for businesses operating in sectors of electronics and household appliances. Businesses operating in Finland need to recognize the role that online reviews play in the decision-making process of Finnish consumers. According to the study's results, encouraging positive online reviews and integrating them into marketing strategies can have a substantial impact on a company's performance in Finland. Lengthy and detailed reviews in particular tend to enhance the perceived helpfulness of the review, thereby increasing their potential to influence purchase intentions.

## 5.2 Validity and reliability

This subchapter examines the reliability and validity of the research findings. The study used the convergent mixed methods approach, employing both quantitative and qualitative research methods in its exploration of the research question. While the fundamental principles of validity and reliability apply to both qualitative and quantitative research, the terminology and specific strategies for assessing and enhancing these aspects can differ (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2017). As such, validity and reliability of each part of the study are discussed separately.

### 5.2.1 Survey

The quantitative part of the study involved administering a survey among Finnish consumers. In quantitative research, validity typically refers to the extent to which a measurement instrument accurately measures the specific construct or concept it is intended to measure, while reliability assesses whether the measurement instrument produces stable and repeatable results. (Heale & Twycross, 2015).

Internal validity of the quantitative research is typically established through content validity and construct validity. Content validity ensures that the items or questions included in a measurement instrument adequately cover the domain of interest. (Heale & Twycross, 2015.) In the context of this study, content validity is concerned with whether the survey questions cover the relevant aspects related to the impact of online reviews on consumer behaviour. Construct validity, on the other hand, assesses whether a measurement instrument effectively measures the theoretical construct it claims to measure (Heale & Twycross, 2015). In the context of this study, construct validity refers to the extent to which the survey questions effectively capture the intended information, ensuring that the responses align with the investigative questions the survey aims to address.

Several measures were implemented to ensure the validity and reliability of the survey, following the guidelines outlined in Creswell & Creswell (2017) and Heale & Twycross (2015).

To establish validity of the survey, an extensive review of relevant literature was conducted to ensure that the survey questions and answer options adequately covered the investigative questions and all the relevant concepts concerning online reviews and their impact on consumer behaviour. Several prior academic surveys that investigated the impact of online reviews on consumer behaviour were used as a reference point when developing the survey. An extensive theoretical framework was created based on the reviewed literature and studies that explained relevant concepts and their interconnectedness within the research topic. The questionnaire was then constructed to

effectively elicit responses that reflect participants' attitudes towards online reviews. This process contributed not only to construct validity but also to the reliability of the survey.

To further mitigate concerns related to both validity and reliability, a pilot test was conducted involving a small group of participants living in Finland. The aim was to identify any ambiguities or issues with clarity and to be able to refine the questionnaire before sending it out to potential respondents. Changes to the questionnaire were made in accordance with the feedback from the participants.

To ensure the reliability of data collection and minimize the likelihood of data entry errors, Webropol was employed, which is a reliable online survey platform, to collect responses accurately and securely.

During the data collection phase, a diverse group of Finnish consumers was targeted via Reddit and LinkedIn, two prominent online platforms with large and distinct communities. The wide range of responses to the demographic survey questions indicated that the sample was inclusive and represented various, albeit not all, demographic categories. A random sampling method was employed to ensure that every user on these platforms had an equal opportunity to participate. To ensure maximum reach, multiple attempts to promote the survey and engage platform users were made during the data collection phase on both platforms. This approach ensured that the findings could be generalized to a broader population of Finnish online shoppers. However, it is essential to acknowledge the limitation of a relatively small sample size, which could potentially affect the reliability generalizability of the results. This becomes particularly relevant when it comes to the analysis of the impact of online reviews in relation to demographics, as some of demographic groups were underrepresented in the sample.

### **5.2.2 Case study**

The qualitative part of the study involved a case study analysing user-generated online reviews on Verkkokauppa.fi. Validity in qualitative research refers to the appropriateness and soundness of the research processes and techniques (Thakur & Chetty, 2020). In the context of this study, it refers to the extent to which the study findings accurately reflect the true patterns and factors that affect the perceived helpfulness of online reviews within Finnish consumer market. Reliability in qualitative research is the dependability of the research processes and findings, ensuring that the research maintains its integrity and consistency in both its form and context (Thakur & Chetty, 2020). In the context of this study, it refers to consistency and dependability of the methods used to analyse online reviews.

Several measures were implemented to ensure the validity and reliability of the survey, following the guidelines outlined in Creswell & Creswell (2017) and Thakur & Chetty (2020).

The selection of online reviews for the case study was conducted with a careful and systematic approach. Reviews were chosen from a diverse array of products and categories available on Verkko kauppa.com, using a random selection method, achieved by employing random number generator when selecting reviews.

The subsequent analysis process followed a structured approach, categorizing reviews based on their content and tone. To ensure smooth and reliable data analysis, qualitative data gathered during the analysis of the reviews was organised into quantitative table. Each of the more subjective categories, such as reviewer's knowledgeability or emotional tone, were clearly defined prior to making assessments and given a distinct list of indicators to look for. Category definitions and their indicators were established based on the reviewed literature. To further mitigate subjectivity in the assessment of the reviews, the author sought input from multiple individuals whenever uncertainty arose. However, it's important to note that, for the majority of the reviews, the author remained the sole person to analyse their features, introducing some subjectivity bias that should be considered when assessing the case study's reliability.

### **5.3 Ethical considerations**

Both the survey and case study components of the study align with the principles of responsible conduct of research, as outlined by Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK (2023). This included maintaining integrity, meticulousness, and accuracy, adhering to ethical standards, and acknowledging the work of other researchers.

In the survey component of this research, the ethical principle of informed consent was followed. Potential participants were informed about the nature and purpose of the study. This was done to ensure that participants entered the research voluntarily, fully aware of the research objectives and the role they would play.

To safeguard participant privacy, data collected through the survey were kept confidential and anonymized. Any personal information within the responses to the open-ended question in the survey was not disclosed in the research. Ethical standards were upheld in data handling. Ethical standards were strictly adhered to in the handling of data, and Webropol, a secure and reliable platform for conducting surveys, was employed for data collection and analysis.



Transparency was maintained throughout the survey process. The survey methodology, research objectives, and data analysis procedures were clearly outlined and communicated. For transparency purposes, the entire questionnaire was included as an appendix to the study.

In the case study component of the research, user-generated online reviews from Verkkokauppa.com were collected and analysed. It is essential to note that these reviews were used without explicit consent from the original reviewers. While these reviews are publicly accessible and in the public domain, it is still important to consider privacy and ethical considerations when using online reviews for research purposes. In line with these considerations, this study ensured user privacy by not disclosing any personal information or identifiers of users whose reviews were used.

Transparency in the case study was fundamental to maintaining ethical standards. The criteria for categorizing reviews, the methodology employed, and the selection process were explicitly presented, allowing for a clear evaluation of the research process. For transparency purposes, the full list of analysed reviews excluding any personal information or identifiers can be found as an appendix to the study.

The research acknowledged and respected the work of other researchers. Several measures were implemented to ensure that their contributions were properly recognized and not misrepresented. All the academic literature used in this study was accessed legally and in accordance with copyright regulations. All sources used in the study were appropriately cited both in-text and in list of sources at the end of the paper, following Haaga-Helia guidelines.

#### **5.4 Suggestions for future research**

The findings presented in this thesis study have shed light on the significant role that online reviews play in influencing the purchasing decisions of Finnish consumers. However, as is with any research, there are areas where further investigation is warranted.

The case study unveiled the fact that highly negative reviews were less likely to be deemed helpful by Finnish consumers. However, the impact of emotions, such as regret and anxiety, on consumer decision-making remained overall inconclusive. Future research should delve deeper into the emotional aspect of online reviews. It could entail a more comprehensive examination of how different emotions, both positive and negative, influence consumer perceptions and decisions within Finnish consumer market. Achieving this might involve employing a larger sample size, incorporating multiple analysts to minimize subjectivity, or even considering alternative research methodologies.

Due to constraints in time and resources, this thesis could not explore the factors influencing perceived trustworthiness in great depth, and only analysed perceived trustworthiness in connection to

perceived helpfulness. Future research could explore how Finnish consumers assess the trustworthiness and credibility of online reviews in greater detail. This could involve a more exhaustive exploration of the various elements contributing to perceived trustworthiness and how they affect consumer choices.

Given the relatively small sample size in this study, it may be advisable to conduct a larger survey involving a more substantial sample size to validate the results obtained here. This is particularly important when considering the demographic analysis, as the number of participants representing many demographic categories in the current study was insufficient to draw reliable and detailed conclusions for numerous categories. A more exhaustive case study could also be conducted involving a larger sample size, preferably multiple researchers and multiple online platforms to validate study findings. It is particularly warranted for review extremity, as the results obtained here had some discrepancies between the research methods and differed from results obtained in previous studies conducted in other contexts.

## **5.5 Personal reflections**

I started writing this thesis on May 1st, 2023, and completed it on November 3rd, 2023. In this subchapter, I delve into the various stages of my thesis process, the lessons I have learned, and the personal and academic growth I have experienced along the way.

Before I could begin writing, I needed to choose a topic. This turned out to be the time-consuming part of the entire process, as I spent months deliberating among different topics that piqued my interest. The width of possibilities was a bit overwhelming, and I had to do a lot of research to select a topic that would be both interesting and relevant while also being feasible within the limited time I had available. Ultimately, I settled for analysing online reviews, a choice recommended to me by several acquaintances with marketing backgrounds.

The next phase involved drafting the thesis plan. Writing the introduction was relatively straightforward and didn't take much of my time. However, I encountered challenges when it came to describing the research design. I had to extensively review several books and articles on academic research since my knowledge of it was rather limited at that point. Selecting appropriate research methods proved to be a challenging task, so for the time being, I decided to go with two methods I was most familiar with: surveys and interviews. Additionally, I created a tentative schedule for the thesis process at this stage, which can be found in the appendix of this study.

The next phase involved conducting an extensive literature review. This phase was quite exhilarating and frustrating, as I grappled with the challenge of finding relevant papers to support my

research. I had to sift through countless articles and studies to establish a solid theoretical foundation for my thesis. A major hurdle was the fact that a significant portion of relevant literature was hidden behind a paywall, and my access was limited to free articles and the resources available at the Haaga-Helia library. This phase ended up taking more time than I had initially anticipated. I began drafting the theoretical framework in early June, and it wasn't until the last days of July that I felt confident enough with the topic to start formulating the survey questions. Nevertheless, when I finally completed the theoretical framework, I felt a sense of accomplishment and a deeper understanding of the subject matter. It also allowed me to refine my research skills and develop the ability to critically analyse existing literature. It was during this stage that I decided to adjust my research approach and transition to a case study methodology instead of semi-structured interviews, as it appeared to be a more appropriate research method.

Then came the time to conduct the actual study. Creating the questionnaire turned out to be relatively straightforward, considering the knowledge I had gathered, and it only took me three days in total. To ensure the clarity of the questions, I shared the questionnaire with some friends and acquaintances as a test group and made necessary adjustments based on their feedback.

Finding survey participants turned out to be more challenging than I had initially anticipated. I tried various channels to distribute the questionnaire, but only LinkedIn and Reddit produced responses. Watching my survey collect responses was satisfying, as each new response gradually provided a clearer understanding of how Finnish consumers engage with online reviews.

Simultaneously, I was collecting reviews for analysis in my case study. Collecting the reviews was a mechanical and straightforward task. However, the actual analysis was quite demanding and, at times, frustrating, especially when assessing reviewers' knowledge and emotional expression in their reviews. It required a thorough analysis of the review content, and I had to seek input from others on multiple occasions to validate my assessments.

The next step was interpreting the results. I didn't have any difficulty analysing survey and case study results on their own. However, comparing the results proved to be more challenging. Some discrepancies emerged between the findings, which is not uncommon when employing mixed research methods. Understanding the underlying reasons for these discrepancies and identifying which findings are valid and which are not necessitated a thorough analysis and a great deal of critical thinking. Nevertheless, I am quite satisfied with the outcomes.

Overall, the thesis process proved to be both challenging and rewarding, providing me with a deeper appreciation for the intricacies of academic research. Beyond the academic aspects, the thesis process had a great impact on my personal growth. I learned the significance of effective

time management and self-discipline, as I had to strike a balance between research and writing while juggling other responsibilities. The skills I acquired during this process will undoubtedly serve me in my future academic and professional endeavours.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Planned schedule

June – July 2023	Analysing relevant literature, writing chapter 2, creating the questionnaire, and formulating interview questions
July – August 2023	Distributing the questionnaire to potential respondents, finding candidates for the interviews, and conducting the interviews with selected participants
August 2023	Analysing the collected survey and interview data, writing chapter 4
September 2023	Drawing conclusions from the collected data, writing chapter 5
October 2023	Writing chapter 6, finalising

## Appendix 2. Questionnaire

Dear Participant,

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. The objective of this survey is to gain a deeper understanding of consumer perspectives and behaviours related to online reviews and their influence on purchasing decisions. Your valuable responses will be used for research purposes only and will remain completely anonymous.

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Your honest feedback is greatly appreciated.

### Section 1. Demographic information.

Question	Answer options
1. Age *	18
	18-24
	25-34
	35-44
	45-54
	>54
2. Gender *	Male
	Female
	Other
3. Where in Finland do you live? (Region) *	Uusimaa
	Pirkanmaa
	Varsinais-Suomi
	Pohjois-Pohjanmaa
	Keski-Suomi
	Pohjois-Savo
	Satakunta
	Päijät-Häme
	Etelä-Pohjanmaa
	Pohjanmaa
	Lappi
	Kymenlaakso
	Kanta-Häme
	Pohjois-Karjala
	Etelä-Savo
	Etelä-Karjala
	Kainuu
	Keski-Pohjanmaa
	Ahvenanmaa
4. Education level * (If currently enrolled, highest degree received)	High School or below
	College/University (bachelor's degree)
	Graduate/Postgraduate Degree
5. Annual Household Income You can skip this question if you don't want to answer	€0 - €15,000
	€15,001 - €35,000
	€35,001 - €55,000
	€55,001 - €75,000
	€75,001 - €95,000
	€95,000+

## Section 2. Online Reviews and Decision-Making

In this section, the aim is to understand the level of importance consumers place on online reviews when making purchasing decisions.

For this survey, online reviews are defined as comments, ratings, or feedback posted by customers on the Internet after purchasing and experiencing a product or service to help others in their decision-making process.

For example, a customer writing a detailed review on a restaurant's website about their dining experience or a person giving a 5-star rating and positive comments for a smartphone they bought from an online retailer.

Question	Answer options
6. When considering purchasing a product online, how important are online reviews in your decision-making process? *	Very Important
	Somewhat Important
	Neutral
	Not So Important
	Not Important at All
7. How frequently do you read online reviews before making a purchase? *	Always
	Often
	Sometimes
	Rarely
	Never
8. Have online reviews ever influenced your decision to purchase a product or service? *	Yes
	No
9. For which types of products do you usually seek out online reviews? (Select all that apply) *	Electronics
	Travel & Holiday
	Clothing & Fashion
	Household Appliances
	Beauty & Personal Care
	Food & Grocery
	Other (please specify)

## Section 3. Online review perception.

In this section, we aim to explore how consumers perceive and evaluate online reviews. Each question focuses on a specific feature of an online review and how that feature influences the perceived helpfulness and trustworthiness of the review.

"Helpfulness" refers to the extent to which an online review provides valuable information that helps make informed purchase decisions. "Trustworthiness" refers to level of confidence in the authenticity of the review's content and the reviewer's intentions.

Question	Answer options
10. How do you feel about long reviews? *	I find long reviews to be more helpful and trustworthy than short ones I find long reviews to be less helpful and trustworthy than short ones It doesn't matter to me if the review is long or short
11. How do you feel about extreme reviews (very positive or very negative)? * Extreme review is a review that is very positive or very negative, e.g. one that has a star rating of 1/5 or 5/5	I find extreme reviews to be more helpful and trustworthy than moderate ones I find extreme reviews to be less helpful and trustworthy than moderate ones I find very positive reviews to be helpful and trustworthy, but not very negative ones I find very negative reviews to be helpful and trustworthy, but not very positive ones It doesn't matter to me if the review is extreme or moderate
12. Do you consider the reviewer's expertise when evaluating its helpfulness and trustworthiness? The reviewer's expertise refers to how much the reviewer seems to know about the product, the product's category, the brand, etc.	I find knowledgeable reviewers to be more helpful and trustworthy I find knowledgeable reviewers to be less helpful and trustworthy It doesn't matter to me if the reviewer is knowledgeable or not
13. Do you consider the reviewer's reputation when evaluating its helpfulness and trustworthiness? Reputable reviewer is someone who has left a lot of reviews on a website or platform	I find reputable reviewers to be more helpful and trustworthy I find reputable reviewers to be less helpful and trustworthy It doesn't matter to me if the reviewer is reputable or not
14. How do you feel about online reviews that contain the emotion of anger? *	I find angry reviews to be more helpful and trustworthy I find angry reviews to be less helpful and trustworthy It doesn't matter to me if the review contains anger or not
15. How do you feel about online reviews that contain the emotion of anxiety? *	I find anxious reviews to be more helpful I find anxious reviews to be less helpful and trustworthy It doesn't matter to me if the review contains anxiety or not
16. How do you feel about online reviews that contain the emotion of regret? *	I find regretful reviews to be more helpful and trustworthy I find regretful reviews to be less helpful and trustworthy It doesn't matter to me if the review contains regret or not
17. How do you feel about online reviews that contain the emotion of satisfaction? *	I find satisfied reviews to be more helpful and trustworthy I find satisfied reviews to be less helpful and trustworthy It doesn't matter to me if the review contains satisfaction or not
18. If you have any additional comments or insights to share, please feel free to write	

### Appendix 3. List of reviews used for case study.

All reviews are taken from various pages on Verkkokauppa.com and translated from Finnish into English.

#### Found helpful

1. We acquired the device in question during a sale (€250), and for that price, it truly offered great value for money! The device's motor provides comfortable power and comes with a lengthy warranty. Naturally, when operating at full power, it does produce some noise. Additionally, the device offers six programs for creating smoothies, chopping vegetables, or making nut butter, among other things. We even used it to make nut bars. We also attempted to prepare hummus, but due to the thick mixture, it put some strain on the motor. Hence, we blended chickpeas separately with a hand blender. In essence, you should be aware of what the blender is designed for. However, if the mixture isn't overly thick, it can certainly handle nuts and other tough ingredients. Rating: 5/5

2. After a week of active use, I must say that this is an excellent blender, especially for the price of €189. It pretty much does exactly what I expected. One banana, a handful of fruit, a splash of juice/milk (and if you prefer, some protein powder), 30 seconds of blending, and you have an exceptionally delicious smoothie in your hands. Cleaning the jug is easy: rinse out the largest bits first, then add water up to the max limit, a couple of drops of detergent, and run the basic 30-second program. Empty the jug, refill it with water, and run another 30-second program, and it's clean. Our first attempt at making soup yielded a 6/10 rating, but that's understandable given the preparation time of 4 minutes and 20 seconds, plus quick vegetable chopping. The result was a hot soup. For an even better experience, when making tomato soup, I highly recommend roasting (plum/cherry/standard) tomatoes, along with one or two (white+) onions, on a baking sheet in the oven for 10 minutes. Then, add a thick slice of bread, blend everything in the blender, and season with a bit of cream and spices. In less than 15 minutes, you'll have a 10/10 soup at your fingertips. One of the coolest features is the ability to make unique drinks like Bailey's with ice cream and cocoa powder. You should definitely give it a try. Many critics have complained about the loud noise, but in my opinion, the powerful sound is quite acceptable. While the high-pitched, ear-piercing noise of a cheap blender I bought from Clas once nearly drove me to physical pain, this blender produces a significantly lower, more tolerable rumble. It even fades enough when you move to another room during programs lasting more than a minute, such as soups. Waiting for a 30-second smoothie is not an issue either. Rating: 5/5

3. Easy to use, the preset programs work well. This blender makes wonderful smoothies and soups. It is a bit loud, but it operates quickly, so the noise nuisance is short-lived. In my opinion, the table stand is a bit too large. Despite this, the offer provides a good price-quality ratio and is generally quite valuable. Rating: 5/5

4. I haven't been very satisfied with this blender. In principle, it seems powerful enough, and it can blend most things eventually. However, there are some issues: When blending thicker or drier materials, the blades tend to create a cavity around themselves. This is especially noticeable when making nut butter or thicker smoothies. The push stick is too short to reach and push down the mixture from the edges to the middle, so

you often need to open the entire lid to scrape the pulp back within reach of the blades. While it's easy to place the jug, even a small shake can trigger the safety switch, turning off the device. This has happened frequently when trying to push the mixture from the edges. Perhaps these problems could be mitigated by making larger batches. We often have the jug only about half full. There are mixed opinions about the digital control panel. On one hand, it's convenient for finding preset programs, but on the other hand, starting it always requires multiple button presses. Quite often, the program has to be interrupted when the mixture escapes from the reach of the blades. Rating: 3/5

5. This device appears to be decent for its price. Its network capacity is suitable for a 50-square-meter apartment with a few devices, such as a couple of screens and a laptop. Rating: 4/5

6. The range is good, and the features are sufficient for various purposes. I particularly like the rack mixer for band gigs. Rating: 5/5

7. As a follow-up, I acquired another Asus jar. Installation and operation are incredibly simple – it's a plug-and-play setup that you can forget about. I highly recommend it for home use. Rating: 5/5

8. It works really well and is a great choice for the average camper, as long as you're not seeking top-tier performance. After less than a month of use, this has become the most frequently used home appliance, ranking just behind the refrigerator and stove. I always use it to grind coffee for the campfire pot, coffee maker, Aeropress, or nut pan. I'm very satisfied that I didn't spend hundreds of euros on a grinder. The main complaints mentioned in previous reviews about the static and tank design and the noise level during grinding are the primary drawbacks of this product, and there's nothing else to criticize in my opinion. Despite these issues, it has been quite manageable for me, especially considering that I get fresh coffee from freshly ground beans. Rating: 5/5

9. It grinds nicely, and the coffee tastes good. However, it loses some points due to the static electricity that builds up in the ground coffee container. Rating: 4/5

10. A really disappointing device! Making basic bread dough is quite challenging as the dough gets stuck around the hook, making it impossible to knead properly. While it works for basic whipped cream, it struggles when trying to make butter or sugar foam. I can't recommend this machine. Unfortunately, you can't get quality for a low price, as demonstrated here once again. Rating: 1/5

11. I used the device occasionally, perhaps around 6 times a year, and just one month after the warranty expired, the device broke down. I do not recommend it at all. Rating: 1/5

12. Budget-friendly. The downside is that it's noisy, and it can only be used for up to 5 minutes at a time before requiring a break. Suitable for households on a tight budget. Rating: 2/5

13. Good quality. The instruction manual answers a question that was previously asked on the item's website: the device's parts should not be washed in the dishwasher. It's quiet, adjustable in temperature, and has a timer. One minor drawback is that the grates must be washed by hand. Rating: 5/5

14. A truly clever dryer. The instructions are clear and good. It would be great if Verkkokauppa sold the additional grates available from the manufacturer. Rating: 5/5

15. I've been using the phone for a couple of days now. The fingerprint reader doesn't work well with tempered glass. You have to wet your finger for it to work properly. The battery life is quite weak; it can barely hold a charge. This is meant to be used as a work phone, and I think you'll need to keep it plugged into the charger constantly. Rating: 2/5

16. The battery is worse than any phone I've had in years. It won't last until the evening, even if you hardly use the phone and have the data saver on all day. It's disappointing to have such a bad battery in such an expensive phone. I use my phone for navigation while driving, and it drains the battery in a couple of hours even when connected to the car charger the entire time. I need a new phone because I require navigation for longer than a couple of hours at a time. I'm really disappointed. Rating: 1/5

17. I previously owned an S7, and the improvement is evident. Everything operates without delay, the battery life is good, and the screen is excellent. The phone comes with a higher price, but quality comes at a cost. Rating: 5/5

18. It works as expected, has a long range, and is fast. The user-friendly and versatile web control panel is also a plus. Rating: 5/5

19. I had to wait a long time for the chair due to manufacturing problems, but when it finally arrived, I was very satisfied with my purchase. The assembly instructions were incorrect, suggesting that the frame legs should be attached in the wrong orientation (the latch belongs to the front of the bench). I noticed that many others have mentioned that the chair leans forward; this is precisely because that part is installed incorrectly. The bench itself is comfortable, with a wide and deep seat that allows enough room for your legs. The armrests can be adjusted to your liking. Rating: 4/5

20. The product is of good quality, but it wobbles back and forth quite a bit. The chair was easy to assemble. The armrests are hard and creaky. The chair feels odd to sit in due to its peculiar shape. It is darker in color than in the picture. It's appropriately wide, even for people with broad shoulders. The material is not abrasive. The chair is more comfortable than many other brands or models, but the price reflects the quality. Rating: 3/5

21. I purchased these headphones 2 months ago, and I've been satisfied with everything except the sound quality of the microphone. The microphone's sound quality is weak and quiet. After a month of use, the headphones started to make a "creaking" sound, which hadn't happened before. I tried different devices, and the cable appeared to be fine. Nevertheless, the headphones are good overall. The sound quality is excellent, and they are comfortable on the head. Rating: 4/5

22. Overall, these are good headphones. The only downside is that they put some pressure on eyeglass frames, although this won't necessarily affect everyone. Rating: 4/5

23. A wiring fault caused the second headset to stop working after half a year of use. Fortunately, the online store handles warranty issues smoothly. Rating: 2/5

24. Good value for money. What more could you ask for? Oh yes, the sound quality rates 5/5 for headphones in general, but only 3/5 for these specific headphones. There's always room for improvement! When I bought them, the warning was clear: don't handle them roughly. However, they broke despite being treated carefully, but the 2-year warranty came to the rescue! Rating: 4/5

25. Setting up the device is very easy and convenient. The image quality is genuinely impressive. It's an excellent purchase! I've been using it for a couple of months now. There was an initial issue when some of the channels were lost a few times, but they were found again after restoring the factory settings. Fortunately, I found a solution: there's an "automatic channel update" option in the TV settings, and unchecking it prevents channels from disappearing. After that, everything has been working perfectly, and I'm thrilled with the purchase! Rating: 5/5

26. The menus are user-friendly, and the picture quality is already good with the factory settings. I struggled a bit with the adjustments, but once I got the colours and contrasts right, everything was fine. The TV's built-in speakers make the sound somewhat thin, so you might want to consider adding a soundbar. Nevertheless, you can manage without one. The device, i.e., Android, hasn't crashed once, and you can find plenty of additional content on the Play Store. Rating: 4/5

27. I've had a Sony s6700 for about a year now. However, I've already disconnected it because I find it suitable only for watching discs. I only turn it on when I'm going to watch a Blu-ray because the picture quality is genuinely impressive. The Upscale feature works well and enhances the quality of even older videos. It's excellent for watching the latest movies. The device takes about 30 seconds to a minute to start up, and connecting to the network requires a similar amount of time, so it's not ideal for busy people. I knew this when I bought it, so it didn't bother me. However, there's one significant issue: the device automatically turns on when you turn on the TV. This means that when you want to watch a TV program or use another device, the TV suddenly switches to the Sony player after a few minutes. This happens repeatedly and can be quite annoying. It's probably possible to disable this function, but I haven't found the setting for it, so I've simply unplugged the power cord from the wall to avoid dealing with this feature. The built-in media player can play a variety of file formats, but it's somewhat limited. It doesn't display the remaining time during playback or indicate where you are when fast-forwarding or rewinding. So, if you want to continue a movie from the one-hour mark, you have no choice but to rewind and guess where to stop. This can be quite cumbersome. Additionally, the media player sometimes loses audio, and it's unclear why. Several times, no sound has played from any file format. Even turning off the device doesn't resolve the issue; you likely have to wait "a while" or until the next update for the audio to start working again. There's no alternative media player available among the limited range of apps. Given the price, I expected better software. There are very few apps available, less than 15, but basic ones like Netflix and YouTube work well. In summary: Excellent picture quality, Bluetooth capability, but annoying to use, and the media player is limited and unpredictable. Rating: 3/5



28. Hi, I bought this, and I was surprised by its size. It came in a small, slim box. This little box is IT! 3D Blu-ray discs start up quickly and work flawlessly. Setting up the device was easy: connect three wires—power, HDMI, and light, and you're done. That's it: plug in the power, HDMI, and optical cable, and you're good to go. It quickly connects to the network, and I didn't have to enter a lengthy series of characters. It also found my Lumia, and I suppose you can explore anything there. I only tried the screen mirroring. It also detected a wireless network, but I use a fiber optic connection. All I can say is, BUY IT! You won't be disappointed. Rating: 5/5

29. The TV works as it should, but applications like HBO Max can take up to 2 minutes to start, even with a good internet connection. Additionally, the remote control has four buttons for streaming services, and if you accidentally press one, the TV becomes unusable for a couple of minutes. Rating: 2/5

30. Based on a couple of evenings of viewing, it provides a really good picture, and I'm surprised at how good the sound is! It took some effort to find all the settings to get the picture to my liking, as there were no usage instructions provided. Yes, this 4K picture and sound are a significant improvement over my 5-year-old Samsung, which is now headed to the bin! Rating: 5/5

31. Quick menus, really good picture quality. The backlight leakage is minimal, and when playing PS5, black reproduction is surprisingly good. The sound reproduction is on par with other TVs. The Magic Remote is the best! Rating: 5/5

32. A fun device. On the positive side, it's compact and has a non-intrusive user interface, although it can be somewhat sticky at times. You can find higher-quality projectors for the same price, but this one can fit in your pocket, so it would be unreasonable to say the purchase was bad. The device is still a bit raw, and everyone's experience may vary. 🤖 Rating: 3/5

33. The device is great, but the picture is somewhat dim and not what I expected. The biggest surprise was that the device came with free TV channels over the Internet (the free ones), in addition to being used as a video projector for my PC. It never crossed my mind that I would get TV channels when I purchased this device primarily as a video projector. The idea dawned on me that I could use this for meetings that can't be conducted remotely, but it requires a power source, and the device doesn't run on batteries, as far as I know. So, you can't take the device to just any location; you need to find a suitable place with access to power. Rating: 5/5

34. Since the day it arrived, I've been impressed with this console. I've felt the 4K quality it offers. Although there haven't been many Next-Gen games yet, it's enjoyable to play old games with 60 fps and graphical improvements. I recommend this console to anyone who doesn't mind the smaller game library compared to a competing console but appreciates the convenience and the excellent Xbox Game Pass. Rating: 5/5

35. Yes, my boyfriend was satisfied! It's the world's most powerful gaming console. Rating: 5/5

36. A stylish and functional console with an Xbox environment and Game Pass, combined with a powerful console. Games like Forza Horizon, The Medium, Ori, and Gears 5 look and play great. Games load quickly. I'm looking forward to summer and the upcoming release of Microsoft Flight Simulator for the new Xbox consoles. The console is very quiet and mainly hums when it cools down after gameplay, which is normal. However, if you're seeking a quiet 4K Blu-ray player, this isn't it. The console makes a loud humming noise while reading the disc. The same issue existed with the previous Xbox One. It's interesting that many dedicated 4K movie players are also loud. Could this be why 4K movies are primarily sold through streaming services? When playing from a disc or watching regular Blu-ray discs, the device is generally silent except for a slight hum. For instance, when playing Red Dead Redemption 2, the device stops reading the disc after a while and then remains completely silent. Rating: 5/5

37. This Xbox offers a familiar experience with a significant increase in power compared to the One X. Quick Resume allows you to switch between games rapidly. Rating: 5/5

38. I've had to purchase different wireless headphones almost every six months because my beloved terrier tends to chew on headphones left on the nightstand if I forget them. Driven by necessity, I've tested Sony and Bose flagship models, and I also own the old AirPods, though I haven't used them yet. I must say that I was pleasantly surprised by these AirPods Pro. They are a significant improvement over the first-generation AirPods. What surprised me the most is that, in my opinion, they sound better than Bose or Sony headphones. Given my initial impression with the first-generation AirPods, I didn't expect Apple to excel in sound quality, but overall, these outshine them to my ears. It's no longer a sad affair when my previous headphones were chewed up. Rating: 5/5

39. I've been using this rice cooker almost every day since I purchased it a month ago. It doesn't burn the rice to the bottom, and it's versatile and works very well. The rice remains hot and delicious for several hours, even if you turn off the power immediately after cooking. It's a bit odd that the power can only be turned off by unplugging it from the wall, but this doesn't bother me. It comes with a few accessories, which are a nice addition. I highly recommend it to anyone looking for a rice cooker. Rating: 5/5

40. I bought this rice cooker based on other positive reviews, and I wasn't disappointed. It took a little over half an hour to cook one cup of rice. The cooking result was good as long as I measured the rinsed rice and water correctly. The pot was easy to clean by hand. Even frozen products like gyoza dumplings and salmon cooked well in the steaming basket. However, there are some downsides, such as the lack of an on/off button, the touch buttons not being clearly marked (there are no lights indicating their functions), and water dripping from the lid when it's opened. The biggest surprise was that the heating continues even with the lid open, so if the pot is empty, you need to either cancel the heating with the button or unplug it. One cup of rice is quite a substantial portion for one person, and the instruction manual doesn't mention smaller servings, so those who eat less may need to adjust the measurements. This is my first rice cooker, so I can't make comparisons, but for the price, it has worked very well. I would recommend it to anyone who wants to cook delicious rice with ease and doesn't mind the lack of advanced features. Rating: 4/5

### Found unhelpful

1. I ordered the product based on the reviews and expected to get a silky smooth smoothie at the push of a button. However, it's not as user-friendly as I had hoped. After the preset programs finish, there are often chunks left in the smoothie, requiring multiple blending cycles. If you want to use the machine in manual mode, it takes quite a few button presses – first to increase the power, and then some more time before you can turn on the device. I wish the machine had a simple on/off button in addition to the pulse function. Rating: 2/5
2. The noise at full power is equivalent to starting a lawnmower indoors. Using preset programs is impractical in an apartment building due to the noise. Lower power settings work, but it takes longer to prepare items like smoothies. Pureeing slightly drier ingredients is not very successful, as it often leaves them unblended. I'm not sure if all blenders have this issue. The blender jug should be larger, making it easier to blend ingredients for soups. The digital controls are a minor drawback; the timer resets when the jug is moved, requiring multiple button presses to start the device. Overall, it's not worth the full price. I paid €179 for it, which is too much. It performs well with regular smoothies, but you can likely find a more cost-effective option. Rating: 2/5
3. The Wilfa WSCG-2 coffee grinder is easy to use and efficient. Adjusting the coarseness of the coffee beans is straightforward, and it consistently provides the desired grind, even for coarse coffee. The timer is easy to set using the dial, and I typically use it for less than 10 seconds for two cups of coffee. I have no complaints, and cleaning the grinder is easy. I highly recommend it. Rating: 4/5
4. This coffee grinder is excessively loud and produces a lot of coffee dust, even on the coarsest setting, leaving a mess everywhere. I cannot recommend it to anyone unless they have hearing difficulties and are willing to clean up after every use. Rating: 1/5
5. As a coffee enthusiast, this product is a necessity for me. Just like quality wine, quality accessories are essential. Rating: 5/5
6. The coffee grinder is a reasonable size, and the noise level is acceptable. However, the square container can be a bit challenging to empty with a spoon, and ground coffee tends to spill over the sides and beneath the container. Overall, it's a competent device. Rating: 4/5
7. I purchased this phone for the full price of approximately €1100 some time ago, and my user experience has been disappointing. Fingerprint recognition for screen unlock does not work with tempered glass, regardless of how many fingerprints are added to the system. The battery life is inferior to my 4-year-old iPhone XR, often requiring daily charging. App reliability is questionable, with the alarm clock sometimes failing to ring. The keyboard layout with the "." key in the center is frustrating, and it cannot be changed. I would not recommend this phone, even for free. Rating: 1/5
8. Absolutely amazing! I highly recommend this product. It's definitely worth the purchase, and it won't disappoint you. Rating: 5/5

9. It works for now, and I'll continue to evaluate my user experience. Rating: 3/5

10. I've only used this product for about a month, and the battery no longer charges to 100%. The battery life has decreased to just one and a half hours. Can I request a refund or an exchange for a different product?

This one is subpar. Rating: 1/5

11. If you're looking for high-quality 7.1 headphones, this is the right choice. The included fabric pillows are very comfortable, and I exclusively use them. They don't cause discomfort. The headphones fit well on the head, and the sound quality from the built-in microphone is excellent. I have no complaints, and I'll definitely repurchase these headphones when needed. Rating: 5/5

12. I received these headphones as a gift, but they were extremely disappointing. The cable barely reaches the front of the device, and the adapter doesn't work at all. The sound quality through the USB connector is terrible. I'm returning them. Rating: 1/5

13. The headphones emit a soft hissing sound when plugged in, which becomes louder when listening to audio. While the headphones are decent, the continuous hissing is annoying. Rating: 2/5

14. Despite the hype, this product was a disappointment. The biggest issue is the poor bass reproduction; explosions and similar sounds lack impact. Additionally, there's no option to adjust the bass. The product is well-built, except for the flimsy volume control. If you want to experience deep bass, these headphones are not suitable. I wouldn't recommend them at the €99 price point; you can find better options for less. Rating: 3/5

15. The screen quality is good for the price, but the parental control feature in the operating system needs an update. Currently, I cannot password-protect apps, which is a limitation. Rating: 4/5

16. This is the second ProCaster TV I'm returning within a week. I bought it for use as a computer monitor, not for gaming, but the HDMI connection behaves illogically, with different display modes and startup times. The TV needs to be restarted every time the computer is turned on or restarted, or it remains dark. I had the same issues with the previous ProCaster model. It might be related to Android TV 11, as my older ProCaster 43A900H, running Android TV 9, works perfectly with a computer. I can't select the desired resolution consistently with this current TV. My setup includes an updated Linux operating system, an Asus B550-PLUS motherboard, and an AMD Ryzen 5 5600G processor. I've also tried different HDMI cables. Rating: 1/5

17. The picture quality is absolutely terrible. During fast-paced scenes, the TV struggles to keep up, resulting in pixelation. Rating: 1/5

18. I had a negative experience with this product due to various shortcomings, including issues with the USB bus. The emphasis on streaming in the Android world should be more transparent in marketing. Rating: 2/5

19. As a first-time user, I find the image quality decent compared to my 10-year-old Sony TV. However, the manual and menu functions are inferior and illogical. The menus are confusing, and navigation is tedious.

The stand assembly instructions are unclear, making it challenging to set up. Personally, I would prefer a sturdier stand. Rating: 3/5

20. This is a good purchase, and I recommend it. It offers good value for the price. Rating: 5/5

21. The device doesn't work as expected. It starts, displays the logo, then goes dark, and neither the power button nor the eject button responds. This issue occurs every time it starts. Rating: 1/5

22. This small device is packed with features that can turn an old 3D flat screen TV into a smart TV while still supporting disc playback. The included Netflix button on the remote control is frequently used. Rating: 5/5

23. The product itself is fine, but poor packaging caused the product's taste to deteriorate. Rating: 2/5

24. This product offers the best picture quality available and is suitable for the entire bedroom. Rating: 5/5

25. It's difficult to evaluate the image quality because the product arrived broken, with no visible image. I'm trying to contact the online store for a refund, but their customer support is unresponsive. I feel like I wasted €450. Rating: 1/5

26. The image is not uniform, and live TV broadcasts require frequent adjustments, making the picture unpleasant. It appears too bright overall. Installation is straightforward, the remote control is comfortable, and the appearance is attractive. However, I will be exchanging it. Rating: 3/5

27. This product reminded me of 1980s school projectors, and the reality doesn't live up to the promises. Rating: 2/5

28. I bought and played this game console for two months, but it didn't meet my expectations, especially considering the claim of being "the world's most powerful" game console. While it is powerful, it doesn't quite deliver as expected, with a video card comparable to the old RTX 2080 model. Rating: 2/5

29. I connected a computer with a 3090 graphics card, enabling 4K output via HDMI. The difference is incredible. Playing games is effortless, but for future releases like GTA VI, it may require significant downscaling. Personally, I may switch to a PC when GTA VI is released. Rating: 3/5

30. After the first wash, the clothes were partially damp with detergent residues. The second wash left the laundry completely wet. On the third attempt, the detergent residues were not properly removed, and the laundry remained wet, as if it hadn't been spun at all. I'll be contacting customer support about this issue. Rating: 1/5

31. It's essential to check the condition of a used washing machine. I haven't used this one yet because I need to purchase a different hose connector. However, there was water inside the machine as if it had been used previously. I've already provided feedback. Rating: 3/5

32. The battery life of this device, including the charging case and buttons, is only 5 hours and 16 minutes. This short usage time is disappointing, and despite flawless Apple service analyses, the battery drains quickly. I've been seeking a solution from Apple support for a month without success. Selling this product to someone else seems easier. Rating: 1/5

33. These headphones are excellent, and they work really well. Rating: 5/5

34. With this rice cooker, you get perfect rice every time. It would have been nice if it included a rice porridge recipe as well. Rating: 4/5

35. This rice cooker is suitable for white rice, but it seems to require more water than the instructions suggest. Cooking one cup of rice with water up to the first scale mark results in excessively dry short-grain rice. The cooker's seal is not very tight. Although it looks good, similar Korean rice cookers in the same price range offer longer storage of cooked rice, often up to 50 hours. This model automatically stops keeping warm after a few hours, leading to wasted rice. I've given it three stars because cooking is more convenient than using a pot, and it has a timer function. Rating: 3/5

36. This device is primarily suitable for cooking rice and not much else. The keys respond unpredictably when pressed. It's not suitable for preparing servings for more than one person due to its small volume. The limited usability restricts its versatility, such as boiling beans/lentils or using dairy products in pots/porridge, as the risk of overboiling is high. After less than a year of use, the metal edge of the bowl has almost completely detached, leaving a sharp exposed edge. Unfortunately, spare bowls are not available for purchase. Rating: 1/5

37. The package did not include an instruction manual in Finnish, and the seller did not provide a demonstration of the vacuum cleaner's features. Rating: 1/5

38. I hadn't owned a microwave for a long time, but I realized its necessity for quickly heating up food when in a hurry. This Samsung microwave, matching my phone's brand, is stylish and meets my needs perfectly. I'm very happy with it. Rating: 5/5

39. This product is the best money can buy! It offers an excellent blend of looks and performance. Plus, the anticipation of GTA6 makes it even more exciting. Rating: 5/5

40. This is a really good device, and I wholeheartedly recommend it! The price-to-quality ratio is excellent. Rating: 5/5

### **Any**

1. The only drawback is that when transferring sound to an analogue sound reproduction device, you have to use two different remote controls. However, the sound quality of an analogue stereo is much better than the TV's built-in speakers. Rating: 4/5

2. I would easily give this controller 5/5 stars, but I already had to replace the controller once due to "stick drift." The controller was less than a year old and had been used normally. Sony still uses technology from the 90s in their controllers, which is known to wear out over time. The newer DualSense controller has replaceable touch modules that cost €20 each, but in addition to that, the controller itself costs over €200. Rating: 3/5
3. Nothing to complain about. An affordable price and high quality make an unbeatable combination, and I can't imagine playing on a PS5 with any other controller. Rating: 5/5
4. There were already a couple of Sony DualSense controllers on the shelf, but I still grabbed this one on sale. It had been sitting on my table for several days, but yesterday I noticed how sleek and stylish this controller looks in all black with LED effects. Rating: 5/5
5. Worked well for 2 months until the left joystick started drifting to the left, making it unusable. For a controller at this price, I would expect a longer lifespan. Rating: 2/5
6. It works when it works. 5/5. What else is there to complain about? Rating: 5/5
7. A good and functional controller with a quite good battery life. The color is beautiful. Nothing to criticize. Rating: 5/5
8. It works really well on the carpet. I didn't even realize how much bunny hair was in our carpet 🐰. The downside is that it can't easily vacuum larger trash, and the container is too small even though we only have two bunnies. But I won't return or exchange it because it's so effective 😊. Rating: 4/5
9. The suction power of the vacuum cleaner is insufficient, not even enough to vacuum up stones in the hallway. However, the folding handle is a great feature! Rating: 3/5
10. The wonderful X-Force Flex 8.60 Animal handle vacuum cleaner makes everyday cleaning in a pet household easier. The package includes safety instructions for the handle vacuum cleaner and a clear, illustrated guide for using the device. The OBH Nordica X-Force Flex handle vacuum cleaner is a suitable size and is quiet and easy to use. The various accessories of the stick vacuum cleaner can be easily removed and attached. I like the vacuum cleaner and use it often for cleaning. The vacuum cleaner's lightweight and ergonomic design is a good solution for vacuuming under tables or sofas. The suction power of the handle vacuum cleaner is good. I can use the booster if necessary, especially when dealing with pet dust. The vacuum cleaner's battery can be removed separately from the vacuum cleaner and charged with mains power, which is convenient. The charging time of the handle vacuum cleaner is approximately 2-3 hours, so it's easy to find time to charge it in your own household. I am an older person, and I was considering a stick vacuum cleaner to make cleaning my household easier. Now I notice that when I use the X-Force Flex vacuum cleaner, I enjoy vacuuming more and more. It's fun. And, for me, using this vacuum cleaner also makes my daily cleaning much easier. However, vacuum cleaner maintenance is also important. When removing the device's dust container for the first time, I had to think a bit about how to put the filter and related parts back

in, but once I figured it out, it was easy. Storing the Flex stick vacuum cleaner with its accessories takes up little space in the cleaning cabinet. My daily cleaning became easier when I switched to OBH Nordica X-Force Flex. I recommend it. Now I'm waiting for my cat to make friends with my new vacuum cleaner. Rating: 5/5

11. Definitely one of the best in this price range. It sucks well and works great as a robot vacuum cleaner. Charging may not be the fastest in town, but by the time you feel like grabbing a vacuum cleaner again, the job is done. Rating: 5/5

12. A really beautiful and functional microwave. The only downside is that the dimensions of the oven space are slightly smaller than stated (due to the rotating plate on the bottom, which I did not take into account, and also the width). For example, a certain microwave sterilizer does not fit in it. That's why I'm deducting one star. Otherwise, it's perfect and great for basic use. Rating: 4/5

13. It's a completely different experience. I've probably never bought a microwave new. Generally, I've picked up used ones. It heats food efficiently and evenly. I haven't tested the grill function yet. Rating: 5/5

14. A stylish microphone that does the job, but one star off for the price. Rating: 4/5

15. The controller works perfectly and has a very ergonomic design, much better in my opinion than the PS4 controller. I think the quality is 5/10; the pins break more easily than in other consoles, which is why I'm giving it 3/5. If it would stay intact for more than 4-6 months, it would be 5/5. Rating: 3/5

16. Nothing to complain about. An affordable price and high quality make an unbeatable combination, and I can't imagine playing on a PS5 with any other controller. Rating: 5/5

17. This controller is not worth the price. Good people, buy the Steam Deck instead. The fans make a lot of noise, the SD cards break down (for me it already took 1 month), the controller's pins crack, the noise of the controller's vibration is absolutely annoying, and the battery runs out in an instant. You shouldn't even dream of using 1080p if it's not connected to the charger. Windows 11 just doesn't work well on the handheld PC, a really bad user experience. Of course, if you use this device only at the end of the day, the graphics are excellent. That's a shame. The performance is amazing for such a small device. However, Steam Deck runs much better with lower currents than the ROG Ally. Rating: 2/5

18. I've been trying to get this working for 5 days now. Bootloops, crashes when opening certain apps. Cloud recovery software is complete garbage and requires the use of a terminal to get back to Windows. After all the latest updates, the same crashing issues are still there. 1/5

19. The iron works, but the software is lacking. Rating: 2/5

20. I let Windows and the device's own tool download all updates, including a BIOS update. I rebooted several times. After the last reboot, there was no image on the screen. A long press of the power button restarts



it, but still no picture. There is no help for the problem on the device manufacturer's website. I have to take it in for service right away. Rating: 1/5

21. I bought this drone in a hurry. Extra batteries and extra propellers are, of course, okay and necessary when you plan to shoot more at once. The charging station has worked without problems. The storage/transport bag can hold the drone and the RC controller, but the bag is quite soft and provides limited protection. It protects the drone from bumps to some extent, but I would have preferred a harder case that could withstand more rugged conditions. I solved this issue by placing a plastic box inside the bag. The only downside is the high price; this is only an accessory combo, and the drone itself already cost a lot. Rating: 3/5

22. It is understandable that it is much more convenient to transport the drone in a high-quality leather bag than in the sales package! The strapping and shape of the bag are also comfortable, allowing you to carry it on your shoulder comfortably even while cycling, without it sliding off your back. The bag is relatively lightweight and compact with its contents, which is a positive aspect when considering portability. The bag's material is also slightly water-repellent, so you don't have to worry about a little drizzle or rain. I once accidentally dropped the bag with its contents from a height of more than a meter, but the bag provided enough protection to prevent any damage. Additional batteries are almost a necessity because one doesn't go very far, and for my active use, three batteries seem to be just the right amount. The charging station is also very useful as it eliminates the need to constantly change and charge individual batteries. It's also safer and more convenient to transport batteries inside the station than separately in a bag. Additional propellers and a USB-A to USB-C cable are also welcome additions to the package! All in all, it's a "must-have" accessory for the Mini 3 Pro if you want to get the most out of the drone and carry it with you on your trips! While it's possible to buy stronger bags and batteries separately, such sets almost always exceed the price of this kit, so I wouldn't go for them myself. Rating: 5/5

23. The price-quality ratio is right. I, at least, have a use for extra batteries, a dock, and a carrying case. It's good to have spare propellers when you have to change them from time to time. The set is significantly cheaper than buying the parts separately. I think the bag could be a little sturdier, but it does its job well. 5/5

24. Good quality picture, compact, and feels like a quality product. Rating: 5/5

25. Okay game. One hour of time-lapse shots can be taken with a full battery. Rating: 4/5

26. I bought this camera for traveling because the zoom length is sufficient to take pictures of objects that are a little further away. The construction of the camera is of high quality, and the size is just right. Rating: 5/5

27. The camera takes surprisingly good pictures considering its size. The user interface requires a bit of learning if you want to enable more advanced settings. It's a good choice if you don't want to carry an SLR or don't want to pay a premium for a mirrorless camera. Rating: 5/5

28. Good pictures and video, but the battery life leaves a lot to be desired. You should get a spare battery right away. The camera also doesn't come with a cable for transferring images, and Wi-Fi transfer consumes a lot of battery. Dust also easily accumulates inside the lens, so you have to be careful with it. Rating: 4/5

29. Suitable speed and volume for a surveillance camera and inexpensive to acquire. 👍 Rating: 5/5

30. Stylish console 👍 Nice to use 👍 Incredibly good picture quality 👍 Rating: 5/5

31. I had been hoping to buy a PS5 for over 4 years, but I couldn't afford it. Then I learned about the installment payment method at Verkkokauppa. One month ago, I bought this console from Verkkokauppa. It runs very smoothly, and I used to play games on my laptop. Now I can experience real gaming with this console. The DualSense gaming controller is amazingly good. Rating: 5/5

32. The concept of the controller is quite innovative; not many manufacturers offer modularity. It feels really comfortable in the hand, and you can change the left stick to a PlayStation or Xbox position depending on your mood. The so-called build quality seemed good, but there seems to be something incomplete on the software side. The firmware update of the USB dongle got stuck on the machine, and as a result, the whole dongle became unusable. When it's such a unique product, and I don't think PDP sells spare parts, I'd be a bit cautious about the product until the situation improves. The idea of a modular controller loses its charm if the modules cannot be replaced. But if they can fix the issues in time, it's a decent controller. The PlayStation Vita doesn't have many of these 3rd party drivers available, and otherwise, this seems like a pretty good option. Rating: 3/5

33. After contemplating getting a drone for a long time, it seemed that the price and quality were right for a beginner. It's easy to use, although the Chinese tutorial videos are not the easiest to follow. The product itself seems nicely finished, and the image quality is excellent. The results depend on the user's skills. Rating: 5/5

34. A basic laptop without anything extra. Works as a Windows 11 machine and is really great for getting things done. Priced at €299, and you can always upgrade to more powerful equipment later. Rating: 3/5

35. I bought the device for home use. Why? The price is relatively affordable considering the performance. In addition, ChromeOS was appealing after more than 30 years of being a Microsoft customer. It's easy and quick to use, starting up in seconds. Google offers enough free applications for office use, among other things. The user interface is clear and quick to understand. Compared to the Lenovo Thinkpad I use at work, the keyboard feels somewhat clumsy and cheap. Similarly, the plastic body of the device. Rating: 5/5

36. I've been using it for 1 month, and it's a really good price-performance product. Rating: 5/5

37. Great value for the money. No unnecessary pre-installed software from off-the-shelf computer brands. And games run smoothly. Rating: 5/5

38. I bought this at a bargain price to replace my previous outdated 144Hz screen. The screen settings menu is really user-friendly, and the image quality and colour reproduction are excellent thanks to the IPS panel. The screen settings are already factory-calibrated and quite good. For the price, it's a really great option for a 2K 165Hz 27" gaming monitor. It's also a plus that you can attach it to a display stand. Would I buy it at full price? I would dare say yes. Rating: 5/5

39. I was surprised that the power source/transformer is a separate small unit at the end of the cord, but that explains the small size of the actual device. The intermediate cable between the transformer and the wall plug is short (50cm), which may affect placement. The device itself is stylish, but the remote control is not. It has a plastic and cheap feel, a poor design, and the key feel is not satisfying. The key arrangement could be better. On the plus side, there is a separate audio interface, which is not common in other basic players. The quick view/slow-down features are very limited and poorly implemented (almost unusable). The device doesn't even display how fast the video is playing, and subtitles are not visible on this device. When you press the display button to get information on the screen about the material being watched, the picture darkens unnecessarily at the top and bottom, making the information difficult to read while watching. I expected that by pressing the button again, I would get a less obstructive information view, but that's not the case. I have considered Sony to be a brand that offers high-quality and well-thought-out solutions, but now I'm not entirely convinced. Rating: 3/5

40. The device's compact size positively surprised me. It's considerably smaller than the previous LG player. It has played all Blu-ray, DVD, CD, and other media discs without any issues. It could have been more convenient to have PLAY & STOP buttons on the outer edge of the device to speed up audio disc use without needing to turn on the TV. On the downside, the remote control is unnecessarily small and lightweight. When you press the button to open the disc tray, the whole unit sometimes moves backward on the shelf. A slightly heavier device would have avoided this issue. Rating: 4/5