FACTORS THAT AFFECT TO CUSTOMER'S BUYING DECISION TOWARD SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS (FOOD BLOGGER)

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A THEMATIC PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF MANAGEMENT
COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT
MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY
2019

Thematic paper

entitled

FACTORS THAT AFFECT TO CUSTOMER'S BUYING DECISION TOWARD SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS (FOOD REVIEWERS)

was submitted to the College of Management, Mahidol University
for the degree of Master of Management
on
September 7, 2019

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor, Asst. Prof. Randall Shannon, for patiently guiding me through this research with useful critiques and encouragement when I was having difficulties with statistics research analysis method. I would also like to thank Ms. Aye Nyein Thant, my batch mate for helping through hardship and the program that I do not get used with. Also, I would like thank Ms. Nichakorn Boonin for helping me with the program as well. Last, my grateful thanks are also extended to Ms. Kamonwan Boonrat, Ms. Pavita Ngamsri, Ms. Phrirathita Kulnguan and my family for their help in distributing my questionnaire to their friends and families. Finally, I would like to thank you to all respondents in the survey for the participation. Without them, I could not collect useful data to analyze and to complete my paper.

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, more people turn to search for information on social media platform, many of them seek an opinion, information and feedback about products and services that they are going to buy. They used this information for making a purchase decision. Thus, social media influencers pay an important role for the source of information for the audience will make a decision upon the information they got from the reviewers.

This paper will focus on finding about the most effective factors that can persuade audience to buy or follow the food reviewers. There are five factors (information quality, online review, trust, influencer and intention), to analyze by using quantitative research and measure by using mean score and standard deviation to see what is the most important factors for food reviewers that can make audience watch and buy follow them.

KEYWORDS: Influencers, Food reviewer, Social Media Influencers

24 pages

CONTENTS

CONTENTS (Cont.)

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Social media influencers (SMIs) is a new type of independent third-party endorser who used social media such as; Facebook, Instagram, Tweeter and other channels to communicate and shape audience's attitudes. Some source mentioned that SMIs are as a marketing tool used to alliance with organization to promote brand, products and services (Freberg, Graham, McGaughey, & Freberg, 2011). As social media influencers have an important role, so technology has been developing to track and analyze their activities. It turns out that the main factors of the SMIs to attract viewers rely on number of daily hits on blog, number of likes, shares and followers. All of these affects to views decision making.

Nowadays, as technology comes worldwide that many people can reach to Internet, no matter which tools they reach for, it tends to search for more information through Internet platform as well as social media. It is easier than before that the Internet become a part of life, people who used smartphone are not only use it for telecommunication purpose anymore. Most smartphones come along with social media applications. It is integrated between telephone and Internet. Thus, many people rely on information that from the Internet. As it is easy to search something online, just a blink of an eye, the information that they are looking for will immediately appear. Everything becomes digitalize, people engage themselves more with the Internet, it is not surprise that why many of them rely on the Internet. Even when they want to buy something, they tend to search for information of specific products and services before they make a purchase decision, such as, skincare, fashion clothing, food service and restaurant (Pan, Wu, & Xu, 2017).

Online review is the product evaluation put forward by the third party such as reviewers. The content that they review also matter, including, products quality, price, service attitude, style and feedback which provide a lot of product's information and its

usage. Many consumers gather this information as a reference to make a decision in order to make a purchase later.

The online influencer comes as a term of word of mouth that they tried the real product and give a feedback review to the audience. This becomes more powerful than before that impact to consumer behavior (Tangnuntachai, 2018). Food bloggers have their own page or channel that technology help them make some different from before. Before they might try food and restaurant and write it as a diary, keep and save it as a memory but social network helps them expand their reviews and attract people to engage with their posts. Followers might use information as an option to choose food service and restaurant. They tend to review before they make a decision (Story, 2019).

Today, there are many food bloggers emerge on social media, audiences seem to have variety of choices and sources to consider before making the decision. Moreover, when there is a new restaurant, the food bloggers may go to review and write a content on social media. People who see the posts or video clips might get excited to try the new things.

1.2 Objective

The purpose of this study is to understand the factors that can persuade the audience to watch and make the decision to buy based on the information that they received from the reviews. The factors that reviewers should have in order to provide attractive information for the audience and make a content to be more reliable which can persuade audience to purchase that products and services.

The reason why I'm interested in this topic because I always look for the review about food and restaurant before making a decision to go. Normally I watch reviews to consider if it is worth to go there or if the service is good compare to the price. Some reviews might promote the new café that very well decorated and I would love to try one. Sometimes, I just want to go to famous place from the review and take a photo then post in my social media platform. So, I would like to do the research about the decision-making journey of the audience, such as, what are the most important factors that can attract the audiences and persuade them to make a buying decision.

This paper would like to focus on the group of people who watch food reviews before making a purchase decision. All of these will find the answer of what is the specific factors that affect to buying decision by influencers (food reviewers) on social media.

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

How social media influencers (food reviewers) impact to customers' decision making

2.1 Influencer

There are various definitions of influencer marketing, for instance, "a type of marketing that focuses on using key leaders to drive a brand's message to the larger market" (Grafström, Jakobsson, & Wiede, 2018). Influencers is a reference group which has a power to effect to the customer's behavior. This can be determined into two group that are private group and public group. Private group comes in the form of family members, friends and colleagues, they are someone that customers know them and meet in daily life. While public group comes as a celebrities and influencer, most of them are the third party that customers tend to follow them (Hoonsopon & Puriwat, 2016). In this paper, we tend to focus on the second group that might come in the form of food reviewers in social media such as Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. Some of them are integrated like YouTube channel might also appear in their Facebook page as well (Tangnuntachai, 2018).

2.2 Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)

Many consumers rely on word-of-mouth (WOM), the information of products and services from the people who related to them, such as, relatives, family and friends. Since the Internet has come, the form of WOM has changed to eWOM which is electronic word-of-mouth that people turn to find information of specific products and services from the online platform such as, Internet, social media,

Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and so on. However, in this case, electronic word-of-mouth come as a form of social media influencers (Cong & Zheng, 2017).

2.3 Online Reviews

Social media can be a place that provides information for people to collect as an information dissemination. This platform is full of electronic word-of-mouth, promotions, two-way communication and so on. People nowadays rely on online reviews to facilitate their purchase decision. The reviews that provide both positive and negative information are more useful for the audience to make a decision based on the information that influencers provided for them. They are also considered as a form electronic word-of-mouth that informal and non-commercial interact or exchange both positive and negative feedback. It is a form of real consumer feedback directly affect consumer behavior in area such as products awareness, beliefs, attitudes, buying intention, and other purchase decision. It is also an information exchange the two sides of products and services through online platform. Thus, many people tend to watch online review to find positive and negative information of that products and services before they make a buying decision (Cong & Zheng, 2017).

2.4 Trust

There are many factors that make customers trust in the influencers such as, the reputation, the number of followers, likes, and shares these can build engagement between viewers and reviewers. The content and information also pay an important role for viewers trust as well. These are the factors that make viewers trust in them and later turn to be customers of that brand or restaurant (Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi, 2012). Before making any purchase, consumers will find information, review, feedback and experience from the real users. However, trust is an important factor that can build from the viewers and develop to consumer later. After that customers will re-visit again or not it depends on the quality of products and services of that food and restaurants.

2.5 Information quality

Information quality comes as a content that influencers provide on their channels. Informative can be considered as a resources information that viewers are seeking for before they make any purchase decision. The top factor for engaging the viewers is the quality of content because it can provide information which is reliability for them to make a decision about particular products and services which afterward affect their consumer behavior (Gilling, 2008). This is all about the information in each content that influencers produce to promote and set the trend of that products and services. The viewers that are interested and think that the information on that content is trustworthy might making a purchase upon the reviews.

2.5 Purchase intention

Purchase intention considered as information searching before consumers make a purchase on a specific services and products that they are interested. They tend to used information that they searched to determine about buying decision. The process of information searching might come in the form of content, reviews from the influencer in social media, the real experience users' feedback or any comment. So, after they searched and analyzed the information, they decide to make a purchase this we call purchase intention (Dehghani & Tumer, 2015). This will help us to understand more about consumer's behaviors and the process of analysis of each product and service before they become customers.

Audience make a buying decision toward these factors. All of these dimensions are related to each other as that influencers should produce the good quality of information which later able to build trust to the viewers. While consumers who has a purchase intention, they tend to seek trustworthy information from reliable the influencers. After all, consumers may have buying intention toward review or may not depend on their perception. However, these can lead to consumers' decision making if they are going to purchase products or services base on the influencers that they review or not. The right influencers with reliable information will be able to lead them to make a purchase on those things.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Primary Data Collection Method

The study will focus on quantitative research by using survey questionnaire. As I want to figure out about the main factors that can lead to consumer buying decision via food blogger on social media. I would like to analyze on what is the most important factor can motivate audience to buy follow to influencers.

I plan to collect data from over 100 people. My research will analyze from the target group of those who live in Bangkok area, age between young adult to adult age, both male and female who watch food reviews on social media. This is the major group which tend to use social media as an information gathering. As I am willing to know about audience side, so question will focus on only one side of the consumers.

3.2 Data Analysis

After the data is collected, some of the general data will demonstrate as a pivot table. The five main factors will come as a form of table by using mean scale measurement to show the mean score and standard deviation.

3.3 Questionnaire

From the information obtained in the previous chapter – literature review, I will develop questionnaire through four main factors that are influencer, trustworthy, information quality and purchase intention.

The questions will start with basic information of the target group like age, gender, area and so on. After that will be about what kind of social media, they normally use such as, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, as well as, which food reviewers they

are following. Who do you believe in their information more and will come up with why you believe in this influencer? This will develop from main factors that mentioned before. I will distribute questionnaire by using Google form and after that will analyze with pivot table and chart to identify the answers.

The survey is composed of three sections that are general overview, main factors and demographic of the respondents. First, start with general overview of social media users which consisted of twelve questions. Next is the questions about the main factors lead to buying intention that are online review, influencer, information quality, trust and intention. All of the questions about factors are sentence and let the respondents weight the score with one to five, strongly disagree and strongly agree. All the factors will be measured as mean score to see which factors has the highest mean score. The last section is the overview demographic information of the respondents.
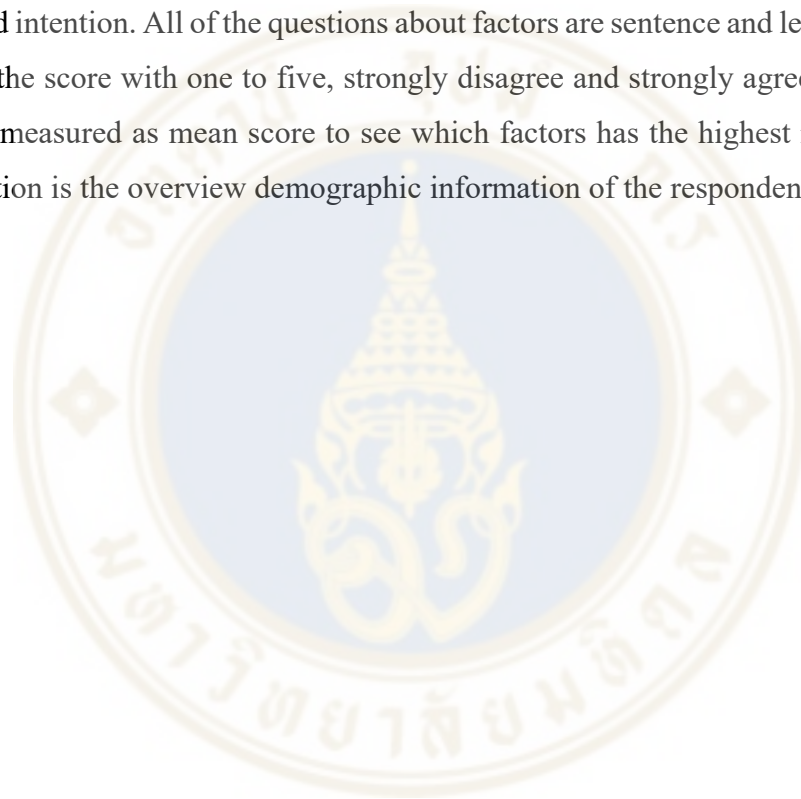
CHAPTER IV
DATA ANALYSIS

In this chapter the finding and analysis data will be shown. The survey randomly distributed through social media channel such as, Line and Facebook. There were 470 respondents and only 377 questionnaires were completed and returned due to the restricted of the first question, as the target group is those who watched food reviews. So, only person who have ever watched food review can get through to the next question. The response rate was approximately about 82%.

Table 4.1: Demographic Profile and User Behavior of social media

Demographic Profile	Respondents (%)	User Behavior	Respondents (%)
Gender		*Follow at least one food reviewer*	
Male	211 (56.0%)	Follow	288 (76.0%)
Female	166 (44.0%)	Not follow	89 (24.0%)
Total	377 (100%)	Total	377 (100%)
Age Range		*Average time of spending on Social Media*	
Less than 18 years old	1(1.0%)	Less than 3 hours	123 (33.0%)
18 – 29 years old	71(19.0%)	3 – 5 hours	177 (47.0%)
30 – 44 years old	142(38.0%)	5 – 10 hours	60 (16.0%)
More Than 45 years old	163(42.0%)	More than 10 hours	17 (4.0%)
Total	377 (100%)	Total	377 (100%)
Monthly Income (Baht)		*It's important to watch review before making decision*	
Less than 15,000	21 (5.0%)	Very important	237 (63.0%)
15,001 – 25,000	70 (19.0%)	A little important	132 (35.0%)
25,001 – 40,000	114(30.0%)	Not important at all	8 (2.0%)
40,001 – 70,000	90 (24.0%)	Total	377 (100%)
More than 70,001	82 (22.0%)		
Total	377 (100%)		
Residence			
Bangkok	215(57.0%)		
Suburban	72(19.0%)		(n = 377)
Other	90 (24.0%)		
Total	377(100%)		

Table 4.1, represents the demographic profile and user behavior of social media. Most of the respondents are male for 56 percent and female are 44 percent. The age ranges are between 30 – 44 years old which is 38 percent and more than 45 years old is up to 42 percent of the respondent which is almost a half of the number of respondents. Most of their income are between 25,001 – 40,000 baht (30%). More than half of the respondents live in Bangkok area which is 57 percent of them. The data also shows about the user behavior that 76 percent of them follow at least one food reviewer and they spend average time on social media about 3 – 5 hours per day (47%). However, 76 percent of the respondents think that it is very important to watch reviews before they make any purchase.

In this paragraph will tell about the result of the social media platform that respondents normally use to access to the food reviews.
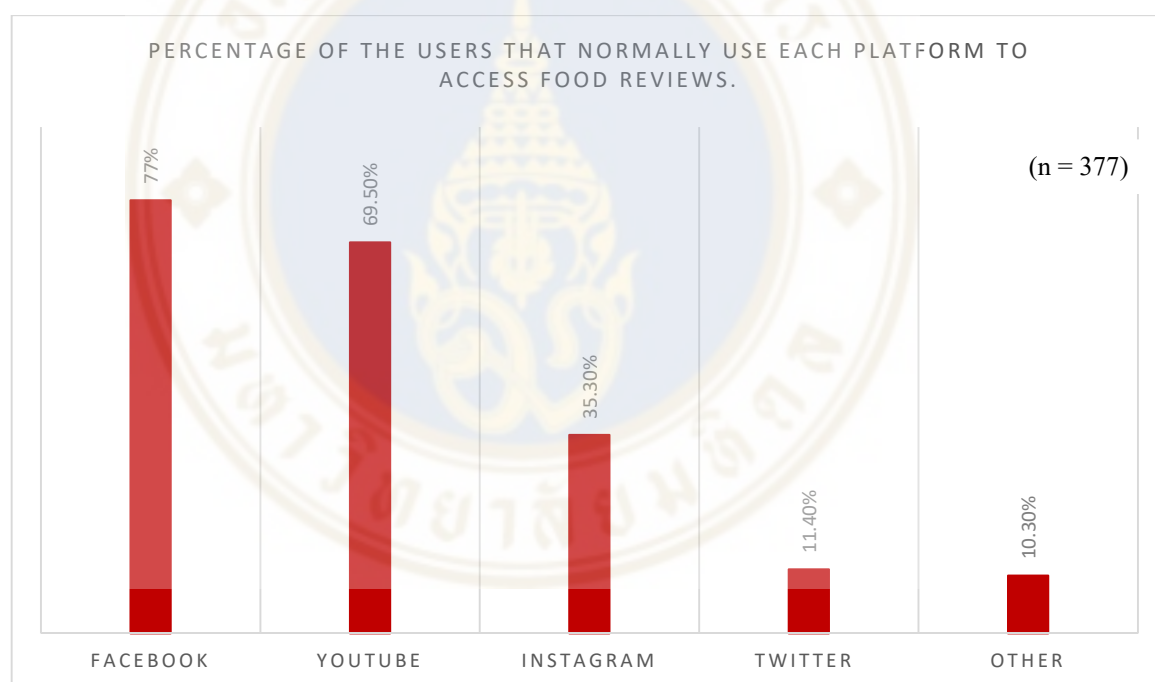
Figure 4.1: Percentage of the most popular social media platform that users

As the figure 4.1 show that Facebook is the most popular platform for them to access to food reviews which is up to 77 percent. Follow with YouTube which is 69.50 percent, Instagram platform gets 35.30 percent consequently with Twitter which is 11.40 percent and the other platforms are just 10.30 percent. So, this can be concluded that people normally reach to food reviews through Facebook and YouTube more than others platforms.

Another important question is that do they think social media influencers and celebrity endorsements play a big part in influencing their purchasing decision or not. The result shows that most of the respondents agree that influencers and celebrity endorsement can influence them to buy or not to buy something.
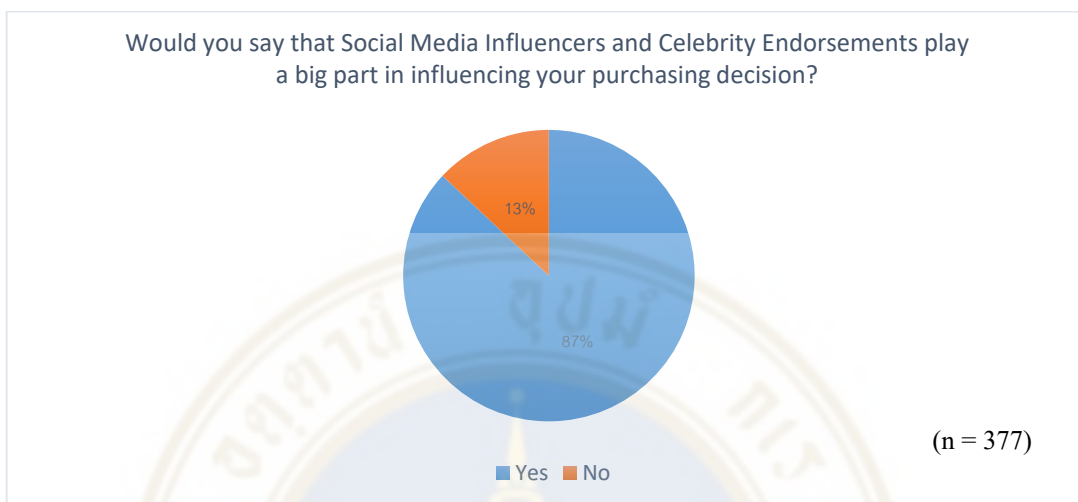
Figure 4.2: The percentage of respondents if they agree or disagree with the sentence that influencers can influence them to buy or not to buy something.

From them figure 4.2: The majority of respondents think that they can be influenced by the reviewers which is up to 87 percent or 328 respondents out of 377 of them. They tend to agree with this question while only 13 percent or 49 respondents don't believe influencers.

Another question is that "Why do you watch review before making a decision?" Which allow respondents answer more than choices. This question was created to see the reason why they decide to watch reviews before making any purchase decision.
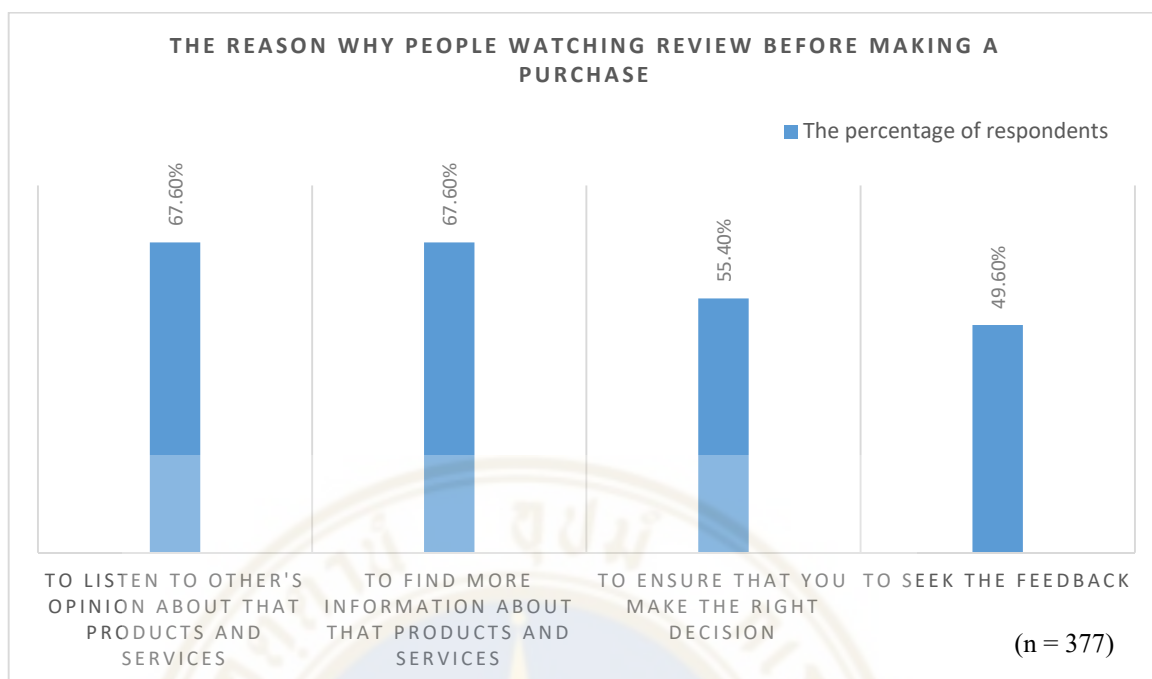
Figure 4.3: The reason why people watching review before making a purchase

The result is that up to 67 percent reply that there are two answers got an equally score, the majority of them, watch review to listen to other's opinion and find more information about products and services.

The last part of analysis will be demonstrated as a table in Table 2. It is the main factors parts consist of online review, influencer, information quality, trust and intention. Table 2, represents the mean and standard deviation of scale statements used in the questionnaire (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree) of the audience. The average scale for "information quality", "online review", "trust", "influencer" and "intention" are 4.05, 3.85, 3.82, 3.76 and 3.40 consequently. This indicate that the respondents are agree with the statements of these five factors. Moreover, this can be concluded that 'information quality' in the review is the most important factor with the highest average score, then' follow up with "online review", "trust", "influencer" and "intention" respectively.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of scale items	Mean	Standard Deviation
Information quality		
I think sincere opinion of reviewers are very important for the review	4.22	0.8175
I think the source of information is very important for the review	4.17	0.7829
I find that creativity on the content is very important for food reviewer	4.06	0.7983
I find that the information that reviewers provide can increase the buying decision	4.06	0.7814
I prefer the restaurant which has a better comment	4.02	0.8134
I find that the more information about food and restaurant, the better review	3.96	0.8591
I find that the experience from the real tasters are more genuine	3.83	0.8708
Average	**4.05**	**0.8176**
Online Review		
I find that watching review can help increasing my interest in the food and restaurant	4.02	0.8058
I find that watching review help to increase confidence in that food and restaurant	3.93	0.8153
I find that watching review can increase the liking in that food and restaurant	3.84	0.8237
I find that the restaurant with reviews are better than the one without reviews	3.61	1.0665
Average	**3.85**	**0.8778**
Trust		
The influencers who tend to tell both good and bad opinion of that restaurant are more trustable	4.01	0.8458
I trust the reviewers who has a background about the food	3.89	0.9135
The influencers who show video clip of that services are more trustable	3.77	0.8652
I believe that the influencers who review only food and restaurant are more trustable for food service area	3.61	0.9729
Average	**3.82**	**0.8993**

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of scale items (Cont.)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Influencer		
I think reviewers who have a good story telling is very attractive	4.07	0.7888
I find that the reviewers who have enjoyment and entertainment are more attractive	3.99	0.8474
I believe more in the reviewers who show their face on social media than the one who did not	3.98	0.8945
I find that social media influencers pay an important role for the food trend setter	3.92	0.8849
I believe in the influencers who have a good characteristic	3.77	0.9353
I believe in the influencers who have a better social background	3.51	1.0291
I tend to believe in the influencers who have a better appearance	3.04	1.1616
Average	**3.76**	**0.9345**
Intention		
I always watch the reviews before making any purchase	3.62	1.0827
If I watch the review without purchase intention, I would not buy it	3.56	1.0602
I always make a purchase according to the review I have watched	3.02	1.1679
Average	**3.40**	**1.1036**
Overall average of agreement	**3.77**	**0.9265**

CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

5.1 Conclusions

   The main purpose of this study was to find the specific factors that affect to buying decision by influencers on social media. In our study, we have defined the potential variables from literature reviews. Constructing the survey and inviting respondents who has watched food reviews. The one who did not watch the review will be eliminated and cannot complete the survey. Consequently, analyzed the behavior watching food reviews and the impact on consumer behavior in term of customer decision making upon the influencers. Finally, the result demonstrates by using mean and standard deviation scale the most and the least main potential factors. As the result shows that "information quality" is the most important factors, follow up by "online review", "trust", "influencer" and "intention" respectively. Therefore, it can be concluded that our principal research question "What are the important factors that impact consumer behavior via food reviews encouraged by influencers on Social Media platform" has a confident answer.

   Statistically, we highlight information quality, online review and trust as the most influencing factors of the consumers' motivation in review by influencers. As the figure 5.1 shows that the majority of respondents believe the influencers which is up to
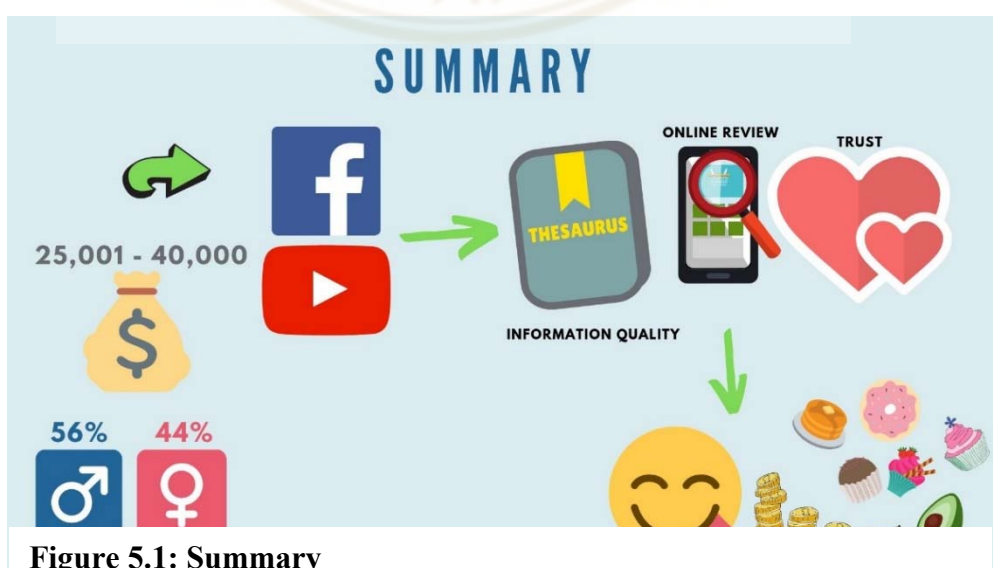

Figure 5.1: Summary

87 percent of them said so. Facebook and YouTube are the most popular platform for Social Media for the respondents to access to food reviews. The data from the figure 3 also represents that many of them watch the review in order to find the information and seek other's opinion about that products and services. These results can lead them to the

buying decision after all.

The summary of the journey to buying decision starts with the respondents, which 56 percent is men and 44 percent is women, the majority of income is between 25,001 – 40,000 baht. They find information or seek opinion about that products and services of the specific things they want to purchase through the famous social media, such as, Facebook and YouTube. The factors that they generate from social media that can lead them to purchase decision are information quality, online review and trust. After they gather all the factors information, they will buy food or visit the restaurant.

For this paper, it is just an initial stage that we find the factors from pervious literature review and assume as a main factor. This just measure by using mean scale and standard deviation. Thus, this study proposes that there is an opportunity for food business and marketer to better understand that what is the main factors that the majority of audience looking for before decision making on buying something and the popular social media platform that most of people use to access to food reviews. All of the results can be used to apply for marketing strategic plans in the future especially food review in social media platform.

5.2 Recommendation

Since this research used methodology on mean scale measurement, the result will show only the average score that can compare on which valuable factor should marketer or influencer focus and apply to the reviews. Also, this research did not focus on specific group but just the group of people who have watched food reviews before. There is no specialty calculation to compare and contrast of the difference age group of people. There is no contribution of hypothesis research before.

For the future study, they might contribute the hypothesis research or framework from these valuable factors and use SPSS to define the different group of people to see

if there is any significant different from each group of the audience. They can develop from the framework that I have provided in the next page and might focus on the smaller group of audience to find the deeper and insight results.

5.3 Frame work
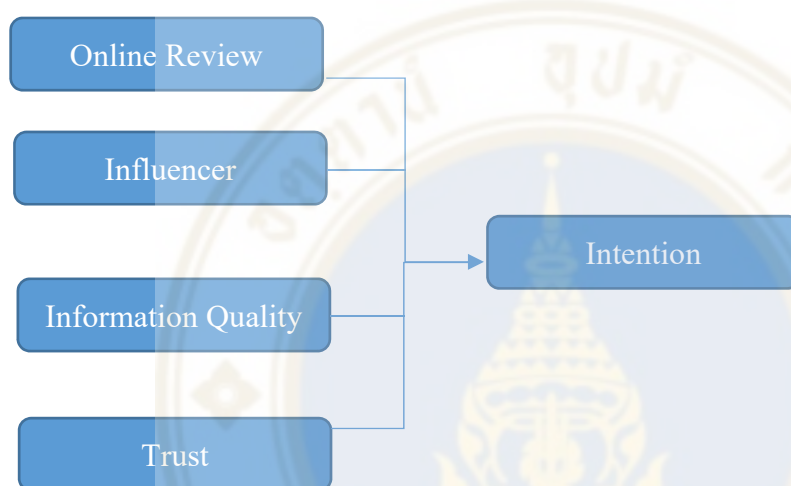
Figure: 5.2 Frame Work

5.4 Limitation of the research

This research is conducted on the people who have watched food reviews before which makes the target group is very wide and not that specific. Thus, there is only factors analysis and mean scale measurement. There is no used of program and special technique to compare and contrast to find the different of each group of people. So, the framework, hypothesis, specific group and analysis program are recommended for the future study.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire

1.) Have you ever watched food review via social media? (If yes go the next step, if not then end of the question)
- o Yes
- o No

Part 1: General overview of social media user

1.) Do you follow at least one food reviewer on social media?

   a) Yes

   b) No

2.) Which social media platform do you normally use? (can choose more than one)

   a) Facebook

   b) Instagram

   c) YouTube

   d) Twitter

   e) Other

3.) How often do you use social media?

   a) Everyday

   b) 2 – 3 times a week

   c) Once a week

   d) Once a month

4.) How often, on average, do you spend on social media each day?

   a) Less than 3 hours

   b) 3 – 5 hours

   c) 5 – 10 hours

   d) More than 10 hours

   e) I don't use social media

5.) Is the time you spend on social media for personal or business use?

   a) Personal

   b) Business

   c) Mixture of both

6.) Which type of device you use for access to social media (can answer more than one)

    a) Smartphone

    b) Tablets

    c) Pc, Notebook, Laptop

    d) Other…

7.) Would you say that Social Media Influencers and Celebrity Endorsements play a big part in influencing your purchasing decision?

    a) Yes

    b) No

8.) What is the main reason why you use social media? (can answer more than one)

    a) To find the latest news

    b) To connect and keep in touch with friends and family

    c) To make professional and business contacts

    d) To make new friends

    e) To relax and entertain

    f) Other (please specify)

9.) How important is it for you to watch review before making any purchase?

    a) Very important

    b) A little

    c) Not important at all

10.) Why do you watch review before making a decision? (can answer more than one)

    a) To seek the feedback

    b) To listen to other's opinion about that product and service

    c) To ensure that you make the right choice

    d) To find more information about that products and services

    f) Other

11.) How strongly do you trust the review?

    a) Very strong

    b) A little

    c) Not important at all

12.) What is the most important factor for you to believe in that review? (Can answer more than one)

    a) Influencer itself
    b) Information quality in that review
    c) Content in that review
    d) The product and service

Part 3: Demographic Information

1) What is your gender?

    a) Male

    b) Female

2) Where do you live?

    a) Bangkok

    b) Suburban area (Pathumthani, Nonthaburi, Samut Prakan, Samut Sathorn, and Nakorn Pathom)

    c) Others

3) What is your age range?

    a) Less than 18 years old

    b) 18 – 29 years old

    c) 30 – 44 years old

    d) More than 45 years old

4) What is your personal income?

    a) Less than 15,000 Baht

    b) Between 15,001 – 25,000 Baht

    c) Between 25,001 – 40,000 Baht

    d) Between 40,001 – 70,000 Baht

    e) More than 70,001 baht

Part 2: Information from the factors that lead to the purchase decision	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Online Review					
I find that watching review can help increasing my interest in the food and restaurant					
I find that the restaurant with reviews are better than the one without reviews					
I find that watching review can increase the liking in that food and restaurant					
I find that watching review help to increase confidence in that food and restaurant					
Influencers					
I find that social media influencers pay an important role for the food trend setter					
I believe more in the reviewers who show their face on social media than the one who did not					
I tend to believe in the influencers who have a better appearance					
I believe in the influencers who have a good characteristic					
I think reviewers who have a good story telling is very attractive					
I believe in the influencers who have a better social background					
I find that the reviewers who have enjoyment and entertainment are more attractive					
Information quality					
I think the source of information is very important for the review					
I think sincere opinion of reviewers are very important for the review					
I prefer the restaurant which has a better comment					
I find that the information that reviewers provide can increase the buying decision					
I find that the more information about food and restaurant, the better review					
I find that creativity on the content is very important for food reviewer					
I find that the experience from the real tasters are more genuine					
Trust					
The influencers who tend to tell both good and bad opinion of that restaurant are more trustable					
The influencers who show video clip of that services are more trustable					
I trust the reviewers who has a background about the food					
I believe that the influencers who review only food and restaurant are more trustable for food service area					
Intention					
I always watch the reviews before making any purchase					
If I watch the review without purchase intention, I would not buy it					
I always make a purchase according to the review I have watched					