

## Online Shopping Behavior: The Influence of Online Reviews on Consumer Purchasing Decisions

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores how online reviews influence consumer purchasing decisions on popular e-commerce platforms such as Google, Shopee, Lazada, and TikTok Shop.

The main purpose of the research is to understand how factors like review quantity, and tone affect consumer purchasing decisions. A quantitative approach was used, where 200 online shoppers in Malaysia were surveyed through a structured questionnaire. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and regression analysis to determine the strength of the relationship between online reviews and consumer decisions. Our findings indicate that trustworthy and positive reviews strongly encourage consumers to make purchases, while negative or unclear reviews cause them to hesitate or seek other options. The study concludes that online reviews are an important factor in shaping consumer confidence and purchase behavior. It is suggested that online sellers and platforms focus on encouraging honest reviews and responding to feedback to build stronger relationships and loyalty among customers.

**Keywords:** Consumer Behavior; E-Commerce; Online Reviews; Purchasing Decisions; Shopee; TikTok Shop; Trust.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In today's digital era, online shopping has become a routine activity for millions of consumers worldwide. The convenience, accessibility, and variety offered by e-commerce platforms such as Shopee, Lazada, TikTok Shop, and Google Shopping have fundamentally changed how people make purchasing decisions. Unlike traditional shopping, where consumers can physically inspect products, online shoppers rely heavily on the experiences and feedback of previous buyers to guide their choices. Online reviews is presented as star ratings, written comments, or short videos, serve as a major source of information that shapes consumer perceptions of quality, trustworthiness, and satisfaction (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2020). These reviews help consumers reduce uncertainty and make more informed decisions in a competitive digital environment filled with countless product options.

As the e-commerce landscape becomes increasingly competitive, online reviews have gained significant importance as a trusted decision-making tool. Studies have shown that most online consumers consult reviews before making a purchase, with over 90% of shoppers stating that online reviews influence their buying decisions (Statista, 2023). Positive feedback tends to increase consumer confidence and sales performance, while negative reviews can significantly reduce purchase intentions (Filieri et al., 2021). These dynamic highlights the growing role of peer-generated content in shaping consumer behavior, often surpassing traditional advertising or brand messaging in credibility. Consumers perceive reviews as authentic expressions of real experiences, making them a powerful form of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) communication (Zhang & Lin, 2022).

In recent years, the rise of social commerce platforms such as TikTok Shop has added a new layer to this phenomenon. Instead of relying solely on text-based reviews, consumers now engage with interactive and visual feedback through short videos that showcase real product experiences. These video reviews are perceived as more genuine, relatable, and emotionally engaging (Sun et al., 2023). This trend are often referred to as "shoppertainment" where blends entertainment with e-commerce and has been shown to increase engagement and purchase intent more effectively than static online reviews. Such innovations demonstrate how online reviews have evolved from simple product evaluations into persuasive tools that influence not only what people buy but also how they experience shopping online.

Despite a growing body of research on online consumer behavior, most studies have been conducted in Western contexts, leaving a research gap in understanding how Southeast Asian consumers, particularly Malaysians, perceive and respond to online reviews. Malaysia's e-commerce market has expanded rapidly, with Shopee and Lazada emerging as leading platforms (MCMC, 2023). However, there is limited understanding of how Malaysian consumers interpret the credibility of online reviews, especially across multiple platforms and different formats such as written and video reviews (Tan et al., 2021). Moreover, cultural factors such as collectivism and trust orientation may influence how Malaysian consumers evaluate peer feedback compared to those in Western societies (Rahman & Isa, 2022).

The motivation for this study stems from the increasing dependence on online reviews in environments where consumers cannot physically evaluate products. Online shopping requires a high degree of trust, and reviews play a central role in establishing that trust (Filieri & McLeay, 2020). However, issues such as fake reviews, paid endorsements, and biased content have made consumers more cautious when interpreting online feedback (Luca & Zervas, 2023). Understanding what drives consumer trust in online reviews is

therefore critical for businesses and policymakers seeking to ensure fairness and transparency in the digital marketplace. For consumers, identifying credible reviews helps prevent misinformation and improves satisfaction with their purchases.

The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of online reviews from different platforms. Specifically, Google, Shopee, Lazada, and TikTok Shop on consumer purchasing decisions. It aims to identify which characteristics of reviews, such as credibility, tone, quantity, and format, most strongly affect consumer trust and purchase intention. This study also compares traditional text-based reviews with newer, video-based reviews to determine which format exerts a greater influence on decision-making. By addressing these objectives, this research seeks to fill existing gaps in the literature and provide a more comprehensive understanding of how consumers process information from diverse online review sources.

This study is significant because it contributes both academically and practically. Academically, it expands consumer behaviour theories by integrating newer dimensions of review content, such as visual and social engagement, into traditional models of online trust formation. Practically, it provides insights for businesses and marketers on how to manage online feedback more effectively, improve customer engagement, and foster brand credibility. The findings can help companies design better marketing strategies that emphasize authenticity, transparency, and consumer interaction.

The novelty of this study lies in its multi-platform and multi-format approach. Unlike previous research that often focused on a single e-commerce site or review type, this study compares reviews from several platforms while considering both textual and video-based feedback. Furthermore, it contextualizes the findings within Malaysia's e-commerce market, offering culturally relevant insights that reflect regional shopping behaviours. The inclusion of video reviews as a major analytical dimension is particularly innovative, as this form of content continues to reshape how consumers make online purchasing decisions.

In summary, this research has three main objectives: (1) to determine how online reviews influence consumer purchasing decisions, (2) to compare the effects of text-based and video-based reviews on consumer trust, and (3) to analyse how review credibility and platform characteristics affect purchase intention. The study's results are expected to provide valuable insights into the psychological and social mechanisms underlying online consumer behaviour, contributing to both theoretical advancement and practical business strategies. Ultimately, the study underscores the increasing power of online reviews in shaping consumer choices in Malaysia's fast-growing digital economy.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Review Credibility**

Review credibility refers to the extent to which consumers trust that a review is reliable, truthful, and not fake. (Singh et al., 2023) noted that credible reviews are usually written by real consumers and provide an accurate explanation of both strengths and weaknesses. Past study show that consumers are more likely to trust reviews that based on real experiences (Lee et al., 2023). This review credibility is important because it affects how consumers understand the information and whether they rely on reviews when making a decision. In addition, (Pandey et al., 2021) emphasized that consumers are less likely to make a purchase when reviews are fake, paid reviews or reviews that sound too positive. Past studies show that, consumers often examine the wording, tone, and details of a review to decide whether it is trustworthy before making a decision (Kee

et al., 2024). Thus, review credibility plays a very important in shaping consumer trust because it affects whether consumers decide to buy a product or not.

### **Review Usefulness**

(Dilip et al., 2021) highlighted that review usefulness refers to the how far the consumers perceive an online review as helpful, informative, and relevant to their decision-making process. (Pandey et al., 2021) notified that useful reviews provide helpful information such as product features, performance detail, comparisons, real consumers experiences and helping consumers reduce uncertainty when purchasing online. It's tended to be more useful and enhance confidents and consumers' willingness to rely on feedback. Past study shows that when consumers find that the information helpful, it increases their satisfaction and confidence when purchasing online (Lew et al., 2025). Besides, (Dilip et al., 2021) noted that consumer behavior research found that helpful and relevant information enhances consumers evaluation and influence them in decision making. Additionally, (Singh et al., 2023) further noted that review usefulness is more strengthened when the information is not fake and provides both positive and negative reviews. It's making the review appear more reliable and trustworthy. Therefore, review usefulness plays an important role to enhance consumers knowledge, reduces perceived risk, and strengthening consumers confident in purchasing online (Kee et al., 2024).

### **Review Quality**

According to (Filiari et al., 2021) quality of a review shows how clear, detailed and useful the information is. (Mudambi & Schuff, 2020) noted that high quality reviews usually include specific product details, personal consumer experiences, comparisons, and explanations about the product performance. High quality and detailed reviews help consumers understand the product better, reduce risk, and strengthen their decision to make a purchase (Ismagilova et al., 2022). On the other hand, low quality reviews that are unclear or too short do not help consumers make decisions. Studies found that, review quality also affects consumer satisfaction because clear reviews create more accurate expectations about the product (Zhang et al., 2023). High quality reviews influence consumer trust and help consumers decide to buy on online platforms. Therefore, high quality reviews are essential because its build consumer trust, provide clear information, and influence purchasing decisions (Filiari et al., 2021).

### **Review Attitude**

According to (Filiari et al., 2021) review attitude reflects to the consumers general feelings and perceptions toward online reviews whether they perceive the review as positive, trustworthy, relevant, or credible. When consumers show positive attitude towards a review, they are more likely to rely on those review when making purchase decisions further supported by (Cheung et al., 2020). Studies on consumers expectations show that positive perceptions toward information sources that can lead to stronger consumer engagement and better acceptance of the information provided (Ismagilova et al., 2021). Research on customer loyalty also show that positive attitudes toward information that related to brand help shape consumer responses and behavioral intentions (Lim et al., 2021). Therefore, when consumers view a review as informative, reliable, and beneficial, they will build a positive attitude which can strengthens the influence of reviews on their buying purchasing decision (Park & Lee, 2023). Thus, review attitude is a psychology factor that influence how the consumers making purchasing decision, interpret, and use the online review information.

### **Review Trust**

(Azis et al., 2025) highlighted that review trust describes how much consumers believe that online review is reliable, credible, and accurate. Supporting this, (Anjaya & Dwita, 2025) found that trust is essential in online shopping context because they cannot physically inspect the products, so they need to rely on those online reviews. Research shows that when consumers trust information sources, it will increase their satisfaction and strengthens their decision-making confidence on purchasing the product that they want (Rahmawati et al., 2025). Similarly, studies on customer loyalty show that trusted feedback reviews positively affect the consumer perceptions and behavior (Singh et al., 2023). Also, (Amuntaza & Triana, 2025) found that consumers tend to trust more on online reviews that appear reliable, authentic, and based on consumers real experience. Besides, review trust reduces consumers perceived risk and increases confident in the product. High trust in reviews significantly increases consumers' willingness to rely on online review that making factor of purchase intention.

### **Consumer Purchasing Decision**

Consumer purchase decision refers to the process on how the consumers evaluate, choose, and finally purchase a product by (Rachmiani et al., 2024). (Rahmawati et al., 2025) emphasized that online consumer often relies on several factors, such as product ratings, review quality, and reviewer credibility to decide whether the product meets their needs. (Rachmiani et al., 2024) highlighted that online reviews give a big impact on purchasing decisions because consumers perceive the product as trustworthy based on real experiences. (Kee at el., 2023) explain that purchase decision also affected by several factors like perceived risk, trust, and product expectations. Past studies show that, positive and credible reviews make consumers feel more confident in their choices, while negative or suspicious review may be distracting and lead them consider other options (Anjaya & Dwita, 2025). Consumers tend to rely more on online reviews when they cannot physically evaluate the product to strengthen their purchase decision. In simple terms, online reviews play an important role in guiding consumers on make better and more confident purchase decisions (Lew et al., 2025).

### **Hypotheses Development**

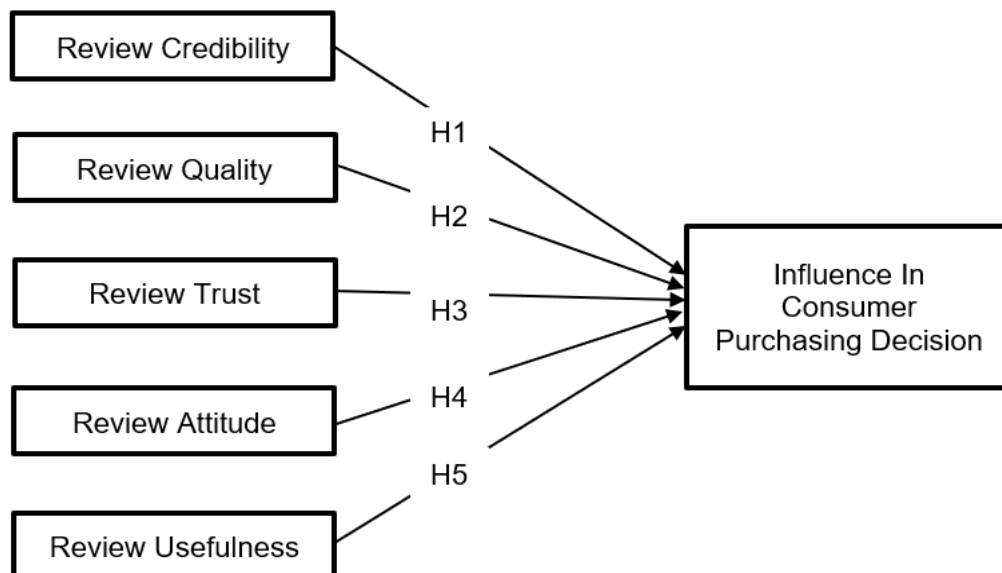
Previous studies demonstrate that online reviews affect consumers buying decisions in different ways, such as reviewer credibility, review usefulness, review quality, review attitude, and review trust. Review credibility builds consumers trust which is very important for online shoppers since they cannot physically touch and inspect the product. Review quality offers detailed information which reduces uncertainty and helps consumers make better decisions. These factors affect how consumers perceive a product and guide their purchasing choices. Based on the literature, the following hypothesis are proposed:

- H1: Review credibility has a positive influence on consumer purchasing decision.
- H2: Review usefulness has a positive influence on consumer purchasing decision.
- H3: Review quality has a positive influence on consumer purchasing decision.
- H4: Review attitude has a positive influence on consumer purchasing decision.
- H5: Review trust has a positive influence on consumer purchasing decision.

### Conceptual Framework

The study framework model is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Research Framework



### RESEARCH METHOD

According to Creswell 2014, research method serves as a strategic framework that provides a systematic procedure for data collection, data interpretation, and data analysis. Research methods are typically categorized as quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods. This specific study employed a quantitative approach to explore how online reviews influence consumer purchasing decisions. Quantitative research, also known as numerical research, is defined as a strategy that involves collecting and analyzing statistical data with the primary purpose of testing theories and explaining real-world phenomena. The necessary data was collected using a survey questionnaire distributed via Google Forms on different digital platforms, such as WhatsApp, Instagram, X (formerly known as Twitter) and Telegram. This method constituted a convenience survey, which allowed respondents to access and complete the form at any time and from any location. The use of an online survey technique offered several key benefits: it ensured privacy for participants, limited the risk of disease transmission associated with direct contact, and was lower in cost compared to traditional methods like face-to-face interviews and paper surveys. By utilizing a questionnaire, the research procedure achieved cost-effectiveness, efficient data collection, and time savings. The researchers dedicated significant effort to the design of the digital questionnaire to ensure the questions were clear and concise, the flow was logical, and the answering process was easier for respondents. Therefore, the use of this appropriate method ensured the overall effectiveness of the study.

### Sample and Procedure

The study used convenience sampling because the survey questionnaire was distributed through various online platforms. With convenience sampling, the survey respondents are chosen based on their accessibility and willingness to participate. This approach means the researchers selected the most convenient individuals or groups to include in the study. Typically, these are the people who are close by, can be contacted through social media, or are readily available to take part (Etikan & Alkassim, 2016). However, a

drawback of this sampling method is a high risk to generalizability, meaning the sample might not accurately represent the broader population. To help ensure the sample was diverse, it was important that the respondents represented a range of demographic backgrounds, including different gender, age and how often do respondents make a purchase online. Ultimately, 200 respondents from various age ranges participated in this survey. This sampling strategy is consistent with research investigating the factors that determine how online reviews influence consumer purchasing decisions.

For the data analysis, the researchers used IBM SPSS version 29 to evaluate the data gathered from the survey and reach the study's results. The study relied on both visualization and descriptive methods. The data visualization approach involves the graphical representation of data, such as using tables, charts, and graphs, to summarize large datasets and draw conclusions (Everitt et al., 2011). Based on the results, the study applied visualization analysis by designing tables to provide an overview of the complex databases and present the data in an easily accessible way. Descriptive statistics are the statistical processes used to summarize, organize, and examine the data. This method focuses on presenting the data in a manageable form, covering measures like the distribution of frequency. Descriptive analysis in this research was used to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents, identify respondents frequencies in buying products online, and detail their perceptions of online reviews. The final results were presented as frequencies in percentages to provide a clearer understanding of the categorical data.

### **Measure**

All items in this study, including those related to review rating, review quality and review credibility (see Appendix 1), are measured using a 5-point Likert scale. The scale ranges from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). This format enables respondents to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement, allowing for the measurement of their perceptions and attitudes. The items were self-developed based on customer experiences with online reviews that influence consumer purchasing behavior and pre-tested for clarity and relevance.

## **RESULTS**

**Table 1.** Summary of Respondent's Demography (*N*=200)

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	108	54.00
Male	92	46.00
<b>Age</b>		
17 – 23 years old	77	38.50
24 – 30 years old	53	26.50
31 – 37 years old	18	9.00
38 – 44 years old	9	4.50
45 years old and above	43	21.50
<b>Employment</b>		

Student	68	34.00
Full time employment	115	57.50
Unemployed	17	8.50
<b>Race</b>		
Malay	85	42.50
Chinese	55	27.50
Indian	60	30.00
<b>Purchasing Frequency</b>		
1 – 2 times	62	31.00
3 – 5 times	86	43.00
6 – 10 times	33	16.50
More than 10 times	19	9.50
<b>Category</b>		
Electronics	24	12.00
Fashion/Apparel/Make-up	105	52.50
Groceries	16	8.00
Home goods	38	19.00
Services/Travel	17	8.50
<b>Read Review Frequency</b>		
Always	92	46.00
Never	2	1.00
Often	49	24.50
Rarely	23	11.50
Sometimes	34	17.00

The demographic analysis indicates a strong concentration in the younger age brackets. The largest group of respondents fell between 17 and 23 years old, comprising 38.50% of the sample. This group was closely followed by respondents aged 24 to 30 years old, who accounted for 26.50%. The third-largest group consisted of respondents 45 years old and above, making up 21.50%. Regarding gender, the sample shows a slight majority of female respondents (54.00%), followed by male respondents (46.00%).

To further explore on the research topic regarding the influence of online reviews on customer purchasing decision, we ask several questions regarding respondents shopping behavior. The analysis of how often respondents make purchases reveals a

clear trend toward moderate buying habits. The largest segment, constituting 43.00% of the sample, reported making purchases 3 to 5 times. For category of products, Fashion/Apparel/Make-up completely dominates the purchasing landscape, accounting for over half of all responses with percentage 52.50%. This overwhelming preference suggests the study's focus or the typical behavior of the respondents is strongly linked to personal appearance and lifestyle products. The remaining four categories have significantly lower representation. For read review frequency, a large portion of the sample, 46.00%, stated they Always read a review before purchasing items online. An additional 24.50% reported doing so Often. This indicates that the survey captured a population that is very active in reading feedback by others customer before their purchases.

**Table 2.** Descriptive Analysis, Cronbach's Coefficients Alpha, And Zero-order Correlations for All Study Variables

<b>Variables</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Credibility	<b>.922</b>					
Usefulness	.536***	<b>.927</b>				
Quality	.533***	.719***	<b>.918</b>			
Attitude	.573***	.753***	.759***	<b>.918</b>		
Trust	.578***	.763***	.792***	.832***	<b>.899</b>	
Influence	.573***	.753***	.757***	.802***	.744***	<b>.930</b>
Number of Items	5	5	5	5	5	5
Mean	4.16	4.08	4.07	4.14	4.13	4.15
Standard Deviation	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.76	0.74	0.79

Note: N = 200; \*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001. The diagonal entries represent Cronbach's coefficient alpha.

Table 2 shows Cronbach's alpha is high, ranging between 0.899 (Trust) and 0.930 (Influence). All these values are well above the acceptable threshold, suggesting that all variables have good internal consistency and reliability. Besides reliability, the descriptive analysis shows that respondents rated all variables positively, with all Mean scores tightly clustered around 4.1 (on a likely 4 - or 5-point scale). We also found strong evidence of positive relationships across all measured constructs. All correlations among the six variables which is Credibility, Usefulness, Quality, Attitude, Trust, and Influence are positive and statistically significant. For instance, Trust has the strongest positive correlation with Attitude (0.832\*\*\*), followed closely by Trust with Quality (0.792\*\*\*). The strong correlations across the matrix confirm that these psychological factors are highly interconnected and mutually reinforcing in the context of the study.

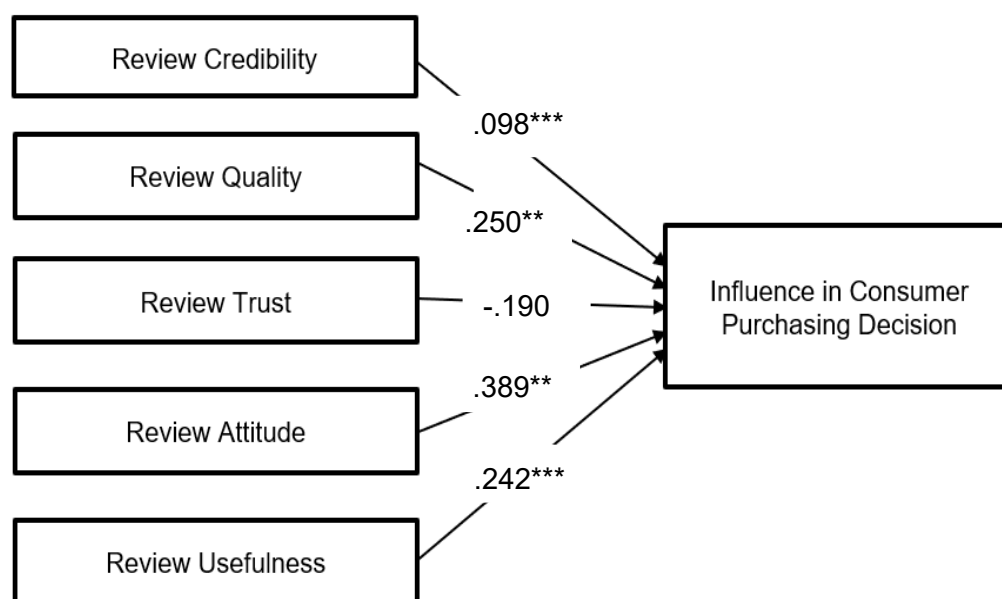
**Table 3.** Regression Analysis

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Influence Towards Customer Purchasing Decision</b>

1. Credibility	.098***
2. Usefulness	.242***
3. Quality	.250**
4. Attitude	.389***
5. Trust	-.190
$R^2$	.725
F value	102.531
Durbin-Watson Statistic	2.110

Note: N = 200; \*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

The regression analysis result are presented in Table 3, examining the effects of Credibility, Usefulness, Quality, Attitude and Trust that lead to Influence Customer Purchasing Decision. The model proved to be highly robust, with the five factors collectively explaining 72.5% ( $R^2 = 0.725$ ,  $F = 102.531$ ) of the variation in purchasing behavior. This indicates that these variables are powerful predictors of the customer's decision to purchase. The individual contributions of the variables reveal a clear hierarchy of influence. Attitude become the strongest positive predictor, ( $\beta = .389$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This signifies that the customer's overall positive feeling or disposition towards the online review is the most important factor driving their final purchasing decision supporting H4. Quality ( $\beta = .250$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and Usefulness ( $\beta = .242$ ,  $p < .001$ ) also exerted significant, strong positive influences, emphasizing that customers are highly motivated by content they perceive as high-quality and directly applicable to their needs supporting H2 and H5. Credibility had the smallest, though still statistically significant, positive impact ( $\beta = .098$ ,  $p < .001$ ) supporting H1. Moreover, the analysis shows an unexpected result for Trust. Trust showed a statistically significant negative influence on purchasing behavior ( $\beta = -.190$ ) which means H3 was not supported. Overall, 4 out of 5 hypothesized relationships were supported and only 1 was not supported, This counter-intuitive finding suggests that once the strong effects of Attitude, Quality, and Usefulness are accounted for, higher levels of general Trust in the review are associated with a decrease in the likelihood of making a purchase. This may imply that consumers use highly trustworthy reviews for comprehensive research rather than as a final prompt for an immediate transaction. Overall, the model confirms that customers' positive Attitude toward the review is crucial for their purchasing decisions.



**Figure 2:** Structural Model

## DISCUSSION

This study aims to examine the influence of online reviews on customer purchasing decisions in Malaysia. The findings are discussed in relation to the research objective, hypothesis, existing literature.

### The Influence of Credibility on Customer Purchasing Decision

This study shows that credibility (H1) has a positive and significant influence on customer purchasing decision. These result Review Credibility was found to have a statistically significant positive impact on purchasing behavior ( $\beta = .098^{***}$ ,  $p < .001$ ), supporting H1. Credibility reflects the extent to which a consumer believes a review is truthful, reliable, and based on authentic experiences. While it had the smallest relative impact among the supported variables, it remains a fundamental building block of trust. This is consistent with the result of previous studies conducted by Dewa (2018) concluded that Credibility has a significant effect on purchasing decisions. There is also a study conduct by Purwanto et al. (2023) shows that their research result can concluded that Credibility influenced significantly on the Purchasing Decision. Furthermore, some studies have reported on other aspects of online product reviews, including the impact of online reviews on product satisfaction (Changkit and Klaus, 2020), relative effects of review credibility, and review relevance on overall online product review impact (Mumuni et al., 2020), functions of reviewer's gender, reputation and emotion on the credibility of negative online product reviews (Craciun and Moore, 2019).

### The Influence of Review Quality on Purchasing Decisions

This study found that Review Quality has a significant positive influence on consumer purchasing behavior ( $\beta = .250^{**}$ ,  $p < .001$ ), providing strong support for H3. Review quality is defined by how clear, detailed, and specific the information is, often including personal experiences and performance evaluations. High-quality reviews help consumers understand products better and reduce the perceived risk of buying items they cannot physically inspect. These results align with research by Komala et al. (2024), which suggests that clear and detailed reviews create more accurate product

expectations, thereby increasing consumer satisfaction and guiding the final decision. Apart from that, this result also align with another research by Dilip et al. (2021) saying that perceived quality is played a role in influencing customer purchasing behavior to make sure customer have the purchasing intention. Pandey et al. (2021) research result regarding product quality also align with these hypotheses where good product quality will attract customer purchasing intention which lead to customer purchasing behavior.

### **The Influence of Review Usefulness on Purchasing Decisions**

The findings also supported H2, showing that Review Usefulness exerts a strong positive influence on purchasing decisions ( $\beta = .242^{***}$ ,  $p < .001$ ), Usefulness refers to how helpful and relevant a consumer perceives the information to be during their decision-making process. Useful reviews provide critical product features and comparisons that enhance a consumer's willingness to rely on feedback. This is consistent with studies by Alfikry et al. (2018), which emphasize that when consumers find information helpful, it directly increases their confidence and strengthens their final evaluation of the product. In addition, studies have considered broader online product information (OPI), comprising both online reviews and vendor-supplied product information (VSPI), and have reported on different attempts to understand the various ways in which OPI influences consumers. For example, Kang et al. 2023 showed that VSPI adoption affected online review adoption. In addition, research by Chen and Ku (2021) found a positive relationship between diversified online review websites as accelerators for online impulsive buying.

### **The Unexpected Role of Review Trust**

One of the most notable findings was that Review Trust showed a statistically significant negative influence on purchasing behavior ( $\beta = -.190$ ), meaning H5 was not supported. While trust is traditionally seen as a positive driver, this counter-intuitive result suggests that once the strong effects of quality, usefulness, and attitude are accounted for, high levels of general trust may lead consumers toward comprehensive research rather than an immediate transaction. This implies that Malaysian consumers might use highly "trustworthy" reviews as benchmarks for further comparison, potentially delaying the purchase to ensure they are making the best possible choice. Even though research by Guo et al. (2020) found that pleasant online customer reviews to lead to a higher purchase likelihood than unpleasant ones, trusting an online review is not enough to become a driven influence on customer purchasing behavior.

### **The Dominance of Consumer Attitude**

This study found that Review Attitude was a powerful predictor of purchasing behavior, providing strong support for H4. This indicates that the general psychological feeling or disposition a consumer has toward a review is a critical driver of their intent to buy. This result aligns with findings by Yo et al (2021), which highlight that positive perceptions of information sources lead to better acceptance and stronger behavioral intentions. In the context of Malaysia's growing "shoppertainment" trend, particularly on TikTok Shop, interactive and positive feedback likely fosters a more engaging attitude, which translates into direct purchase intent

## **CONCLUSION**

This research serves as an excellent primer on how online reviews can serve as a critical tool in the ever-changing Malaysian online shopping arena. Through analysis on Shopee, Lazada, and TikTok Shop, the research was able to find that while credibility, helpfulness, quality, and consumer attitude can indeed constitute a very significant 72.5% variable itself for purchase decisions, the bottom line in improving sales would lie in the critical importance of the technical component (detail and clarity) married with the

critical importance of the psychological component (disposition or "attitude") of the consumer in regard to the review itself. What can be found interesting here, in fact, in the negative correlation shown between general trust, that Malaysian consumers are prone perhaps to taking on an even more analytic disposition in viewing highly credible reviews, often times treating them almost as a point of departure in further comparisons. The implications of this study for practical applications are important for digital marketing professionals and online retailers. In this respect, in order to achieve a higher level of conversions, it is important for companies to focus on creating quality feedback and building a "positive community attitude" for their brands. In this respect, promoting shoppertainment content, especially on YouTube and TikTok Shop can certainly help close the divide between informational content and emotions. In addition, since consumers rely on reviews to address issues of untested quality due to an inability to inspect a product, sites should adopt a more rigorous filtering system for eliminating untrustworthy reviews that could degrade the usefulness of a feedback system.

In regard to future research, it is recommended that this study be conducted in a more diverse geographical area throughout Southeast Asia to see if there are cultural subtleties that affect the level of importance placed upon the value of review credibility versus format. Further research may also investigate the "trust paradox" concept introduced in this research to gain deeper insight into the relationship between trust and purchase hesitation. With the growing integration of the digital economy and the implementations of artificial intelligence and augmented reality into the purchasing experience, it will be necessary that this relationship between review content and recommendations become a part of the examining literature of consumer behavior.

#### **LIMITATION**

Although this research recognizes some limitations, which may influence the accuracy of the outcome, these include: First, the nature of the research being conducted using convenience sampling meant that the data was predominantly obtained from the young, urban, and members of Gen Z and Millennial generations, which may not be an accurate representation of buyer behavior among older Malaysians. Second, the research being conducted was more statistical in nature, meaning that it offered more statistical correlation outputs but less qualitative explanatory power in terms of why, for instance, "Trust" acted in a counter intuitive manner in relation to influencing outcomes. Third, though generally applied across a wide product type, in practice, dependence on reviews may differ between products that are high involvement, such as high end electronics, compared to those that may be of a lower involvement level, such as groceries.

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#### **DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS**

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest with respect to this study, its authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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