

CUSTOMER REVIEWS AND INFLUENCER ENDORSEMENTS ON PURCHASE DECISIONS MEDIATED BY TRUST IN THE GOFOOD PLATFORM

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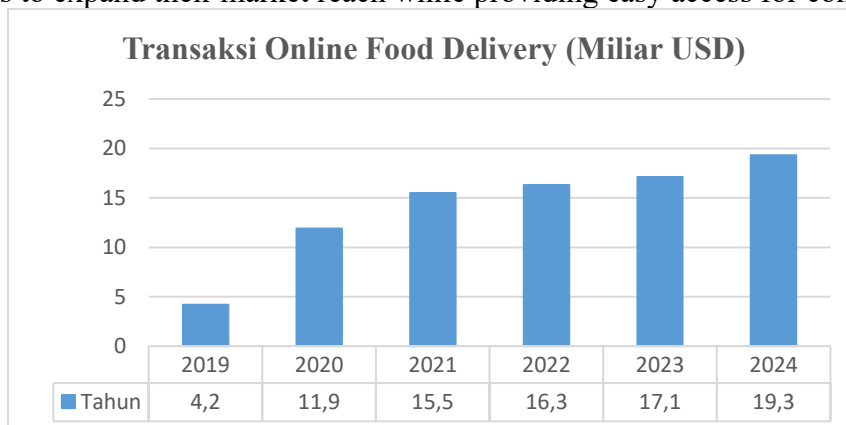
Abstract

This study examines the influence of customer reviews and influencer endorsements on purchase decisions with trust in the GoFood platform as a mediating variable. Using a quantitative approach, the research collected data from 150 active GoFood users in Medan, Indonesia. Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS) through SmartPLS software. The findings reveal that both customer reviews and influencer endorsements have a significant positive effect on purchase decisions directly and indirectly through platform trust. These results highlight the importance of strengthening consumer trust as a strategic factor to increase purchase intentions and customer loyalty in digital food delivery services.

Keywords: Customer Review, Influencer Endorsement, Trust, Purchase Decision, GoFood.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is currently experiencing a rapid digital transformation, particularly in the e-commerce and application-based services sector. This phenomenon is driven by the increasing internet penetration, which has reached more than 200 million users, the widespread ownership of smartphones, and lifestyle changes that prioritize convenience and speed (APJII, 2023). Digital transformation not only changes people's shopping behavior but also creates a more mature digital business ecosystem. One of the industries that has been significantly impacted by digitalization is the food and beverage sector, especially through the growth of online food delivery (OFD) services (Prabowo et al., 2021). This shift has created substantial opportunities for businesses to expand their market reach while providing easy access for consumers.



Source: Goodstats (2024), Data Processed

Figure 1. Online Food Delivery (OFD) Transactions in Southeast Asia

The lifestyle of Indonesian consumers has shifted from conventional shopping patterns to digital transactions via online platforms (Erwansyah et al., 2022). A concrete manifestation of this change is the rapid growth of OFD services, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, which encouraged people to rely on food delivery services as their primary alternative (Putri & Cahyono, 2021). OFD services allow consumers to enjoy a wide variety of food without leaving their homes, ensuring both convenience and safety. The rapid expansion of the OFD market illustrates not only the shift in consumer behavior but also the ability of businesses to adapt to digital technology (Wijaya et al., 2023). This growth is supported by service expansion into tier-2 and tier-3 cities, increasing purchasing power among the middle class, the emergence of quick commerce, and aggressive platform strategies through loyalty programs and promotions (Bain & Company, 2023).

Several demographic and socioeconomic factors also drive the development of the OFD market in Indonesia. Increasing urbanization, higher mobility among urban communities, and increasingly busy lifestyles have limited time for home cooking (Prabowo & Nugroho, 2021). In this context, OFD services emerge as a practical solution, allowing consumers to access various food options with just a few taps on their smartphones. User-friendly applications, extensive menu selections from diverse merchants, and aggressive promotional strategies make these services increasingly popular among urban consumers (Wibowo & Susanti, 2022). This shift marks a fundamental transformation in Indonesian consumption patterns—from traditional household-based food consumption to more efficient and responsive digital services.

GoFood, one of the pioneers of food delivery services in Indonesia, has played a strategic role in shaping the national OFD ecosystem. The platform successfully connects millions of consumers with thousands of merchants across the country through advanced digital integration, multiple payment systems, and an extensive driver network. However, the increasing intensity of competition—particularly from GrabFood and ShopeeFood—has created serious challenges for GoFood to maintain its dominant position. These conditions demand continuous innovation and marketing strategy adjustments to remain relevant in the eyes of consumers.

The popularity of GoFood is also strongly influenced by the high interest of younger generations in fast and practical digital services. Millennials and Generation Z, in particular, tend to seek convenience in fulfilling their daily needs, including food. GoFood responds to this demand with a user-friendly interface, attractive design, personalized menu recommendations, and creative promotional strategies such as special discounts, brand collaborations, and gamification features. Flexible digital payment methods, ranging from e-wallets to pay-later options, further strengthen GoFood's appeal among tech-savvy youth. These factors position GoFood not merely as a food delivery service but as an integral part of modern urban lifestyles in Indonesia.

Despite this, competitive dynamics remain a challenge. As shown in recent data, Grab maintained its market leadership with a 47–50% share between 2021–2024, while GoFood experienced a decline from 44% in 2022 to 35% in 2024. Meanwhile, ShopeeFood increased its market share from 8% to 18% in the same period (MomentumWorks, 2025). This shift indicates a change in consumer preferences influenced by service quality, promotional strategies, and application features. The declining market share of GoFood highlights the need for an in-depth evaluation of its marketing strategies and user experience.

Competition in OFD platforms has fundamentally reshaped consumer decision-making. Consumers are free to choose the platform that best suits their preferences, and purchase

decisions in this context extend beyond buying physical products—they include selecting digital services. Tjiptono (2025) defines service usage decisions as actions of choosing among alternatives, beginning with problem recognition and ending with service consumption. In OFD services, purchase decisions are influenced not only by rational factors such as price and delivery speed but also by overall perceptions of service quality. Positive experiences increase the likelihood of repeat purchases, which serves as a key success indicator for platforms (Ramadhan et al., 2023).

However, consumer decision-making is not always linear, as various obstacles can emerge during the process. According to Hermawan and Marliani (2023), inconsistent service quality can directly reduce purchase decisions and customer loyalty. In the digital era, reviews and recommendations from other consumers—through application feedback or social media—play a critical role in influencing potential users (Hadi & Ekawati, 2024). Thus, GoFood users' decisions are shaped not only by the platform's internal performance but also by social and digital perceptions.

Customer reviews, in particular, serve as one of the most credible sources of information in digital contexts. Reviews are perceived as authentic because they reflect actual customer experiences, making them more persuasive than advertisements. Rahmi and Prasetyo (2023) argue that reviews have strong persuasive power as honest and independent opinions. In GoFood, reviews function both as a feedback mechanism and as social proof, reducing consumer uncertainty and risk in decision-making. Positive reviews can significantly improve purchase intentions, while negative reviews that are poorly handled may reduce consumer trust (Adiwijaya & Batu, 2023; Hadi & Ekawati, 2024).

In addition to reviews, influencer endorsements have become a dominant digital marketing strategy in OFD services. Influencers, particularly those with large audiences and high engagement, can shape consumer opinions and preferences effectively. Through engaging visual content and authentic narratives, influencers create strong emotional connections with their followers. Endorsements—ranging from food reviews to app usage tutorials—are perceived as more trustworthy since consumers tend to rely on figures they admire (Stevani & Junaidi, 2021). Effective influencer marketing is determined by expertise, authenticity, relevance, and engagement quality, all of which contribute to brand awareness and purchase intention.

Finally, trust in the platform plays a crucial mediating role in linking customer reviews and influencer endorsements to purchase decisions. Trust is formed through consistent user experiences such as reliable ordering systems, accurate information, secure payments, and effective complaint handling (Mayer et al., 1995). In an era of promotional saturation, consumers are increasingly selective and evaluate whether promotional claims align with their actual experiences. A strong sense of trust not only encourages repeat purchases but also fosters customer loyalty.

Based on these phenomena, this study investigates the effects of customer reviews and influencer endorsements on purchase decisions, mediated by trust in the GoFood platform, with a focus on consumers in Medan, Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Purchase Decision

A purchase decision represents the cognitive and affective processes consumers undergo in selecting a product or service to satisfy their needs and wants. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), the decision-making process consists of several stages: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, and post-purchase behavior. In the context of Online Food Delivery (OFD) services, purchase decisions are not limited to rational aspects such as price or delivery speed but are also influenced by service quality, customer

reviews, and social influence (Sulistia et al., 2025). Indicators of purchase decisions include (1) purchase intention, (2) buying based on recommendations, (3) comparing alternatives, and (4) ease of access to products.

2.2 Customer Reviews

Customer reviews are evaluations provided by consumers after experiencing a product or service. Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) define electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) as positive or negative statements made by consumers about products or companies, available to a wide audience online. Reviews play an essential role in reducing uncertainty and influencing perceptions of service quality (Rahmi & Prasetyo, 2023). Positive reviews can enhance purchase intentions, while negative reviews may decrease trust and shift consumer preferences to competitors (Adiwijaya & Batu, 2023; Hadi & Ekawati, 2024). Indicators of customer reviews (Hamisena & Sudyasjayanti, 2024) include: (1) ease of access to information, (2) usefulness in decision-making, (3) adoptability, (4) contribution to the community, and (5) motivational impact.

2.3 Influencer Endorsements

Influencer endorsement refers to the use of social media personalities to promote products or services. Lim et al. (2020) explain that endorsements by influencers can influence consumer attitudes and purchase intentions through credibility, attractiveness, and social connection. In the OFD industry, influencers often create relatable content such as food reviews, delivery experiences, and app usage tips. Effective endorsement depends on perceived expertise, authenticity, relevance, and audience engagement (Stevani & Junaidi, 2021). Indicators of influencer endorsement include (1) influencer credibility, (2) content attractiveness, (3) product relevance, (4) frequency of exposure, and (5) audience interaction (Lim et al., 2020).

2.4 Trust in Platform

Trust in a platform refers to consumers' belief that a digital service provider is reliable, secure, and responsible. Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995) identify three key dimensions of trust: competence, integrity, and benevolence. In digital transactions, trust reduces perceived risks, particularly regarding data security and service reliability (Pavlou, 2003). For OFD services like GoFood, trust arises from consistent performance in product delivery, transparent information, and effective complaint resolution. Indicators of platform trust include (1) reputation, (2) reliability, (3) transaction assurance, and (4) privacy protection.

2.5 Previous Studies

Several studies have demonstrated the significant role of customer reviews and influencer endorsements in shaping purchase decisions. Putri et al. (2025) found that celebrity endorsement and product reviews significantly affect Gen Z's purchasing decisions on TikTok. Ningrum and Andjarwati (2025) confirmed that online reviews and endorsements influence purchase decisions but found brand trust had no mediating effect. Conversely, Sari and Mustaqim (2024) showed that customer reviews affect purchase decisions through trust in GrabFood. These mixed findings suggest that trust may serve as an important mediating variable but requires further empirical testing in the OFD context.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

This study proposes a model where customer reviews (X1) and influencer endorsements (X2) influence purchase decisions (Y), both directly and indirectly through trust in the platform (Z) as a mediating variable.

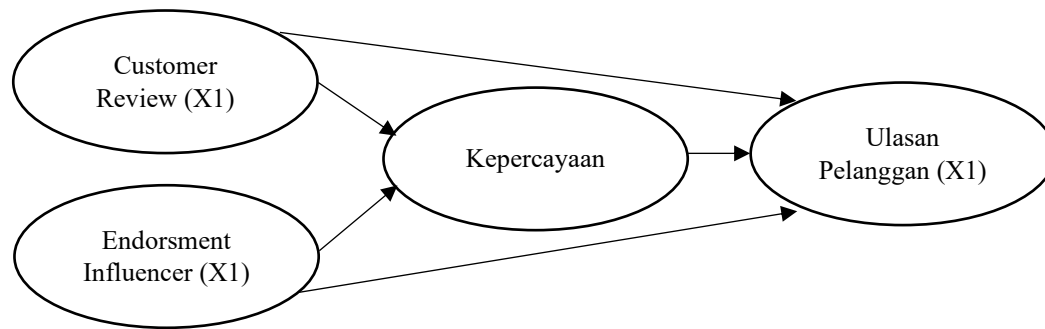


Figure 2 Conceptual Framework

2.7 Hypotheses

Based on the literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1: Customer reviews have a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions.
- H2: Influencer endorsements have a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions.
- H3: Customer reviews have a positive and significant effect on trust in the platform.
- H4: Influencer endorsements have a positive and significant effect on trust in the platform.
- H5: Trust in the platform has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions.
- H6: Trust mediates the effect of customer reviews on purchase decisions.
- H7: Trust mediates the effect of influencer endorsements on purchase decisions.

METHOD

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research design using a survey method. The quantitative approach is appropriate for examining relationships among latent variables and testing hypotheses statistically (Sugiyono, 2010). The research aims to analyze the influence of customer reviews and influencer endorsements on purchase decisions, with trust in the GoFood platform as a mediating variable.

3.2 Research Location and Period

The study was conducted in Medan City, Indonesia, particularly in the Medan Johor district, where the use of Online Food Delivery (OFD) services is relatively high. Data collection was carried out between July and October 2025.

3.3 Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of active GoFood users in Medan City. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling with the following criteria:

1. Respondents live in Medan Johor District.
2. Aged 17 years or older.
3. Have made at least two transactions using GoFood in the last six months.

Based on Hair et al. (2010), the minimum required sample size is 5–10 respondents per indicator. With 30 indicators used in this study, a total of 150 respondents was determined as the sample size.

3.4 Data Sources and Collection

The study used primary data, collected directly through questionnaires distributed both online (Google Form) and offline. The questionnaire items were developed from prior studies

and measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

Table 1. Likert Scale

Response	Score
Strongly Agree	5
Agree	4
Neutral	3
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	1

3.5 Data Analysis Technique

Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 3.0. The analysis involved two main stages:

1. Measurement Model (Outer Model): to test the validity and reliability of constructs through convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability.
2. Structural Model (Inner Model): to test the relationships among variables using R-square, path coefficients, and bootstrapping for hypothesis testing.

Model fit was assessed using the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), while mediation effects were tested using bootstrapping procedures.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Respondent Profile

The survey involved 150 respondents who were active users of the GoFood platform in Medan. The demographic distribution is summarized below.

Table 2. Respondent Profile

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender: Male	72	48.0%
Gender: Female	78	52.0%
Age 17–30 years	84	56.0%
Age 31–40 years	38	25.3%
Age >40 years	28	18.7%
Occupation: Student	42	28.0%
Occupation: Private Employee	40	26.6%
Occupation: Entrepreneur	35	23.4%
Occupation: Others	33	22.0%

This profile indicates that GoFood’s primary users are young adults (17–30 years old) and working professionals, reflecting a consumer segment with high digital literacy and active OFD usage.

4.2 Measurement Model

The measurement model was evaluated through convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability.

Table 3. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variable	AVE
Customer Review (X1)	0.756
Influencer Endorsement (X2)	0.759

Trust (Z)	0.761
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.818

All constructs had AVE values > 0.5 , indicating strong convergent validity.

Table 4. Reliability Test

Variable	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Customer Review (X1)	0.912	0.876
Influencer Endorsement (X2)	0.918	0.882
Trust (Z)	0.927	0.895
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.936	0.901

All values exceeded the threshold (>0.7), confirming construct reliability.

4.3 Structural Model (Inner Model)

Table 5. R-Square Values

Variable	R ²	Interpretation
Trust (Z)	0.512	Moderate
Purchase Decision (Y)	0.673	Strong

The model explains 51.2% of the variance in Trust and 67.3% of the variance in Purchase Decisions.

Table 6. Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

Path	β	t-statistic	p-value	Result
Customer Review \rightarrow Trust	0.453	7.858	0.000	Supported
Customer Review \rightarrow Purchase Decision	0.309	4.759	0.000	Supported
Influencer Endorsement \rightarrow Trust	0.319	5.217	0.000	Supported
Influencer Endorsement \rightarrow Purchase Decision	0.314	4.664	0.000	Supported
Trust \rightarrow Purchase Decision	0.221	3.341	0.001	Supported

Table 7. Mediation Test

Mediation Path	β	t-statistic	p-value	Result
Customer Review \rightarrow Trust \rightarrow Purchase Decision	0.100	3.001	0.003	Supported
Influencer Endorsement \rightarrow Trust \rightarrow Purchase Decision	0.071	2.771	0.006	Supported

4.4 Discussion

The findings confirm that both customer reviews and influencer endorsements significantly influence purchase decisions in the GoFood platform, both directly and indirectly through trust.

1. Customer Reviews \rightarrow Trust & Purchase Decision: Consistent with Rahmi and Prasetyo (2023), positive reviews provide credible information, reduce consumer uncertainty, and strengthen purchase decisions. Negative reviews, if not properly addressed, can weaken trust and reduce purchase intention (Adiwijaya & Batu, 2023).
2. Influencer Endorsements \rightarrow Trust & Purchase Decision: In line with Lim et al. (2020), endorsements by credible influencers enhance consumer trust by providing relatable,

engaging, and persuasive content. This strengthens consumer attitudes and encourages repeat purchases.

3. Trust → Purchase Decision: Trust acts as a crucial mediator, confirming Mayer et al. (1995) that reliability, transparency, and integrity of digital platforms are essential to consumer loyalty. Trust not only ensures initial purchase but also fosters long-term commitment to the platform.

Overall, the study demonstrates that building consumer trust is the key strategic factor in strengthening purchase decisions in highly competitive OFD platforms. GoFood, facing declining market share, must leverage authentic customer reviews and effective influencer collaborations to maintain relevance and loyalty in Indonesia's digital economy.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that:

1. Customer Review (X1) has a positive and significant effect on Trust in the Platform (Z), with a path coefficient value of 0.453 and p-value = 0.000 (Hypothesis accepted).
2. Customer Review (X1) has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision (Y), with a path coefficient value of 0.309 and p-value = 0.000 (Hypothesis accepted).
3. Influencer Endorsement (X2) has a positive and significant effect on Trust in the Platform (Z), with a path coefficient value of 0.319 and p-value = 0.000 (Hypothesis accepted).
4. Influencer Endorsement (X2) has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision (Y), with a path coefficient value of 0.314 and p-value = 0.000 (Hypothesis accepted).
5. Trust in the Platform (Z) has a positive and significant effect on Purchase Decision (Y), with a path coefficient value of 0.221 and p-value = 0.001 (Hypothesis accepted).
6. Customer Review (X1) significantly affects Purchase Decision (Y) through Trust in the Platform (Z), with a p-value = 0.003 < 0.05 (Mediation Hypothesis accepted).
7. Influencer Endorsement (X2) significantly affects Purchase Decision (Y) through Trust in the Platform (Z), with a p-value = 0.006 < 0.05 (Mediation Hypothesis accepted).

5.2 Suggestions

Based on the results showing that Customer Reviews and Influencer Endorsements positively influence Purchase Decisions, both directly and through Trust in the Platform as a mediating variable, several strategic recommendations are offered for GoFood and culinary business partners utilizing the platform in Medan City:

1. Optimizing Customer Reviews
GoFood and partner restaurants are advised to actively encourage customers to provide honest and positive reviews. Presenting relevant testimonials, responding quickly to customer complaints, and ensuring transparency of product information will further increase consumer trust and drive purchase decisions.
2. Effective Use of Influencer Endorsements
GoFood and business partners should select influencers with credibility, audience affinity, and consistent communication styles aligned with the promoted products. This will strengthen the platform's positive image, build trust, and ultimately increase transactions.
3. Strengthening Platform Trust

Since trust plays a critical mediating role, GoFood should continuously improve transaction security, service speed, price transparency, and food quality provided by its partners. These factors are crucial in building consumer loyalty.

4. Developing Integrated Marketing Strategies

GoFood is encouraged to integrate digital marketing strategies with user experience-based approaches. Consistency in communication, a user-friendly application design, and creative promotional campaigns will strengthen GoFood's positioning as a trusted platform that resonates with the needs of young consumers in Medan City.

By implementing these recommendations, GoFood is expected to strengthen its competitiveness in the online food delivery industry, increase customer satisfaction and loyalty, and simultaneously support the growth of culinary business partners in Medan City.

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