

# **A Qualitative Analysis of the Digital Marketing Influence on the Consumer Decision-Making Process of Different Generational Cohorts (A Descriptive Analysis on Boomers, Millennials, Gen Z and Shopee E-commerce Platform)**

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**Abstract:** Digital marketing changes how consumers recognize a problem, search for information, and evaluate a product, resulting in altering their purchasing behavior, which plays a crucial role in the consumer decision-making process. This study aimed to reveal how digital marketing influences consumer behavior during purchase decision-making—using a qualitative approach as the research methodology with an exploratory approach, explaining the concept to clarify and define a problem's nature. The present study applied a convenience sampling technique. This study examined consumer's behavior based on their purchasing experience—fifteen respondents' opinions were collected to get a clear picture of the present study. The findings show that online user-generated contents mostly influence the consumer's way of searching for information. The research also revealed that consumers using a comparison method to determine the product's value on the evaluation stage.

**Keywords:** Digital Marketing, Consumer Decision-Making Process, Consumer Behavior

## **INTRODUCTION**

As stated by Reiss (2020) on Forbes.com, the world social and economic environment has undergone remarkable changes, begin with industry 1.0, and now the world is experiencing industry 4.0, the revolution including cyber-physical systems (CPS), Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT) and the Internet of Services (IoS).

In each of these cases, the revolution of technologies allowed new industries to develop and upgrade the economic

growth. These revolutions developed many innovative functionalities, and created a new business model, work process, development methods, and a big data environment. Correspondingly, as the digital transformation has been happening, it has become more critical for businesses to adopt digital marketing to achieve their goals.

Thus, with the advancement of digital technology, numerous analyses have been carried out regarding digital marketing's influence on consumers'

behavior. With the surrounding 59% of the total global population worldwide use the internet regularly, every working professional is supposed to be familiar with Digital Marketing. Clement (2019) stated that nearly 4.54 billion individuals were active users of the internet. Furthermore, the article also stated that an estimated 1.8 billion people used e-commerce-oriented products to purchase goods online compared to traditional commerce in the worldwide market. Meanwhile, there are approximately 185 million internet users in Indonesia, and estimated to rise to around 256 million internet users in Indonesia by 2025 (Statista Research Department, 2020). It was also reported from GlobalWebIndex that Indonesia has the highest rate of e-commerce usage of any country globally, by 90% of the country's internet users between the ages of 16 and 64 (Kemp & Moey, 2019).

The present study investigated the decision-making process among the Shopee e-commerce platform users. The decision-making process was chosen based on several reasons; first, every individual plays the consumer's role and makes purchase decisions almost every

day. It is essential to understand the factors or situations that could affect a person's buying decisions – could it be a problem or need/wants or a high-level marketing campaign? From a marketer perspective, it is fundamental to understand the factors affecting customer purchasing decisions to successfully target the customers and evaluate the products from the customer point of view.

### **Research Problem**

Build upon the background, this study tried to answer a specific question of “how digital marketing impact the consumer decision-making process?”.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Digital Marketing**

Chaffey D. (2020), the co-founder of Smart Insight, defines digital marketing as the application of technology, the internet, and digital media to achieve marketing objectives. Under Grubor & Jaksa (2018) finding of digital marketing, there are seven significant digital marketing channels to reach the consumers: web site, search engine marketing, social media marketing, content marketing, e-mail

marketing, mobile marketing, display advertising.

Table 1. Digital Marketing Channel

Digital Marketing Channels	Definition
Web Site	Electronic word-of-mouth. A digital space where all information about the company and its products can be found
Search Engine Marketing	A tool to increase visibility a company's website (e.g., pay per click platforms, SEO) and Search Engine Optimization
Social Media Marketing	A tool for creating public relations through virtual networks platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn)
Content Marketing	An approach to create and distribute content to drive and retain clearly-defined customer action and interaction with the company and its brands with authentic, original, and inspiring content
e-Mail Marketing	Direct personal and customized communication with new and old customers
Mobile Marketing	Content or ads that are viewable and suitable for a mobile device
Display Advertising	The use of visual elements like images, videos, animations, rather than text

Source: Grubor & Jaksá (2018)

### Consumer Decision Making Process

To make a final purchase decision, the consumer needs to go through several stages of the decision-making process. Consumer purchase decision involves a series of choices

developed by a consumer before initiating a purchase, which begins when he/she has a willingness to fulfill a need or desire. Marketers can influence these decisions by presenting messages about their products or services that may affect the consumer's evaluation process. In the opinion of Kotler and Keller (2012), consumers in particular pass through five stages (Figure 3): problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior.

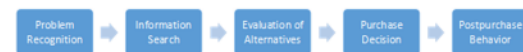


Figure 1. Five-Stage Model of Consumer Buying Process (Kotler & Keller, 2012)

### Generational Differences

A generation can be defined as an identifiable group that shares birth years, age, location, and significant life events at critical developmental stages (Kupperschmidt, as cited in Parry and Urwin, 2017). This study uses the generational cohort theory from Padayachee (2017) to project Indonesia's population. Based on the sixth population census results in Indonesia in 2010, the total population was 237 million people. With a composition of Gen Z (born after 1992)

as much as 30.7%, Gen Y or Millennial (born 1982-1991) of 26.23%, Gen X (born 1961-1981) 28.37%, and the remainder is the Baby Boomers (born 1943-1960) of around 14.7% (Triani, 2019).

Table 2. Generational Cohorts Birth Period

Authors	Boomers	Generation X	Millennials	Generation Z
Kotler & Keller (2012)	1946-1964	1964-1978	1979-1994	
Williams & Page (2011)	1946-1964	1965-1977	1977-1994	after 1994
Chaney, Slimane, & Touzani (2017)	1946-1964	1966-late 1980s	1981-1995	1995-late 2000s
Dhanapala, Vashub, & Subramaniam (2015)	1946-1964	1965-1980	1981-2000	
Ahmad & Ibrahim (2015)	1945-1964	1965-1980	after 1980	
Ludwig et al. (2020)	1944-1964	1965-1979	1980-1994	
Parry & Urwin (2017)	1943-1960	1961-1981	after 1982	after 2001
Fietkiewicz, Lins, Baran, & Stock (2016)	1946-1964	1965-1976	1977-1997	after 1996
Parment (2013)	1946-1955		1977-1990	
Padayachee, K. (2017)	1943-1960	1961-1981	1982-1991	after 1992
Edge (2014)	1946-1965	1966-1980	1981-2003	after late 1990s

Source: Original from Author

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Type

The present study applied a qualitative exploratory approach as the research methodology. Exploratory research provides a greater understanding of the concept of a problem; it is initially conducted to clarify and define the nature of a problem (Manerikar, 2014). The researcher starts with a general idea and uses this research as a medium to identify the problem, which can be the focus of future research. The crucial aspect here is that the direction subject could change based on the revelation of new data or insight. In this study process, primary and secondary data are gathered through academic literature and in-depth interview. Compared to the focus group discussion, the interview gave a clear, in-depth insight into the topic with less bias from other people's answers. The present study variables are digital marketing as the independent variable and consumer behavior as the dependent variable.

### Population and Sample

The present study uses Boomers, Millennials, and Generation Z, which have some marketing ideas. Baby Boomers is a set of group members born between 1944 and 1964; Millennials was born between 1982 and 1991; lastly, Gen Z is the newest generation to be named and was born between 1995 and 2015. A purposive sampling technique is applied in this study, and the sample size is determined by data saturation, not by statistical power analysis. Before conducting an interview, the researcher first recruited and selected the research participants according to the considered criteria. The qualification to participate in the study was selected based on four main criteria: a) Knowledge: a basic understanding of the internet and marketing. (i.e., such as the use of internet and advertising), b) Experience: aware of Shopee e-commerce platform. There are a total of fifteen participants interviewed for this study, four informants from Boomers, five from Millennials, and six from Gen Z. Those informants were representing the characteristics needed for this study. Moreover, fifteen people's sample is adequate to provide a manageable

volume of data that can answer the research questions.

### **Data Types and Source**

The data is a descriptive analysis, where the data collected is in the form of statements or explanations instead of statistical or numbers. An in-depth interview was the primary data collection technique for this study, attained from interviews, field notes, audio recordings, and academic literature. There are a total of three key informants, one from each generational cohort. Firstly, from Boomers, there is Prof.Dr.Ir. Suhardjono, MPd., Dipl.HE., 74 years old, is an expert team of the Ministry of Research, Technology, and High education and the Ministry of Education. The next key informant is Millennials, Sherlinda Octa Yuniarsa, S.E., M.Sc., an International Economics class tutor at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Brawijaya. The last is from Gen Z, Latifa Al Rosyidah Imas S.M., a fresh graduate from the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Brawijaya.

### **Data Collection Method**

This study employed an interview technique, a direct interview, and a telephone interview, and opted for a structured interview. The interviewee presented precisely the same questions in the same order, to reduce as much variation as possible. The interview used open-ended questions; to encourage the participants to respond as accurately. The interview guideline and the protocol are presented in the Appendix. The secondary data was obtained from academic literature through library and internet research.

### Data Analysis Technique

This study uses content analysis methods, and are entirely based on the information extracted from the data collected from the interview about the impact of digital marketing on the consumer purchase decision-making process in the Shopee E-commerce Platform. Krippendorff defined content analysis as a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use (Krippendorff, cited in Bengtsson, 2016). The manual coding process started with a 1) transcription and

familiarizing with the data, 2) a basic commenting which was guided by a theoretical basis of previous research, 3) a coding on paper, in which an open mind was kept to distinguish new rising codes and patterns, which continued by merging, sorting, deleting and cleaning 4) identifying overall category, 5) reviewing and finalizing category, 6) generate themes and 7) producing the findings report and framework of the study.

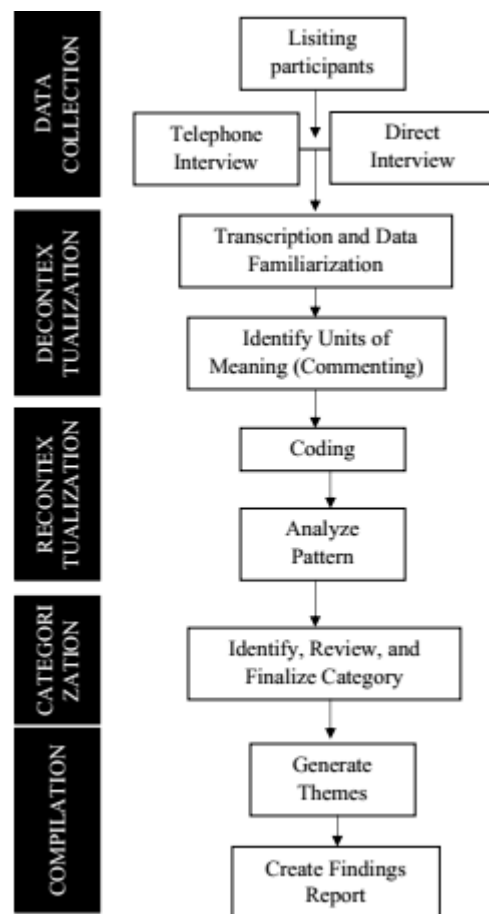


Figure 2. Data Analysis Process

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Research Object Description

Shopee is a consumer-focused online company build by Forrest Li, launched in 2015 under the auspices of Sea Group (previously known as Garena). Shopee uses seven main domains for its marketing channel: e-mail marketing, social media marketing, paid search, and display ads as their primary digital marketing channel. The highest contribution is from the direct marketing channel with 55.83%, followed by the organic search with 28.92%, and the least the used channel is display ads, which is 0.57%. More than 50% of the ads are using the YouTube platform, and the rest, 0.77%, are using other platforms (SimilarWeb, 2020).

### Informant's Characteristics

Table 3. Informant's Characteristics by Gender

Gender	Number of Informants	Percentage (%)
Male	3	20%
Female	12	80%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Data Processed (2020)

Table 4. Informant's Characteristics by Age

Age (Generation)	Number of Informants	Percentage (%)
56-74 (Baby Boomers)	4	26.66%

23-43 (Millennials)	5	33.34%
<22 (Gen Z)	6	40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Data Processed (2020)

All the 15 informants are aware of the Shopee platform, and all of them are digital marketing users. The detailed profile of the informants is presented in the appendix (see Table. 6). The chart below portrayed the digital marketing channel utilized by each informant on conducting the decision-making process.

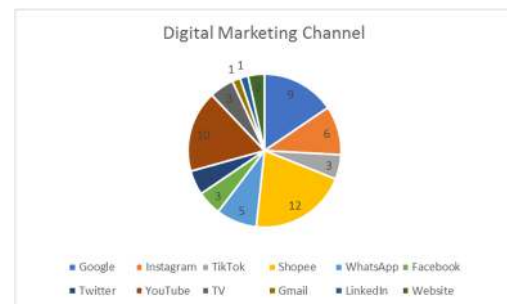


Figure 3. Digital Marketing Media Used by Informants

### Consumer Decision-Making Process through Digital Marketing

The emanation themes were conceptualized as; 1) Perceiving Digital Marketing, 2) Stages in Consumer Decision-Making, 3) Digital Marketing Channel: Reasons to Use, and 4) Ways of Influence. Each section contextualizes different generation cohorts' decision-making process by

providing informant responses, which reveal enclosed narratives and shall demonstrate how digital marketing influence the decision-making process unfolds in practice.

### **Perceiving Digital Marketing**

There are four big categories to perceive digital marketing based on the respondents; 1) Advertising, 2) Internet, 3) Efficient, and 4) Conservative.

#### **1. Advertising**

*“Digital marketing itu biasanya organisasi atau company yang mempromosikan produk atau aktivitas apapun itu di... secara digital,”* (Latifa, 22)

A key respondent from Gen Z stated that digital marketing is usually an organization or company that promotes their product or any activity digitally. To strengthen the statement, here are other respondents' opinions about digital marketing.

*“Menurut saya, pemasaran digital ini seperti suatu kegiatan mempromosikan sebuah brand ke masyarakat umum melalui internet atau berbagai platform digital”* (Luthfina, 22)

*“Menurut saya, digital marketing tuh kayak pemasaran secara digital, menggunakan internet”* (Silmy, 18)

*“Pemasaran digital, secara pemasaran kayak sales, tapi secara digital, jadi cuma di dunia internet aja”* (Anjastari, 22)

*“Promosi melalui media elektronik”* (Ovel, 19)

*“Iya tau, kayak iklan di TV, di YouTube, di IG”* (Ayu, 24)

According to the interview data, most of the opinion on the advertising category is from Gen Z, which means that they perceive digital marketing to promote or advertise a product or service. However, conforming to the Millennials' statements below, that digital marketing is an action of advertising or promoting a business or product-related to digital technology or using digital media helps build up that finding.

*“Kalo menurut saya pemasaran digital itu adalah mempromosikan sebuah usaha atau produk yang berkaitan dengan digital, menggunakan media digital”* (Siti, 30)

*“Digital marketing involves promoting and selling products on the*



*internet using applications or online platform” (Anis, 24)*

## **2. Internet**

The respondents frequently mentioned that the internet is highly related to digital marketing.

*“Marketing berbasis online, dimana seller menawarkan produk via jasa online gitu, via marketplace online” (Achmad, 24)*

*“When I first hear the term digital marketing, the first three words that came to my mind were online, internet, and postage. I was thinking that digital marketing allow me to shop online and require me to have online but online banking and internet” (Anis, 24)*

*“Produk ya, produk online. Terus pemasaran online, menarik perhatian konsumen menggunakan online ya, menggunakan media digital” (Siti, 30)*  
*“Digital marketing itu penjualan pake digital, lebih ke diagnosanya lewat dari semua, kayak yang di Instagram, terus yang ada di website website gitu jualannya” (Hasna, 18)*

Based on the respondents' statement above, they perceived digital marketing as an online or internet-based marketing strategy. Whether it is to offer,

promote, or as a mediator for the consumer to purchase a product.

## **3. Efficient**

According to the respondent's statement below, digital marketing is an easy, flexible, and fast. From the Boomers perspective, digital marketing is convenient, sometimes it's fast, and sometimes it's satisfying.

*“Digital marketing itu keywordnya adalah, very easily” (Sherlinda, 30)*

*“Apa ya? Gampang, murah, terus fleksible termasuk yah” (Ayu, 24)*

*“Ya gampang, apalagi ya, cepet ya kadang-kadang, puas ya kadang kadang” (Suhardjono, 74)*

## **4. Conservative**

The criteria for being the respondent of this study have been fulfilled by all the participants; however, some informants cannot wholly understand digital marketing. It opens up a new finding of this study, that although one knew about Shopee e-commerce platform, it does not mean one knows about digital marketing. The statement from Boomers below shows that they understand the use of internet and digital technology, but still do not fully aware of digital marketing.

*“Kalau belanja langsung anu aja, ke tempatnya. ... Tidak mengerti masalah-masalah yang tadi. Kita langsung ke sana, ada uang langsung menuju sasaran, kayak cash itu aja.”*  
**(Maksum, 72)**

*“Aku gak ngerti, nggak mbak, aku cuma pake apa yo mbak, WhatsApp aja”*  
**(Sujahmi, 72)**

### **Stages in Consumer-Decision Making**

Below are the cognitive processes that the interviewed samples go through when making purchase decisions.

#### **1. Problem Recognition**

Problem recognition is frequently recognized as the first and most crucial step in the process of consumer decision-making. Before deciding to buy a product, the consumer evaluates their needs and wants. Then, examining the importance of each desired product.

*“Habis lihat, memang dipertimbangkan dulu. Memang itu ada kepentingan apa ndak, memang istilahnya apa nanti ada kepentingan apa ndak, mesti dipertimbangkan. Kalau memang itu kepentingan bener*

*ya beli, kalau ndak ya masih pertimbangan gitu.”*  
**(Linda, 65)**

*“Kalo aku bisanya, menentukan dulu, itu perlu gak sih sesuai gak sih. Yang pertama perlu gak sih sebenarnya kalo aku pake itu.”*  
**(Anjas, 22)**

*“Karena saya biasanya cari berdasarkan 'oh, saya butuh', biasanya tergantung kebutuhan.”*  
**(Luthfina, 22)**

*“Kita mau beli itu, mau pergi ke tempat yang mau kita tuju itu, mikir dulu apa, kadang kadang dicatat karena namanya sudah tua, dicatat supaya ndak bolak balik. Jadi harus dicatat gitu lo.”*  
**(Maksum, 72)**

The interview results show that respondents from the Boomers and Gen Z conduct problem recognition before purchasing a product, while Millennials did not directly mention their problem recognition stage.

*“Untuk tahapannya, tentunya kita juga harus melihat dulu gitu. Eh bukan melihat membikin, list gitu ya produk apa kira-kira nanti yang akan saya cari itu fokusnya ke situ dulu”*  
**(Sherlinda, 30)**

#### **2. Information Search**

In this crucial decision-making process, information search will reshape

the consumers' point-of-view or decision. The desired product-related content plays a vital source for consumers to determine the product characteristics, attributes, features, and understanding of the product's previous consumers' experience.

*"Mencari informasi tentang produk dulu, apakah benar produk yang mau kita beli itu. Terus melihat komen-komen sebelumnya gitu"* (Siti, 30)

*"Terus research produknya, terus research itu kayak review, analysis, kekurangan, pros and cons, terus baru dilihat apakah ada promo"* (Achmad, 24)

*"Biasanya kalau ingin membeli suatu produk, saya mencari informasi dasar produknya dulu. Kayak mungkin harga, terus warna yang tersedia, ukuran dll"* (Luthfina, 22)

When the informants were asked whether they needed to search for product information, some responded that information search is necessary. At the same time, some relied on the information they already have on their minds and asked directly to the seller if they needed additional information.

*"Sebetulnya perlu, jadi, di toko mana yang ada jual itu, kita tinggal milih aja.*

*Udah tahu harganya masalah diskonnya. Jadi, lebih gampang menuju nya gitu loh."* (Suhardjono, 74)

*"Enggak, kadang ya anu sendiri. Kalau ke tokonya tanya gitu"* (Linda, 65)

### 3. Visual Evidence (Evaluation)

The interviewed sample shows that product image affects the consumer decision-making process. Consumers tend to form a virtual image related to the product and seek a product image that fits that image. This finding is consistent with Chen-Yu and Kincade (2000) discovery, at the alternative evaluation stage, the product image significantly influenced consumers' perception of product quality and expectations for future performance.

*"Melihat produknya bagus apa tidak, sesuai dengan keinginan kita atau tidak"* (Siti, 30)

*"Pertama lihat dulu barang nya kayak gimana"* (Achmad, 24)

*"Cari-cari dulu produk-produknya, kayak mana model-modelnya gitu"* (Silmy, 18)

*"Ya lihat, kalo di Shopee ya lihat"* (Suhardjono, 74)

### 4. Comparison (Evaluation)

Informants frequently outlined a comparison between their prior experience and the presented product attributes with the advantage they ought to get. However, predominantly, respondents compare the price first before moving to the next decision-making stage. The findings unveiled that pricing is an essential key to product attributes.

*“Kita lihatnya yang menjadi tolak ukur adalah tidak hanya melihat barang bagus harganya pun juga sesuai, misalkan tapi memang benar-benar mereka memberikan value added yang lebih baik gitu daripada toko-toko yang lainnya.” (Sherlinda, 30)*

*“Terus yang keempat aku bandingin sama yang lain, kalo misalnya face wash dari wardah, oh kayak gini nih, kalo misal dari ini ada bahan gini nya nih, kayak gitu sih. Jadi kayak pertimbangan gitu” (Anjas, 22)*

*“Biasanya nge lihat dari orang lain dulu sih, atau dari temen, tanya-tanya gitu terus kalau misalkan ada yang jelek di barangnya atau pas pengiriman, nggak jadi.” (Hasna, 18)*

*“Terus habis itu kalau udah nemu barang yang cocok, nengok harganya,*

*terus bandingin sama store lainnya gitu” (Silmy, 18)*

*“Setelah itu, saya coba melihat dari review review pengguna lain. Biasanya kalau di marketplace itu ada review review nya kan mbak, disitu biasanya saya cek, saya lihat review nya rata rata seperti apa” (Luthfina, 22)*

*“Nah kemudian kalo misalkan searching-nya udah dapet, ya kita baru tanya-tanya ke penjualnya gitu ya via chat messenger gitu kan.” (Sherlinda, 30)*

The older respondent claimed that he relied more on his experience rather than comparing it through new additional information.

*“Toko ini, toko itu, kan sudah biasa kita beli. Sudah tahu kualitasnya, sudah tahu harganya, enggak terlalu mahal. Ya kita langsung menuju toko yang kita tuju biasanya itu.” (Maksum, 72)*

The respondents used different sources to gather information or made a brief comparison for a detailed consideration or a deciding factor. The other critical information sources were personal word-of-mouth based on their response to the comparison, which

included feedback from a close associate, past consumer reviews, as well as asking the seller on the site, such as the ecommerce platform or social media platform, which signifies as an essential source of information.

### 5. Post-Purchase Behavior

The interviewed samples further evaluate the purchased-product to determine if it has met their expectations. They shared their post-purchase experiences through comments, ratings, and suggestions to close friends/family.

*“Itu kan kode etik ya, aku sudah dikasih bagus, ya aku kasih bagus. Tapi ngasih komentar, aku nggak pernah. Cuma bintang bintang”*

**(Suhardjono, 74)**

*“Langsung kasih review jujur disitu gitu. Jadi kalau misalkan bagus banget ya saya kasih bintang 5, difoto produknya gitu”*

**(Sherlinda, 30)**

*“Otomatis kan sama teman-teman yang dekat, atau saudara, lebih baik ini aja. Ini kan sesuai dengan kita minta dan juga cocok, gitu lo. Dikasih tau sama teman dekat”*

**(Maksum, 72)**

*“Kalau saya orang nya insecure, jadi gak nge-post disana. Paling di second account”*

**(Silmy, 18)**

*“Aku pasti kasih review jujur 100%. Cuma kalau reviewnya udah ada, ada yang pasang foto, itu paling Cuma aku kasih bintang doang”*

### Digital Marketing Channel: Reasons to Use

Based on the interview results, customers search extensively on various digital marketing channels, social media being the leading channel, followed by the search engine, direct channel, and website in a few circumstances.

#### 1. Social Media

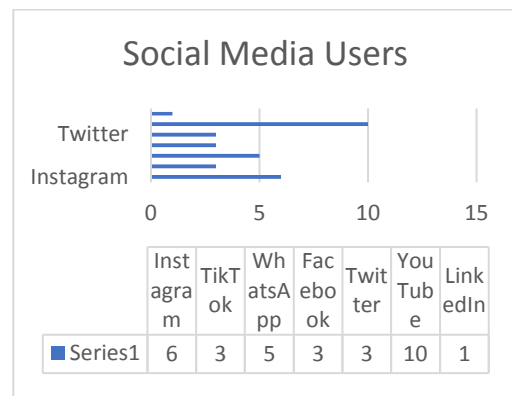


Figure 4. Interview Results (Author's Documentation, 2020)

Consumers use social media to access user-generated content such as; pictures, videos, hashtags, and reviews relating to designated products or services. The highest number of users is YouTube, with ten informants. Although Facebook appears to be the most popular channel, this study shows

that YouTube plays an essential role in the customer decision-making process among the sample of social media users interviewed.

*“Iya, buka YouTube, nanya temen juga, terus kalau misalkan kayak berupa skincare gitu kan ada reviewnya juga gitu” (Hasna, 18)*

*“Biasanya nyari kadang YouTube atau Instagram gitu” (Silmy, 18)*

*“Lewat YouTube untuk mencari review, terus sekarang menjadi lebih cepat, kalau menurut saya.”*

**(Luthfina, 22)**

*“Kadang ke YouTube juga” (Linda, 65)*

Facebook groups are valuable in general, and they have a broad impact as a marketing strategy. While Facebook appears to be the most potent channel, the study finds that amongst the interviewed sample of social media users, Instagram plays a relevant role in the decision-making process.

*“Kalo saya biasanya lewat Facebook ya, masuk ke grup jual beli, jadi menawarkan produk-produk kita masuk ke grup jualan.” (Siti, 30)*

*“Instagram gitu, liat postingan orang lain gitu” (Ayu, 24)*

*“Instagram, sekarang kan banyak di TikTok gitu ya” (Ovelia, 19)*

*“Aside from Shopee, I usually search for information from hashtags through Instagram” (Anis, 24)*

*“Kemudian nanti baru lihat review orang-orang di YouTube gitu dan aku pasti make sure dulu disitu” (Sherlinda, 30)*

*“Lebih gampang nyarinya. Terus lebih tahu, kayak misalkan ada dua barang gitu lebih bisa dibandingin.” (Hasna, 18)*

*“Kalau YouTube kan banyak kayak YouTube-er yang nge-review barang-barangnya disitu kan. Baru itu dijelasin, panjang lebar gitu kan. Lebih lengkap gitu” (Silmy, 18)*

*“Because I can compare the prices from other shops as well” (Anis, 24)*

The interview findings from the Boomers generation showed that the older generation does not use social media daily. The main platform they use is the messenger app.

*“Media sosial mbak, aku gak ngerti, nggak mbak, aku cuma pake apa yo mbak, WhatsApp aja.” (Nur, 72)*

*“Internet biasanya untuk anak-anak kos itu. Anak-anak kos itu biasanya dia menanyakan masalah di WA itu.*

Jadi, di situ dipersiapkan untuk internet.” (Maksum, 72)

## 2. Search Engine

“Iya tanya Google. Kadang suka tanya ke Google juga. Biar obat atau apa itu, kegunaannya untuk apa nanya ke Google.” (Linda, 65)

“Biasanya saya pertama sih dari Google sih mbak. Itu media pencarian pertama saya” (Luthfina, 22)

“Kadang-kadang Google dulu. Seperti kemarin aku mau cari jagrak nya piring-piring hiasan, kan aku pertama cari dari dulu di toko enggak ada, terus aku cari di Google.” (Suhardjono, 74)

“Paling gak sih di Google nyarinya” (Sherlinda, 30)

“Internet, Google ya udah itu aja” (Ovelia, 19)

The ultimate reasons to use search engines are predominantly linked to their capability to offer the essential information on a wide range of products or services and answering consumers’ questions through a combination of reviews, ratings, photos, and videos, to assist their decision process.

“Ya kan lebih leluasa, ketimbang sekarang dengan sesuai umur sekian kan mungkin sudah ndak, dengan

perkembangan zaman sekarang mungkin sudah lewat ya, sekarang mungkin lebih canggih gitu jadi tanya sama Google.” (Linda, 65)

“Karena lebih sering aja sih mbak dipakai, gara-gara lebih mudah. Dalam kehidupan sehari-hari itu sering saya pakai, jadinya untuk mencari produk pun akhirnya memakai itu. Karena kan scroll di Instagram, terus sering browsing juga di Google.” (Luthfina, 22)

“Ya lebih mudah, lebih cepat” (Suhardjono, 74)

“Karena gampang” (Ovelia, 19)

“Yang pasti lebih gampang lah” (Achmad, 24)

“Ya lebih cepat, mudah, praktis” (Silmy, 18)

“Dan lebih detail informasi produknya” (Sherlinda, 30)

As stated by the interviewed samples, Google seems to be the search engine platform utilized by all the generational cohorts. Because, it also provides an easy and comfortable user interface, which helps users grow accustomed to it and even hastening the information search process.

## 3. Direct

As the informant stated, Shopee does have a guarantee program which boosts its level of credibility.

*“Kalo nyari di Google sih jarang, langsung di Shopee nya” (Ayu, 24)*

*“I usually use Shopee to search for information of a product” (Anis, 24)*

*“The reason I prefer Shopee is because it is a reliable platform for online shopping as customer is further provided with Shopee guarantee” (Anis, 24)*

#### **4. Website**

Websites are still used for information search; the official website provides a distinct product value that allows the customer to examine its authenticities, such as product attributes, features, and advantages.

*“Kita harus make sure dulu apakah memang benar itu barangnya original kah. Kita harus crosscek dulu di website produk orinya gitu. Apakah memang benar produk itu ada karena memang kita juga harus cari tahu apakah memang produk yang mereka share itu benar original gitu.” (Sherlinda, 30)*

The combination of several digital marketing channels enables consumers to access user-generated

content from previous customers who have already experienced certain products. Consumers could compare the product with one another and deduce objective and trustworthy information from the reviews available.

#### **Ways of Influence**

Social media positively impacts word-of-mouth; the more the brand's social media presence, especially on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, the more the positive word-of-mouth yields. Thereby, this study implies that informants specify three top levels of content, which influence them in their decision-making; a) positive content, b) negative content, and c) lack or the inexistence of content.

##### **1. Positive Contents**

On a positive content, the informant noted that positive comments, reviews, high ratings, and engaging documentary evidence influence them positively and getting them triggered to initiate, consider, and select the product in the evaluation stage.

*“Karena, biasanya fotonya bagus-bagus, reviewnya juga bagus-bagus, sangat mempengaruhi. Saya orang*



yang mudah terpengaruh.”  
**(Suhardjono, 74)**

“Aku secara pribadi, foto, video, kayak bukti fisiknya, ya kan kadang foto yang di upload sama company nya itu kadang kan kayak gak sesuai dengan ekspektasi. Jadi, sebelum beli ya liat foto video.” **(Latifa, 22)**

“Karena ada video yang membuktikan bahwa produk itu bagus” **(Ovelia, 19)**

“Iya, mempengaruhi. Seperti contohnya ada produk apa gitu kan, disitu ada videonya, cara pembuatannya, terus cara memanfaatkan produknya bagaimana. Lah itu mempengaruhi kita untuk ikutan memasarkan atau ikutan membeli biasanya.”  
**(Sherlinda, 30)**

“Iklan-iklan di TV, pengaruh juga. Jadi, tertarik gitu loh. Maksudnya ada promo ini, ada diskon ini. Jadi, tertarik.” **(Maksum, 72)**

“Influencer, tapi biasanya ya di cek dulu” **(Ayu, 24)**

A social media post by strangers or friends with positive comments or reviews about a product would positively influence the informant, inspiring them to find more information and more likely to buy the product.

“Kalau untuk prosentase sih pasti sekitar 80% ya jadi langsung coba untuk search engine lagi gitu. Apakah benar ini tuh yang direview temen-temen tuh beneran menarik. Juga kita dengan pertimbangan-pertimbangan yang lain seperti misalkan memang bermanfaat banget buat di saya bukan buat misalkan cuma koleksi aja.”  
**(Sherlinda, 30)**

“Yang pertama mungkin dari komen, dari ulasannya ya, ulasan yang kita lihat, dari suatu produk. Yang kedua dari harganya. Terus kualitas barangnya, yang ada di YouTube, kan biasanya kan ada tayangannya” **(Siti, 30)**

“Sangat mempengaruhi. Soalnya kalau opini nya bagus ya jadi semangat dibeli. Oh, ini barangnya aku suka, terus banyak review nya yang bagus- bagus, yaudah beli gitu. Kalau misalkan opini-opininya jelek ya ngapain dibeli.” **(Silmy, 18)**

“Next, I will check the review given by previous customer. If the product has a good review with a reasonable price, then I will proceed with the order.”  
**(Anis, 24)**

Product with positive comments, reviews, or documentary evidence is

only considered if they have a competitive advantage, for example, if they are a) necessity goods, for b) it is affordable.

## 2. Negative Contents

The majority of informants said that negative content needs to be checked and should not be trusted entirely. While a product with positive content might be considered an option, a product with negative content is much more likely to be excluded from the list of feasible alternatives. Mainly, if the negative comments exceed the positive ones, a product will not be purchased.

*“Aku punya banyak teman se-hobi. Terus temenku bilang, 'eh ojok ndek kono', itu sangat, teman sangat mempengaruhi.” (Suhardjono, 74)*

*“Tergantung berapa banding berapa review jelek sama review bagus. Kalau misalkan kadang, kadang kan emang kayak orang gak baca dulu detail nya gimana barangnya. Asal beli langsung checkout. Tergantung perbandingan gitu, perbandingan bagus sama jelek.” (Latifa, 22)*

*“Kita lihat dulu ulasan negative nya ini lebih banyak atau mungkin cuma beberapa. Kalau cuma beberapa sih, bisa lah. Tergantung juga sih, ulasan*

*negatifnya seberapa parah. Kalo sampe bener-bener se-negative itu gitu, saya cari yang lain.” (Luthfina, 22)*

*“Seperti tadi yang dibilang di awal, dijadikan opini berimbang gitu lo, bahwa fakta barang yang nantinya kedepannya akan jadi jelek, atau ekspektasi nya hype nya tinggi tapi ternyata berkata lain gitu, itu bisa dijadikan factor deciding” (Achmad, 24)*

Some participants reported having cancelled a purchase after having experienced adverse treatment from the seller or a negative experience in the past, causing them to restart their information search and decision-making process.

*“Iya ada. Ada negatifnya. Ya kalau tidak sama, kalau tidak sesuai dengan apa yang diiklankan tadi, kita akhirnya keblojok.” (Linda, 65)*

*“Kalau ulasan negatif, biasanya aku udah gak beli. Terutama masalah delivery, ketidakjujuran, ndak aku beli” (Suhardjono, 74)*

*“Sekarang kan biasanya tu ada yang lama jawabnya tapi kadang barangnya bagus kayak gitu. Terus ya*

*nggak bisa benar-bener lihat produknya gitu” (Hasna, 18)*

*“Jika penjualnya tidak segera mengemas dan saya membutuhkan barangnya secepatnya, nah itu bisa jadi saya batalkan.” (Luthfina, 22)*

*“Kalau sellernya gaada kejelasan gitu lo bagaimana ininya, kita kan pastinya follow up gitu ya, tapi kalau gaada ininya, ya mohon maaf batal.” (Achmad, 24)*

### **3. Lack or Inexistence of Contents**

Informants explained that if a product does not have a decent amount of user-generated content, it will not contemplate it as a thorough evaluation basis. Alternatively, they prefer finding a product with more reviews, comments, or documentary evidence that assures them to prove that the right decision is being made.

*“Agak ragu sih. Mungkin di keep dulu, terus cari yang lain gitu. Kalau ada yang ada ulasan kaya lebih percaya sama yang ada ulasannya gitu.” (Silmy, 18)*

*“Selama ini selalu melihat ulasannya, karena sangat tricky gitu tanpa ulasan/review itu sangat tricky untuk pembelian barang” (Achmad, 24)*

These comprehensions suggest that digital marketing influence on the consumer decision-making process cannot be generalized by looking at the three different content levels. The findings also show the significance of identifying a circumstantial or a case-by-case influence of digital marketing on the evaluation stage, based on the source, the credibility, and the level of content.

### **Limitation**

This research is a descriptive study, implying that all the data presented should be continuously analyzed. Amidst this standard, the researcher must continue to explore the data that properly fits the research topic. This fact has highly affected the study timeline; hence, the short research period may make the findings insufficient. Furthermore, research on each generational cohorts' behavior is not a common topic studied by the experts. The researcher finds it difficult to find academic literature that is focused on the theory about different generations. The alternative is to learn through similar references that discuss the generation and relate it to the present

study's topic. During the interview, some informants did not give objective responses about the real situations, which means that the data may not show the real phenomena they experienced. Accordingly, the interview data is limited to what the speaker stated directly, and the subjectivity of the response still exists.

### **Research Implication**

This study offers marketing managers highlighting how digital marketing can alter the consumer decision-making process. Starting from the realization of the need and wants unto the decision to purchase. It was further discovered that digital marketing impacts the consumer decision-making process with a more influential impact on the evaluation stage through online user-generated content.

### **CONCLUSION**

Firstly, the study's general conclusions show that eight out of fifteen informants perceive the internet as an advertising strategy; an action of advertising or promoting a business or product-related to digital technology or using digital media. The respondents

also frequently mentioned that the internet is highly related to digital marketing. Second, this study revealed that digital marketing's impact on the information search and evaluation stage had been widely discussed in the previous academic literature. This study also disclosed that digital marketing could alter consumers' decision through user-generated content in the problem recognition stage. The finding shows that the problem recognition stage is not static but is influenced by positive and negative aspects of digital marketing media and the trustworthiness of specific channels and their embedded content. Third, in general, social media was found to have a strong influence on consumers; through this study, it is revealed that consumers mostly use YouTube as their information search channel. Simultaneously, the intensity of its influence was different between positive, negative, and inadequate content. This information can form the basis for developing quantitative digital marketing measurement instruments to measure each channel's degree of engagement or influence, most of which do not exist today.

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## APPENDIX

### Interview Guidelines and Protocols

#### Fundamental Question

1. Name:
2. Age: (\*Fietkiewicz, Lins, Baran, & Stock, 2016)
  - a. 56-74 (Baby Boomers)
  - b. 23-43 (Millennials)
  - c. <22 (Gen Z)
3. Gender:
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
4. Occupation:
  - a. Student
  - b. Employed
  - c. Unemployed
5. Do you use social media?

6. Have you ever bought a product online?
7. Do you know Shopee platform?

#### Digital Marketing Related Question

1. **Perceiving Digital Marketing**
  - a. Could you give a simple explanation of digital marketing?
  - b. When you hear the term digital marketing, what are the first three words that came to your mind?
  - c. Do you use any digital marketing media in your daily life?
2. **Decision-making Process**

- a. What actions did you go through before deciding to buy a product?
- 3. Information Search Stage**
- a. Before searching for information for a product, what information have you had in mind?
  - b. What kind of information do you need?
- 4. Digital Marketing Channel and Reasons to Use**
- a. What type of media do you mostly use to find information about a product?
  - b. What type of information are you intend to search from digital marketing media?
  - c. For what reasons do you choose the media as mentioned earlier?
- 5. Ways of Influence**
- a. Before deciding to purchase a product, how do opinions, reviews, photos, videos, or other information (UGC) you can find on social media websites influence you?
  - b. Have digital marketing ads ever inspired you to search for information about a product?
  - c. Have you ever made any changes to your designated product because of the additional information you found?
  - d. Would you purchase a product without a vast number of reviews shared by other customers?
  - e. In your opinion, what are the advantages of searching for information through the internet and digital marketing channels?
  - f. Are the online posts of your friend influencing your plans to purchase a product?
- g. Why do you think digital marketing media influence you more than traditional marketing media?
  - h. Which Shopee's digital marketing channel have you seen?
  - i. Where have you seen it? How frequently do you see it?
  - j. Is the content related to the product you were looking for? Is it helpful?
- 6. Selection of Alternatives and Purchase Decisions**
- a. What factors determine your selection of an alternative?
  - b. What factors encourage you to purchase a product?
- 7. Negative Influence**
- a. Would you purchase a product with negative comments/reviews?
  - b. Is there any negative side of using the internet of digital marketing media? Have you experienced that digital marketing media were not useful (destructive) in your information search process?
  - c. Are there any reasons you decided not to use the internet and digital marketing media for your information search process?
- 8. Post-purchase Behavior**
- a. Is there any possibility of canceling your order? What are the reasons?
  - b. Do you create UGC (user-generated content)? Do you share your experience after purchasing a product?

Table 5. Interview Themes and Evidence from Literature

Theme	Evidence
Definition and conceptualization of digital marketing	Roncevic, Lukcic, & Spoljaric (2019); Bala &

	Deepak Verma (2018); Grubor & Jaksa (2018);	Latifa	22	Shopee
Decision-making process, consideration and	Dasgupta & Grover (2019); Bala & Deepak Verma (2018); Varkaris & Neuhofer (2017)	Siti	30	Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Google, YouTube, Shopee
Information search before purchasing	(Maitya, Dassb, & Kumar, 2018); (Khatwani & Srivastava, 2018); (Gursoy, 2019)	Luthfina	22	Google, YouTube, Shopee
Digital marketing channels and underlying rationale for use	Roncevic, Lukcic, & Spoljaric (2019); Grubor & Jaksa (2018); Singh & Swait (2017)	Silmy	18	Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Television, Shopee
Influence of digital marketing media on decision-making process	Dasgupta & Grover (2019); Roncevic, Lukcic, & Spoljaric (2019); Sivasankaran (2017);	Anis	24	Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Shopee, YouTube, Gmail
Selection of alternatives and purchasing behavior	Stankevich (2017); Ozarslan & Eren (2018)	Hasna	18	YouTube, TikTok, Shopee
Potential negative influence on decision-making process	Roncevic, Lukcic, & Spoljaric (2019); Grubor & Jaksa (2018); Nash (2018); Varkaris & Neuhofer (2017)	Achmad	24	Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google, Online Forum, YouTube, Shopee
Post decision-making and purchasing behavior	Tinambunan (2019); Xliema (2019)	Ayu	24	YouTube, Shopee, Instagram
		Sherlinda	30	Google, YouTube, Website, Shopee
		Anjas	22	YouTube, TikTok, Google, Instagram, Shopee
		Sujahmi	72	WhatsApp
		Maksum	72	Google, Television, WhatsApp
		Linda	65	Google, WhatsApp, Television, YouTube

Source: 1Data Processed (2020)

Source: Original from Author

Table 6. Informant's Profile

Pseudonym	Age	Digital Marketing Media for Information Search
Ovelia	19	Google, Instagram, TikTok, Shopee
Suhardjono	74	Google, Shopee, WhatsApp