

## The Effect of Product Quality on Purchasing Decisions with Customer Reviews and Ratings as Intervening Variables

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### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini berupaya menyelidiki dampak Kualitas Produk pada Pilihan Pembelian Konsumen, memanfaatkan Ulasan dan Peringkat Pelanggan sebagai variabel mediasi. Metodologi yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) yang difasilitasi oleh perangkat lunak SmartPLS. Data dikumpulkan dari 228 peserta yang memiliki pengalaman dalam belanja online. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa Kualitas Produk memberikan pengaruh positif dan signifikan pada Ulasan dan Peringkat Pelanggan, serta pada Keputusan Pembelian. Selain itu, Ulasan dan Peringkat Pelanggan ditemukan secara positif mempengaruhi Keputusan Pembelian, meskipun dengan besarnya yang lebih rendah dibandingkan dengan Kualitas Produk. Hasil ini menggarisbawahi gagasan bahwa Kualitas Produk adalah penentu penting dari Keputusan Pembelian, sementara Ulasan dan Peringkat Pelanggan berfungsi sebagai faktor tambahan yang dapat meningkatkan keputusan tersebut. Implikasi yang diperoleh dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa organisasi harus memprioritaskan peningkatan kualitas produk sebagai strategi mendasar, sementara juga mengelola ulasan pelanggan dan peringkat untuk meningkatkan persepsi yang menguntungkan tentang produk mereka.

**Keyword:** Kualitas Produk; Keputusan Pembelian; Ulasan Pelanggan; Peningkatan Pelanggan

### ABSTRACT

*This study seeks to investigate the impact of Product Quality on Consumer Purchase Choice, utilising Customer Reviews and Ratings as mediating variables. The methodology used in this study is Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) facilitated by SmartPLS software. Data was collected from 228 participants who had experience in online shopping. The research findings revealed that Product Quality exerted a positive and significant influence on Customer Reviews and Ratings, as well as on Purchase Decision. In addition, Customer Reviews and Ratings were found to positively influence Purchase Decision, albeit to a lesser magnitude compared to Product Quality. These results underscore the idea that Product Quality is an important determinant of Purchase Decision, while Reviews and Customer Ratings serve as additional factors that can enhance the decision. The implications derived from this study suggest that organisations should prioritise improving product quality as a fundamental strategy, while also managing customer reviews and ratings to increase favourable perceptions of their products.*

**Keyword:** Product Quality; Purchase Decisions; Customer Reviews; Customer Ratings

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary digital landscape, the purchasing choices of consumers are increasingly shaped by a multitude of factors, notably product quality alongside customer evaluations. Consumers typically seek information regarding a product before making a purchase, often through reviews or ratings provided by prior users. This indicates that Product Quality, as well as Customer Reviews and Ratings, significantly influence

Purchase Decisions. The objective of this research is to investigate the degree to which product quality impacts purchasing decisions and to examine the contribution of customer reviews and ratings in reinforcing these associations.

The concept of product quality has been extensively acknowledged within the realm of consumer behavior as a pivotal determinant that significantly shapes the purchasing choices made by consumers in a variety of market environments. When products are characterized by high-quality standards, they are not only able to meet the baseline expectations of consumers but frequently surpass those anticipations, leading to a marked increase in consumer satisfaction and fostering a deeper sense of loyalty towards the product in question. Empirical research has consistently demonstrated that there exists a positive correlation between product quality and purchasing decisions, as consumers exhibit a greater propensity to select products that align with or exceed their established expectations (Kotler & Keller, 2016). In a similar vein, an investigation conducted by Harijanto and Herdinata (2024) provides compelling evidence indicating that product quality exerts a considerable influence on customer satisfaction levels, which subsequently plays a crucial role in shaping subsequent purchase decisions made by consumers. This interrelationship between product quality and consumer behavior highlights the importance of maintaining high standards in product development and marketing strategies to cultivate a loyal customer base. Ultimately, understanding the dynamics of product quality as they relate to consumer expectations and satisfaction can provide valuable insights for businesses aiming to enhance their market position and drive sales.

Nevertheless, in the contemporary digital landscape, numerous consumers base their purchasing choices not solely on personal encounters but also consider the evaluations and ratings provided by fellow consumers. Consequently, Customer Reviews and Ratings emerge as an additional determinant that can enhance or even alter the perception of a product. Certain investigations suggest that while consumer reviews exert a considerable impact, the quality of the product remains a pivotal element in purchasing decisions (Filieri & McLeay, 2014). Muzumdar's analysis (2021) underscores that the polarity of reviews and the perceived ambiguity influence the purchasing decisions regarding time-sensitive and discounted items. The connection between product quality and purchasing decisions may also be influenced by customer reviews and ratings. Superior product quality typically generates affirmative reviews, which in turn bolster consumer confidence and stimulate purchase intentions. A study conducted by Mulyati and Gesitera (2019) revealed that online customer reviews significantly impact purchase intention, with trust acting as an intermediary variable in Bukalapak online stores in Padang City. Moreover, research by Akbarullah (2023) demonstrates that product quality, product design, and price perception significantly influence purchasing decisions, mediated by brand image in Lock n Lock Indonesia. These observations highlight the necessity of considering a multitude of factors that affect consumer purchasing decisions, encompassing product quality and customer reviews.

Numerous prior investigations have indicated that consumer evaluations exert a considerable influence on purchasing choices, particularly within the realms of e-commerce and online retail. Shoppers are inclined to place greater trust in assessments from fellow consumers as opposed to the information disseminated by producers or advertisers. Nonetheless, in certain instances, the quality of the product prevails as the primary determinant, with customer evaluations merely affirming previously established anticipations. Consequently, this research aims to examine the extent to which Customer Reviews and Ratings function as an intervening variable that enhances the correlation between Product Quality and Purchase Decisions. The anticipated findings of this inquiry are expected to yield valuable insights for business practitioners in formulating more efficacious marketing strategies that incorporate considerations of product quality and the management of customer reviews. Furthermore, this research aspires to serve as a reference point for scholars and professionals seeking to comprehend the intricacies of consumer behavior in the contemporary digital landscape.

#### ***A. Relationship between Product Quality and Purchase Decisions***

The intricate relationship that exists between the quality of a product and the subsequent purchasing decisions made by consumers has garnered considerable attention within the realm of academic research, as numerous studies have consistently demonstrated that this relationship exerts a profound and significant influence on the behaviors exhibited by consumers in the marketplace. It has been observed that consumers are generally more inclined to express interest in and ultimately purchase products that they perceive to possess high-quality attributes, as these perceptions of quality are frequently linked to notions of value, longevity, and overall satisfaction that is derived after making the purchase. Within this framework, it becomes apparent that product quality transcends mere physical characteristics or functional capabilities; rather, it encompasses a range of psychological factors that play a crucial role in shaping the levels of trust and loyalty that consumers develop towards particular brands and products. Consequently, it is imperative for companies that aspire to capture and retain the affection of their target market to prioritize quality as a central tenet of their overarching product strategy, thereby ensuring that they not only meet but exceed consumer expectations. By doing so, these companies can effectively position themselves as leaders in their respective industries, fostering a loyal

customer base that is both willing and eager to engage in repeat purchases. Ultimately, the strategic emphasis on quality serves as a vital component in enhancing a company's reputation and overall market success, which underscores the importance of integrating quality considerations into every facet of product development and marketing efforts.

Research conducted by Sianturi et al. (2024) on Wardah lipstick consumers in Surabaya shows that product quality has a positive influence on purchasing decisions, even stronger than marketing through social media. This confirms that even though digital promotions are increasingly widespread, product quality remains the main benchmark for consumers in making decisions. It also highlights that vigorous promotion without the support of good quality is not enough to encourage consumers to make real purchasing decisions.

Similar findings also emerged in Christiarini and Martasya's (2024) study in Batam, which showed that product quality not only influences purchasing decisions directly, but also indirectly through customer satisfaction. That is, consumers' perception of quality will increase their satisfaction, which in turn encourages repeat purchase decisions. This reinforces the understanding that satisfaction is an important bridge between quality and consumer loyalty, making product quality management a long-term strategic investment.

Not only limited to beauty products, other studies in food and technology also show the same pattern. Research by Darmawan & Pasaribu (2024) on coffee shops and Arifudin et al. (2024) on smartphones confirmed that consumers will prefer products that they believe have superior quality. In a world full of choices and information, quality is a key differentiator that provides a sense of security and value for consumers. The hypothesis proposed based on this literature review is:

H1: Product Quality has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decisions.

### **B. Relationship between Product Quality and Customer Reviews and Ratings**

The relationship between product quality and customer reviews and ratings plays a pivotal role in shaping consumer behavior in digital marketplaces. Product quality not only affects consumers' direct perception of value but also heavily influences how they communicate their experiences through reviews and ratings. In the beauty industry, particularly on platforms like TikTok where visual appeal and peer influence are strong, studies show that high product quality directly contributes to positive customer reviews and higher ratings (Pransiska et al., 2024). These positive interactions become part of a feedback loop that reinforces trust and encourages new purchases, highlighting the interplay between perceived quality and word-of-mouth dynamics in the digital era.

Interestingly, the relationship is not always straightforward. Research involving Shopee users reveals that product quality alone may not always drive purchasing decisions. Instead, product quality becomes a more powerful factor when it is considered in combination with online customer reviews and ratings (Amalia et al., 2024; As'ari & Yulinda, 2024). This suggests that in highly competitive e-commerce environments, consumers rely on the social proof provided by other buyers before fully trusting a product's quality. Reviews and ratings act as amplifiers, enhancing the effect of quality when it is confirmed by user-generated content. In other words, quality must be visible and validated by others to truly influence purchasing behavior.

Moreover, product quality has been shown to moderate the impact of customer reviews and ratings on purchase decisions. Simamora & Maryana (2023) found that when the quality of a product is high, the influence of positive reviews becomes stronger, leading to a more decisive impact on consumer choice. Conversely, if product quality is low, even glowing reviews may lose credibility or fail to translate into actual sales. This moderating effect emphasizes the synergistic relationship between intrinsic product value and external validation. It signals to businesses that investing in quality can enhance the effectiveness of their review-based marketing efforts.

Lastly, it's crucial to note that product quality is not the only factor shaping customer reviews and ratings. Elements such as service quality, delivery speed, and product availability also contribute significantly to the customer experience and, by extension, the reviews they leave (Ardiyanto & Ramadhayanti, 2024). This underscores the importance of a holistic approach to customer satisfaction. For brands aiming to boost their ratings and improve public perception, focusing solely on the product itself is insufficient; they must also ensure that the entire customer journey, from browsing to post-purchase, is seamless and satisfactory. The hypothesis proposed based on this literature review is:

H2: Product Quality has a positive and significant effect on Customer Reviews and Ratings

### **C. Relationship of Customer Reviews and Ratings to Purchase Decisions**

Consumer evaluations and ratings have been found to exert a considerable impact on buying choices across a range of digital platforms, as evidenced by numerous contemporary investigations. For instance, a study focused on the fashion application TikTok Shop among tertiary education students revealed that consumer evaluations and ratings significantly shape the perceptions of buyers, which subsequently affect their purchasing decisions (Amano & Azhar, 2025). Comparable conclusions were reached in research concerning the Shopee marketplace for Garnier micellar water products in Tasikmalaya City, where it was demonstrated

that online evaluations and ratings substantially influence buying choices, with each element contributing independently to the decision-making process (Tarisha et al., 2024).

Moreover, an investigation into the Khanza Snacks online platform situated in Malang Raya has indicated that while direct customer reviews exert a minimal positive influence on purchasing decisions, the ratings provided by customers wield a considerably significant positive effect. Additionally, consumer trust functions as a mediating variable that enhances the relationship between reviews and ratings with purchasing decisions (Bahtiar & Firmansyah, 2024). This implies that fostering trust through transparency and exemplary customer experience can amplify the beneficial effects of reviews and ratings in influencing purchasing behavior. A further study focusing on users of the Shopee marketplace corroborated that customer reviews and ratings exert a positive and significant impact on purchasing decisions. This evidence highlights that augmenting both the quality and quantity of reviews and ratings can bolster consumer confidence and stimulate purchasing actions (As'ari & Yulinda, 2024). Consequently, it is imperative for companies to actively motivate customers to submit reviews and ratings post-transaction, while ensuring that the shopping experience delivered aligns with or surpasses consumer expectations.

The study conducted by Isnaini et al. (2024) corroborates the significance of consumer reviews and ratings in influencing purchasing behavior, particularly when integrated with services such as Cash on Delivery (COD). This synergy exerts a positive and substantial impact on purchasing choices, underscoring the critical role of these elements in enhancing consumer convenience and trust in the realm of online commerce. Similarly, the findings from the research by Amin et al. (2024) indicate that COD services significantly and positively affect consumer purchasing decisions within the fashion sector, particularly when paired with perceptions of superior product quality. The COD system offers a sense of security and convenience for consumers, as it allows them to assess the product prior to payment, thereby alleviating concerns related to the potential risks of fraud or product discrepancies. Furthermore, COD is revealed to reinforce the correlation between product quality and purchasing decisions, with consumers who perceive products as high quality demonstrating a greater propensity to purchase when COD options are available. These results validate that the provision of COD services, alongside the enhancement of product quality, constitutes an effective strategy for online fashion retailers to boost sales conversion rates and elevate customer satisfaction. From this literature review, it can be postulated that:

H3: Customer Reviews and Ratings have a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decisions.

#### **D. Relationship between Product Quality and Purchase Decisions**

The intricate relationship that exists between the quality of a product and the decisions made by consumers when purchasing has been extensively established through a plethora of empirical studies, which collectively illustrate a substantial and noteworthy influence that exists between these two critical variables. In particular, the research conducted by esteemed scholars Fadhli and Ibrahim (2024) provides compelling evidence that the quality of a product has a direct and measurable impact on the purchasing decisions of consumers, thereby underscoring the importance of this relationship in contemporary market dynamics. To put it another way, the greater the quality of a product as perceived by consumers—considering factors such as durability, performance, and overall satisfaction—the higher the likelihood that these consumers will proceed to make a purchase, thus indicating a clear correlation between perception and action. This finding strongly suggests that product quality is not merely a peripheral characteristic, but rather one of the fundamental and essential aspects that serves to distinguish a product from its competitors in the marketplace, while simultaneously acting as a critical determinant in shaping the purchasing behavior of consumers. Furthermore, this understanding emphasizes the necessity for businesses to prioritize and enhance product quality in order to effectively meet consumer expectations and drive sales, as consumers today are increasingly discerning and informed about the products they choose to invest in. Ultimately, recognizing the pivotal role that product quality plays in influencing consumer behavior can provide valuable insights for marketers and business strategists seeking to optimize their offerings and attain a competitive advantage in an ever-evolving marketplace.

Furthermore, extensive research conducted by Firmansah et al. (2024) has revealed that product quality constitutes a significant and substantial proportion of the variability observed in consumer purchasing decisions, indicating that it plays a crucial role in influencing these choices. This revelation implies that product quality possesses the capability to elucidate the majority of the underlying factors that drive consumers to opt for one particular product over another within a competitive marketplace. Such a finding serves to fortify the argument that allocating resources and capital towards the enhancement of product quality can yield tangible and meaningful effects on the elevation of sales figures and the overall growth trajectory of a business. It is evident that organizations that prioritize and emphasize product quality are likely to experience a higher degree of success in both attracting new customers and retaining existing ones, in stark contrast to those enterprises that may neglect this vital dimension of their offerings. In light of these insights, it becomes increasingly clear that the strategic focus on product quality is not merely advantageous but rather essential for sustainable

business performance in an ever-evolving economic landscape. Consequently, businesses that engage in ongoing efforts to refine and elevate the quality of their products are positioning themselves favorably to capitalize on market opportunities and enhance their competitive edge. Ultimately, this underscores the critical importance of understanding consumer behavior and the pivotal role that product quality plays in shaping purchasing outcomes in today's complex marketplace.

Moreover, the quality of a product not only exerts a direct influence on consumer purchasing choices, but also functions as an intermediary in the enhancement of customer satisfaction. The study conducted by Anggela et al. (2024) underscores that superior product quality can elevate satisfaction levels, consequently motivating consumers to engage in repeat purchasing behaviors. Therefore, product quality acts as a conduit between consumers' preliminary expectations and the experiences they acquire post-consumption, which subsequently impacts their loyalty and intentions to repurchase.

In light of the aforementioned literature review, it can be inferred that initiatives aimed at enhancing product quality constitute a crucial strategy for organizations aspiring to augment consumer purchasing decisions and satisfaction levels (Azhar & Sari, 2024). Moreover, a hypothesis emerges suggesting that customer feedback and ratings may serve as mediators in the correlation between product quality and purchasing decisions. This indicates that favorable reviews and ratings from contented consumers regarding product quality can amplify the influence of product quality on the purchasing decisions of prospective consumers. Consequently, it is imperative for companies to not only prioritize product quality but also to actively motivate consumers to provide feedback and ratings, thereby fostering a constructive cycle that reinforces future purchasing decisions. The hypothesis formulated based on this literature review is:

H4: Customer Reviews and Ratings mediate the relationship between Product Quality and Purchase Decisions

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research endeavor employs a quantitative methodology, specifically utilizing a survey technique as a means of gathering pertinent data from individuals who actively engage as consumers in the online marketplace for fashion products. The selection of the sample was executed through the purposive sampling method, whereby the specific criterion established for inclusion mandated that respondents possess prior experience in offering product reviews or ratings subsequent to their purchasing activities. The total size of the sample population in this study consisted of 228 respondents; for the purposes of analyzing the collected data, the researchers applied the Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) approach. The process of data collection was conducted via online questionnaires that were disseminated across a variety of digital platforms, including but not limited to social media channels and online shopping forums frequented by potential respondents. Prior to engaging with the questionnaire, participants were provided with comprehensive information regarding the overarching aims of the research, along with assurances concerning the confidentiality and security of the data they would be supplying. It is imperative to note that the participation of individuals in this research study was entirely voluntary, ensuring that respondents could make an informed decision about their involvement without any form of coercion or obligation. The approach taken in this research is designed to yield insightful findings that contribute to the existing body of knowledge regarding consumer behavior in the online fashion retail sector. Additionally, the methodological rigor applied in selecting participants and collecting data is intended to enhance the reliability and validity of the research outcomes. Ultimately, this comprehensive study aims to illuminate the dynamics of consumer interactions with online fashion products, thereby facilitating a deeper understanding of the factors that influence consumer decision-making in this rapidly evolving digital landscape.

The research instrument consists of three main variables, namely Product Quality, Customer Reviews and Ratings, and Purchase Decisions. Each variable was measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree) that had been adapted from previous research. Product Quality is measured using four indicators developed by Zeithaml, which include aspects of durability, performance, conformity with specifications, and design. Reviews and Customer Ratings are measured on a scale from Mudambi & Schuff (2010), with indicators including review credibility, number of available reviews, and relevance of reviews to the product. Purchase Decision is adapted from the research of Engel, Blackwell, and Miniard, which includes the desire to buy, confidence in the purchase decision, and satisfaction after purchase. The instrument's reliability and validity were evaluated employing Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) to ascertain that each construct exhibited a substantial level of internal consistency. Furthermore, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was utilized to assess the convergent validity of each latent variable. The collected data were subjected to analysis through the PLS-SEM methodology utilizing SmartPLS 4.0 software. This analytical approach was selected due to its capability to accommodate intricate structural models without

necessitating normally distributed data (Hair et al., 2019). The data analysis process was conducted in several phases.

Assessment of the Measurement Framework, evaluating construct reliability through the use of Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). Examination of convergent validity via Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with a stipulated minimum threshold of  $\geq 0.50$ . Analysis of discriminant validity employing the Fornell-Larcker Criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). Evaluation of the Structural Model. Investigating the interrelations among variables by analyzing the path coefficient and its significance through bootstrapping techniques. The model's predictive capability is measured using  $R^2$  (R-squared), while the mediation effect is evaluated by the Variance Accounted For (VAF) approach. Hypothesis testing is conducted, with the hypothesis being supported if the T-statistic value is  $\geq 1.96$  and the p-value is  $\leq 0.05$ . The direct and indirect effects among variables within the research model are interpreted.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this bootstrapping confirm that product quality is the main factor influencing the purchase decision, while Customer Reviews and Ratings play an additional role that can strengthen or weaken the customer's purchase decision. This research emphasizes that companies must focus more on improving product quality to encourage customer purchase decisions, as well as pay attention to strategies in managing customer reviews and ratings to support purchase decisions.

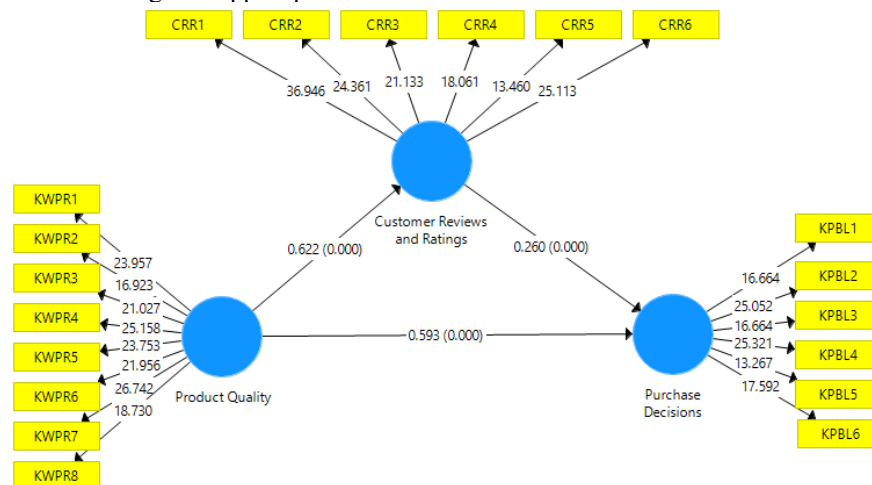


Figure 1. Bootstrapping analysis

In light of the empirical findings derived from the path coefficients test conducted using SmartPLS, which is illustrated in the accompanying figure, a comprehensive interpretation and analysis of the intricate relationship between the aforementioned variables is presented, particularly focusing on the correlation between Product Quality and Customer Reviews and Ratings. The calculated path coefficient is observed to be 0.622, alongside a T-Statistic value of 12.172, which notably exceeds the critical threshold of 1.96, and a P-Value that is recorded at 0.000, indicating that it is significantly lower than the conventional alpha level of 0.05. The path coefficient value of 0.622 serves as compelling evidence that Product Quality exerts a positive and statistically significant influence on the Customer Reviews and Ratings that are provided by consumers. This implies that as the perception of product quality improves from the perspective of the customers, there is a corresponding increase in the positivity of the reviews and ratings that they subsequently assign to the product in question. Moreover, the elevated T-statistic further reinforces the assertion of a robust and statistically significant relationship existing between these variables, thereby suggesting a strong level of confidence in the findings. In conclusion, the results elucidate the critical importance of maintaining high product quality, as it is directly correlated with enhanced customer satisfaction as evidenced through their reviews and ratings, which ultimately can influence the overall success and reputation of a business.

Relationship of Product Quality to Purchase Decisions, Path coefficient = 0.593, T-Statistics = 9.556 (above 1.96), P-Value = 0.000 (less than 0.05). Product Quality also has a direct effect on Purchase Decisions with a path coefficient of 0.593. This means that good product quality will improve purchasing decisions directly without having to go through the intermediary Customer Reviews and Ratings. A high T-Statistics score indicates a very significant relationship.

Relationship of Customer Reviews and Ratings to Purchase Decisions, Path coefficient = 0.260, T-Statistics = 4.203 (above 1.96), P-Value = 0.000 (less than 0.05). Customer Reviews and Ratings also had a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decisions, with a path coefficient of 0.260. However, compared to the direct influence of Product Quality on Purchase Decisions (0.593), the influence of Customer Reviews and

Ratings is smaller. This shows that although customer reviews influence purchasing decisions, the product quality factor remains the dominant factor that determines the customer's purchasing decision.

Table 1. Results of the PLS SEM direct effects bootstrapping analysis

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ( O/STDEV )	P Values
Product Quality -> Customer Reviews and Ratings	0.622	0.620	0.051	12.172	0.000
Product Quality -> Purchase Decisions	0.593	0.590	0.062	9.556	0.000
Customer Reviews and Ratings -> Purchase Decisions	0.260	0.265	0.062	4.203	0.000

In light of the findings derived from the model fit assessment conducted using SmartPLS, as illustrated in the accompanying figure, it is possible to undertake a comprehensive interpretation and detailed analysis of the results obtained: The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) has been calculated to be 0.074. SRMR serves as a pivotal indicator among the various fit model metrics employed to evaluate the degree to which the estimated model aligns with the observed data points. According to the established guidelines posited by Hu and Bentler in 1999, an SRMR value that is less than 0.08 is indicative of a model that demonstrates a commendable level of congruence with the data. In this particular instance, the recorded SRMR value of 0.074 suggests that the model under examination exhibits an acceptable degree of alignment with the empirical data collected during the study.

Furthermore, the  $d_{ULS}$ , or Unweighted Least Squares Discrepancy, has been measured at 1.140, while the  $d_G$ , representing the Geodesic Discrepancy, stands at 0.419. These two critical metrics are instrumental in quantifying the disparity between the estimated covariance matrix and the actual covariance matrix derived from the data. A lower value for these discrepancies typically signifies a superior fit of the model to the observed data. Although the existing literature does not specify any rigid constraints regarding acceptable values, the relatively modest figures attained in this analysis imply that the model is demonstrating a reasonably good fit with the dataset utilized for this research endeavor.

The calculated Chi-Square statistic is 538,932, which fundamentally serves as an evaluative measure that quantifies the extent to which the observed discrepancies between the sample covariance matrix and the covariance matrix derived from the proposed theoretical model exist. In empirical research investigations that involve large sample sizes, it is a well-established fact that the chi-squared value tends to achieve statistical significance, primarily due to its heightened sensitivity to variations in sample size. Consequently, within the context of model fit evaluation, it is customary to interpret the Chi-Square statistic in conjunction with other pertinent fit indices, such as the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) or the Normed Fit Index (NFI), to gain a comprehensive understanding of the model's performance. When we examine the Normed Fit Index (NFI), we find that its calculated value is 0.777, which serves as an important metric that assesses the degree to which the model under scrutiny surpasses the baseline or null model in terms of explanatory power.

It is essential to note that NFI values occupy a range from 0 to 1, wherein values that exceed the threshold of 0.90 are typically indicative of a robust fit between the model and the empirical data observed (Bentler & Bonett, 1980). In the context of the current analysis, the NFI value of 0.777 suggests that the proposed model exhibits a moderate degree of alignment with the observed data, although it has not yet achieved the benchmark of an excellent fit as defined by conventional standards in the field of statistical modelling. Therefore, researchers and practitioners should exercise caution when interpreting these results, recognizing the implications of the NFI value about the overall adequacy of the model being evaluated. Thus, while the model demonstrates some level of fit, the existing NFI score indicates that there remains considerable room for improvement before it can be confidently classified as a superior fit for the data. Ultimately, this analysis underscores the necessity for a multifaceted approach to model evaluation, incorporating various indices to arrive at a nuanced understanding of model validity and reliability in research settings.

Table 2. Model fit test results

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.074	0.074
$d_{ULS}$	1.140	1.140
$d_G$	0.419	0.419
Chi-Square	538.932	538.932
NFI	0.777	0.777

#### A. *The Influence of Product Quality on Product Quality*

The empirical findings derived from the conducted study, which reveal a path coefficient quantified at an impressive 0.593 alongside a p-value of 0.000, furnish compelling and robust evidence that the dimension of product quality exerts a profoundly positive and statistically significant impact on the decision-making

processes associated with consumer purchasing behaviors. In practical terms, this indicates that as consumers perceive an elevation in product quality, their propensity to engage in purchasing activities increases correspondingly, thereby enhancing the likelihood of a transaction occurring. This particular outcome can be theoretically substantiated through the framework of Expectation-Confirmation Theory, which posits that the decisions made by consumers regarding purchases are heavily contingent upon the degree to which their preconceived expectations regarding product quality are satisfied or potentially surpassed. It is a well-established notion that consumers predominantly gravitate toward products that they anticipate will deliver tangible benefits and intrinsic value, thus rendering perceived quality a crucial and pivotal element within the intricate decision-making continuum. Furthermore, the implications of these findings not only enrich the existing body of literature surrounding consumer behavior but also serve as a critical reminder of the paramount importance of maintaining high standards of quality in product offerings to foster positive purchasing outcomes. Ultimately, this underscores the necessity for businesses and marketers alike to remain vigilant in their efforts to understand and enhance product quality perceptions among consumers, as this is linked to their purchasing intentions and overall satisfaction.

However, although Customer Reviews and Ratings may act as intervening variables, the results from the figure show that the direct effect of Product Quality on Purchasing Decisions is greater than the indirect channel through customer reviews. This indicates that purchasing decisions are still heavily influenced by direct perceptions of product quality rather than other customer opinions. In a marketing context, this underlines the importance for companies to maintain and improve product quality as a key strategy in attracting and retaining customers. With high quality, consumers tend to be more confident in making purchases without unduly considering customer reviews. However, in certain industries such as technology products or cosmetics, customer reviews and ratings can have a greater influence. Therefore, further research can explore how the influence of product quality varies across different types of industries.

Research in the last five years has further strengthened the understanding that perceived product quality is a key factor in driving consumer purchasing decisions. Studies by Handayani and Sutawijaya (2024) and Maulidya and Yulianto (2025) show that in both conventional and e-commerce markets, consumers who perceive products to be of high quality will be more confident in making purchasing decisions, even amidst a large selection of other products. This indicates that product quality is not only a key differentiator in a competitive market, but also acts as a key foundation in building consumer trust. During the COVID-19 pandemic, research by Rosillo-Díaz et al. (2024) found that consumers increasingly prioritise quality indicators such as official certifications and superior product features in online purchases, as these factors provide a sense of security and confidence in the value of the products purchased.

However, the relevance of product quality as a key determinant of purchasing decisions may differ depending on the market context and consumer characteristics. Research by Cortez and Reich (2023) revealed that in products with very strong brands, brand strength can shift consumer attention from product quality to the reputation of the brand itself. In addition, in consumer segments that are highly price sensitive, price considerations are often prioritised over quality. These findings confirm that it is not enough for companies to rely solely on product quality, but must also strengthen brand marketing strategies and competitive pricing. By understanding these dynamics, companies can design a more holistic and adaptive approach to reach different market segments and optimise consumer purchase decisions.

The implication of the study results is that companies should place product quality as the main foundation in marketing strategy and business development. Consumer perception of product quality is proven to be the dominant factor that drives purchasing decisions, both in conventional markets and e-commerce. Therefore, companies need to ensure that every product they market meets high quality standards, from raw materials, production processes, to final quality control. In addition, during the pandemic and the rising trend of online shopping, companies should also highlight quality indicators such as certifications, superior features, and product authenticity to strengthen consumer trust and loyalty.

However, companies also need to realise that brand strength and price factors can influence purchasing decisions in certain situations. For this reason, the right strategy is to combine improving product quality with strengthening branding and competitive pricing. Efforts to build a strong brand image through consistent marketing campaigns, customer testimonials, and collaboration with credible third parties can increase product appeal in the eyes of consumers. Meanwhile, flexibility in pricing strategies, such as discount or bundling programmes, can attract price-sensitive market segments. With this holistic approach, companies can reach various consumer segments, increase sales, and maintain a competitive position in a dynamic market.

#### **B. The Influence of Product Quality on Customer Reviews and Ratings**

Drawing from the empirical findings of the conducted study, which yielded a path coefficient of 0.622 and demonstrated a remarkably significant p-value of 0.000, it is evident that product quality exerts a direct and substantial influence on the reviews and ratings that customers allocate to the items they purchase. Consequently, as the perceived quality of a product increases in the eyes of consumers, there exists a heightened



probability that these consumers will express their satisfaction through positive reviews and elevated ratings, thereby reinforcing the critical link between quality perception and consumer feedback. This particular observation aligns seamlessly with the principles outlined in Expectation-Confirmation Theory, which posits that when consumers' anticipations regarding a product are not only met but are indeed surpassed, they are predisposed to offer affirmative evaluations and positive commentary about their experiences. Thus, the implications of this study underscore the necessity for businesses to prioritize the enhancement of product quality in order to cultivate favorable consumer perceptions, which in turn can lead to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty.

In theory, this relationship can be justified through the concept of customer satisfaction, where good product quality will increase satisfaction, which in turn encourages consumers to share their positive experiences through reviews and ratings. In the past five years, several studies have supported this finding. For example, a study by Romli (2024) found that perceived high product quality significantly increases the likelihood of consumers providing positive reviews on e-commerce platforms. Another study by Ismagilova et al. (2020) also confirmed that good product quality is a key predictor in the formation of positive reviews and high ratings, especially in product categories that involve direct usage experience by consumers.

However, some studies provide a different view. The study (Rita et al., 2019) shows that while product quality has a positive effect on reviews and ratings, other factors such as customer service, delivery, and overall shopping experience can also influence the reviews consumers leave. In fact, in some cases, consumers may leave negative reviews despite good product quality if they experience problems in other aspects, such as late delivery or unsatisfactory service. This is supported by research by Qiu and Zhang (2024), who found that in highly competitive products, non-product aspects such as interactions with sellers and ease of returning goods are also key considerations in giving reviews.

The implications of the results of this study confirm that companies should place product quality as a top priority in their business strategy. The high path coefficient indicates that good product quality not only increases customer satisfaction but also directly encourages consumers to give positive reviews and high ratings. This can be an important asset in building brand reputation and increasing the trust of potential customers. However, companies should also realise that product quality alone is not enough. Based on findings from various studies, other aspects such as customer service, speed of delivery, and ease of the returns process also contribute significantly to the overall consumer experience and can influence the reviews given.

The justification for the strategy the company should take is to adopt a holistic approach that integrates product quality improvement with the optimisation of the entire customer experience chain. Concretely, the company needs to ensure strict quality control on every product marketed, provide training to customer service staff to be responsive and solve problems, and liaise with reliable logistics partners to ensure on-time delivery. In addition, companies can implement a proactive feedback system, for example by requesting reviews after a transaction is completed and responding to each review-both positive and negative in a professional manner. This strategy will not only increase the chances of getting positive reviews and ratings but also strengthen customer loyalty and the company's competitiveness in the market. Thus, companies can create a positive cycle where superior product and service quality results in a good reputation, which in turn drives sustainable business growth.

Thus, while product quality is proven to be the main factor that drives positive reviews and high ratings, companies should not neglect other aspects of service that can affect the overall consumer experience. The practical implication is that companies should ensure that not only is product quality taken care of, but also the entire customer experience chain from purchase to after-sales service. With this holistic strategy, companies can maximise their chances of gaining positive reviews and ratings, which in turn will increase consumer trust and loyalty.

### **C. *The Influence of Customer Reviews and Ratings on Purchase Decisions***

The impact exerted by customer reviews and ratings on the decision-making processes pertaining to purchases has emerged as a significant area of concern in the contemporary digital landscape, particularly within the realm of e-commerce platforms that facilitate online transactions. According to the analytical model that was meticulously examined, the correlation between customer-generated reviews and the associated ratings on purchasing decisions is characterized by a path coefficient of 0.260, which is accompanied by a remarkably low significance level, denoted by a p-value of 0.000, indicating a high degree of statistical significance. This numerical representation clearly illustrates that customer reviews and ratings not only exert a positive influence but also hold substantial significance in shaping the purchasing decisions made by consumers. Furthermore, this particular finding is consistent with the empirical research conducted by Chen et al. (2022), which articulates that favorable reviews emanating from customers are capable of enhancing both trust and interest in making purchases, particularly with regard to products that may not yet have gained widespread recognition among consumers. The implications of this research are profound, as they suggest that

businesses operating in the digital marketplace should prioritize the cultivation of positive customer feedback to bolster their sales and enhance consumer confidence. In conclusion, the interplay between customer reviews and purchasing behavior is a critical factor that warrants further investigation, given its pivotal role in influencing consumer behavior and overall market dynamics. This phenomenon underscores the necessity for companies to adopt strategic approaches in managing their online reputations and customer interactions to maximize their commercial success.

However, the smaller coefficient value compared to the effect of product quality indicates that although customer reviews are important, their influence is not as great as product quality itself. This is supported by the findings of Moen et al. (2017) who highlighted that customer reviews tend to be a supporting factor, not the main factor, in making purchasing decisions. Consumers tend to use reviews as an additional source of information to reduce uncertainty, but the final decision is still more influenced by the perceived quality of the product in question.

Furthermore, the Information Adoption Model theory explains that the effectiveness of information in customer reviews is highly dependent on the credibility and relevance of the information to potential buyers. Research by (Qiu & Zhang, 2024) shows that reviews that are considered credible and relevant are more influential in shaping purchasing decisions than reviews that are considered biased or unclear sources. Therefore, e-commerce platforms need to ensure a review moderation system so that consumers can obtain reliable information. On the other hand, there are also studies that show the limited influence of customer reviews. For example, a study by Cortez and Reich (2023) found that for products with strong brands or high reputation, the influence of customer reviews on purchasing decisions is smaller. Consumers trust brand strength and previous personal experience more than online reviews, especially for high-involvement products such as electronics or premium products. In addition, not all reviews have a positive impact on purchasing decisions. Research by (Golmohammadi et al., 2020) reveals that the presence of negative reviews or low ratings can significantly reduce purchase intentions, even on products with high quality. This shows that consumers are very sensitive to negative information, although positive reviews remain more dominant in shaping the final decision.

The implications of the results of this study suggest that companies cannot rely solely on customer reviews and ratings as the main strategy to increase sales. Although customer reviews have a positive influence on purchasing decisions, their role is more as a support to strengthen consumer confidence, not as the main determining factor. Therefore, companies must still prioritise improving product quality consistently in order to meet or even exceed consumer expectations. Good customer reviews will be more effective if supported by superior product quality, because in the end, purchasing decisions are more influenced by consumer perceptions of the quality of the product itself.

In addition, companies need to take proactive steps in managing and moderating customer reviews on digital platforms. Based on the Information Adoption Model theory and the findings of Qiu & Zhang (2024), companies should ensure that the reviews that appear on their platforms are credible and relevant, and minimise the presence of fake or biased reviews that can mislead consumers. For products with strong brands, companies can strengthen branding strategies to remain in consumers' top consideration, while for new products or those without a reputation, companies should more actively encourage positive reviews and respond professionally to negative reviews. By doing so, companies can more effectively build consumer trust, reduce the impact of negative reviews, and create a more transparent and trustworthy shopping experience.

#### **D. The Influence of Product Quality on Purchase Decisions**

The impact that product quality exerts on consumers' purchasing decisions constitutes a crucial element of the broader field of consumer behaviour, which researchers have examined in a variety of contexts. Drawing upon empirical research findings, which indicate a path coefficient of 0.593 accompanied by a highly significant p-value of 0.000, one can infer that product quality possesses a substantial and direct effect on the choices that consumers make when considering a purchase. This observation suggests that the perceptions held by consumers regarding the quality of a product serve as the primary driving force behind their purchasing decisions, even in the presence of customer reviews and ratings, which can serve as supplementary sources of information that may influence their choices. This phenomenon aligns with the principles articulated in Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory, which posits that both customer satisfaction levels and the intention to make a purchase are profoundly shaped by the degree to which consumers' expectations concerning product quality are not only met but potentially surpassed. In this context, it becomes evident that understanding the dynamics of product quality and its relationship with consumer perceptions is essential for marketers aiming to enhance consumer satisfaction and drive sales. Therefore, further exploration into the mechanisms by which product quality influences consumer behaviour may yield valuable insights that could inform strategies for improving market performance and customer loyalty.

This finding is also reinforced by various previous studies. Zeithaml, for example, explains that good product quality tends to increase consumer confidence and reduce the perception of risk in making purchases.

In addition, a study from Dodds et al. proves that perceptions of product quality can directly influence purchase intentions, because high quality is considered to provide more value to consumers. In other words, consumers who are confident in the quality of a product tend to be more willing to plan to buy, without being overly influenced by customer reviews. Pratama & Firmansyah's (2022) findings in the Indonesian e-commerce context show that perceived product quality remains the dominant factor driving purchasing decisions. Although consumers can increasingly easily access customer reviews and ratings, their final decision is still strongly influenced by directly perceived product quality, such as authenticity, durability, and clear product specifications. Research by Zhang et al. (2021) in the Chinese market also reinforces these findings. They found that perceived product quality has a stronger direct influence on purchase decisions than online reviews, especially in branded products and search goods categories. This suggests that consumer trust in product quality remains a top priority, even amid the proliferation of information from various digital sources.

On the other hand, research by Kim & Kim (2023) during the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the changing behaviour of consumers who increasingly rely on product quality indicators such as certifications, warranties, and detailed specifications. The influence of customer reviews is increasing, especially for new or innovative products that do not yet have a strong market reputation. However, for recognised products, guaranteed quality remains a major factor in purchasing decisions.

Apart from product quality, other factors such as brand power, price and customer loyalty also play an important role in influencing purchase decisions. Recent studies confirm that consumers who have had a positive experience with a brand tend to trust the brand's product quality more, so customer reviews become less dominant in influencing their decisions. Brand strength can reinforce quality perceptions and drive purchases directly. Furthermore, the relationship between product quality and purchase decisions can also be influenced by other factors such as brand, price, and customer loyalty. Consumers who already have positive experiences with a brand tend to prioritise product quality over customer reviews. Keller's research shows that brand strength can increase quality perceptions and drive purchase decisions directly. This is why some well-known brands are still able to attract consumers despite mixed reviews. Thus, recent studies confirm that while customer reviews and ratings play a role in shaping initial perceptions, product quality remains a key determinant in purchase decisions. Companies need to ensure that the products they offer meet or exceed consumer expectations to build trust and long-term loyalty.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the empirical findings derived from the conducted research, it has been conclusively established that Product Quality exerts a notably positive and statistically significant impact on both Customer Reviews and Ratings as well as on Purchase Decisions. Nevertheless, it is of paramount importance to recognize that the direct influence wielded by Product Quality on the actual purchasing decisions of consumers is considerably more pronounced than the influence that Customer Reviews and Ratings exert in their capacity as an intervening variable in this context.

This particular observation underscores the critical notion that, while customer reviews indeed play a role in shaping and influencing the decision-making processes of consumers, the intrinsic quality of the product itself remains the predominant factor that ultimately dictates consumer choices and preferences. In light of these findings, a pertinent suggestion for the direction of future research endeavors would be to undertake a more comprehensive exploration by incorporating additional variables that possess the potential to significantly affect Purchase Decisions, such as factors including, but not limited to, price sensitivity, brand trustworthiness, or the overall customer experience during the purchasing journey. Furthermore, it may also be beneficial for subsequent research initiatives to adopt a mixed methods approach, which would facilitate a more nuanced and in-depth understanding of the multifaceted factors that influence consumers' purchase decisions in today's complex marketplace.

By integrating qualitative and quantitative methodologies, researchers could uncover richer insights that may not be readily apparent through a singular methodological lens. Ultimately, such an approach could significantly enhance the existing body of literature regarding consumer behavior and decision-making processes in relation to product quality and its associated ramifications.

Although this study provides valuable insights into the influence of Product Quality on Purchase Decisions with Customer Reviews and Ratings as intervening variables, several limitations need to be considered. First, the study focuses solely on the relationship between three key variables without considering other external factors that can influence purchasing decisions, such as price, promotion, brand loyalty, and previous experience. These factors can have a significant role in influencing consumer behavior and should be considered in further research. Second, the study may be limited to the context of a specific industry or product category, so the generalization of the results to different types of products still needs to be further tested. The influence of Customer Reviews and Ratings can differ depending on the type of product; for example, products

with a high level of involvement, such as electronics, tend to be more influenced by customer reviews than products with low involvement.

Therefore, research in various industry sectors can provide a more comprehensive understanding. Third, the methodological approach used in this study may have limitations in revealing more in-depth consumer psychological dynamics. For example, emotional and social factors in purchasing decision-making are not explicitly analysed in this model. Additional qualitative studies, such as in-depth interviews or sentiment analysis from customer reviews, can provide richer insights into how product quality perceptions are formed and how customer reviews influence purchase decisions.

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