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How Consistency, Reviews, And Ratings Shape Seller Reputation: Customer Experience Mediation in Online Marketplaces

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Abstract

Objective – This study examines how Consistency, online reviews, and ratings influence seller reputation, with customer experience as a mediating mechanism in the Shopee marketplace.

Design/methodology/approach – A quantitative approach was employed, using questionnaire data from Shopee users, with up to 252 respondents. The proposed model was tested using PLS-SEM to evaluate direct and indirect relationships among constructs.

Findings – Consistency positively influences customer experience and seller reputation. Ratings positively affect customer experience and seller reputation and are the strongest direct drivers of reputation. Customer experience positively affects seller reputation. Online reviews positively influence seller reputation but do not significantly affect customer experience. Customer experience mediates the effects of consistency and ratings on seller reputation, whereas mediation is not supported for online reviews.

Research limitations/implications – The findings are based on cross-sectional, self-reported data from a single platform, limiting causal inference and generalizability. Future studies may incorporate longitudinal designs, objective behavioral indicators, and additional review attributes (e.g., valence and credibility).

Practical implications – Sellers should prioritize consistent service performance and maintain strong ratings to enhance reputation through improved customer experience. Platforms can strengthen review governance to support reputation formation

Originality/value – This study clarifies how marketplace signals translate into seller reputation directly and through customer experience as an explanatory pathway.

Keywords: Consistency, online reviews, ratings, customer experience, seller reputation.

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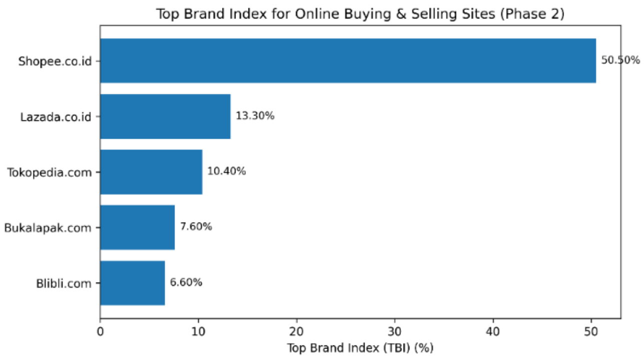
INTRODUCTION

The evolution of digital technology has led to a fundamental shift in shopping habits among Indonesians. E-commerce is one area in which transaction volume and user base have increased significantly. According to a report by Google, Temasek, and Bain & Company (2023), the Indonesian digital economy is projected to reach $82 billion by 2025, with e-commerce accounting for 60% of the economy's overall value (Hartanto et al., 2021). Digital transformation has changed the way consumers engage with products and services, including shopping engagement. In the context of Southeast Asia's growing digital economy and widespread technological adoption, Indonesia's e-commerce sector is a foundational pillar (Sharma et al., 2023). Seller reputation is a key determinant of customer trust and loyalty. Reputation is shaped not only by product quality but also by digital interactions, such as online reviews and ratings, and by the consistency of the service experience for consumers. When transactions occur without face-to-face interaction, reliability and perceptions of digital reputation become the primary benchmarks for purchasing decisions (Rachmiani et al., 2024). According to Similarweb data (2025), Shopee ranks first among e-commerce platforms in Indonesia, with approximately 127.5 million monthly visits in June 2025. In second place is Tokopedia with 57.3 million visits, followed by Blibli with around 20.7 million visits. Lazada is in fourth place with 13.5 million visits, while Bukalapak ranks fifth with around 0.572 million (571.9 thousand) visits.

The high number of visits does not necessarily correlate with transactions. According to ECDB data (2024), the add-to-cart rate in Indonesian e-commerce is approximately 8.5–9.0%, and more than 84% of shopping carts are abandoned before checkout (cart abandonment rate). This indicates that seller reputation and customer experience are key factors in converting interest into purchasing decisions. This success is inseparable from the platform's strategy for delivering a positive customer experience through interactive features such as ratings, reviews, transaction security, and responsive customer service (Wan Jusoh et al., 2022). Figure 1 shows that Shopee has the highest Top Brand Index (50.50%), well above those of other major marketplaces (6.60-13.30%). This dominance indicates greater brand salience and consumer preference, supporting the selection of Shopee as the study context to examine how marketplace signals (consistency, reviews, and ratings) shape seller reputation through customer experience. In e-commerce, a seller's reputation is a valuable resource that builds consumer trust and can influence purchase decisions. In other words, instead of evaluating a product based on a physical examination, consumers will rely on attributes such as customer ratings, service consistency, and online reviews. Service consistency contributes to reliability and fosters long-term consumer loyalty, particularly when the seller meets or exceeds customer expectations (Rizkina et al., 2025).



Source: Top Brand Award (topbrand-award.com)

Figure 1. Top Brand Index (TBI) for Online Buying & Selling Sites in Indonesia (Phase 2)

Online reviews remain a major influence on consumer decision-making, and their credibility has changed significantly due to the proliferation of fake reviews and blatantly false information (Jabr, 2022). Ratings provide information about the seller's quality, but without written reviews, readers can only see the rating itself. The aforementioned characteristics support the customer experience and highlight the relationship between the seller's actions and subsequent reputation-building in a digital environment. The research gap in this study is the conflicting findings in the existing literature on the relationships among service consistency, ratings, and seller reputation, both directly and through customer experience engagement as a mediating variable. Several previous studies have highlighted that service consistency is an important factor in shaping customer experience. Rane et al. (2023) found that consistency in service delivery can strengthen trust and create a positive experience for customers by providing a sense of security and stable expectations regarding the quality of online stores. Inuwa et al. (2022) report mixed results, indicating that consistency does not consistently have a significant impact on customer experience, especially when factors such as delivery speed and seller responsiveness are more dominant in shaping perceptions of the shopping experience. This difference indicates that the role of service consistency in customer experience remains a matter of debate and does not yield uniform results across research contexts.

Rizkina et al. (2025) state that positive reviews can shape a positive customer experience because they are considered credible electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) that is relevant to consumer needs. Jabr (2022) reported that a large number of reviews does not always improve the customer experience, due to perception bias and fake reviews, which can cause distrust. This shows that the relationship between reviews and customer experience is not always linear, but is influenced by the credibility of the source and individual perceptions of the review content. Rizkina et al. (2025) also show that high store ratings serve as a quality signal that can enhance the customer experience, as they reflect the satisfaction levels of previous users. Bigne (2023) finds that ratings do not always reflect customer experience objectively, due to rating inflation and emotional bias, which can lead to overly positive or overly negative assessments without clear justification. These illustrate that the relationship between ratings and customer experiences remains contradictory and warrants further research in digital marketplaces. Ramli et al. (2024) demonstrated that service consistency positively affects reputation, as consumers perceive it as a form of professionalism on the part of the seller. Inuwa et al. (2022) showed that not every level of service consistency leads to a good reputation unless accompanied by response speed and communication quality. In summary, the literature is not yet consistent regarding the effect of consistency on reputation across research contexts. Ningrum et al. (2024) found that positive customer reviews significantly affect reputation by conveying credibility and enhancing the positive image of online stores among potential consumers. On the contrary, Ariansyah et al. (2025) argued that reviews cannot always be seen as a gauge of credibility if they are inauthentic or motivated by promotions. In conclusion, the research findings indicate that it cannot be determined whether reviews affect reputation.

Falach & Muzakki (2025) argue that high ratings positively affect sellers' reputations by signaling the store's quality and reliability to consumers. Rizkina et al. (2025) argue that ratings are not always a reliable gauge of reputation because many customers provide ratings based on their feelings at a single point in time rather than their overall experience. The inconsistency in these results further underscores the need for additional research to examine how ratings shape sellers' reputations in marketplaces.

Wang et al. (2022) explained that customer experience significantly affects seller reputation, as positive experiences create lasting impressions of reliability and credibility. Román et al. (2023) showed that while customer experience is generally a reliable predictor of seller reputation, it does not always affect reputation when customer expectations are not met (even when the actual transaction is successful). These varied research findings indicate an empirical gap in understanding the mechanism underlying the relationship between customer experience and seller reputation on marketplace platforms. Given these contradictions and gaps, the present study seeks to bridge the research gap on the effects of service consistency, online reviews, and store ratings on seller reputation and to investigate the role of customer experience as an intervening variable among Shopee app users in Indonesia.

This study aims to analyze seller reputation on online marketplaces from the perspective of customer experience, using service consistency, consumer reviews, and store ratings as exogenous variables. This study is novel in that it was conducted in the Pantura region, which has a unique geographical segmentation that differs from that of previous studies, and it employs the ECT-EDT theoretical approach.

The urgency of this study also lies in enhancing our understanding of the mechanisms of reputation formation amid increasing competition among digital platforms. With increasing competition among sellers and the high number of visits that do not always result in transactions, the results of this study can serve as a reference for sellers to improve service consistency, enhance the quality of customer experience, and maintain the credibility of ratings and reviews in order to drive purchase conversions and build long-term loyalty.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH MODEL

Consistency in Customer Experience

In the context of e-commerce, consistency refers to a seller's steadfast commitment to providing products and services of consistent quality across all transactions. This consistency encompasses delivery time, customer service response time, and the accuracy of product information. When customers experience consistent service, their perception of the seller's reliability and trustworthiness increases (Rachmiani et al., 2024). Maintaining consistency is a core building block of enduring customer relationships. When circumstances lead to surprises or discrepancies between a customer’s order and the product received, or to delivery delays, they can lower expectations and the customer experience, even after a seller receives a high rating. Rane et al. (2023) further support the claim that consistency creates predictable experiences, fosters loyalty, and ultimately yields a long-term reputation, indicating that consistency is a significant factor in generating positive, repeatable customer experiences.

H1: Consistency will relate positively to customer experience

Online Reviews on Customer Experience

Online reviews have become the primary source of information for customers when making purchasing decisions. Reviews that report other users' experiences can shape initial perceptions of a product or service before a transaction occurs. (Rizkina et al., 2025) states that online reviews significantly influence experience because they help customers form expectations. The effectiveness of reviews is now being questioned due to the rise of fake reviews. Andayana & Pitanatri (2023) show that review credibility is declining because many reviews do not reflect real experiences. This can interfere with the formation of accurate expectations and may lead to negative experiences. Rizkina et al. (2025) emphasize that although reviews are still read, customer trust in them continues to decline. Thus, the relationship between online reviews and customer experience is contextual, depending on perceptions of their authenticity.

H2: Online reviews have a positive effect on customer experience.

Ratings and Customer Experience

Ratings are a numerical representation of customer satisfaction with a product or service. In e-commerce, ratings are an important, easily accessible signal that helps potential buyers quickly evaluate a seller's reputation (Rizkina et al., 2025). High ratings tend to generate positive initial expectations for the purchasing experience, but without supporting narratives or reviews, ratings risk misinterpretation. Bigne et al. (2023) argue that ratings alone do not fully capture the context of the experience, as two customers may give the same rating even when they had different experiences. Therefore, the effectiveness of ratings in shaping the experience depends heavily on the realization of those expectations in the purchasing process. When positive customer experiences confirm high ratings, the seller's reputation is strengthened. This shows that ratings not only reflect past assessments but also shape expectations that influence current experiences.

H3: Ratings have a positive effect on customer experience.

Customer Experience and Seller Reputation

Customer experience encompasses all interactions between customers and sellers during the online shopping process. Dimensions of experience include ease of navigation, delivery speed,

communication, and after-sales service. Positive experiences reinforce perceptions of reputation, while negative experiences can drastically damage a seller's image (Wang et al., 2022). The reputation formed from customer experience creates a sustainable cycle of trust. Therefore, experience is not merely the result of a transaction but a strategic tool that directly shapes the seller's digital reputation. Consumers who enjoy a pleasant shopping experience tend to form a positive perception of the seller's reputation. Such positive experiences arise when the products or services received meet expectations, supported by high-quality service, a seamless transaction process, and a prompt, professional response from the seller. This satisfying experience boosts consumer confidence in the seller's credibility, integrity, and competence in meeting customer needs. As this trust grows, consumers are more inclined to make repeat purchases, confident that they will enjoy the same or an even better experience in future transactions. Furthermore, consumers with positive experiences often recommend the seller to family, friends, and others through word of mouth, whether in person or via digital channels. These recommendations can strengthen the seller's reputation among prospective customers, enhance the company's image, and foster long-term customer loyalty.
H4: Customer experience positively affects seller reputation (Ningsih, 2021).

The Mediating Role of Customer Experience

Various studies show that customer experience can mediate the relationship between external factors (such as ratings, reviews, and service consistency) and seller reputation. In consumer behavior models, mediating variables explain how indirect effects occur through customer psychological mechanisms (Rachmiani et al., 2024). Katole (2022) states that customer experience is a key factor in bridging the initial perception formed by reviews or ratings with the seller's image formed at the end of the transaction. When the customer experience aligns with the expectations formed from the initial information, the reputation will strengthen. Thus, customer experience is not only a dependent variable, but also plays an important role in explaining the influence of input variables on digital reputation.

Consumers who have a positive shopping experience tend to form a favorable perception of the seller's reputation. Such experiences arise when the product or service received meets consumer expectations, supported by high-quality service, a seamless transaction process, and a prompt, professional response from the seller. These factors enhance consumer confidence in the seller's credibility, integrity, and ability to deliver quality products or services consistently.

This increased trust encourages consumers to maintain a relationship with the seller through repeat purchases, as they are confident that future transactions will be satisfying. Furthermore, consumers with positive experiences are likely to recommend the seller to family, friends, and others through word-of-mouth communication. Such recommendations serve as social proof that can influence potential customers' perceptions of the seller. Consequently, a superior shopping experience fosters a more positive reputation, thereby boosting customer loyalty and supporting the business's long-term sustainability.

H5: Customer experience mediates the influence of consistency on seller reputation.
H6: Customer experience mediates the influence of online reviews on seller reputation.
H7: Customer experience mediates the influence of ratings on seller reputation.

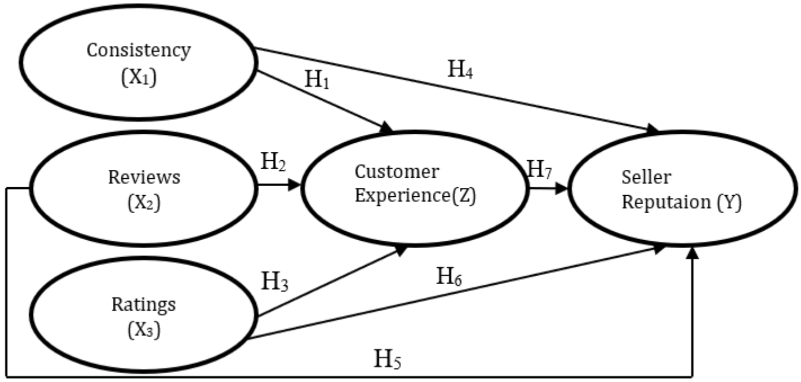
Framework

The conceptual framework in this study describes the relationship between exogenous variables (consistency, online reviews, and ratings) and endogenous variables (seller reputation), with customer experience as an intervening variable. The framework in Figure 2 explains the direct and indirect effects of the three factors on customers' perceptions of seller reputation on Shopee.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to test the proposed relationships among consistency, online reviews, ratings, customer experience, and seller reputation in an e-marketplace context. The model was estimated using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM), as it is well-suited to predictive, theory-driven models with multiple latent constructs and mediation paths.



Source: processed by researchers (2026)
Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

Population, Sampling, and Sample Size

The target population comprised Shopee users in Indonesia who had previously made a purchase on the platform. Respondents were selected via purposive nonprobability sampling to ensure sufficient exposure to key marketplace signals (reviews and ratings) and seller interactions. Eligibility criteria were: aged 18 years or older, had made at least one purchase within the last three months and had purchased more than once, and had read reviews and checked ratings prior to purchasing. The final sample consisted of 252 respondents.

Sample size adequacy was determined using an indicator-based rule of thumb (5–10 observations per indicator). The measurement model contained 36 indicators across all constructs; 252 responses were deemed sufficient for robust estimation. This sample size also exceeds common minimum requirements in PLS-SEM applications for models with a small number of predictors per endogenous construct.

Data Collection Procedure

Primary data were collected through an online survey administered using Google Forms. The survey link was shared through social media channels to reach Shopee users who met the screening criteria. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and that their responses would be used only for research. No personally identifying information was collected.

Measures and Instrument Development

All constructs were measured reflectively using multi-item scales adapted from established literature and contextualized to the Shopee shopping experience. Responses were captured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Seller consistency was represented by five indicators covering integration, coordination, consistent culture, core values, and mutual agreement. Online reviews were measured using nine indicators covering awareness, frequency, comparison, effect, perceived usefulness, source credibility, argument quality, quantity of review, and valence of online customer review.

Ratings were measured using five indicators, namely perceived trust, perceived enjoyment, information quality, rating reliability, and customer satisfaction. Customer experience was represented by nine indicators covering sense, feel, think, act, relate, product quality, service speed, information availability, and interaction with the seller. Seller reputation was measured using eight indicators covering good name, competitor reputation, being widely known, ease of recognition,

responsibility, communication, talent, and goods and services.
Consistency, online reviews, ratings, customer experience, and seller reputation in an e-marketplace context. The model was estimated using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) because it is appropriate for predictive, theory-driven models with multiple latent constructs and mediation paths.
Data were analyzed using SmartPLS (PLS-SEM) following a two-stage assessment: measurement model evaluation and structural model evaluation. Convergent validity was assessed using outer loadings (target ≥ 0.70) and average variance extracted (AVE; target ≥ 0.50). Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (targets ≥ 0.70). Discriminant validity was evaluated using both the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT), with HTMT values assessed against commonly used thresholds (e.g., < 0.85 or < 0.90 depending on construct similarity). Collinearity was examined using variance inflation factor (VIF) values (recommended < 5 and ideally < 3). The model's explanatory power was assessed using R^2 for endogenous constructs, and the significance of direct and indirect (mediated) effects was tested via bootstrapping. Hypotheses were evaluated using path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values (α =0.05). Mediation was assessed through specific indirect effects (bootstrapping-based).

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Sample Profile

A total of 252 valid responses were analyzed. Respondents were predominantly female (166; 65.87%) and aged 18–28 years (196; 77.78%). Most respondents lived in Kudus (106; 42.06%), followed by Jepara (66; 26.19%) and Pati (33; 13.10%). Regarding monthly income, the largest segments reported IDR 3,000,000–4,000,000 (69; 27.38%) and IDR 2,000,000–3,000,000 (64; 25.40%), followed by IDR 4,000,000–5,000,000 (48; 19.05%). The analysis then evaluated the measurement model and tested the hypotheses using PLS-SEM.

Evaluation of the Measurement Model (Outer Model)

Outer Loading

The measurement model was evaluated using outer loadings, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. To keep the results concise, outer loadings are reported in narrative form rather than as a table. All retained indicators exhibit strong outer loadings, ranging from 0.807 (PPG9) to 0.907 (KON1), confirming that every indicator adequately represents its intended construct and that convergent validity from the outer-loading criterion is fulfilled for all constructs.

Reliability and Convergent Validity (Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and AVE)

After the outer loading was completed, the evaluation continued with internal reliability (Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability) and convergent validity (AVE). The calculation results are presented in Table 1:

Table 1.
CONSTRUCT VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Construct	*Cronbach's Alpha*	*rho_A*	*Composite Reliability*	*AVE*
Consistency	0.933	0.933	0.949	0.788
Customer Experience	0.940	0.940	0.951	0.734
Rating	0.815	0.815	0.890	0.730
Seller Reputation	0.905	0.906	0.929	0.725
Review	0.961	0.963	0.966	0.760

Source: Primary data processed by researchers with SEM-PLS V.3, 2026

Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values for all constructs are above the feasibility threshold, indicating that the indicators within each construct show good internal consistency. In addition, the AVE values for all constructs are above 0.50, indicating that the constructs adequately explain the variance in their indicators. Thus, convergent validity in the final model is fulfilled not only in terms of outer loading, but also in terms of AVE.

Discriminant Validity (Fornell–Larcker and HTMT)
Discriminant validity is necessary to ensure that a construct is truly different from other constructs. Testing was conducted using the Fornell–Larcker and HTMT methods.

Fornell–Larcker Criterion
The Fornell–Larcker results are presented in Table 2:

Table 2.
FORNELL-LARCKER CRITERION

Construct	Consistency	Customer Experience	Rank	Seller Reputation	Review
Consistency	0.888				
Customer Experience	0.779	0.857			
Rating	0.539	0.627	0.854		
Seller Reputation	0.622	0.691	0.737	0.851	
Review	0.008	0.205	0.521	0.377	0.872

Source: Primary data processed by researchers with SEM-PLS V.3, 2026

The diagonal values (AVE roots) for each construct appear to be greater than the correlation values with other constructs in the same row/column. This indicates that each construct is sufficiently distinct and not intercorrelated with other constructs, thus fulfilling the Fornell–Larcker discriminant validity criterion.

HTMT (Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio)
As reinforcement, the HTMT results are presented in Table 3:

Table 3.
HETEROTRAIT–MONOTRAIT RATIO

Construct	Consistency	Customer Experience	Rank	Seller Reputation	Review
Consistency					
Customer Experience	0.832				
Rating	0.618	0.716			
Seller Reputation	0.675	0.748	0.857		
Review	0.047	0.213	0.588	0.402	

Source: Primary data processed by researchers with SEM-PLS V.3, 2026

All HTMT values are below 0.90. The highest value is for the relationship between Rating and Seller Reputation (0.857), which is still within acceptable limits. Thus, the discriminant validity of the final model is also supported by the HTMT criteria.

Multicollinearity Test (VIF)
Based on the multicollinearity test results, all indicators exhibit Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values below the critical threshold of 5.00. The VIF values range from 1.690 to 4.145, with the highest value

observed for indicator (ULN9) at 4.145. These results indicate the absence of excessive linear relationships (multicollinearity) among the indicators measuring the same construct. Consequently, each indicator contributes unique information without introducing redundancy that could compromise the stability of the estimation model. Therefore, it can be concluded that the measurement model satisfies the requirement of freedom from multicollinearity, making it suitable for proceeding to the structural model (inner model) analysis stage.

Inner VIF Values
The inner VIF results are presented in Table 4:

Table 4.
INNER VIF VALUES

Predictor	VIF -> Customer Experience	VIF -> Seller Reputation
Consistency	1.647	2,929
Rating	2,260	2,432
Review	1,603	1,621
Customer Experience		3,036

Source: Primary data processed by researchers with SEM-PLS V.3, 2026

The inner VIF values are also within a safe range. The highest value is 3.036 (Customer Experience → Seller Reputation), so the structural model does not show any multicollinearity issues that could weaken the interpretation of the relationships between constructs.

Evaluation of Structural Models and Hypothesis Testing (Inner Model)
Once the measurement model (outer model) meets the validity and reliability criteria, the analysis proceeds to the structural model (inner model). The focus of this stage is to ensure that the model is free of collinearity problems, assess the model's ability to explain endogenous variables using the coefficient of determination, review the contribution of each predictor using effect measures, and test the significance of the relationship between variables using a bootstrapping procedure. Hypothesis decisions in this study are based on a significance level of 5% (p-value ≤ 0.05).

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)
The coefficient of determination is used to assess the proportion of the variance in the endogenous variables explained by the predictors. They are presented in Table 5:

Table 5.
COEFFICIENT OF DETERMINATION (R^2)

Endogenous Variables	*R*	*Adjusted R^2*
Customer Experience	0.671	0.667
Seller Reputation	0.645	0.640

Source: Primary data processed by researchers with SEM-PLS V.3, 2026

An R^2 value of 0.671 indicates that Customer Experience can be strongly explained by Consistency, Rating, and Reviews. Meanwhile, an R^2 of 0.645 indicates that Seller Reputation also has a strong explanatory power through Consistency, Rating, Reviews, and Customer Experience. In other words, the model structure substantially explains the variation in respondents' assessments in this study.

Effect Size (f^2)
The effect size f^2 is needed to read "how much" each exogenous variable contributes when explaining the endogenous variable. It is presented in Table 6:

Table 6.
EFFECT SIZE (f^2)

Predictor	f^2 → Customer Experience	f^2 → Seller Reputation
Consistency	0.779	0.038
Rank	0.076	0.198
Review	0.011	0.020
Customer Experience	–	0.060

Source: Primary data processed by researchers with SEM-PLS V.3, 2026

In the formation of Customer Experience, the largest contribution comes from Consistency (f^2 = 0.779), making this factor the dominant determinant of experience. In the formation of Seller Reputation, the largest contribution comes from Rating (f^2 = 0.198), while the contributions of Customer Experience and Consistency are small to medium. Reviews have a small effect size, but still show a role in reputation.

Model Fit

Model fit is used to assess the model's overall suitability. The indices commonly reported in PLS-SEM are SRMR and NFI. They are presented in Table 7:

Table 7.
MODEL FIT (FIT SUMMARY)

Index	*Saturated Model*	*Estimated Model*
SRMR	0.042	0.042
d_ULS	0.754	0.754
d_G	0.502	0.502
Chi-Square	712.796	712.796
NFI	0.896	0.896

Source: Primary data processed by researchers with SEM-PLS V.3, 2026

Hypothesis Testing (Bootstrapping)

Hypothesis testing is conducted based on path coefficients (β), t-statistics, and p-values. The relationship is considered significant if the p-value ≤ 0.05. The following Table 8 is presented:

Table 8.
PATH COEFFICIENT (BOOTSTRAPPING)

Path	Coefficient (O)	*Sample Mean (M)*	*STDEV*	*t-statistics*	*p-value*
Consistency → Customer Experience	0.650	0.650	0.045	14.348	<0.001
Consistency → Seller Reputation	0.200	0.197	0.054	3.728	<0.001
Customer Experience → Seller Reputation	0.254	0.254	0.060	4.239	<0.001
Rank → Customer Experience	0.238	0.239	0.052	4.531	<0.001

Path	Coefficient (O)	*Sample Mean (M)*	*STDEV*	*t-statistics*	*p-value*
Rank → Seller Reputation	0.413	0.418	0.064	6.492	<0.001
Review → Customer Experience	0.076	0.075	0.043	1.778	0.076
Reviews → Seller Reputation	0.109	0.107	0.046	2.343	0.020

Source: Primary data processed by researchers with SEM-PLS V.3, 2026

Almost all paths show a positive and significant effect, except for Reviews → Customer Experience, which is not significant at $\alpha = 0.05$ ($p = 0.076$). This means that reviews are not sufficiently strong to directly shape the experience, whereas other relationships have been shown to contribute significantly, consistent with the signs of the coefficients.

H1 is accepted. Consistency has a positive and highly significant effect on customer experience ($\beta = 0.650$). This means that the stability of service quality/accuracy in fulfilling the seller's promises is the main driver of customer experience.

H2 is rejected. Reviews do not have a significant effect on customer experience ($\beta = 0.076$; $p = 0.076$). This finding suggests that aspects of the transaction itself shape the experience more strongly than merely reviewing information.

H3 is accepted. Ratings have a positive and significant effect on customer experience ($\beta = 0.238$). Ratings serve as signals of quality that influence customer expectations and perceptions.

H4 is accepted. Consistency has a positive and significant effect on seller reputation ($\beta = 0.200$). Reputation is formed through consistent service patterns, thereby increasing the perception of seller reliability.

H5 is accepted. Reviews have a positive and significant effect on seller reputation ($\beta = 0.109$). Reviews appear to function more as reputation perception formers (social signals), although the magnitude of the effect is relatively small.

H6 is accepted. Ratings have a positive and highly significant effect on seller reputation ($\beta = 0.413$). This is the strongest path to reputation, so that the seller's reputation is largely "read" through directly visible numerical indicators.

H7 is accepted. Customer experience has a positive and significant effect on seller reputation ($\beta = 0.254$). The better the experience, the stronger the seller's reputation in customers' minds.

Table 9.
SPECIFIC INDIRECT EFFECTS (MEDIATION)

Indirect Path	Indirect Effect (β)	Mediation Type	Decision
Consistency → Customer Experience → Seller Reputation	0.165	Partial mediation	Supported
Rating → Customer Experience → Seller Reputation	0.060	Partial mediation	Supported
Review → Customer Experience → Seller Reputation	0.019	No mediation	Not supported

Source: Primary data processed by researchers with SEM-PLS V.3, 2026

The mediation results indicate that Customer Experience partially mediates the effects of Consistency and Ratings on Seller Reputation. Because the direct effects from Consistency and

Ratings to Seller Reputation are also significant, the mediating role of Customer Experience is partial. Conversely, the indirect pathway from Online Reviews to Seller Reputation via Customer Experience is not supported, indicating that reviews primarily shape reputation through direct informational and social influence rather than by improving the transaction experience.

DISCUSSION

The Effect of Consistency on Customer Experience

The findings demonstrate that consistency has a positive and significant effect on customer experience, indicating that consumers perceive a more favorable shopping experience when sellers maintain stable service performance throughout the transaction process. Consistency in providing accurate product information, processing orders systematically, responding promptly to customer inquiries, and handling complaints using standardized procedures reduces uncertainty and creates a predictable purchasing environment. In online marketplaces, where consumers cannot directly evaluate sellers before making a purchase, predictable service becomes an important factor in fostering confidence and enhancing the overall shopping experience. Thus, customer experience is shaped not only by the final transaction outcome but also by the continuity and reliability of interactions across multiple service encounters.

This finding is consistent with Signaling Theory, which argues that consumers rely on observable signals to evaluate seller quality under conditions of information asymmetry. Consistent service represents a credible signal because maintaining stable performance over time requires genuine operational capability rather than temporary promotional efforts. Consumers interpret consistency as evidence of seller reliability and professionalism. Furthermore, Expectation Confirmation Theory–Expectation Disconfirmation Theory (ECT–EDT) explains that customer experience becomes more positive when service performance consistently confirms consumers' initial expectations throughout the purchasing process (Oliver & Sharpe, 2015). Stable service therefore minimizes expectation disconfirmation and strengthens positive evaluations of the shopping experience.

The present findings support those of Keni & Sandra (2021), who identified service reliability as an important determinant of customer experience and customer loyalty, Gao & Fan (2021) who emphasized the importance of consistency across customer touchpoints in creating positive service experiences. However, this study extends previous research by demonstrating that, within digital marketplace environments, consistency functions not only as a dimension of service quality but also as a mechanism for reducing perceived transaction risk. This finding suggests that consumers place greater value on sellers who consistently deliver dependable service than on those who merely provide attractive promotions or competitive prices. From a practical perspective, marketplace sellers should prioritize maintaining standardized operating procedures across all stages of customer interaction, including product information, communication, order fulfilment, delivery coordination, and complaint resolution. Sustained consistency in these activities strengthens customer experience, increases consumer confidence, and contributes to the development of long-term customer relationships.

The Influence of Online Reviews on Customer Experience

The findings indicate that online reviews do not have a significant effect on customer experience. This suggests that although consumers frequently consult online reviews before making purchasing decisions, their subsequent evaluation of the shopping experience is primarily determined by the actual service they receive during the transaction. In marketplace settings, customer experience is shaped more directly by factors such as product conformity, communication quality, delivery accuracy, responsiveness, and the effectiveness of complaint resolution than by opinions shared by previous buyers. Consequently, online reviews function mainly as an initial information source that assists consumers during the pre-purchase stage but become less influential once consumers have accumulated their own transactional experiences.

This finding can be interpreted through Signaling Theory, which argues that the effectiveness of a signal depends on its credibility and consistency. Online reviews often represent heterogeneous signals because consumers differ in their expectations, purchasing situations, product usage, and evaluation criteria. As a result, reviews may contain considerable informational noise, making it difficult for prospective buyers to determine whether the shared experiences are relevant to their own purchasing context. Furthermore, Expectation Confirmation Theory–Expectation Disconfirmation Theory (ECT–EDT) explains that customer experience is formed after consumers compare their expectations with actual service performance (Oliver & Sharpe, 2015). Once consumers directly experience the transaction process, the influence of external information, including online reviews, diminishes because actual performance becomes the primary basis for evaluating the shopping experience.

The rejection of H2 may also reflect recent developments in digital marketplace environments. Consumers are increasingly exposed to a large volume of online reviews, creating information overload that reduces their ability to process review content effectively. In addition, concerns regarding fake reviews, paid endorsements, and overly polarized opinions may reduce the perceived credibility of online reviews (Jabr, 2022). Rather than relying heavily on textual reviews, consumers increasingly evaluate sellers using multiple marketplace signals, including seller ratings, response speed, transaction history, and platform protection mechanisms. These complementary information cues may weaken the direct influence of online reviews on customer experience. Although this finding differs from studies that reported a positive relationship between online reviews and customer evaluations, it provides an important theoretical contribution by suggesting that online reviews play a stronger role in shaping pre-purchase perceptions than post-purchase customer experiences. While reviews remain influential in reducing uncertainty before a transaction, actual service performance ultimately determines how consumers evaluate their shopping experience. This distinction extends the application of Signaling Theory and ECT–EDT by demonstrating that the effectiveness of marketplace signals varies across different stages of the customer journey.

From a practical perspective, marketplace sellers should not focus solely on increasing the number of positive reviews as a strategy to improve customer experience. Instead, they should prioritize delivering consistent service quality, accurate product information, timely delivery, and responsive complaint handling because these operational factors have a more direct influence on consumers' post-purchase evaluations. Marketplace platforms should also continue strengthening review verification mechanisms to enhance review credibility and reduce the negative effects of misleading or manipulated reviews.

The Influence of Ratings on Customer Experience

The findings demonstrate that ratings have a positive and significant effect on customer experience, indicating that consumers rely on seller ratings as an important cue when forming their initial expectations before making a purchase. In online marketplace environments, where direct interaction with sellers is limited, ratings provide a simple and easily interpretable summary of previous customers' evaluations. High ratings increase consumers' confidence by reducing uncertainty and perceived transaction risk, allowing them to enter the purchasing process with more positive expectations. When the actual transaction confirms these expectations through accurate product descriptions, responsive communication, and reliable service, consumers evaluate their overall shopping experience more favorably.

This finding is consistent with Signaling Theory, which suggests that consumers depend on observable and credible signals to assess seller quality under conditions of information asymmetry. Compared with textual reviews, ratings require less cognitive effort to process and therefore function as efficient heuristic signals that facilitate purchase decisions. In addition, Expectation Confirmation Theory–Expectation Disconfirmation Theory (ECT–EDT) explains that positive ratings establish favorable expectations before the transaction, while customer experience is determined by whether these expectations are confirmed through actual service performance (Oliver & Sharpe, 2015). Consequently, ratings influence customer experience not only by shaping initial confidence but also by providing a benchmark against which consumers evaluate the quality of the service they receive.

The present findings support Ningrum et al. (2024), who demonstrated that ratings contribute to the development of consumer trust in marketplace transactions, and are also consistent with Bigne et al. (2023), who highlighted the relationship between ratings and service experience. However, this study extends previous research by showing that ratings continue to exert a significant influence on customer experience even though discrepancies may exist between numerical ratings and the sentiments expressed in textual reviews. This suggests that consumers tend to use ratings as an efficient summary indicator of seller credibility, while relying on their own transaction experiences to validate those initial perceptions. From a practical perspective, marketplace sellers should recognize that maintaining high ratings requires consistent service quality rather than short-term efforts to improve evaluation scores. Delivering accurate product information, responding promptly to customer inquiries, and ensuring timely order fulfillment are essential for sustaining ratings that accurately reflect service performance. Marketplace platforms should also continue improving the transparency and reliability of their rating systems so that ratings remain credible signals capable of supporting informed consumer decision-making.

The Influence of Consistency on Seller Reputation

The findings indicate that consistency has a positive and significant effect on seller reputation, suggesting that consumers develop favorable reputational judgments when sellers consistently deliver reliable service over time. In online marketplaces, reputation is not established through a single successful transaction but rather through the accumulation of consistent service experiences across multiple interactions. Sellers who continuously provide accurate product information, respond promptly to customer inquiries, fulfill orders as promised, and resolve complaints fairly are perceived as more dependable and professional. Consequently, consistency enhances consumers' confidence that the seller will maintain similar performance in future transactions, thereby strengthening seller reputation. This finding can be explained through Signaling Theory, which posits that consistent service performance serves as a credible signal of seller capability under conditions of information asymmetry. Unlike temporary promotional activities or isolated positive experiences, consistency reflects the seller's ability to maintain operational standards over time, making it difficult for competitors to imitate without genuine organizational competence. As consumers repeatedly observe stable service quality, they interpret consistency as evidence of trustworthiness and reliability, which gradually accumulates into a positive seller reputation. From this perspective, reputation is not formed solely by individual transaction outcomes but also by consumers' perceptions of the seller's long-term behavioral consistency.

The present findings support those of Ramli et al. (2024), who identified service quality as an important determinant of consumer trust and seller evaluation in e-commerce platforms, and Keni et al. (2021), who emphasized the close relationship between reputation and customer loyalty. However, this study extends previous research by demonstrating that consistency functions not merely as a dimension of service quality but also as a strategic mechanism for building seller reputation in digital marketplace environments. The findings suggest that consumers evaluate reputation based on the seller's ability to maintain stable performance across repeated transactions rather than on isolated service encounters alone. From a practical perspective, marketplace sellers should focus on maintaining standardized service processes to ensure consistency across every stage of the customer journey. Establishing clear operating procedures for product information, communication, order fulfillment, and complaint handling can strengthen seller reputation by reinforcing consumers' perceptions of reliability and professionalism. For marketplace platforms, encouraging consistent seller performance through service standards and performance monitoring may contribute to a more trustworthy marketplace ecosystem.

The Effect of Online Reviews on Seller Reputation

The findings demonstrate that online reviews have a positive and significant effect on seller reputation, indicating that consumers rely on the experiences shared by previous buyers when evaluating the credibility and reliability of sellers. Unlike customer experience, which is primarily formed through direct interactions during the transaction process, seller reputation is largely constructed from publicly available information that can be accessed before a purchase is made. Consequently, online reviews function as a collective source of social information that helps potential buyers assess whether a seller is trustworthy, responsive, and capable of delivering satisfactory service. Positive reviews therefore contribute to a favorable public image, while negative reviews may substantially weaken consumers' perceptions of seller credibility. This finding can be explained through Signaling Theory, which suggests that online reviews serve as observable market signals that reduce information asymmetry between buyers and sellers. In digital marketplaces, where consumers have limited opportunities to evaluate sellers directly, reviews provide valuable information generated by previous customers. Unlike promotional messages created by sellers, reviews are generally perceived as more independent and therefore more credible indicators of seller performance. The accumulation of positive reviews strengthens consumers' confidence because it signals that many previous transactions have resulted in satisfactory outcomes. Consequently, online reviews contribute more strongly to the formation of seller reputation than to post-purchase customer experience.

The findings support Pratiwi et al. (2023), who identified online reviews as an important determinant of consumer perceptions and purchase decisions, and are consistent with Ahn and Lee (2024), who emphasized the influence of social interaction and group similarity in online shopping environments. However, this study extends previous research by distinguishing the different roles of online reviews across stages of the customer journey. While the results indicate that online reviews do not directly influence customer experience, they significantly shape seller reputation because reputation is formed through collective social evaluations rather than individual transactional experiences. This distinction suggests that the effectiveness of online reviews depends on the context in which consumers use the information. From a practical perspective, sellers should actively encourage satisfied customers to provide authentic reviews, as these reviews strengthen seller reputation and improve the confidence of prospective buyers. At the same time, marketplace platforms should enhance review verification mechanisms to ensure the credibility and transparency of review systems. Strengthening the authenticity of online reviews not only improves the quality of information available to consumers but also contributes to building a more trustworthy digital marketplace ecosystem.

The Influence of Ratings on Seller Reputation

The findings indicate that ratings have a positive and significant effect on seller reputation, suggesting that consumers use seller ratings as one of the primary indicators when evaluating seller credibility in online marketplaces. In digital commerce, where consumers have limited opportunities to directly assess sellers before making a purchase, ratings provide a concise summary of previous customers' evaluations. High ratings reduce perceived transaction risk and strengthen consumers' confidence that the seller is capable of delivering satisfactory products and services. Consequently, consumers tend to associate consistently high ratings with greater seller reliability, professionalism, and trustworthiness, all of which contribute to a stronger seller reputation. This finding is consistent with Signaling Theory, which argues that consumers rely on credible and easily observable signals when making decisions under conditions of information asymmetry. Compared with detailed textual reviews, numerical ratings function as efficient heuristic cues because they summarize collective customer evaluations into a simple and easily interpreted measure. As a result, ratings reduce the cognitive effort required to evaluate seller quality while simultaneously increasing consumers' confidence in their purchasing decisions. The stronger the rating signal, the more favorable the seller's reputation is likely to become because consumers perceive the ratings as evidence of consistent service performance.

The findings support those of Hariyanto & Trisunarno (2021), who demonstrated that ratings contribute to building consumer trust in Shopee online stores, and Ningrum et al. (2024), who highlighted the positive relationship between ratings and trust in marketplace environments. However, this study extends previous research by demonstrating that ratings influence not only consumers' initial purchase confidence but also the broader formation of seller reputation. This finding suggests that ratings function as a strategic reputation signal that shapes consumers' perceptions even before they engage in direct transactions. In this regard, ratings serve a dual role: they reduce uncertainty during purchase decisions while simultaneously strengthening the long-term reputation of sellers within the marketplace ecosystem. From a practical perspective, sellers should recognize that maintaining high ratings requires continuous improvements in service quality rather than short-term efforts to obtain favorable evaluations. Consistent product quality, timely delivery, responsive communication, and effective complaint handling are essential for sustaining high ratings that accurately reflect seller performance. Marketplace platforms should also maintain transparent and reliable rating systems, as credible ratings play an important role in helping consumers make informed decisions while encouraging healthy competition among sellers.

The Influence of Customer Experience on Seller Reputation

The findings indicate that customer experience has a positive and significant effect on seller reputation, suggesting that consumers develop favorable reputational evaluations after experiencing satisfactory interactions with sellers. In online marketplaces, reputation is not formed solely by pre-purchase information but is continuously reinforced through consumers' actual experiences during and after the transaction. When consumers receive accurate product information, experience smooth order processing, timely delivery, responsive communication, and fair complaint resolution, they are more likely to perceive sellers as reliable and trustworthy. These positive experiences encourage consumers to share favorable evaluations, provide positive ratings and reviews, and recommend sellers to other potential buyers, thereby strengthening seller reputation over time. This finding is well explained by Expectation Confirmation Theory–Expectation Disconfirmation Theory (ECT–EDT), which proposes that customer evaluations are determined by the extent to which actual service performance confirms or exceeds prior expectations (Oliver & Sharpe, 2015). When expectations are confirmed, consumers develop positive emotional and cognitive evaluations that extend beyond satisfaction and become lasting perceptions of seller credibility. In addition, the concept of reputation proposed by Fombrun (2018) suggests that reputation is a cumulative social judgment formed through repeated positive experiences. Therefore, customer experience serves as the mechanism through which operational performance is translated into a favorable seller reputation.

The present findings support those of Prasidya & Dewi (2023), who identified customer experience as an important determinant of consumer trust and behavioral intentions in e-commerce platforms, and Sulivyo (2021), who emphasized the role of experience in creating customer satisfaction and perceived value. However, this study extends previous research by demonstrating that customer experience functions as the critical link between operational service quality and seller reputation in marketplace environments. The findings indicate that reputation is not established solely through external signals such as ratings or online reviews but is ultimately strengthened when consumers' direct experiences confirm the positive expectations created before the transaction. This highlights the complementary roles of marketplace signals and actual service performance in shaping seller reputation. From a practical perspective, marketplace sellers should recognize that reputation cannot be sustained solely through promotional activities or favorable ratings. Instead, long-term reputation depends on consistently delivering positive customer experiences through reliable service, effective communication, timely fulfillment, and responsive problem resolution. Marketplace platforms should therefore encourage service quality improvements alongside reputation mechanisms, ensuring that reputation reflects consumers' authentic transaction experiences rather than merely numerical evaluations.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that seller reputation in the Shopee marketplace is shaped through both direct marketplace signals and an experience-based pathway: seller consistency and ratings strengthen customer experience and, in turn, reinforce seller reputation, while ratings also remain the most influential cue for reputation formation; online reviews contribute to seller reputation mainly through a direct reputational channel rather than by improving customer experience. These findings imply that reputation management should prioritize consistent service performance and the maintenance of strong, credible ratings, supported by platform governance that enhances the reliability of feedback features. Future research should broaden generalizability and causal explanation by using longitudinal or objective behavioral data and by examining review characteristics such as credibility and valence.

This study aims to analyze seller reputation in online marketplaces through the lens of customer experience, utilizing service consistency, consumer reviews, and store ratings as exogenous variables. The study presents opportunities for further development, particularly given the currently low coefficient of determination. Future research is encouraged to incorporate additional variables related to customer experience and seller reputation. Variables worth considering include fair complaint resolution and service responsiveness. By including these variables, future studies are expected to explain better the factors influencing customer experience and seller reputation.

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