



THE ROLE OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN MEDIATING DISCOUNTS AND SERVICE QUALITY ON CUSTOMER INTENTIONS FOR WORD OF MOUTH: STUDY ON ENGLISH COURSE CUSTOMERS DISCOVERY ENGLISH JOGJA

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine: (1) the effect of discounts on customer intention for word of mouth, (2) the effect of service quality on customer intention for word of mouth, (3) the effect of customer satisfaction on customer intention for word of mouth, (4) customer satisfaction mediates the effect of discounts on customer intention for word of mouth, (5) customer satisfaction mediates the effect of discounts on customer intention for word of mouth. The sample used was 100 respondents using purposive sampling technique. Data analysis using SEM PLS with SmartPLS 3 software. The results show that: (1) discounts have a significant effect on customer intention for word of mouth, (2) service quality has a significant effect on customer intention for word of mouth, (3) customer satisfaction has a significant effect on customer intention for word of mouth, (4) customer satisfaction partially mediates the effect of discounts on customer intention for word of mouth, and (5) customer satisfaction partially mediates the effect of service quality on customer intention for word of mouth.

Keywords: discount; service quality; customer satisfaction; word of mouth

1. Introduction

Service companies are companies that provide services to meet customer needs in terms of intangible goods or so-called services. Currently, there are more and more service businesses and various types so that marketers must be able to market their products to reach customers. The services offered vary in various fields, including transportation, care, health, finance, and education.

Based on Central Statistics Agency (BPS) data in the 2016 Economic Census, the number of service companies in the education sector reached 619,947 businesses all over Indonesia country, equivalent to 2.32% of the total number of businesses in Indonesia. Among them are schools, universities, and courses, also training institutions. Data from Tirto.Id (April 2017) shows that English language courses are the second largest courses and training institutions after computers, with 4,728 institutions. This shows that people have an awareness to develop their abilities and skills, especially in the current era where soft skills such as English Language are needed.

This opportunity is utilized by business people in providing English course training. Currently, many English course institutions have sprung up, where business people compete to provide these services. In Yogyakarta itself, the existence of English courses is experiencing a rapid development. There are approximately 30 institutions that provide English course services, including IONs, English First, English Made Easy (EME), Arvard Institute, and

Discovery English. The number of competitors in this area forces marketers to improve strategies to service quality in running their business.

There are five factors that can affect customer satisfaction, such as product quality, service quality, emotional, price and cost (Lupiyadi, 2001). Service quality in accordance with customer desires can foster satisfaction in the minds of customers (Fernandes & Solimun, 2018). Price triggers customer satisfaction so that marketers must be able to create a pricing strategy. According to Ardiansyah and Nurdin (2018), discounts can be a strategy to attract consumer buying interest in the products they offer through price discounts.

The theory put forward by Tjiptono (2006), states that product quality has a major contribution to customer satisfaction so that customers have the intention to recommend and provide testimonials to their relatives. The activity of recommending and giving testimonials to others is called **Word of Mouth**.

According to Sumardi (Abdillah and Harono, 2015), Word of Mouth is a marketing activity that triggers consumers to talk, promote, recommend and sell a product brand to other potential consumers. Information through word of mouth is considered more credible and real without any promotional elements from the company concerned (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011: 206). According to Solomon 1996 (Daryantono, 2021) customer satisfaction is a factor that will encourage positive word of mouth communication.

Marketers must make improvements in their operations and marketing to generate satisfaction so that customers have the intention to do word of mouth for a product.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Discount

Discounts are price reduction given by sellers to buyers as a reward for purchases that are pleasing to the seller (Tjiptono, 2018). According to Kotler and Armstrong (2008) discounts are price reductions on a purchase within a certain period. There are four types of discounts (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008), namely: (1) cash discounts; (2) quantity discounts, (3) functional or trade discounts, and (4) seasonal discounts. The purpose of discounts is classified into three (Tjiptono, 2018: 167), namely:

- a. Encourage large purchases; if the buyer wants to make large-scale purchases, the manufacturer or seller will provide a discount.
- b. Encourage buyers not to make long-term credit. With a discount, buyers are expected to be interested in making purchases by making payments in a short time to avoid accounts receivable for the company.
- c. Retaining customers; discounts can provide special value to consumers so that they are reluctant to move to other sellers.

2.2 Service Quality

Kotler and Keller (2016) define service quality as all the characteristics and properties of a product or service that affect the ability to satisfy needs. Meanwhile, according to Goetsch and Davis (Tjiptono, 2008) service quality is a condition related to products, services, people, processes, and the environment that meet and even exceed consumer expectations.

Tjiptono (2016) states five indicators of service quality including tangible, empathy, responsiveness, reliability, and assurance.

2.3 Customer Satisfaction

Daryanto (2021) states that customer satisfaction is an emotional assessment of the customer after using a product when expectations and needs are met. Customer satisfaction is an achievement that has the potential to lead to long-term and short-term sales growth and market share. Peter & Olson (2010) define customer satisfaction as a comparison of

performance expectations when not buying and perceptions after buying. Customer assessment of product performance is determined by many factors such as consumer loyalty to the brand and word of mouth.

There are 5 main drivers of customer satisfaction (Daryanto, 2021), that is (1) product/service quality, (2) price, (3) service quality, (4) emotional factors, and (5) cost and convenience. In addition, Tjiptono (2016: 101) states the indicators used to measure customer satisfaction, namely:

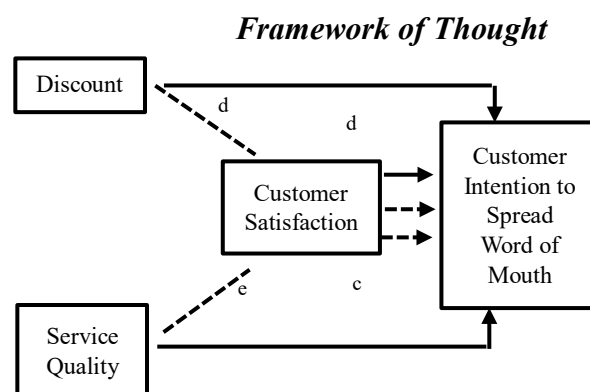
- a. Conformity to expectations, where the level of product capability in meeting consumer expectations.
- b. Performance is the level of product ability to perform functions well.
- c. Comparison is the degree of difference or similarity of product performance with other companies.
- d. Confirmation is the ability of a product to realize its performance as promised.
- e. Interest in revisiting, is the willingness of customers to reuse the products/services offered by the company.
- f. Willingness to recommend is the willingness of customers to offer and tell the experience of using the products / services that have been used to their relatives.

2.4 Word of Mouth

Sumardi in Abdilah, et. al. (2015) argue that word of mouth is a marketing activity that can influence customers to talk about, promote, and recommend to other potential customers based on experience. besides that Kotler and Armstrong (2016) argue that word of mouth is the delivery of a person to friends, family, or other customers and recommends products because they have used or bought them.

Sernovitz (2009) states that there are four basic dimensions of word of mouth known as 4T, namely talkers, topics, talking parts, and tracking. Ronny and Sunandar: 2007 (Rahyu & Ruhamak, 2016) argue that word of mouth can be measured by: The willingness of customers to talk about positive things about the company including the quality of services provided, the ease of reach and the price provided by the company.

- a. Recommendations to others regarding the services provided by the company.
- b. Encouragement of friends or acquaintances to make purchases of products provided by the company.



2.5 Hypothesis

Based on the background and problem formulation that has been explained, the hypothesis of this study is:

- a. H1: Discounts affect customer intentions for word of mouth.
- b. H2: Service quality affects customer intentions for word of mouth.
- c. H3: Customer satisfaction affects customer intentions for word of mouth.
- d. H4: Customer satisfaction mediates the effect of discounts on customer intentions for word of

- mouth.
- e. H5: Customer satisfaction mediates the effect of service quality on customer intentions for word of mouth.

3. Research Methods

3.1 Type of Research

This research will use a quantitative approach with a survey research type, where researchers will distribute a number of questions arranged in the form of a questionnaire. The survey research used is explanatory research which aims to examine the causality between variables that explain a certain phenomenon (Zulganef, 2018).

3.2 Population and Sample

The population in this study is approximately 1,000 people who are students or customers who have had courses at the Discovery English Jogja English course institution from 2021 to 2023 (the last 2 years).

The sample in the study were students or customers at the Discovery English Jogja English Course as many as 100 people who had or were doing the course program.

3.3 Sampling Technique

This study uses a non-probability sampling technique which is a sampling technique where each member in the population does not have the same opportunity to be sampled (Suliyanto, 2018).

The techniques used in non-probability sampling are purposive sampling and accidental sampling. Purposive sampling is a data source selection technique based on certain considerations with the respondent's criteria, namely students or customers of Discovery English Jogja who have had a course program. While accidental sampling is a sampling method by taking respondents who happen to be or are coming for courses at Discovery English Jogja.

3.4 Research Variables

- a. Independent Variables. In this study, the independent variables are Discounts and Service Quality.
- b. Dependent Variable. The dependent variable in this study is customer intention for Word of Mouth.
- c. Intervening Variable. In this study, the mediating variable is Customer Satisfaction.

3.5 Data Collection Technique

The data collection technique in this study is a questionnaire that will be distributed online via google form. Sekaran and Boegi, 2013 (Zulganef, 2018) say that a questionnaire is a set of written questions that have been formulated, where respondents answer these questions with alternative answer

choices. The questionnaire was distributed to students or customers of English language institutions who had already conducted course programs at Discovery English Jogja.

3.6 Instrument Testing Technique

3.6.1 Validity Test

According to Suliyanto (2018) the validity test is the level of accuracy and accuracy of the research instrument measuring instrument. In this study, researchers focused on the type of construct validity that can show how well the results obtained from the use of measures that are in accordance with the theory underlying the instrument. Construct validity consists of convergent validity and discrimination validity.

3.6.2 Reliability Test

Abdilah and Hartono (2015) argue that reliability shows the level of consistency and stability of measuring instruments or research instruments. Reliability tests can use Alpha Cronbach and Composite Reliability techniques.

3.7 Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis technique in this study uses Partial Least Square (PLS) and uses multivariate statistical techniques with two independent variables (X), one dependent variable (Y), and one mediating variable (M). In conducting data analysis, researchers conducted measurements with the outer model then continued structural measurements with the inner model. Furthermore, researchers conducted a mediation test by estimating the direct effect and indirect effect. In hypothesis testing, researchers used PLS based on p-values with a confidence level of 0.05. The final stage of data analysis is testing the mediation hypothesis, where researchers use the path coefficient between the independent variable (discount and service quality) and the dependent variable (customer intention for word of mouth) from direct effect to indirect effect as a basis for decision making.

4. Research Findings and Discussion

The following are the results of the description of the characteristics of respondents based on gender, age, occupation, and pocket money/income per month.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Gender	Number (Respondents)	Percentage (%)
Male	29	29%
Female	71	71%
Total	100	100%
Age	Number (Respondents)	Percentage (%)
< 18 years old	3	3%
18 - 23 years old	74	74%
> 23 years old	23	23%
Total	100	100%
Work	Number (Respondents)	Percentage (%)
Students	4	4%
Students	75	75%
Public Employee	5	5%
Privat Employee	12	12%
Other	4	4%
Total	100	100%
Monthly Allowance/Income	Number (Respondents)	Percentage (%)
< Rp 1000.000	22	22%
Rp 1.000.000 - Rp 3.000.000	48	48%
> Rp 3.000.000	30	30%
Total	100	100%

Judging from gender, 29 respondents who are male with a percentage of 29% and 71 people are female with a percentage of 71%. So, it can be concluded that women dominate as

customers at the Discovery English Jogja English course. Judging from age, there are 4 respondents aged < 18 years with a percentage of 3%, 74 respondents aged 18 - 23 years with a percentage of 74%, and 23 respondents aged > 23 years with a percentage of 23%. So, it can be concluded that the age of 18 - 23 years dominates as a customer at Discovery English Jogja. Judging from occupation, there are 4 respondents who are students with a percentage of 4%, 75 respondents are students with a percentage of 75%, 5 respondents work as civil servants with a percentage of 5%, 12 respondents work as private employees with a percentage of 12%, and 4 respondents with other jobs with a percentage of 4%. So it can be concluded that Discovery English Jogja customers are dominated by students. Judging from the characteristics of pocket money/income per month, 22 respondents have pocket money/monthly income below Rp 1,000,000 with a percentage of 22%, 48 respondents have pocket money / monthly income between Rp 1,000,000 to Rp 3,000,000 with a percentage of 48%, and 30 respondents have pocket money / monthly income above Rp 3,000,000. It can be concluded that the customers of Discovery English Jogja are people with middle economic class.

4.1 Validity Test Results (Outer Model)

4.1.1 Convergent Validity Test

Sholihin and Ratmono (2013: 16) state that the rule of Thumb for convergent validity is indicator loading greater than 0.70. The following is a table of data processing results for each variable.

Table 2. Outer Loading Before Removal

Variable	Item (Code)	Outer Loading	Status
Discount	X1.1	0,733	Valid
	X1.2	0,887	Valid
	X1.3	0,672	Invalid
	X1.4	0,767	Valid
	X1.5	0,771	Valid
	X1.6	0,263	Invalid
Service Quality	X2.1	0,778	Valid
	X2.2	0,753	Valid
	X2.3	0,861	Valid
	X2.4	0,859	Valid
	X2.5	0,749	Valid
Customer Satisfaction	M1.1	0,895	Valid
	M1.2	0,896	Valid
	M1.3	0,831	Valid
	M1.4	0,907	Valid
	M1.5	0,837	Valid
Customer Intention to WORD OF MOUTH	Y1.1	0,895	Valid
	Y1.2	0,900	Valid
	Y1.3	0,856	Valid
	Y1.4	0,917	Valid

In the table above, it can be seen that the outer loading value on the discount variable is on statement items X1.3 and X1.6 with a value of 0.672 and 0.263 respectively. This value is below 0.7 so that the two statement items are declared invalid and should be deleted. Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black, 2014: 94 (in Abdillah and Hartono, 2015: 196) state that a good or acceptable outer loading value is > 0.5. Therefore, researchers did not delete statement item X1.3 because its value was 0.672. The following is the outer loading value after deletion.

Table 3. Outer Loading after Deletion

Variable	Item (Code)	Outer Loading	Status
Discount	X1.1	0,734	Valid
	X1.2	0,889	Valid
	X1.3	0,670	Valid
	X1.4	0,768	Valid
	X1.5	0,769	Valid
Service Quality	X2.1	0,778	Valid
	X2.2	0,753	Valid
	X2.3	0,861	Valid
	X2.4	0,860	Valid
	X2.5	0,749	Valid
Customer Satisfaction	M1.1	0,889	Valid
	M1.2	0,894	Valid
	M1.3	0,829	Valid
	M1.4	0,908	Valid
	M1.5	0,844	Valid
Customer Intention to WORD OF MOUTH	Y1.1	0,894	Valid
	Y1.2	0,900	Valid
	Y1.3	0,854	Valid
	Y1.4	0,920	Valid

Another parameter used to measure convergent validity is the Average Variant Extracted (AVE) value > 0.5 (Sholihin and Ratmono, 2013: 16). The following is the AVE value in the table below:

Table 4. Average Variant Extracted (AVE) Value

Variabel	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Status
Discount	0,592	Valid
Service Quality	0,643	Valid
Customer Intention to WORD OF MOUTH	0,763	Valid
	0,796	Valid

4.2 Discriminant Validity Test

According to Sholihin and Ratmono (2013: 16) there are 2 rules of thumb for discriminatory validity, namely the square root of the AVE is greater than the correlation between constructs and the loading of indicators on the measured constructs is greater than the loading on other constructs.

Table 5. Cross Loading Value of Discriminant Validity Test

Variable	Discount	KL	KP	WORD OF MOUTH Intention
X1.1	0,734	0,270	0,149	0,333
X1.2	0,889	0,505	0,351	0,388
X1.3	0,670	0,378	0,274	0,309
X1.4	0,768	0,446	0,361	0,390
X1.5	0,769	0,458	0,383	0,371
X2.1	0,356	0,778	0,627	0,505
X2.2	0,338	0,753	0,567	0,472

Variable	Discount	KL	KP	WORD OF MOUTH Intention
X2.3	0,353	0,861	0,627	0,543
X2.4	0,236	0,860	0,735	0,710
X2.5	0,378	0,749	0,596	0,559
M1.1	0,481	0,733	0,889	0,618
M1.2	0,460	0,685	0,894	0,675
M1.3	0,554	0,620	0,829	0,616
M1.4	0,514	0,723	0,908	0,770
M1.5	0,385	0,692	0,844	0,783
Y1.1	0,414	0,754	0,689	0,894
Y1.2	0,406	0,759	0,694	0,900
Y1.3	0,431	0,568	0,503	0,854
Y1.4	0,425	0,733	0,603	0,920

4.3 Reliability Test Results

In the reliability test, the rule of thumb for alpha and composite reliability values must be > 0.7. The following is a table of Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values.

Table 6. Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability Values

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Status
Discount	0,826	0,878	Reliable
Service Quality	0,860	0,900	Reliable
Customer Intention	0,922	0,941	Reliable
to WORD OF MOUTH	0,915	0,940	Reliable

Inner Model Test Results

Table 7. Evaluation Goodness of Fit (R-square) Test Results

Variable	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square
Customer satisfaction	0,678	0,681
Customer intention to WORD OF MOUTH	0,651	0,641

The results of the goodness of fit evaluation test obtained an R-square value of the customer satisfaction variable of 0.678. This shows that exogenous variables (discounts and service quality) are able to explain 67.8% of changes in endogenous variables (customer satisfaction). As much as 32.2% of changes in endogenous variables are explained by variables outside this research model. The customer intention variable for word of mouth obtained an R-square value of 0.651. This means that exogenous variables (discounts, service quality, and customer satisfaction) are able to explain 65.1% of changes in endogenous variables (customer intention for word of mouth), while the remaining 34.9% of changes in endogenous variables (customer intention for word of mouth) are explained by variables outside this research model.

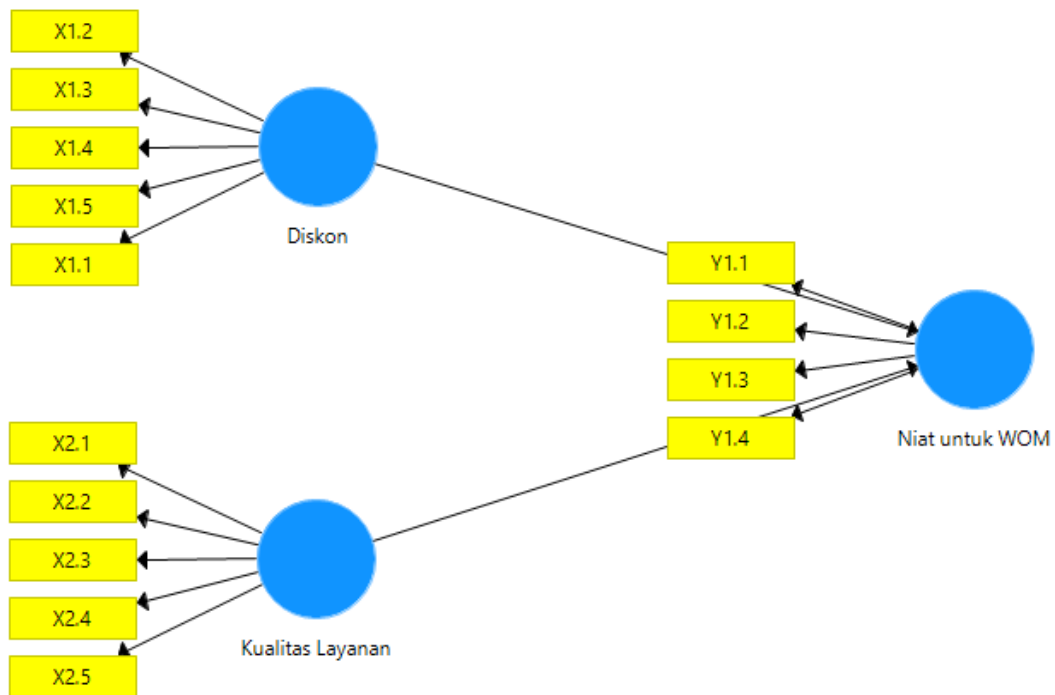
4.4 Hypothesis Testing

This hypothesis testing stage is carried out after evaluating the structural model which is carried out to determine whether the research hypothesis is accepted or rejected.

Table 8. Direct Effect Hypothesis Testing Results

Model	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics	P Values	Explanation
Discount → <i>WORD OF MOUTH Intention</i>	0,221	2,826	0,002	Significant
L Quality → <i>WORD OF MOUTH Intention</i>	0,619	8,498	0,000	Significant
P Satisfaction → <i>WORD OF MOUTH Intention</i>	0,607	5,292	0,000	Significant

Diagram 1. Direct Effect Structural Equation Model



4.4.1 Hypothesis Test 1

The effect of discounts on customer intention for word of mouth is indicated by a p-value of $0.002 > 0.05$, then H_0 is rejected and H_A is accepted, which means that discounts directly have a positive effect on customer intention for word of mouth. This means that the more attractive or the more discounts Discovery English provides, it will directly strengthen or weaken the customer's intention to do word of mouth.

4.4.2 Hypothesis 2 Test

The effect of quality on customer intention for word of mouth is indicated by a p-value of $0.000 > 0.05$, then H_0 is rejected and H_A is accepted, which means that service quality has a positive effect on customer intention for word of mouth. This means that the better the quality of service provided, the stronger the customer intention for word of mouth, and vice versa, if the weaker the quality of service provided, the weaker the customer intention for word of mouth.

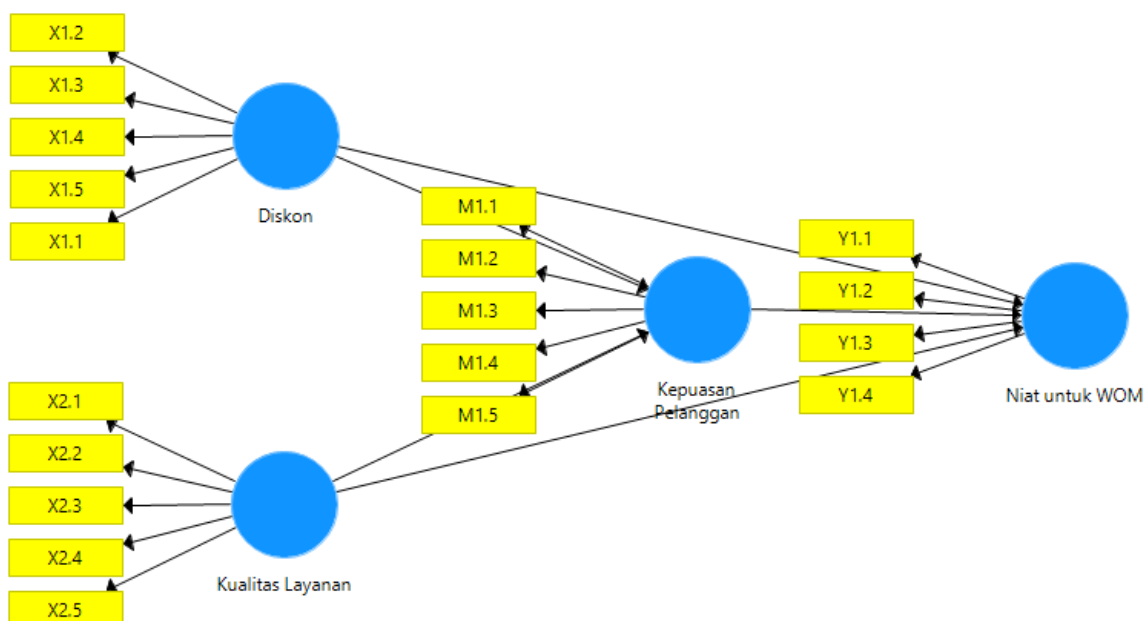
4.4.3 Hypothesis Test 3

The effect of customer satisfaction on customer intention for word of mouth is indicated by a p-value of $0.000 > 0.05$, then H_0 is rejected and H_A is accepted, which means that customer satisfaction has a positive effect on customer intention for word of mouth. This means that the more satisfied a customer is, the stronger the customer's intention to do word of mouth. Conversely, if the customer is not satisfied, the weaker the customer's intention to do word of mouth.

Table 9. Indirect Effect Hypothesis Testing Results

Model	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics	P Values	Explanation
Discount → P Satisfaction → WORD OF MOUTH Intention	0,163	3,356	0,000	Significant
L Quality → P Satisfaction → WORD OF MOUTH Intention	0,414	4,474	0,000	Significant

Diagram 2. Indirect Effect Structural Equation Model



4.4.4 Hypothesis Test 4 (Mediation Hypothesis)

The effect of discounts on customer satisfaction and the effect of customer satisfaction on customer intentions for word of mouth are indicated by a p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$. This shows that H_0 is rejected and H_A is accepted, so it can be concluded that customer satisfaction mediates the effect of discounts on customer intentions for word of mouth.

Sholihin and Ratmono (2013) state that if the path coefficient between the independent and dependent variables from the direct effect to the indirect effect decreases in value and remains significant, then H_0 is rejected and H_A is accepted with partial mediation. In this study, the mediation model formed is partial mediation, namely customer satisfaction partially mediates the effect of discounts on customer intentions for word of mouth. This is indicated by the original sample (O) value in the direct to indirect effect estimate decreasing, from 0.221 to 0.163. This means that customer intention for word of mouth will be higher when customers have satisfaction because of the discount given.

4.4.5 Hypothesis Test 5 (Mediation Hypothesis)

Service quality on customer satisfaction and the effect of satisfaction on customer intentions for word of mouth are indicated by a p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$. This shows that H_0 is rejected and H_A is accepted, so it can be concluded that customer satisfaction mediates the effect of service quality on customer intention for word of mouth.

In this study, the mediation model formed is partial mediation, namely customer satisfaction partially mediates the effect of service quality on customer intentions for word of mouth. This is indicated by the original sample (O) value in the direct to indirect effect estimation has decreased but remains significant, namely 0.619 to 0.414. This means that customer intention to do word of mouth will be higher when customers have satisfaction due to the quality service provided by Discovery English Jogja.

4.5 Discussion

Discounts are one of the sales and promotion strategies that can be carried out by companies. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2008: 9) a discount is a price reduction on a purchase within a certain period. The results of hypothesis testing show that discounts have a positive and significant effect on customer intention for word of mouth. This shows that whether or not there is a discount, whether or not a discount is attractive, affects the customer's intention to do word of mouth. Discounts provided by the company influence customers to be encouraged to talk about positive things about Discovery English Jogja to others.

Product quality and service quality have a major contribution to customer satisfaction so that customers have customer intentions to provide recommendations and testimonials to their relatives (Tjiptono 2006: 528). In this study, the quality of service affects customer intentions for word of mouth supported by data, meaning that the better the quality of service provided. This shows that companies and employees who provide good, promising, and appropriate services will encourage positive attitudes in the minds of customers. In this study, it is shown that many respondents are satisfied with the quality of service provided by Discovery English in the questionnaire with an average value of 4.60 which is included in the very good category. Customer satisfaction is able to encourage customers' intentions to talk about positive things related to their purchasing experience. The theory that supports this research is stated by Tjiptono (2006: 258) which states that customer satisfaction can trigger customer attitudes to provide recommendations and testimonials to their relatives.

The results of hypothesis testing show that discounts affect customer intention for word of mouth mediated by customer satisfaction. When companies provide discounts on products or services sold, customers who make purchases will feel happy and satisfied, so that they can encourage customer intention to do word of mouth.

The results of hypothesis testing show that service quality affects customer intention for word of mouth mediated by customer satisfaction. The more customers feel satisfied because of the quality of service provided by Discovery English employees, the higher the customer's intention to do word of mouth.

5. Conclusion

- a. Discounts have a direct effect on customer intention for word of mouth.
- b. Service quality has a direct effect on customer intentions for word of mouth.
- c. Customer satisfaction has a direct effect on customer intentions for word of mouth.
- d. Customer satisfaction mediates the effect of discounts on customer intentions for word of mouth partially (partial mediation).
- e. Customer satisfaction mediates the effect of service quality on customer intentions for word of mouth partially (partial mediation).

6. Suggestion

- a. To increase customer satisfaction, companies can focus on the discount variable, namely by continuing to carry out promotions in the form of discounts by paying attention to indicators such as the amount and period of the discount. Based on input from respondents, it is hoped that Discovery English Jogja will provide discounts with a longer duration, especially during certain periods, for example during school holidays. This suggestion is intended to increase customer satisfaction raised by the discount variable.
- b. The quality of service provided by employees should be maintained and even improved as much as possible to create a stimulus for more satisfaction in the minds of customers. so that customers increasingly have a strong intention to talk about positive things to others. Then the company gets indirect marketing from the word of mouth.
- c. Provide innovation and other supporting facilities such as teaching learners by using strategies, materials, and activities that are relevant to the latest circumstances and trends. This will trigger satisfaction as it is able to exceed customer expectations and needs when deciding to do a course program.

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