

The Effects of Customer Reviews, Ratings, and Price on Purchase Decisions: The Mediating Role of Purchase Intention in Online Food Delivery Applications

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Abstract

The development of online food delivery services has changed consumer behavior in purchasing food through digital platforms. Before making a transaction, consumers generally use customer reviews, ratings, and price information to evaluate products and merchants. However, previous studies have reported mixed findings regarding the effects of these three factors on purchase decisions, indicating the need for further research. This study aims to analyze the effects of customer reviews, ratings, and price on purchase decisions, with purchase intention as a mediating variable in online food delivery applications. The study employed a quantitative approach and surveyed 170 respondents selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4. The results show that customer reviews, ratings, and price have positive and significant effects on purchase intention. In addition, customer reviews, ratings, price, and purchase intention also have positive and significant effects on purchase decisions. Purchase intention was found to mediate the effects of customer reviews, ratings, and price on purchase decisions in online food delivery applications. These findings indicate that improving the quality of customer reviews, maintaining consistently favorable ratings, and setting appropriate prices can strengthen consumers' purchase intention and thereby encourage purchase decisions in online food delivery services.

Keywords

Customer Reviews;
Ratings; Price; Purchase
Intention; Purchase
Decisions; Online Food
Delivery.



I. Introduction

Digital transformation has changed how consumers search for information, evaluate alternatives, and purchase products and services. Advances in information technology, high-speed internet, and smartphone use have shifted consumer behavior from conventional transactions toward transactions on digital platforms. In recent years, the online food delivery (OFD) industry has been among the fastest-growing sectors because it integrates food ordering, digital payments, delivery tracking, and customer service into a single application. These changes have not only improved transaction efficiency but have also transformed consumer decision-making processes, which increasingly rely on digital information before a purchase is made (Grewal et al., 2023; Long et al., 2024; Verma et al., 2024).

The growth of online food delivery services in Indonesia has been driven by increasing internet penetration, the adoption of digital payments, and lifestyle changes that prioritize convenience. Platforms such as GoFood, GrabFood, and ShopeeFood have intensified competition in the food delivery industry. Competition no longer focuses solely on the number of merchants or the variety of menus offered, but also on the ability of platforms to provide a better customer experience through comprehensive information, accurate recommendation systems, attractive promotions, and ease of application use. Under these

conditions, the quality of information received by consumers is an important factor influencing purchase decisions (Kotler et al., 2022; Long et al., 2024; Statista, 2025).

Unlike conventional transactions, consumers on online food delivery platforms cannot directly assess food quality before making a purchase. Consequently, they rely more heavily on the information available in the application to evaluate products and merchants. This information includes customer reviews, ratings, prices, product photographs, and previous customer experiences. According to Information Adoption Theory, information perceived as relevant, high-quality, and credible is more readily adopted by consumers and thus influences the formation of attitudes and purchase decisions. The higher the quality of information available on digital platforms, the more likely consumers are to trust the products offered and decide to make a purchase (Sussman & Siegal, 2003; Filieri et al., 2023; Qiu & Zhang, 2024).

One of the most widely used forms of information in digital transactions is customer reviews. Customer reviews are a form of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) that describes consumers' experiences after using a product or service. Unlike marketing communications issued by companies, customer reviews are considered more objective because they are based on users' actual experiences. Positive reviews can improve perceived quality, build trust, and reduce perceived risk in online transactions. Conversely, negative reviews can create doubts and reduce consumers' interest in making a purchase. Customer reviews are therefore a key determinant of consumer behavior on various digital platforms, including online food delivery services (Filieri et al., 2023; Prabowo et al., 2023; Qiu & Zhang, 2024).

In addition to customer reviews, ratings are an important indicator in consumers' evaluation processes. Ratings are quantitative assessments of product or service quality provided by customers and are usually displayed as star symbols. From the perspective of Signaling Theory, ratings serve as quality signals that help prospective consumers reduce uncertainty when they have no prior experience with a product. Merchants with high ratings tend to be perceived as offering better product and service quality than merchants with low ratings. However, high ratings do not always reflect the actual experiences of all consumers because assessment bias and variations in service quality across transactions may still occur. These conditions indicate that the effectiveness of ratings in influencing purchase decisions requires further empirical evidence (Connelly et al., 2011; Mahendra & Edastama, 2022; Sari & Mustaqim, 2024).

Another equally important factor in online food delivery transactions is price. Competition among digital platforms makes it increasingly easy for consumers to compare prices across merchants and applications before making a purchase. In addition to product prices, consumers consider delivery charges, service fees, discounts, and vouchers offered by platforms. According to the Theory of Perceived Value, consumers compare the benefits they receive with the sacrifices they must make. When the price is perceived as appropriate for the benefits received, perceived value increases, encouraging purchase intention and purchase decisions. Conversely, a price perceived as disproportionate to product quality can reduce consumers' interest in making a transaction (Tandon et al., 2021; Kotler et al., 2022; Verma et al., 2024).

Although customer reviews, ratings, and price are important factors in digital marketing, purchase decisions do not always occur immediately after consumers receive this information. Before making an actual purchase, consumers generally go through a psychological stage involving purchase intention. Purchase intention reflects consumers'

readiness to buy a product after evaluating the available information. It therefore serves as a mechanism explaining how digital information is translated into purchasing behavior. Various studies show that customer reviews, ratings, and price perceptions can increase purchase intention, which subsequently influences purchase decisions (Ajzen, 1991; Tandon et al., 2021; Qiu & Zhang, 2024).

Although the relationships among these variables have been widely studied, previous findings remain inconsistent. Mahendra and Edastama (2022) found that customer reviews significantly influenced purchase decisions, whereas ratings had no significant effect. In contrast, Sari and Mustaqim (2024) showed that ratings had a positive effect on purchase decisions, while customer reviews exerted a greater influence through a mediating variable. Another study by Prabowo et al. (2023) demonstrated that purchase intention mediated the relationship between online customer reviews and purchase decisions. These differences indicate that the mechanisms linking customer reviews, ratings, price, purchase intention, and purchase decisions require further investigation, particularly in the context of online food delivery applications in Indonesia.

Based on these empirical phenomena and the research gap, this study offers novelty by integrating customer reviews, ratings, and price as determinants of purchase decisions through purchase intention as a mediating variable in online food delivery applications. Unlike some previous studies that examined only direct effects among variables, this study positions purchase intention as a psychological mechanism explaining how digital information is transformed into purchase decisions. The study is expected to enrich the literature on consumer behavior on digital platforms and provide practical recommendations for online food delivery application operators and merchants in designing marketing strategies based on digital information to increase consumer purchase decisions.

II. Review of Literature

2.1 Information Adoption Theory

Information Adoption Theory (IAT) was developed by Sussman and Siegal (2003) to explain how individuals adopt information obtained from digital environments in their decision-making processes. The theory states that information quality and source credibility are the main factors determining whether information will be accepted and used by individuals. The more relevant, accurate, and trustworthy the information, the more likely it is to influence a person's attitudes and behavior (Sussman & Siegal, 2003; Salehi-Esfahani et al., 2016).

In the context of online food delivery (OFD), Information Adoption Theory explains that consumers cannot directly evaluate product quality and therefore rely more heavily on information available in applications, such as customer reviews, ratings, and product descriptions. This information helps consumers reduce uncertainty before making a purchase. Various studies show that the quality of digital information positively influences trust, perceived value, and intention to use OFD services (Islamy & Arifa, 2025; Chiu et al., 2024).

2.2 Customer Reviews

Customer reviews are a form of electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) that contains consumers' experiences, opinions, and evaluations after using a product or service. Unlike marketing communications controlled by companies, customer reviews arise from users' actual experiences and are therefore considered more objective and more credible. Consequently, customer reviews are one of the primary sources of information used by consumers to assess product quality before making a purchase (Filieri et al., 2018; Sussman & Siegal, 2003).

In digital transactions, customer reviews help reduce uncertainty and increase consumer trust in products and merchants. Positive reviews can improve perceived quality and perceived value, whereas negative reviews can increase perceived risk and reduce purchase intention. This indicates that review quality and credibility are important factors in shaping consumer behavior on digital platforms (Filieri et al., 2018; Islamy & Arifa, 2025).

Empirical research shows that customer reviews have a positive effect on both purchase intention and purchase decisions. Islamy and Arifa (2025) found that online reviews increased perceived value, which subsequently affected the purchase intention of food delivery application users. Similarly, various studies on e-commerce show that informative customer reviews can increase trust and encourage consumers to make purchases (Filieri et al., 2018; Islamy & Arifa, 2025).

2.3 Ratings

Ratings are numerical assessments of product or service quality provided by consumers based on their post-purchase experiences. On digital platforms, ratings are generally displayed as star symbols (1–5), allowing consumers to obtain a quick overview of product quality. Ratings serve as quality signals that help consumers reduce uncertainty when selecting products or merchants (Connelly et al., 2011).

According to Signaling Theory, ratings are signals sent by previous customers to prospective consumers about the quality of a product or service. Merchants with high ratings tend to be perceived as offering better product and service quality than merchants with low ratings. Ratings can therefore increase consumer trust and accelerate the evaluation of alternatives before a purchase (Connelly et al., 2011).

In the context of OFD services, ratings have been shown to influence both intention to reuse services and purchase decisions. Studies of OFD user behavior in Indonesia show that online ratings contribute to satisfaction and intention to reuse applications, especially when combined with online reviews and service quality.

2.4 Price

Price represents the value that consumers must sacrifice to obtain the benefits of a product or service. In modern marketing, price is viewed not only as a cost to be paid but also as a representation of the perceived value received by consumers. In online food delivery applications, price perceptions are influenced not only by food prices but also by delivery charges, service fees, discounts, and promotions offered by platforms (Kotler et al., 2022).

Based on the concept of perceived value, consumers compare the benefits obtained with the costs incurred. When the price is perceived as appropriate for the benefits received, perceived value increases and encourages the formation of purchase intention. Conversely, when the price is considered too high relative to the benefits obtained, the likelihood of consumers making a purchase decreases (Zeithaml, 1988; Tandon et al., 2021).

Recent research shows that price value and price-saving orientation are important determinants of OFD service use. Chiu et al. (2024) found that perceived price value significantly influenced intention to use food delivery services, while Islamy and Arifa (2025) showed that price increased perceived value, which subsequently encouraged purchase intention.

2.5 Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is consumers' psychological tendency to buy a product after evaluating the available information. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, intention is the main predictor of actual behavior; thus, the stronger a person's purchase intention, the more likely that individual is to make a purchase (Ajzen, 1991).

In the context of online food delivery, purchase intention is influenced by various factors, including information quality, customer reviews, ratings, price perceptions, ease of

application use, and trust. A meta-analysis of 60 studies on OFD shows that perceived usefulness, perceived trust, and price value are the dominant factors influencing intention to use food delivery services. Recent research also shows that perceived value serves as an important mechanism linking the effects of customer reviews and price to purchase intention in food delivery applications. Purchase intention therefore explains the process through which digital information is transformed into consumer purchasing behavior.

2.6 Purchase Decisions

A purchase decision is the final stage in the consumer decision-making process, following need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, the formation of purchase intention, and the act of purchasing. In digital environments, purchase decisions are influenced not only by product characteristics but also by the quality of information consumers receive through digital platforms (Kotler et al., 2022).

In online food delivery applications, purchase decisions are influenced by a combination of factors, such as customer reviews, ratings, price, perceived value, and purchase intention. Various studies show that high-quality digital information can increase consumer trust and thereby increase the likelihood of a purchase. Recent meta-analyses also confirm that perceived value and behavioral intention are the main predictors of decisions to use OFD services.

III. Research Methods

This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design to explain the causal relationships between customer reviews, ratings, price, and purchase decisions, with purchase intention as a mediating variable among users of online food delivery applications. A quantitative approach was selected because it enables the objective testing of relationships among variables through statistical analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The population of this study comprised all users of online food delivery applications who had purchased food through digital platforms such as GoFood, GrabFood, and ShopeeFood. Because the exact population size was unknown, a non-probability sampling technique using purposive sampling was employed. Respondents were selected according to the following criteria: (1) being at least 17 years old, (2) having used an online food delivery application within the previous six months, and (3) having purchased food through that application. Based on these criteria, 170 respondents met the study requirements.

The study used primary data collected through an online questionnaire distributed using Google Forms. The research instrument was developed from indicators used in previous studies and measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree (Sekaran & Bougie, 2021). Customer reviews, ratings, price, purchase intention, and purchase decisions were operationalized through several indicators adapted to the context of online food delivery applications.

Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS version 4.0. PLS-SEM was selected because it can test simultaneous relationships among latent variables, accommodate mediation models, and is suitable for predictive research without requiring normally distributed data (Hair et al., 2022). The analysis included assessments of the measurement model (outer model) and structural model (inner model).

The outer model was assessed to evaluate construct validity and reliability. Convergent validity was assessed through outer loadings (>0.70) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

(>0.50). Construct reliability was evaluated using Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha, with a minimum threshold of 0.70. Discriminant validity was then evaluated using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) to ensure that each construct was sufficiently distinct from the other constructs (Hair et al., 2022).

After the measurement model met the validity and reliability criteria, the inner model was assessed to determine the model's ability to explain relationships among variables. The structural model was evaluated using the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) as an indicator of model goodness of fit. Hypotheses were tested using a bootstrapping procedure at a 5% significance level. A hypothesis was accepted if the t-statistic was >1.96 and the p-value was <0.05 (Hair et al., 2022).

The conceptual research model comprises three independent variables—customer reviews (X_1), ratings (X_2), and price (X_3)—one mediating variable, purchase intention (Z), and one dependent variable, purchase decisions (Y). The relationships among the variables were analyzed to test both direct and indirect effects through the mediating variable in accordance with the research hypotheses.

Table 1. Operationalization of Research Variables

Variable	Operational Definition	Indicators	Source
Customer Reviews	Consumers' perceptions of customer reviews about products or services in online food delivery applications.	Review credibility, information quality, review usefulness, information completeness	Filieri et al. (2018)
Ratings	Consumers' assessments of product or service quality expressed as scores or star symbols.	Rating level, rating consistency, trust in ratings	Connelly et al. (2011)
Price	Consumers' perceptions of whether the price corresponds to the benefits obtained.	Price affordability, price–quality alignment, price competitiveness	Kotler et al. (2022)
Purchase Intention	Consumers' tendency to make a purchase after evaluating the available information.	Interest in purchasing, desire to try, intention to make a transaction	Ajzen (1991)
Purchase Decisions	Consumers' decisions to purchase products through online food delivery applications.	Confidence in purchasing, decision to select a product, decision to make a transaction	Kotler et al. (2022)

IV. Result and Discussion

4.1 Respondent Characteristics

This study involved 170 respondents who were users of online food delivery applications. Most respondents were female, comprising 94 individuals (55.29%), while 76 were male (44.71%). In terms of semester, the largest group consisted of eighth-semester students, with 80 respondents (47.06%), followed by second-semester students with 51 respondents (30.00%), sixth-semester students with 24 respondents (14.12%), and fourth-semester students with 15 respondents (8.82%). The most widely used application was ShopeeFood, with 124 respondents (72.94%), followed by GrabFood with 29 respondents (17.06%) and GoFood with 17 respondents (10.00%).

These findings indicate that respondents had sufficient experience using online food delivery services to objectively assess customer reviews, ratings, price, purchase intention, and purchase decisions.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	94	55.29
Male	76	44.71
Semester		
Semester 2	51	30.00
Semester 4	15	8.82
Semester 6	24	14.12
Semester 8	80	47.06
Application		
GoFood	17	10.00
GrabFood	29	17.06
ShopeeFood	124	72.94

4.2 Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

The measurement model was evaluated to assess construct validity and reliability through outer loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability (CR), and Cronbach's alpha (Hair et al., 2022).

The results show that all indicators had outer loadings greater than 0.70, meeting the criteria for convergent validity. The AVE values of all constructs were also above 0.50, indicating that each construct explained more than 50% of the variance in its indicators.

In addition, all variables had Composite Reliability and Cronbach's alpha values above 0.70, indicating that all constructs were reliable. Discriminant validity testing using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and cross-loadings also showed that each construct was sufficiently distinct from the others. Accordingly, the measurement model met all validity and reliability requirements and was suitable for structural model testing.

4.3 Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

The structural model was evaluated using R^2 , effect size (f^2), and bootstrapping. The results show that the variance in purchase intention explained by customer reviews, ratings, and price fell within the moderate category. The R^2 value for purchase decisions also fell within the moderate category according to Hair et al. (2022). This indicates that the research model has a good ability to explain relationships among variables.

The effect size (f^2) values indicate that:

1. Customer reviews have a medium effect on purchase intention ($f^2 = 0.305$).
2. Ratings have a relatively small effect on purchase intention.
3. Price has the largest effect on purchase intention ($f^2 = 0.374$).
4. Purchase intention has a very large effect on purchase decisions.

These findings indicate that price is the most dominant factor in shaping purchase intention, while purchase intention is the main factor driving purchase decisions.

4.4 Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses were tested using the bootstrapping method in SmartPLS 4. A hypothesis was accepted if the t-statistic was >1.96 and the p-value was <0.05 (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 2. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	t-statistic	p-value	Decision
H1	Customer Reviews $\rightarrow$ Purchase Intention	0.400	7.228	0.000	Accepted
H2	Ratings $\rightarrow$ Purchase Intention	0.217	3.502	0.001	Accepted
H3	Price $\rightarrow$ Purchase Intention	0.420	8.678	0.000	Accepted
H4	Purchase Intention $\rightarrow$ Purchase Decisions	0.746	21.314	0.000	Accepted
H5	Customer Reviews $\rightarrow$ Purchase Decisions through Purchase Intention	0.298	6.893	0.000	Accepted
H6	Ratings $\rightarrow$ Purchase Decisions through Purchase Intention	0.162	3.374	0.001	Accepted
H7	Price $\rightarrow$ Purchase Decisions through Purchase Intention	0.313	8.028	0.000	Accepted

All hypotheses had t-statistics greater than 1.96 and p-values below 0.05; therefore, all hypotheses were accepted.

4.5 Discussion

The Effect of Customer Reviews on Purchase Intention

The results show that customer reviews have a positive and significant effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.400$; $t = 7.228$; $p < 0.001$). This finding indicates that the better the quality of customer reviews, the stronger consumers' intention to make a purchase through online food delivery applications. Customer reviews provide information that can reduce uncertainty and increase consumer trust before a transaction. This result supports Information Adoption Theory, which states that information quality influences consumers' information adoption processes (Sussman & Siegal, 2003). It is also consistent with Filieri et al. (2018) and Islamy and Arifa (2025), who found that online customer reviews positively affected purchase intention.

The Effect of Ratings on Purchase Intention

Ratings were found to have a positive effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.217$; $t = 3.502$; $p = 0.001$). This indicates that high ratings improve perceptions of merchant quality and thereby encourage consumers to make a purchase. The result supports Signaling Theory (Connelly et al., 2011), which explains that ratings function as quality signals for prospective

consumers. However, compared with customer reviews and price, the effect of ratings is relatively smaller. This indicates that consumers consider not only star scores but also the content of reviews provided by other users.

The Effect of Price on Purchase Intention

Price has the largest effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.420$; $t = 8.678$; $p < 0.001$). This finding indicates that consumers pay close attention to whether the price matches the benefits obtained when purchasing through online food delivery applications. The result supports the concept of perceived value, which states that perceived value increases when the benefits received are considered commensurate with the costs incurred (Zeithaml, 1988). This finding is also consistent with Tandon et al. (2021), who stated that price value is one of the main determinants of online food delivery service use.

The Effect of Purchase Intention on Purchase Decisions

Purchase intention has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions ($\beta = 0.746$; $t = 21.314$; $p < 0.001$). This coefficient is the largest in the research model, indicating that purchase intention is the main factor determining consumer purchase decisions. This finding supports the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which states that intention is the main predictor of actual behavior.

The Mediating Role of Purchase Intention

The analysis shows that purchase intention mediates the effects of customer reviews, ratings, and price on purchase decisions. The largest mediating effect occurs in the relationship between price and purchase decisions through purchase intention ($\beta = 0.313$), followed by customer reviews ($\beta = 0.298$) and ratings ($\beta = 0.162$). This finding indicates that purchase decisions are not formed directly but through a psychological process involving the prior formation of purchase intention. Consequently, improving customer review quality, rating credibility, and competitive pricing can strengthen purchase intention, which ultimately encourages consumer purchase decisions in online food delivery applications.

V. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that customer reviews, ratings, and price are important factors in shaping consumers' purchase intention in online food delivery applications. Informative and credible customer reviews can increase consumer trust in products and merchants, while ratings serve as quality signals that help consumers evaluate purchase alternatives. Meanwhile, price perceptions that align with the benefits received are the strongest factor encouraging the formation of purchase intention.

The results also show that purchase intention has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions: the stronger consumers' intention to make a purchase, the greater the likelihood of a purchase decision. In addition to serving as a direct predictor, purchase intention was found to mediate the effects of customer reviews, ratings, and price on purchase decisions. These findings indicate that information received by consumers through digital platforms does not directly produce purchase decisions; rather, it first shapes purchase intention before being translated into purchasing action.

Theoretically, this study reinforces Information Adoption Theory, Signaling Theory, and the Theory of Planned Behavior by showing that digital information quality, quality signals conveyed through ratings, and perceived value in relation to price are important

determinants of purchase intention and purchase decisions in online food delivery services. The study also contributes by positioning purchase intention as a mediating variable that explains the relationships among customer reviews, ratings, price, and purchase decisions, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior on digital platforms.

In practical terms, these findings imply that online food delivery platform operators and merchants should pay greater attention to the quality of customer reviews, maintain consistent ratings by improving product and service quality, and implement competitive pricing strategies aligned with consumers' perceived value. These efforts are expected to strengthen purchase intention, ultimately increasing purchase decisions and supporting sustainable business performance amid intensifying competition in the food delivery industry.

This study has limitations because its respondents came from a particular user group and the sample size was limited; therefore, the findings cannot yet be generalized to all users of online food delivery applications in Indonesia. In addition, the research model examined only the effects of customer reviews, ratings, and price on purchase decisions through purchase intention. Future studies are therefore encouraged to broaden their geographical coverage, increase the number of respondents, and include other variables such as trust, electronic service quality (e-service quality), promotions, perceived risk, or customer satisfaction to develop a more comprehensive model explaining consumer behavior in online food delivery services.

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