

The role of information quality processing in determining purchase intentions through social psychological distance

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Abstract

The expansion of e-commerce users in Indonesia parallels the growing internet penetration. However, this does not necessarily positively affect e-commerce service providers, as there are other obstacles, including a healthy environment. Because the quality of the information in e-commerce is maintained, a healthy ecosystem develops. Consequently, this study will delve deeper into the significance of information quality in e-commerce services. Data gathered from 143 respondents and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) reveal that the quality of information has a positive and statistically significant effect on purchase intention via social psychological distance and trust.

Keywords

information quality; social psychological distance; trust; purchase intention

INTRODUCTION

In the fourth quarter of 2018, Tokopedia booked 168 million visits, but in the fourth quarter of 2020, the visit dropped to 114.7 million. There was a drastic decrease because more and more competitors entered the e-commerce marketplace in Indonesia, which can threaten Tokopedia's position and market. Nielsen published the 2015 Global Trust in Advertising Report, which stated that in the Asia Pacific region, consumer opinions or reviews published online achieved a level of trust of 70% and ranked fourth out of 18 factors that can affect consumer trust. From Nielsen's findings, it can be concluded that trust from potential consumers can grow with information from other consumers who have purchased an item, and with 10,482,050 people in Central Java which is the reason shopping online as their top five reason when using the internet obtained from APJII (Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers), it can be obtained that 7,337,435 people in Central Java trust consumer reviews published online.

The quality of information appears crucial in influencing consumer purchasing decisions. Prospective consumers usually obtain information from reviews from other consumers; this is called electronic word of mouth (eWOM). The role of eWOM is significant because its information can

increase consumer confidence in using online shopping services. Besides that, it is quoted from Zhao et al. (2020) that low-quality information can harm buyers, sellers, and online shopping service providers. The buyer will feel that the products they buy do not match their description in consumer reviews. Consequently, the seller can lose his reputation due to unqualified consumer reviews, that way, because the quality of the information circulating in the shopping service is terrible, it will create a lousy ecosystem, and the shopping service can be abandoned.

Therefore, it is inevitable that the information circulating in e-commerce must be of good quality. Good quality information is described as information that can meet the needs of e-commerce users for information (Eppler, 2003). It becomes a separate question about what kind of information can be said to be of quality even more deeply. This question is answered by Park et al. (2007) through research which states that information can be qualified if there are the following indicators, relevance, understandable, adequacy, and objectivity. The information is in the form of consumer reviews on e-commerce platforms.

Information in the form of consumer reviews on e-commerce is a one-way communication; other e-commerce users cannot interact with reviewers on a product they are reviewing. Although unidirectional,

the quality of the information can influence consumer purchasing decisions (Zhao et al., 2020). According to Zhao et al. (2020), the quality of information can influence consumer purchase intentions through two things: social-psychological distance and trust. The level of trust here can be directly affected by the quality of information or mediated by the distance or proximity of social psychological distance from e-commerce users who read consumer reviews on a product. Social psychological distance represents the results of a person's thought process who associates with a group or not or becomes part of a larger group (Kruglanski & Higgins, 2007). It can also be concluded that group associations can be reduced to interpersonal similarities (Matthews & Matlock, 2011).

The widespread research on the quality of information with trust lacked a deeper look at increasing consumer trust in these studies. It turns out that when reading other consumer reviews, readers of these reviews will indirectly form a psychological distance in their thinking. This stage is a process in which users of e-commerce interpret what they see in their environment with the help of explanations from the constructive level (Bar-Anan, Liberman, & Trope, 2006). The constructal level represents the abstract or concrete form of someone's thought. The more abstract a person's thinking is, the higher the level of construction, and the more concrete the opposite will happen. Based on a study by Kruglanski & Higgins (2007), consumers with a low construal will focus on specific details when viewing other consumer reviews. Regarding an item, because the social-psychological distance also decreases due to the decreasing level of construction, from the process, it will form thoughts from consumers, such as; consumers will perceive the communicator or individual who did the review to have the same taste as them when buying a product or could also have the same value that is sought in a product. These things decrease social-psychological distance and affect the level of trust in other consumer reviews on online shopping services (Hernández-Ortega, 2018).

By referring to research done by Zhao et al. (2020), trust can be influenced through social-psychological distance by the quality of information. The complex process through which good information quality can increase

purchase intention becomes important. The factors that are significant to purchase intention, such as social-psychological distance and trust, are analyzed more deeply to determine how mechanisms of information quality can affect purchase intention comprehensively. Zhao et al. (2020) reveal the possible influence of a person's online shopping experience, seeing the information quality mechanism that can influence purchase intention from a different perspective. Therefore, considering that this study is a follow-up study of Zhao et al. (2020), this study will analyze the mechanisms of information quality through social-psychological distance and trust in purchase intention. The relationship of information quality is directly related to trust, which will later be influenced by consumers' online shopping experience, and an indirect relationship mediated by social-psychological distance to trust.

With the description above, studying the mechanism of information quality on purchase intention becomes essential if the factors that can influence it are explored more deeply, from mediating factors such as social-psychological distance and consumer trust. This study will provide a more comprehensive picture of the mechanism affecting the quality of information available at Tokopedia, Indonesia's largest online shopping service provider, more specifically as depicted in Figure 1.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Theory of planned behavior

The theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991) started in 1980 as the Theory of Reasoned Action to predict an individual's intention to engage in a behavior at a specific time and place. The theory was intended to explain all behaviors over which people can exert self-control. The key component of this model is behavioral intent; behavioral intentions are influenced by the attitude about the likelihood that the behavior will have the expected outcome and the subjective evaluation of the risks and benefits of that outcome.

The TPB states that behavioral achievement depends on motivation (intention) and ability (behavioral control). It distinguishes between three types of beliefs

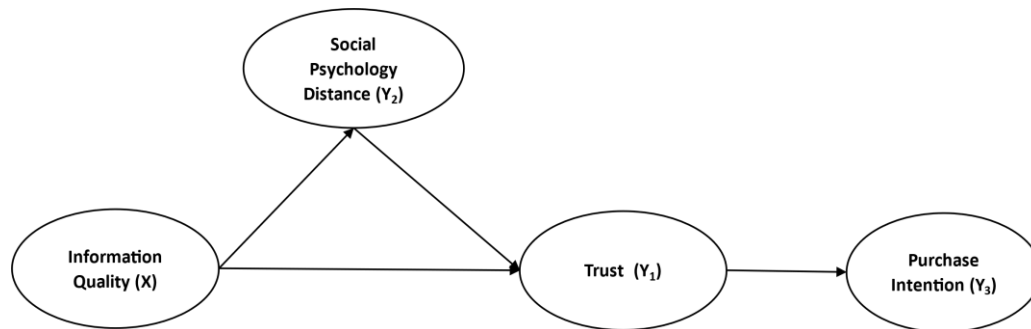


Figure 1.
The conceptual research framework

- behavioral, normative, and control. The TPB is comprised of six constructs that collectively represent a person's actual control over the behavior.

Construal level theory

Construal level theory is a theory that is within the scope of social psychology, this theory will explain the psychological distance and thinking of an individual in an abstract or clear form, and generally, it is explained that the farther an object is from a person, the more abstract they think. However, the closer the object is to a person, the more concrete they think (Kruglanski & Higgins, 2007).

Therefore, in their research, Trope & Liberman (2010) argue that the construal level theory looks at the psychological representation of the distance and proximity of an object, event, or other individual formed by differences in their thoughts. The psychological representation is a form of the construal level, and according to Lange et al. (2012), there are at least two construal levels, namely the low construal and high construal levels. A low construal level sees something in more detail that only focuses on an object, be it events, items, individuals, or other things.

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or other things. On the other hand, a high construal level is indicated by thinking big picture and not focusing on details.

Then in subsequent studies, this construal level theory is used to determine the appropriate psychological distance. Suitability is divided into several dimensions time, room, social, and hypothetical (Bar-Anan et al., 2006; Trope & Liberman, 2010; Trope, Liberman, & Wakslak, 2007).

Social-psychological distance

The statement about social distance is another form of interpersonal similarity that has been studied by Liviatan et al. (2008) by doing four experiments studying interpersonal similarity, and one of these experiments about interpersonal similarity will affect a much higher level (abstract) or much lower (concrete).

Information quality

The quality of the information described from the beginning is also when information in online shopping or e-commerce services is in the form of consumer reviews or can be classified in eWOM Zhao et al. (2020). Several previous researchers argued that in their studies, eWOM (electronic word of mouth) is a positive or negative statement made by potential customers (Dinh & Mai, 2016; Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004), actual customers, or former customers about a product or service company via the internet, from this it is possible that eWOM can be accessed by various people and institutions (Chen, Nguyen, Klaus, & Wu, 2015). According to Park et al. (2007), their research states that the following indicators can qualify information quality; relevance;

understandability; sufficiency; and objectivity.

Purchase intention

Bosnjak et al. (2006), in their study, stated that purchase intention would encourage consumers to purchase an item. That confirms previous research, which states that purchase intention predicts consumer buying behaviour. Then the definition of purchase intention continues to grow, one of which comes from Lu et al. (2014), who argue that purchase intention is "the willingness of consumers to buy certain products at certain times or in certain situations".

Information quality and trust

A previous study found that the quality of information is an essential factor in influencing the perception of online platform users' perception of credibility of an eWOM (Cheung et al., 2012). In a subsequent study, it was found that the quality of information that has value and substance is then submitted on the online platform, which can positively affect consumer confidence (Zhang, Cheung, & Lee, 2014). That is also supported by other findings that prove that the quality of information that reflects credibility can positively impact users' trust in the information available on the platform (Khwaja, Jusoh, & Nor, 2019).

In subsequent studies, it was proven that quality information, especially what service users can understand, can have positive implications for trust (Khwaja et al., 2020; Yang Zhao et al., 2020).

H1a: The quality of information has a positive effect on trust.

Information quality and social-psychological distance

A study by Hernández-Ortega, (2018) states that when eWOM contains relevant information for consumers, it will ultimately look far or near the social-psychological distance between consumers and the eWOM they receive. Furthermore, this perception will affect how consumers evaluate and respond to the information from the sender, which in this context is a Tokopedia user who reads other consumer

reviews. Furthermore, this study also proves that the information contained in eWOM will positively affect social-psychological distance from consumers. That is because social distance reveals how much a person distinguishes himself from others, or similar people from different people, or people who are part of a group or outside a particular group (Trope et al., 2007).

Subsequent research also confirmed that quality information positively affects social-psychological distance; this study examines the relationship between information quality with social-psychological distance (Yang Zhao et al., 2020).

H1b: Information quality has a positive effect on social psychological distance.

Information quality, social-psychological distance, and trust

In their research, Trope & Liberman (2010) argue that different forms of psychological representation formed by individuals on the same object, event, or other person are referred to from the constructal level theory. The representation is a function of the perceived psychological distance of individuals, who regard them as the centre of reference, and objects that are further away from their perception. As perceived psychological distance increases, all individuals use a higher level of interpretation to characterize something more abstract, simple, and non-contextual. When the psychological distance is reduced, individuals will use a lower level of interpretation to characterize something more complex and have detailed information (Liberman & Trope, 2008).

Consumer perceptions of social-psychological distance will impact the level of construal on the information in eWOM. This can be seen through the relationship between social-psychological distance and construal level. Social psychological distance allows individuals to feel that others are in the same group, just like them (Charness & Gneezy, 2008). Therefore, in their study, Li et al. (2016) stated that consumers would make more straightforward buying decisions if they received information related to their emotions and sensitivities. If social-psychological distance increases, consumers will require complex decision-

making and use the broadest range of information about anything related to their decision.

That way, it can be said that when the social-psychological distance between consumers and eWOM makers is minimal, consumers will feel closer individually to eWOM makers and will increase their likelihood of feeling part of a group of eWOM makers. In this case, consumers will believe in information based on emotional attachment. From this, it can be concluded that social psychological distance will positively affect consumer confidence in eWOM (Hernández-Ortega, 2018; Li et al., 2016; Yang Zhao et al., 2020).

H2: Social psychological distance has a positive effect on trust.

H3: The quality of information positively affects trust mediated by social-psychological distance.

Trust and purchase intention

Trust has two variants, cognitive-based trust; several dimensions must be met in this case. In contrast, emotion-based trust, this emotion is based on the feelings felt by agents toward other agents, both of which form the basis and motivation of a person to have purchase intentions (Kahneman & Tversky, 2000; Kim, Ferrin, & Rao, 2008; Ling, Chai, & Piew, 2010).

Moreover, it has also been confirmed that trust is an important part of online transactions, where transactions are carried out indirectly (Hong & Cha, 2013; Yang Zhao et al., 2020).

H4: Trust has a positive effect on purchase intention.

METHODS

This study is quantitative research; according to Cooper & Schindler (2014), quantitative research aims to quantify something precisely. Quantitative methodologies are frequently used in business research to assess consumer behaviour, knowledge, opinions, and attitudes. These methodologies answer questions about how much, how frequently, how many, when, and who.

For quantifying, this study uses an electronic questionnaire. The definition a questionnaire Sekaran and Bougie, (2016) is a written question that has been compiled and formulated in advance, and the respondents themselves will record the answers. Furthermore, what is meant by electronic questionnaires are questionnaires that have been transferred to electronic media and can be distributed via the internet with various platforms in it such as links, websites, personal blogs, or using social media. Because this electronic questionnaire is a structured question because the author has compiled it, the questions in this questionnaire are included in the type of closed question (Cooper & Schindler, 2014).

Moreover, in this study using non-probability sampling, individuals in the population have no probability associated with their selection as sample subjects in this sampling design. Then used for the sampling technique in this study is purposive sampling. This sampling technique is limited to certain types of people who can provide the desired information, either only those who have it or several criteria set by the researcher (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

A total of 143 respondents were surveyed for this study. The data type is primary data, and the samples were gathered via an online questionnaire. The respondents in this study were women and men between < 25 and ≥ 46 who resided in Semarang, Indonesia, and had made at least one purchase on Tokopedia in the preceding six months. The six-month time limit was imposed to ensure that respondents' responses were presented appropriately and under current conditions.

The questionnaire used for this study consisted of three parts. The first part contained a brief introduction and a profile of the researchers, which explained the research aims and objectives. The second part was about the respondent's identity, including gender, age, occupation, domicile, monthly expenses, and the average nominal expenditure per transaction. The third part was about the items to measure information quality (IQ), Trust (T), Social-psychological Distance (SPD), and purchase intention (PI) as shown in Appendix.

In this study, the data analysis was conducted with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), and the analysis was carried out in the AMOS program.

Table 2.
Respondent characteristics

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	64	44.76 %
Female	79	55.24 %
Age		
<25	124	86.71 %
26-35	8	5.59 %
36-45	8	5.59 %
Job		
Student	99	69.23 %
Civil servants	7	4.90 %
Employees	19	13.29 %
Entrepreneur	8	5.59 %
Etc	10	6.99 %
Education		
Highschool	63	44.06 %
Diploma	9	6.29 %
Undergraduate	69	48.25 %
Postgraduate	2	1.40 %

Table 3.
Validity test result

Indicator	Cut off value	Result
Barlett's Test of Sphercity	<0.05	0.00
KMO	>0.5	0.861

Table 4.
Reliability testing

Variable	Construct	Result
IQ	5	0.866
T	5	0.897
SPD	3	0.877
PI	3	0.857

Table 5.
Goodness of fit index test

Goodness of fit index	Cut-off Value	Result	Evaluati on
Chi-Square	< 124,342	114.428	Fit
Probability	≥ 0.05	0.154	Fit
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0.032	Fit
Chi-square/df	≤ 1.20	1.144	Fit
GFI	≥ 0.90	0.911	Fit
AGFI	≥ 0.90	0.878	Marginal
TLI	≥ 0.95	0.988	Fit
CFI	≥ 0.95	0.986	Fit

RESULTS

According to the demographic characteristics results, the number of female respondents (55.24%) was more than male respondents (44.7%) in Semarang, Indonesia. Most of the respondents were dominated by college students (69.23%), and the rest varied from civil servants, entrepreneurs, and employees for further details stated in Table 2.

The data from 143 respondents have validity and reliability. It can be seen that 16 items of questions contained five variables, namely information quality (IQ), Trust (T), social-psychological distance (SPD), and purchase intention (PI). The data considered meet the construct validity criteria, shown in Table 3. Besides that, the reliability test has already done for this research model, which is shown in Table 4.

To ensure the SEM model's fitness, authors tested using Chi-square, CFI, TLI, CMIN/DF and RMSEA, which were within the expected range of values, even though GFI and AGFI were marginally accepted, as described in table 5.

With Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) shows that a significance value smaller than 0.05 indicates hypotheses 1a, 1b, 2, and 4. Thus the results of this statistical test succeeded in accepting the hypothesis that hypotheses 1a, 1b, 2, and 4, as described in table 6. As Well as with hypothesis 3 through bootstrapping, as shown in table 7, the result is significant.

DISCUSSIONS

This study's first finding is that the quality of information affects trust. This finding is in line with Khwaja et al. (2020) and Zhao et al. (2020), indicating that the quality of information favours trust. This means that the quality of information affects consumer trust in electronic commerce, and this conclusion may be valuable for enhancing electronic commerce in terms of their platform's information.

The second result shows that the quality of information also affects social-psychological distance. The finding is in line with Zhao et al. (2020) finding that the quality of information influences social-psychological distance positively. The findings indicate that information quality may influence the social-psychological distance

Table 6.
Hypothesis 1a, 1b, 2, and 4 testing results

	Relation	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
SPD	<-- IQ	0.472	0.112	4.210	***
T	<-- SPD	0.234	0.076	3.072	0.002
T	<-- IQ	0.449	0.095	4.743	***
PI	<-- T	0.298	0.105	2.834	0.005

between users of electronic commerce. It may be crucial for the platform to improve its recommendation system in light of this finding.

The study's third finding is that social psychological distance affects trust. These results confirmed the finding of Hernández-Ortega, (2018), Li et al. (2016) and Zhao et al. (2020), who showed that psychological distance has a positive effect on trust.

The fourth finding shows the information effect of social-psychological distance on trust. These results also confirmed Hernández-Ortega, (2018), Li et al. (2016) and Zhao et al. (2020) finding, which shows that social-psychological distance has a positive influence on trust mediated by social-psychological distance.

The fifth finding shows that trust affects purchase intention. This finding validates Hong and Cha (2013); Zhao et al. (2020) finding, indicating that trust significantly impacts purchase intention. From this result, trust is essential for consumers' purchase intention in electronic commerce.

The study result also validates previous studies (Hong & Cha, 2013; Yang Zhao et al., 2020), indicating that trust significantly impacts purchase intention. From this result, trust is essential for consumers' purchase intention in electronic commerce.

CONCLUSION

Information quality has an important role in electronic commerce platforms. It affects the purchase intention of the platform's user to make a purchase. This research supports Khwaja et al. (2020) and Zhao et al. (2020), indicating that the quality of information has a favorable effect on trust.

In the mechanism of affecting purchase intention, information quality could affect through social-psychology distance and trust. This study reveals that social-psychology distance is important for the electronic commerce platform to enhance

Table 7.
Hypothesis testing

	IQ	SPD	T	PI
SPD
T	0,006
PI	0,009	0,012

the suggestion to stimulate users to trust the information.

Therefore, the quality of information that circulates in the platform has to be monitored by the providers to maintain the growth of the users. To conclude, this study's findings are crucial for electronic commerce nowadays to keep their users' right information for their needs. The results of the research are expected to be utilized by Tokopedia as an e-commerce service provider in order to be able to monitor the quality of information circulating in their services in order to create a good ecosystem for sellers and buyers.

Apart from this study's contribution, our research also has limitations, since it was conducted only for Tokopedia user respondents in Semarang. The second limitation was that the information quality variable is only based on reviews from other consumers and not on information shared by sellers on Tokopedia.

The other limitation was that this research did not specify which media the respondent used to access Tokopedia, either from the website or an application on a smartphone. The last is no specific secondary data regarding the number of Tokopedia users in the city of Semarang, so this study only uses data on how many individuals shop online in big cities in Central Java such as Semarang, Brebes, Cilacap, Banyumas, Tegal and other cities or counties. Future research suggested being done in other e-commerce platforms with specific media platforms and conducted with other area respondents.

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APPENDIX

**Table 1A.
Measurements**

Variables	Indicators	Reference
Information Quality	IQ1: Every review is objective. IQ2: Every review is understandable. IQ3: Every review can be credible. IQ4: Every review is clear. IQ5: In general, the quality of each review is high.	Park et al. (2007)
Trust	T1: Other consumer reviews are trustworthy, T2: Other consumer reviews are true T3: Other consumer reviews are reliable, T4: Trustworthy reviewers, T5: Reviewers share actual experiences.	Zhao et al., (2020)
Social-psychological Distance	SPD1: Other people have the same taste as me, SPD2: Other people have the same values as me, SPD3: I am the same as everyone else.	Hernández-Ortega, (2018)
Purchase Intention	PI1: Reference from consumer reviews, PI2: Changes in consumer attitudes, PI3: Influence on consumer decision making.	Zhao et al., (2020)