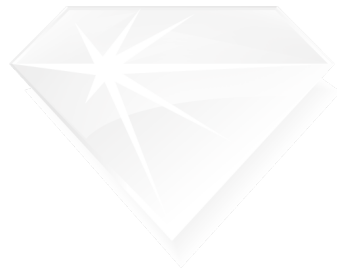


THE IMPACT OF ELECTRONIC WORD OF MOUTH TOWARDS PURCHASING  
INTENTION ON SOCIAL MEDIA AMONG NON-THAI STUDENTS IN THAILAND



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**BANGKOK  
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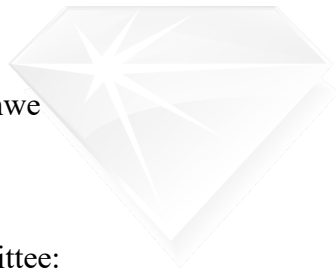
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#### ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) on purchasing intention among non-Thai students in Thailand. Data were collected through a convenience sampling method, with responses analyzed to assess the relationships between the identified factors and purchasing intentions. The findings indicate that information credibility and positive attitudes toward eWOM significantly influence purchasing behavior, underscoring the importance of trust and consumer engagement in digital interactions. Practical recommendations are provided for communication scholars, policymakers, practitioners, and businesses to enhance the effectiveness of eWOM strategies. Limitations such as the reliance on self-reported data, cross-sectional design, and cultural scope are discussed, with suggestions for future research to explore longitudinal effects, platform-specific dynamics, and cross-cultural variations. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of eWOM's role in shaping consumer behavior and provides actionable insights for leveraging eWOM in marketing and communication practices.

*Keywords: electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), purchasing intention, social media, information credibility, attitudes toward eWOM, social support*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	iv
LIST OF TABLES .....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	viii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 Rationale and Problem Statement .....	1
1.2 Knowledge Gap Found from Past Studies .....	2
1.3 Objectives of Study .....	2
1.4 Scope of Study .....	3
1.5 Research Questions .....	3
1.6 Significance of the Study .....	3
1.7 Definition of Terms .....	4
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW .....	5
2.1 Related Literature and Previous Studies .....	5
2.2 Related Theories .....	10
2.3 Hypotheses .....	12
2.4 Theoretical Framework .....	13
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY .....	14
3.1 Research Design .....	14
3.2 Population and Sample Selection .....	16
3.3 Research Instrument .....	17
3.4 Instrument Pretest .....	19
3.5 Data Collection Procedure .....	20
3.6 Data Analysis .....	21
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS .....	23
4.1 Analysis of Demographic Data .....	23
4.2 Analysis of Consumer Behavior .....	24
4.3 Analysis of eWOM factors and Purchasing Intention .....	25

## TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

	Page
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS (Continued)	
4.4 Results of the Hypothesis Testing .....	26
4.5 Conclusions .....	29
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION .....	30
5.1 Summary and Conclusion.....	30
5.2 Hypothesis Testing Summary.....	31
5.3 Discussion and Recommendation for Implication.....	33
5.4 Recommendation and Limitation for Further Research .....	37
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	40
APPENDEIX .....	48
BIODATA .....	53

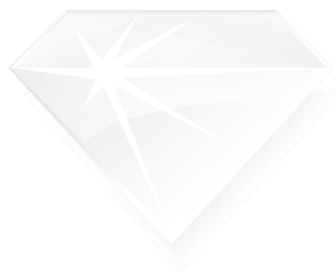
## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 3.1: Krejcie and Morgan Table .....	17
Table 4.1: Demographic Data of 302 respondents .....	23
Table 4.2: Consumer Behavior Data of 302 respondents .....	24
Table 4.3: Descriptive Statistics of the examined variables.....	26
Table 4.4: Results of Regression Analysis of Information Credibility and Consumer Purchasing Intention .....	27
Table 4.5: Results of Regression Analysis of Attitude Towards eWOM and Consumer Purchasing Intention.....	28
Table 4.6: Results of Regression Analysis of Social Support and Consumer Purchasing Intention.....	28



LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 2.4: Theoretical Framework .....	13



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Rationale and Problem Statement

In today's connected and technologically advanced society, social media and digital platforms have a growing impact on consumer behavior. Because social media lets users engage with brands and other users, it has a significant impact on how customers behave and how they make decisions about what to buy (Berthon et al., 2012). Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) is one of the many fascinating and revolutionary aspects of social media's impact on consumer behavior. eWOM refers to the opinions, reviews, suggestions, and endorsements that people share about goods and services on social media sites (Cheung & Thadani, 2012). The potential of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) to mold and sway consumers' intents to buy and, ultimately, their actual purchasing decisions, is what gives it its power (Dellarocas, 2003). Researchers, marketers, and companies around the world have been paying close attention to the dynamics of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and how it affects purchasing intention as long as companies continue to realize how social media shapes customer behavior (Gupta & Harris, 2010; Hajli, 2018; Seifert & Kwon, 2019).

eWOM and its impact on purchase intention are the subject of this study, which focuses on non-Thai students including both undergraduate and graduate students who are studying in Thailand. The decision to concentrate on non-Thai students was made on purpose since it represents the changing global environment of migration, education, and consumer behavior (Bodycott, 2009). Many international students looking for possibilities for higher education have chosen Thailand as their destination because of its diverse range of educational institutions, friendly atmosphere, and lively culture (Gao & Trent, 2009). Because these non-Thai students are studying abroad and are not in their home countries, a number of factors, including the effect of Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) on social media platforms, have a particular influence on their purchasing behaviors (Mikalef, Giannakos, & Pateli, 2013). This study looks into the dynamic interaction between eWOM and non-

Thai students' purchasing intents in Thailand. It sheds light on how digital marketing is changing and how it influences cross-cultural consumer decision-making. According to the Statista Research Department, Thai social media users are highly engaged, and the country boasts a high social media penetration rate (Statista, 2024). As non-Thai students integrate into Thai society, they become exposed to and influenced by Thai digital marketing and eWOM, which can be distinct from practices in their home countries. And this exposure presents a unique set of challenges and opportunities for marketers seeking to influence their purchasing decisions. Understanding the specific factors that shape the impact of eWOM on the purchasing intentions of non-Thai students in Thailand is a multifaceted issue that requires detailed investigation.

### 1.2 Knowledge Gap Found from Past Studies

The existing body of research on the impact of electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) on purchasing intentions among non-Thai students in Thailand presents a notable knowledge gap that this study aims to address. Despite a growing literature on consumer behavior and eWOM, there is a scarcity of studies specifically focused on the purchasing intentions of non-Thai students in the Thai context. While some research has explored general eWOM dynamics and its influence on consumers, there is a lack of nuanced understanding regarding the unique factors that shape the purchasing decisions of non-Thai students within the cultural and social context of Thailand.

### 1.3 Objectives of Study

The research objectives for this study can be divided into two distinct phases: identification and analysis. In the identification phase, the study aims to uncover key factors that influence consumer purchase intentions on social media. These factors include assessing the impact of information credibility, understanding consumer attitudes towards eWOM, and examining the influence of social support within

eWOM interactions. In the subsequent analysis phase, the research will delve into a comprehensive examination of these identified factors, utilizing quantitative analysis technique. This analysis will involve investigating the relationships between information credibility, attitudes towards eWOM, and social support, ultimately providing valuable insights into how these factors collectively shape consumer purchase intentions in the context of social media.

#### 1.4 Scope of Study

The study's focus is on non-Thai students (Undergraduate and Graduate Students) who are studying in Thailand, with a focus on the influence of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) factors-information credibility, attitude towards eWOM and social support on their purchasing intentions through social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Tiktok, Line, Instagram).

#### 1.5 Research Questions

How do eWOM factors, including information credibility, attitudes toward eWOM, and social support, influence the purchasing intentions of non-Thai students on social media platforms in Thailand?

#### 1.6 Significance of the Study

This study provides insightful information regarding the shopping habits of international students in Thailand. It is important to know how these students are affected by electronic word of mouth (eWOM) on social media not only for Thailand but also for various consumer demographics throughout the world. Moreover, this research is crucial in terms of business and marketing. They gain deeper comprehension of the particular eWOM factors that influence purchasing decisions, enabling them to develop marketing strategies that are more effective when targeted to this group. Lastly, this research contributes to the academic field, serving as a valuable source for scholars and researchers in marketing and consumer studies.

## 1.7 Definition of Terms

Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM): According to Montazemi et al. (2014), this refers to the sharing of opinions, recommendations, and information about products or services via electronic channels, typically on social media, blogs, or review platforms. Information credibility focuses on the reliability of the data present in eWOM. It determines whether a review or comment contains accurate, factually accurate, and dependable information. Information credibility takes into account elements like the accuracy of product details, its relevance to the good or service, and whether the information is subject to independent verification. The second factor of eWOM is attitude towards eWOM and it refers to a person's thoughts and opinions on recommendations and reviews found online. The last factor, social support refers to the extent to which individuals within a social network or online community offer encouragement, feedback, or validation in response to eWOM content, such as reviews, recommendations, or comments.

Purchasing Intention: According to Aizen and Fishben 1972, the definition is a user's subjective likelihood of engaging in a particular behavior. Customers are more likely to act on their purchase intentions when they have a favorable perception of a brand's goods or services, as this perception influences their behavior.

Social Media: This encompasses online platforms and websites that enable users to create, share, and interact with content (Boyd & Ellison, 2008). In this study, social media platforms include Facebook, Twitter, Tiktok, Line, Instagram.

Non-Thai students : They are individuals of non-Thai nationality who are currently enrolled in educational institutions in Thailand at various levels, such as undergraduate, graduate, or certificate programs. These students are residing in Thailand for educational purposes and actively use social media platforms where they are exposed to electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) through online reviews, recommendations, and user-generated content that may influence their purchasing intentions. They may come from various other countries, which are aging 18 years old and above.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter offers an overview of the key literature relevant to the research project, emphasizing any gaps in the body of knowledge and how the research fills them. This study emphasizes how consumer purchasing decisions on social media are influenced by electronic word of mouth (eWOM).

#### 2.1 Related Literature and Previous Studies

##### 2.1.1 Digital influence on non-Thai students

People's everyday lives now revolve around the internet sphere, especially the younger generation, which includes international students studying in Thailand. Comprehending the impact of digital media on this demographic is crucial in order to understand their purchasing intentions and electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM), as well as their behaviors, preferences, and decision-making processes.

Non-Thai students are often characterized by their tech-savvy nature, being adept at using digital platforms for various purposes. Their dependence on social media, smartphones, and internet platforms affects how they interact with brands and receive information, Junco (2013). According to Junco's (2013) research, a large number of college students use their smartphones for social networking, communication, and information access. This demonstrates the widespread impact of digital technology on the habits of the student population.

Moreover, non-Thai students actively engage with social media platforms as a means of staying connected, sharing experiences, and seeking information. Social media plays a pivotal role in shaping their perceptions and influencing their decision-making processes, particularly when it comes to product recommendations and reviews (Muntinga et al., 2011). Muntinga et al. (2011) conducted research highlighting the impact of social media on consumer behavior, emphasizing its role in information sharing, brand engagement, and the formation of opinions.

According to recent research, customers' information gathering, product evaluation, and purchase decisions are greatly impacted by digital platforms (Dedeoglu et al., 2020). Digital platforms offer essential information and peer reviews to non-Thai students, enabling them to make well-informed purchasing decisions and navigate the local market. Online reviews and eWOM also significantly impact the decision-making process of non-Thai students. The accessibility of reviews on various online platforms influences their perceptions of products and services. Positive eWOM can contribute to trust-building and influence purchase decisions (Duan et al., 2008). Duan et al. (2008) conducted a study on the impact of online reviews on purchasing decisions, revealing that positive reviews significantly influence consumers' perceptions and decisions. Non-Thai students, being active users of online platforms, are likely to be influenced by similar factors.

### 2.1.2 Information Credibility

One crucial factor influencing purchase intentions is the reliability of information found online. Recent research by Appelman and Sundar (2016) shows that students evaluate the credibility of digital material by considering its source, consistency, and the reviewer's expertise. Trust in internet sources is particularly vital for non-Thai students who rely on them to make purchasing decisions in an unfamiliar market.

A great deal of research also has been done recently on the complex idea of information trustworthiness, especially as it relates to internet and digital media. It's critical to comprehend how people evaluate the reliability of information due to the widespread of false and misleading content on the internet. According to Cheung and Thadani (2012), information credibility is an important factor that drives peripheral routes since it is the message recipients' perception of a communication's reliability. Students who are not Thai and come from a variety of cultural backgrounds could evaluate trustworthiness in different ways.

According to Flanagin and Metzger's (2013) research, credibility has multiple dimensions, including competence, benevolence, and trustworthiness. Study needs to

focus on how non-Thai students in Thailand assess the veracity of eWOM information and how it affects their propensity to buy. Businesses and marketers must comprehend information credibility in order to guarantee that eWOM messages are viewed as reliable and have a favorable influence on purchase intention (Kim & Cameron, 2011). If consumers think the content is reliable, they are more inclined to participate in any kind of communication. Since users can freely express their emotions in online settings without physically engaging, standard measures of the reliability of information do not hold true (Reichelt, Sievert, & Jacob, 2013). Neglecting this element could result in a mismatch between consumer perceptions and marketing initiatives.

### 2.1.3 Attitude Towards eWOM

According to Zanial, Harun, and Lily's (2017) research, trust in the honesty, skill, goodness of the sources has a substantial impact on attitudes about and intents to follow eWOM. The results also imply, nevertheless, that attitude is important in moderating the relationship between follower intention and eWOM source trust. It is believed that people's attitudes regarding eWOM influence how receptive they are to the information that is shared. The research by Cheung and Thadani (2012) also showed that the importance of attitude in moderating the relationship between eWOM and consumer behavior. This is particularly true as it affects how people respond to particular concepts or objects. Customers are more likely to engage in eWOM communication if they are happy with eWOM in e-commerce.

Relevant studies have looked at the main eWOM elements, how they affect behavior, and how individuals see brands and websites (Hu & Kim, 2018). According to Phau and Sari (2004), people are typically more willing to express their ideas regarding online media if they think it would be beneficial. Customers that view electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) communication favorably are therefore willing to express their comments online. According to recent research, customers prefer electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) that offers thorough and accurate information



about goods and services, which fosters favorable attitudes and higher levels of trust (Park et al., 2021).

In the internet age, attitude seems to have a big influence on consumer behavior intention (Bruner & Kumar, 2000). The cultural backgrounds of non-Thai students might affect how they are inclined to use eWOM and how compelling it is. It's critical for marketers to understand the subtleties of non-Thai students' attitudes toward eWOM in order to effectively customize their methods. According to Laroche et al. (2012), buying intentions are likely to be more positively impacted by eWOM when attitudes are positive. This highlights the need of using context-specific data to guide marketing activities.

#### 2.1.4 Social Support

Social support refers to the emotional, informational, and instrumental assistance provided by social networks. In the context of consumer behavior, social support can come from family, friends, peers, and even virtual communities. There are four main types of social support: emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal support (Cobb, 1976). Each type of support can influence consumer decisions in different ways, particularly in online environments where interactions are often mediated by digital platforms.

In the digital era, social support refers to the feeling that one has support from one's social circle, and social networks and online communities are important resources for social support. Digital spaces are significantly influenced by social media influencers. The importance of social support in influencing customer behavior in online communities is highlighted by research by Nambisan (2011). According to recent study, engaging in online communities can offer emotional and informational support, which has a beneficial effect on consumers' intents to make purchases (Zhou et al., 2013). Nguyen et al. (2020) describe online reviews, forums, and social media groups as venues where customers share recommendations and impact one another's purchasing choices.

A study by Kozinets, de Valck, Wojnicki, and Wilner (2010) looked into how social support and online communities affect how customers interact with eWOM. The results showed that eWOM's ability to influence consumer behavior is greatly enhanced by social support found in online communities. Strong social support is a determining factor in consumer susceptibility to eWOM, and the community aspect of these platforms adds to the overall potency of eWOM. Examining the influencer landscape and the dynamics of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) transmission in the non-Thai student population can reveal distinctive trends that are critical to the creation of focused digital marketing campaigns.

### 2.1.5 Purchasing Intention

Consumer purchasing intention, the likelihood or inclination of consumers to buy a product or service, is a critical aspect of consumer behavior and marketing strategy. The marketing investigation of consumer purchase intention indicates a complex environment influenced by a number of variables. A great deal of research has demonstrated how important consumer attitudes and perceptions are in determining whether or not they are inclined to make a purchase (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Furthermore, the characteristics of a good or service have a big impact on what people want to buy. According to recent research, customers' views and decisions are greatly influenced by elements like price, quality, brand reputation, and product features (Chen & Tseng, 2012; Bigne et al., 2020). Customers are more likely to buy goods, for instance, if they believe they are well-made and offer good value. Keller's study (1993) emphasizes the value of a positive brand image in promoting trust and influencing buying decisions. It also highlights the impact of brand image on consumer perceptions and consequent purchase intention.

Consumer purchase intention has been found to be significantly influenced by social factors, especially word of mouth. Online suggestions and reviews have a big influence on people's intentions to buy in the digital era. Studies indicate that when it comes to making judgments about what to buy, customers mainly rely on the opinions of their peers and online communities (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Zhu & Zhang, 2010). While unfavorable reviews can discourage customers from making a purchase,

favorable evaluations and suggestions can increase the likelihood of a purchase. Research has demonstrated that peers' beliefs and actions, both in person and online, have an impact on customers (Van den Bergh & Behrer, 2016; Wu et al., 2019). Customer views and decisions can be greatly influenced by peer recommendations and endorsements, which increases the likelihood that they will make a purchase.

Especially in online purchases, individuals' purchasing intentions are largely influenced by variables such as trust and trustworthiness. According to research, customers are more inclined to purchase products from companies and merchants they believe to be reliable and trustworthy (Kim & Forsythe, 2008; Huang & Chen, 2021). Developing trust by open lines of communication, dependable customer support, and safe transactions can have a favorable impact on purchase intention. Since consumers are more inclined to interact with businesses they trust, trust itself emerges as a significant factor influencing purchase intention (McKnight et al., 2002). Kim and Forsythe (2008) have demonstrated that consumer purchase intention in the context of e-commerce is influenced by aspects including website usability and online trust, underscoring the significance of a positive online experience. Additionally, cultural influences have a big impact on how customers assess products and decide what to buy (Hofstede, 1980).

## 2.2 Related Theories

### 2.2.1 Social Information Processing (SIP) Theory

Social media's development has changed how consumers behave, especially in Thailand where non-Thai students who depend on electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) are concerned. Using the Social Information Processing Theory and the Uses and Gratifications Theory, two well-known communication theories, this study seeks to investigate the complex relationship between eWOM and purchase intentions.

According to Joseph Walther's Social Information Processing (SIP) Theory, people can build relationships and impressions through computer-mediated communication, making up for the loss of nonverbal signs with prolonged encounters and a dependence on textual clues (Walther, 1992). This theory presents the hyperpersonal paradigm, arguing that online interactions may be more intimate than

in-person relationships since people are motivated to build relationships even in text-based online environments (Walther, 1992).

This theory offers insights on how non-Thai students who participate in eWOM on social media utilize textual and other online signals to negotiate the diminished social context cues. Online interactions developed through eWOM may be more intimate and self-disclosing, according to the hyperpersonal paradigm. Through repeated online interactions, this theory promotes investigation into how trust changes over time. It provides a theoretical framework for understanding the complexity of social information processing in the digital sphere.

### 2.2.2 Uses and Gratifications Theory

Uses and Gratifications Theory, pioneered by Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch, departs from traditional media theories by placing the audience at the center, assuming that individuals actively choose media to fulfill specific needs and gratifications (Katz et al., 1973). The theory identifies categories of gratifications, including information, personal identity, personal relationships, integration, and entertainment. It also considers selective exposure and selective retention, suggesting that individuals choose media content that aligns with their existing beliefs and preferences (Katz et al., 1973).

In the context of non-Thai students engaging in eWOM on social media, Uses and Gratifications Theory becomes relevant as it offers a framework to understand why individuals actively participate in eWOM. Non-Thai students are assumed to be purposeful in their engagement, seeking specific gratifications such as information about products and services, social interaction, identity expression, and entertainment through their interactions with eWOM. The theory encourages researchers to explore how these gratifications influence the decision-making process, providing insights into the multifaceted motivations behind eWOM interactions.

While SIP Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory approach the research context from different angles, they share common ground in understanding the active

role of individuals in online interactions. In the context of eWOM among non-Thai students, SIP Theory's emphasis on relationship development and impression formation aligns with Uses and Gratifications Theory's focus on individuals actively seeking gratifications through media engagement.

The integration of these theories has significant implications for the study. Understanding how non-Thai students process information, form impressions, and actively seek gratifications through eWOM interactions can inform the development of targeted marketing strategies. For instance, marketers can leverage the hyperpersonal nature of online relationships identified by SIP Theory to enhance engagement with non-Thai students. Additionally, recognizing the diverse gratifications sought by individuals, as outlined by Uses and Gratifications Theory, allows for the customization of eWOM content to meet specific needs, whether informational, social, identity-related, or entertainment-driven.

In conclusion, the application of Social Information Processing (SIP) Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the complex dynamics of eWOM and its impact on purchasing intentions among non-Thai students in Thailand. By integrating these theoretical perspectives, researchers can gain a holistic understanding of how social information is processed, relationships are formed, and gratifications are sought in the context of eWOM on social media. The implications of this research extend to marketers, businesses, and educators aiming to engage effectively with non-Thai students in the digital landscape.

## 2.3 Hypotheses

This research studies the relationship between electronic word of mouth (eWOM) and consumer's purchasing intentions on social media among non-Thai students in Thailand.

### 2.5.1 Information Credibility Hypothesis

(H0): There is no significant relationship between perceived information credibility in electronic word of mouth and purchasing intention among non-Thai students in Thailand.

(H1): Perceived information credibility in electronic word of mouth significantly influences purchasing intention among non-Thai students in Thailand.

#### 2.5.2 Attitude towards eWOM Hypothesis:

(H0): Attitude towards electronic word of mouth does not play a significant role in shaping purchasing intention among non-Thai students in Thailand.

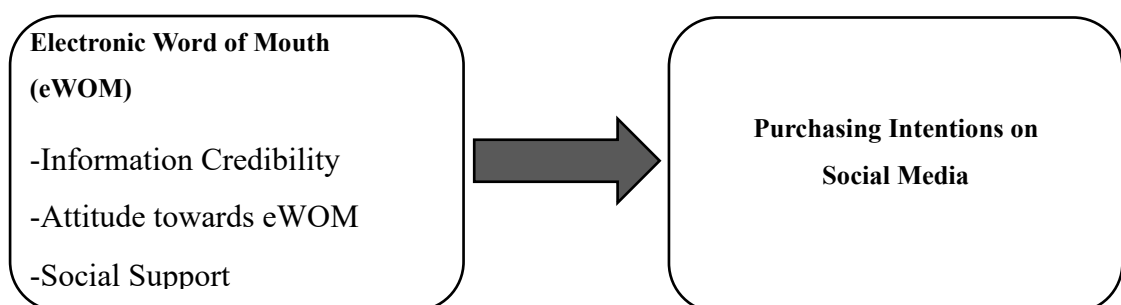
(H1): Positive attitudes towards electronic word of mouth significantly contribute to higher purchasing intention among non-Thai students in Thailand.

#### 2.5.3 Social Support Hypothesis:

(H0): Social support within digital communities does not have a significant impact on the relationship between electronic word of mouth and purchasing intention among non-Thai students in Thailand.

(H1): Social support within digital communities enhances the impact of electronic word of mouth, leading to higher purchasing intention among non-Thai students in Thailand.

### 2.4 Theoretical Framework



## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

The research methodology used to examine the framework and research hypotheses presented in Chapter 2 is outlined in this section. This topic included, research design, research methodology, research method, and validity and reliability of the study.

#### 3.1 Research Design

In order to investigate the influence of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) on the purchasing intentions of non-Thai students in Thailand, this study employs a quantitative research methodology. The quantitative method enables the correlations between particular eWOM factors-information credibility, attitudes toward eWOM, and social support-and their impact on purchase intentions to be measured objectively and statistically analyzed. In consumer behavior research, where the goal is to find patterns and connections in numerical data, quantitative methods are especially useful. Prior research, such that done by Cheung and Lee (2012), has shown that quantitative methods work well for determining how customers feel and behave while sharing information online. Furthermore, Zhang and Daugherty (2009) highlight how crucial it is to use standardized measures in order to ensure the reliability of results in a variety of cultural contexts. This study uses a quantitative technique to produce generalizable insights into how various eWOM elements affect non-Thai students' purchasing intentions in a foreign market.

The study utilizes a cross-sectional survey design, which is chosen for its practicality in gathering data on attitudes and behaviors at a certain moment in time. This methodology works especially well to investigate how certain eWOM factors—like the information credibility, attitudes toward eWOM, and social support—affect the target population's intents to purchase. Cross-sectional surveys are economical and ideal for academic research since they provide the effective collecting of data from a sizable sample. Mangold and Faulds (2009) provide additional evidence for the

suitability of this approach for evaluating the impact of eWOM on purchase intentions by highlighting the crucial role that social media plays in influencing consumer decision-making.

The study focuses on three key factors within eWOM. The first factor, information credibility is the idea that the data distributed by electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is reliable and trustworthy. This is an important component since it determines the value that customers attach to recommendations and reviews they see online. The second factor, attitudes toward eWOM refers to students' general opinions—whether favorable or unfavorable—about eWOM. This component evaluates the influence of positive or negative attitudes on the propensity to act on eWOM when making judgments about what to buy. When interacting with eWOM, the third factor, social support refers to the perceived degree of validation and support from peers or social networks. This component looks at how social ties affect whether electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) is accepted and used during the decision-making process.

To ensure validity and reliability, these factors will be measured using validated scales adapted from existing literature. To measure respondents' agreement with statements related to each eWOM factor and purchasing behavior, for instance, the survey will use a Likert scale, in accordance with Kim and Gupta's (2012) recommendations for reliable consumer behavior measurement.

The cross-sectional design has limits, especially when it comes to drawing conclusions about causality, even though it offers insightful information. Since the study will only be able to find correlations between the eWOM characteristics and purchasing intentions, it will not be able to conclusively demonstrate cause-and-effect linkages. Cross-sectional research, which provides a brief overview as opposed to a longitudinal picture of changes over time, develop to this disadvantage. However, the design is appropriate for investigating correlations within the particular group of non-Thai students in Thailand, adding to a more comprehensive knowledge of how various aspects of eWOM impact consumer behavior in a foreign market.



## 3.2 Population and Sample Selection

### 3.2.1 Target Population

The study's target population comprises of non-Thai students who are presently enrolled in Thai higher education institutions. Students from various countries who are studying for undergraduate or graduate degrees are included in this group. The goal of concentrating on non-Thai students is to investigate how eWOM affects purchase intentions in a particular group of people who might exhibit different attitudes and habits than local Thai students. Non-Thai students represent a diverse group with varying cultural backgrounds, which provides a rich context for examining the impact of eWOM in a foreign market.

### 3.2.2 Sampling Method

This study will use convenience sampling to select participants, focusing on non-Thai students in Thailand who are easily accessible and willing to participate. Convenience sampling is selected for the study because of its practicality and efficiency, since it facilitates quick data collecting within the restrictions of time and resources. Rather than carefully choosing participants from various groupings, we will use student clubs, and university agencies to find accessible students. The intended sample size is roughly 300 people, which is manageable and sufficient for significant statistical analysis. Students who are willing to participate will receive an online survey that will be used to collect data. Although convenience sampling may not capture the full diversity of the population as precisely as other methods, it is a practical choice that enables the timely collection of valuable data. Ethical considerations, such as informed consent and confidentiality, will be strictly followed to protect participants' rights.

### 3.2.3 Sample Selection

According to the Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC) of Thailand ([https://www.thailand.go.th/issue-focus-detail/001\\_06\\_011](https://www.thailand.go.th/issue-focus-detail/001_06_011)), in the first semester of the academic year 2022, there were approximately 34,202 international students in Thailand. This figure includes various education levels. So, based on the table 3.3.2.1, 380 samples need to be collected with a 95% confidence level and a 5%

margin of error. Given practical constraints such as resource limitations and accessibility, a sample size of 300 participants is chosen. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) suggest that smaller sample sizes can still provide reliable results when resources are limited. Fink (2009) supports using manageable sample sizes for practical research, which reflects the common practice in similar studies. Thus, targeting 300 participants balances statistical accuracy with feasibility, ensuring sufficient data for meaningful analysis.

Table 3.1 Krejcie and Morgan Table

<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382
210	136	1100	285	1000000	384

Note.—*N* is population size. *S* is sample size.

Source: Krejcie & Morgan, 1970

### 3.3 Research Instrument

The research instrument for studying the impact of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) on purchasing intentions among non-Thai students in Thailand is designed for convenience sampling, ensuring ease of distribution and accessibility. This ensures

accessibility and ease of distribution. The survey was distributed online through popular social media platforms which are popular among international students. Because of its mobile-friendly design, students can complete the survey on their tablets or smartphones. The survey is designed to effectively reach the intended group and provide significant data collection, with a sample size of 300 participants. Throughout this study, closed-ended questionnaires were used to collect data from the respondents. All the questionnaires will be in English.

An introduction outlining the goal of the study and providing participants with an assurance of their privacy and voluntary participation comes before the survey even starts. A total of set of questionnaires containing 4 sections of demographic data, consumer behavior, eWOM factors, and purchasing intention. The questionnaires were adapted from the work of Digdarshan Thapa (2021), who explored the impact of Brand Advocacy, Electronic Word of Mouth, and Microinfluencer Factors towards Consumer Purchase Intention on Social Media in Thailand. These items were selected because they have been validated in similar studies, ensuring their relevance and reliability for measuring (information credibility, attitudes toward eWOM, and social support).

#### Part 1: Demographic data

In this section, the demographic data was gathered, including country of origin, age, gender, degree of education, and duration of stay in Thailand. This section includes a total of 5 items, involving nominal and ordinal scales.

#### Part 2: Consumer Behavior

In this section, 6 items were used to explore participants' social media usage, their preferred platforms, and the frequency of their online shopping activities. By understanding where and how often participants engage with social media and eWOM, we can better assess the platforms and behaviors that most significantly influence their purchasing intentions.

#### Part 3: eWOM factors

This session aims to access three key areas: Information Credibility, Attitudes toward eWOM, and Social Support. There were total of 9 items, and each aspect was assessed through Likert scale questions, which help determine the respondents' perceptions on a range of topics. Information Credibility: this section of the questionnaire focuses on how credible and trustworthy participants perceive the information they receive through electronic word of mouth (eWOM). It assesses whether the participants believe that the online reviews, ratings, and recommendations they encounter are accurate, reliable, and provided by knowledgeable sources. Attitudes Toward eWOM: this section explores participants' overall attitudes toward eWOM, including their enjoyment of reading online reviews, their preference for relying on eWOM over traditional advertising, and their confidence in purchasing products that receive positive online reviews. It aims to understand how participants feel about the value and usefulness of eWOM in their decision-making process. Social Support: this section investigates the role of social support in influencing eWOM engagement and purchasing decisions. It examines how participants rely on the opinions and recommendations of their social network—such as friends and family—when making purchase decisions, and how these personal connections impact their trust in eWOM.

#### Part 4: Purchasing Intention

In this section, there were 5 items which are designed to measure the likelihood that participants will make a purchase based on the eWOM they encounter. It assesses how strongly online reviews and ratings influence their buying decisions and whether positive eWOM increases their intention to purchase a product.

#### 3.4 Instrument Pretest

A pre-test was conducted to confirm the validity and reliability of the research instrument designed to investigate the effect of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) on purchasing intention among non-Thai students in Thailand. The questionnaire was administered to a small, representative sample of 33 non-Thai students during the pre-test. This process aimed to evaluate the efficacy, relevance,

and clarity of the questionnaire. According to DeVellis (2016), pre-testing is critical for identifying unclear questions and ensuring that the instrument accurately measures the intended constructs.

The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, with a target value of 0.7 or higher to confirm internal consistency (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). The results of the reliability test yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.726 for eWOM and 0.767 for purchasing intention, indicating acceptable internal consistency for both constructs. These values confirm that the items used in each section reliably measure their respective factors. Feedback from participants were used to guide revisions to improve question clarity and relevance, enhancing the overall quality of the instrument. This approach aligns with best practices in survey research, which emphasize the importance of pre-testing for refining instruments and ensuring reliable data (Bryman, 2016).

### 3.5 Data Collection Procedure

This study targeted non-Thai students studying in Thailand, as they represent a diverse and significant group that actively engages with social media platforms and online shopping. Convenience sampling was used to select participants who met the criteria of being non-Thai students currently enrolled in Thai institutions.

A structured questionnaire was developed to measure various aspects of eWOM, including information credibility, attitudes towards eWOM, social support, and consumer behavior. The questionnaire also included demographic questions and items to assess purchasing intention. The survey was divided into three main sections: demographic information, eWOM factors and purchasing intention.

Prior to the main data collection, a pre-test was conducted with a sample of 33 non-Thai students to assess the clarity, relevance, and reliability of the questionnaire. The results showed a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.726 for eWOM and 0.767 for purchasing intention, indicating acceptable internal consistency for both constructs. This step confirmed that the items within each construct were measuring the same underlying

concept reliably. Based on feedback and a reliability test minor revisions were made to improve the instrument's effectiveness.

The final version of the questionnaire was distributed through online. An online survey tool (Google Form) was used to reach participants via social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, Line). Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the confidentiality of their responses, and their right to withdraw at any point without any consequences. A consent form was provided at the beginning of the questionnaire, ensuring that participation was voluntary and anonymous.

Data collection took place over a period of one to two weeks, allowing sufficient time to reach a broad sample of non-Thai students. Follow-up reminders were sent to encourage participation, particularly for the online survey. After the data was collected, responses from the online surveys were entered into SPSS for analysis. To ensure accuracy, the data was cleaned, and any incomplete or invalid responses were excluded from the final dataset.

### 3.6 Data Analysis

The data collected from the questionnaire was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The analysis aimed to evaluate the impact of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) on purchasing intention among non-Thai students in Thailand. The data analysis was carried out in several stages, as outlined below:

#### 3.6.1 Data Preparation and Cleaning

After data collection, the responses were reviewed to ensure completeness and accuracy. Incomplete questionnaires and responses with missing or invalid data were excluded from the analysis. The cleaned data was then imported into SPSS for statistical analysis. The data was coded and organized based on the structure of the questionnaire, with categorical and ordinal variables labeled appropriately.

#### 3.6.2 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the participants, such as gender, age, country of origin, education level, and social media usage. These statistics provided a general overview of the sample's demographics and social media behavior.

### 3.6.3 Regression Analysis

To examine the impact of eWOM on purchasing intention, a multiple regression analysis was performed. The independent variables—information credibility, attitude towards eWOM, and social support—were entered into the regression model to predict purchasing intention.



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## CHAPTER 4

## FINDINGS

The research results from the data examined using statistical software are presented in this chapter. To evaluate the hypotheses, 302 respondents were collected and analyzed.

## 4.1 Analysis of Demographic Data

The 302 respondents' demographic information is shown in the following table. Gender, age, original country, education level, and duration of staying in Thailand are among the information gathered from the respondents. These values statistics are presented in frequency and percentage (%).

Table 4.1: Demographic Data of 302 respondents

Demographic Data	Frequency	Percentage
<b>1. Gender</b>		
Male	137	45.4
Female	152	50.3
Prefer not to say	13	4.3
Total	302	100
<b>2. Age</b>		
Under 18	0	0
18-27 years old	170	56.3
28-37 years old	110	36.4
38 and above	22	7.3
Total	302	100
<b>3. Original Country</b>		
China	52	17.2
Vietnam	47	15.6
Myanmar	146	48.3
Laos	21	7
Other	36	11.9
Total	302	100

(continued)



Table 4.1: (Continued) Demographic Data of 302 respondents

Demographic Data	Frequency	Percentage
<b>4. Education Level</b>		
High School Diploma	10	3.3
Associate Degree	34	11.3
Bachelor's Degree	124	41.1
Master's Degree	93	30.8
Doctoral Degree (PhD)	11	3.6
Diploma/Certificate Programs	28	9.3
Other	2	0.7
Total	302	100
<b>5. Duration of stay in Thailand</b>		
Less than 1 year	112	37.1
1- 2 years	127	42.1
3-4 years	40	13.2
5 years and above	23	7.6
Total	302	100

Table 4.1 presents a summary of the demographic data of 302 respondents. The table illustrated that most of the respondents in this study were female (50.3%), closely followed up with 45.4% of males. Most of the respondents were aged 18 to 27 years old (56.3%). The majority of respondents were from Myanmar (48.3%) and hold a bachelor's degree (41.1 %). A large group of respondents (42.1%) had been staying in Thailand for 1-2 years.

#### 4.2 Analysis of Consumer Behavior

Table 4.2: Consumer Behavior Data of 302 Respondents

Consumer Behavior Data	Frequency	Percentage
<b>6. Social Media Usage</b>		
Less than 1 hour	34	11.3
1-2 hours	92	30.5
3-4 hours	107	35.4
5 hours and above	69	22.8
Total	302	100

(continued)

Table 4.2: (Continued) Consumer Behavior Data of 302 Respondents

Consumer Behavior Data	Frequency	Percentage
<b>7. Mostly use social media platforms</b>		
Facebook	120	39.7
Instagram	59	19.5
Twitter	24	7.9
Tik Tok	50	16.6
Line	31	10.3
Other	18	6
Total	302	100
<b>8. Frequency of Online Shopping</b>		
Never	21	7
Once a month	142	47
2-3 times a month	106	35.1
Once a week	18	6
More than once a week	15	5
Total	302	100

Table 4.2 illustrates the summary of consumer behavior data of 302 respondents. The table describes most of the respondents' time spent on social media were 3-4 hours (35.4%). Most of the respondents prefer to use Facebook (39.7%) and the online shopping frequency of the respondents was once a month (47%).

#### 4.3 Analysis of Electronic Word of Mouth eWOM factors and Consumer Purchasing Intention on Social Media

Descriptive statistics in terms of mean, standard deviation was computed for describing the independent variable (eWOM factors) and the dependent variable (consumer purchasing intention). These statistics offer insight into the central tendency and dispersion of the scores.

Table 4.3: Descriptive Statistics of the examined variables

<b>Variables</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D</b>
eWOM factors	302	3.84	0.58
Purchasing Intention	302	3.73	0.69

The mean score for eWOM factors (3.84) indicates that respondents generally view these factors positively, reflecting favorable perceptions of information credibility, attitude, and social support within electronic word of mouth. Meanwhile, the mean for Purchasing Intention (3.73) suggests that respondents are inclined toward purchasing decisions influenced by eWOM, albeit slightly less strongly than their perceptions of eWOM factors.

The standard deviation for eWOM factors (0.58) is lower than that for Purchasing Intention (0.69), indicating less variability in how respondents perceive eWOM compared to how they act on their purchasing intentions. This suggests greater consensus in perceptions of eWOM factors and a broader range of responses regarding actual purchasing decisions.

#### 4.4 Results of Hypotheses Testing

This section presents the results of inferential statistical analyses used to test the proposed research hypotheses. It includes the results of the regression analysis to examine the relationship between eWOM factors and consumer purchasing intention.

##### 4.4.1 Information Credibility Hypotheses

The regression analysis indicates a significant positive relationship between information credibility in eWOM and purchasing intention among non-Thai students in Thailand ( $\beta=0.695$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). With an  $R^2$  value of 0.483, information credibility explains 48.3% of the variance in purchasing intention, suggesting it is a critical determinant. Respondents who perceive eWOM information as credible are more likely to develop a stronger intention to purchase. Therefore, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is supported, confirming that information credibility significantly influences purchasing intention.

Table 4.4: Results of Regression Analysis of Information Credibility and Consumer Purchasing Intention

Variable	B	S.E	$\beta$	Sig.t
Information Credibility	0.712	0.043	0.695	6.5

$$R^2 = 0.483, df = 1 (p < .001)$$

#### 4.4.2 Attitude Towards eWOM Hypotheses

The results reveal a significant positive impact of attitudes toward eWOM on purchasing intention ( $\beta=0.681$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), with an  $R^2$  value of 0.464. This indicates that 46.4% of the variation in purchasing intention is explained by attitudes toward eWOM. Respondents with a positive attitude toward eWOM are more likely to have higher purchasing intentions, emphasizing the importance of fostering favorable perceptions of eWOM. Thus,  $H_0$  is rejected, and  $H_1$  is supported, demonstrating that attitudes toward eWOM play a significant role in shaping purchasing intention.

Table 4.5: Results of Regression Analysis of Attitude Towards eWOM and Consumer Purchasing Intention

Variable	B	S.E	$\beta$	Sig.t
Attitude towards eWOM	0.695	0.043	0.681	5.67

$$R^2 = 0.464, df = 1 (p < .001)$$

#### 4.4.2 Social Support Hypotheses

The analysis shows a strong and significant relationship between social support within digital communities and purchasing intention ( $\beta=0.694$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), with an  $R^2$  value of 0.482. This means that social support accounts for 48.2% of the variance in purchasing intention. Respondents who experience high levels of social support within digital communities are more likely to act on eWOM by forming a stronger intention to purchase. Consequently,  $H_0$  is rejected, and  $H_1$  is supported, confirming that social support significantly enhances the impact of eWOM on purchasing intention.

Table 4.6: Results of Regression Analysis of Social Support and Consumer Purchasing Intention

Variable	B	S.E	$\beta$	Sig.t
Social Support	0.734	0.044	0.694	5.742

$$R^2 = 0.482, df = 1 (p < .001)$$

## 4.5 Conclusions

Overall, this chapter has presented the results of statistical analyses conducted to describe respondents' characteristics, the mean and standard deviation of the examined variables, and to test the proposed research hypotheses related to the influence of eWOM factors on purchasing intention among non-Thai students in Thailand. The findings highlight significant positive relationships between purchasing intention and all three eWOM factors: information credibility, attitudes toward eWOM, and social support within digital communities. These results emphasize the critical role of these factors in shaping purchasing behaviors. This sets the stage for a more detailed discussion of the theoretical and practical implications, as well as the study's limitations and recommendations for future research, which are addressed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

This chapter presents an overview of the research findings, summarizing the main results, their implications, and how they relate to the study's objectives. The research focused on examining the impact of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) factors, including information credibility, attitudes toward eWOM, and social support, on the purchasing intentions of non-Thai students in Thailand. The study aimed to explore how these factors influence consumer behavior within a multicultural social media environment.

The chapter starts with a summary of the respondents' demographic and behavioral characteristics. It then provides a detailed discussion of the findings in relation to the research hypotheses. The implications of the results are examined, highlighting their significance for businesses, marketers, and researchers, along with practical recommendations and theoretical insights. Lastly, the chapter addresses the study's limitations and suggests areas for future research to better understand the role of eWOM in shaping consumer behavior across diverse contexts.

#### 5.1 Summary and Conclusion

##### 5.1.1 Demographic Data

The study surveyed 302 respondents, with an equal representation of male and female participants. The majority were aged 18-27 years, originating primarily from Myanmar, Vietnam, and China. Most respondents had a bachelor's degree and had been in Thailand for 1-2 years, frequently using social media for 3-4 hours daily, with Facebook being the most preferred platform.

##### 5.1.2 Attitudes toward eWOM factors

The attitudes toward the variables in this study reflect the perceptions and agreements of respondents regarding the influence of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) factors on their purchasing intentions. The findings are summarized below:

**Information Credibility:** Respondents rated information credibility positively, with a mean score of 3.84 and a standard deviation of 0.58. This result indicates that participants generally trust the information shared through eWOM on social media. The credibility of eWOM content, such as product reviews, testimonials, and recommendations, appears to play a significant role in building trust and influencing purchasing decisions. Credible information is viewed as reliable, making it a key factor for businesses to focus on when designing eWOM strategies. A mean score of 3.84 suggests that respondents find eWOM information credible.

**Attitudes Toward eWOM:** The mean score of 3.73 (SD = 0.69) for attitudes toward eWOM highlights a generally favorable perception among respondents. This reflects their positive outlook on eWOM's role in shaping their decision-making processes. Attitudes toward eWOM encompass the respondents' beliefs and feelings about the usefulness and trustworthiness of online recommendations. Favorable attitudes indicate that respondents find eWOM not only influential but also an enjoyable and trusted source for guiding their purchases.

**Social Support:** With a mean score of 3.84 (SD = 0.58), social support was also viewed favorably by respondents. Social support in eWOM includes both informational and emotional support provided by peers and communities within digital platforms. Respondents value the sense of connection and assistance they receive from online communities, which reinforces their confidence in making purchasing decisions. This underscores the communal aspect of eWOM, where shared experiences and advice play a pivotal role in decision-making.

## 5.2 Hypothesis Testing Summary

The results of this study supported all three main hypotheses, confirming significant relationships between the independent variables (information credibility, attitudes toward eWOM, and social support) and the dependent variable, purchasing intention among non-Thai students in Thailand. Each hypothesis is detailed as follows:



**Information Credibility Hypotheses:** The analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between information credibility in eWOM and purchasing intention ( $\beta=0.695$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Information credibility was found to explain 48.3% of the variance in purchasing intention, making it a critical factor. This highlights the importance of trust and reliability in eWOM content. Respondents indicated that credible, truthful, and well-supported eWOM strongly influences their decisions to purchase products or services.

**Attitudes toward eWOM Hypotheses:** Attitudes toward eWOM were also found to have a significant positive effect on purchasing intention ( $\beta=0.681$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). With an explanatory power of 46.4%, this factor reflects the degree to which respondents' positive perceptions of eWOM influence their purchasing behavior. Favorable attitudes suggest that respondents view eWOM as a trusted and effective guide for decision-making, underscoring its role in driving consumer engagement and purchase intent.

**Social Support Hypotheses:** Social support within digital communities emerged as another significant factor, with a strong positive relationship to purchasing intention ( $\beta=0.694$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). It accounted for 48.2% of the variance in purchasing intention. This result underscores the value of emotional and informational support provided by online communities in influencing consumer behavior. Social interactions and recommendations from peers help to build confidence and trust in purchasing decisions.

The findings confirm that all three eWOM factors have a substantial and positive impact on purchasing intention. Among the three, information credibility and social support showed slightly stronger effects than attitudes toward eWOM, emphasizing the need for businesses to focus on fostering trust and community engagement in their eWOM strategies. These results align with existing research that highlights the centrality of eWOM in driving consumer behavior in digital marketplaces.

The acceptance of these hypotheses provides a comprehensive understanding of how eWOM influences consumer purchasing intentions and sets the stage for further exploration of practical applications in marketing strategies.

### 5.3 Discussion and Recommendation for Implication

The primary goal of the current study is to present a thorough knowledge of electronic word of mouth affecting consumers' intents to make purchases on social media. This study advances our theoretical and practical knowledge of electronic word of mouth (eWOM) and how this factor affects consumers' intentions to make purchases on social media. It would be very helpful to take into account both information qualities and consumer behavior in addition to technological and social variables, particularly in the context of social media, as this study has only focused on one of these two topics.

The findings of this study support the understanding of how electronic word of mouth (eWOM) affects purchase intentions and are in accordance with earlier research. Information credibility, attitudes toward eWOM, and social support are all factors that have demonstrated strong agreement with previous research in the field. In line with previous research, the important roles of social support, attitudes about eWOM, and information credibility demonstrate how these elements are interrelated in influencing consumer behavior. For example, Cheung and Thadani (2012) highlighted that trustworthy information in eWOM is a key factor in fostering customer trust, which lowers uncertainty and raises the probability that decisions will be made. This study supports their findings by demonstrating that credible eWOM content significantly influences purchasing intention. Similarly, Joshi and Singh (2017) found that credible eWOM serves as a strong predictor of purchase intention, particularly in cases where consumers seek validation for their choices.

The importance of attitudes toward eWOM aligns with Bruner and Kumar's (2000) assertion that favorable attitudes toward online communication channels enhance consumer engagement and decision-making. Positive attitudes create a psychological predisposition to trust and act on eWOM content, a phenomenon

further supported by Zainal et al. (2017), who demonstrated that trust in eWOM sources strengthens positive attitudes and mediates their effect on purchasing behavior. The present study confirms these findings, showing that positive attitudes significantly contribute to higher purchasing intentions among non-Thai students in Thailand.

The role of social support in eWOM also aligns with the findings of Liang et al. (2011), who identified informational and emotional support within digital communities as critical for consumer decision-making. This study reinforces their conclusions, showing that social support fosters a sense of belonging and confidence in purchasing decisions. Additionally, Riaz et al. (2021) emphasized the value of social interactions in online communities, demonstrating that emotional and informational support drive consumer trust and engagement, consistent with the findings of this study.

Collectively, these results support King et al.'s (2014) conclusion that eWOM effectiveness is a multifaceted phenomenon driven by the integration of credible information, positive attitudes, and supportive interactions. The current study shows that these factors collectively explain a significant proportion of the variance in purchasing intention emphasizing the synergistic nature of their influence. The alignment with past research underscores the reliability of these constructs and highlights their universal applicability in diverse cultural and demographic contexts. These findings provide a robust foundation for businesses and marketers to design strategies that prioritize trust, foster positive consumer attitudes, and create supportive digital communities to maximize the impact of eWOM on purchasing intentions.

The findings of this study are also consistent with both Social Information Processing Theory (SIPT) and Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT). According to SIPT, individuals can develop meaningful relationships and exchange social information through computer-mediated communication, even without face-to-face interaction. This study supports SIPT as social support and information credibility were found to significantly influence purchasing intentions among participants. Respondents reported relying on their social networks on social media for product

recommendations and reviews, highlighting how online platforms can facilitate the exchange of valuable social information. Moreover, participants were more likely to trust and act on eWOM if the information came from credible sources, aligning with SIPT's assertion that individuals adapt their communication to ensure the information they receive or share is meaningful.

Similarly, the findings also align with Uses and Gratification Theory, which suggests that individuals actively seek media to fulfill various needs, such as informational, social, or entertainment-related. In this study, participants were found to use social media primarily to gather information and interact socially, which matches UGT's premise. Respondents indicated that they actively sought out product recommendations, reviews, and experiences from peers or influencers to make informed decisions. Additionally, participants' attitudes toward eWOM were strongly influenced by the perceived usefulness of the information shared, supporting UGT's idea that individuals choose media that best serves their needs. The study confirms that social media is used to gratify informational and social needs, which in turn influences purchasing behavior.

Building on the insights gained from the analysis of the study's consistency with Social Information Processing Theory and Uses and Gratification Theory, it is clear that eWOM has a significant impact on consumer behavior, particularly on social media platforms. Based on these findings, several detailed recommendations can be made for further application.

### 5.3.1 Application for Communication Scholars/ Researchers

For communication scholars and researchers, future studies should expand the understanding of eWOM by exploring cross-cultural differences in how consumers respond to online word-of-mouth across different geographic and cultural contexts. Research could also examine the long-term effects of eWOM on consumer loyalty and brand perception, particularly how repeated exposure to eWOM over time influences consumer trust and purchasing behaviors. Scholars should investigate the role of various social media platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and others, in shaping eWOM effectiveness, as each platform offers different affordances

and user engagement dynamics. Additionally, future research can delve into the demographic influences on eWOM, analyzing how factors like age, gender, education, and social status impact the way individuals consume and trust eWOM.

### 5.3.2 Application for Governmental Offices/ Policy Makers

For governmental offices and policy makers, there is a need for regulations and guidelines to ensure the authenticity and credibility of online reviews and testimonials. Governments could implement measures to combat deceptive practices such as fake reviews and influencer fraud, promoting transparency about paid partnerships and sponsored content. Policy makers should also focus on encouraging digital literacy among consumers, particularly for vulnerable groups, to help them critically evaluate online reviews and differentiate between genuine and misleading eWOM. By fostering an informed public, governments can ensure that eWOM remains a trustworthy source of information for consumers.

### 5.3.3 Application for Communication Practitioners and Businesses

Communication practitioners, including digital marketers, public relations professionals, and social media managers, should leverage eWOM to enhance brand visibility and influence purchasing decisions. Building trust with the audience should be a priority, achieved by ensuring that the eWOM content shared is credible, accurate, and aligned with the brand's values. Practitioners should engage with influencers who have a strong, authentic connection with their audiences, rather than simply choosing those with the largest followings. Additionally, communication professionals should focus on creating engaging, shareable content that encourages positive user-generated eWOM. Monitoring eWOM trends and analyzing consumer sentiment can help practitioners refine their messaging strategies, ensuring that their communications resonate with their target audiences and respond to shifting consumer preferences.

For businesses, the findings suggest the importance of maintaining an authentic online presence. Companies should prioritize transparency in all communications, especially when it comes to sponsored content and influencer partnerships. Establishing trust is essential, and businesses should be proactive in

fostering positive eWOM by encouraging satisfied customers to share their experiences on social media and review platforms. To further ensure credibility, businesses could implement systems to verify the accuracy of online reviews and testimonials, preventing the spread of misinformation. Actively engaging with feedback, both positive and negative, is another crucial step in building consumer trust. Responding to customers' comments, addressing concerns, and acknowledging praise can foster stronger relationships with consumers, enhancing customer loyalty and driving brand advocacy. By focusing on authenticity, transparency, and active engagement, businesses can maximize the effectiveness of eWOM to build long-term relationships with consumers.

These comprehensive recommendations offer a multifaceted approach to applying the study's findings across academic research, policy development, communication practices, and business strategies. By considering the unique needs and responsibilities of each stakeholder group, these suggestions aim to enhance the impact of eWOM while maintaining ethical standards and fostering a more trustworthy, transparent, and engaging digital landscape.

#### 5.4 Recommendations and Limitations for Further Research

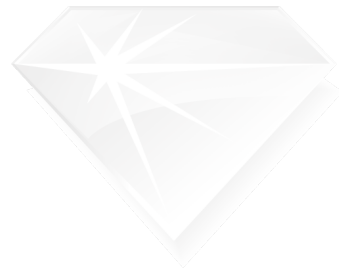
Based on the findings of this study, several realistic recommendations and limitations for future research can be identified. First, for future research, it would be valuable to investigate the specific role of visual content in shaping eWOM's effectiveness. As social media platforms become increasingly visual, understanding how images, videos, and other multimedia content influence consumer behavior could provide deeper insights into eWOM's impact. Longitudinal studies should also be considered to explore the long-term effects of eWOM on consumer behavior, especially how repeated exposure to online recommendations may affect brand loyalty and consumer trust over time. Researchers could also delve into the psychological factors influencing eWOM, such as how emotional reactions (e.g., excitement or fear) to eWOM affect purchasing intentions. Additionally, exploring how different types of influencers (ranging from micro-influencers to celebrities)

affect consumer attitudes toward eWOM would be helpful, as it could provide businesses with clearer guidelines on influencer marketing strategies.

Another recommendation for future studies is to compare eWOM across social media platforms, as the dynamics of user interaction differ across platforms. For example, the way eWOM operates on TikTok (video-centric, fast-paced) might differ significantly from Facebook or Instagram (where posts can be more visual or text-heavy), and examining these differences could provide platform-specific marketing strategies. Finally, more research into how cultural and demographic factors influence the effectiveness of eWOM would be valuable. Since this study was conducted with non-Thai students in Thailand, it's important to understand how factors like nationality, age, or social status shape perceptions of eWOM in different contexts.

However, there are several limitations to this study that should be addressed in future research. The convenience sampling method limits the generalizability of the results, as the sample may not fully represent the broader population. Future studies should aim for more diverse samples that include a broader range of demographics and geographic locations. Additionally, the study's cross-sectional design only captures data at a single point in time, which means it is not possible to establish causal relationships. A longitudinal study would provide deeper insights into how eWOM influences purchasing intentions over time. The study also relied on self-reported data, which can introduce biases such as social desirability or recall bias. Future research could benefit from combining self-reported data with more objective metrics, such as actual consumer behavior (e.g., purchasing data, social media analytics). Moreover, the limited focus on specific variables such as social support and information credibility may overlook other important factors like the impact of product type, brand reputation, or peer influence, which could play significant roles in shaping consumer behavior. Lastly, the study's focus on a specific cultural context (non-Thai students in Thailand) limits its applicability to other cultural groups. Cross-cultural studies would provide more robust findings that account for different cultural influences on consumer behavior and eWOM.

By addressing these limitations and recommendations, future research can further contribute to the understanding of eWOM's impact on consumer behavior and offer more practical insights for businesses, marketers, and policymakers.



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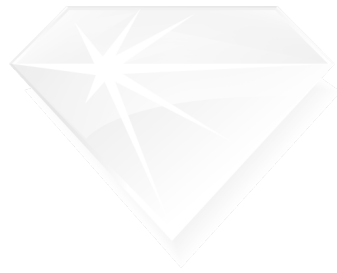
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## APPENDIX

### Questionnaire

My name is Pyone Myat Thwe, and I am a graduate student at Bangkok University, pursuing a Master of Communication Arts in Global Communication. As part of my program requirements, I am conducting a survey research project which was aimed to comprehend the impact of eWOM (Electronic Word of Mouth) towards purchasing intention on social media among non-Thai students in Thailand.

This questionnaire is divided into three sections and includes a total of 25 questions. Completing it will take approximately 10 minutes of your time. Please be assured that all personal data collected will remain anonymous and will be used exclusively for educational purposes. Your honest responses are highly valued and will play a crucial role in the success of my research.

#### Section 1: Demographic Information (5 Questions)

1. What gender do you identify as?

- A. Male
- B. Female
- C. Prefer not to say

2. What is your age?

- A. Under 18
- B. 18-27 years old.
- C. 28-37 years old
- D. 38 and above

3. What is your country of origin?

- A. China

- B. Vietnam
- C. Myanmar
- D. Laos
- E. Other (Please specify):

4. What is your current level of Education?

- A. High School Diploma
- B. Associate Degree
- C. Bachelor's Degree
- D. Master's Degree
- E. Doctoral Degree (PhD)
- F. Diploma/Certificate Programs
- G. Others

5. How long have you been in Thailand?

- A. less than 1 year
- B. 1-2 years
- C. 3-4 years
- D. 5 years and above

Section 2: Consumer Behavior (6 Questions)

6. How much time do you spend on social media on a daily basis?

- A. less than 1 hour
- B. 1-2 hours
- C. 3-4 hours

D. 5 hours and above

7. Which of the following social media platforms do you use most frequently? (Select all that apply)

A. Facebook

B. Instagram

C. Twitter

D. Tiktok

E. Line

F. Others



8. How often do you shop online?

A. Never

B. Once a month

C. 2-3 times a month

D. Once a week

E. More than once a week

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	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9	Social media is beneficial for influencing consumers' purchasing decisions.					
10	Advertisements on social media platforms provide useful information that can guide purchasing decisions.					
11	Social media tools encourage and motivate users to engage in online shopping.					

Section 3: eWOM Factors (9 Questions)

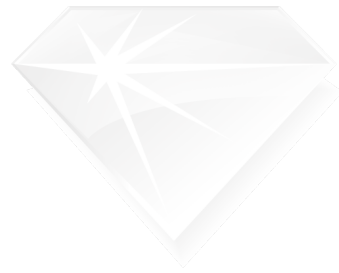
	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	<b>Information Credibility</b>					
12	Sharing opinions about products with your social media contacts is useful for spreading trustworthy information.					
13	I believe that online reviews shared through social media accurately reflect the quality of the product.					
14	I tend to trust online reviews more if they come from verified or experienced users.					
	<b>Attitude towards eWOM</b>					
15	I usually follow recommendations and reviews on social media before purchasing a product or service.					
16	Positive eWOM reviews on social media strongly affect my decision to buy a product.					
17	Negative reviews online make me reconsider purchasing a product, even if I was planning to buy it.					
	<b>Social Support</b>					
18	I rely on my friends' and family's opinions when making purchasing decisions.					
19	I often seek advice from my social network before buying a product.					
20	Positive feedback from my social network reinforces my trust in the product.					

Section 4: Purchasing Intention (5 Questions)

	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
21	After reading positive online reviews, I am more likely to purchase the product.					
22	I tend to buy products that have been highly rated by other users.					

23	Online reviews play a significant role in my purchasing decisions.					
24	I am willing to pay more for a product if it has excellent online reviews.					
25	I often choose products with the highest ratings, even if they are more expensive.					

End of Questionnaire. Thank you for your time



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