
Original Article

Investigating the Effect of Customer Reviews and Online Customer Ratings on Purchase Intention: Mediating Role of Word of Mouth

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Citations: Lestari, I. & Maharani, M. (2023). Investigating the Effect of Customer Reviews and Online Customer Ratings on Purchase Intention: Mediating Role of Word of Mouth. *International Journal of Finance, Economics and Business*, 2(4), 313-321.

Received: 8 August 2023

Accepted: 22 November 2023

Published: 31 December 2023

Abstract: Technological advancement is accelerating, compelling business professionals to consistently engage in online marketing through e-commerce to stay competitive. By examining customer reviews and ratings online, this study seeks to determine how word of mouth affects purchase intentions. The research was conducted in Binjai city with a sample of 120 respondents. Purposive sampling was carried out with the condition that the respondent was female. Data analysis in this study used path analysis. The result shows that online customer reviews and ratings have a significant positive relationship with word of mouth. Also, online customer reviews, ratings, and word of mouth effect positively with purchase intention. In addition, this study found that word of mouth mediates the relationship between online customer reviews and online customer ratings on purchase intention. This study unequivocally demonstrates a noteworthy and positive relationship between online customer reviews and ratings and the phenomenon of word of mouth. Furthermore, the research establishes that these online reviews and ratings significantly shape purchasing intentions through word of mouth. It underscores the influential role that virtual customer feedback plays in fostering and amplifying consumer perceptions, highlighting its significance in shaping purchasing decisions in the digital landscape.

Keywords: Online customer review; Online customer ratings; Word of Mouth; Purchase intention.



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1. Introduction

Technology is developing more and more rapidly and makes businesspeople continue to compete in marketing their products online through e-commerce. According to [Ramdhan \(2019\)](#), e-commerce is an online shopping activity carried out without meeting directly with the buyer but can be done through electronic media such as smartphones connected via the internet network. There are various kinds of online shopping applications available. One of the e-commerce that many consumers widely reach is Shopee. [Rahmawati et al. \(2022\)](#) state that Shopee provides an online marketplace platform that connects sellers and buyers in conducting online buying and selling transactions with smartphones that can be done easily.

According to [Chen & Xie \(2008\)](#), the digital era changes the buying process from offline to online shops. Initially, people were only interested in shopping offline through store visits because, with the offline shopping system, buyers can immediately see the state of the product to be purchased. However, with online shopping, buyers get convenience. The time used is more flexible and efficient. Conversely, consumers who do online shopping cannot see a product directly. According to [Rahmawati et al. \(2022\)](#), when shopping online, a potential consumer will face various risks that can cause a loss. Of the many products available on the market, only a few products from certain brands are targeted by consumers.

Cosmetics are synonymous with women because they are used as beauty supporters. Cosmetics consist of various types; lipstick products are an alternative to lipsticker. The viral lipstick, currently the target product of many consumers, is Implora Cheek & Lipstick. This research was conducted on users of Implora cosmetic products in Binjai City. The phenomenon in this study is that although the reviews of content creators, influencers, and customers on TikTok contain positive reviews about Implora Cheek & Lipstick, researchers still find negative reviews and low ratings on Shopee. It is the phenomenon behind this research. With various existing reviews, researchers found that buyers still write many negative reviews of Implora Cheek & Lipstick products through Implora Cosmetics on Shopee. Implora Cosmetics claims that Implora Cheek & Lipstick products are long-lasting. It means that it has a long durability when applied. However, researchers found reviews submitted by several consumers that Implora Lipstick does not have long durability. After being applied, buyers provide reviews related to the durability of Implora Lipstick only within 2-3 hours. Not all consumers are in a condition that always allows them to retouch. If reviews from previous consumers and company claims do not match, the product is not worth buying.

Reviews or reviews are useful for a consumer in making a purchase decision ([Naomi & Ardhiansyah, 2021](#)). Apart from still finding bad reviews from customers, low ratings from buyers were also found on Implora Cosmetics in Shopee. Buyers who give low ratings are because Implora Cosmetics has poor service. Ratings given by consumers can also be used as a source of information for other potential consumers before deciding to purchase a product later, so this affects word of mouth from product users and impacts purchasing decisions. This study is also based on a research gap in previous studies. A study conducted by [Sianipar & Yoestini \(2021\)](#) indicated that online customer reviews positively and significantly affect purchasing decisions. The better reviews consumers give about a product and service, the more purchasing decisions will be made. Meanwhile, [Mahmudah \(2021\)](#) shows that Online Customer Review does not significantly influence purchasing decisions. Online Customer Review is not a reason for a consumer to buy a product because consumers have confidence that the purchase decision will be made.

Very few reviews are submitted by beauty vloggers, and the sources doubt if the product being reviewed is a deliberate form of advertising. Also, [Simamora & Maryana \(2023\)](#) state that Online Customer Rating has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. Meanwhile, [Istiqomah & Mufidah \(2021\)](#) state that Online Customer Rating does not positively and significantly influence purchasing decisions. A consumer decides based only on existing reviews, not on ratings. This study aimed to determine and analyze the effect of customer reviews and online customer ratings on purchasing decisions for Implora cheek & lipstick products at Shopee.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Purchase Decision

A purchasing decision is a decision made by a consumer that can be influenced by various things such as economy, finance, technology, politics, culture, product, price, place, promotion, physical evidence, people and process ([Yulistiyani et al., 2024](#)). From some of these things, consumers can obtain information and make decisions regarding the product to purchase. Purchasing is a process of making consumer decisions on purchases that combine knowledge in choosing two or more products that exist by being influenced by several factors, including quality, price, place, perceived use, and service. According to [Kalangi et al. \(2019\)](#), there are five indicators of purchasing decisions, namely:

1. Decision about Brand - Consumers must decide which brand of product to buy. Each brand is different from one another. Therefore, a company must understand how consumers choose a brand to buy.
2. Decision about Choice of Distributor - A consumer must decide which distributor to visit. Each consumer has a difference in determining a distributor due to several factors such as low price, completeness of a product, and convenience when shopping.

3. Decisions about the Number of Products Purchased - Consumers can decide the number of products to purchase. Consumers may buy more than one product. Therefore, companies must always provide stock for the different desires of consumers.
4. Decisions about Purchase Time - A consumer's decision regarding the timing of buying a product differs. For example, some buy things once a month, once every 3 months, once every 6 months and others.
5. Decision on Payment Method - Consumers can decide about the payment methods that will be made when purchasing. The payment methods include cash on delivery, bank transfer, credit/debit card, pay later, etc.

2.2. Word of Mouth

Word of Mouth is word-of-mouth communication about views or assessments of a product or service, individually and in groups, that aim to provide personal information. Word of Mouth is one of the strategies that is very effective in influencing consumer decisions in using products or services, and Word of Mouth can build a sense of trust in customers. According to Philip Kotler (2009), Word of Mouth is a marketing activity through person-to-person intermediaries either verbally, in writing, or through electronic communication tools connected to the internet based on experience with products or services. When viewed from the definition above, Word of Mouth can be interpreted in general as providing information on the assessment or view of a product of goods and services to the closest people, whether the product or service is worth consuming or not for other potential consumers. According to Joesyiana (2018), word-of-mouth indicators are (i) the willingness of consumers to talk about positive things about the quality of service and products to others. (ii) recommendation of company services and products to others and (iii) encouragement of friends or relations to purchase the company's products and services.

2.3. Customer Reviews

Online Customer Review is the opinion and experience consumers give to a service the seller provides or related to products purchased and used before (Regina Dwi Amelia et al., 2021). Meanwhile, Syakira & Moeliono (2019) mentioned that online consumer reviews are feedback based on their experience using a product. They can influence potential new consumers to develop purchase intentions for similar products. Online Customer Review is a form of WOM (word of mouth) in online transactions that conveys the customer's assessment of the product or service; the written assessment is either positive or negative (Depari & Ginting, 2022). According to Agesti et al. (2021), there are several indicators of online customer review, namely Perceived Usefulness, Source Credibility, Argument Quality, Volume of Online Reviews, and Valance of Online Consumer Reviews.

2.4. Conceptual Framework

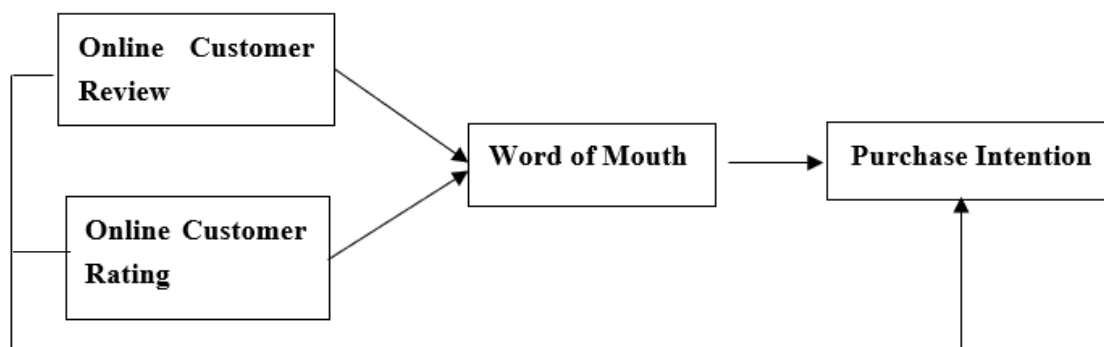


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Hypothesis 1: Customer review positively and significantly affects word of mouth on consumers of Implora products in Binjai City.

Hypothesis 2: Online customer ratings positively and significantly affect word-of-mouth for Implora products in Binjai City.

Hypothesis 3: Word of mouth positively and significantly affects purchase intention for Implora products in Binjai City.

Hypothesis 4: Customer review positively and significantly affects the purchase intention of Implora products in Binjai City.

Hypothesis 5: Online customer rating positively and significantly affects the purchase intention of Implora products in Binjai City.

Hypothesis 6: Word of mouth mediates the relationship between customer reviews and online customer rating on purchase intention for Implora products in Binjai City.

3. Materials and Methods

This study uses a quantitative approach using a causal relationship approach. According to [Yani et al. \(1995\)](#) a causal relationship is a relationship that is between cause and effect between the independent variable and the dependent variable. This research was conducted in Binjai City. The sample in this study numbered 120 respondents. The data analysis technique used is path analysis.

4. Result and Discussion

Table 1. Result of Hypothesis Testing (Direct Effect)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.322	2.821		0.823	0.412
Online Customer Reviews	0.303	0.128	0.253	2.378	0.019
Online Customer Ratings	1.072	0.19	0.6	5.633	0.000
R	0.830a		df		2
R Square	0.689		Mean Square		911.01
Adjusted R Square	0.684		F		130.947
Std. Error of the Estimate	2.63763		Sig.		0.000b
Sum of Squares	1822.021				

a. Predictors: (Constant), Online Customer Rating, Online Customer Review

b. Dependent Variable: Word of Mouth

Table 1 shows that R Square value is 0.689. It means that online customer reviews and ratings explain their relationship to word of mouth as much as 68.9 percent. Remaining 31.1. Also, F stat is 130.947 with a significant level of 0.000, smaller than alpha 0.05 (5%). It means that online customer reviews and ratings simultaneously affect Word of Mouth. In addition, this study indicates that Online Customer Review has a significant positive relationship with Word of Mouth. The regression coefficient of Online Customer Review is 0.303, std. error is 0.128, t-stat is as much as 2.378, and sig. 0.019 or $p < 0.05$. It means that by assuming an increase in online customer reviews, 1 percent and Word of Mouth would be increased as much as 30.3 percent. Also, Online Customer Rating has a significant positive relationship with Word of Mouth. The regression coefficient of Online Customer Rating is 1.072, std. error is 0.190, t-stat is as much as 5.633, and sig. 0.000 or $p < 0.01$.

Table 2 shows that R Square value is 0.899. It means that online customer review, rating and word of mouth explain their relationship to Purchase intention as much as 89.9 percent. The remaining 10.1 percent is explained by other variables not included in this study. It means that online customer reviews, ratings, and word of mouth simultaneously affect Word of Mouth. In addition, this study indicates that Online Customer Review has a significant positive relationship with Purchase Intention. The regression coefficient of Online Customer Review is 0.320, std. error is 0.070, t-stat is as much as 4.559, and sig. 0.000 or $p < 0.01$. It means

that by assuming an increase of online customer reviews of 1 percent, Purchase Intention would increase as much as 32 percent.

Table 2. The Result of Hypothesis Testing (Direct Effect)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-1.106	1.520		-0.728	0.468
Online Customer Review	0.320	0.070	0.285	4.559	0.000
Online Customer Rating	0.838	0.115	0.500	7.276	0.000
Word of Mouth	0.201	0.049	0.215	4.067	0.000
R	0.948a		Sum of Squares		2085.184
R Square	0.899		df		3
Adjusted R Square	0.896		Mean Square		695.061
Std. Error of the Estimate	1.41727		F		346.031
R Square Change	0.899		Sig.		.000b

a. Predictors: (Constant), Word of Mouth, Online Customer Review, Online Customer Rating

b. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

Also, Table 2 describes that Online Customer Rating has a significant positive relationship with Purchase Intention. The regression coefficient of Online Customer Rating is 0.838, std. error is 0.115, t-stat is as much as 7.276, and sig. 0.000 or $p < 0.01$. In addition, this study found that Word of Mouth has a significant positive relationship with Purchase Intention. The regression coefficient of Word of Mouth is 0.201, std. error is 0.049, t-stat is as much as 4.067, and sig. 0.000 or $p < 0.01$.

Table 3. The Result of Hypothesis Testing (Direct Effect)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Online Customer Review --> Word of Mouth --> Purchase Intention	0.061	0.006	0.054	9.671	0.000
Online Customer Rating --> Word of Mouth --> Purchase Intention	0.215	0.009	0.129	22.909	0.000

Table 3 shows that word of mouth mediates the relationship between online customer reviews and online customer ratings on purchase intention. The regression coefficient of Online Customer Review towards purchase intention is 0.061, std. error is 0.006, t-stat is as much as 9.671, and sig. 0.000 or $p < 0.01$. Also, the regression coefficient of Online Customer Rating towards purchase intention is 0.215, std. error is 0.009, t-stat is as much as 22.909, and sig. 0.000 or $p < 0.01$.

5. Discussion

5.1. The Effect of Customer Review on Word of Mouth

Customer review is a review given by consumers about a product they have purchased about various aspects of providing additional information that helps other consumers find information about the product by providing an overview of the quality of the product through the reviews provided. Consumer reviews are used as a means for consumers to find and obtain information which will influence purchasing decisions. Online consumer reviews have also functioned as decision-making aids, mechanisms for feedback provided by consumers, and recommendation systems on online shopping platforms. Good online customer reviews from consumers can influence word of mouth, in line with research conducted by [Anastasiei et al. \(2023\)](#) and [Ginting et al. \(2023\)](#).

5.2. The Effect of Online Customer Rating on Word of Mouth

Ratings are made by consumers who have purchased online and published on the website. Usually, rating is a way for consumers to provide feedback to sellers. Online Customer Rating is one way for potential buyers to get information about sellers, so the existence of ratings in online buying and selling is a logical thing if consumers consider that ratings measure a product's quality. This Online Customer Rating plays a role in influencing consumers towards a product. There is a feature of using Online Customer Rating to increase purchase interest in a consumer or potential consumer. Consumer expectations are to get credible information to positively impact word of mouth, in line with research conducted by [Clark \(2021\)](#) and [Assifah & Sumadi \(2021\)](#).

5.3. The Effect of Word of Mouth on Purchase Intention

According to [Aditya & Wardana \(2017\)](#), word of mouth is an action taken by consumers to provide information personally to other fellow consumers regarding a product or service. Word of mouth can be categorized as very effective in convincing potential customers because they tend to trust the people around them who have used certain products or services first compared to advertisements or other marketing tools. It will certainly affect purchase intention because word of mouth can spread widely quickly and is trusted by potential customers. The spread of word of mouth can not only be done by providing information through word-of-mouth communication but can also be disseminated through existing social media networks. The spread of Word of Mouth through Internet social media is very easy, and its spread is widespread because access is relatively efficient, one of which is through the YouTube application, WhatsApp, line, google, Facebook, and other applications found on devices connected to other internet connections. This is in line with research conducted by [Al-Gasawneh et al. \(2023\)](#), [Aravindan et al. \(2023\)](#), and [Su et al. \(2023\)](#).

5.4. The Effect of Online Customer Reviews on Purchase Intention

Making product purchase transactions online makes potential customers unable to see the products' authenticity. Reviews help potential customers by providing information about experiences from other consumers who have bought and used the same product. Various kinds of information consumers submit in the form of reviews can influence purchasing decisions for potential customers. A study conducted by [Fahrozi et al. \(2022\)](#) and [Naomi & Ardhiyansyah \(2021\)](#) state that Online Customer Review positively and significantly influences purchasing decisions.

5.5. The Effect of Online Customer Rating on Purchase Intention

Before making an online purchase, consumers will usually observe assessments from existing sources. Information about product quality, seller service, and the process or processing time of goods can be obtained through rating consumers experienced in buying similar products. This is aligned with the opinion of [Prasetyo & Adriyanto \(2022\)](#) and [Naomi & Ardhiyansyah \(2021\)](#) that Online Customer Rating has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. Ratings can help potential buyers in receiving products and services that are of good quality.

5.6. The Mediating Role of Word of Mouth in the Relationship of Online Customer Reviews and Ratings on Purchase Intention

Review is one of several factors that determine a person's purchasing decision. People can take the number of reviews as an indicator of product popularity or the value of a product, which will affect their willingness to buy a product. Online reviews can be a powerful promotional tool for marketing communications. Marketers and vendors have been using this medium as it provides a cheap and impactful channel to reach their customers. Marketers are known to have taken advantage of the network of influence between customers to influence the purchasing behaviour of potential buyers. In comparison, part of the review uses the form of star symbols rather than text forms to express customer opinions. A rating can be interpreted as a judgment from users on a product's preference for their experience referring to their psychological and emotional state when interacting with virtual products in a mediated environment. The existence of online customer reviews and online customer ratings can influence purchase intention through word of mouth because it can be a powerful promotional tool for marketing communication. Marketers and vendors have been using this medium as it provides an inexpensive and impactful channel to reach their customers. Marketers are known to have taken advantage of the network of influence between customers to

influence the purchasing behaviour of potential buyers, In line with research conducted by [Mariantika & Nuryakin \(2023\)](#) and [Prasetio & Purnamawati \(2023\)](#).

6. Conclusions

This study concludes that the intricate web of consumer interactions in the digital realm unveils a fascinating synergy between online customer reviews, online customer ratings, word of mouth, and purchase intention. The findings underscore the robust positive relationships among these elements and illuminate the pivotal role of Word of Mouth as a mediator. As online platforms continue to shape and redefine the landscape of consumer engagement, understanding and leveraging these interconnected dynamics can empower businesses to navigate the digital realm with strategic precision, fostering enhanced customer trust and driving forward a virtuous cycle of online influence and purchase intent. In improving customer reviews, Implora product sellers are expected to improve service quality and always be responsive when receiving questions so that consumers can provide interesting reviews when receiving products. They will provide memorable unboxing videos and be able to attract potential customers to want to buy the products offered so that this can have an impact on word of mouth and purchase intention. Online customer ratings can be improved by providing optimal product content and providing customer engagement. To get a good rating, sellers must ensure that the products sold are of good quality. Sellers can use the broadcast chat feature to remind customers to provide positive reviews immediately. For example, by giving thanks for making a purchase and asking consumers to give five stars and leave a positive review this can impact word of mouth and purchase intention. Future researchers can conduct further research by adding variables outside this study, such as responsiveness, customer service and engagement, that can increase purchase intention.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, I.L. and M.M.; methodology, I.L.; software, I.L.; validation, M.M.; formal analysis, I.L.; investigation, I.L. and M.M.; resources, I.L.; data curation, M.M.; writing—original draft preparation, I.L. and M.M.; writing—review and editing, I.L. and M.M.; visualization, I.L.; supervision, M.M.; project administration, I.L. and M.M.; funding acquisition, I.L. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Acknowledgments: The authors would like to thank Universitas Medan Area, Indonesia, for supporting this research and publication. We also thank the reviewers for their constructive comments and suggestions.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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