

## **Consumer Decision Model: Online Customer Reviews, Online Customer Ratings, and Brand Ambassadors Influence Decisions to Purchase in E-commerce During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to determine the effect of Online Customer Reviews, Online Customer Rating, and Brand Ambassador on Purchasing Decisions during the Covid-19 Pandemic on Tokopedia E-Commerce and to determine which variables are most dominant in influencing consumer purchasing decisions during the Covid-19 pandemic that occurred in Indonesia in 2020.

The analysis method in this study uses quantitative primary data by distributing questionnaires via Google Forms. The test stages carried out are validity test, reliability test, normality test, heteroscedasticity test, multicollinearity test, multiple linear regression analysis, t-test, f-test, and determination coefficient analysis. The testing tool used is SPSS version 26.

The results of this study indicate that online customer reviews and online customer ratings do not have a significant effect on purchasing decisions, while brand ambassadors have a significant effect on purchasing decisions.

*Keywords: Online Customer Review, Online Customer Rating, Brand Ambassador, Purchase Decision*

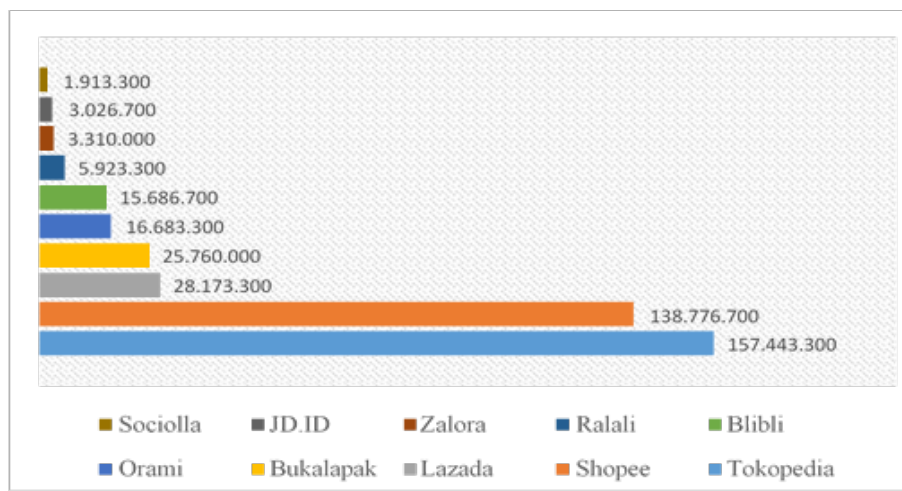
### **Introduction**

The first reported case of COVID-19 in Indonesia was in early 2020 and is continuing until 2022, which means that this case has continued in Indonesia for two years, accompanied by various actions taken to break the chain of transmission so that it does not spread further. One of them is avoiding crowds that have the potential to have direct or indirect physical contact with each other so that people's activities are limited when they are outdoors. The restrictions on activities imposed by the government on the Indonesian people have created new problems for business people who make direct sales in stores. (Setyowati & Tutiasri, 2021). Producers also have to think of alternative ways to maintain their business in a situation like this, for example, producers sell online through online buying and selling sites in Indonesia to facilitate buying and selling transactions between producers and consumers. Consumers will certainly feel safe if they make transactions online during the pandemic because they don't need to leave the house and only rely on the electronic goods they have as an intermediary for online shopping.

This will form a new character for people to shop only through their electronics without going to the store directly due to people's habits during recent activity restrictions. (Octavia et al., 2020),

(Lorca et al., 2019). E-commerce is a site for buying and selling a product that is offered through images or recordings listed on the site where producers and consumers do not meet directly but via the internet to make transactions. (Jeyapriya et al., 2019), (Mardiyah & Nurwati, 2020). Various E-commerce in Indonesia include Tokopedia, Shopee, Lazada, Bukalapak, Orami, Blibli, Ralali, Zalora, JD.ID, Sociolla, and many more. The large number of online buying and selling sites creates competition in promoting their companies to maintain the desired sales. The following is a table of monthly Web visitors in Q4 2021.

**Table 1.** Monthly Web Visitors in Q4 2021



Sources: iPrice (2022)

Based on the table above, it is known that Tokopedia is the highest monthly web visitor in the fourth quarter of 2021, which is 157 million, followed by Shopee with 138 million. The difference between the two is more than 18 million, so Tokopedia must pay attention to it to stay ahead of other e-commerce.

Tokopedia is an Indonesian e-commerce website, namely William Tanuwijaya on August 17, 2009, which is now an influential unicorn company in Indonesia and Southeast Asia. Maintaining a business in this competition is not easy, because the company must have advantages that can attract purchasing decisions from consumers. One thing that can make a purchasing decision is the influence of various information that is widely spread in electronic media in positive and negative contexts such as reviews and ratings. (Vitara & Puspa Novita Sari, 2024). Consumers will share their experiences and assessments of a brand that they have used themselves through the internet because of easy access but with a wide reach.

In addition, it requires famous figures such as celebrities as the face of the company to have an appeal and get the attention of consumers in making purchasing decisions on Tokopedia. By using celebrities, consumers will compete to buy a product offered by a celebrity they like to support the activities of the celebrity. A brand ambassador is a well-known individual (public figure) in the public eye for his achievements other than the products he supports.

The consumer decision-making process is a step-by-step process used when purchasing a product or service because of the interest felt by someone, wanting to buy, try, use, or even want to own the product. Each producer will implement various strategies that they have so that consumers decide to purchase their products. A purchasing decision is an action from a consumer who buys or does not buy a product. (Azali & Setiawan, 2023), (Alikasari, 2022)

Currently, consumers are increasingly selective in choosing a product offered by a company based on online reviews and online ratings given by consumers with the selection of brand ambassadors who are considered appropriate in their purchasing decisions. This research is important to analyze the Consumer Decision Model: Online Customer Review, Online Customer Rating, and Brand Ambassador Influence Decision To Purchase On E-commerce During the Covid-19 Pandemic.

## **Theoretical Foundations and Hypothesis Development**

### **E-commerce**

E-commerce is the purchase, sale, and marketing of goods and services through electronic systems. Examples include; television, radio, and computer networks or the internet. E-commerce is a business process using electronic technology that connects companies, consumers, and the public in the form of electronic transactions and the exchange sale of goods, services, and information electronically. (Mayasari et al., 2023). E-commerce is a process carried out by consumers in buying and selling various products electronically from one company to another using a computer as an intermediary for business transactions carried out.

E-commerce is a process of buying and selling products electronically with a computer as an intermediary for business transactions. Electronic commerce known as electronic commerce (e-commerce) is any form of business transaction that uses information and communication technology. However, over time, the definition of e-commerce has expanded to include not only sales and purchases via the internet but also online customer service and the exchange of business documents. E-commerce is a process carried out by consumers in selling and buying various products through an electronic system that connects companies, consumers, and the community in the form of electronic transactions. (Jeyapriya et al., 2019), (Octavia et al., 2020)

### **Online Customer Review**

Customer reviews are a form of WOM (Word of Mouth) which can be understood as a medium that can be used by consumers to find information by looking at reviews from other consumers, either about a product, a company's service, or about how a company produces its products so that consumers can determine their decisions in making purchases. (Vitara & Puspa Novita Sari, 2024), (Dwipa Premesti & Aminah, 2023).

Online customer reviews are used as a means for consumers to find and obtain information that can later influence purchasing decisions, a mechanism for feedback provided by consumers, and also a recommendation system for online shopping. With customer reviews, consumers can estimate the quality of the product they are looking for through reviews given by other consumers about their experiences when using the product.

Customer reviews contain positive and negative things and describe the characteristics (eg benefits and disadvantages) related to the product. Therefore, there is evidence that there is encouragement given by consumers who have used the product by providing information about the product to become one way of evaluating which is considered to be able to influence purchasing decisions by prospective consumers towards the product. Online customer review indicators consist of source credibility, opinion quality, review valance, and number of reviews.

### **Online Customer Rating**

Online customer rating is a consumer's opinion on a certain scale, whereas in online stores it is in the form of giving stars. The more consumers give stars, the better the seller's rating. Rating can be interpreted as an assessment of users' preferences for a product towards their experience which refers to the psychological and emotional state experienced when interacting with virtual products in a mediated environment. The influence of customer assessments on ratings before deciding to buy a product depends on how often other customers rate or evaluate the product. (Salea et al., 2021). The ranking or rating of a product online is one way for consumers to express their opinions about the quality of online products. This is due to the assessment of the product by consumers which reflects consumer satisfaction globally, not only on the product, but also on how consumers are served by online sellers. Online Customer Rating indicators are Source credibility, Rating quality, Rating valance, Perceived benefits, and Number of reviews.

### **Brand Ambassador**

The use of brand ambassadors themselves is carried out by companies to invite or influence consumers, especially because their selection is based on the image of a celebrity. (Ghadani et al., 2022), (Anggraeni, 2020) Being a celebrity representing a product is not only having a good but also being able to attract the attention of consumers with a positive image. A brand ambassador is a cultural icon of a company or identity that acts as a marketing tool that represents the achievement of individualism, human glory, and the commodification and commercialization of a product. (Ismail et al., 2023), (Dwipa Premesti & Aminah, 2023). Brand Ambassador indicators include Transparency, Suitability, Credibility, Attraction, and Strength.

### **Purchasing decisions**

Purchasing decisions are inseparable from the nature of a consumer (consumer behavior) so each consumer has different habits in making purchases, Kotler and Keller (2016) state that purchasing decisions have the following dimensions, including Product choice, Brand choice, Distributor choice, Purchase time, Purchase amount, Payment method. Consumers can make decisions about the payment method that will be used in making decisions to use products or services. Purchasing decisions are influenced not only by environmental and family aspects, purchasing decisions are also influenced by the technology used in purchasing transactions. The consumer buying process begins earlier before the actual purchase and continues after that so marketers must focus on the entire process rather than just the purchasing decision. The five stages in the consumer purchasing decision process start from recognizing needs, searching for information, evaluating alternatives, making purchasing decisions, and post-purchase behavior.

### **COVID-19 Pandemic**

According to the Committee for Handling COVID-19 and National Economic Recovery (2020) Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). SARS-CoV-2 is a new type of coronavirus that has never been previously identified in humans. (Agung, 2020). Handling of KKM is carried out through the implementation of health quarantine both at the entry point and in the region. In implementing health quarantine in the region, after a fairly comprehensive study, Indonesia took the policy to implement Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) which in principle were implemented to suppress the spread of COVID-19 from spreading further, based on epidemiological considerations, the magnitude of the threat, effectiveness, resource support, operational techniques, political, economic, social, cultural, defense and security considerations. (Hadiwardoyo, 2020), (Agung, 2020), (Wang, 2021). The PSBB

regulation is stipulated through Government Regulation Number 21 of 2020 concerning Large-Scale Social Restrictions in the Context of Accelerating the Handling of Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and is technically outlined in the Regulation of the Minister of Health Number 9 of 2020 concerning Guidelines for Large-Scale Social Restrictions in the Context of Accelerating the Handling of Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Guidelines for the prevention and control of COVID-19 are prepared based on WHO recommendations adjusted to the development of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the provisions of applicable laws and regulations.

### **Research Hypothesis Hypothesis Development**

H1: Online Customer Review influences purchasing decisions during the Covid-19 pandemic on Tokopedia e-Commerce.

H2: Online Customer Rating influences purchasing decisions during the Covid-19 pandemic on Tokopedia e-Commerce.

H3: Brand Ambassador influences purchasing decisions during the Covid-19 pandemic on Tokopedia e-Commerce.

### **Research Method**

The subjects of this study were respondents who could provide information in collecting research data as consumers who had made purchases on Tokopedia e-Commerce during the COVID-19 pandemic in Jabodetabek. The population in this study were consumers who had made online transactions during the COVID-19 pandemic on Tokopedia e-commerce.

The sample in this study were consumers who had made online transactions on Tokopedia e-commerce. The sampling method used in this study was non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling technique where the determination of the sample was carried out with certain considerations or had certain criteria. (Sugiyono, 2013). The criteria were that respondents had shopped at least once during the COVID-19 pandemic on Tokopedia e-commerce and were at least 17 years old and domiciled in Jabodetabek.

The type of data used in this study was quantitative data. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire by distributing questionnaires to consumers who had made online transactions during the COVID-19 pandemic on Tokopedia e-commerce. The data collection method in the distribution study can be done online using the Google Form questionnaire. Distribution of questionnaires through messaging applications in WhatsApp groups and Instagram social media to consumers who have made transactions on Tokopedia e-commerce. The score level used in this study is by using the Likert scale according to Sugiyono (2014). The data analysis method used in this study is the quantitative analysis method with the help of the SPSS (Statistical Product and Service Solutions) program. The analysis method was carried out using the T Test and Multiple Linear Analysis aimed at determining the influence and relationship of Online Customer Reviews, Online Customer Ratings, and Brand Ambassadors on purchasing decisions during the Covid-19 pandemic on Tokopedia e-Commerce.

### **Discussion**

The results of the validity and reliability tests show that all instruments for each variable are declared valid and reliable.

**Table 2.** Validity Test Results

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Statement</b>	<b>r-count</b>	<b>r- table</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Online Customer Review (X1)</b>	X1.1	0,544	0,1966	Valid
	X1.2	0,643	0,1966	Valid
	X1.3	0,547	0,1966	Valid
	X1.4	0,681	0,1966	Valid
	X1.5	0,696	0,1966	Valid
	X1.6	0,645	0,1966	Valid
<b>Online Customer Rating (X1)</b>	X2.1	0,707	0,1966	Valid
	X2.2	0,803	0,1966	Valid
	X2.3	0,743	0,1966	Valid
	X2.4	0,653	0,1966	Valid
	X2.5	0,717	0,1966	Valid
<b>Brand Ambassador (X3)</b>	X3.1	0,770	0,1966	Valid
	X3.2	0,761	0,1966	Valid
	X3.3	0,696	0,1966	Valid
	X3.4	0,698	0,1966	Valid
	X3.5	0,742	0,1966	Valid
<b>Purchase decision (Y)</b>	Y.1	0,699	0,1966	Valid
	Y.2	0,764	0,1966	Valid
	Y.3	0,768	0,1966	Valid
	Y.4	0,617	0,1966	Valid
	Y.5	0,703	0,1966	Valid

Source: SPSS 26, 2022 processing results

Based on the table above, shows that the calculated r value obtained for each variable is greater than the r table value with a sample of 100 respondents at a significance level of 0.05, namely 0.1966. So it can be concluded that the statements used in this study are declared valid.

**Table 3.** Reliability

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>Value Reliable</b>	<b>Description</b>
<i>Online Customer Review</i>	0,682	0,60	Reliable
<i>Online Customer Rating</i>	0,770	0,60	Reliable
<i>Brand Ambassador</i>	0,785	0,60	Reliable
Purchasing Decision	0,750	0,60	Reliable

Source: SPSS 26, 2022 processing results

The results of the T-test to test the influence between variables in this study are presented in the following table.

**Table 4.** T-Test Results Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	
1 (Constant)	5,977	2,364		2,529	,013
Online Customer Review	,163	,083	,170	1,965	,052
Online Customer Rating	-,033	,071	-.035	-,467	,642
Brand Ambassador	,561	,083	,593	6,791	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Decision

Source: SPSS 26, 2022 processing results

Based on the results of the table test above, the online customer review variable on purchasing decisions obtained a significance value of  $0.052 > 0.05$  so that  $H_a$  is rejected and  $H_o$  is accepted and the online customer rating variable on purchasing decisions obtained a significance value of  $0.642 > 0.05$  so that  $H_a$  is rejected and  $H_o$  is accepted. This means that the online customer review and online customer rating variables do not have a partial effect on purchasing decisions on Tokopedia e-commerce. Meanwhile, the brand ambassador variable on purchasing decisions obtained a significant value of  $0.00 < 0.05$  so  $H_a$  is accepted and  $H_o$  is rejected. This means that the brand ambassador variable has a partially significant effect on purchasing decisions on Tokopedia e-commerce.

### **H1: Online Customer Review influences purchasing decisions during the Covid-19 pandemic on Tokopedia e-Commerce**

The results of this study indicate that the online customer review variable obtained a significance value of  $0.052 > 0.05$  with a regression of 0.163. This means that although the direction of the relationship is positive, reviews or reviews from consumers are less beneficial so they can reduce purchasing decisions on Tokopedia e-Commerce. Thus,  $H_a$  is rejected and  $H_o$  is accepted, so the online customer review variable does not affect purchasing decisions during Covid-19 on Tokopedia e-Commerce. (Jeyapriya et al., 2019), (Lorca et al., 2019), (Candra Astuti & Nasution, 2017).

Questionnaire statement, the statement point "I feel the need to see and read comments or reviews given by other consumers" has the highest value. However, this study, cannot significantly influence purchasing decisions because several other factors are not strong enough to influence purchasing decisions on Tokopedia e-commerce. Consumers are more interested in other factors such as brand ambassadors and others. The results of this study are not in line with research conducted by Pratiwi, et al. (2020) that online customer reviews have a positive effect on purchasing decisions. However, this study is supported by research conducted by Ilmiyah and Krishernawan (2021) that product reviews do not have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions. (Vitara & Puspa Novita Sari, 2024), (Nabila Adillati Azka, 2023).

## **H2: Online Customer Rating influences purchasing decisions during the Covid-19 pandemic on Tokopedia e-Commerce.**

The results of this study indicate that the online customer rating variable obtained a significance value of  $0.642 > 0.05$  with a regression coefficient value of  $-0.033$ . The regression coefficient value can be interpreted that the lower the influence of the rating on Tokopedia e-Commerce, the lower the purchasing decision made because the consumer rating has not been able to express the opinions of other consumers so that it can reduce purchasing decisions on Tokopedia e-Commerce. Thus,  $H_a$  is rejected and  $H_o$  is accepted, so the online customer rating variable does not affect purchasing decisions during Covid-19 on Tokopedia e-Commerce. Some consumers choose to buy products after seeing high ratings, but this statement does not affect purchasing decisions based on the highest rating. Consumers are more interested in making purchasing decisions on Tokopedia because of other factors such as Brand ambassadors and Online customer reviews. This means that the higher the Tokopedia rating given has not been able to influence other consumers in making purchases. This study is not in line with other studies that state that online customer ratings influence consumer purchasing decisions on Tokopedia. (Datiar Nyimpado et al., 2024), (Dwipa Premesti & Aminah, 2023).

## **H3: Brand Ambassador influences purchasing decisions during the Covid-19 pandemic on Tokopedia e-Commerce**

Based on the T-test, a significant value of  $0.00 < 0.05$  was obtained so that  $H_a$  was accepted and  $H_o$  was rejected. This means that brand ambassadors have a partially significant effect on purchasing decisions on Tokopedia e-commerce. Respondents agreed that Tokopedia brand ambassadors have expertise in conveying information accurately. Celebrities who are Tokopedia brand ambassadors are now very suitable because they have an attractive communication style. Brand ambassadors can now be trusted to represent Tokopedia. Making celebrities as Tokopedia brand ambassadors is an attraction to be able to influence consumer purchasing decisions. The number of fans a celebrity has can increase purchases on Tokopedia. This study is in line with other studies which state that Brand Ambassadors influence purchasing decisions. (Dwipa Premesti & Aminah, 2023), (Nabila Adillati Azka, 2023), (Pratama et al., 2024), (Anggraeni, 2020), (Ghadani et al., 2022).

## **Conclusion**

Online customer review partially does not affect purchasing decisions on Tokopedia e-Commerce. Online customer rating partially does not affect purchasing decisions on Tokopedia e-Commerce. Brand ambassador partially has a significant effect on purchasing decisions on Tokopedia e-Commerce.

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