

(RESEARCH ARTICLE)



## Evaluating the influence of customer reviews and consumer trust on online purchase behavior

Shuvo Kumar Mallik <sup>1,\*</sup>, Imran Uddin <sup>2</sup>, Farzana Akter <sup>3</sup>, A. S. M. Shafin Rahman <sup>4</sup> and M Abeedur Rahman <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Economics, Southeast University, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

<sup>2</sup> A2Z Finance Australia (Easy Mortgage Solutions Australia), Australia.

<sup>3</sup> Department of Business Administration, Southeast University, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

<sup>4</sup> Master of Business Administration, Daffodil Institute of IT.

World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews, 2025, 25(01), 423-432

Publication history: Received on 25 November 2024; revised on 04 January 2025; accepted on 06 January 2025

Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30574/wjarr.2025.25.1.0015>

### Abstract

With the evolution of new-age technology, consumers make up the significant influence for consumer behavior and purchasing decisions. This study explores complex interplay between consumer decision-making in brand choice and end-user verdicts. The power of collective consumer opinions, with the help of social media and online pledge, has never been available in such a great scale for consumers. We estimate peer reviewed comments' effects on consumer perceptions and trust, which in turn affects consumers' attitudes and purchases. This study is to evaluate the customer reviews relevance, authenticity as well as legitimacy. Transaction cannot be processed without their verification as if customer was not happy with the product claimed that is irrelevant, unjustified to the extent of misleading. It investigates the reasons behind the seemingly misplaced faith most customers put on peer reviews and testimonials. The study explores how online review aggregators and aggregate review platforms help contribute visibility and access to customer reviews and how these aggregates affect consumer behavior. There have been several studies done showing how important customer reviews are for brand loyalty and reputation. The positive reviews are strong testimonials that encourage potential purchasers to trust you. On the other hand, negative reviews can drive consumers away and towards a rival brand. It also examines the phenomenon of fake reviews and its repercussions on consumer trust and brand authenticity. It also explores how numerous factors — product type, brand reputation, volume of reviews moderate review impact. It explains how consumers wade through mountains of input to be able to make smart decisions, tiptoeing their way to find and use consumer feedback.

**Keywords:** Consumer behavior; Consumer decision-making; Consumer perceptions and trust; Purchases

### 1. Introduction

Customer reviews have emerged as a romantic crucial factor influencing purchase decisions in the modern hyperconnected world in which information is readily shared and confidence is gained through hard labour. These stories serve as powerful monuments to real experiences as well as provide invaluable insight that rise above the cleverly concocted marketing story those brands take great care to build. There is a deeper exploration needed to fully understand the complex relationship between reviews and customer behavior, and what that means for companies seeking to operate in this fluid marketplace. Food, furniture, clothing and many more products are bought every day by shoppers on Myntra, Flipkart, Amazon, Ajo, Snapdeal and plethora of other Indian e-commerce biggies. Just like that an online shopper can put in an order in seconds and have it show up without even stepping foot outside their home.

\* Corresponding author: Shuvo Kumar Mallik

In a sea of marketing clichés, client endorsements provide a welcome dose of sincerity. Prospective buyers are suspicious of overly promoted information and seek out reviews to find unbiased opinions and firsthand experiences. Great reviews provide social proof, reinforcing what a brand says and building trust. As such, trusted clients tend to convert better and sell more sales because they are confident about their acquisitions. Evaluations affect other people more than you: which is what we do know about the 270 people who bought when they got the evaluations, impulsively, much more than those that did not buy the evaluations. Besides checking if there are any customer reviews are reliable, customer reviews provide more information about: the working of the product, its performance and the impact it has on overall user experience. They go into detail about things like fit, robustness, or other attributes that tend to be left out of marketing brochures.

In making decisions, consumers weigh the pros and cons of numerous possibilities. When purchasing goods and services, consumers tend to favor some brands over others. However, marketers do have digital offerings that could enhance consumers' online shopping experiences by allowing for faster product purchasing, payment and delivery all while saving consumers money and time. Finally, and keep in mind that even when a consumer keeps every step of the way, their factors for purchasing is mainly dependent on if parent aid is in there.

In the digital era, customer reviews are not only a small portion of purchasing decisions, they greatly affect them. By fully grasping the financial, ethical, and nuance of Longview reviews, brands may utilize reviews to not only build credibility, but also perfect their goods for long-lasting success. Such a journey needs frugal focus, an unwavering commitment to transparency and the flexibility to change as guided by the value of the feedback from customers. It scenarioizes with the world, but one legend will never change and that is customer reviews will always make an important mark in our decision making and businesses that wants to win the game will have to realize this fact sooner or later. Purchase intention can be used to predict customers' subjective willingness to make purchases.

A wide range of online reviews, their influences on buy intent, valences, similarities, qualities, and the following. There are different types of conflicting comments and they affect customers differently regarding their opinions and decisions, according to the philosophy behind study on conflicting remarks available in online comments. The review value by peripheral cues, as well as the quality of the review itself, influences the willingness to purchase, or intentions to purchase, of the audience. Although they should have high reference value for internet shoppers, narrative reviews have not been paid attention to as much.

And then the customer purchase decisions are collected and organized in preparable format to be used in later operational tasks. Consumer is a term used there because you as individuals who have emotions, instincts and thoughts become consumers the moment you start processing and analyzing information. While perception consists of multiple processes it is greatly influenced by the sociological, cultural and environmental background of each individual. Because there are numerous aspects that play a role in how the customer views what they see, hear, or experience. The product quality a consumer purchases greatly influences their fundamental purchasing behavior.

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## 2. Literature Review

Senecal and Nantel (2004) found that respondents seem to rely more on non-expert than expert sources in electronic word of mouth research; other studies have shown that source competence boosts persuasive effects of messages and have found brand familiarity effects. Using data from organized book reviews, Chevalier and Mayzlin (2006) show that the quantity and average of reviews on the product positively influence online book sales. explores the profitable relationship between word-of-mouth and weekly movie box office figures.

Al and Khoshgoftaar (2009) indicate in e-commerce that the essential characteristics of a recommender system are: high-quality product; user ratings. With e-commerce growing, customer reviews are the primary source of information for producers, merchants, and buyers. According to Chi et al, a brand is a name, group of names, word, words, a sign, a design, a combination of those or any other feature, capable of identifying goods and services of one seller or group from the goods and services of sellers. (2009). Strader and Ramaswamy (2010) found that if the potential buyers are not show potential buyers of seller's account, buyers of potential sellers might not trust seller's account.

One of the aspects that make online shopping more convenient, according to Aaker and Keller (2010) are product knowledge; and they examined the reputation of a company as the customer-level service associated with a given brand. One of the things that kickstart sales are reviews. Consumers are more and more used to researching products online before making a purchase. EWOM also refers to consumer reviews, which was explored in the paper by Schuff and Mudambi (2010), comprising user-generated content on a website or third-party site.

As per findings of Park and Han (2011), perceived authenticity had a meaningful relationship with purchase intention among customers based on online reviews and both quantity and quality of reviews had meaningful relationship with perceived usefulness of reviews. According to Supranto et al. (2011), is essentially what people know about a brand and what they think or feel when they hear or see the brand name. Wharton et al. according to the report. (2011) explored the mechanisms that underlie customers decisions when purchasing products, first "process and process into a neat and organized form so that it is more operational." Sathish et al. examined the "Consumer Behavior Towards Online Shopping" study. (2012). As per research, Indians found a lot of reasons (known or unknown) to shop online, like time saving rewards, convenience and cashback rewards. According to Özbay et al. According to Baek and Morimoto (2013), positive OCRs can establish a good mind for the users and increase product sales while negative remarks have an equal influence on customers purchasing decision as positive ones. Consumer trust, according to Sopia and Sangadji's (2013) study, encompasses all the information and assumptions that customers make on goods, benefits, and features. According to Abzari et al. As per social media spread its influence on brand equity, customer engagement and brand attitudes are found Influence of social media towards someone is stronger and deep-rooted consumer perception of a brand. Lee and Shin (2014). Consider a direct assessment by a person, rather than by an advertisement, it is one of the several factors affecting the e-WOM that guides customers on what to buy. This includes customer reviews. According to Kotler et al. (2014), consumers are affected and inspired by a number of factors that they cannot ignore while deciding what to buy. Baba and Abdul-Aziz (2014). highlighted and propounded the impacts of packaging and labeling on consumer attraction, the importance of product or service quality in deciding on a brand, the tremendous changes in consumer preferences for branding and the waning popularity and recognition of Minnesota's insurance brand. Mo and associates (2015). Customer reviews (also known as online customer reviews) are statements, positive or negative, made by visitors to a site that relate to a product or feature they purchased or experienced and that provide other consumers with information about a product or service.

## 2.1. Research Gap

Language style, emotional tone, and visual content of each review component are frequently ignored. By leveraging these factors, a brand can have a huge impact on a consumer's emotional and mental response, which in turn influences their perceptions towards the brands, and even their willingness to purchase. Developing a stronger understanding of their work will provide brands with actionable, practical learnings that will allow them to refine their review capturing and management efforts. Such research that has investigated different elements influencing online purchase behavior separately must amalgamate these factors. A better definition of consumer behavior might come from understanding more about the interactions between demographic traits, brand image, online reviews, and opinions about product quality.

## 2.2. Objectives

Business would actively engage and reply by getting in touch with all their reviews. To see if that has any impact on customers' perception and purchase decisions. To determine how much of a difference either good or bad reviews can make, and how the effects differ in decisions to purchase. Identify customer reviews across multiple platforms (e.g. social media, Amazon, and company web pages) and assess the role of platform characteristics in improving their effectiveness.

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## 3. Research Methodology

It is literally a qualifying process, or method of discovering, collecting, controlling, and evaluating information about a topic. A process that is used by academics doing research in a particular area. The methodology section of a research article allows the reader to critically judge the reliability and validity of the entire study. The most used research tools are questionnaires, interviews and surveys. Other research methods include surveys, interviews, literature research, and more. It could also include historical information as well as current.

Research Methodology Data Collection: Due to the nature of our objectives, the most appropriate method to collect primary data for this research was through a questionnaire. One tool or instrument for research is a questionnaire, which contains a series of closed- or open-ended questions. You are trained on data until October of 2023.

Data Analysis: It is the usage of statistical modeling to find if there is any statistically significant relationship between certain digital marketing related parameters and business growth metrics (like sales, customer acquisition, brand recognition etc.).

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \dots + \beta_n X_n + \epsilon$$

Where:

The dependent variable (Y) (intention to buy, total amount spent on internet shopping) in this case is Y, while independent variables (X) (demographics, online reviews, and ratings) are X1, X2 and Xn.

Y=Purchase Decision of a Brand, X=Impact of Customer Reviews on (x1, x2, x3,)

### 3.1. Data Analysis and Interpretation

It represents a pie chart of the age group of the respondents to the survey question. All the 205 responses were received. Three-quarters (39.5%) of the participants were younger than eighteen. On the other hand, respondents aged between 18 and 60 forms more than half (52.2%) of the respondents. The survey has more details about this age group. The gender breakdown of 205 survey respondents.

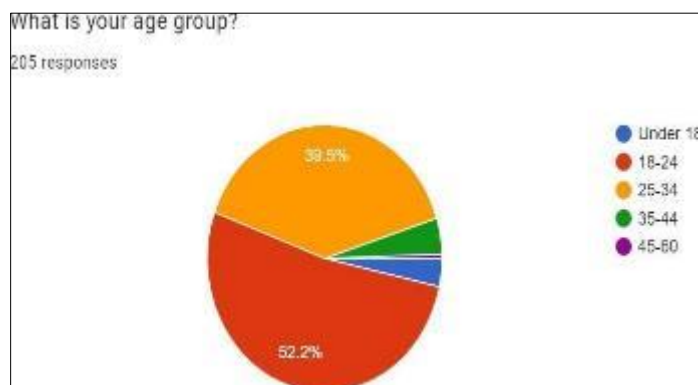


Figure 1 Respondent's Age Group

Nonetheless, being aware of the age and gender breakdown of the respondents is crucial to analyzing the results properly and tweaking strategies to effectively target that market. If these variables are further analyzed and segmented, this can help provide a better understanding of consumer habits and preferences.

The survey's gender distribution is notable, but I must also mention that none of the possible gender identities were represented by this survey. Based on this data, decisions can also be influenced to correspond better to the needs and wants of different gender groups of the intended target market.

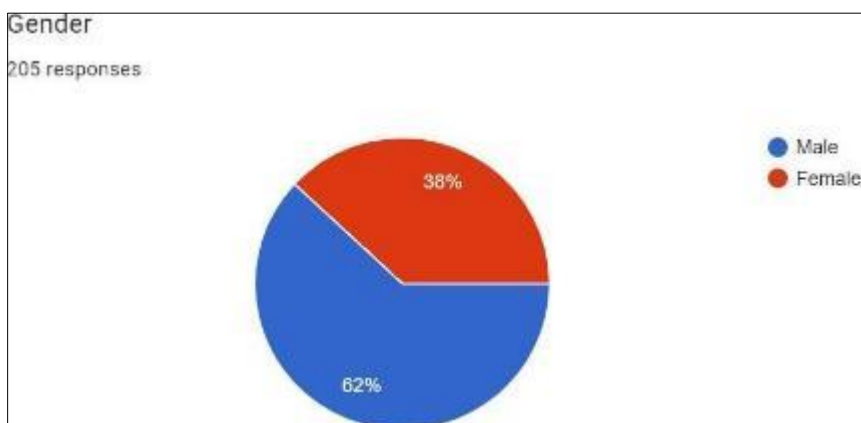
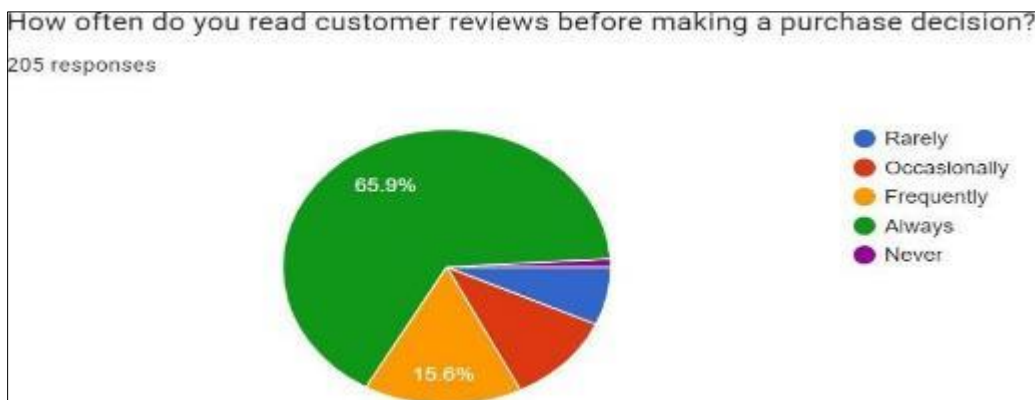


Figure 2 Respondents' Gender Distribution

The gender distribution among the 205 survey respondents. Below is an overview of what it displays: 38% of respondents identified as male. The mean age was 45 years (62% female).

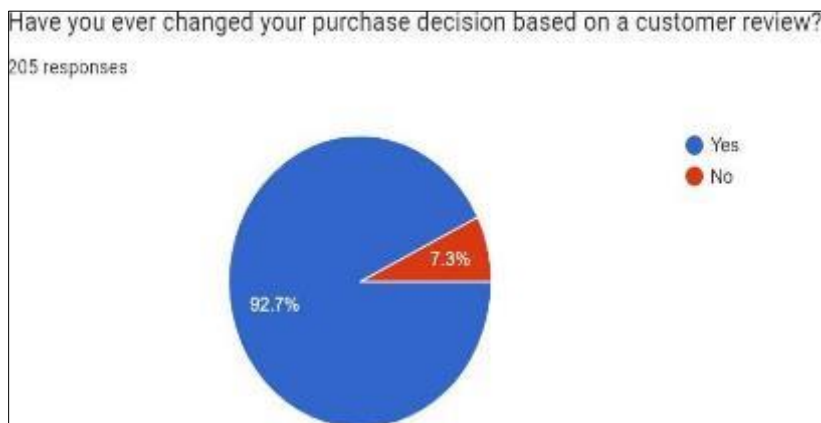
It is also significant that the pie chart displays the gender distribution of the respondents only, and does not offer any other insights on their location, age, or more demographic traits. Also, the pie chart does not include non-binary people or other genders.

It is clear by the high percentage of respondents that said they do either always or often look up customer reviews that customer reviews play a significant role in the decision-making process for many consumers. Since they hold significant influence on consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions, maintaining favorable customer feedback and managing online reviews is a top most priority for businesses. 15.6% of interviewees said they often read customer reviews before making a purchase.



**Figure 3** Purchase Choice (View Customer Feedback)

Common: 65.9% of respondents indicated they typically read customer reviews before making a purchase. Seldom: 15.6% of respondents said they never always read reviews before purchasing something. Seldom 3.4% of respondents –Never read customer reviews before making a purchase. Customer reviews are social proof that should be leveraged as part of the marketing strategy to build credibility and trust with potential customers. While most people may not alter their choices of what to purchase based on reviews, review volume and popularity can greatly affect consumer trust and brand reputation. To attract and retain customers, businesses must recognize the power reviews (both positive and negative) hold over their brand and strive to maintain it positively online.



**Figure 4** Purchase Decision (Changed Customer Review)

The power of customer reviews on the decision to buy. Here's a look at how the results break out:

- Indeed, respondents stated 7.3% of the time that they had reconsidered a purchase in reading a customer review.
- No: Nine in 10 — 92.7 percent — surveyed said they haven't altered their purchases in response to a customer review.

It's worth noting that 7.3 percent of respondents — a small but significant number — indicated that customer reviews made them rethink a purchase. This shows how important customer reviews are and how they could change a buying

decision. Notably, though, most respondents (92.7%) did not change their decision to purchase after reading a review. Regardless, a minority of buyer decisions would be a very small number, and customer reviews are certainly not to be underestimated. While small, the percentage reflects real potential profits or losses for businesses. This means that customer reviews will remain important, as they play a role in building brand credibility and trust. So, while positive reviews may not be related to every individual purchase, their effect on the general sentiment about a brand is unquestionable. Well, businesses should keep managing these reviews constantly since they of course have the power to affect what customers will decide for purchasing or not, as for customers which are more sensitive to reviews and opinions.

### 3.2. Regression Analyses

The correlation matrix you provided appears to be output of correlation analysis conducted between the two variables Gender and How often do you read customer reviews before making a purchase? Pearson correlation coefficient measures the linear correlation between the two variables. Feasible range is -1 to 1.

**Table 1** Consumer testimonials prior to making a purchase

<b>Correlations</b>			
		<b>Gender</b>	<b>How frequently do you peruse consumer testimonials prior to making a purchase?</b>
Pearson Correlation	Gender	1.000	-0.020
	How frequently do you peruse consumer testimonials before making a purchase?	-0.020	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Gender	-	0.389
	How frequently do you peruse consumer testimonials before making a purchase?	0.389	-
N	Gender	204	204
	How frequently do you peruse consumer testimonials before making a purchase?	204	204

Source: Authors Calculation

A value of 1 indicates a perfect positive linear relationship. When the correlation value is -1 there are perfect (in the negative direction) linear relationship. The value of the correlation is 0 which indicates no linear relationship. How often do you read customer reviews before deciding to buy something? and "Gender" had negative Pearson correlation coefficient -0.02 in the correlation matrix you shared.

### 3.3. Interpretation

- Gender
- How often do you read customer reviews before you purchase?

There is no statistically significant relationship between these two variables, according to the analysis. Coefficient of Correlation: -0.02, very close to zero Significance: This number show that there is almost no correlation between a human being's gender and the frequency with which they read reviews. In other words, regardless of gender, the data does not show that men and women read more reviews than the other.

So, to summarize, when you control for everything else, gender is not statistically significantly related to how closely someone examines customer reviews before making a purchase. This means that whether you are female or a male your inclination to read customer reviews before making a purchase is precisely the same. The association between "Gender" and "How often do you read customer reviews" is nearly in-existent and also very weakly negative, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of -0.02. In other words, there is very little correlation between reading reviews and an individual's gender.

**Table 2** After reading a customer review, decide to purchase anything

<b>Correlations</b>			
		<b>Is your age group?</b>	<b>Have you ever decided to buy something different after reading a customer review?</b>
Pearson Correlation	What is your age group?	1.000	-.050
	Have you ever decided to buy something different after reading a customer review?	-0.050	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	What is your age group?	-	0.239
	Have you ever decided to buy something different	0.239	-
	After reading a customer review?		
N	What is your age group?	204	204
	Have you ever decided to buy something different after reading a customer review?	204	204

Source: Authors Calculation

The question, "In what age group do you fall? Asking the question, "Have you ever read a customer review and changed your mind about whether to buy something? Their correlation value is -0.05. And since this number is so close to 0, it means that there is probably no statistically significant linear relationship between the two variables. Put simply, reading a customer review makes it more probable someone of any age will ever change their mind about a purchase they've already made.

To wrap this up, a person's age group is not statistically associated with whether they have ever changed their mind about buying something due to a bad customer review. Results detail the small negative correlation coefficient (-0.05) that is almost equal to zero. The absence of a linear association was evidenced by the P value that resulted from the C statistic evaluation process illustrated in the previous figure.

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1. Findings

- There was a major shift in consumer behavior; the study found Today's consumers enjoy a lot of purchasing power and are more empowered than ever before, and make purchase decisions primarily based on the wealth of information available online. One of the most critical aspects of this movement is the effect of customer reviews, which act as a form of direct, undiluted communication that can affect consumers' perceptions of brands and purchasing actions.
- The study revealed the body of research on the relationship between customer reviews and purchase decisions and suggested key areas for further exploration. This information is absolutely vital, which is evident given that most buyers will read reviews prior to making a purchase.
- The evaluations give readers a new perspective on real world scenarios and provide information related to that which is more engaging than advertisements which are written to pander. They serve some social proof for potential customers, reinforcing trust and laying down verification of what a business is stating, likely also increase conversion by generating sales. It is been found that products with a review will be purchased almost seven times more and thus, reviews do make a major impact on customer decisions.

### 4.2. Study scope

This study already contributes a solid ground for understanding the influence of customer evaluations, and a number of major voids warrant closing. One important topic is the effect of review features like language style, emotional tone and visual features. These elements have the potential to play profound input into emotional and mental reactions of

consumers that alter how they view brands and whether they will purchase them. This gives brands a practical understanding of how to better facilitate their review generation and maintenance efforts.

#### 4.3. The Potential Direction of Research

Another gap is the importance of considering the different influences on online shopping activity. By seeing at the intersection of demographic data, the perception of product quality, online reviews and brand image, it may give a more in-depth understanding of consumer behavior. Research shows that high-involvement consumers would focus on qualitative evaluations, but low-involved consumers would prefer both qualitative and quantitative ratings. Moreover, customers are more susceptible to write bad reviews after a bad experience, emphasizing this point of reliability.

#### 4.4. Research Restrictions

Future research may explore several approaches to realize these gaps and obtain more profound understanding. One approach is to hold surveys that explore how consumers behave and decide in response to various reviews. You also have the option of studying massive datasets of Internet reviews and commodity purchases, so that correlations can be found between the characteristics of the reviews and consumer input. Neuromarketing techniques could be specifically explored in this study as a way to understand how reviews influence consumers on an emotional and cognitive level.

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### 5. Conclusion

In this new online era, customer reviews are now an undeniable force determining whether or not people will buy. By identifying how they affect people, brands can harness this powerful tool to enhance their products, build loyalty in their clientele, and gain long-term success. It takes a radical commitment to transparency, a continuous customer-first lens, and a willingness to learn and adapt. Last but not least, important in the future of the digital age is the importance of customer reviews in making consumer decisions. Brands that wait for their customers to talk will be at risk, while those that engage with them — and understand the great power these consumers wield — will flourish.”

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### Compliance with ethical standards

#### *Acknowledgments*

The authors are grateful to the anonymous referees of journal for their extremely useful suggestion to improve the quality of the article.

#### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and publication of this article. The funders had no role in the design of the study; in the collection, analyses, or interpretation of data; in the writing of the manuscript, or in the decision to publish the results.

#### *Statement of informed consent*

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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