



Assessing The Impact of Online Customer Reviews and Product Rating On Customer Intention to Purchase Online from Local Restaurants of Karachi

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Abstract

This study is one of the primary studies developed to understand the significance of online customer reviews and online product ratings on customer intention towards online purchases. This study is also supplemented with theoretical triangulation to relate the outcomes with the customer intention to purchase online, specifically from local food restaurants of Karachi. Hence, the significance of this study lies in its multiple folds due to its application to both academia and the pragmatic world. Hence, the outcomes of the study can be used by academicians and practitioners to understand the impact of sentiment analysis and product rating for conducting better and rigorous studies, and also to formulate better policies for optimizing customer intention to purchase online from local food restaurants. However, to achieve these outcomes, the significance testing of the study is mandatory, that is why the analysis of this study is based on structural equation modeling. The outcomes of the analysis does not only assures the significance testing but also provide reasons and scope of online customer reviews and online product rating on online purchase intention from local food restraints.

Keywords: Online Customer Reviews, Online Product Rating, Customer Attitude, Customer Intention to Purchase, Customer Intention to Purchase online, Local Food Restaurants, and Restaurant Business.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Online business helps vendors and customers to interact virtually in order to conduct business with ease and minimal cost. Online connections are also beneficial for sales and create a positive impact on the frequency of business transactions (Surwayan et al., 2022). Use of the internet also resulted in a new form of global communication termed “Electronic Word of Mouth”. However, this form of communication is treated as informal communication between a non-commercial encoder and decoder about the brand and performance of products, etc. Hence, Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WoM) is very beneficial for online knowledge exchange through comments made by any past, current, or prospective customer, etc (Tantrabundit & Jamrozy, 2018). On the other side we may also not ignore the importance of online product rating that may produce a substantial impact over the level of customer trust (Rachmiani et al., 2024). One of the recent studies also emphasized upon the importance of online product rating and highlighted the significant role of online product rating in shaping customer intention to purchase. However, the study also emphasized that online customer reviews and online customer rating are the major variables that may influence customer intention to purchase. In fact, both of the variables also has the tendency to affect the customer intention in an independent manner and also in with association with each other (Sahrudin et al., 2025).

These points are sufficient to make anyone believe that customers prefer the opinion of peers more than the endorsement by celebrities (Ackermen et al., 2024). Hence, it is optimal to study the impact of online customer review and product ratings with reference to the restaurant business, where these elements have a significant impact on the customer’s intention to purchase (Sulistio & Aransyah, 2023). There are many factors that influence customer intention to purchase from restaurants, although the main importance is of food (Bilgihan et al., 2018). These points legitimizes the indications of Chen (2019), who mentioned sentiments and rating are the main element of online reviews and has a significant impact on customer intention.

1.1. Theoretical Framework

The Theory of Reasoned Action was proposed by Fishbein and Ajzen (2008) to connect belief, attitude, intention, and behavior. According to this theory, intention is developed through personal factors that are influenced by social interactions. On the other side attitude is defined as feelings or believes of individuals (Awaluddin & Sukmawati, 2017). Studies related with E-WoM highlighted a significant association between E-WoM and customer attitude, e.g., Andrade and Ramos (2017) and Haro-Sosa et al (2024) etc. Positive E-WoM is found to be an important predictor of customer satisfaction & trust (Yaqub et al., 2024). On the other side Bustinza et al (2019) mentioned the Social Proof Theory that people follow others in order to comply with social requirements. Hence, it is legitimate to quote Ham et al (2014) and Pookulangara et al (2017), who are of the opinion that social media platforms have a significant ability to influence the attitude and opinion of other users. Other than E-WoM product ratings also has the tendency to influence the attitude and opinion of others.

1.2. Research Model

There are limited studies that highlight about the effect of E-WoM and Customer rating over customer intention to purchase Surwayan et al (2022). However, there are multiple studies i.e., Al-Haddad et al (2022) and Sa'ait et al (2016), and Yusuf et al (2018), all postulated about E-WoM and customer intention. Similarly, Hamouda AND Tabbabe (2013) highlighted the effect of E-WoM on customer attitude, and Kudeshia and Mittal (2016) highlighted the indirect effect of E-WoM on customer purchase intention with the mediating effect of customer attitude. Hence, through extracting elements from all of these studies, the model of this study is based upon two predicting variables, i.e., (Customer Online Reviews & online product rating), while customer attitude serves as the mediating variable, and customer intention to purchase is the outcome variable.

However, Tat et al (2011) reflected that massive competition is one the prime factor that may influence customer intention to purchase. Supplemented by Xu et al (2024) the customer reviews related with competing brands has the tendency to produce negative impact over customer's intention to purchase.

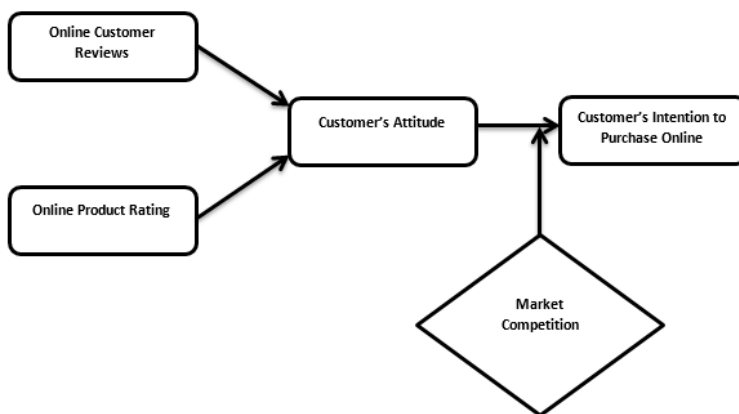


Figure 1: Research Model

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Online Customer Reviews and Customer Attitude:

Online reviews are the tools that enable customer to write their opinions, views and reviews related with brands and products etc (Surwayan et al., 2022). According to the previous studies, there is a definite association between online customer reviews and customer attitudes. However, these studies are based upon the opinion that viewers of online reviews are perspective customers that does not have any previous experience of using the product (Lee & Ro, 2016). Recent Studies, e.g.,

Fangxin (2022) and Varma (2025), also highlighted the significance of online customer reviews and acknowledged their positive association with customer's attitude. According to research, positive online customer reviews produce positive emotions towards the brand that ultimately resulted in positive customer's attitude towards the brand (Fangxin, 2022).

H1A: There is a relationship between Online Customer Reviews of local food restaurants and Customer Attitude

2.2 Online Product Rating and Customer Attitude:

Product Rating are also perceived as one of the most important elements associated with heuristic that are used by customers to rate the online products (Park & Nicolau, 2015). Similar points are also highlighted by a recent study, i.e., Rachmiani et al (2024) that there is a definite correlation between product rating and customer attitude.

Higher ranking resulted in a decrease of perceived risk and vice versa. However, some of the studies highlighted peer reviews as more important in the purchase of expensive products. Hence, product rating given by peers also has a substantial impact on the customer purchase (Ackerman et al., 2024). On the other side recent studies also admit that the significance of online product rating is one of the influential signals that are required to boost customers' trust (Rachminani et al., 2024).

H2A: There is a relationship between Online Product Rating of local food restaurants and Customer Attitude

2.3 Online Customer Reviews and Customer's Intention to Purchase Online:

Customer reviews are one of the most influential tools that have the tendency to create an impact on customer purchase decision. Studies, e.g., Kurniawan (2021), also prove that E-WoM has a direct association with customer buying interest. However, there are some studies that highlighted no association between E-WoM and buying interest (Sudirman, 2018). Some of the recent studies, e.g., Ananda et al (2023); Lestari and Maharani (2023); Suryawan et al (2022) and Tanuwijaya et al (2023) etc, also posit a direct and positive association between online customer reviews and customer's intention to purchase. The relationship is based upon valuable insights and experiences shared by consumer on online mediums (Lestari & Maharani, 2023 & Suryawan et al., 2022). These points are also valid for e-commerce platforms (Ananda et al., 2023 & Tanuwijaya et al., 2023)

H3A: There is a relationship between Online Customer Reviews of local food restaurants and Customers' Intention to Purchase Online

2.4 Online Customer's Rating and Customer's Intention to Purchase Online:

Online purchase is always found to be affected by the evaluations made by the current users. Hence, product evaluation is also found to be one of the most important determinants of the online purchase. Most of the times rating is given in the form of stars and based upon comparative evaluation of the product against the offerings of other merchants (Surwayan et al., 2022). However, results are mixed in this regards as there are some studies that favors the effect of customer rating on customer's intention to purchase, e.g., Kurniawan (2021), and there are some that does not reflect any association, e.g., Hasrul et al (2021). However, recent studies e.g., Martini et al (2022) and Rachminani et al (2024), highlight the positive association between online product rating and customer intention to purchase. Some of the previous studies e.g., Küsgen and Köcher (2016) claims that higher product ratings are the symbol of product quality and attribute that ultimately diminish the impact of brand name.

H4A: There is a relationship between Online Product Rating of local food restaurants and Customer's Intention to Purchase Online

2.5 Online Customer Reviews, Customer Attitude, and Customer's Intention to Purchase Online:

Online customer reviews are the modern examples of word of mouth (WoM) promotions that are used to provide insights to perspective customers and assist them in making purchase decision (Lestari & Maharani, 2023).

Some of the studies, e.g., Ananda et al (2023) and Suryawan et al (2022) highlighted the positive and direct association between customer reviews and purchase intention. However, Tanuwijaya et al (2023) indicated that there is also an indirect association between customer reviews and purchase intention, with customer trust plays a mediating role. Hence, it is optimal to highlight that the presence of a mediator may cause a significant push on purchase intention. The mediating role of customer's attitude between online customer reviews and customer's intention to purchase has also been acknowledged by recent studies, e.g., Erkan and Elwalda (2018) and Paramita et al (2023), that means positive online customer reviews has a definite indirect association with customers' intention to purchase.

H5A: Customer Attitude mediates between Online Customer Reviews of local food restaurants and Customer's Intention to Purchase Online

2.6 Online Product Rating, Customer Attitude, and Customer's Intention to Purchase Online:

There are multiple studies that highlighted the significant & direct association between online customer rating and customers' purchase intention (Ananda et al., 2023 & Martini et al., 2022). Lestari and Maharani (2023) also emphasized the relationship between online product ratings over customer intention to purchase. However, some of the recent studies, e.g., Purnama et al (2024) emphasized on the

mediating role of trust etc, in the relationship of online product rating and customer intention to purchase. Similar is the indication of Nabila and Abadi (2024) who highlighted the mediating role of trust in between the association of online product rating and customers' intention to purchase Online

H6A: Customer Attitude mediates between Online Product Rating of local food restaurants and Customer's Intention to Purchase Online

2.7 Market Competition and Customer Purchase Intention:

Increased exposure to negative information about the brand also has the tendency to affect customers' purchase intention. Hence, it is optimal to believe that there is a definite association between the level of competition in the market and customer purchase intention (Han et al., 2020). One of the recent studies, i.e., Mamuaya (2024), also highlighted that price sensitivity also has a significant negative impact over customers' purchase intention. Hence, an increase in the level of competitiveness may produce a negative impact on customers' purchase intention related to a specific brand (Sari & Belgiawan, 2024)

H7A: There is a relationship between Market Competition between local food restaurants and Customer Intention to purchase Online

H8A: Market Competition between local food restaurants moderates the relationship between Customer Attitude and Customer Intention to Purchase Online

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Methodology is the part of the research that highlights not only the parameters that are used in the study but also the reason behind the preference of every element used in the study (Kothari, 2004). Recent scholarly work highlighted that it is better to divide research methodology in to subsections that are required to make readers understand the philosophy behind the formulation of research work in a more effective manner. Hence, the methodological part of the study is divided into two sub-sections, i.e., Research Design and Sampling Design (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). These two sections are discussed below

3.1 Research Design:

The purpose of this study is correlational, as indicated by Sekaran and Bougie (2016), as the study is based upon variable extraction from related studies in order to create unique intellectual property (Eruanga, 2021). The study setting is non-contrived, the researcher's interference is moderate and the nature of experiment is a field experiment as indicated by Sekaran and Bougie (2016). Similar research design approaches was used by previous studies, e.g., Al-Haddad et al (2022) and Sa'ait et al (2016) and Yusuf et al (2018) etc, in order to compile research in minimal cost and time. The philosophy of research is epistemology that is the philosophy of knowledge, as indicated by Saunder et al (2007), and the philosophy

is used to describe the post-modern, social, and global perspective of knowledge (Daruhadi, 2024). Philosophical stance associated with the study is post-positivism, as indicated by Saunders et al (2015) is a refined form of positivism and especially in the field of marketing, as marketers are required to take consumers as the active participants (Rabby et al., 2021). Moreover, post-positivism has the tendency to combine qualitative and quantitative perspectives in order to enrich the literature through social phenomenon (Pylypenko, 2022). Moreover, in research work related with management sciences, researchers are also required to apply and use believes of societies. Hence, the theories used in the research may evolve with the passage of time. Therefore, it is optimal to nourish the literature with the use of post-positivism rather than any other philosophical stance, especially in the domain of management sciences (Lu, 2015). The research approach used in the study is deductive, methodological choice is mono-method, and the time horizon is cross-sectional as indicated by Saunders et al (2007) and Saunders et al (2015). Similar methodological elements are also used by Al-Haddad et al (2022); Sa'ait et al (2016), and Yusuf et al (2018), etc.

3.2 Sampling Design:

Al-Haddad et al (2022) used non-probability sampling through mentioning that the adequate sample size must be in between 30 to 500 samples. Hence, their study with the sample of 304 respondents is adequate to assess the impact of E-WoM Promotions. The study of Sa'ait et al (2016) uses the reference of Krejcie and Morgan (2010) to collect data from 361 respondents. However, according to Krejcie and Morgan (2010) sample size of 384 is sufficient to assess the perception of a population that is larger than 1000000. Previous studies also claim that for efficient sample size calculation, a researcher may multiply the number of variables by at least five or ten (Hill, 1998). However, for studies that are supplemented with structural equation modeling, it is better to use a sample size based upon 200 plus respondents for effective analysis and assessment (Kline, 2012).

Hence, in association with these parameters the sample size for this study is 384 to satisfy the criteria mentioned by Hill (1998); Kline, (2012) and Krejcie and Morgan (2010) and also the sampling methods used by previous studies e.g., Al-Haddad et al (2022); Sa'ait et al (2016) and Yusuf et al (2018) etc. Therefore, a closed-ended questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale was distributed among 500 Facebook users in order to collect responses regarding the impact of customer reviews and product rating on customer intention to purchase online from local restaurants of Karachi. The Sampling Technique used to collect data is non-probability sampling, and the sampling method is convenience sampling. Similar methodology was adapted by previous studies, e.g., Al-Haddad et al (2022); Sa'ait et al (2016), and Yusuf et al (2018). However, due to inappropriate responses from multiple respondents, the sample size of this study is limited to 384 respondents, and the response rate 77%.

3.3 Research Instrument:

The Research Instrument used in this study is a closed-ended questionnaire that is developed through a Five-Points Likert scale. The Likert Scale is one of the prime scaling methods that are used to assess customers' perception (Bartikowski et al., 2010). The application of the Likert scale is efficient for the assessment of different variables, and scaling is also found to be significant in assessing customer perception in online business dealing (Peng et al., 2019). Hence, the research instrument for this study is adapted from multiple studies. Hence, contributors of every variable are highlighted separately below:

Indicators for Online Customer Reviews are adapted from: Rahayu et al. (2020); Suryawan et al (2022), and Sutanto and Aprianingsih (2016)

Indicators for Online Product Rating are adapted from: Baek et al (2012); Chevaliar and Mayzlin (2006); Park and Lee (2008); Suryawan et al (2022), and Zhu and Zhang (2010)

Indicators for Customer Attitude are adapted from: Chevaliar and Mayzlin (2006); Filierei (2015); Mudambi and Schuff (2010); Park and Lee (2008) and Zhu and Zhang (2010)

Indicators for Customer's Intention to Purchase Online are adapted from: Chen and Xie (2008); Sen and Lerman (2007); Sutanto and Aprianingsih (2016), and Zhou et al (2007)

Indicators for Market Competition are adapted from: Iyengar and Lepper (2000); Filierei (2015); Schwartz (2004), and Scholesser (2003)

4. STATISTICAL TESTING

According to the research work related with assessment tools and techniques it has been revealed that SMART-PLS is one of the most sophisticated software that has the capability to handle all the latest trends of analysis (Wong, 2013). Working of SMART-PLS is based upon two models that are termed as outer (structural) model and inner (measurement) model. However, to initiate analysis it is required to assess outer model on initial bases. Reason behind the assessment of outer model is to understand the reliability of the model and its consistency etc (Ab Hamid et al., 2017). Inner model has its own significance as it is used to assess the association between the variables of interest and plays major part in inferential statistical analysis (Wong, 2013). Therefore, the software has the tendency to provide rigorous descriptive and inferential analysis (Ogwigi & Lasisi, 2022) that makes clarity for all the paths and relationships posited by the research model (Vijaybanu & Arunkumar, 2018).

In fact, SMART-PLS also has the tendency to run SEM (Structural Equation Modeling) better in comparison to any other software researchers' use for analysis especially in the field of management sciences and business administration (Wong,

2013)

Table 4.1: Outer Loading, Internal Consistency & Convergent Validity

Variable	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Goldstein rho	Composite Reliability	AVE
Customer Reviews	0.795	0.740	0.743	0.852	0.684
	0.828				
	0.810				
Product Rating	0.866	0.811	0.818	0.888	0.727
	0.888				
	0.802				
Customer Attitude	0.830	0.768	0.769	0.866	0.684
	0.804				
	0.846				
Customer Intention to Purchase	0.799	0.760	0.779	0.823	0.607
	0.754				
	0.784				
Market Competition	0.799	0.742	0.747	0.807	0.583
	0.773				
	0.716				

Table 4.1 along with the figure 2 is the reflection of composite reliability and convergent validity. It includes descriptive analytical measures as indicated by Ab Hamid et al (2017). Initial component of the table is outer loading whose range is from 0 to 1 and the purpose of outer loading is to validate every indicator that is used in the process of research (Aftahnorhan, 2013). Therefore, values of outer loading are perceived better when these values approaches to 1 and the values between 0.60 & 0.70 may be deleted if the deletion is fruitful for the increase of convergent validity. Secondly the table also contains different elements related with internal consistency i.e., Cronabch's alpha, Goldstein rho and Composite reliability and the range of these internal consistency measures also range from 0 to 1 (Ab Hamid et al., 2017).

Thirdly the Table 4.1 also contains elements of convergent validity i.e., outer loading, composite reliability and (AVE) Average Variance Extracted (Adeleke et al., 2015) and AVE with values of 0.50 or above is sufficient to reflect convergent validity in efficient manner (Ab Hamid et al., 2017). Hence, in the light of Table 4.1 and Figure 1 it is optimal to reflect that the Table and Figure are sufficient to endorsed construct reliability, internal consistency and convergent validity in the research.

Table 4.2: Discriminant Validity

	Customer Attitude	Customer Reviews	Customer's Intention to Purchase online	Market Competition	Moderating Effect 1	Product Rating
Customer Attitude						
Customer Reviews	0.709					
Customer's Intention to Purchase online	0.731	0.675				
Market Competition	0.636	0.787	0.655			
Moderating Effect 1	0.184	0.241	0.220	0.301		
Product Rating	0.842	0.808	0.803	0.701	0.222	

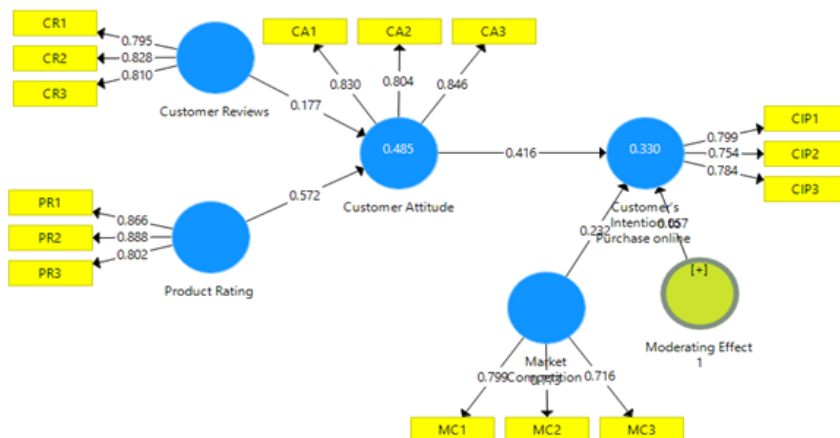
**Figure 2: Outer Loading and CFA**

Table 4.2 has the purpose to indicate Discriminant Validity that is perceived as one of the most important predictors used to assess model fit (Hair et al., 2010). Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio is the prime method to determine Discriminant Validity (Iqbal & Rao, 2023). The purpose of using Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio is to indicate the distinctiveness and uniqueness of every variable that is used in the process of research (Malik et al., 2021). According to Hair et al (2019) maximum range of values that may appear at the junction of variable is 0.85 above which no other value may substantially reflect Discriminant Validity. However, Table 4.2 is not reflecting any value that is greater than 0.842 that means the Table 4.2 is sufficient to fulfill the requirements of discriminant validity.

Table 4.3: Predictive Accuracy

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Customer Attitude	0.589	0.582
Customer's Intention to Purchase on-line	0.430	0.422

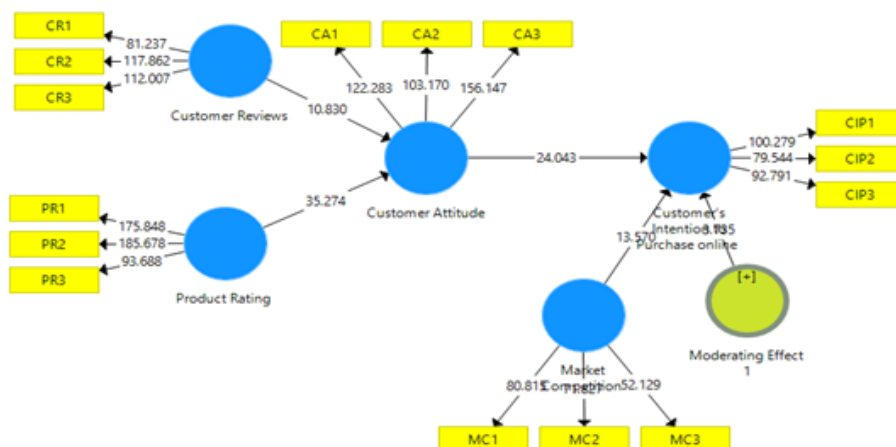
**Figure 3: Path Coefficient**

Table 4.3 is the measurement of predictive accuracy that reflect the change that may be produced by 1% change in the independent variable. This association is one of the prime parts of inferential statistical analysis (Hahn, 1973).

Hence, there is also a range of effect that may be created by 1% change in the independent variable i.e., values from 0-0.24 highlights no effect; 0.25-0.49 term minimal effect; values of 0.50-0.74 means moderate effect & 0.75 and above shows substantial effect over the dependent variable (Sansui & Hasibun., 2022). Therefore, in accordance with the Table 4.3 it is legitimate to declare that change in the independent variable is producing significance change in the dependent variables i.e., Customer Attitude (0.589) & Customer Intention to Purchase (0.430) that are average effect and near to average effect.

Table 4.4 is a reflection of path-coefficient and it is also related with inferential statistical analysis. The purpose of this analysis is to determine the relationship among the variables. Hence, the analysis must be governed by some rules or rubric etc. Therefore, this study will use the reference of Hair et al (2017) and Hair et al

(2019) to analyze the relationship who mentioned t-statistical values and p-values as the major predictor of any relationship. However, in order to assess the impact of variables over each other both of the benchmarks must be satisfied, as indicated by Silaparsetti et al (2017). Hence, in the light of the analysis it is optimal to highlight that researchers are rejecting H1O, & H2O,

Table 4.4: Path Coefficient

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/ST-DEV)	P Values
Customer Attitude -> Customer's Intention to Purchase online	0.416	0.416	0.017	24.043	0.000
Customer Reviews -> Customer Attitude	0.177	0.178	0.016	10.830	0.000
Market Competition -> Customer's Intention to Purchase online	-0.232	0.232	-0.017	13.570	0.000
Moderating Effect 1 -> Customer's Intention to Purchase online	0.057	0.056	0.015	3.735	0.000
Product Rating -> Customer Attitude	0.572	0.571	0.016	35.274	0.000

Table 4.5: Specific Indirect Effect

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/ST-DEV)	P Values
Customer Reviews -> Customer Attitude -> Customer's Intention to Purchase online	0.073	0.074	0.007	9.885	0.000
Product Rating -> Customer Attitude -> Customer's Intention to Purchase online	0.238	0.238	0.013	17.789	0.000

Table 4.5 is the extension of the path-coefficient and it is used for the assessment of mediation analysis. The matrix is termed as Specific indirect Effect and it is also a part of important matrixes and tools related with inferential statistical analysis. However, it is also a part of inferential statistical testing. Hence, it is also based upon the parameters highlighted by Hair et al (2017) and Hair et al (2019) and attainment of both the parameters is also mandatory in effective and efficient

manner as indicated by Silaparasetti et al (2017). Hence, in the light of the analysis it is optimal to highlight that researchers are rejecting H3O & H4O

Table 4.6: Total Effect

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/ST- DEV)	P Values
Customer Attitude -> Customer's Intention to Purchase online	0.416	0.416	0.017	24.043	0.000
Customer Reviews -> Customer Attitude	0.177	0.178	0.016	10.830	0.000
Customer Reviews -> Customer's Intention to Purchase online	0.073	0.074	0.007	9.885	0.000
Market Competition -> Customer's Intention to Purchase online	0.232	0.232	0.017	13.570	0.000
Moderating Effect 1 -> Customer's Intention to Purchase online	0.057	0.056	0.015	3.735	0.000
Product Rating -> Cus- tomer Attitude	0.572	0.571	0.016	35.274	0.000
Product Rating -> Customer's Intention to Purchase online	0.238	0.238	0.013	17.789	0.000

Table 4.6 is used to highlight Total Effects and the assessment of this table is also based upon the criteria given by Hair et al (2017) and Hair et al (2019). Hence, in the light of t-statistical values and p-value it is optimal to declare that all the relationships that are highlighted through the Table 4.6 found to have a positive association. Hence, in the light of values available in Table 4.6 it is optimal to reject H3O, H4O, H7O & H8O.

5. CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION & POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Discussion

The findings of this study affirm that there is a definite relationship between online product reviews and customer attitude. Hence, the findings are consistent with the indication of Fangxin (2022) and Varma (2025).

Therefore, in line with these parameters, it is optimal to highlight that online product reviews of local restaurants in Karachi are definitely important and

positively associated with customers' attitudes. Similar outcomes are traced for the relationship between online product rating of local restaurants in Karachi and customers' attitudes. Hence, it is optimal to relate the findings of this study to those of Park and Nicolau (2015) and Rachmiani et al. (2024). Hence, it can also be endorsed that higher product rating are directly associated with an increase in positive customers' attitude towards the restaurant and vice versa. Therefore, there is no doubt on the significance of product rating in shaping customer's trust and positive attitude towards the local restaurant from Karachi (Ackerman et al., 2024 & Rachminani et al., 2024). Similarly, online customer reviews also have a direct association with customers' intention to purchase (Kurniawan, 2021). Findings of the study also indicated that there may be a direct relationship between online customer reviews and customers' intention to purchase online from local restaurants in Karachi. Thus, it is legitimate to relate the findings of this study with Ananda et al (2023); Lestari and Maharani (2023); Suryawan et al (2022), and Tanuwijaya et al (2023) etc. Similarly, these points are also valid for the direct association of online product rating of local restaurants from Karachi, that found to have a direct and positive association with customers' intention to purchase. Hence, there is no issue in relating the findings of the study with Hasrul et al (2021). Findings of this study also highlighted the fact that the stronger impact of customer reviews and online product ratings is based on the indirect association (mediating impact) of customers' attitude. Hence, it is optimal to relate the findings of this study with Erkan and Elwalda (2018) and Paramita et al (2023) that online customer reviews may create a direct impact over the customer's intention to purchase, but a better relationship can be formed through the mediation of customer's attitude. The same points are also valid for online product rating and its indirect association with customer's intention to purchase. Hence, legitimate to relate the findings of this study with Purnama et al (2024) and Nabila and Abadi (2024), who emphasized upon the indirect association between online products rating and customer intention to purchase.

However, there are some studies, e.g., Sudirman (2018) that indicated no relationship between online customer reviews and customer intention to purchase. However, findings of this study are totally different in comparison to Sudirman, (2018) as there is a direct as well as indirect association between online customer reviews and customer intention to purchase from local restaurants of Karachi, Similarly, there are also some studies e.g., Hasrul et al (2021) that mentioned no association between online product rating and customer's intention to purchase. Thus findings of the study are also 360 degrees different from this point of view. Last but not least, outcomes of the study also signify that intensified (heightened) competition is negatively associated with customers' intention to purchase. Hence, the findings of this study is also connected with Mamuaya (2024), Sari and Belgiawan (2024), that there is a negative association with an increase in market competition and a decrease of customers' intention to purchase from local restaurant in Karachi. This point also signifies through associating the moderating role of an increase in market competition, which decreases the association of customer attitude and customers' intention to purchase.

5.2 Conclusion & Policy Implications:

Findings of this study revealed that online customer reviews and online product rating are significantly important for shaping customer attitude. Hence, it is better to highlight that positive online customer reviews cause positive customer attitudes that would ultimately create intention to purchase & vice versa. Hence, the outcomes of this study do not only signify the use of “Theory of Reasoned Action” & “Social Proof Theory” but also the significance testing of this study. Therefore, this study can be used by students, academicians, researchers and policy makers to conduct rigorous studies to understand the role of online sentiments and product rating on customer intention to use restaurant services. Hence, further studies may be classified with reference to ordering online, dine in or take away in a separate manner. Similarly the upcoming studies may also use other theories like Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) or S-O-R Theory to devise more emphatic research model that may clarify the effect in better manner. Lastly future studies may also conducted through adding other independent variables e.g., social media advertisements to understand the impact in detailed manner. However, this study would be the main source not only for defining research models and parameters for conducting future academic research but also for improving policies and customer reviews and product rating on social media for optimization of sales in ethical manner.

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