

Consumer Product Reviews of Online Stores and Their Influence on Purchasing Decisions

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the influence of consumer product reviews on the purchasing decisions of online shoppers in Camarines Norte. Specifically, it examined the level of influence of review elements, including star ratings, the nature of reviews, and the source of reviews, and investigated whether a significant relationship exists between the respondents' demographic profiles and the influence of these reviews.

Furthermore, the research sought to identify common problems encountered by consumers regarding online product reviews and aimed to develop a practical consumer guide to support informed purchasing decisions. Using a descriptive-correlation research design, the study utilized survey data from 432 active online consumers to describe current behaviors and quantify the impact of digital feedback on consumer choices.

Results revealed that online product reviews serve as a critical tool for evaluating quality and building trust in the absence of physical inspection, particularly for electronic devices and accessories on platforms like Lazada. While consumers are significantly influenced by star ratings and the nature of reviews, they often overlook less prominent components such as feature-specific ratings and verified tester reviews.

Furthermore, the data showed that the most significant problem encountered by consumers is the prevalence of fake or inauthentic reviews. Statistical analysis confirmed a significant relationship between consumer profiles, specifically age and employment status, and the degree to which shoppers are swayed by online feedback, suggesting that younger and self-employed individuals exhibit distinct interaction patterns with digital reviews.

Based on these findings, it was concluded that online product reviews are a vital proxy for physical inspection in Camarines Norte, though their influence varies across demographic segments. The presence of information asymmetry and deceptive advertising remains a primary concern, necessitating structured intervention. Consequently, the researcher recommends that e-commerce platforms develop targeted strategies for dominant consumer profiles and implement advanced verification mechanisms. It is also highly recommended that retailers formally adopt the SMART BUY: A Practical Consumer Guide to Evaluating Online Product Reviews to enhance digital literacy. Finally, future research should explore broader mechanisms in online selling and influencer marketing to further refine consumer protection policies.

THE PROBLEM AND ITS BACKGROUND

Background of the Study

In the Philippines, the revenue in the Electronic Commerce (E-Commerce) market is projected to reach US\$3,546 million in 2020 based on an algorithm-based calculation of E-Commerce. Revenue is expected to show an annual growth rate from 2020 to 2025 of 16.7 percent, resulting in a projected market volume of US\$7,665m by 2025. The market's largest segment is electronics and media, with a projected market volume of US\$955m in 2020. This data shows the large sum of money being made through the internet by selling and buying goods in the Philippines. Filipinos are aware of the online market through the two biggest online platforms, such as Lazada and Shopee, wherein people can sell and buy worldwide using their applications (Statista, 2020).

Researchers in other countries have also emphasized the importance of product reviews in influencing consumer purchasing decisions, particularly when individuals face difficult trade-offs between product attributes. In situations where decision-making becomes complex, younger consumers tend to prefer higher-rated products as a shortcut for quality evaluation (Ali, 2024). However, this preference can still be influenced by emotionally charged (affect-rich) reviews, where a single highly positive or negative comment may override aggregated ratings. In contrast, older consumers are more strongly influenced by negative reviews and tend to rely more on individual experiential feedback rather than average ratings or positive comments.

These findings suggest that while younger consumers are guided more by numerical evaluations such as ratings, older consumers are more sensitive to emotional content, especially negative experiences shared in reviews. Despite these differences in age-related processing of review information, recent research continues to confirm that product reviews remain a critical factor in shaping online purchasing decisions. In particular, consumers across age groups still rely on user-generated feedback and rating systems when evaluating products, especially in online environments where physical inspection is not possible. A study by Cheung et al. (2022) supports this, emphasizing that online reviews significantly influence perceived product credibility and purchase intention, highlighting that both ratings and narrative reviews function as essential decision-making cues in digital shopping contexts.

The hospitality performance of online stores can be understood as the ability of e-commerce platforms to create a welcoming, convenient, and user-focused shopping experience that meets customer needs without face-to-face interaction. According to Perinotto and Santos (2022), key features of e-commerce, such as the flexibility of time, ease of comparing prices and products, and access to a broader range of suppliers, contribute significantly to this experience. These elements align with core hospitality principles by offering consumers comfort, autonomy, and efficiency in their shopping journey. By enabling purchases from anywhere at any time, online stores demonstrate attentiveness to modern lifestyles and preferences, which enhances their perceived hospitality.

Furthermore, the ability to receive peer reviews and recommendations, as well as the inclusion of users from rural or underserved areas, reflects a more inclusive and socially engaging shopping environment. The study highlights that these digital interactions help reduce the digital divide and expand market access, which not only benefits consumers but also strengthens competition and drives businesses to improve their service quality. In this way, hospitality in online commerce is not limited to product delivery; it is embedded in the entire customer experience, from navigation and personalization to accessibility and post-purchase support.

The increasing importance of online product reviews in influencing consumer behavior has positioned them as a critical factor in the profitability and overall performance of digital retail platforms. Consumer-generated product evaluations, or electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), significantly shape purchasing decisions by providing peer-based insights that are often perceived as more credible and accessible than traditional advertising (Ismagilova et al., 2021). Retailers, recognizing the persuasive power of these reviews, have strategically integrated them into their marketing systems to improve customer engagement and boost sales. Platforms like Amazon continue to encourage the use of customer reviews, with large volumes of evaluations contributing to consumer trust and product legitimacy. While findings vary, online reviews are widely recognized as influential in shaping consumer decisions and overall platform performance (Babić Rosario et al., 2022).

This became even more evident during the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated the shift to online shopping due to mobility restrictions and health protocols. In this new normal, where physical inspection of goods is often limited, online reviews have become a primary tool for evaluating product quality, price fairness, delivery reliability, and overall satisfaction. As such, the strategic use of product reviews plays a key role in building consumer trust and enhancing online store performance. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly altered consumer behavior in Camarines Norte, driving a shift toward online platforms for purchasing goods and services. With strict health protocols and transportation limitations, traditional shopping became less convenient. As a result, many residents turned to digital solutions such as delivery services and e-commerce platforms, reflecting a broader trend in the Philippines where digital transactions increased during and after the pandemic (Department of Trade and Industry, 2022).

In this new consumer landscape, online reviews and ratings emerged as critical tools that guide purchasing decisions by helping consumers evaluate products in terms of price, quality, satisfaction, delivery, and packaging. These reviews also serve as a proxy for physical inspection, building trust and confidence in the absence of face-to-face transactions. As the pandemic continues to reshape daily life, understanding the role of online reviews in consumer decision-making becomes increasingly important in sustaining the growth of e-commerce. This study aims to explore that influence and provide insights into how consumers in Camarines Norte, and beyond, can effectively adapt to and navigate the evolving digital marketplace in a post-pandemic economy.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to determine the consumer product reviews of online stores and its influence to purchasing decisions. Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of: age; sex; nature of employment; online shopping platform frequently used; and goods commonly purchased online?
2. What is the level of influence of product reviews to purchasing decisions of online consumers in terms of: star ratings; nature of review; and source of review?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and the level of influence of product reviews to purchasing decisions of online consumers?
4. What are the problems being encountered by consumers when purchasing that affect their online purchasing decisions?
5. Based on the findings of the study, what consumer guide may be proposed in relation to online purchasing decisions?

Hypothesis

This study is based on the hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and the level of influence of product reviews to purchasing decisions of online consumers.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study focused on examining how consumer product reviews influence the purchasing decisions of online shoppers in Camarines Norte. It aims to assess the extent to which review elements such as star ratings, the nature of reviews, and the source of review affect consumers' buying behavior. The research also investigated how these influences vary according to the respondents' profile, including age, sex, nature of employment, frequently used online shopping platforms, and commonly purchased goods. The study further sought to identify problems encountered by consumers when purchasing that affect their online purchasing decisions, and to propose a practical consumer guide for informed online purchasing.

The study involved 432 respondents from various towns in Camarines Norte, selected through a convenience sampling method to ensure time-efficiency and cost-effectiveness in data collection. This approach was chosen to facilitate a rapid gathering of primary data across a broad geographic area. Because the survey was administered through Google Forms, the sample consists of active online consumers with consistent internet access. While this target group aligns with the study's focus on digital consumer behavior, it is noted as a delimitation, as the findings may not fully represent segments of the population with limited digital connectivity.

Limitations also exist in the data utilized, as the consumer product reviews and ratings analyzed were strictly limited to publicly available feedback on selected e-commerce platforms, specifically Shopee and Lazada. Consequently, the findings may vary in authenticity and comprehensiveness, and do not account for private transactions or alternative digital marketplaces. Furthermore, because the study focuses on a specific sample size of 432 respondents within Camarines Norte, the results capture local consumer behavior patterns that may not fully reflect the shopping habits of consumers in other regions. Despite these regional and structural limitations,

the study provides statistically validated, relevant insights into the evolving dynamics of online consumer behavior in the local context.

Significance of the Study

This study would be beneficial to the following groups or individuals, as they are directly involved with the purchase decisions as well as the operations of online stores:

Online Stores / Sellers: The online market will benefit from this source of information about strategizing sales through the achievement of positive online reviews of their product as a good online image, as well as to increase sales and popularity. This study can be a great help to the management of online businesses by offering them information about the behavior of their buyers when it comes to rating their products or services.

Online Consumers: Awareness and information about purchasing decisions in online shopping will be offered by this study by giving information about consumer behavior, factors affecting online product reviews, the process of purchasing products based on theories, and different aspects in relation to the online market. This study will possibly serve as a guide and basis for how consumers will react to product reviews and will give them information and additional points of view when purchasing products online.

Community: With the advancement of technology and the spread of unknown viruses and diseases, this study will help the community patronize more efficient and safer shopping without going to physical stores to buy something they need. This study can impose an important stand about how product reviews work, and how they affect the views of consumers compared to other products.

Department of Trade and Industry (DTI): The results of this study will give information on how the online product reviews affect the consumer's decision in purchasing products and will play a big role in the possible new rules and regulations or even new laws about the online business community. The data gathered will be a great help to discover online opportunities with their advantages and disadvantages.

Researcher herself: The knowledge about the theories in relation to the focus of the study on product reviews will be beneficial to the researcher, giving her thoughts about how consumers make decisions in purchasing products online.

Future Researchers: Future studies about the online world will be essential, with the new ways in life to adapt to the different events happening in the world. The discoveries of this study can serve as a comparison to similar studies and can also be a source of reference for related studies.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

This chapter provides the related literature and studies to give thoughts about the online community, its characteristics, and influences, in order to show data and findings that have to do with the research problem. This section of the research provides an overview of related literature on how product reviews influence consumers' purchasing decisions in online shopping.

Related Literature

Foreign Literature

Consumer profile plays a significant role in shaping online purchasing behavior. Age, for instance, has been identified as a key factor influencing how individuals interact with digital platforms. Younger consumers tend to be more comfortable navigating online stores and are more likely to rely on product reviews when making purchasing decisions. In contrast, older consumers may exhibit more cautious behavior, often requiring more assurance before completing a transaction. Reports indicate that generational differences affect not only shopping frequency but also trust in online information, including reviews (Statista, 2024).

Moreover, gender differences have also been observed in online shopping patterns. Some reports suggest that

female consumers are generally more attentive to detailed product information and customer feedback, while male consumers may prioritize convenience and speed in decision-making. These behavioral differences influence how reviews are interpreted and used during the purchasing process. As highlighted in market insights, gender-based preferences can shape the level of reliance on online reviews, ultimately affecting purchasing decisions (PwC, 2023).

In addition, the nature of employment contributes to variations in online consumer behavior. Individuals with stable income or full-time employment are more likely to engage in frequent online shopping due to greater purchasing power. On the other hand, those with limited financial resources may rely more heavily on reviews to minimize the risk of making unsatisfactory purchases. Employment status, therefore, affects both the frequency of online transactions and the extent to which consumers depend on product reviews (NielsenIQ, 2022).

Furthermore, the choice of online shopping platforms also influences consumer experiences and decision-making. Different platforms provide varying levels of review transparency, verification systems, and user interfaces, which can affect how consumers interpret product feedback. Popular e-commerce platforms often integrate review systems that allow users to rate and comment on products, making reviews more accessible and influential. The accessibility and organization of these platforms contribute significantly to how reviews impact purchasing behavior (Business Insider, 2023).

Similarly, the type of goods commonly purchased online affects the degree to which consumers rely on reviews. For high-value or complex products, consumers tend to spend more time reading reviews to ensure product quality and reliability. In contrast, for low-cost or frequently purchased items, buyers may rely less on detailed reviews and make quicker decisions. This variation demonstrates that the importance of reviews depends on the nature of the product being considered (BrightLocal, 2023).

Moving forward, star ratings are among the most visible and influential elements of online reviews. These numerical indicators provide a quick summary of overall customer satisfaction, allowing consumers to make rapid judgments about a product. Many buyers rely on star ratings as an initial screening tool before reading detailed reviews. Reports suggest that products with higher ratings are more likely to attract attention and be perceived as trustworthy, thereby increasing the likelihood of purchase (Forbes, 2022).

In the same way, the nature of reviews, whether positive or negative, significantly affects consumer perceptions and decisions. Positive reviews can enhance confidence and encourage purchases, while negative reviews may raise concerns and deter potential buyers. Interestingly, some consumers consider a mix of positive and negative reviews as more credible than purely positive feedback, as it reflects a more balanced perspective. This indicates that the content and tone of reviews play a crucial role in shaping purchasing behavior (Trustpilot, 2022).

Equally important is the source of the review, which determines its credibility and influence. Reviews from verified buyers are generally perceived as more trustworthy compared to anonymous or unverified sources. Additionally, feedback from influencers or experienced users may carry more weight due to their perceived expertise. Consumers often evaluate the reliability of the reviewer before considering the content of the review, highlighting the importance of source credibility in decision-making (Investopedia, 2025).

In the same manner, psychological and cultural traits within a consumer's profile significantly dictate how individuals synthesize online marketplace information. Recent econometric modeling suggests that digitized consumer behavior is heavily driven by distinct internal traits such as personal risk aversion and price consciousness, which heavily manifest when evaluating products across electronic platforms. Because online environments present a constant migration of traditional retail to digital spaces, understanding how specific demographics interact with web atmospherics and emotional cues becomes critical. Research confirms that these deeply seated psychological traits interact dynamically with user perceptions, ultimately altering a consumer's overall purchase intentions based on how they process digital storefront feedback (Antohti et al., 2022).

On the other hand, consumers often encounter various problems when purchasing products online, which can

affect their decision-making process. One of the most common issues is the presence of fake or misleading reviews, which can create false impressions about product quality. News reports have highlighted that deceptive reviews may lead consumers to make poor purchasing decisions or experience dissatisfaction with their purchases (BBC News, 2023). In addition, other challenges such as inaccurate product descriptions, delayed delivery, and receiving items that do not match expectations also influence consumer trust in online shopping. These problems can discourage repeat purchases and make consumers more cautious in future transactions. As a result, buyers tend to rely more on credible reviews to avoid negative experiences, emphasizing the importance of reliable information in online marketplaces (The Guardian, 2024).

Local Literature

The rapid growth of e-commerce in the Philippines has significantly influenced how consumers make purchasing decisions. With increased internet accessibility and mobile usage, more Filipinos are engaging in online shopping, where product reviews play a crucial role in evaluating items before purchase. Reports from the Philippine Statistics Authority (2023) highlight the expansion of digital transactions, emphasizing that online feedback has become an important factor in shaping consumer behavior in the absence of physical product inspection.

Also, age differences affect how Filipino consumers utilize online reviews in their purchasing decisions. Younger consumers, who are more technologically inclined, tend to rely heavily on ratings and customer feedback when shopping online. In contrast, older consumers may exercise more caution and require additional sources of verification. According to DataReportal (2024), younger age groups in the Philippines are among the most active internet and e-commerce users, which increases their exposure to and reliance on online reviews.

In addition, gender-based differences can be observed in online shopping behavior within the Philippine context. Female consumers are often more meticulous in reading detailed reviews and comparing products, while male consumers may focus more on convenience and efficiency. Insights from Kantar Philippines (2022) suggest that these behavioral patterns influence how reviews are interpreted and used in purchasing decisions. Furthermore, employment status plays a role in shaping online consumer behavior. Individuals with stable income and full-time employment are more likely to engage in frequent online purchases, while those with limited financial capacity tend to rely more on reviews to avoid unsatisfactory transactions. Reports from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (2023) indicate that the rise of digital payments has contributed to increased participation in e-commerce, reinforcing the importance of product reviews in guiding purchasing decisions.

Similarly, the choice of online shopping platforms influences how consumers interact with reviews. In the Philippines, platforms such as Shopee and Lazada provide integrated review systems that include star ratings, written feedback, and verified purchase indicators. According to Rappler (2023), these features enhance consumer confidence by allowing buyers to assess product quality based on the experiences of others. Meanwhile, the type of goods commonly purchased online also affects the extent to which Filipino consumers rely on reviews. Products such as electronics, clothing, and beauty items often require careful evaluation due to concerns about quality and authenticity. News reports from ABS-CBN News (2022) indicate that consumers tend to read multiple reviews when purchasing these items to minimize the risk of dissatisfaction.

Additionally, star ratings serve as a quick and accessible indicator of product quality for Filipino online shoppers. These ratings allow consumers to make immediate judgments, especially when comparing multiple products. According to CNN Philippines (2023), many buyers rely on high star ratings as a primary factor in selecting products, particularly when time constraints limit their ability to read detailed reviews. In the same way, the nature of reviews, whether positive or negative, significantly influences purchasing decisions. Positive reviews tend to build trust and encourage consumers to proceed with purchases, while negative feedback may create hesitation or lead to rejection of a product. Reports from the Philippine Daily Inquirer (2023) highlight that Filipino consumers often consider both positive and negative comments to form a balanced evaluation before making a decision.

Equally important is the credibility of the review source, which affects how consumers interpret online feedback. Reviews from verified buyers are generally perceived as more reliable than anonymous comments. According

to Manila Bulletin (2024), Filipino consumers are becoming more cautious and are increasingly prioritizing trustworthy sources when making purchasing decisions. On the other hand, several problems are encountered by consumers when purchasing products online. These include fake reviews, misleading product descriptions, delayed deliveries, and receiving items that do not match expectations. Reports from the Department of Trade and Industry (2023) emphasize that these issues continue to affect consumer trust and satisfaction in online shopping. Finally, the development of a consumer guide is essential in helping Filipino buyers make informed decisions. Consumers are encouraged to critically evaluate reviews, verify seller credibility, and compare multiple sources before purchasing. Guidance from the Department of Information and Communications Technology (2024) highlights that informed and cautious behavior can reduce risks and improve the overall online shopping experience.

Related Studies

Foreign Studies

In the study “Impact of Online Reviews and Product Ratings on Consumer Purchasing Decisions,” Rachmiani et al. (2024) found that both online reviews and product ratings significantly influence consumer trust and purchasing behavior in e-commerce platforms. Their results showed that positive reviews significantly increase consumer trust, while negative reviews heighten perceived risk and reduce purchase intention. Moreover, higher product ratings were associated with stronger trust and a greater likelihood of purchase, confirming that reviews and ratings function as essential social proof in digital shopping environments.

In “Development of a Scale for Measuring the Influence of Online Reviews,” Fernandes et al. (2022) developed and validated a framework that explains how online reviews affect consumer decision-making. Their study identified key dimensions such as source credibility, volume of reviews, clarity of language, and relevance of content. Findings revealed that exposure to online reviews significantly shapes product evaluation, with credibility and relevance emerging as the strongest predictors of trust and purchasing behavior in online retail settings.

In “Cross-Generational Differences in the Influence of Online Reviews on Purchasing Decisions,” Garcia et al. (2025) examined how different age groups respond to online reviews. The study revealed that online reviews consistently influence purchasing decisions across generations, but the level of dependence varies. Younger consumers were found to rely more heavily on review content, while older consumers showed more cautious behavior. This indicates that online reviews function as digital word-of-mouth that remains influential regardless of age differences.

In “Effects of Online Review Characteristics on Consumer Behavior,” Wu (2024) analyzed how specific review features influence purchasing decisions. The findings showed that overall rating scores and consistency of review content significantly increase consumer preference and recommendation intention. The study also emphasized that more uniform and positive review patterns strengthen consumer confidence, particularly in experience-based products where uncertainty is higher.

In “Online Reviews, Trust, and Viral Marketing in Social Commerce,” Liang and Chen (2023) investigated the role of online reviews in TikTok Shop purchasing behavior. Their study revealed that online reviews do not directly affect purchasing decisions but significantly influence consumer trust, which then drives actual buying behavior. This highlights the mediating role of trust in transforming review exposure into purchase intention within social commerce platforms.

Empirical research in digital consumer behavior underscores the immense weight that digital feedback holds over traditional marketing channels. According to a study by Ahn and Lee (2024), online product reviews have emerged as a primary digital marketing mechanism that offers a distinct persuasive advantage over traditional promotional strategies by directly fostering baseline trust among consumers. Their findings confirm that the informational influence embedded within these evaluations serves as highly diagnostic information that consumers systematically review before finalizing an online transaction to minimize uncertainty. However, the study also highlights that consumer purchase intentions are highly sensitive to the nature of the feedback, noting

that negative review elements dramatically damage the perceived reliability of an item, thereby directly driving down final conversion rates in electronic marketplace ecosystems.

Furthermore, in “Influence of Online Customer Reviews on Shopee Users’ Purchasing Decisions,” Nguyen and Tran (2024) found that online reviews and ratings positively affect consumer purchasing behavior in e-commerce platforms such as Shopee. Their study emphasized that trust acts as a mediating factor between reviews and purchase intention, while emotional responses strengthen the relationship, showing that both cognitive and emotional factors shape online buying behavior. In addition, in “Online Review Volume, Ratings, and Consumer Trust in E-Commerce,” Smith et al. (2023) examined how review quantity and quality influence purchasing behavior. Their findings showed that higher review volume and positive ratings significantly increase consumer trust and purchase likelihood. This demonstrates that social proof created by large volumes of positive feedback helps reduce uncertainty in online shopping decisions.

Finally, in “Global Trends in Consumer Use of Online Reviews,” Johnson (2022) reported that nearly all consumers read online reviews before making purchases, with a large percentage trusting them as much as personal recommendations. The study highlighted that online reviews have become a dominant source of information in consumer decision-making processes globally, significantly shaping buying behavior across different markets. In “Review Credibility and Consumer Decision-Making in Online Shopping,” Kumar and Lee (2021) emphasized that online reviews strongly influence purchasing decisions by affecting perceptions of product and seller credibility. Their findings showed that well-structured, relevant, and easy-to-understand reviews increase consumer confidence and reduce uncertainty, ultimately leading to stronger purchase intentions.

Local Studies

To begin with, Paculanan et al. (2023), in their study “User Experience and Satisfaction Between Shopee and Lazada Among Filipino Online Shoppers,” examined how platform usability and customer satisfaction influence purchasing behavior. The findings revealed that interface clarity, ease of navigation, and system reliability significantly affect user engagement and repeat purchases. Respondents emphasized that platforms with more intuitive designs generate higher trust, which encourages continued usage and purchasing activity. Overall, the study shows that e-commerce platform experience plays a crucial role beyond product pricing in shaping consumer decisions.

Moreover, Mejes et al. (2024), in “Online Customer Reviews and Consumer Purchase Behavior in Food Establishments in Novaliches, Quezon City,” investigated how online reviews affect consumer decisions in local food businesses. Their results showed that positive reviews, detailed feedback, and high star ratings encourage consumers to try new food products or services, while negative reviews discourage purchases. This indicates that consumers rely heavily on review credibility and content when evaluating quality, service, and value in localized settings.

In addition, Borja et al. (2025), in “Influence of Social Media Reviews on Customer Purchase Decisions in Coffee Shops in Cagayan de Oro City,” explored how social media-based reviews shape consumer behavior. The findings revealed that electronic word-of-mouth shared through social platforms significantly influences consumer perception, especially when accompanied by detailed descriptions and visual content. Although personal experience remains important, exposure to online peer feedback encourages consumers to explore new offerings and affects their purchase intentions.

On the other hand, Ocampo et al. (2025), in “Deceptive Advertising and Its Effect on Platform Credibility and Purchase Intention in Online Shopping,” analyzed how misleading advertisements influence consumer trust. The results showed that deceptive content reduces platform credibility and negatively affects purchase decisions. Conversely, platforms that provide accurate and transparent information are more likely to gain consumer confidence. This highlights the importance of authenticity in maintaining trust in online shopping environments.

Likewise, Perez and Bonifacio (2025), in “Trust and Privacy Concerns as Antecedents of Purchase Intention Among Shopee Users in Batangas City,” examined how trust and privacy issues affect online purchasing behavior. The findings revealed that trust-related factors such as secure payment systems and data protection

significantly increase purchase intention. While privacy concerns exist, they are often reduced through strong platform security features, showing that trust-building mechanisms are essential in encouraging online transactions.

Similarly, Itt Khai et al. (2023), in “Interactive Product Reviews and Impulsive Buying Behavior Among College Students in Cavite,” investigated how engagement with online reviews influences impulsive buying behavior. The findings showed that students who frequently read and interact with reviews are more likely to make unplanned purchases. Platforms with credible and detailed review systems also increase user confidence, which encourages impulsive buying decisions.

Furthermore, Nartea and Barrera (2023), in “Effects of Digital Marketing Strategies on Purchase Decision and Online Buying Behavior of Gen Z Filipino Consumers,” explored how digital engagement affects purchasing behavior. The results revealed that social proof, online endorsements, and customer reviews significantly influence perceived product value and purchase readiness. Respondents stated that reviews make them feel more informed and secure, showing that digital marketing and review systems jointly shape consumer decisions.

Notably, Aragon et al. (2025), in “Impact of Privacy Concerns on Online Consumer Behavior in the Philippines,” examined how data security concerns affect purchasing decisions. The findings revealed that awareness of privacy protection and transparency increases consumer trust and willingness to purchase online. Respondents preferred platforms with clear privacy policies and reliable review systems, indicating that security and review credibility are closely connected. In relation to this, Lucero et al. (2025), in “Influence of Online Reviews on Consumer Trust Among Senior High School Students,” found that online reviews significantly affect consumer trust. Detailed, informative, and visually supported reviews increase confidence in online buying. Students reported that balanced feedback helps reduce uncertainty when shopping online, highlighting the importance of review quality in shaping trust among younger consumers.

Finally, Jimera et al. (2025), in “Interdependence of Online Customer Reviews and Product Reliability Perception,” analyzed how review characteristics affect perceived product reliability. The findings revealed that review detail, credibility, and honesty strongly influence consumer confidence. When reviews are perceived as thorough and unbiased, consumers are more likely to trust product quality and proceed with purchasing decisions, reinforcing the importance of structured and credible review systems.

Synthesis of the State-of-the-Art

The reviewed foreign and local studies strongly support the present study by emphasizing that online product reviews significantly influence consumer purchasing decisions. Foreign studies such as Rachmiani et al. (2024), Fernandes et al. (2022), Wu (2024), and Smith et al. (2023) consistently found that positive reviews, high ratings, review credibility, and review consistency increase consumer trust and encourage purchasing behavior. Similarly, local studies by Mejes et al. (2024), Borja et al. (2025), Lucero et al. (2025), and Jimera et al. (2025) revealed that detailed, honest, and visually supported reviews strongly affect consumer confidence and buying decisions. These studies are similar to the present study because they recognize the importance of review characteristics in influencing online purchasing behavior. However, while most previous studies focused generally on trust, credibility, or purchase intention, the current study specifically examines the influence of star ratings, review nature, and review source on purchasing decisions.

Furthermore, both foreign and local studies highlight trust as an important factor in online shopping behavior. Liang and Chen (2023), Ahn and Lee (2024), Kumar and Lee (2021), and Nguyen and Tran (2024) explained that reviews build trust, which then leads consumers toward actual purchasing behavior. Likewise, Perez and Bonifacio (2025), Aragon et al. (2025), and Ocampo et al. (2025) emphasized that platform credibility, privacy protection, and transparency strengthen consumer confidence in online transactions. These findings support the present study in recognizing that trust and credibility are closely connected with online reviews. However, unlike the reviewed literature that mainly treated trust as a mediating or dependent variable, the current study directly measures how specific review-related factors influence consumer purchasing decisions despite existing concerns about privacy, deception, and misleading information.

Moreover, similarities are also evident in the role of consumer profile and digital exposure in shaping online buying behavior. Garcia et al. (2025) and Johnson (2022) revealed that consumers across different age groups rely heavily on online reviews, although younger consumers tend to depend more on them than older buyers. Likewise, local studies such as Itt Khai et al. (2023), Nartea and Barrera (2023), and Paculanan et al. (2023) showed that students, Gen Z consumers, and frequent online shoppers are highly influenced by digital engagement, social proof, and platform experience. These findings justify the inclusion of respondent profile variables such as age, sex, employment status, platform usage, and commonly purchased goods in the present study. However, most existing studies examined demographic variables independently, whereas the current study integrates consumer profile with the influence of review characteristics on purchasing decisions.

Finally, the reviewed literature demonstrates strong similarities with the present study in terms of variables such as online reviews, consumer trust, platform credibility, and purchasing behavior. However, a major difference lies in the integration of these variables into a single localized framework. Most foreign and local studies examined reviews, trust, demographics, or platform experience separately. In contrast, the present study combines consumer profile, review characteristics, and purchasing decision influence into one comprehensive analysis. This gap establishes the significance of the current study, as it provides a more structured and localized understanding of how online product reviews influence the purchasing decisions of consumers.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is anchored on the Engel–Kollat–Blackwell Model developed by James F. Engel, David T. Kollat, and Roger D. Blackwell in 1968, which explains how consumers receive, process, and use information when making purchasing decisions. The theory emphasizes that consumer behavior is influenced by both internal and external factors and that purchasing decisions pass through several stages before the final purchase is made. The model is highly relevant to the present study because online shopping environments heavily depend on information cues such as product reviews, star ratings, and reviewer credibility. In the context of e-commerce, online reviews serve as external information inputs that shape consumer perceptions, evaluations, and final purchasing decisions.

The framework begins with the Information Input Stage, which serves as the foundation of the consumer decision-making process. This stage refers to the exposure of consumers to environmental stimuli from both marketing and non-marketing sources. In online shopping, these stimuli include advertisements, product descriptions, star ratings, and customer reviews. Product reviews are considered important non-marketing inputs because they are created by fellow consumers and are often viewed as more credible and trustworthy than promotional content from sellers. Positive reviews and high ratings may encourage consumers to continue exploring a product, while negative reviews may create hesitation or doubt regarding the purchase.

The next component of the framework is the Stages of Decision-Making. This stage includes problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase intention, and purchase decision. Consumers first recognize a need or problem, then search for product information and compare available alternatives. During this process, online reviews become highly influential because consumers rely on feedback, ratings, and experiences of other buyers to evaluate product quality, performance, and reliability. Reviews help consumers reduce uncertainty and perceived risk, guiding them toward the formation of purchase intentions and final buying decisions.

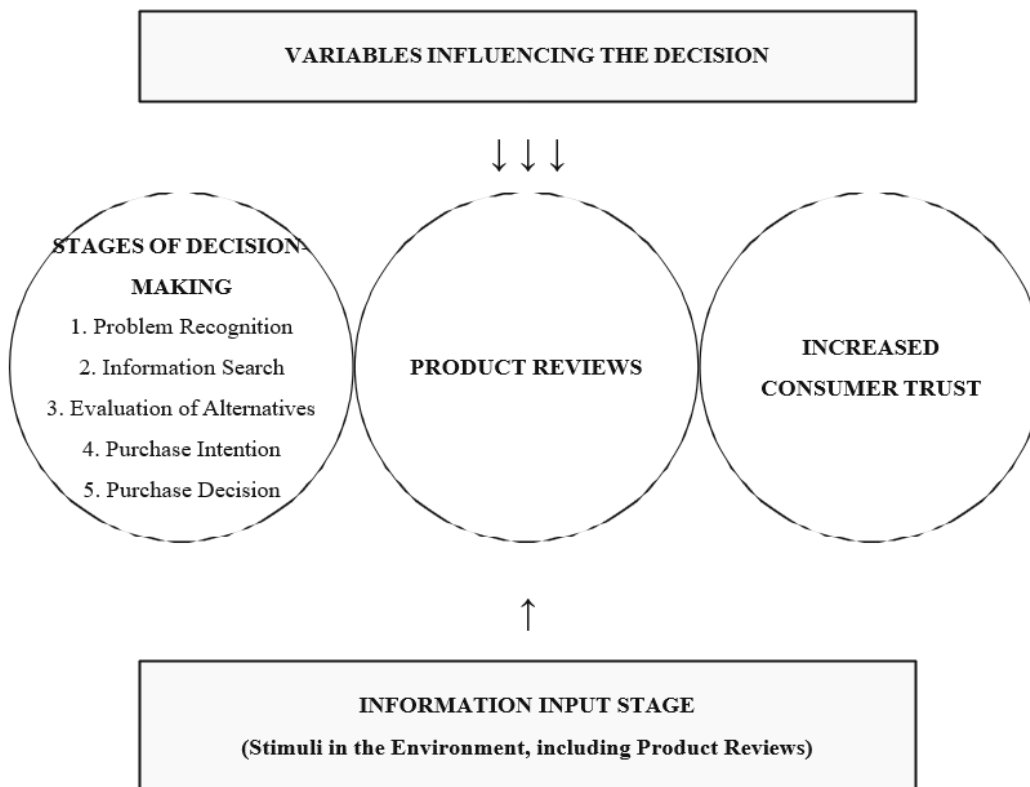
At the center of the framework is Product Reviews. This component represents the information processing stage of the Engel–Kollat–Blackwell Model, where consumers pay attention to, interpret, evaluate, and retain review information. Consumers assess the tone, clarity, detail, consistency, and credibility of reviews according to their preferences, needs, and prior experiences. Reviews from verified purchasers, influencers, or trusted sources are more likely to be accepted and remembered by consumers. This mental processing stage plays a critical role in shaping attitudes and influencing purchasing behavior.

The framework also highlights the Variables Influencing the Decision, which include psychological, social, and situational factors that affect consumer behavior throughout the purchasing process. Psychological factors such as trust, perceived risk, and previous online shopping experience interact with social influences like peer

recommendations, influencer endorsements, and expert opinions. Situational factors such as budget, urgency, and product availability may also influence the final decision. These variables affect how consumers interpret product reviews and determine the level of influence reviews have on their purchasing decisions.

The final component of the framework is the Increased Consumer Trust. After processing review information and completing the decision-making stages, consumers who perceive reviews as credible and helpful are more likely to develop confidence in their purchases and experience greater satisfaction. Trust built through reliable product reviews also increases the likelihood of positive purchasing experiences and future online transactions. Overall, the Engel–Kollat–Blackwell Model provides a strong theoretical foundation for understanding how consumers process online review information before making purchasing decisions. The present study applies this theory by examining how review characteristics such as star ratings, review nature, and review source influence the purchasing decisions of online consumers in Daet.

Figure 1. Theoretical Paradigm of the Study



Stages Of Decision-Making

1. Problem Recognition
2. Information Search
3. Evaluation of Alternatives
4. Purchase Intention
5. Purchase Decision

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The framework of this study primarily focuses on the different variables that make online product reviews influential in the purchasing decisions of consumers in Daet, Camarines Norte. To achieve the goals and objectives, this research is anchored on the statement of the problem of the study. The conceptual framework is based on the Input–Process–Output (IPO) model to clearly illustrate the flow of the research.

In the input stage, the study considers the profile of the respondents, including age, sex, nature of employment, frequently used online shopping platforms, and commonly purchased goods. It also includes the level of

influence of product reviews on purchasing decisions in terms of star ratings, nature of the review, and source of the review. Additionally, the problems encountered by consumers during online purchasing that may affect their decision-making are included as part of the input. These variables serve as the foundational data in understanding the behavior and perceptions of online consumers.

In the process stage, the study follows a systematic procedure to ensure the validity and reliability of the results. First, the research instrument is validated to ensure that the survey questionnaire accurately measures the intended variables. Next, respondents are selected using a descriptive-correlational research method to appropriately represent the target population. Data are then gathered through the administration of a survey questionnaire. After data collection, statistical treatment and analysis are conducted to evaluate the relationship between respondents' profiles and the level of influence of product reviews, as well as to determine how review characteristics and encountered problems affect purchasing decisions. The analyzed data are then interpreted to generate meaningful insights.

In the output stage, the findings of the study serve as the basis for the development of a proposed consumer guide related to online purchasing decisions. This guide aims to help consumers make informed choices by enhancing their awareness of the influence of product reviews and by providing strategies to address common problems encountered in online shopping.

Definition of Terms

This part presents the terminologies used in the study, which are defined conceptually and operationally:

Goods Commonly Purchased Online: This term refers to the various categories of tangible consumer products, ranging from non-durable items like personal care to durable goods like electronics and apparel that are selected and acquired through digital marketplaces. Operationally, it refers to specific categories such as electronics, beauty items, and clothing identified by the respondents.

Nature of Review: The nature of a review refers to the tone and content of feedback provided by consumers after purchasing a product. It may include positive, negative, or neutral sentiments, as well as specific or general commentary based on the consumer's experience. Operationally, it involves original photos/videos, detailed lists of pros and cons, and text length.

Online Reviews: Online reviews are evaluations written by consumers who have used a product or service, often shared on digital platforms. In this study, it refers to comments, feedback, and ratings posted on Shopee and Lazada.

Online Shopping Platforms: Digital infrastructures or e-marketplaces that facilitate the exchange of goods and services between sellers and buyers through internet technology. In this study, it specifically refers to Lazada, Shopee, and TikTok Shop.

Purchasing Decisions: Purchasing decisions involve a problem-solving process that includes need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, actual purchase, and post-purchase evaluation. Operationally, it represents the digital transaction choices made by consumers in Daet, Camarines Norte.

Source of Review: The origin or identity of the person who provided the feedback, such as verified buyers, influencers, anonymous users, or brand ambassadors. In this study, it tracks how trust varies by source identity.

Star Ratings: Numerical evaluations, typically ranging from 1 to 5, used by consumers to indicate their level of satisfaction with a product or service. They serve as a quick reference filter for buyers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research methodology utilized in this research study. It reviews the population, sample size, sampling technique, description of the respondents, research instrument, data gathering procedure, and statistical treatment of data.

Method of Research

This study utilized the quantitative method of research using a descriptive-correlational research design. The descriptive part of the study was used to determine the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, nature of employment, online shopping platform frequently used, and goods commonly purchased online. It also described the level of influence of product reviews on purchasing decisions in terms of star ratings, nature of review, and source of review, as well as the problems encountered by consumers that affect their online purchasing decisions. Through this design, the researcher was able to gather and analyze data systematically using a survey questionnaire administered to the identified respondents.

On the other hand, the correlational part of the study was used to determine the significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and the level of influence of product reviews on purchasing decisions of online consumers. Specifically, the study examined whether variables such as age, sex, nature of employment, online shopping platform frequently used, and goods commonly purchased online were significantly related to how consumers were influenced by product reviews. To analyze the relationship between these variables, the study utilized Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient as the statistical tool.

Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Technique

This study was composed of 432 respondents who were given survey questionnaires to gather data and information. This study used a purposive and convenience sampling technique to gather data from the respondents of Camarines Norte during the academic year 2025-2026. This approach was chosen to ensure time-efficiency and cost-effectiveness in data collection across a broad geographic area.

Description of Respondents

The respondents of this study consist of residents from Camarines Norte who are active online consumers/buyers or those who purchase online for personal, business, or household purposes. To ensure that respondents possessed sufficient experience, they were required to have made at least five (5) purchases online with at least three (3) written reviews in each purchase transaction to be qualified to answer the survey questionnaire. The sample captures active users across popular platforms operating in the Philippines, including Shopee, Lazada, and Facebook.

Research Instrument

This study utilized a researcher-made survey questionnaire as the primary instrument for data gathering. The questionnaire consisted of several sets of questions designed to gather information regarding the profile of the respondents, the extent of influence of review features, and the problems encountered. The researcher-made questionnaire underwent content validation by five experts to ensure the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the items included in the instrument. Following validation, a dry run was conducted to test the reliability of the scale items.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher-made survey questionnaire underwent formal content validation by five experts to ensure structural clarity and item relevance. The validators were Ma'am Rubelyn Morales, Sir Manuel C. Dime, Ma'am Mailyn Quijance, Ma'am Rochelle Monica S. Latigay, and Sir Ivan Jeffrey Mago. Their comments and recommendations were incorporated before the dry run.

To determine the reliability and internal consistency of the instrument, a dry run was conducted among twenty (20) online consumers from municipalities in Camarines Norte who possessed similar characteristics to the target population but were not included in the final sample. The responses were processed via SPSS. For the extent of influence of product reviews, reliability testing yielded a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.726 for star ratings, 0.875 for the nature of the review, and 0.864 for the source of the review. The overall reliability coefficient for all influence items was 0.926, indicating excellent internal consistency. For the problems encountered section, which used a dichotomous format, the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (KR-20) yielded a coefficient of 0.805, indicating good internal consistency.

Ethical considerations were strictly addressed by seeking approval from local government units and obtaining explicit informed consent from all respondents. Questionnaires were distributed online via Google Forms, social media accounts, and email. For respondents with limited connectivity, manual distribution was safely conducted following standard health protocols.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The following statistical tools were utilized through SPSS to analyze the gathered data:

- **Frequency Counts and Percentages:** Used to summarize the profile of the respondents (age, sex, occupation, platform usage, and goods purchased).
- **Weighted Mean:** Utilized to evaluate the level of influence of star ratings, nature of review, and source of review based on a 4-point Likert scale, as well as to rank the problems encountered.
- **Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient (rs):** Applied to determine the significant relationships between the profile variables and the level of review influence, given that the ordinal data violated normal distribution assumptions.

Analysis And Interpretation Of Data

This chapter presents the empirical results, statistical analyses, and corresponding textual interpretations of data gathered from the 432 respondents of the study.

Profile of the Respondents

Table 1: Age Profile of the Respondents

AGE GROUP	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Below 20 years old	228	52.8%
21-30 years old	128	29.6%
31-40 years old	67	15.5%
41-50 years old	8	1.9%
51 years old and above	1	0.2%
Total	432	100.0%

Table 1 reveals that the largest proportion of respondents belongs to the below 20 years old age group (52.8%), followed by individuals aged 21 to 30 years old (29.6%). This indicates that the vast majority of online consumers in Camarines Norte are young digital natives who are highly comfortable with digital ecosystems. In contrast, older populations are significantly less represented, with only one participant aged 51 or above, supporting literature that younger generations adopt e-commerce at vastly accelerated rates (Noh et al., 2025).

Table 2: Sex Profile of the Respondents

SEX	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Female	184	42.6%
Male	248	57.4%
Total	432	100.0%

Table 2 demonstrates that male respondents constitute the majority of the sample (57.4%), while females represent 42.6%. This implies that male consumers in the localized sample exhibit high confidence and frequency in using e-commerce platforms, potentially for speed and convenience (Kanwal et al., 2021). Female consumers, though slightly fewer in this sample, tend to maintain a highly meticulous approach, reading text comments and analyzing details thoroughly before purchasing.

Table 3: Occupational Profile of the Respondents

OCCUPATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Government Employee	114	26.4%
Private Employee	41	9.5%
Self-Employed	157	36.3%
Student	110	25.5%
Unemployed	10	2.3%
Total	432	100.0%

Table 3 shows that self-employed individuals form the largest segment (36.3%), followed by government employees (26.4%) and students (25.5%). This distribution implies that flexible working schedules and regular income streams facilitate active digital transaction behavior. Self-employed individuals possess the autonomy to browse platforms at their own pace, while unemployed individuals represent the smallest group due to limited disposable purchasing power.

Table 4: Online Shopping Platform Frequently Used

E-COMMERCE PLATFORM	FREQUENCY*	RANK
Lazada	389	1
Shopee	373	2
TikTok Shop	346	3
Zalora	47	4
Sephora PH	39	5
eBay	17	6
Uniqlo / Shein	3	7

*Multiple responses allowed.

As indicated in Table 4, Lazada ranks first as the most frequently used platform (389 responses), followed closely by Shopee (373) and TikTok Shop (346). Niche or regional specific sites like Uniqlo/Shein and eBay received minimal engagement. This pattern establishes that general marketplaces with intensive localized brand presence, continuous free-shipping vouchers, and robust integrated review systems attract the highest consumer loyalty (Koswara, 2025).

Table 5: Goods Commonly Purchased Online

PRODUCT CATEGORY	FREQUENCY*	RANK
Electronic devices and accessories	389	1
Health and beauty products	373	2
Sports and lifestyle	346	3
Baby essentials and toys	47	4
Women and men's fashion	39	5
Groceries and pets	17	6
Home and living	3	7

*Multiple responses allowed.

Table 5 shows that electronic devices and accessories are the primary online purchases (389 responses), followed by health and beauty products (373). This strong focus on standardized, high-risk, or lifestyle-driven items highlights that consumers actively seek digital social proof, specification comparison, and user pictures to mitigate functional and financial risks before checking out (Villegas et al., 2025).

Level of Influence of Review Characteristics

Table 6: Influence of Star Ratings on Purchasing Decisions

INDICATOR STATEMENTS	WM	INTERPRETATION
1. Star ratings provided by actual users or verified testers.	3.38	Very Much Influenced
2. Specific numerical threshold (e.g., minimum of 4 stars) as a requirement.	3.65	Very Much Influenced
3. Total number (volume) of star ratings received by a product.	3.53	Very Much Influenced
4. Recency of the star ratings versus older ratings.	3.49	Very Much Influenced
5. High star rating (4 stars and above) as a primary search filter.	3.57	Very Much Influenced
6. Store-level "Seller Star Rating" for unfamiliar merchants.	3.44	Very Much Influenced
7. Feature-specific star ratings (e.g., durability, delivery speed).	3.40	Very Much Influenced
8. "Verified Purchase" badge alongside the star rating.	3.52	Very Much Influenced
9. Perfect score (5-star rating) compared to a 4.5 score.	3.48	Very Much Influenced
10. Low-star ratings (2 stars or less) used to exclude products.	3.52	Very Much Influenced
General Weighted Mean (GWM)	3.50	Very Much Influenced

Table 6 reflects an overall GWM of 3.50, denoting that consumers are "Very Much Influenced" by numerical rating systems. The highest-rated indicator is the mandatory enforcement of a specific numerical threshold (WM = 3.65), followed by using high ratings as primary search filters (WM = 3.57). This shows that digital shoppers leverage summary heuristics to screen out low-quality items rapidly. Feature-specific breakups show lower immediate impact, indicating preference for aggregated quality metrics.

Table 7: Influence of the Nature of Review on Purchasing Decisions

INDICATOR STATEMENTS	WM	INTERPRETATION
1. Reviews provided by actual product users on performance.	3.51	Very Much Influenced
2. Recency of the posted narrative review for relevance.	3.49	Very Much Influenced
3. Detailed descriptions of a product's structural pros and cons.	3.56	Very Much Influenced
4. Reviews containing original photos or videos of the actual product.	3.59	Very Much Influenced
5. Reviews that directly compare the item with competing brands.	3.47	Very Much Influenced
6. Complete length and verbosity of the textual feedback text.	3.47	Very Much Influenced
7. Customers describing real contextual field experiences.	3.55	Very Much Influenced
8. Feedback from individuals who personally tested the product.	3.53	Very Much Influenced
9. "Helpfulness" upvote count on specific review blocks.	3.50	Very Much Influenced
10. Seller's direct public response to a user review block.	3.50	Very Much Influenced
General Weighted Mean (GWM)	3.52	Very Much Influenced

Table 7 demonstrates that the qualitative substance of reviews is highly impactful (GWM = 3.52). The most powerful cue is the inclusion of original customer-uploaded photos or videos (WM = 3.59), alongside detailed lists of product pros and cons (WM = 3.56). This underlines that visual evidence serves as an empirical proxy for physical inspection, minimizing uncertainty. Comparative text and general review length are less decisive factors.

Table 8: Influence of the Source of Review on Purchasing Decisions

INDICATOR STATEMENTS	WM	INTERPRETATION
1. Recommendations from close family members.	3.37	Very Much Influenced
2. Informal word-of-mouth shared within social media networks.	3.27	Very Much Influenced
3. Endorsements from Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) or professionals.	3.49	Very Much Influenced
4. Niche specialized Social Media Influencers.	3.49	Very Much Influenced
5. Trending items widely discussed by public personalities.	3.46	Very Much Influenced
6. Community-based hobbyist or specialized platform forums.	3.44	Very Much Influenced
7. Structured formal online business store reviews.	3.53	Very Much Influenced

8. Reviews appearing to come from trolls or competitors.	3.44	Very Much Influenced
9. Immediate peer negative feedback forcing purchase abandonment.	3.42	Very Much Influenced
10. "Verified Buyer" badge profile status versus anonymous logs.	3.46	Very Much Influenced
General Weighted Mean (GWM)	3.44	Very Much Influenced

Table 8 shows that institutional business reviews on official platforms score highest (WM = 3.53), followed by expert opinions and niche influencer evaluations (WM = 3.49). Informal community word-of-mouth scores the lowest (WM = 3.27), indicating that structured, verified purchase loops are considered far more trustworthy than casual social media chat.

Inferential Analysis: Correlational Matrix

Table 9: Spearman's Rank Correlation Matrix Between Profile and Review Influence

PROFILE VARIABLES	STAR RATINGS (RS / P)	NATURE OF REVIEW (RS / P)	SOURCE OF REVIEW (RS / P)
Age	-0.140 / 0.004*	-0.125 / 0.009*	-0.117 / 0.015*
Sex	0.082 / 0.090	0.056 / 0.246	0.098 / 0.041*
Occupation	-0.233 / <0.001**	-0.209 / <0.001**	-0.210 / <0.001**
Shopping Platform	-0.027 / 0.577	0.006 / 0.897	0.042 / 0.381
Goods Purchased	0.036 / 0.460	0.038 / 0.432	0.070 / 0.146

*Significant at 0.05 level; **Significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 9 highlights that Age exhibits a significant negative correlation across all review criteria, proving that younger consumers are profoundly more review-dependent. Occupation demonstrates a strong negative correlation, indicating that students and self-employed individuals rely significantly more on reviews than structured corporate employees, rejecting the null hypothesis for these variables.

Problems Encountered by Consumers

Table 10: Problems Encountered in Online Purchasing

ENCOUNTERED CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS	FREQUENCY	RANK
Review Authenticity (Fake, bot-generated, or incentivized reviews)	332	1
Lack of Visual Evidence (Absence of actual photos/videos)	257	2
Overwhelming Volume of Information (Choice paralysis from too many comments)	250	3
Sponsorship Bias (Hidden PR samples or influencer promotional paid posts)	244	4
Review-Product Mismatch (Reviews attached to an altered model or item)	243	5
Inconsistent Ratings across Platforms (High on store site, low on third-party logs)	235	6
Vague or Brief Feedback (Empty star entries saying just "Good" or "Bad")	221	7
Suppression of Negative Feedback (Suspected deleting or hiding critical reviews)	217	8
Extreme Rating Polarization (Only 5-star or 1-star extreme logs)	215	9
Information Recency (Outdated feedback years old)	204	10

Table 10 highlights that review authenticity issues (fake reviews) rank as the most severe hurdle (332 responses), followed closely by a lack of genuine customer visual media (257 responses). These findings demonstrate that deceptive marketing practices severely threaten consumer confidence, forcing buyers to seek external validation networks.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

This study examined consumer product reviews of online stores and their influence on purchasing decisions among 432 respondents in Camarines Norte. The sample was dominated by consumers below 20 years old (52.8%), males (57.4%), and self-employed individuals (36.3%). Lazada was established as the primary marketplace, and electronic products represented the highest transaction volume category. Numerical metrics (GWM = 3.50) and review characteristics (GWM = 3.52) exert a powerful impact on transactions. Age and occupation are significantly correlated with evaluation dependency, while fake reviews represent the single highest barrier to online marketplace trust.

Conclusions

1. E-commerce participation is driven primarily by younger, tech-adept individuals and self-employed consumers with highly flexible schedules.
2. Numerical rating thresholds (minimum 4 stars) and rich visual media (photos/videos) function as the absolute baseline elements of consumer risk mitigation.
3. Review reliance varies significantly based on demographic profile structures, particularly age brackets and occupational flexibility.
4. Inauthentic feedback forms the primary systemic threat to platform credibility.
5. The proposed CLICKSAFE guide transforms empirical results into active consumer protection mechanisms.

Recommendations

1. Online sellers and e-commerce platforms must optimize user-experience elements specifically for young demographics, enhancing Lazada's interface mechanics and securing high-quality electronics catalogs.
2. Platforms should enhance the visibility of multi-layered review components, such as verified tester tags and feature-specific breakdowns, ensuring balanced information transparency.
3. Sellers must integrate automated data-driven systems to personalize review sequences based on age and occupational groups, boosting conversions.
4. The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) must institutionalize strict monitoring panels, advanced fraud detection algorithms, and punitive measures against fake review syndicates under the Consumer Act of the Philippines.
5. Academic and regulatory entities should adopt and widely deploy the **CLICKSAFE: Smart & Safe Online Purchasing Consumer Guide** through Negosyo Centers and digital literacy campaigns across the region to secure safe transactions.

Table 11: Click safe Framework Implementation Matrix

ISSUES & CONCERNS	FOCUS AREA	STEP-BY-STEP ACTIONS	LEGAL / POLICY BASIS	EXPECTED OUTCOME
1. Fake Reviews	Fabricated feedback	Check Verified Labels; watch for repetitive text patterns.	RA 7394 (Consumer Act)	Filter out fraudulent logs.
2. No Visual Proof	Absence of media	Prioritize user photos/videos over stock layouts.	DTI Fair Trade Guidelines	Eliminate "expectation" gaps.
3. One-Sided Content	Biased praise	Examine 2–4-star mid-range balanced reviews.	RA 7394 Information Right	Objective product view.
4. Source Credibility	Anonymous users	Track Top Reviewer status badges.	DTI Protection Framework	Isolate malicious bot lines.

5. Product Risk	High-ticket tech assets	Perform strict multi-platform vetting checks.	Safeguards against fraud	Risk-adjusted buying paths.
6. Fraudulent Stores	Scam profiles	Report artificial setups via in-app flagging.	DTI Care Hotline 1-384	Proactive fraud cleanup.

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