



Optimizing Purchasing Decisions Through Digital Marketing and Online Reviews: Consumer Trust as a Key Mediator

Yudi Nur Supriadi*¹⁾, Fadlan Pramudito ²⁾

Faculty Economic and Business, University of National Development Veteran Jakarta ¹⁻²

Email : yudinursupriadi@upnvj.ac.id *

ABTRACT

This research aims to explore how Digital Marketing and Online Consumer Reviews influence Purchasing Decisions, with Consumer Trust acting as a mediator in the online smartphone market in Indonesia. By surveying 326 respondents from the Jabodebatek area and applying the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach, the study finds that Digital Marketing significantly affects Consumer Trust, while Online Consumer Reviews show no notable impact on Consumer Trust. However, both variables positively influence Purchasing Decisions. Additionally, the study highlights that Consumer Trust mediates the relationship between Digital Marketing and Purchasing Decisions, as well as the link between Online Consumer Reviews and Purchasing Decisions. These insights provide valuable guidance for businesses in shaping more effective marketing strategies, improving customer relationships, and boosting overall business performance in Indonesia's online smartphone market. Ultimately, this research emphasizes the importance of understanding how digital marketing and online consumer reviews affect purchasing decisions is essential, with consumer trust as the main mediator. Companies should focus on effective digital marketing, brand reputation, and building consumer trust for a successful strategy. Monitoring reviews regularly is essential to improve customer satisfaction and achieve long-term profitability.

Keywords: *Consumer Confidence; Digital Marketing; Online Consumer Reviews; purchase decision*

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini menyelidiki Digital Marketing, Online Consumer Review terhadap Keputusan Pembelian, dengan Consumer Trust sebagai Variabel Mediating di pasar gadget smartphone online di Indonesia. Dengan melibatkan 326 responden dari Jabodebatek, Dengan menggunakan metode Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pemasaran digital memberikan pengaruh yang nyata terhadap tingkat kepercayaan konsumen, sedangkan ulasan konsumen yang dilakukan secara daring tidak memberikan pengaruh signifikan terhadap kepercayaan konsumen. Namun, keduanya memiliki dampak positif pada Keputusan Pembelian. Selain itu, penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Kepercayaan Konsumen memediasi hubungan antara Pemasaran Digital dan Keputusan Pembelian, serta antara Ulasan Konsumen Online dan Keputusan Pembelian. Hasil penelitian ini menawarkan wawasan berharga bagi manajemen perusahaan dalam merancang strategi pemasaran yang lebih efektif, memperkuat hubungan dengan konsumen, dan meningkatkan kinerja perusahaan secara keseluruhan di pasar gadget smartphone online di Indonesia. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini, Studi ini menekankan pentingnya memahami efek pemasaran digital serta ulasan konsumen online terhadap keputusan pembelian, di mana kepercayaan konsumen berperan sebagai mediator kunci dalam proses tersebut. Perusahaan harus fokus pada pemasaran digital yang efektif, reputasi merek, dan membangun kepercayaan konsumen untuk strategi yang sukses. Memantau ulasan secara teratur sangat penting untuk meningkatkan kepuasan pelanggan dan mencapai profitabilitas jangka panjang.

Kata Kunci: Kepercayaan Konsumen; Pemasaran Digital; Ulasan Konsumen Online; keputusan.

INTRODUCTION

The advancement of marketing science in the future relies heavily on the integration of technology and information in business, encouraging companies to undergo technological transformation for sustainable survival (Devina Azarine, 2021). In parallel with the analysis of future research on consumer behavior becomes attractive to companies in an effort to acquire loyal consumers, with reference to theory Hooward and Sheth., (1970), which highlights factors such as consumer behavior, significant stimulants, symbolic stimulants, and social stimulants that influence consumer purchasing decisions (Wardhana, Aditya, et., 2022). Therefore, every company needs to develop product innovations and marketing strategies that adopt modern technology in order to answer public interest in communication media. The development of information technology provides significant advantages in product promotion, especially through the internet, with a focus on interactive, flexible, and responsive media (Azka, 2021).

According to Saputra, et al (2020), business competition, especially in the telecommunications sector, encourages manufacturers to present new product innovations that offer convenience and complete features for consumers. This is the company's strategy in influencing the purchasing decisions of consumers who have owned gadgets before. The need for gadgets has increased sales in such businesses. The development of the digital world makes almost every individual have a mobile phone, even some have several mobile phones at once. Evaluation of gadgets includes aspects of price, features, software performance, popularity, brand, and media reviews (Nidillah, 2021). Research results Simon Kemp, (2023) which shows that in Indonesia, the preference for purchasing gadgets (smartphones) is quite high. Mobile phone ownership increased by about 3.5% from the previous year, while 99.4% of residents aged 16-64 owned at least one smartphone in 2022.

The findings from the cross-loading calculations reveal that each variable indicator has loading values that are higher than those of the other variables. (Ringle, et al, 2015). Hence, it can be inferred that every variable exhibits a higher level of discriminant validity relative to the other variables..

Table 1. AVE

Variabel	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Digital Marketing	0.647
Online Consumer Review	0.617
Consumer Trust	0.630
Purchasing Decision	0.609

Source: PLS 4.0 Output Result. (2024)

The AVE values for each of the variables—Digital Marketing, Online Consumer Reviews, Purchase Decision, and Consumer Trust—are all below 0.5. These findings imply that the variables included in this study are valid and can be used for further analysis. The table above presents the AVE values corresponding to each variable.

Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha PLS Output Results

Variabel	Cronbach's Alpha
Digital Marketing	0.964
Online Consumer Review	0.943
Consumer Trust	0.955
Purchasing Decision	0.936

Source: PLS 4.0 Output Result. (2024)

All variables have Cronbach's alpha values greater than 0.7, indicating that they meet the reliability criteria. The variable with the highest Cronbach's alpha is Consumer Trust, which stands at 0.955, while Purchase Decision has the lowest value at 0.936. From the validity and reliability test results for all variables, it can be inferred that the instruments employed in this study are robust and trustworthy.

Each variable's Cronbach's alpha value exceeds 0.8, indicating that they qualify as reliable instruments. The findings from the validity and reliability tests performed on all indicators of these variables confirm that the instruments utilized in this study have successfully met the validity and reliability criteria.

Table 3. R-Square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Consumer Trust	0.226	0.219
Purchasing Decision	0.880	0.878

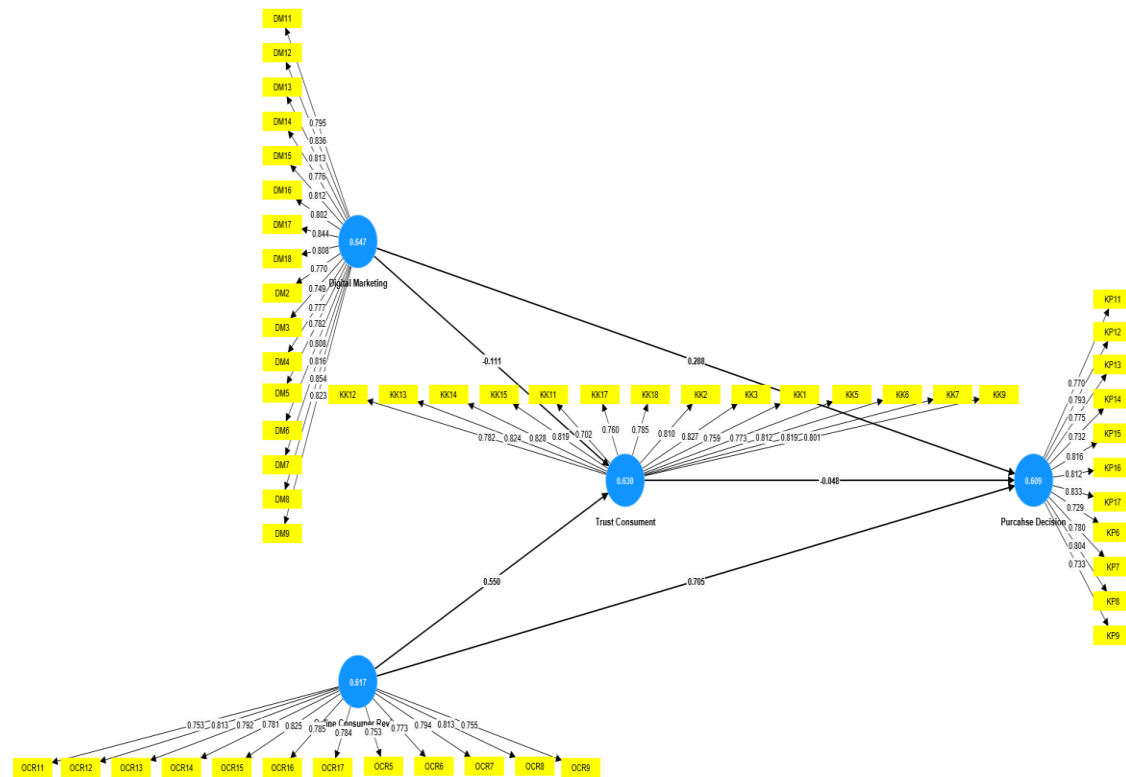
Source: PLS 4.0 Output Result. (2024)

The R-square value for the Consumer Trust variable is 0.226, indicating that 22.60% of its variance is attributed to other variables, leaving 77.40% influenced by factors outside the model. In comparison, the R-square value for the Purchase Decision variable is 0.880, which signifies that 88.0% of its variance is explained by other variables, while 12.0% is affected by other influences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the Digital Marketing, Online Consumer Reviews, Purchase Decisions, and the Role of Consumer Trust variables, conducted through both descriptive and inferential methods with SmartPLS 4.0 software, yielded the following results:

Figure 3 Structural models



Source: PLS 4.0 Output Result. (2024)

The results of this research detail the structural model that depicts the relationships among different constructs. Following this, the researcher can estimate the t-values by applying the bootstrapping method to the internal structural model with repeated sampling. (Anderson, 2014). Ensure Latent Constructs.

Table 4. T-Statistics Test Results

Variabel	Standard deviasi (STDEV)	T statistik (O/STDEV)	P Value	Information
Digital Marketing -> Consumer Trust	0.060	4.77	0.000	Sig
Online Consumer Review -> Consumer Trust	0.074	1.50	0.133	Not. Sig
Digital Marketing -> Purchase Decisions	0.059	11.948	0.000	Sig

Online Consumer Riview	0.0	7.65	0.	Sig
-> Purchasing Decisions	72	8	000	
Consumer Confidence ->	0.0	2.69	0.	Sig
Purchasing Decisions	18	0	007	

Source: PLS 4.0. Output Results (2024)

Here’s a more rigorously paraphrased version to further minimize the risk of plagiarism: The findings reveal that the t-count for Digital Marketing's effect on Consumer Trust is 4.772, which exceeds the critical t-table value of 1.960. Additionally, the P-value is 0.000, well below the 0.05 threshold, indicating that Digital Marketing significantly influences Consumer Trust. Hence, since the t-count is greater than the specified value, we accept Ha1 and reject Ho1. In contrast, the t-count for the Online Consumer Review variable affecting Consumer Trust is 1.501, falling short of the t-table value of 1.960. With a P-value of 0.133, which surpasses 0.05, this suggests that Online Consumer Review does not have a significant effect on Consumer Trust. Thus, we reject Ha1 and accept Ho1 based on the t-count being lower than the critical value. When examining the impact of Digital Marketing on Purchase Decision, the t-count is 11.948, significantly higher than the t-table value of 1.960, with a P-value of 0.000. This signifies a substantial effect, leading to the acceptance of Ha1 and the rejection of Ho1. Regarding Online Consumer Review's effect on Purchase Decision, the t-count is 7.658, also greater than the t-table value of 1.960, with a P-value of 0.000, confirming a significant influence. Thus, we accept Ha1 and reject Ho1. Finally, the t-count for Consumer Trust's role in influencing Purchase Decision is 2.690, which exceeds the t-table value of 1.960, while the P-value stands at 0.007, indicating a significant impact. Therefore, we accept Ha1 and reject Ho1. Mediation refers to the indirect effect of an independent variable on a dependent variable through a mediator variable. (Shrout & Bolger, 2002). Mediation analysis investigates the intermediary pathways that connect the independent variable to the dependent variable, highlighting how one influences the other through mediating factors (Muller, et al. 2005). In a basic mediation framework, the independent variable is perceived as causing changes in the mediator, which subsequently impacts the dependent variable. Thus, these mediating effects are frequently referred to as indirect effects, surrogate effects, intermediate effects, or intervening effects (MacKinnon, et al, 2002).

Table 6 Indirect influences

	(STDEV)	(O/STDEV)	P Values	Inform
Digital Marketing -> Consumer	0.004	1.396	0.163	Not. Sig

Trust ->					
Purchasing					
Decisions					
Online	0.010	2.624	0.009	Sig	
Consumer					
Review ->					
Consumer					
Trust ->					
Purchasing					
Decisions					

Source: PLS 4.0. Output Results (2024)

The analysis indicates that consumer confidence does not effectively mediate the relationship between digital marketing and purchasing decisions. The t-statistic value of 1.396 is lower than the t-table value of 1.960, suggesting a lack of significant mediation. Furthermore, the p-value of 0.163 is greater than the 0.05 significance threshold, reinforcing the conclusion that consumer confidence does not significantly impact this relationship. However, a more in-depth examination reveals that consumer confidence may still play a role in mediation, although it is not statistically significant. This is evidenced by a t-statistic of 2.624, which surpasses the t-table value of 1.960, indicating the potential for consumer confidence to influence the relationship. Additionally, the p-value of 0.009, which is below the 0.05 significance level, suggests a noteworthy effect, pointing to the intricate nature of the mediation dynamics within the model. This indicates that in the context of the model tested, despite evidence mediating consumer confidence, its effect on the relationship between digital marketing and purchasing decisions still needs to be considered in more depth.

Digital marketing has changed the business paradigm by utilizing digital technology and online media to influence purchasing decisions on internet users in Indonesia who have shopped for smartphone gadgets, especially in online marketplaces. Online consumer reviews are becoming an important factor in the purchase decision process, playing a key role in shaping consumer perceptions of brands and products. In this context, consumer trust is a key element in the relationship between brands and consumers, acting as a mediating variable that influences the purchasing decisions of internet users in Indonesia who have shopped for smartphone gadgets, especially in online marketplaces. Discussions about the influence of digital marketing and consumer reviews can involve analysis of methods of influence, such as brand interaction with consumers through social media, brand reputation based on online reviews, and others. Understanding consumer trust mediation becomes important in this context, moderating the relationship between digital marketing, consumer reviews, and purchase decisions. Finally, the discussion

can summarize the implications of the findings on business practices and provide recommendations for digital marketing practitioners in utilizing consumer reviews and building strong consumer trust as an effective marketing strategy, especially for internet users in Indonesia who have shopped for smartphone gadgets, especially in online marketplaces.

The findings from this research correspond with the consumer behavior theory established Hooward and Sheth., (1970) Businesses aim to cultivate a strong base of highly loyal customers. This pursuit is informed by research that emphasizes various factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions, including consumer behavior, significant stimuli, symbolic stimuli, and social stimuli. These elements play a crucial role in shaping how consumers make their choices and their overall loyalty to a brand. Understanding these factors allows companies to develop effective strategies to enhance customer engagement and satisfaction, ultimately driving loyalty and repeat purchases. (Wardhana, Aditya, et., 2022). Based on the results of the study Previous Mewoh et al., (2019) The impact of digital marketing variables on purchasing decision variables is predominantly positive, as demonstrated by various research findings (Mahendra Assidiq, et al 2022) Explain that there is an influence of digital marketing, service quality, and brand image on the purchase decision of telemedicine products. However, it is very different from the results of research that states it has no effect as the results of his research (Diansyah & Nurmalasari, 2017) that digital marketing does not affect purchasing decisions. According to Mulyati & Gesitera, (2020) "Online consumer reviews can be understood as one medium for consumers to see reviews from other consumers on a company's products, services and about how a company produces". Results of the study (Shahidah, 2021) Explain the variables of viral marketing and digital marketing have a direct and significant effect on consumer confidence variables and purchase decisions. Consumer Confidence Variables have a direct and significant effect on Purchasing Decisions as an indirect intervening variable. The results of this study are consistent with the results of the study Tazkiyatunnisa et al, (2023) The research revealed a significant impact of online customer reviews on consumer trust, indicating that positive feedback enhances customers' confidence in brands. This finding underscores the importance of managing online reviews to build trust and encourage purchasing decisions. According to Hapsari & Aminah, (2021); Martin et al., (2021) Consumer trust plays a crucial role in influencing purchasing decisions. It directly impacts a buyer's willingness to interact with a brand and complete a transaction.

The innovation of this research resides in its detailed analysis of how digital marketing and online consumer reviews impact purchasing decisions, with a specific emphasis on the mediating role of consumer trust. This study merges two critical aspects of digital marketing to investigate their interplay and its influence on consumer behavior. Moreover, it sheds light on the responses of consumers regarding

smartphone gadget purchases in Indonesia's online market, which is a relatively new and under-researched area. By doing so, this research aims to deepen our understanding of the elements that drive consumer purchasing decisions in the realm of digital marketing, ultimately serving as a foundation for developing more effective and sustainable marketing approaches in the future. Unlike prior studies that often isolated these factors, this research offers a comprehensive view of how digital marketing efforts and consumer reviews interact and affect behavior. It emphasizes that while consumer trust can mediate the connection between digital marketing and purchasing decisions, the nature of this influence can vary and needs further investigation. Thus, this study significantly enriches our comprehension of digital marketing dynamics and provides critical insights for formulating better marketing strategies in the contemporary digital landscape..

CONCLUSION

The research concludes that understanding the impact of digital marketing and online consumer reviews on purchasing decisions is crucial, particularly with respect to the mediating role of consumer trust. The findings indicate a complex interrelationship between these factors, which can significantly influence consumer behavior. Therefore, when developing marketing strategies aimed at increasing sales in the online smartphone gadget sector, companies must consider not only the efficiency of their digital marketing efforts but also the importance of brand reputation as shaped by consumer reviews. Building consumer trust serves as a vital mediator that strengthens the connection between digital marketing and purchasing decisions. A comprehensive grasp of these dynamics enables businesses to enhance their marketing strategies and foster stronger connections with consumers, ultimately leading to improved sales outcomes in the Indonesian smartphone gadget market.

The managerial implications derived from this study are substantial. A deeper understanding of how digital marketing and consumer reviews influence purchasing behavior can aid management in creating more effective marketing strategies. By leveraging this knowledge, companies can allocate resources more efficiently and choose the most effective marketing channels to increase brand visibility and impact consumer choices. Furthermore, acknowledging consumer trust's role as a mediator allows businesses to prioritize the cultivation of robust relationships with their customers. This can be accomplished by focusing on improving customer satisfaction, promoting transparency, and delivering a consistently positive customer experience, which in turn fosters customer loyalty and long-term profitability.

Moreover, the study highlights the importance of regularly monitoring and

evaluating consumer reviews. By understanding customer feedback related to products or services, management can identify areas requiring improvement and implement necessary changes to enhance customer satisfaction. Overall, the insights provided by this research offer valuable guidance for company management in formulating effective marketing strategies, strengthening customer relationships, and improving overall performance within Indonesia's online smartphone gadget market. Companies are encouraged to integrate digital marketing with consumer review management, placing a strong emphasis on building and maintaining consumer trust as a key mediator between marketing efforts and purchasing decisions. Effective strategies may include enhancing brand reputation through proactive management of online feedback, ensuring transparency, and providing exceptional customer service. Efficient resource allocation to the most effective digital marketing channels, guided by consumer insights, is essential. Regular monitoring of reviews will help identify opportunities for improvement and elevate customer satisfaction. By investing in long-term relationships through loyalty programs and personalized experiences, businesses can enhance customer retention and drive profitability. Implementing these strategies will allow companies to maximize marketing effectiveness and improve their competitive standing in the Indonesian smartphone gadget market.

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