

THE EFFECT OF PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE AND SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON THE BRAND SWITCHING OF FAST MOVING CONSUMERS GOODS PRODUCTS DURING THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to determine the effect of product knowledge and social media marketing on the brand switching of fast moving consumers goods (FMCG) products during the COVID-19 pandemic. The type of research is quantitative with the use of regression analysis techniques and SPSS analysis tools version 23. The number of respondents in this research are 100 FMCG users spread across five villages in Central Maluku Regency. Based on the research results, social media marketing has a negative effect on brand shifting, this is due to the more information received, the more selective consumers tend to be. The era of the internet today makes consumers more critical and think about the validity of information, especially related to health. Meanwhile, product knowledge is just the opposite. Product knowledge has a positive effect on brand switching. This is simply because product knowledge is more relevant and becomes a reference for shifting health product brands. People are increasingly educated and trusting brands that have a good reputation. A well-known brand is easy to gain the trust of the public or respondents.

Keywords: Product Knowledge, Social Media Marketing, Brand Switching, Fast Moving Consumers Goods

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1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia and hundreds of countries in the world have been shocked by the spread of the Covid-19 virus outbreak. The rapid spread of the virus cannot be taken lightly and must be carefully handled. The numbers of infected people spread all over the world.

In addition to the massive and rapid spread, a significant number of people has been a victim of this virus which also affects all aspects of life. One of them is the change in the people's daily patterns around the world. Currently, we are entering the New Normal era. The situation is completely different from the past. Living a new normal life is the only option to survive during the pandemic. The habit of washing hands and paying attention to hygiene is now a concern and priority. Apart from being at home, this habit is also implemented in shopping centers and shops, markets and offices.

Brand switching behavior is a complex phenomenon, which can occur due to the variety seeking behavior, the availability of other product offerings or can also occur due to problems found with products that have been purchased. In addition, brand switching behavior is also influenced by social factors such as behavior in nature, competition, and time (Srinivasan, 1991). Whilst Assael (1995) states that brand switching occurs in products with low involvement characteristics, such as fast moving consumer goods (FMCG).

During this pandemic, the ability in understanding product knowledge is very important because it is related to all aspects that will arise through the use of products. Consumers generally choose health products that already have a good reputation, but in an urgent situation, consumers can buy health products with any brand as long as they are believed to be able to meet their needs. Which is why currently, FMCG products are emerging with health product lines with brands we have not known before.

The development of the internet has indeed influenced economic development. Various transactions in buying and selling that were previously only done directly or by telephone and post, are now much easier because they could be done via the internet. To attract the attention of consumers in today's modern era, Social Media Marketing Activities hold important role to influence the consumers buying process. Social media marketing activities are promotional activities carried out to promote products or services on social media platforms. Social media in Indonesia is very popular and has been accessed by more than 50 million users, both male and female.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social Media Marketing

Social media has the power to structure the market, to shift the power structure in the market, to massively migrate, to generate a new generation that is more powerful and sophisticated, and to change the way of consumption and creativity in information. (Constantinides, 2014; Kavoura & Stavrianea, 2014). According to Asnawi (2019), Social media marketing is an application-based marketing process that is entertaining, informative, trendy, personalized, and help improving WoM to achieve goals.

Social media marketing is broadly categorized as the use of advertising through social networks, virtual worlds, consumer generated products reviews, blogger endorsements, RSS feeds contents, social news sites, podcasts, games, and consumer generated advertisements. The creation of brands and its distribution through forms of social media advertising such as consumer generated advertisements, opinions pool via message boards, review sites, blogs, social networks, social news, virtual worlds, and games provide opportunities for consumers to digest aspects of brand personality and to assess brands meaning for them, and to interact with the brands. (Tuten, 2008).

According to Richter & Koch (2007) in the journal Seo & Park (2018). Social media is an online application program, platform, or media that facilitates interaction, joint work, or content sharing. According to Kelly et al (2010) cited in the journal Seo & Park (2018), social media plays a role when a company's marketing activities intent to build individual relationships with customers and provide opportunities for the company in assessing the customers.

Kim & Ko (2012) argue that social media marketing activities can provide an opportunity to reduce misunderstanding and bias towards brands, and to increase brand value by creating platforms for exchanging ideas and information among people on social media. Khan (2019) argues that when customers receive information and interact with brands on social media, consumers would form

relationships with the brands, which leads to brands loyalty and influences consumers purchase intentions.

Based on the experts descriptions, it can be concluded that social media marketing activities are the advertisements that rely on social media. The purpose of social media marketing activities is to interact with consumers, introduce, or sell products that are expected by the company could affect consumers' purchase intentions.

According to Seo & Park (2018) there are five indicators to measure social media marketing activities, in which they are:

a. *Entertainment*

Entertainment is a result of the pleasure that arises from the experience of using social media.

b. *Interaction*

Social media interactions have fundamentally changed the communication between brands and consumers. As social media can offer consumers assistance such as a room for discussion and exchange of ideas.

c. *Trendiness*

Social media provides the latest news and hot topics for discussion. Consumers will more often turn to various types of social media to get the information, because they assume that the information is rather trustworthy than the information through traditional promotional activities.

d. *Customization*

Social media customization is a tool for companies to communicate the brands uniqueness and to increase preference and loyalty toward those brands.

e. *Perceived risk*

Perceived risk is the ability of social media to overcome the anxiety or concern felt by consumers due to a lack of the obtained information.

Product knowledge

Product knowledge is very crucial for consumers. This is related to the ability of consumers to choose and determine the purchased products are in accordance with their needs and expectations toward a product. According to Brucks (in Shirin and Hanzae, 2011), product knowledge is a knowledge which is based on memory or acquired knowledge of the consumers. According to Nitisusatro (2012), things related to product knowledge are the knowledge about product characteristics, product benefits, risks of consuming products, and product consumption satisfaction.

Product knowledge is a consumers knowledge related to the knowledge about product characteristics, consequences of using the product, and the value (level) of satisfaction to be achieved by the products (Peter & Olson, 1990). Consumers knowledge regarding a product can affect satisfaction positively. Product knowledge includes: a) Awareness of product categories and brands within it; b) Product terminology; c) Product attributes or characteristics; and d) Trusts on product categories in general. (James & Engel, 1994).

There are 3 ways to measure product knowledge (Alba & Huchinson, 1987) in Roslina's (2009) research, they are:

a. *Subjective knowledge*, is the level of consumers understanding of a product, often called self-assessed knowledge.

b. *Objective Knowledge*, is the level and type of product knowledge that is actually stored inside the memory of consumers, often called social knowledge (actual social)..

c. *Experience-based knowledge*, is a previous experience of purchasing or using a product. In the previous research conducted by Akmal (2012), it is stated that product knowledge has a positive effect on purchasing decisions. However, the research conducted by Sri (2011) states that product knowledge does not have a positive effect on consumer satisfaction.

Product knowledge is needed as the basis for the success of a product, usually through the use or involvement of a product. Consumer knowledge about a product is expected to positively affect satisfaction, because knowledge will make the product more realistic. The effect of knowledge is positive if: 1. The use of knowledge is needed as the basis for the success of a product, usually through the use or involvement of a product. Betty & Smith (1987, in Sambandam & Lord, 1995); and 2. Product knowledge implies a memory structure in the consumers mind. Product knowledge includes: a) Awareness of product categories and brands within it; b) Product terminology; c) Product attributes or characteristics; and d) Trusts on product categories in general.

According to Nugroho (2008:95) who states that knowledge which emphasizes observation and sensory experience is introduced as empirical knowledge or a posteriori knowledge. This knowledge is usually obtained by making surveillance and observation that are carried out empirically and rationally. Meanwhile, according to Hurriyati (2010:84), product knowledge is a total information that is relevant to the consumers function in the market.

Satish and Peter (2004) in Shafiq et al., (2011) argue that customer knowledge is important to build customers response or evaluation towards the product which can be referred to as the perceived value of the product. Li et al., (2006) in Shafiq et al., (2011) explain that consumer psychological perceptions openly reflect the consumers' point of view on product knowledge and consumers knowledge of a product which can help consumers to make decisions effectively. While according to Bian and Moutinho (2011), product knowledge is a descriptive characteristic of companies intention to provide knowledge to the wider community to fulfill the purchase intentions.

In a research conducted by Shafiq et al., (2011) there are three indicators to measure product knowledge on consumers, in which they are:

- a. Considering a product purchase – with the knowledge of a product that will be taken into account when making a purchase decision.
- b. Describing the value of a product - consumers can describe what benefits or values the product can provide to the consumers.
- c. Analyzing a product – consumers can analyze products with their own knowledge.

Mowen and Minor (2008: 106) define knowledge as "a unit of experience and information concerning a particular product or service that one has". In addition, it is also explained that consumers knowledge can be divided into three categories:

- a. *Objective knowledge,*
- b. *Subjective knowledge,*
- c. *Information on other knowledge*

According to Nitisusatro (2012), things related to product knowledge are knowledge about products characteristics, risks of consuming products, and product consumption satisfaction.

Brand Switching

Switching behavior can be triggered from the wide variety of other product offerings, or from a problem with an already purchased product. Brand switching or variety seeking is defined as the freedom to choose one's preference for a particular item (Menon & Khan, 1995, p.286).

Keaveney (1995, pp. 76-77) in his research on switching behavior in services, states that consumer ignorance and prices are some of the many causes that can make consumers switch to other service providers. Some consumers switch to other services when there is a new, more expensive service provider. It gives the impression that service quality is judged by its price.

According to Dharmmesta (1999), brand switching is a brand switching behavior carried out by consumers for certain reasons, or it is also interpreted as a consumers' vulnerability to switch into another brand.

Consumers evaluation on the brands can arise from various things such as consumers experience with previous products and consumers knowledge about the product. Consumers experience in using the product can lead to commitment towards the products brand.

According to Beatty, Kahle and Homer (1988) in Dharmmesta (1999, p.83) brand commitment can be defined as an emotional attachment or feeling. Consumers' emotional dissatisfaction from the experience with the product can cause consumers to feel attracted in looking for other brands outside the usual brand. This search for other brands can be done by consumers by getting information through printed media, audio media, or through interpersonal, in which the end goal is brand switching behavior.

Brand switching behavior is a behavior that is carried out by consumers for certain reasons, or is also interpreted as the consumers' vulnerability to switch into another brand. According to Arianto (2013), brand switching means that customers stop their relationship with the old manufacturer for trying the products offered by competitors. While according to Wibisana (2014), brand switching is a behavior carried out by consumers or is also interpreted as the consumers' vulnerability to switch into another brand.

Brand switching is a buying pattern characterized by a change or shift from one brand to another. Consumers who activate the cognitive stage are consumers who are most vulnerable to brand switching behavior due to the marketing stimulus factor carried out by businessman (Peter and Olson,

2010), as brand switching is a kind of switching used by customers for each time of usage, in which the brand switching level also shows the extent to which they have loyal customers (Givon, 2001). While Mazursky et al., (1998) have the opinion that brand switching occurs when a consumer or group of consumers switch loyalty from one particular product brand to another and this can happen temporarily. The higher the level of brand switching, the more disloyal consumers to the brand, the higher the level of brand switching, and if it occurs for a long time and is carried out by groups of consumers who usually use certain brands, the brand has a high risk of losing its customers.

Based on the explanation above, the research model that can be built in this research is shown below.

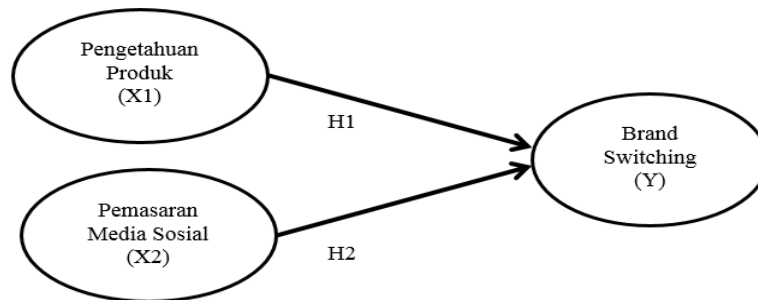


Figure 1. Research Model

Research Hypothesis:

Previous research conducted by Wuri (2002) states that there are two factors that influence the occurrence of brand switching, which are consumers internal factors and external factors. Consumer internal factors are environmental factors within the consumers. The dimensions of consumers internal factors are the desire of variety seeking, dissatisfaction, and consumer knowledge of the brand. While the consumers external factors are environmental factors from consumers that can affect brand switching in the form of advertisements, promotions and so on. In addition, Rohman (2016) in Risna (2017) states that switching behavior is influenced by extrinsic and intrinsic factors. Extrinsic factors include product quality, brands, design, product features, prices, new product emergence, promotion, and distribution. While the intrinsic factors include dissatisfaction and variety seeking.

H₁ : Product knowledge has a positive effect on *brand switching fast moving consumers goods*

H₂ : Social media marketing has a positive effect on *brand switching fast moving consumers goods*

3. RESEARCH METHODE

The population used in this research are all consuming fast moving consumer goods products in the Ambon City. While the sample in this research uses a proportional sampling technique, in which the researcher selects sample members to meet certain criteria. The criteria used can be based on certain judgments or certain quotas (Jogiyanto, 2010). The criteria used by researchers are consumers of fast moving consumer goods products in Ambon as much as 100 respondents.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Validity

The validity test is carried out by comparing the r count value to the r table value. An instrument is considered valid in the validity test if r count > r table, otherwise, if r count < r table then the instrument is considered invalid.

The distribution of questionnaires in the validity test was given to 70 respondents. The results of the validity test can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. Validity Test Results

No.	Indicator	r count	r table (5%)	Information
1.	Sosial Media Marketing			
	- Indicator 1	0,611	0,235	Valid
	- Indicator 2	0,621	0,235	Valid
	- Indicator 3	0,782	0,235	Valid
	- Indicator 4	0,802	0,235	Valid
2.	Product Knowledge			
	- Indicator 1	0,587	0,235	Valid
	- Indicator 2	0,872	0,235	Valid
	- Indicator 3	0,846	0,235	Valid
	- Indicator 4	0,839	0,235	Valid
3.	Brand Switching			
	- Indicator 1	0,604	0,235	Valid
	- Indicator 2	0,717	0,235	Valid
	- Indicator 3	0,804	0,235	Valid
	- Indicator 4	0,752	0,235	Valid

Source: SPSS data processing results. 25, 2020

Based on the table above, can be explained that the variables of social media marketing, product knowledge, and brand switching have valid indicators. This is due to the value of each question item from each variable is greater than the value of r table ($r \text{ count} > r \text{ table}$).

Reliability Test

The reliability test is carried out using the SPSS 25 program. The level of reliability of a variable or research construct can be seen from the results of the Cronbach Alpha (α) statistical test. The variable or construct is said to be reliable if the Cronbach Alpha value is > 0.6 . The closer the alpha value to one, the more reliable the data reliability value is. The results of reliability testing can be seen in the table below :

Table 2. Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha Alpha	Information
Sosial Media Marketing (X1)	0,776	Reliable
Product Klowledge (X2)	0,783	Reliable
Brand Switching (Y)	0,687	Reliable

Source: SPSS data processing results. 25, 2020

Based on the table 2, can be seen that the results of the reliability test of the social media marketing variable (X1) is 0.775, while the product knowledge variable (X2) is 0.777, and the brand switching variable (Y) is 0.706. This shows that all the used variables have Cronbach's Alpha values > 0.6 . So, it can be considered that all variables or questionnaires used in the research are reliable/constant.

Normality Test

In principle, normality can be detected by looking at the spread of data (points) on the diagonal axis of the graph or by looking at the histogram of the residuals. The basis for decision making by Ghozali, (2006) include:

- 1) If the data (dots) spread around the diagonal line and follow the direction of the diagonal line or the graph shows a normal distribution pattern, then the regression model meets the assumption of normality.
- 2) If the data (dots) spread far from the diagonal and or do not follow the direction of the diagonal line or the graph does not show a normal distribution pattern, then the regression does not meet the assumption of normality.

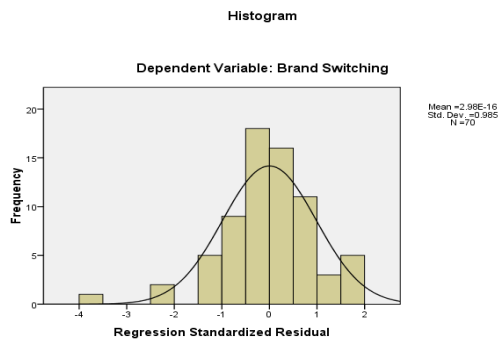


Figure 1 Normal Probability plot

Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual

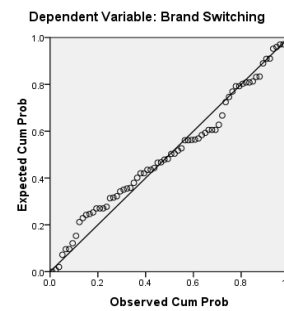


Figure 2 Histogram

Source: SPSS data processing results. 25, 2020

The normality test can be seen on the histogram and normal probability plot. The histogram of normally distributed data can be seen from the histogram which looks like a bell. Normal probability plot data is assumed to be normal because the spread of points follows the direction of the diagonal line, and its distribution is around the diagonal line. It means that the regression model is feasible to use in analyzing purchasing decisions based on the independent variables.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing conducted in this research aims to see how the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. This hypothesis testing consists of partial hypothesis testing and simultaneous hypothesis testing. The results of testing the hypothesis will then be explained.

According to Pardede, R., & Manurung, (2014), the calculated t value is used to partially test social media marketing (X1) and product knowledge (X2) on the dependent variable. Whether or not this variable have a significant effect on the brand switching variable (Y) with an error rate of 5%. This test is carried out by looking at the significant column in each independent variable with a significant level of 0.05. The performed t test can be seen in the following the following table:

Table 3. Partial Test Results (T Test)

Coefficients ^a						
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	4.087	1.902		2.149	.035
	Social Media Marketing	.121	.087	.155	1.401	.166
	Product Knowledge	.557	.119	.517	4.687	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Brand Switching

Source: SPSS data processing results. 25, 2020

Based on the table above by observing the row, column t and sig can be explained as follows:

1. The effect of social media marketing variables on brand switching (H1)
Social media marketing variable (X1) has a negative and insignificant effect on brand switching. This can be seen from the significance of social media marketing (X1) $0.166 > 0.05$.
And the value of t table = $t(\alpha/2; n-k-1) = t(0.05/2; 70-2-1) = t(0.025; 67) = 1.99601$. It means that the value of t count is greater than t table ($1.401 < 1.99601$), thus, H0 is accepted and H1 is rejected. And it contrasts with the hypothesis since there is no effect of social media marketing on brand switching.
2. The effect of product knowledge on brand switching (H2)
Product knowledge variable (X2) has a positive and significant effect on brand switching. This can be seen from the significance of product variation (X2) $0.00 < 0.05$.

And the value of t table = $t(\alpha/2; n-k-1) = t(0.05/2; 70-2-1) = (0.025; 67) = 1.99601$. It means that the value of t count is greater than t table ($4,687 > 1,99601$), thus, H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted. And is concurs with the hypothesis since there is an effect of product knowledge on brand switching which is partially accepted.

Table 4. Results of Feasibility Test Model (F Test)

ANOVA ^b						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	176.685	2	88.343	19.382	.000 ^a
	Residual	305.386	67	4.558		
	Total	482.071	69			

Source: SPSS data processing results. 25, 2021

Based on the test results in table 4 above, can be seen that value f count is 19.382 while the value of f table is 3.13. It means that the value of f count $>$ f table ($19.382 > 3.13$) and the significant level is $0.00 < 0.05$, then, H_0 is rejected and H_3 is accepted. Overall, it can be concluded that social media marketing (X1) and product knowledge (X2) simultaneously have a significant effect on brand switching.

Table 5. Multiple Linear Regression Test Results

Coefficients ^a						
	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	4.087	1.902		2.149	.035
	Sosial Media Marketing	.121	.087	.155	1.401	.166
	Product Knowledge	.557	.119	.517	4.687	.000

Source: SPSS data processing results. 25, 2021

From the test results in table 5 above, if the equation is made in the form of standardized coefficients, then it will be as follows::

$$Y = 4.087 + 0,121X_1 + 0,557 X_2$$

Information:

X1 : Sosial Media Marketing (X1)

X2 : Product Knowledge (X2)

Y : Brand Switching (Y)

The regression equation above shows the partial relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable, in which from the equation, it can be concluded that:

1. The constant value is 4,087, which means that if there is no change in the Social Media Marketing and Product Knowledge variables (the X1 and X2 values are 0), then the Brand Switching is 4,087.
2. The value of the social media marketing regression coefficient is 0.121, which means that if the social media marketing variable (X1) increases by 1% with the assumption that the product knowledge variable (X2) and the constant (a) is (0), then brand switching is 0.121. This shows that the social media marketing variable has a positive contribution on brand switching.
3. The value of the product knowledge regression coefficient is 0.557, which means that if the product knowledge variable (X2) increases by 1% with the assumption that the social media marketing variable (X1) and the constant (a) is (0), then brand switching increases by 0.557. This shows that the product knowledge variable positively contributes on brand switching.

Tabel 6. Coefficient of Determination Test Results

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.605 ^a	.367	.348	2.135

Source: SPSS data processing results. 25, 2021

Based on table 6, can be seen that the value of the coefficient of determination is around the Adjusted R Square value of 0.348. This means that the ability of the independent variable in explaining the dependent variable is 34.8%, while the remaining 65.2% is explained by other variables outside of this research.

5. CONCLUSION

From research which examines the effect of social media marketing and product knowledge on brand switching using the SPSS analysis tool, it can be concluded that:

- a. Social media marketing has a negative effect on brand switching. As the respondents think that advertisement or promotion of FMCG products on social media cannot be used as the reference sources in deciding which health products consumers use. During the current covid pandemic, people tend to trust more in official information and read many sources of information so that they have many reference sources in deciding to buy a product or switch from one brand to another.
- b. Product knowledge in this research has a positive effect on brand switching. The results indicate that product knowledge is more relevant and becomes a main reference for switching health product brands. People are increasingly educated and trusting brands that have a good reputation. A well-known brand is easy to gain the trust of the public or respondents.

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