



**The Influence of Multidimensional User Reviews on Consumer
Purchase Decisions on Shopee**

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**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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Purchase Decisions on Shopee**

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This Independent Study Has Been Approved as a Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Business Administration

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ABSTRACT

With the rapid expansion of Thailand's digital economy and mobile e-commerce, the Shopee platform has established a dominant position in the local market. In an online shopping environment characterized by information asymmetry, consumer behavior is shifting from a purely price-oriented paradigm to a trust-driven, value-oriented approach, positioning online user reviews as a core reference for purchase decisions. To empirically analyze the specific paths through which online reviews influence consumer purchase decisions, this study aimed to examine the mechanisms of four review dimension: review quantity, review valence, review emotional content, and review recency, on Shopee users' purchase decisions, thereby constructing an integrated information processing framework.

Employing a quantitative research design, this study targeted active Shopee users in Bangkok, Thailand, as the research population, distributing a structured online questionnaire via convenience and snowball sampling to gather responses. The findings confirmed that consumers in mobile shopping contexts prioritize valence and recency as low-cognitive-load heuristic cues for rapid screening.

This study concludes that multidimensional online reviews significantly drive Shopee consumers' purchase decisions, with heuristic cues playing a dominant role. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Shopee platform optimize its ranking algorithm to prioritize recent, high-scoring feedback and incorporate AI to extract semantic tags; concurrently, merchants should reinforce pre-shipping quality control

and establish normalized review incentive mechanisms to maintain review recency.

Keywords: online user reviews, purchase decisions, e-commerce, consumer behavior.



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NI AO

DECLARATION

I, NI AO, hereby declare that this Independent Study entitled “*The Influence of Multidimensional User Reviews on Consumer Purchase Decisions on Shopee*” is an original work and has never been submitted to any academic institution for a degree.



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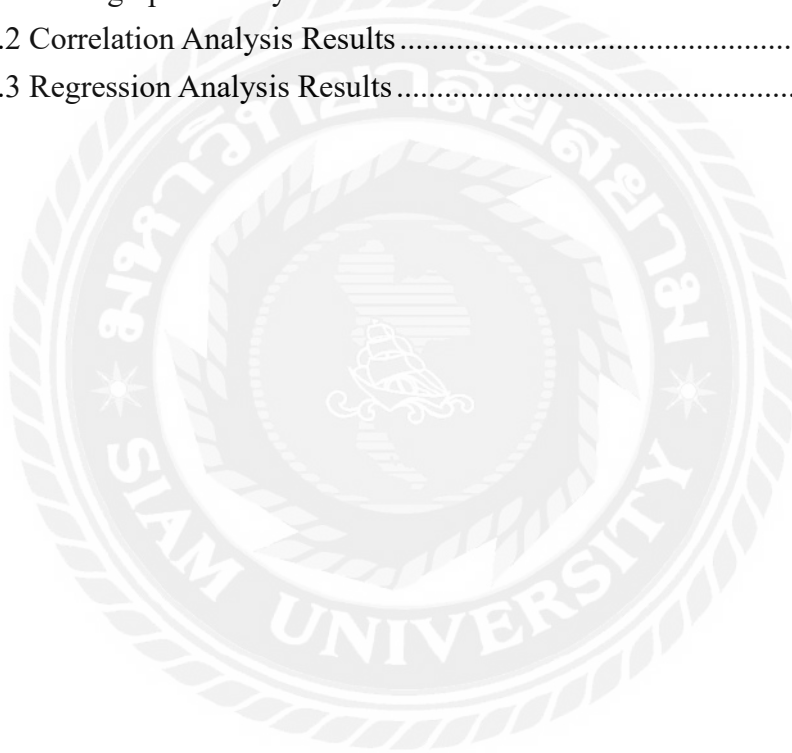
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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Thailand's digital economy has experienced rapid expansion, establishing itself as the second-largest e-commerce market in Southeast Asia. Within this booming ecosystem, the Shopee platform has secured a dominant market position, capturing the vast majority of local online consumer traffic. As mobile shopping becomes deeply embedded in daily life, digital platforms serve as the primary shopping channel for modern consumers. Concurrently, consumer shopping behavior is undergoing a profound shift from a purely price-oriented paradigm to a value-oriented and trust-driven approach, positioning online user reviews as the core reference for purchasing choices.

However, alongside this market growth, both consumers and merchants face critical challenges resulting from severe information asymmetry and information overload. For consumers, being unable to physically inspect products online creates high perceived risk and decision hesitation. For platform operators and sellers, managing user-generated content (UGC) has become increasingly complex as review formats diversify with images, videos, and incentivized feedback. A major problem in current practice and existing literature is that online feedback is frequently evaluated through isolated, single-dimensional metrics—such as relying solely on average star ratings or total review volume. Such narrow approaches fail to explain how consumers navigate complex information environments under cognitive constraints, nor do they clarify how multiple review attributes interact to influence decision outcomes.

To address these critical issues, choosing this research topic is both academically necessary and practically significant. By integrating four core dimensions: review quantity, review valence, emotional content, and review recency, into a unified theoretical framework grounded in the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) and Social Proof Theory, this study sought to decode the dual cognitive pathways (heuristic vs. systematic) that consumers employ on mobile e-commerce platforms. Selecting active Shopee users in Bangkok as the empirical target provided a highly representative context to explore how modern digital shoppers process eWOM signals. Ultimately, this research topic was chosen to bridge the gap between single-dimension review literature and complex consumer behaviors, offering actionable insights for

merchants to build sustainable consumer trust and for platforms to optimize information architecture.

1.2 Questions of the Study

To systematically examine how online user feedback guides consumer choice, this study formulated specific research inquiries based on the multidimensional properties of user reviews. The central inquiry focused on identifying the specific influence mechanisms through which distinct review attributes affect purchase decisions within the mobile e-commerce context. Specifically, this study addressed the following four questions:

1. Does review quantity influence consumers' purchase decisions?
2. Does review valence influence consumers' purchase decisions?
3. Does review emotional content influence consumers' purchase decisions?
4. Does review recency influence consumers' purchase decisions?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The overarching objective of this study is to empirically examine the influence of multidimensional online review attributes on Shopee consumers' purchasing decisions. Specifically, this study aimed to achieve the following four objectives:

1. To examine the influence of review quantity on consumer purchase decisions.
2. To examine the influence of review valence on consumer purchase decisions.
3. To examine the influence of review emotional content on consumer purchase decisions.
4. To examine the influence of review recency on consumer purchase decisions.

1.4 Scope of the Study

This study employed a quantitative research design, with data collection strictly restricted to a structured online survey questionnaire containing 30 items. The empirical target of this study was explicitly focused on active Shopee users within the Bangkok area, Thailand. Data analysis was limited to using Statistical software to perform Cronbach's alpha reliability analysis, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test of sphericity for validity testing, Pearson correlation analysis, and multiple linear regression analysis.

1.5 Significance of the Study

In terms of theoretical significance, this study first broadens the research perspective on electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) by integrating review quantity, review valence, review recency, and review emotional content into a unified framework, revealing the independent effects and relative influence priorities of each dimension when processing multidimensional information concurrently. Second, it deepens the integration of dual-process theories (ELM/HSM) and the Affect Infusion Model (AIM), confirming that mobile consumers initially utilize structured cues such as review valence and review recency as heuristic shortcuts for rapid screening, followed by in-depth evaluation via the central route using review emotional content. Finally, it fills an empirical gap in the Southeast Asian market by focusing on well-educated, tech-savvy young and middle-aged consumers in Bangkok, Thailand, thereby enriching the research landscape of cross-cultural consumer behavior.

In terms of practical significance, this study first provides data-driven support for e-commerce platforms to optimize their review systems, inspiring platforms like Shopee to assign higher ranking weights to recent high-quality reviews and leverage NLP technology to extract fine-grained emotional tags to reduce search costs. Second, it offers e-commerce merchants refined reputation management strategies, clarifying resource priorities ranging from pre-shipping quality control to prevent low scores to dynamically refreshing review recency and encouraging review quantity. Finally, it assists consumers in identifying fake reviews and cognitive biases in information-overloaded mobile environments, thereby mitigating decision risks and achieving rational consumption choices.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

(1) Online user reviews

In academic literature, online user reviews are commonly referred to as electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), defined as any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former consumers about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people via the Internet. They constitute non-commercial, user-generated content (UGC). In the context of this study, online user reviews specifically refer to the feedback posted by consumers on the Shopee Thailand platform regarding product quality, customer service, logistics, and other relevant aspects following their purchase and usage.

Specifically, this study focused on four dimensions of user reviews: review quantity, defined as the cumulative total number of reviews on a product detail page;

review valence, represented by the star ratings (ranging from 1 to 5 stars) assigned by consumers; review emotional content, referring to the subjective emotional tendencies expressed within textual reviews (such as anger, satisfaction, and surprise); and review recency, reflecting the time proximity between the review posting date and the present.

(2) Purchase decision

According to Kotler's classic model, a purchase decision comprises five distinct stages: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior. Within the context of this study, the purchase decision focuses specifically on the "evaluation" and "decision" stages of this framework. Specifically, it denotes the purchase intention or final ordering behavior formed by Shopee consumers when they evaluate products by reading user reviews, operating as external information cues, while browsing product detail pages.

(3) E-commerce

E-commerce refers to commercial activities and transactions conducted via the Internet and related digital technologies, encompassing the purchasing, selling, transferring, and exchanging of products, services, and data. It transcends spatial and temporal limitations, enabling transacting parties to execute value exchange within a virtual ecosystem. This study specifically focuses on mobile commerce (m-commerce) and hybrid B2C/C2C platform business models, explicitly contextualized within the Shopee online marketplace.

(4) Consumer behavior

Contextualized within the empirical scope of this research, consumer behavior specifically refers to the target audience of well-educated, middle-income, young working professionals in Thailand, who exhibit behavioral characteristics of rational decision-making on the Shopee platform by utilizing review valence and review recency as heuristic cues for rapid product screening to maximize decision efficiency and minimize risk.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

2.1 Consumer Purchase Decision Process Theory

Consumer Purchase Decision Process Theory is the starting point for understanding consumer behavior (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Solomon, 2018). The traditional model divides the process into five logically progressive stages: Problem Recognition, Information Search, Evaluation of Alternatives, Purchase Decision, and Post-purchase Behavior (Engel et al., 1968; Kotler & Keller, 2016). Online user reviews play a decisive role in the two key stages of "information search" and "evaluation of alternatives" in this classic process. When consumers browse through the Shopee platform and recognize a purchase need, they enter the information search stage, actively seeking various types of product-related information to reduce decision uncertainty (Peterson & Merino, 2003; Urbany et al., 1989). In this process, user reviews generated by other consumers—perceived as more objective and less commercial—become the core basis for evaluating alternatives and forming product attitudes (Lee & Hong, 2021; Osman, 2023).

In the specific context of online shopping, this classic process has undergone significant evolution. On the one hand, the physical and time costs of information search have been greatly reduced (Bakos, 1997); on the other hand, consumers face unprecedented information overload (Eppler & Mengis, 2004; Malhotra, 1982). In response to this phenomenon, Häubl and Trifts (2000) proposed a two-stage decision-making model tailored to online environments (Alba et al., 1997). The theory suggests that consumers first utilize easily manageable cues (such as average ratings, sales volume, and review quantity) for a quick, initial screening, thereby filtering a vast array of options into a smaller "consideration set" (Shocker et al., 1991). They then dedicate more cognitive resources to a detailed assessment of the few products within that set, such as reading review texts and viewing user-uploaded images. This evolution highlights the necessity of categorizing review features into distinct dimensions in this study. Specifically, review quantity, review valence, and review recency tend to operate during the first stage of rapid screening, whereas review emotional content plays a pivotal role in the second stage of in-depth evaluation. Within the classic Engel-Blackwell-Miniard (EBM) model (Blackwell et al., 2006; Engel et al., 1968), the "information search" and "evaluation of alternatives" stages correspond directly to these two online steps, rendering it a robust framework for analyzing online consumers' shopping decisions.

2.2 Electronic Word-of-mouth (eWOM) and Social Proof Theory

Electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is defined as "any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual or former customers about a product or company over the Internet" (Rodgers & Wang, 2011). As a digital extension of traditional word-of-mouth, eWOM is regarded as one of the most powerful forces influencing contemporary consumer decision-making due to its rapid dissemination speed, wide coverage, and strong traceability (Bickart & Schindler, 2001; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004). Information from peer consumers is often perceived as more credible and persuasive than commercial advertisements published by businesses (Chen & Xie, 2008; Jayawardhena et al., 2022). On e-commerce platforms like Shopee, the user review section represents the most direct and concentrated form of eWOM (Bassig, 2022).

The underlying psychological mechanisms that make eWOM so powerful can be explained by Social Proof Theory (Cialdini, 1993, 2007). The theory suggests that when individuals encounter uncertainty, they tend to observe and imitate the behavior of others, operating under the subconscious premise that collective behavior reflects the correct choice in a given situation (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955; Festinger, 1954). Online shopping represents an environment inherently filled with uncertainty—consumers cannot physically touch, try, or experience products prior to purchase, making information asymmetry particularly prominent (Akerlof, 1970; Dimoka et al., 2012; Pilat & Krastev, 2024). In this context, the quantity, valence, and recency of user reviews serve as compelling social proof signals.

Review quantity as social proof: A high review quantity conveys a clear signal to potential buyers: "A large volume of consumers has purchased and evaluated this product, indicating high popularity and lower transaction risk. " This aligns directly with the "wisdom of the crowd" principle within social proof theory (Surowiecki, 2004). *Ceteris paribus*, a product with 500 reviews possesses a natural advantage in trust and appeal compared to one with only 3 reviews (Bassig, 2022).

Review valence as social proof: High average star ratings provide social proof regarding "choice quality. " When consumers observe a high rating of 4.8 stars, they infer that the vast majority of prior buyers were satisfied, thereby increasing their own expectation of satisfaction. This illustrates "informational conformity, " wherein consumers assume that previous buyers possess superior diagnostic information regarding true product quality and consequently align with their collective judgment (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Deutsch & Gerard, 1955; Pilat & Krastev, 2024).

Review recency as social proof: Review recency provides social proof concerning the "real-time validity" of information. Recent reviews are perceived as more

accurately reflecting the current status of products and services. A positive review posted within the past week carries significantly higher diagnostic value than one from a year ago because it reassures consumers that current product quality and seller service remain reliable. This validation of present conditions is critical for attenuating perceived uncertainty (Feldman & Lynch, 1988; Filieri, 2015; Shin & Xiang, 2021).

2.3 Affect Infusion Models and Commentary Content Analysis

The Affect Infusion Model (AIM), proposed by social psychologist Joseph Forgas (1995), systematically explains how an individual's emotional state (affect, including mood and emotions) permeates and influences information processing, social judgment, and behavioral decision-making. A core tenet of AIM is that the degree of affect infusion becomes more pronounced when tasks are complex, novel, or demand open and constructive processing (Kosnes et al., 2010).

AIM posits that affect can infuse the judgment process through multiple mechanisms, two primary ones being "affect-as-information" and "affect priming." Under the "affect-as-information" mechanism, individuals subconsciously query themselves ("How do I feel about it?") and use their immediate feelings as an informative cue (Pham, 1998; Schwarz & Clore, 1983, 2003). Under the "affect priming" mechanism, specific affective states selectively activate related memories, concepts, and associations, thereby biasing the interpretation and evaluation of subsequent information—where positive affect selectively retrieves positive experiences, leading to more favorable interpretations of new information (Bower, 1981; Forgas, 1995).

This model offers a robust theoretical underpinning for the variable review emotional content in this study. When a potential consumer browses a review rich in affective expressions, the review emotional content influences decision-making through affect infusion mechanisms:

Under heuristic processing (low-elaboration processing), if a consumer merely glances at the review, the strong positive emotional tone functions as a simple heuristic cue, directly triggering emotional resonance or positive associations to rapidly form a favorable initial product impression (Chaiken, 1980; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

Under systematic processing (high-elaboration processing, corresponding to "substantive processing" in AIM), the affect infusion effect becomes particularly prominent as consumers read and deeply evaluate the review text. Vivid emotional descriptions and storytelling narratives within reviews strongly activate consumers'

own affective memories and cognitive associations (Escalas, 2004; Green & Brock, 2000). A narrative-driven review infused with genuine positive emotions is significantly more effective at helping consumers construct a favorable mental representation of the product than a dry factual description. This process effectively "infuses" the reviewer's affect into the consumer's own product evaluation and final purchase decision (Forgas, 1995; Watson & Tellegen, 1985). This mechanism explains why review emotional content, functioning via the central route, exerts a persuasive and impactful influence on decision-making.

2.4 Influence of Review Quantity

In the literature of Information Systems (IS) and Management Science, review quantity is frequently referred to as "review volume" (Duan et al., 2008; Liu, 2006; Wu & Wu, 2016). It is directly defined as the total number of online reviews associated with a specific product or service. In empirical studies, this is an objective, discrete variable that can be directly extracted from product detail pages on e-commerce platforms such as Shopee (Wu & Wu, 2016). The core theoretical foundation of how review quantity influences consumer decision-making lies in Social Proof Theory. The theory posits that when individuals encounter uncertainty—a defining characteristic of online shopping environments—they tend to observe and imitate the behavior of others as a guide for their own choices. In the eWOM domain, a high review quantity conveys two particularly strong signals to potential consumers: first, perceived popularity, which signals that a large number of consumers have purchased the product; second, perceived reliability, which provides a sufficiently large sample size, rendering the aggregated trend of reviews statistically more reliable and trustworthy (Li, 2018).

These two signals operate synergistically to trigger a herd effect among consumers (Banerjee, 1992). In a classic experiment on music downloads, users were found to be more influenced by perceived popularity than by the intrinsic quality of the music itself (Salganik et al., 2006). Similarly, a high review quantity triggers an "information cascade" (Bikhchandani et al., 1992), prompting consumers to choose options widely validated by others. Following this logic, mainstream IS and marketing literature has broadly confirmed that an increase in review quantity positively impacts product sales and consumer purchase decisions by enhancing market exposure and providing evaluative information (Dellarocas, 2003; Feng et al., 2023; Floyd et al., 2014; Kang et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2020).

However, simply assuming "the higher the review quantity, the better" is an oversimplification. In-depth literature analysis reveals critical boundary conditions

and nuanced findings regarding review quantity, which are particularly relevant to the Shopee context. First is cognitive overload, where there is a threshold to the positive effect of review quantity. When review quantity is excessively high, consumers struggle to process the overwhelming information, leading to cognitive overload (Lurie, 2004; Malhotra, 1982). Consequently, consumers may experience decision fatigue, abort their information search, or revert entirely to simpler heuristic cues (Payne et al., 1993; Scheibehenne et al., 2010), thereby diminishing the marginal utility of review quantity. Second is the interaction with valence and variance, as the influence of review quantity is highly contingent upon other variables. For instance, research indicates that a low review quantity coupled with high rating variance significantly undermines consumers' reliance on average ratings (Sun, 2012; Wang et al., 2015). In other words, neither a 4.5-star rating based on only 10 reviews (low review quantity) nor a 3.0-star rating based on 1,000 reviews (high variance) can effectively foster strong purchase decisions.

Finally, regarding market context and trust, the effect of review quantity is not universal. Certain empirical studies indicate that review quantity lacks statistically significant influence on purchase decisions. For example, research on emerging e-commerce markets found that consumers, overwhelmed by cognitive load or distrustful of complex review systems, rely primarily on simplified metrics (such as star ratings), rendering the quantitative effect insignificant (Askalidis & Malthouse, 2016). Crucially for this study, prior research on the Shopee platform observed that factors such as information accuracy and review recency significantly drive credibility, whereas review quantity exerts no statistically significant effect. This suggests that Shopee consumers may become desensitized to mere quantity signals, seeking higher-diagnostic information instead. Ultimately, review quantity alone does not provide directional evaluation; it signals product popularity rather than product quality (Duan et al., 2008; Liu, 2006). Therefore, consumers inevitably evaluate review quantity in tandem with review valence (Floh et al., 2013).

2.5 Influence of Review Valence

Review valence is defined in the eWOM literature as the positive or negative emotions, feelings, and attitudes reflected by the information (Kim et al., 2018). In empirical studies, especially on mainstream e-commerce platforms such as Amazon and Shopee, the most commonly used and intuitive operationalized metric of review valence is the star rating. Platforms typically offer a quantification system of 1 to 5 stars. Therefore, the "average star rating" is widely used as a macro indicator that reflects the overall market judgment of the quality and popularity of the product. The

core psychological mechanism that makes review valence so powerful is that it is an efficient heuristic cue. Star ratings are such an easy-to-handle "cognitive shortcut" (Chaiken, 1980; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). A high average score of 4.5 stars can quickly convey a positive, credible quality signal to consumers; a low average score of 2.5 stars can quickly convey a strong negative risk signal. The vast majority of literature confirms this mechanism: a higher average star rating is significantly associated with a more favorable impression of the product, which directly boosts consumers' purchase decisions and actual product sales (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Luca, 2016; Maslowska et al., 2017). However, the influence of review valence on purchase decisions is not linearly symmetrical. A very robust finding in the literature (particularly in the fields of psychology and consumer behavior) is negative bias, sometimes also referred to as negative dominance. Negative bias refers to the fact that negative information (such as negative reviews) often has a greater, more prominent, and more lasting influence on human cognition, emotion, and decision-making compared to an equal amount of positive information (Baumeister et al., 2001; Kanouse, 1984; Rozin & Royzman, 2001).

From the perspective of evolutionary psychology, negative information (representing threats and risks) requires individuals to invest more cognitive resources to handle (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979; Vaish et al., 2008). In the e-commerce environment, a one-star or two-star negative review acts as an "alarm" that forces consumers to pause their decisions and reevaluate the risks. Consumers tend to give more weight to negative reviews. As a result, the negative influence of a small number of low-rating reviews on sales is often greater than the positive influence of an equal number of high-rating reviews on sales (Albuquerque, 2023; Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Lee et al., 2008). Review valence is a powerful heuristic cue. But the presence of "negative bias" suggests that consumers do not passively accept the average score but actively seek out negative information to diagnose risk. This diagnostic information is not in the macro star ratings but in the specific review text.

2.6 Influence of Review Emotional Content

Review emotional content is considered a richer, more diagnostic, and more reliable quality signal than star ratings alone. The core reason lies in the phenomenon of rating-sentiment inconsistency (Hu et al., 2014; Tang et al., 2014). For instance, a consumer may assign a high star rating of 4 or 5 stars out of habit, courtesy, or platform incentives such as cashback for positive feedback, yet express negative sentiment within the review text. Studies relying solely on star ratings would mistakenly classify such feedback as positive. Conversely, evaluating review

emotional content through natural language processing, text mining, or sentiment analysis models can penetrate this superficial valence and capture authentic negative consumer signals (Hu et al., 2009; Kim, 2021). Therefore, empirical studies explicitly employ textual sentiment as an essential complementary metric to review valence, confirming the theoretical separation between the two. This negative bias emerges even more strongly when consumers engage in systematic processing by thoroughly reading textual reviews (Kim, 2021).

Furthermore, perceived review helpfulness plays a critical mediating role (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010; Pan & Chiou, 2011). On information-overloaded e-commerce platforms like Shopee, consumers cannot read all available feedback and actively search for the most helpful reviews. Extensive research indicates that reviews containing negative emotional content and lower review valence are frequently perceived as more helpful. This attribution mechanism is driven by perceived sincerity and cognitive effort. Consumers tend to suspect that purely positive reviews may be manipulated or lack depth, whereas reviews conveying negative emotional content are viewed as more authentic, credible, and objective (Flanagin et al., 2014; Sen & Lerman, 2007; Willemsen et al., 2011). Additionally, negative reviews often reflect greater cognitive effort, containing richer details and vivid emotional expressions that render them highly persuasive. Consequently, detailed negative review emotional content significantly reduces purchase intentions, shortens information processing time for that product, and prompts consumers to seek competitor alternatives immediately.

Integrating review emotional content places this study at the forefront of information systems and marketing research. Traditional approaches utilize sentiment analysis tools to quantify text sentiment as a single polarity score ranging from negative to positive. However, cutting-edge literature in top-tier journals such as *MIS Quarterly* demonstrates that simplifying all negative emotions into a single continuum is overly reductive and masks crucial nuances (Lerner & Keltner, 2000; Russell, 1980; Yin et al., 2014). This gives rise to the paradox of discrete emotions, as different negative emotions do not exert identical effects. Consumers subconsciously analyze how reviewers express negative emotions and make specific attributions. Anger is a high-arousal emotion (Wetzer et al., 2007; Yin et al., 2014); expressing anger in reviews through aggressive language or exclamation marks is often perceived by prospective buyers as uncivilized, irrational, or inappropriate. Consequently, readers attribute the negative experience to the author rather than the product, thereby attenuating the persuasiveness of angry reviews. Conversely, disappointment is a low-arousal emotion. Expressing disappointment reflects an objective gap between expectations and actual product performance without aggressive blaming. Readers

attribute this disappointment directly to product defects, making reviews conveying disappointment highly persuasive and damaging. Therefore, empirical research must capture these discrete nuances within review emotional content to avoid masking critical behavioral mechanisms (Yin et al., 2014).

2.7 Influence of Review Recency

Review recency refers to the timeliness or freshness of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) reviews (Fu et al., 2011). In today's era of rapid iteration of products—especially consumer electronics—and platform services such as Shopee's logistics and customer support, review recency is crucial. Two core theoretical mechanisms explain the significance of review recency: information decay and the recency effect (Hogarth & Einhorn, 1992; Murdock, 1962). Information decay posits that the diagnostic value of information diminishes over time (Feldman & Lynch, 1988; Fu et al., 2011); for instance, a review regarding a Shopee store's logistics speed from years ago may no longer accurately reflect its current service quality following changes in logistics partners. Consumers recognize this decay and discount outdated feedback. Conversely, the recency effect represents a cognitive bias wherein individuals assign greater weight and recall to the most recently processed information, the latest reviews encountered when making decisions (Kolomiiets et al., 2016).

Furthermore, review recency interacts dynamically with other informational dimensions. A newly posted review provides immediate context for evaluating review valence and review emotional content, thereby amplifying or attenuating their influence on purchase decisions. Research highlights an asymmetric effect: review recency is positively correlated with perceived review helpfulness primarily when review valence is negative. Reading recent negative reviews, compared to outdated ones, causes a pronounced decline in consumer purchase decisions. Review recency significantly influences consumers' willingness to accept negative feedback, whereas its effect on positive feedback acceptance is relatively negligible. These detrimental effects driven by recent negative reviews become even more prominent in immediate decision-making contexts. In fast-paced mobile e-commerce environments like Shopee, where features such as same-day or next-day delivery encourage rapid purchasing choices, the real-time validity provided by review recency is particularly potent (Kim et al., 2022; Kuan et al., 2015; Shin & Xiang, 2021).

2.8 Conceptual Framework

Grounded in consumer decision-making theory and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) influence mechanisms, this study constructed an integrated theoretical framework to examine the influence pathways of online review dimensions on consumer purchase decisions. In contemporary digital consumption environments, consumers face the dual challenges of information overload and information asymmetry, where online user reviews serve as a primary information source that directly shapes consumer decision-making. This study focused on four core review dimensions: review quantity (serving as a heuristic cue for social proof), review valence (represented by aggregated star ratings reflecting overall evaluation), review emotional content (capturing expressed emotional valence and intensity within textual feedback), and review recency (reflecting the timeliness and freshness of review information), which collectively constitute the information processing framework guiding consumer purchase decisions.

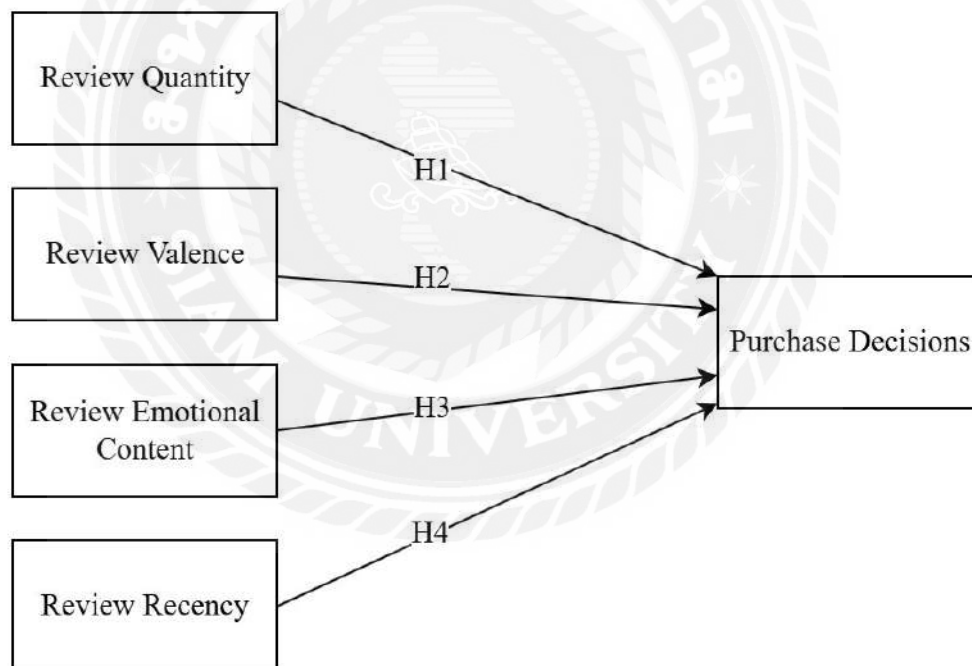


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

To validate the theoretical model and research hypotheses proposed in this study, a quantitative research design was adopted, and a structured online questionnaire was developed. The structure of the questionnaire strictly aligned with the theoretical framework described earlier, aiming to quantitatively measure the four core dimensions of user reviews on the Shopee platform and their influence on consumer purchase decisions.

3.2 Population and Sample

The target population for this study was active Shopee users residing in the Bangkok metropolitan area, Thailand. Bangkok was selected as the primary sampling region due to its strategic representativeness within the Southeast Asian e-commerce ecosystem. Shopee exhibits high mobile penetration and strong social attributes in Thailand, while Bangkok, serving as the nation's economic and digital hub, hosts a substantial young consumer base and an exceptionally high Internet penetration rate. Consumers in this region demonstrate a strong propensity to rely on online user reviews during their decision-making process in socialized digital environments, thereby providing an ideal contextual setting to examine the influence mechanisms of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM).

This study employed a non-probability sampling design combining convenience sampling and snowball sampling. To ensure sample validity and relevance, respondents were required to satisfy three strict inclusion criteria: residing in the Bangkok area, having completed purchases on the Shopee Thailand platform within the past six months, and routinely consulting online user reviews prior to making purchase decisions. The structured questionnaire was hosted on the Wenjuanxing online platform and administered across active local digital channels, including Bangkok-focused Facebook shopping communities and consumer LINE groups. Upon survey completion, initial qualified respondents were invited to forward the questionnaire link to peers and colleagues who met the identical criteria. Screening questions were placed at the beginning of the survey to verify respondent eligibility before granting access to the core measurement items.

3.3 Hypotheses

H1: Review quantity has a significant positive influence on consumer purchase decisions.

H2: Review valence has a significant positive influence on consumer purchase decisions.

H3: Review emotional content has a significant positive influence on consumer purchase decisions.

H4: Review recency has a significant positive influence on consumer purchase decisions.

3.4 Research Instrument

This study adopted a quantitative questionnaire survey design as the primary data collection method to empirically examine the influence mechanisms of user review characteristics on consumer purchase decisions on the Shopee platform. The questionnaire comprised 30 items structured into two main sections. The first section (Items 1–5) collected demographic characteristics of respondents, including gender, age, education, personal monthly income and career, which served both to establish the sample profile and to screen respondents based on their Shopee purchasing experience. The second section contained the remaining 25 core scale items, derived strictly from variable definitions in the literature review and measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). These 25 items systematically evaluated the five core dimensions of the theoretical model: review quantity, review valence, review emotional content, review recency, and consumer purchase decisions.

3.4.1 Review Quantity Scale

Social Proof Theory and Heuristic Processing: According to Social Proof Theory, when individuals encounter uncertainty, such as in online shopping environments where physical product inspection is impossible, they judge appropriate choices by observing the behaviors and actions of others. Within this theoretical framework, review quantity functions as a heuristic cue operating via the peripheral route in the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), serving as an accessible numerical indicator processed without demanding deep cognitive effort.

Perceived Risk Reduction: Measures evaluating perceived risk reduction assess

whether consumers leverage a high review quantity to offset concerns regarding counterfeit or inferior products, as a substantial volume of reviews symbolizes transaction safety through collective validation.

Herd Mentality and Popularity Judgment: Items capturing herd mentality and popularity judgments examine whether consumers equate review quantity with market popularity. On highly competitive e-commerce platforms like Shopee, consumers tend to operate under the assumption that "the greater the volume of buyers, the higher the product reliability. "

Decision Confidence: Decision confidence measures the specific capacity of review quantity to mitigate decision hesitation, effectively shifting consumer evaluation from mere quality perception to establishing the requisite confidence to execute purchase decisions.

Table 3.1 Review Quantity Scale

Review Quantity Scale	
1	When I see a product with a lot of reviews, I feel it's "safer" to buy it.
2	On Shopee, review quantity is an important clue for me to determine whether a product is "popular" or "highly popular".
3	If the two products are similar in other respects, I tend to choose the one with more reviews.
4	The higher review quantity, the more confident I feel about the product's quality.
5	I believe the more reviews a product has, the more it has been tested by people, and thus is trustworthy.

3.4.2 Review Valence Scale

Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), Heuristic Processing, and Cognitive Shortcuts: Review valence (operationalized via average star ratings) serves as one of the most classic peripheral cues in ELM and heuristic cues in the Heuristic-Systematic Model (HSM) within digital information processing. According to HSM, consumers apply simple decision heuristics, such as "high rating equals high quality", to execute rapid evaluations while conserving cognitive capacity. This mechanism reflects informational conformity, wherein individuals assume that aggregate group judgments are superior and more accurate than individual assessments.

Consideration Set Screening: This dimension examines whether review valence functions as an initial filtering threshold for consumers when constructing a consideration set. If a product's average star rating falls below a critical threshold (e.

g., 4.0 stars), prospective buyers may discard the option entirely without processing secondary information, such as review emotional content or user-uploaded images.

Quality Signaling: Evaluates the degree to which consumers directly equate average star ratings with underlying product quality, illustrating their reliance on cognitive shortcuts to diminish perceived uncertainty (such as discrepancies between physical items and online descriptions).

Consensus Trust: Measures the extent to which consumers rely on the wisdom of the crowd, testing whether high rating consensus effectively eliminates hesitation regarding specific purchasing risks.

Table 3.2 Review Valence Scale

Review Valence Scale	
1	Average star ratings (e.g. 4.8 stars vs. 3.5 stars) are my primary basis for quickly judging the "overall quality" of a product.
2	When browsing the list, I mainly rely on high star ratings to help me filter and narrow down the "consideration collection" (that is, products worth my further review).
3	I believe that the average star rating of a product accurately reflects the real experience of "the majority of buyers".
4	If a product 's rating falls below my expectation (for example, below 4.0), I usually ignore it outright.
5	Seeing high ratings (such as a perfect 5-star score) effectively alleviates my concerns about the received item not matching expectations.

3.4.3 Review Recency Scale

Information Diagnosticity and Dynamic Social Proof: Review recency reflects the real-time validity of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) information. In rapidly evolving e-commerce environments characterized by product batch variations and logistics quality fluctuations, static social proof from the past loses its effectiveness. Grounded in information diagnosticity theory, consumers perceive recent reviews as possessing higher diagnostic value when assessing current vendor reliability and product status.

Information Decay: Measures the temporal decay of eWOM information, quantifying the diagnostic "shelf life" or temporal validity window of user feedback (e. g. , evaluating the premise that reviews older than three months lose diagnostic relevance for purchase decisions).

Real-Time Service Evaluation: Captures dynamic platform-specific service

attributes on Shopee, such as current fulfillment speed and latest batch quality, operating under the assumption that only recent reviews reflect a seller's present operational performance.

Risk-Averse Asymmetric Weighting: Tests the risk-aversion mechanism wherein recent negative reviews exert greater psychological weight and decision-making disruption than outdated positive reviews.

Table 3.3 Review Recency Scale

Review Recency Scale	
1	For me, comments posted recently (say within a month) are more valuable than old comments from months ago.
2	I tend to look at the latest reviews because they best reflect the "current" status of products and services (such as quality or shipping speed).
3	If the reviews of a product were all posted a long time ago (say, more than three months), I would be skeptical about its "present" quality.
4	I specifically filter or sort by "Most Recent" to check the latest buyer feedback.
5	I believe reviews older than six months are already "outdated" and shouldn't be used as a basis for my current decision.

3.4.4 Review Emotional Content Scale

Affect Infusion Model (AIM) and Central-Route Processing: Unlike the preceding three peripheral heuristic cues, review emotional content functions as a central-route informational signal requiring higher cognitive elaboration from consumers. Grounded in the Affect Infusion Model (AIM), review texts laden with intense discrete emotions (such as delight, anger, or disappointment) infuse the decision-making process through mechanisms of affect priming and emotional resonance, enabling consumers to mentally simulate product consumption and usage scenarios.

Systematic Processing Willingness: Evaluates consumers' propensity to engage in substantive reading and high-elaboration cognitive processing, which serves as a cognitive prerequisite for affective information to exert its influence.

Emotional Contagion: Measures whether affective expressions within reviews (e. g. , excitement or satisfaction) trigger emotional resonance in readers, thereby strengthening affective purchase motivations.

Mental Simulation: Examines whether vivid emotional narratives assist consumers in constructing clear mental representations of product experiences, which

represents a core functional mechanism of the AIM framework.

Perceived Authenticity: Assesses whether reviews rich in emotional content are perceived as more authentic, credible, and non-commercial compared to generic positive feedback—a distinction particularly vital for establishing buyer trust within the Shopee e-commerce environment.

Table 3.4 Review Emotional Content Scale

Review Emotional Content Scale	
1	When evaluating a product, I tend to read the detailed review text carefully rather than just the star rating.
2	Comments filled with positive emotions (such as "surprise", "perfection", "love") move me more than those that merely state facts.
3	Reading passionate positive reviews from others will help me build up a "positive imagination" of the product in my mind.
4	The genuine emotions expressed by the commenter in the text are an important factor influencing my final decision.
5	Seeing others express excitement about using the product in their reviews sparks my desire to own it too.

3.4.5 Purchase Decision Scale

Operationalization of Dependent Variable (Purchase Decision): Given the practical constraints of tracking real-time transactional behavior in survey research, purchase decision is widely adopted as the optimal proxy variable for actual purchasing behavior. Empirical multivariate literature consistently demonstrates a robust positive correlation between stated purchase decisions and ultimate transaction execution. The dependent variable scale is structured across four key indicators:

Action Likelihood: Directly measures the probability and immediacy of executing a purchase, representing the primary baseline indicator of the dependent variable.

Attitudinal Conversion (Purchase Propensity): Evaluates the transition from passive interest to explicit product preference or strong purchase desire, reflecting a higher potential for behavioral conversion.

Referral Intention (Word-of-Mouth): Assesses consumers' willingness to recommend the product to peers, serving as a higher-order manifestation of purchase decisions that reflects deep cognitive and affective product endorsement.

Decision Rationality: Measures perceived decision wisdom to confirm that consumers not only experience immediate purchasing motivation but also cognitively

validate the decision as sound, optimal, and justifiable.

Table 3.5 Purchase Decision Scale

purchase decision Scale	
1	I'm likely to buy this product.
2	I would recommend this product to my friends.
3	If necessary, I would give priority to this product.
4	Taking all the information into account, purchasing this product is a wise decision.
5	I have a strong desire to buy this product.

3.5 Reliability and Validity Analysis of the Scale

3.5.1 Questionnaire Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis evaluates the internal consistency and stability of survey measurement scales, assessing the degree to which items measuring the same latent construct yield coherent and stable responses. High scale reliability indicates that measurement items effectively minimize random measurement error, thereby ensuring that respondent perceptions are captured accurately without internal contradiction.

The primary criterion for evaluating scale internal consistency is Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α), which ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values representing greater internal consistency among measurement items. In quantitative empirical research, a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.70 or higher is widely accepted as indicating satisfactory scale reliability, values exceeding 0.80 represent high internal consistency, and values below 0.60 indicate inadequate reliability—suggesting potential flaws in scale design or excessive measurement noise that precludes the data from subsequent statistical modeling.

In this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was employed to test the internal consistency reliability of each measurement scale. It is widely established that a Cronbach's alpha value exceeding 0.70 indicates satisfactory scale reliability. The empirical results demonstrate that the Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the five latent variables—review quantity, review valence, review recency, review emotional content, and purchase decision—were 0.785, 0.734, 0.781, 0.784, and 0.775, respectively. The reliability coefficients of all variables exceeded the standard threshold of 0.70, confirming that the scales utilized in this study demonstrated robust internal consistency, stability, and reliability, thereby making the dataset well-suited for subsequent statistical analysis.

Table 3.6 Results of Reliability Analysis

Scale	N of Items	Cronbach's α
Review Quantity Scale	5	0.785
Review Valence Scale	5	0.734
Review Recency Scale	5	0.781
Review Emotional Content Scale	5	0.784
Purchase Decision Scale	5	0.775

3.5.2 Questionnaire Validity Analysis

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity represent essential prerequisite statistical diagnostics conducted prior to factor analysis, primarily utilized to evaluate the suitability of survey data for construct validity analysis.

The KMO index evaluates sampling adequacy by measuring the proportion of variance among variables attributable to underlying common factors, with values ranging from 0 to 1. A KMO value exceeding the standard threshold of 0.60 confirms sufficient common variance among variables to justify factor analysis, whereas values below 0.50 indicate inadmissibility.

Concurrently, Bartlett's test of sphericity evaluates whether the correlation matrix functions as an identity matrix, in which variables are completely independent. Achieving statistical significance ($p < 0.05$) rejects the null hypothesis of variable independence, establishing significant inter-variable correlations and verifying that the dataset is appropriate for factor extraction.

Table 3.7 Results of Validity Analysis

KMO and Bartlett tests		
KMO sampling appropriateness measure		0.924
Bartlett sphericity test	Approximate chi-square	2657.279
	df	300
	Sig.	<.001

According to the statistical results, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy for the dataset was 0.924, substantially exceeding the 0.90 threshold and falling into the "excellent" range. This indicates exceptional sampling adequacy and substantial common variance among the measurement items. Concurrently, Bartlett's test of sphericity yielded an approximate Chi-square value of 2,657.279 with 300 degrees of freedom ($df = 300$) and a significance level of $p < 0$.

001(Sig.< 0.001). Achieving statistical significance, these results reject the null hypothesis of variable independence, confirming significant inter-variable correlations and establishing that the dataset is highly suitable for factor analysis.

3.6 Data Collection

This study primarily employed a quantitative online questionnaire survey for empirical data collection, targeting active Shopee platform users residing in the Bangkok metropolitan area, Thailand. The questionnaire was administered using a combination of convenience and snowball sampling, leveraging local social media communities (such as Facebook shopping groups) and instant messaging networks (such as LINE groups) in Bangkok. A total of 220 questionnaires were distributed across online channels. To ensure data integrity and quality, strict data cleaning and screening procedures were conducted prior to data entry. Consequently, 12 invalid questionnaires—exhibiting abnormally short completion times (less than 60 seconds) or unengaged response patterns (e.g., straight-lining where all responses were identical)—were excluded. Ultimately, 208 valid questionnaires were retained (N = 208), yielding an effective response rate of 94.5%. Preliminary evaluation confirmed that the final sample size satisfied the baseline requirements for multivariate statistical analysis.

3.7 Data Analysis

This study primarily utilized statistical analysis software to process and analyze the collected valid data. The data analysis strategy was systematically executed in three sequential steps:

First, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to examine the distribution of sample demographic characteristics and establish the respondent profile.

Second, reliability and validity testing was performed to evaluate the measurement instrument. Specifically, Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) was employed to assess internal consistency reliability, while the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity were conducted to evaluate construct validity, thereby ensuring the precision, stability, and integrity of the measurement scales.

Third, Pearson correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis were executed to test the proposed research hypotheses and investigate the underlying empirical relationships among the core latent variables (review quantity, review valence, review emotional content, review recency, and purchase decisions).

Chapter 4 Findings and Discussion

4.1 Findings

4.1.1 Introduction

To validate the proposed theoretical model and research hypotheses, this study performed systematic statistical processing on the collected valid questionnaire dataset ($N = 208$). Utilizing statistical software and adhering to a progressive logical framework, moving from preliminary observation to rigorous empirical testing, the research sequentially employed three quantitative analytical techniques: descriptive statistical analysis, Pearson correlation analysis, and multiple linear regression analysis.

First, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to summarize the sample data. Utilizing metrics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, this procedure systematically presented the demographic distribution of the sample alongside the central tendencies and dispersion characteristics of each variable. This step provided a comprehensive understanding of the sample's structural profile while evaluating data distributional properties and normality, thereby establishing a solid foundation for subsequent inferential statistics.

Second, Pearson correlation analysis was applied to preliminarily explore the bivariate relationships among the latent constructs. This study utilized the correlation matrix to examine whether statistically significant linear associations existed among the four independent variables (review quantity, review valence, review emotional content, and review recency) and the dependent variable (purchase decision), as well as the magnitude and direction of these relationships. Beyond offering initial empirical alignment with the research hypotheses, correlation analysis played a critical role in identifying potential severe multicollinearity issues among variables, thereby safeguarding the stability and validity of the subsequent regression model.

Finally, multiple linear regression analysis served as the primary hypothesis-testing method. As a robust multivariate statistical technique, it simultaneously evaluated the relative predictive power and combined effects of the independent variables on consumer purchase decisions. By evaluating the model's goodness-of-fit (R^2), overall significance (F-statistic), and standardized regression coefficients (β), this study quantified the direction and magnitude of each review dimension's influence on consumer purchase decisions, thereby rigorously testing research hypotheses H1 through H4 and elucidating the underlying empirical relationships embedded within the theoretical model.

4.1.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 4.1 Demographic Analysis Results

Entries	Categories	Quantity	Percentage
Gender	Male	92	44.2
	female	116	55.8
Age	Under 18	8	3.8
	18-24 years old	56	26.9
	25-34 years old	69	33.2
	35-44 years old	55	26.4
	45-54 years old	12	5.8
	55 years old and above	8	3.8
Highest educational attainment:	High school and below	4	1.9
	College	131	63
	Undergraduate	9	4.3
	Master's degree or above	64	30.8
Personal average monthly income	10,000-30,000 baht	55	26.4
	30,000-50,000 baht	65	31.3
	50,000-70,000 baht	63	30.3
	more than 70,000 baht	15	7.2
	unwilling to disclose	10	4.8
Career	Student	14	6.7
	Full-time work	118	56.7
	Part-time/freelance	46	22.1
	unemployed/retired	20	9.6
	Others	10	4.8
Total		208	100

A total of 208 valid questionnaires were analyzed in this study (N = 208). The frequency and percentage distributions of the demographic variables within the sample are presented in Table 4.1.

Regarding gender distribution, female respondents accounted for a slightly higher proportion at 55.8% (n = 116), while male respondents comprised 44.2% (n = 92), reflecting a relatively balanced gender composition.

In terms of age structure, the sample was predominantly concentrated among young and middle-aged cohorts. Respondents aged 25–34 constituted the largest

group at 33.2% (n = 69), followed by those aged 18–24 at 26.9% (n = 56) and 35–44 at 26.4% (n = 55). Combined, these three age groups represented over 85% of total respondents, demonstrating that the sample primarily comprised economically active and vibrant consumer segments.

Concerning educational attainment, respondents generally exhibited a high level of education. Overall, 63.0% of respondents held a bachelor's degree, while 30.8% held a master's degree or higher (cumulatively accounting for 93.8%), indicating a well-educated sample profile.

Regarding personal monthly income (in Thai Baht, THB), the sample displayed a normal-like distribution characterized by a higher concentration in middle-income brackets. The largest group reported a monthly income of 30,000–50,000 THB (31.3%), followed by 50,000–70,000 THB (30.3%) and 10,000–30,000 THB (26.4%).

Finally, with respect to career, over half of the respondents were full-time employees (56.7%), followed by part-time workers or freelancers (22.1%), confirming that a substantial majority of respondents possessed stable income sources.

Synthesizing these profile characteristics, the sample was predominantly composed of young and middle-aged, highly educated professionals (59.6% aged 25–44 and 93.8% holding a bachelor's degree or higher). According to the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), individuals with higher education and cognitive capacity possess elevated motivation and ability to process information. Consequently, when evaluating products on Shopee, these consumers are more inclined to process information via the central route rather than relying solely on peripheral cues (such as review quantity). That is, they tend to systematically evaluate argument quality and fine-grained emotional expressions embedded within review texts. This behavioral inclination renders the sample exceptionally well-suited for empirically testing the influence of review emotional content on consumer purchase decisions.

4.1.3 Correlation Analysis

Table 4.2 Correlation Analysis Results

	Review Quantity	Review Valence	Review Recency	Review Emotional Content	Purchase Decision
Review Quantity	1				
Review Valence	0.778 * * *	1			
Review Recency	0.725 * * *	0.784 * * *	1		
Review Emotional Content	0.707 * * *	0.751 * * *	0.772 * * *	1	
Purchase Decision	0.754 * * *	0.784 * * *	0.772 * * *	0.744 * * *	1

This study employed Pearson correlation analysis to examine the bivariate relationships among the core variables, with the statistical results presented in Table 4.2.

The empirical findings demonstrate that all four dimensions of Shopee user reviews exhibit statistically significant positive correlations with consumer purchase decisions ($p < 0.001$):

Review valence displayed the strongest correlation with consumer purchase decisions ($r = 0.784$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that aggregated star ratings and positive evaluation propensity exert the most dominant linear association with purchasing choices.

Review recency demonstrated a strong positive correlation with purchase decisions ($r = 0.772$, $p < 0.001$), underscoring temporal timeliness as another critical determinant.

Review quantity exhibited a substantial positive correlation with purchase decisions ($r = 0.754$, $p < 0.001$).

Review emotional content also yielded a robust positive correlation with purchase decisions ($r = 0.744$, $p < 0.001$).

In summary, the correlation coefficients between all four independent variables and the dependent variable exceeded the 0.70 threshold ($r > 0.70$, $p < 0.001$), indicating strong positive linear associations among the latent constructs. These

results provide preliminary empirical support for research hypotheses H1 through H4 and establish a solid data foundation for subsequent multiple regression analysis.

4.1.4 Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 4.3 Regression Analysis Results

	Unstandardi zed coefficients	Standard error	Standardized coefficient Beta	t	Significance	VIF
(Constant)	0.152	0.201		0.758	0.45	
Review Quantity	0.245	0.067	0.233	3.676	<.001	2.882
Review Valence	0.29	0.077	0.268	3.753	<.001	3.649
Review Recency	0.25	0.068	0.252	3.673	<.001	3.366
Review Emotional Content	0.179	0.063	0.183	2.847	0.005	2.972
R ²				0.717		
Adjusted R ²				0.711		
F				128.355		
DW				1.525		
H1				Support		
H2				Support		
H3				Support		
H4				Support		

To further investigate the specific extent to which each dimension of Shopee user reviews influences consumer purchase decisions, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted, with purchase decision as the dependent variable and review quantity, review valence, review recency, and review emotional content as independent variables. The analytical results are summarized in Table 4.3.

The regression model yielded an R² value of 0.717 and an adjusted R² of 0.711, indicating that the four independent variables collectively account for 71.7% of the total variance in the dependent variable (purchase decision), demonstrating strong

goodness-of-fit. The F-statistic was 128.355 ($p < 0.001$), signifying that the overall regression equation is statistically significant. The Durbin-Watson statistic was 1.525, falling within the recommended acceptable range of 1.5 to 2.5, which confirms the absence of autocorrelation (serial correlation) in the sample data.

The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for all independent variables ranged between 2.882 and 3.649, remaining well below the standard critical threshold of 5.0. This confirms that the model is free from severe multicollinearity, thereby establishing the statistical reliability of the regression outputs.

Among the predictors, review valence exerted the strongest positive influence on consumer purchase decisions ($\beta = 0.268$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that Shopee consumers attach the highest importance to aggregated star ratings and positive evaluation propensity. Review recency ranked second ($\beta = 0.252$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the timeliness and freshness of reviews exert a substantial positive influence on decision-making. Review quantity also demonstrated a statistically significant positive influence ($\beta = 0.233$, $p < 0.001$). Similarly, review emotional content exhibited a statistically significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.183$, $p = 0.005$), though its standardized coefficient was relatively lower in magnitude compared to the other three dimensions.

In summary, all four research hypotheses (H1, H2, H3, and H4) received robust empirical support, confirming that the quantity, valence, recency, and emotional content of Shopee user reviews each significantly and positively influence consumer purchase decisions.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Review quantity has a significant positive influence on consumers' purchasing decisions

Empirical results suggest that review quantity is an important external heuristic cue that triggers the purchase decisions of Shopee consumers. Validation of the social proof effect: A substantial review volume conveys signals of "high market acceptance" and "low transaction risk" to consumers. In an e-commerce environment where physical product inspection is impossible, consumers tend to equate "a large volume of buyers" with "product reliability". Attention threshold: review quantity often functions as the initial screening threshold for consumers deciding whether to click through from search results to product detail pages. The empirical findings demonstrate that the accumulation of reviews significantly reduces consumers' perceived uncertainty, thereby positively driving purchase decisions. Although significant, its standardized effect size is lower than those of review valence and

review recency. This indicates that the sample population of this study (predominantly well-educated middle-class consumers) possesses strong capacity for rational evaluation—while they value popularity, they do not follow trends blindly. Furthermore, being aware of potential review manipulation and artificial sales volume inflation, they recognize that a high review quantity alone is not a decisive determinant of their purchase decisions.

4.2.2 Review valence has a significant positive influence on consumers' purchasing decisions

For Shopee users, high review valence—operationalized via elevated average star ratings—serves as the most intuitive and cognitive-resource-efficient proxy for product quality. The dominant standardized regression coefficient ($\beta = 0.268$) indicates that consumers exhibit pronounced risk aversion toward low ratings. Once a product's average rating falls below an expected threshold (e.g., 4.5 stars), consumer purchase decisions decline significantly regardless of other contextual conditions. Within the Thai e-commerce market, high review valence signals not only superior product quality but also a comprehensive service ecosystem encompassing rapid logistics fulfillment and responsive customer service. For time-sensitive working consumers, evaluating review valence represents the fastest heuristic processing route for executing initial consideration set filtering decisions. These findings highlight the pivotal role of aggregate word-of-mouth in purchase conversion and confirm that intrinsic product quality remains the foundational source of competitive advantage in e-commerce.

4.2.3 Review emotional content has a significant positive influence on consumers' purchasing decisions

Although review emotional content exerts a statistically significant positive influence on consumer purchase decisions ($\beta = 0.183$, $p = 0.005$), its effect magnitude is the lowest among the four review dimensions. This finding reveals a sequential information processing pattern among consumers: they typically evaluate review valence (star ratings) first as an initial filter, assess review recency next to verify temporal validity, and finally expend cognitive effort to process review emotional content embedded within textual feedback. Grounded in the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), reading and systematically analyzing detailed review text represents central-route processing, which demands substantial cognitive resources. In fast-paced mobile e-commerce environments like the Shopee application, consumers are more inclined to rely on review valence as a low-effort peripheral cue. Nevertheless, the statistical significance ($p = 0.005$) confirms that when review valence and review

recency are comparable across alternative choices, high-quality, emotionally authentic textual feedback containing vivid experiential details serves as a pivotal tipping point to dispel final purchasing hesitation.

4.2.4 Review recency has a significant positive influence on consumers' purchasing decisions

Review recency emerged as the second most influential factor driving consumer purchase decisions ($\beta = 0.252$, $p < 0.001$), second only to review valence. The empirical regression outputs demonstrate that Shopee consumers attach substantial importance to the real-time timeliness of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) information. Because product batch quality and seller logistics performance frequently fluctuate over time in e-commerce environments, positive reviews posted six months prior fail to accurately represent a seller's current service reliability. Consequently, recent reviews function as a dynamic, real-time diagnostic indicator reflecting merchants' present operational status. Consumers demonstrate heightened sensitivity to review recency when evaluating fast-iterating product categories, such as consumer electronics and personal care products. Consumers generally perceive temporally distant reviews as obsolete or less diagnostic, whereas recent, consecutive organic evaluations possess significantly higher reference value. The empirical findings suggest that sustaining a continuous stream of recent user reviews is critical for driving purchase decision conversions on e-commerce platforms.

Chapter 5 Conclusions and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusions

5.1.1 Review quantity exerts a significant positive social proof effect on purchase decisions.

Empirical findings demonstrate that user review quantity exerts a significant, independent positive influence on consumer purchase decisions on the Shopee platform, thereby achieving the research objective of examining the social proof mechanism of review quantity.

The conclusions confirm that under conditions of information asymmetry and inherent uncertainty within the online shopping environment, the volume of online reviews functions as a powerful social proof signal. When confronted with abundant review information, consumers actively activate cognitive reliance on the "wisdom of crowds," presuming that choices made by the majority entail lower trial-and-error costs. This mechanism effectively mitigates consumers' perceived risk regarding online products. From the perspective of the peripheral route within the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), a high review density serves as an intuitive trust endorsement that bypasses complex textual reasoning, thereby rapidly accelerating the formation of consumer purchase decisions.

5.1.2 Review valence constitutes the primary heuristic screening pathway driving purchase decisions.

Empirical findings indicate that review valence exerts an exceptionally significant positive driving effect on consumer purchase decisions, with its path coefficient ranking highest among all independent variables, thereby achieving the research objective of delineating the heuristic screening pathway of review valence.

This conclusion robustly demonstrates that review valence—functioning as core structured data (e.g., average star ratings and positive review proportions)—serves as the most heavily relied-upon "low-cognitive-load heuristic cue" for consumers in high-frequency mobile online shopping contexts. As young and middle-aged working professionals in Bangkok, Thailand operate within fast-paced living and working environments, their time and cognitive resources during online shopping are often severely constrained. Highly condensed rating signals (e.g., 4.9/5.0 stars) enable consumers to adhere to the "principle of least effort," accomplishing preliminary alternative filtering and trust building in an instant without expending substantial mental effort on in-depth text evaluation. Ultimately, the magnitude of review valence

directly dictates whether a product successfully enters the consumer's final consideration set.

5.1.3 Review emotional content profoundly reshapes purchase decisions via the central route.

Empirical findings demonstrate that review emotional content exerts a significant positive influence on purchase decisions; however, its standardized path coefficient ranks lowest among the four dimensions, thereby fulfilling the research objective of analyzing the affect infusion pathway of review emotional content.

Grounded in the Affect Infusion Model (AIM), this conclusion elucidates the mechanism through which unstructured, long textual reviews reshape consumers' deep psychological processing. When consumers move beyond initial rating screenings and enter the "substantive processing" stage of textual evaluation, the fine-grained emotional content embedded within review texts (e.g., joy, surprise, anger, and disappointment) deeply permeates consumers' cognitive apparatus via the central route of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM). Reviewers' authentic and vivid emotional experiences strongly evoke consumers' "psychological simulation" and "emotional resonance" enabling consumers to mentally pre-experience product usage scenarios. Although its overall magnitude of influence recedes to the fourth rank owing to cognitive resource constraints, it continues to play an irreplaceable central processing role in establishing high-quality trust and profoundly reshaping purchase decisions.

5.1.4 Review recency serves as a real-time validity cue that provides immediate decision-making guidance.

Empirical findings indicate that review recency exerts a significant and crucial positive influence on purchase decisions, with its magnitude of influence ranking second only to review valence, thereby fulfilling the research objective of elucidating the real-time validity mechanism of review recency.

This conclusion reveals the catalytic effect of review posting time (recency) functioning as a dynamic, real-time social proof cue on final purchase choices. Recently posted reviews (e.g., within hours or days) convey real-time reassurance to consumers concerning "stable current product quality" and "active ongoing store operations". Such highly time-sensitive information effectively overcomes consumer purchase procrastination and attenuates defensive mechanisms stemming from concerns about recent product quality degradation or unresponsive after-sales support. The empirical results underscore that within a fast-paced digital ecosystem, recently generated electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) exerts a more immediate and potent

traction on purchase behavior than historically accumulated eWOM.

5.2 Recommendation

5.2.1 Suggestions for improvements to the Shopee Platform

Based on data: Valence and recency have the highest weights. Optimize the comment ranking algorithm by introducing a "time-weighted" mechanism. At present, the default sorting of some products may tend to show comments with a high number of likes but long ago. Given the high influence of "recency", Shopee is advised to adjust its algorithm to give higher weight to "reviews within the last 30 days". A prominent tag of "Verified Recent Purchase" could be added to the comment section to help consumers quickly locate the latest feedback and reduce their decision-making costs. The platform can send background alerts to merchants for products that haven't received new reviews for a long time, indicating that their conversion rate may have declined due to "insufficient review recency", and recommend corresponding promotional tools (such as Flash Sale) to activate the new review stream. Use AI to extract review tags to make up for the lack of attention to the "content". The data shows that the influence of "comment content" is relatively weak, possibly because the cost of reading long texts is too high. It is suggested that Shopee introduce natural language processing (NLP) technology to automatically capture high-frequency keywords (such as "fast shipping", "soft material", "genuine") from high-score reviews and generate semantic tags at the top. This takes advantage of the informational value of the "content" and conforms to users' habit of quick browsing (valence-oriented). Since "value" is the primary productive force, the platform should establish a more sophisticated mechanism to block malicious negative reviews. For long-term merchants with good credit, if an exceptionally low score occurs suddenly, the platform should provide a more convenient complaint channel to prevent a single malicious negative review from having a devastating influence on the overall value of the merchant.

5.2.2 Operational Suggestions for Shopee Merchants

Data-based: Quantity is the foundation, but effectiveness is the key. Implement a "defensive" quality management strategy. Businesses should understand that "no bad reviews" is more important than "getting good reviews". Strict QC (Quality Control) should be carried out before shipping. Establish an "immediate response" after-sales mechanism to resolve issues through Chat before the buyer gives a low score. Use the Service Recovery Paradox to turn potential negative reviews into high positive ones. Businesses can't rest on their laurels. Even if a bestseller has tens of thousands of

historical reviews, the conversion rate will decline if there are no new reviews in the last week. Periodic promotions: Ensure that orders continue to be generated, thereby ensuring that "fresh" reviews continue to be produced.

Follow-up incentives: Regularly contact existing customers via CRM tools, offer coupons to invite them to make "additional reviews" of previous purchases, and refresh the timestamp of the reviews. Although the content weight is low, it is the decisive point to differentiate homogeneous products. Include a "Review Guide" in the package. Instead of just asking for a "five-star" rating, guide the user to "take a picture of the usage scenario" or "describe the feel".

5.2.3 Educational advice for consumers

Develop "multi-dimensional" information discrimination skills. Consumers should avoid falling into the trap of "high score only" when shopping. It is recommended that while looking at the "total score (potency)", use filters to look at "latest reviews (recency)" and "reviews with images (content)". Especially for high unit price products, focus on the specific content of medium and negative reviews (1-3 stars), as these often contain more authentic information about product defects than the uniform five-star reviews.

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Appendix

Hello! Your participation will help us gain a deeper understanding of the trust mechanism in the online shopping environment. The results of this study are expected to provide theoretical basis and practical guidance¹ for the vast number of sellers on Shopee to optimize review management strategies and for platform operators to improve functions.

We need you to provide some basic demographic information. This information will be strictly confidential and used only for overall statistical analysis, such as comparing differences between different groups.

1. Your gender:

- ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. Your age:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Under 18 | ☐ 18-24 years old |
| ☐ 25-34 years old | ☐ 35-44 years old |
| ☐ 45-54 years old | ☐ 55 years old and above |

3. Your highest educational attainment:

- ☐ High school and below ☐ College ☐ Undergraduate ☐ Master's degree or above

4. Your personal average monthly income:

- ☐ [10000-30000baht]
☐ [30000-50000baht]
☐ [50000-70000baht]
☐ [more than 70, 000baht]
☐ unwilling to disclose

5. Your career status:

- ☐ Student
☐ Full-time work
☐ Part-time/freelance
☐ unemployed/retired
☐ Others

Different types of review information may have an influence on you during your online shopping decision-making process. Please rate how much you agree with the following statements based on your shopping experience on Shopee.

6. When I see a product with a lot of reviews, I feel it's "safer" to buy it.

1. Completely disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Completely agree

7. On Shopee, review quantity is an important clue for me to determine whether a product is "popular" or "highly popular".

1. Completely disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Completely agree

8. If the two products are similar in other respects, I tend to choose the one with more reviews.

1. Completely disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Completely agree

9. The higher review quantity, the more confident I feel about the product's quality.

1. Completely disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Completely agree

10. I believe the more reviews a product has, the more it has been tested by people, and thus is trustworthy.

1. Completely disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Completely agree

11. Average star ratings (e. g. 4. 8 stars vs. 3. 5 stars) are my primary basis for quickly judging the "overall quality" of a product.

1. Completely disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Completely agree

12. When browsing the list, I mainly rely on high star ratings to help me filter and narrow down the "consideration collection" (that is, products worth my further review).

1. Completely disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Completely agree

13. I believe that the average star rating of a product accurately reflects the real experience of "the majority of buyers".

1. Completely disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Completely agree

14. If a product's rating falls below my expectation (for example, below 4. 0), I usually ignore it outright.

1. Completely disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Completely agree

15. Seeing high ratings (such as a perfect 5-star score) effectively alleviates my concerns about the received item not matching expectations.

1. Completely disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Completely agree

16. For me, comments posted recently (say within a month) are more valuable than old comments from months ago.

1. Completely disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Completely agree

17. I tend to look at the latest reviews because they best reflect the "current" status of products and services (such as quality or shipping speed).

1. Completely disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Completely agree

18. If the reviews of a product were all posted a long time ago (say, more than three months), I would be skeptical about its "present" quality.

1. Completely disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Completely agree

19. I specifically filter or sort by "Most Recent" to check the latest buyer feedback.

1. Completely disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Completely agree

20. I believe reviews older than six months are already "outdated" and shouldn't be used as a basis for my current decision.

1. Completely disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Completely agree

21. When evaluating a product, I tend to read the detailed review text carefully rather than just the star rating.

1. Completely disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Completely agree

22. Comments filled with positive emotions (such as "surprise", "perfection", "love") move me more than those that merely state facts.

1. Completely disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Completely agree

23. Reading passionate positive reviews from others will help me build up a "positive imagination" of the product in my mind.

1. Completely disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Completely agree

24. The genuine emotions expressed by the commenter in the text are an important factor influencing my final decision.

1. Completely disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Completely agree

25. Seeing others express excitement about using the product in their reviews sparks my desire to own it too.

1. Completely disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Completely agree

Please recall the most recent experience on Shopee when you evaluated a certain product by carefully reading the reviews.

After you have read the review, rate the following statements based on how you felt at that time:

26. I'm likely to buy this product.

1. Completely disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Completely agree

27. I would recommend this product to my friends.

1. Completely disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Completely agree

28. If necessary, I would give priority to this product.

1. Completely disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Completely agree

29. Taking all the information into account, purchasing this product is a wise decision.

1. Completely disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Completely agree

30. I have a strong desire to buy this product.

1. Completely disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Completely agree

You have completed all the questions. Thank you very much for your valuable time and honest sharing!

Your data will be of great help to our research.

