

THE INFLUENCE OF MARKETING FACTORS ON ONLINE PURCHASE DECISION BEHAVIOR IN THE UPPER NORTHERN REGION OF THAILAND*

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of marketing factors on online purchase decision behavior in the upper northern region of Thailand by integrating traditional marketing constructs with digital-era variables. A quantitative research design was employed, and data were collected from 450 respondents with prior online purchasing experience using a convenience sampling technique. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was applied to test the hypothesized relationships among marketing factors (7Ps), user-generated content (UGC), customer trust, social commerce, and perceived convenience.

The results indicate that marketing factors have a significant positive effect on purchase decision behavior ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$), with process and place emerging as particularly influential dimensions. UGC significantly influences customer trust ($\beta = 0.52$, $p < 0.001$), which in turn affects purchase decisions (β

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= 0.36, $p < 0.001$), confirming its mediating role. Additionally, social commerce ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.01$) and perceived convenience ($\beta = 0.33$, $p < 0.001$) were found to significantly impact purchase behavior. The structural model demonstrated a good fit with the empirical data (CFI = 0.93, TLI = 0.92, RMSEA = 0.057), confirming its robustness and validity.

The findings contribute to the literature by integrating traditional marketing theory with digital consumer behavior frameworks, providing a comprehensive model for understanding online purchasing behavior in emerging markets. From a practical perspective, the study highlights the importance of enhancing service processes, platform accessibility, and digital engagement strategies. At the policy level, the results emphasize the need for digital infrastructure development, consumer protection, and digital literacy to support sustainable growth in Thailand's e-commerce sector.

Keywords: Online Purchase Behavior, Perceived Convenience, Customer Trust Social Commerce, User-Generated Content (UGC)

Introduction

The rapid expansion of digital technology has significantly transformed consumer behavior, particularly in the context of online purchasing. Over the past decade, the proliferation of internet access, mobile devices, and social media platforms has reshaped how consumers search for information, evaluate alternatives, and make purchasing decisions. In emerging economies such as Thailand, this transformation has been particularly evident, with online commerce becoming an integral part of daily life. According to Statista (2023), Thailand is among the fastest-growing e-commerce markets in Southeast Asia, driven by increasing digital adoption and the widespread use of social media platforms. Consequently, understanding the determinants of online purchase

decision behavior has become a critical area of inquiry for both scholars and practitioners.

Traditional marketing theories, particularly the marketing mix framework (7Ps), have long been used to explain consumer behavior. The 7Ps product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing how marketing strategies influence consumer decisions (Kotler & Keller, 2016). While this framework remains foundational, it is primarily grounded in firm-controlled environments in which value is created and delivered through structured and linear processes. However, in digital environments especially within social commerce contexts consumer behavior is increasingly shaped by decentralized interactions, real-time communication, and user participation. As a result, the explanatory power of the traditional 7Ps framework becomes limited, as it does not fully account for the dynamic, interactive, and co-created nature of value in digital marketplaces.

In recent years, the emergence of social commerce has introduced new dynamics into the online purchasing environment. Social commerce, defined as the use of social media platforms to facilitate online buying and selling activities, has become increasingly prevalent in Thailand. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok have evolved beyond communication tools to become key channels for commercial transactions. Unlike traditional e-commerce, social commerce integrates social interaction, user participation, and content sharing, thereby influencing consumer perceptions and decision-making processes (Hajli, 2015). In this context, purchasing decisions are not solely driven by firm-generated marketing efforts but are significantly influenced by peer interactions, algorithm-driven content exposure, and viral trends. This shift highlights a critical theoretical gap, as traditional marketing frameworks do not sufficiently capture the role of user-driven content and social influence in shaping consumer behavior.

This limitation creates a fundamental tension between traditional marketing logic and contemporary digital consumption patterns. Conventional marketing assumes that firms control key elements of the marketing mix and guide consumers through structured decision-making processes. In contrast, social commerce platforms such as TikTok and Instagram operate through decentralized and rapidly evolving ecosystems, where consumers are both content creators and decision influencers. Viral product trends, influencer endorsements, and peer-generated reviews can significantly shape purchasing behavior independent of formal marketing strategies. In regional contexts such as the upper northern region of Thailand, this tension becomes even more pronounced, as consumers simultaneously engage with traditional retail structures and digitally mediated social commerce environments. Therefore, relying solely on the 7Ps framework may overlook critical mechanisms driving consumer decision-making in such hybrid contexts.

User-generated content (UGC), in particular, has emerged as a powerful influence on consumer behavior. UGC refers to any form of content created by users, including reviews, ratings, comments, and shared experiences. Prior research has consistently demonstrated that consumers tend to perceive UGC as more credible and trustworthy than firm-generated content (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006). In the context of online purchasing, UGC serves as a form of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), which significantly reduces information asymmetry and perceived risk. This is especially important in digital environments where consumers cannot physically inspect products before purchase. Therefore, integrating UGC into the analysis of online purchase behavior provides a more accurate representation of contemporary consumer decision-making processes. Another critical factor influencing online purchase behavior is customer trust. Trust has been widely recognized as a fundamental determinant of online transactions, particularly in environments characterized by uncertainty and risk (Gefen, Karahanna, & Straub, 2003). In online and social commerce settings, trust

is not only directed toward sellers but also toward platforms, payment systems, and other users. The presence of credible reviews, transparent information, and secure transaction processes can enhance customer trust, thereby increasing the likelihood of purchase decisions. Conversely, a lack of trust can deter consumers from engaging in online transactions, regardless of the attractiveness of marketing offerings.

In addition to trust, perceived convenience plays a significant role in shaping online purchase behavior. Perceived convenience refers to the extent to which consumers believe that online shopping processes are easy, efficient, and time-saving. In the digital era, consumers increasingly value seamless user experiences, including intuitive interfaces, quick navigation, and efficient payment systems. Research has shown that perceived ease of use and convenience significantly influence consumer attitudes and behavioral intentions in online contexts (Davis, 1989). In Thailand, where mobile commerce is highly prevalent, convenience has become a key competitive factor among online platforms.

Despite the growing body of literature on online consumer behavior, several research gaps remain. First, many existing studies continue to rely heavily on traditional marketing mix frameworks without adequately incorporating digital-era constructs such as UGC, social commerce, and platform-based trust. Second, empirical research in Thailand has predominantly focused on major urban areas, particularly Bangkok, which may not fully reflect the diversity of consumer behavior across regions. The upper northern region of Thailand, which includes provinces such as Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai, represents a distinctive socio-economic and cultural context characterized by a hybrid of urban and rural lifestyles, strong community-based consumption patterns, and rapidly increasing digital adoption. Compared to the Bangkok metropolitan area, where consumption is highly urbanized and infrastructure-driven, consumers in this region often rely on mobile-based social commerce while maintaining localized

purchasing behaviors and social networks. This unique combination creates a context in which traditional and digital consumption logics coexist, making it particularly important to examine how marketing and digital factors jointly influence purchase decisions.

Furthermore, previous studies often employ basic statistical techniques such as regression analysis, which may not fully capture the complex relationships among multiple variables. Advanced analytical approaches, such as Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), allow for the simultaneous examination of direct and indirect effects, including mediating variables such as trust and perceived convenience. By adopting SEM, researchers can develop a more comprehensive understanding of the underlying mechanisms that drive online purchase behavior.

In response to these gaps, this study aims to examine the influence of marketing factors on online purchase decision behavior in the upper northern region of Thailand by integrating traditional marketing constructs with digital-era variables, including user-generated content, social commerce, customer trust, and perceived convenience. Specifically, this study seeks to develop and test a conceptual model that explains how these factors interact to influence consumer behavior in a regional context. By doing so, the study not only extends existing theoretical frameworks but also provides practical insights for businesses operating in digital marketplaces.

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to both theory and practice. From a theoretical perspective, the study advances the understanding of consumer behavior by integrating traditional and contemporary constructs into a unified framework. From a practical perspective, the findings can inform marketers, entrepreneurs, and policymakers about the key drivers of online purchasing behavior in regional markets, thereby supporting the development of effective digital marketing strategies.

In conclusion, as digital technologies continue to evolve and reshape consumer behavior, it is essential to revisit and refine existing theoretical models to reflect contemporary realities. By focusing on the upper northern region of Thailand and incorporating key digital factors such as UGC, social commerce, trust, and perceived convenience, this study aims to provide a more comprehensive and contextually relevant understanding of online purchase decision behavior. The insights gained from this research will contribute to the growing body of knowledge in digital marketing and consumer behavior, while also offering practical implications for enhancing competitiveness in the digital economy.

Objectives

1. To examine the influence of marketing factors (7Ps) on online purchase decision behavior among consumers in the upper northern region of Thailand.
2. To investigate the effect of user-generated content (UGC) and social commerce on customer trust and perceived convenience.
3. To assess the influence of customer trust and perceived convenience on online purchase decision behavior.
4. To analyze the mediating roles of customer trust and perceived convenience in the relationships between digital marketing factors and online purchase behavior.
5. To develop and validate a structural equation model (SEM) explaining online purchase decision behavior in the context of social commerce.

Literature Review

The study of online purchase behavior has evolved significantly alongside the advancement of digital technologies and the rapid expansion of e-commerce and social commerce platforms. Traditional frameworks, particularly the

marketing mix (7Ps), have long provided a foundational basis for understanding consumer decision-making processes. The 7Ps framework product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence offers a structured approach for analyzing how firm-controlled marketing strategies influence consumer behavior (Kotler & Keller, 2016). In online contexts, elements such as process and place remain highly relevant, as they are closely associated with accessibility, usability, and transaction efficiency. However, the applicability of this framework becomes increasingly constrained in digital environments characterized by user participation, decentralized information flows, and platform-mediated interactions.

To address these limitations, contemporary research has incorporated constructs from the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), trust theory, and social commerce literature. TAM emphasizes perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness as key determinants of technology adoption (Davis, 1989), which align conceptually with perceived convenience in online purchasing contexts. Trust theory further extends this perspective by highlighting the role of perceived reliability and risk reduction in shaping consumer intentions (Gefen et al., 2003). While these frameworks provide valuable insights, they originate from different theoretical traditions and are often applied independently. In social commerce environments, however, these constructs converge. Specifically, marketing factors (7Ps) influence the structural design of the purchasing environment, TAM-related constructs explain user interaction with digital platforms, and trust mediates the relationship between information exposure and behavioral outcomes. This convergence suggests the need for an integrated framework that captures both firm-driven and user-driven mechanisms of value creation in digital marketplaces.

Within this integrated perspective, user-generated content (UGC) has emerged as a central construct influencing consumer behavior. UGC encompasses various forms of content created by users, including text-based

reviews, numerical ratings, images, and short-form videos. Importantly, different types of UGC may exert varying levels of influence on consumer trust and decision-making. For instance, text-based reviews and ratings provide structured and cognitive evaluations of products, while visual and video-based content particularly on platforms such as TikTok offer experiential, affective, and highly engaging forms of information. Recent studies have shown that video-based UGC and live-stream interactions significantly enhance perceived authenticity and trust compared to static content (Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020; Sun et al., 2023). This distinction is particularly relevant in high-engagement social commerce environments, where consumers rely on immersive and interactive content to reduce uncertainty and evaluate products.

Closely associated with UGC is the concept of customer trust, which remains a fundamental determinant of online purchase behavior. Trust is especially critical in digital environments characterized by uncertainty, information asymmetry, and the absence of physical product inspection (Gefen et al., 2003). In social commerce contexts, trust extends beyond the seller to include the platform, content creators, and peer communities. The credibility of UGC, transparency of communication, and perceived authenticity of influencers all contribute to trust formation. Moreover, recent research highlights that influencer marketing and live commerce play an increasingly important role in shaping trust and purchase intentions in Southeast Asia (Lim et al., 2023; Nguyen et al., 2024). These developments underscore the evolving nature of trust in digitally mediated environments, where interpersonal influence and social validation are central mechanisms.

Another critical construct in digital consumer behavior is perceived convenience, which reflects the extent to which consumers perceive online shopping as efficient, effortless, and time-saving. Rooted in TAM, perceived convenience is closely linked to ease of use and system usability (Davis, 1989).

In social commerce, convenience is further enhanced by platform features such as integrated payment systems, real-time interaction, and seamless navigation. Empirical studies have demonstrated that higher levels of perceived convenience lead to stronger purchase intentions and more favorable consumer attitudes (Sun et al., 2023). As mobile commerce continues to dominate in regions such as Southeast Asia, convenience has become a key competitive factor influencing platform choice and consumer loyalty.

In addition to these constructs, social commerce itself represents a transformative paradigm that reshapes traditional purchasing processes. Social commerce integrates social media functionalities with commercial activities, enabling consumers to engage in interactive, community-driven, and content-rich environments (Hajli, 2015). Unlike traditional e-commerce, which is largely transactional and firm-driven, social commerce emphasizes participation, engagement, and co-creation of value. Emerging trends such as live commerce where products are promoted and sold through live-streaming events and influencer marketing have further amplified the role of social interaction in shaping consumer behavior. Recent studies indicate that live commerce significantly increases purchase intention by enhancing perceived enjoyment, trust, and immediacy of interaction (Sun et al., 2023; Nguyen et al., 2024).

Despite the growing body of literature, several gaps remain. First, existing studies often examine marketing mix factors, TAM constructs, and trust mechanisms in isolation, without adequately synthesizing their interrelationships within a unified framework. Second, the diversity of UGC types and their differential impacts on trust and behavior remain underexplored, particularly in high-engagement platforms such as TikTok. Third, while recent studies have begun to address emerging phenomena such as live commerce and influencer marketing, empirical research in regional contexts particularly in the upper northern region of Thailand remains limited.

Therefore, this study aims to address these gaps by developing an integrated conceptual framework that combines traditional marketing factors (7Ps) with digital-era constructs, including user-generated content, social commerce, customer trust, and perceived convenience. By synthesizing these theoretical perspectives, the study seeks to provide a more comprehensive and contextually grounded understanding of online purchase decision behavior in contemporary digital environments.

Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research design to examine the influence of marketing factors on online purchase decision behavior in the upper northern region of Thailand. The research framework integrates traditional marketing constructs with digital-era variables, including user-generated content (UGC), social commerce, customer trust, and perceived convenience. A structured survey method was adopted to collect empirical data, enabling statistical analysis and hypothesis testing.

Research Design and Population. The target population comprised consumers residing in the upper northern region of Thailand, including Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Lampang, Lamphun, Phayao, Phrae, Nan, and Mae Hong Son, who have prior experience purchasing products through online or social commerce platforms. Individuals actively engaging with Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok for purchasing purposes were included.

Due to the absence of a complete sampling frame, a non-probability sampling method, specifically convenience sampling, was employed. While this approach is widely used in consumer behavior research for its practicality and efficiency (Hair et al., 2019), it may introduce sampling bias and limit the generalizability of the findings. To mitigate this limitation, key demographic variables including age, gender, education level, and income were collected and

treated as control variables in the analysis. These variables were incorporated to account for potential heterogeneity among respondents and to improve the robustness of the estimated relationships.

Sample Size. The sample size was determined following Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) guidelines, which recommend 10–20 observations per estimated parameter (Hair et al., 2019). Accordingly, a sample size of 400–500 respondents was deemed sufficient to ensure statistical power and model stability. A total of 450 valid responses were collected, meeting the recommended threshold for SEM analysis.

Research Instrument. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed based on validated scales from prior studies. The questionnaire consisted of two main sections: (1) demographic information and (2) measurement items for the study variables. All constructs were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

To ensure cultural and linguistic appropriateness, the questionnaire was translated into Thai using a back-translation procedure. The initial English version was translated into Thai and subsequently translated back into English by independent bilingual experts to ensure semantic equivalence. Additionally, the measurement items were contextualized to reflect local usage patterns in northern Thailand. For example, items related to social commerce were adapted to include references to commonly used platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, and phrased in a way that reflects everyday consumer experiences (e.g., “I trust product reviews from other users on social media platforms” and “It is convenient to purchase products through mobile applications”). A pilot test was conducted with a small group of respondents to ensure clarity, relevance, and comprehension of the questionnaire items.

The measurement items were adapted as follows: marketing factors (7Ps) were derived from Kotler and Keller (2016); user-generated content from

Chevalier and Mayzlin (2006); customer trust from Gefen et al. (2003); perceived convenience from Davis (1989); and social commerce constructs from Hajli (2015). The questionnaire was reviewed by experts to ensure content validity.

Validity and Reliability. The study ensured strong validity and reliability of the measurement model. Content validity was confirmed using Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) values ranging from 0.67 to 1.00. Reliability analysis demonstrated high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values between 0.82 and 0.94. Construct validity was verified through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), indicating adequate convergent validity, as factor loadings exceeded 0.60, composite reliability ranged from 0.83 to 0.95, and average variance extracted (AVE) values were above 0.50. Discriminant validity was established using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and HTMT ratios below 0.85. Overall, these results confirm that the measurement model is statistically reliable and valid for SEM analysis.

To assess potential common method bias (CMB) arising from self-reported data, Harman's single-factor test was conducted. The results indicated that a single factor did not account for the majority of the variance, with the first factor explaining less than 50% of the total variance. This suggests that common method bias is unlikely to pose a serious threat to the validity of the findings.

Data Analysis. Data analysis was conducted in two stages. First, descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were used to summarize respondents' characteristics and general responses. Second, inferential statistical analysis was performed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to test the hypothesized relationships among variables.

SEM was selected as the primary analytical technique due to its ability to simultaneously examine complex relationships among multiple latent variables, including both direct and indirect effects (Byrne, 2016). The analysis consisted of two components: the measurement model and the structural model. The

measurement model was evaluated using CFA to ensure reliability and validity, while the structural model was used to test the hypothesized relationships among marketing factors, UGC, social commerce, customer trust, perceived convenience, and online purchase decision behavior.

Model fit was assessed using multiple fit indices, including the chi-square statistic (χ^2), comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker–Lewis index (TLI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). Acceptable model fit was determined based on recommended thresholds, with CFI and TLI values above 0.90 and RMSEA below 0.08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Ethical Considerations. Participation in the study was voluntary, and respondents were informed of the purpose of the research prior to completing the questionnaire. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured, and all data were used solely for academic purposes.

Results

Descriptive Statistics. A total of 450 valid responses were collected. The majority of respondents were female (58.2%), aged between 21–35 years (62.4%), and held a bachelor's degree (54.7%). Most participants reported purchasing products online at least 2–3 times per month, primarily via social commerce platforms such as Facebook and TikTok. These findings indicate that the sample represents active online consumers, suitable for analyzing purchase behavior in digital contexts.

Assessment of Normality. Prior to SEM analysis, the normality of the data distribution was assessed using skewness and kurtosis statistics. The results indicate that skewness values ranged from -1.12 to 0.98 and kurtosis values ranged from -1.05 to 1.21 , which fall within the acceptable thresholds of ± 2 for skewness and ± 7 for kurtosis (Hair et al., 2019). These results suggest that the

data approximate a normal distribution and support the use of Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimation in Structural Equation Modeling.

Measurement Model Evaluation. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to assess the validity and reliability of the constructs. The results indicate that the measurement model demonstrates a good fit with the data: $\chi^2/df = 2.31$, CFI = 0.94, TLI = 0.93, and RMSEA = 0.054, meeting the recommended thresholds (Hu & Bentler, 1999). All factor loadings were statistically significant and exceeded 0.60, confirming indicator reliability. Composite reliability (CR) values ranged from 0.84 to 0.95, while average variance extracted (AVE) values ranged from 0.56 to 0.78, indicating strong convergent validity (Hair et al., 2019). Discriminant validity was established using the Fornell–Larcker criterion, as the square root of AVE for each construct exceeded inter-construct correlations.

Table 1: Measurement Model Results

Construct	Factor Loadings	CR	AVE
Marketing Factors	0.65–0.88	0.91	0.62
UGC	0.68–0.90	0.89	0.66
Customer Trust	0.70–0.92	0.93	0.72
Perceived Convenience	0.66–0.87	0.88	0.59
Social Commerce	0.64–0.89	0.90	0.63
Purchase Decision	0.71–0.91	0.94	0.75

Structural Model Analysis. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to test the hypothesized relationships among variables. The structural model demonstrated a satisfactory fit: $\chi^2/df = 2.45$, CFI = 0.93, TLI = 0.92, and RMSEA = 0.057.

The results reveal that marketing factors have a significant positive effect on online purchase decision behavior ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$), supporting the first research objective. User-generated content (UGC) was found to have a strong positive impact on customer trust ($\beta = 0.52$, $p < 0.001$). Customer trust, in turn, significantly influenced purchase decision behavior ($\beta = 0.36$, $p < 0.001$).

Social commerce also demonstrated a significant positive effect on purchase behavior ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.01$), while perceived convenience significantly influenced purchase decisions ($\beta = 0.33$, $p < 0.001$). These findings confirm that both traditional marketing factors and digital constructs play significant roles in shaping consumer behavior.

Table 2: Structural Model Results

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	Result
H1	Marketing Factors $\rightarrow$ Purchase Decision	0.41	6.72	Supported
H2	UGC $\rightarrow$ Customer Trust	0.52	8.15	Supported
H3	Customer Trust $\rightarrow$ Purchase Decision	0.36	5.89	Supported
H4	Social Commerce $\rightarrow$ Purchase Decision	0.29	4.12	Supported
H5	Perceived Convenience $\rightarrow$ Purchase Decision	0.33	5.21	Supported

Moderation Analysis. To explore whether demographic characteristics influence the relationship between perceived convenience and purchase decision behavior, a multi-group analysis was conducted based on age and gender. The results indicate that the relationship between perceived convenience and purchase decision behavior is stronger among younger

consumers (aged 21–35) compared to older age groups. However, no significant differences were observed between male and female respondents.

These findings suggest that age may act as a moderating factor in shaping the impact of perceived convenience on purchase decisions, particularly in digitally active consumer segments.

Overall, the results confirm that both traditional marketing factors and digital constructs significantly influence online purchase behavior. Marketing factors remain a strong predictor, while UGC, social commerce, and perceived convenience reflect the growing importance of digital environments. Customer trust plays a crucial mediating role, and demographic differences particularly age further shape consumer responses in social commerce contexts.

The Structural Equation Model (SEM) illustrates the relationships among key factors influencing online purchase decisions and demonstrates good model fit ($\chi^2/df = 2.45$, CFI = 0.93, TLI = 0.92, RMSEA = 0.057), indicating strong consistency with empirical data. As shown in Figure 1.

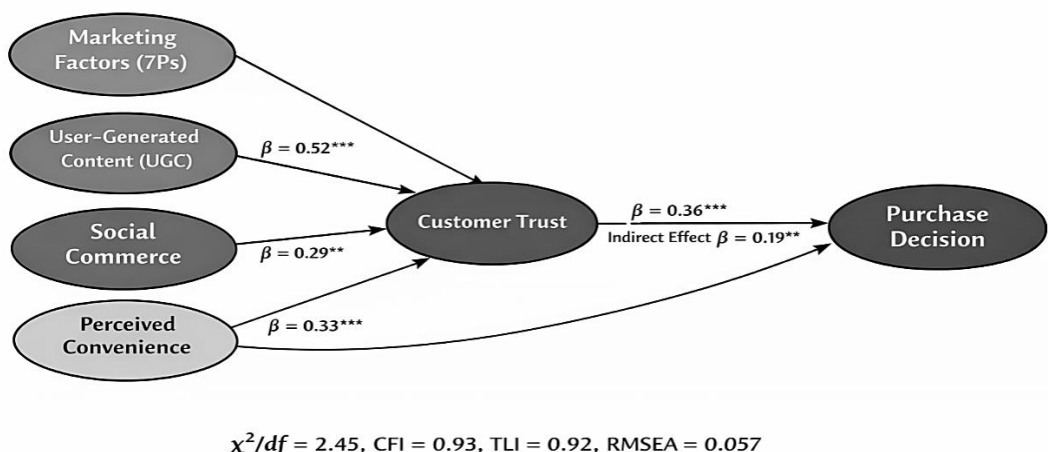


Figure 1: Structural Equation Model of Marketing Factors Influencing Online Purchase Decision Behavior in the Upper Northern Region of Thailand

Discussion

This study aimed to examine the influence of marketing factors and digital constructs on online purchase decision behavior in the upper northern region of Thailand. The findings provide strong empirical support for the proposed model, confirming that both traditional marketing variables and digital-era factors significantly influence consumer behavior in social commerce contexts.

Regarding the first objective, the results reveal that marketing factors (7Ps) have a significant positive effect on online purchase decision behavior. This finding is consistent with the foundational framework proposed by Kotler and Keller (2016), indicating that core elements such as product quality, pricing strategies, and service processes remain influential even in digitally mediated environments. Rather than being replaced, these traditional marketing elements are extended and recontextualized within online platforms.

A particularly notable finding of this study is the strong effect of user-generated content (UGC) on customer trust ($\beta = 0.52, p < 0.001$). This relatively high coefficient suggests that UGC is not merely a supplementary information source but a primary driver of trust formation in social commerce environments. While prior studies have established the importance of electronic word-of-mouth (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006), the magnitude of this effect indicates a shift toward user-dominated influence structures, especially on high-engagement platforms. From a practical perspective, this implies that businesses should move beyond passive reliance on customer reviews and actively design mechanisms to encourage content creation. However, such strategies must carefully balance incentivization with perceived authenticity. For instance, firms may encourage organic content through non-monetary recognition (e.g., featuring customer content, community engagement, or social visibility) rather than direct financial rewards, which could undermine credibility. Additionally, facilitating interactive

formats such as live reviews or short-form video sharing may further enhance trust without compromising authenticity.

In relation to the mediating mechanism, customer trust was found to fully mediate the relationship between UGC and purchase decision behavior. This finding reinforces the trust-based model in e-commerce (Gefen et al., 2003) and suggests that UGC alone does not directly translate into purchasing decisions unless it is internalized as trust. This highlights the critical role of trust as a psychological conversion mechanism that transforms information exposure into behavioral outcomes.

While most findings align with existing literature, several results provide important nuances and partial incongruence with prior expectations. Notably, although social commerce and perceived convenience were both significant predictors of purchase decisions, their effects were relatively moderate compared to the influence of UGC and marketing factors. This contrasts with some recent studies that position social commerce features and platform usability as dominant drivers of online purchasing behavior. One possible explanation lies in the regional context of the upper northern region of Thailand, where consumers may place greater emphasis on interpersonal trust and peer validation than on platform functionality alone. Additionally, the non-significant direct effect of UGC on purchase decisions (in the presence of trust) suggests a more complex causal structure than commonly assumed in prior models. These findings indicate that, in this context, social influence operates indirectly through trust rather than as a direct behavioral trigger. Such nuances highlight the importance of contextualizing digital consumer behavior models within specific socio-cultural environments.

Another important insight emerges from the moderation analysis, which indicates that perceived convenience has a stronger influence on purchase decisions among younger consumers. This finding suggests that digitally native

users are more responsive to usability and efficiency factors, whereas other demographic groups may rely more heavily on trust and social validation. This demographic variation adds an additional layer of complexity to consumer behavior models and underscores the importance of segmentation in digital marketing strategies.

From a theoretical perspective, this study makes a significant contribution by proposing an “Integrated Body of Knowledge Framework” that synthesizes traditional marketing theory, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), and trust-based models within a social commerce context. While TAM (Davis, 1989) emphasizes perceived ease of use and usefulness as determinants of technology adoption, the present framework extends TAM in two important ways. First, it incorporates user-generated content as an external, user-driven information source that shapes both perceived usefulness and trust. Second, it positions trust as a central mediating mechanism that connects technological interaction (TAM) and social influence (UGC and social commerce) to behavioral outcomes. In this sense, the framework shifts from a technology-centric perspective to a socio-technical perspective, where consumer decisions are co-created through interactions between platform features, marketing strategies, and user communities.

Furthermore, the integration of the 7Ps framework with digital constructs demonstrates that traditional marketing elements remain relevant but are dynamically reinforced by digital engagement factors. Rather than functioning independently, marketing mix elements, technological perceptions, and social influences interact synergistically to shape consumer behavior. This integrated approach addresses limitations in prior research, which often examines these constructs in isolation, and provides a more holistic understanding of online purchase decision behavior in contemporary digital environments.

From a practical standpoint, the findings suggest that businesses should adopt a hybrid strategy that combines strong marketing fundamentals with active

digital engagement. In particular, firms should prioritize building trust through authentic user interactions, enhancing platform convenience, and leveraging social commerce features to facilitate community-driven purchasing. Policymakers, in turn, can support these developments by promoting digital literacy, strengthening consumer protection mechanisms, and investing in digital infrastructure to ensure inclusive participation in the digital economy.

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that online purchase decision behavior in the upper northern region of Thailand is shaped by a complex interplay of traditional marketing factors and digital-era constructs. By highlighting the central role of UGC-driven trust and proposing an integrated theoretical framework, the study contributes to both the advancement of academic knowledge and the development of practical strategies in the evolving landscape of social commerce.

Furthermore, the validated SEM framework offers a robust analytical tool for future research, enabling scholars to explore complex relationships among latent variables in emerging markets. This integrative knowledge not only advances academic discourse but also supports practical innovation and national economic development in Thailand. As shown in Figure 2.

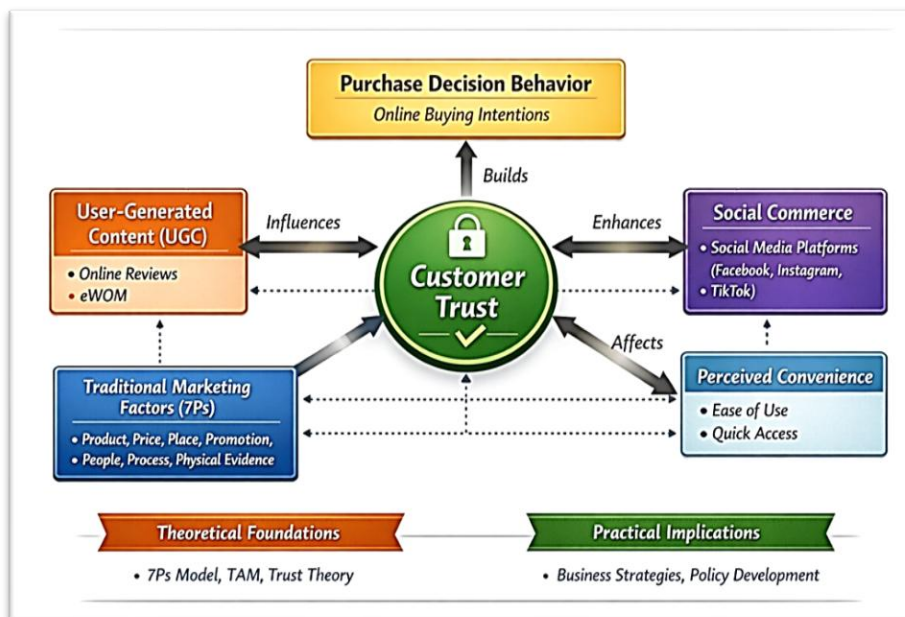


Figure 2: Integrated Body of Knowledge Framework for Digital Consumer Behavior in Thailand

Recommendation

This study investigates the influence of traditional marketing factors and digital-era constructs on online purchase decision behavior in the upper northern region of Thailand. By integrating the 7Ps marketing mix with user-generated content (UGC), social commerce, customer trust, and perceived convenience, the study develops a comprehensive framework that reflects contemporary consumer behavior in digital environments.

The findings confirm that marketing factors remain a significant predictor of purchase decisions, demonstrating that traditional marketing principles continue to be relevant in online contexts. However, digital constructs play an increasingly critical role. Notably, UGC has a strong positive effect on customer trust, which fully mediates its impact on purchase decisions. This highlights trust

as a key mechanism through which online information influences consumer behavior. Social commerce and perceived convenience also significantly affect purchasing decisions, emphasizing the importance of interactive platforms and user-friendly systems.

The study contributes theoretically by proposing an integrated framework that extends the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) into a socio-technical perspective, incorporating both firm-driven and user-driven influences. Practically, the findings suggest that businesses should focus on fostering authentic UGC, enhancing platform usability, and strengthening trust-building mechanisms. SMEs should prioritize community engagement and credibility signals, while large firms should invest in advanced systems and omnichannel integration.

At the policy level, the study highlights the need for improved digital infrastructure, particularly in rural and mountainous areas, alongside digital literacy and consumer protection initiatives. For future research, longitudinal designs are recommended to examine how trust evolves over time across repeated transactions.

Overall, this study provides a comprehensive and context-specific understanding of online consumer behavior, contributing to both academic knowledge and practical development in Thailand's digital economy.

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