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# The Effect of Viral Marketing, Online Customer Reviews, and Online Customer Ratings on Product Purchase Decisions at Bukalapak (A Case Study of Students at Muhammadiyah University Bengkulu)

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## **ABSTRACT**

Consumer purchasing decisions on e-commerce platforms are influenced by various factors, some of which are viral marketing, online customer reviews, and online customer ratings. This study aims to analyze the influence of viral marketing, online customer reviews, and online customer ratings on product purchasing decisions on Bukalapak, with a case study of students at Muhammadiyah University Bengkulu. This study employs a quantitative method with a survey approach. The study population consists of all students at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu. The sample size is 140 students. Data was collected through a questionnaire distributed to students at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu who have made purchases on Bukalapak. Data analysis was conducted using multiple linear regression techniques. The results of the study indicate that viral marketing has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions, meaning that the wider the reach and effectiveness of viral marketing, the higher the likelihood of consumers making a purchase. Online customer reviews also have a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions, indicating that good customer reviews can increase consumer trust and interest in purchasing products. Additionally, online customer ratings have a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions, indicating that high product ratings can increase consumer confidence in making purchasing decisions. This study confirms that viral marketing, online customer reviews, and online customer ratings are the main factors influencing product purchase decisions on Bukalapak. Therefore, businesses on Bukalapak are advised to utilize viral marketing strategies, encourage customers to provide positive reviews, and maintain product ratings to increase consumer purchase decisions.

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#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The purchase decision is a stage in the decision-making process where consumers actually buy the product they want (Rafidah & Djawoto, 2017). Viral marketing is a marketing technique that uses advances in electronic media to achieve marketing objectives, carried out through a continuous or chain communication process and said to be self-explanatory. According to Banjarmahor et al. (2021), online customer reviews can be defined as product evaluations conducted by customers who have experience with the product or service, posted on the company's website or online store. Globalization driven by advancements in transportation and communication technology has had a significant impact on various aspects of human life, including consumption patterns and shopping activities. The development of information and communication technology, particularly the internet, has facilitated interpersonal interactions and accelerated the flow of information, goods, and services. The internet is not only a communication tool but has also become an integral part of modern society's economic activities. These technological advancements have also driven changes in lifestyle, including shopping habits. Whereas in the past people had to visit physical stores to purchase products, today the process can be done online through various e-commerce platforms using only a smartphone.

Online shopping is considered more efficient, practical, and time-saving. This has led to the rapid growth of various marketplaces in Indonesia, such as Shopee, Tokopedia, Lazada, Blibli, and Bukalapak. However, the rapid growth of marketplaces has also intensified business competition. Each platform strives to attract consumers through various marketing strategies and service innovations. Bukalapak, as one of Indonesia's homegrown marketplaces, faces significant challenges in maintaining its competitiveness. Data from the second quarter of 2024 shows that Bukalapak experienced a 22.86% decline in visits compared to the previous quarter, making it the marketplace with the highest decline among the top five e-commerce platforms in Indonesia. Although Bukalapak has provided various features and promotions, these do not automatically increase consumer purchasing decisions. Consumer purchasing decisions are not solely determined by price or ease of access but are also influenced by consumer perception and experience, including through viral marketing, customer reviews (online customer reviews), and consumer ratings (online customer ratings). Preliminary interviews with several students from Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu revealed hesitation in purchasing products on Bukalapak. Students felt that excessive promotions through viral marketing actually eroded trust in the products. On the other hand, inconsistent customer reviews and ratings that do not reflect the actual quality make it difficult for them to assess the reliability of products and services. Furthermore, concerns about fake reviews and ratings further reinforce their hesitation in making purchasing decisions. This phenomenon indicates that while technology simplifies the online shopping process, trust remains a key factor in decision-making. Therefore, further research is needed to understand the extent to which viral marketing, online customer reviews, and online customer ratings influence consumer purchasing decisions, particularly among students.

Viral marketing is often perceived by students as a marketing tactic orchestrated by marketers, leading them to distrust the messages conveyed in viral marketing campaigns. This skepticism may even cause students to hesitate or decide not to purchase the product, despite the numerous conveniences and benefits offered by ecommerce platforms like Bukalapak to consumers, this does not guarantee that consumers will decide to purchase the products they need on the Bukalapak marketplace. Promotional programs like viral marketing are believed to increase consumer purchasing decisions. Based on this background, the author is interested in conducting research with the title:

"The Influence of Viral Marketing, Online Customer Reviews, and Online Customer Ratings on Product Purchase Decisions on Bukalapak (Case Study of Students at Muhammadiyah University Bengkulu.

# 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

## **Product Purchase (Y)**

Purchasing decisions are individual activities that are directly involved in making decisions to purchase products offered by sellers. According to Amirullah (2012), purchasing decisions are a process in which consumers evaluate various alternative choices and select one or more alternatives based on certain considerations.

Students' decisions to purchase or not to purchase products available on the Shopee marketplace after considering various alternative choices.

- 1. Loyalty to a product
- 2. Habits in purchasing products
- 3. Giving recommendations to other
- 4. Repeat purchases. Schiffman & Kanuk, (2014)

# Viral Marketing (X1)

According to Clow & Bacck (2018), viral marketing originates from the term "virus" and stems from the image of a person who is "infected" by a marketing message and spreads it to others like a virus. Messages conveyed in viral marketing can take the form of advertising, hyperlink promotions, online newsletters, streaming videos, and games.

Students' perceptions of the campaign or strategy at Muhammadiyah University of Bengkulu marketing of products available on the Bukalapak e-commerce platform.

- 1. Social media
- 2. Opinion leader involvement
- 3. Product knowledge
- 4. Clarity of product information
- 5. Discussing the product Wiludjeng & Nurlela (2013)

#### Customer Review (X2)

Reviews are part of electronic word of mouth (eWOM), which are direct opinions from individuals. Reviews are one of many factors that can influence consumers' purchasing decisions when shopping online, indicating that consumers will view the number of reviews as an indicator of a product's popularity or value, which will influence their willingness to purchase a product. Online customer reviews are a feature that makes it easier for prospective buyers and buyers to make purchasing decisions about a product.

Opinions or reviews provided by consumers after purchasing a product from a store on the Bukalapak marketplace.

- Credible
- Trustworthy
- honest
- 2. Expertise
- Professional
- usefull
- 3. Pleasant
- Likeable
- interesting (Megawati, 2018).

## **Customer Rating (X3)**

Online customer ratings are part of reviews that use star symbols instead of text to express customer opinions. Online customer ratings are similar to reviews, but differ in terms of the ratings given by customers, which are determined by the consumers themselves. The rating scale in online customer ratings is such that the more stars a consumer gives, the more the product aligns with the customer's expectations. Ratings can be created by consumers who have made online purchases and are published on the seller's website or marketplace.

It is a form of consumer feedback on products available on the Bukalapak marketplace, using a star rating scale ranging from 1 to 5 stars.

- 1. Number of ratings
- 2. Product quality assessment (Auliya et al., 2017)

# 3. RESEARCH METHOD

# 3.1 Type of Research

The type of research used in this study is quantitative research with a descriptive approach.

# 3.2 Population and sample

Based on the above calculations, the minimum sample size for this study is 140 students from Muhammadiyah University Bengkulu who use the Bukalapak marketplace. The sampling technique used in this study is accidental sampling.

# 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

# 4.1 Research Instrument Validity Test

The rhitung value in this study was obtained from data testing using SPSS version 25.0, while the rtabel value was obtained from the Pearson R Table distribution. With a sample size of 30 people, a probability value of 0.05, and DF = N - 2 (30 - 2 = 28).

Therefore, the rtable value in this study is 0.361. An item is considered valid if rhitung  $\geq$  rtable (0.361)

Table 1. Validity Test Result

Variabel		r hitung	r tabel	Ket.	
1	0,550		0,361	Valid	

V	ariabel	r hitung	r tabel	Ket.
2	Keputusan Pembelian (Y)	0,699	0,361	Valid
3		0,434	0,361	Valid
4		0,670	0,361	Valid
1		0,674	0,361	Valid
2	Viral Marketing (X1)	0,766	0,361	Valid
3	vital ivial ketting (201)	0,849	0,361	Valid
4	_	0,439	0,361	Valid
5	_	0,751	0,361	Valid
1		0,700	0,361	Valid
2	-	0,682	0,361	Valid
3	Customer Riview (X2)	0,530	0,361	Valid
4		0,859	0,361	Valid
5	_	0,526	0,361	Valid
6	_	0,859	0,361	Valid
1		0,645	0,361	Valid
2		0,642	0,361	Valid
3	Customer Rating (X3)	0,754	0,361	Valid
4	_	0,700	0,361	Valid

Based on the validity test results in Table 4.8 above, it can be seen that all statement items are valid because the rhitung value is > rtabel. So, it can be concluded that the statement items in this research instrument are appropriate for measuring each research variable. The results of the multiple linear regression analysis can be seen in the following table:

Table 2. Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

# Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

		Unstandardized		Standardized		
		Coefficients		Coefficients		
Model		В	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.195	.230		.848	.398

Viral Marketing	.161	.042	.206	3.795	.000	
Online Customer Review	.393	.040	.549	9.848	.000	
Online Customer Rating	.239	.046	.247	5.147	.000	
a. Dependent Variable: Keputusan Pembelian						

Source: Primary Data Analysis Results, 2025

Based on the calculations in Table 4.9 above, the following multiple linear regression equation was obtained between viral marketing, online customer reviews, online customer ratings, and purchase decisions: Y = 0.195 + 0.161 X1 + 0.393 X2 + 0.239 X3

Based on the above regression equation, the following can be explained:

- 1. The constant value of 0.195 means that if the values of viral marketing (X1), online customer reviews (X2), and online customer ratings (X3) are zero, then the purchase decision value remains 0.195.
- 2. The regression coefficient for viral marketing (X1) of 0.161 means that if the value of the viral marketing variable (X1) increases by one unit, the purchase decision value (Y) will increase by 0.161, assuming that the values of the online customer review variable (X2) and the online customer rating variable (X3) remain constant.
- 3. The regression coefficient for online customer review (X2) is 0.393, meaning that if the value of the online customer review variable (X2) increases by one unit, the purchase decision value (Y) will increase by 0.393, assuming that the viral marketing variable (X1) and the online customer rating variable (X3) remain constant.
- 4. The regression coefficient for online customer rating (X3) is 0.239, meaning that if the value of the online customer rating variable (X3) increases by one unit, the value of the purchase decision (Y) will increase by 0.239, assuming that the viral marketing variable (X1) and the online customer review variable (X2) remain constant.

## Results of Determination Coefficient Analysis.

The coefficient of determination indicates the percentage of the independent variables viral marketing (X1), online customer review (X2), and online customer rating (X3) used in the model that can explain the variation in the dependent variable purchase decision (Y). The coefficient of determination values in this study can be seen in the following table of multiple linear regression analysis results:

Table 3. Coefficient of Determination Value (R2)

# **Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate			
1	.883ª	.865	.865	.664			
a. Predictors: (Constant), Online Customer Rating, Viral Marketing, Online Customer Review							

Source: Primary Data Analysis Results, 2025

From Table 3 above, the R Square (R2) value is 0.865. This indicates that the percenta contribution of the independent variables viral marketing (X1), online customer review (X2), and online customer rating (X3) to the dependent variable purchase decision (Y) is 86.5%. In other words, the variation in the independent variables used in the model (viral marketing, online customer reviews, and online customer ratings) can explain 86.5% of the variation in the dependent variable (purchase decision). The remaining 13.5% is influenced or explained by other variables not included in the model or not studied.

### **Partial Testing (t-test)**

Partial tests were used to determine whether the independent variables (viral marketing, online customer reviews, and online customer ratings) partially (individually) influenced the dependent variable (purchase decision). The results of the partial tests in this study can be seen in the table of coefficients output from the multiple linear regression analysis using SPSS 25.0 for Windows, as follows:

Table 4. Partial Test Results (t-test)

#### Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		В	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.195	.230		.848	.398
	Viral Marketing	.161	.042	.206	3.795	.000

	Online Customer Review	.393	.040	.549	9.848	.000	
	Online Customer Rating	.239	.046	.247	5.147	.000	
a. Dependent Variable: Keputusan Pembelian							

Source: Primary Data Analysis Results, 2025

Based on Table 4 above, the results of testing each research variable can be explained as follows:

- 1. From the test results for the viral marketing variable (X1), the calculated t-value = 3.795 > the table t-value = 1.656 or Sig =  $0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$ , so it can be concluded that H0 is rejected and Ha is accepted. This means there is a positive and significant influence between viral marketing (X1) and purchase decisions (Y).
- 2. From the test results for the online customer review variable (X2), the calculated t-value is 9.848 > table t-value = 1.656 or Sig =  $0.000 < \alpha$  value = 0.05, it can be concluded that H0 is rejected and Ha is accepted. This means there is a positive and significant influence between online customer rating (X2) and purchase decision (Y).
- 3. From the results of testing the online customer rating variable (X3), the t-value = 5.147 > t-table value = 1.656 or Sig =  $0.000 < \alpha$  value = 0.05, so it can be concluded that H0 is rejected and Ha is accepted. This means that there is a positive and significant influence between online customer rating (X3) and purchase decision (Y).

# **Simultaneous Testing (F-Test)**

Simultaneous testing was used to determine whether the independent variables (viral marketing, online customer reviews, and online customer ratings) jointly or simultaneously influenced the dependent variable (purchase decision). The results of the simultaneous testing in this study can be seen in the following Anovab output table of multiple linear regression analysis:

Table 5. Simultaneous Test Results (F Test)

## **ANOVA**<sup>a</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.		
1	Regression	1670.130	3	556.710	1261.610	.000b		
	Residual	60.013	136	.441				
	Total	1730.143	139					
a. Dependent Variable: Keputusan Pembelian								
b. Predic	b. Predictors: (Constant), Online Customer Rating, Viral Marketing, Online Customer Review							

Source: Primary Data Analysis Results, 2024

Based on Table 4.13, the results of the multiple linear regression analysis above show that Fcount = 121.610 > Ftable = 2.67 or  $\text{Sig} = 0.000 < \alpha = 0.05$ , so it can be concluded that H0 is rejected and Ha is accepted. This means that there is a combined effect of viral marketing, online customer reviews, and online customer ratings on purchasing decisions (Y).

# DISCUSSION

# The Effect of Viral Marketing (X1) on Purchasing Decisions (Y)

The test results for the Viral Marketing variable yielded a t-value of 3.795 > t-table value of 1.656 or significance = 0.000 < value a 0.05, so it can be concluded that H0 is rejected and Ha is accepted. This means that Viral Marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions at Bukalapak. This indicates that students' perceptions of the effectiveness of Bukalapak's viral marketing play an important role in influencing their decisions to purchase products. The higher or better the students' perceptions of viral marketing, the greater the likelihood that they will make purchasing decisions on that platform.

The results of this study align with the opinion expressed by Hidayati (2018), who states that viral marketing influences consumers in making purchasing decisions for products in online shopping due to several factors, including activity on social media, having active chat groups on social media, recommendations from other consumers regarding online shopping, the intensity of viewing advertisements on social media, the attractiveness of the information displayed in advertisements on social media, and the spread of reviews on social media. Consumers will consider something that is viral at the moment and is being widely discussed by the general public.

# The Effect of Online Customer Reviews (X2) on Purchasing Decisions (Y)

The test results for the Online Customer Review variable yielded a t-value of 9.848 > t-table value of 1.656 or significance = 0.000 < value a 0.05, so it can be concluded that H0 is rejected and Ha is accepted. This means that online customer reviews have a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions on Bukalapak. This finding indicates that students' perceptions of customer reviews play an important role in influencing their decisions to purchase products. The higher or better students' views of online customer reviews, the greater the likelihood they will make a purchase decision on that platform.

The results of this study are in line with the theory or opinion put forward by Sugiarti (2021), who states that online customer reviews are one of the important factors that can influence consumer purchasing decisions on online shopping platforms. Reviews or comments provided by previous consumers as past shopping experiences at online stores or marketplaces will provide important information that prospective consumers can consider before making a decision to purchase products at those online stores or marketplaces.

## The Influence of Online Customers (X3) on Purchasing Decisions (Y)

The test results for the Online Customer Rating variable yielded a t-value of 5.147 > t-table value of 1.656 or significance =  $0.000 < \alpha$  value of 0.05, so it can be concluded that H0 is rejected and Ha is accepted. This means that online customer rating (X3) has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions on Bukalapak (Y). This indicates that students view ratings given by previous consumers as an important indicator in assessing product quality and store reputation. In the context of online purchasing, where direct interaction with the product or seller is not possible, customer ratings become one of the primary evaluation tools that can provide students with confidence in making purchasing decisions. Hasil penelitian ini juga sejalan dengan hasil penelitian yang dilakukan oleh Bahari & Dermawan (2022), yang menemukan bahwa terdapat pengaruh positif dan signifikan *online customer rating* terhadap keputusan pembelian konsumen pada aplikasi Tokopedia di Kecamatan Tanjunganom Kabupaten Nganjuk.

Pengaruh Viral Marketing, Online Customer Review, dan Online Customer Rating Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian hasil analisis regresi linier berganda di atas didapatkan nilai  $F_{hitung} = 121,610 > nilai F_{tabel} = 2.67$  atau Sig = 0.000 < nilai α = 0.05, maka dapat disimpulkan bahwa H0 ditolak dan Ha diterima. Artinya ada pengaruh secara bersama-samaviral marketing, online customer review, dan online customer rating terhadap keputusan pembelian (Y). Temuan ini mengindikasikan bahwa ketiga variabel tersebut saling melengkapi dalam membentuk persepsi mahasiswa dan memengaruhi proses pengambilan keputusan untuk membeli produk di platform tersebut. Hasil penelitian ini sejalan dengan hasil penelitian yang dilakukan oleh Hidayat (2023) berfokus pada pengaruh empat faktor, yaitu viral marketing, online customer review, online customer rating, dan kemudahan penggunaan terhadap keputusan pembelian di platform Social Commerce, khususnya TikTok Shop. Temuan dalam penelitian ini memberikan wawasan yang mendalam tentang bagaimana faktor-faktor digital ini berinteraksi dalam konteks e-commerce berbasis media sosial yang semakin populer. Hasil yang sama juga ditunjukan penelitian yang dilakukan oleh Yunitarini & Sunarjo (2023) berfokus pada pengaruh tiga faktor penting dalam e-commerce, yaitu viral marketing, online consumer rating, dan online customer review, terhadap keputusan pembelian produk Scarlett di platform Shopee. Penelitian ini memberikan wawasan tentang bagaimana ketiga elemen tersebut memengaruhi perilaku konsumen dalam konteks pembelian produk kecantikan yang populer di Indonesia, khususnya di platform Shopee, yang merupakan salah satu marketplace terbesar di negara tersebut.

# 5. CONCLUSION

Berdasarkan hasil penelitian yang telah dilakukan tentang pengaruh viral marketing, *online customer review*, dan *online customer rating* terhadap keputusan pembelian, dapat disimpulkan beberapa hal berikut ini:

- 1. Terdapat pengaruh positif dan signifikan viral marketing terhadap keputusan pembelian konsumen pada marketplace Bukalapak.
- 2. Terdapat pengaruh positif dan signifikan *online customer review* terhadap keputusan pembelian konsumen pada marketplace Bukalapak.
- 3. Terdapat pengaruh positif dan signifikan *online customer rating* terhadap keputusan pembelian konsumen pada marketplace Bukalapak.
- 4. Terdapat pengaruh signifikan viral marketing, *online customer review*, dan *online customer rating* terhadap keputusan pembelian konsumen pada marketplace Bukalapak.

Product ratings serve as a visual aid that reinforces students' confidence in making purchasing decisions. Simultaneously, the three variables of viral marketing, online customer reviews, and online customer ratings contribute significantly to students' purchasing decisions on Bukalapak. Regression test results show that 53.4% of the variation in purchasing decisions can be explained by these three factors, while the remainder is influenced by factors outside the scope of this study. Thus, it can be concluded that digital strategies involving viral content, consumer reviews, and rating systems are crucial in shaping online shopping behavior, particularly among students.

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