

A Study on Pandemic COVID-19 on Indonesia's Consumer Preferences: Input for Business and Government Policies in Indonesia

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Abstract A study on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on consumer preferences in Indonesia would likely examine how the pandemic has affected the buying habits, needs and behavior of consumers in the country. It would also likely look at how these changes have impacted businesses in Indonesia and the strategies they have implemented to adapt to the new market conditions. The study would likely include data and analysis on various sectors such as retail, e-commerce, food and beverage, and hospitality. It would also likely consider the government policies and regulations related to COVID-19 and how they have affected consumer behavior and business operations. The research method was carried out on Q3, 2020, through an online survey to respondents who live in Jakarta Great Area, Indonesia. The findings of such a study would likely indicate that, in addition to prioritizing basic necessities, consumers have reduced their spending on other goods. The transportation and tourism industries were found to be among the hardest hit sectors, as per the study's respondents. In the automotive industry, consumers have been more hesitant to purchase new or used cars. The pandemic has led to a significant decrease in vehicle sales, and therefore, innovative policies and incentives are needed to revive the industry. The government of Indonesia would need to develop various policies and incentives to aid in the economic recovery post-pandemic.

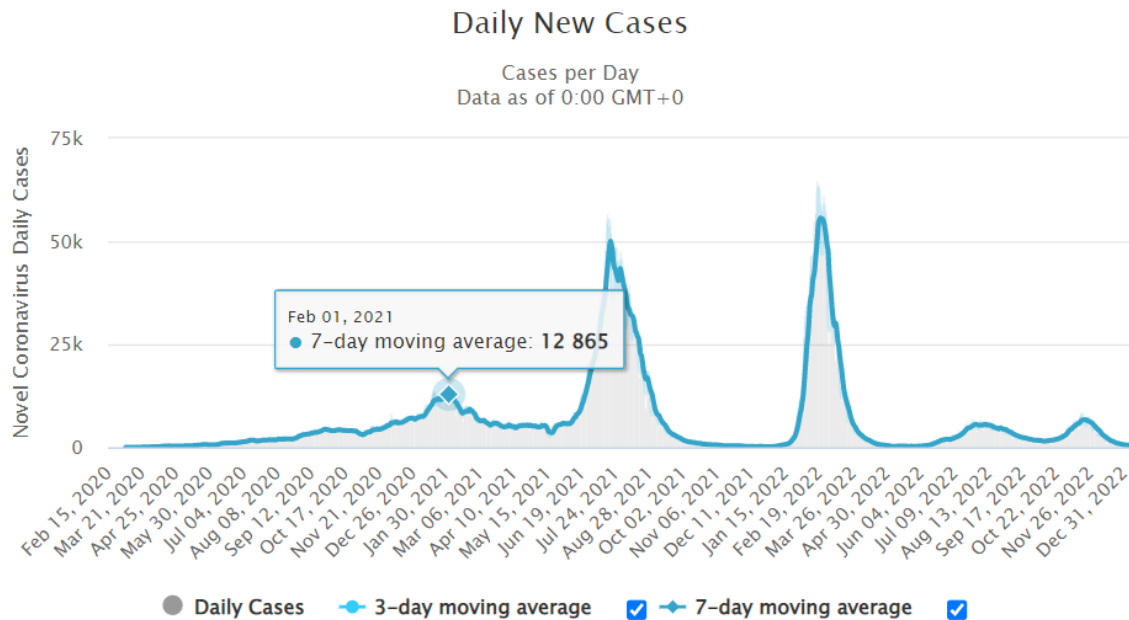
Keywords Purchase Intention, Consumer, COVID-19, Business Policy

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic, caused by the Sars-Cov-2 virus, affected a total of 670,69 million people and spread to 230 countries as of January 14th, 2023. Instead of implementing a complete lockdown, the Indonesian government has implemented large-scale social restrictions (PSBB) across the country. The success of these restrictions, which are intended to curb the spread of the virus, greatly relies on the cooperation and compliance of the community.

As of October 2020, despite the implementation of a transitional phase of the PSBB, the number of daily cases of COVID-19 in Indonesia was still increasing. A lack of discipline within the community in following health protocols is a significant contributing factor to the high number of daily cases. On October 8th, 2020, the total number of confirmed cases in Indonesia stood at 320,564. In the past two months, specifically September-October, the number of daily confirmed cases has exceeded 4000 per day, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Daily New Cases in Indonesia



Source: Worldometer, 2023 [29]

Figure 1. COVID-19 Cases in Indonesia

Recent studies have suggested that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a far-reaching impact, not only on public health but also on the economy. Research conducted by Dietrich [4] found that a survey of 3,334 households in the United States revealed a decline in purchasing power, an increase in inflation, and uncertainty about income for the coming year. Additionally, Goodell [6] also highlighted that the pandemic has had not only devastating economic consequences, but also significant social implications.

These findings are consistent with predictions of negative economic growth made by several institutions, including the Indonesian Ministry of Finance, which estimates that the country's economy is expected to shrink between -1% to -2.9% in the third quarter, indicating a recession is imminent. The retail and food service industries were also heavily impacted by the second phase of the PSBB implemented in Jakarta in September-October 2020.

The government is facing a complex problem in managing the pandemic and its economic impact. The PSBB policy has not been effective in controlling the spread of the virus and this has become a dilemma for the government. As a solution, the government needs to reformulate its policy by using evidence-based approach and measuring the impact of regulations through regulatory impact assessment, which is a tool for improving the quality of new or modified government regulations. President Joko Widodo has stated that the government's concern is to find a balance between

loosening the PSBB to revive the economy. Additionally, the government has also launched the National Economic Overcoming (PEN) program and allocated a budget of 905.1 trillion rupiah to handle the pandemic and its economic consequences. However, to overcome the economic and health recession in the second semester of 2020, strategic and innovative steps are needed.

Given the current situation, it is crucial to conduct research on community behavior towards pandemics and its impact on both health and the economy. One potential research question that could be explored is:

"What is the public's purchase intention during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia?" Such a study would aim to understand how the pandemic has affected consumer behavior and how it has changed the way they make purchasing decisions. It could also look at factors that influence these decisions, such as changes in income, job security, and overall economic uncertainty. The research can provide valuable insights for businesses and policymakers, by giving them a better understanding of the economic impact of the pandemic and the changes in consumer behavior, which can help them to develop strategies to mitigate the negative impacts.

2. Literature Study / Hypotheses Development

In this study, the theory used as a reference is purchase intention. Purchase intention is a part of individual

behavior component in consumption and purchase decisions [10] [15]. Purchase intention is the probability that a consumer will buy a product or service, generated when the impression of the product or service is positive [12]. It refers to a consumer's attitude towards a specific purchasing behavior and their degree of willingness to pay [19], which is based on their level of positive or negative assessment of the behavior [24]. Morinez et al. (2007) define purchase intention as a situation where a consumer tends to buy a certain product in certain condition [17].

From various previous studies, the COVID-19 pandemic has reduced people's interest in buying. Sheth [23] explained that the lockdown policy caused by the emergence of the Covid-19 virus resulted in changes in

consumer behavior. This change is due to the limited space for the community to carry out their daily activities. This limitation causes a shift in people's behavior, especially in terms of meeting the needs of daily life, for example, to buy personal and household needs, they prefer to do it online. The following is a table of several previous studies related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy. Furthermore, COVID-19 has also changed consumer preferences in India, Taiwan, Malaysia, Greece and also Indonesia where in general, consumers prefer shopping through online platforms and focus on the needs of basic goods [2], [23], [7], [26], [27], [9]. Here are some literature reviews.

Table 1. Literature Review

Author	Research Results
Jagdish Sheth [23]	The lockdown caused by the emergence of the COVID-19 virus resulted in changes in consumer behavior.
Maria Nicola, et al [14]	The urgency of preparing a socio-economic and ecosystem development plan that encourages entrepreneurship due to COVID-19
Foteini Biskanaki, et al [2]	The catastrophic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on business people in Greece include decreased income and loan restructuring.
Susilawati, et al [25]	The number of COVID-19 cases which is always increasing every day has resulted in a decline in the economy in Indonesia.
Widayat, Zainal Arifin [28]	During pandemic, consumers tend to be more careful in choosing foodstuffs and there is an increase in consumer preference for using E-money and avoidance of banknotes in an effort to avoid physical contact with sellers or suppliers.
Grashuis, et al [7]	The increase in the number of COVID-19 cases has made consumer preferences for purchasing goods or foodstuffs 180 degrees change.
Stanciu [25]	In Romania, COVID-19 increases the need for investment in health; the national medical system and the education system are more flexible.
Prince [20]	This research is inspired by the theory of fear appeal which shows the relationship between fear appeal, social presence, e-loyalty, and online buying behavior.
Coibion [3]	The study examines how differences in lockdown times causally affect household spending and macroeconomic expectations at the local level using multiple survey waves tailored to more than 10,000 respondents in the US.
Hung-Hao Chang [9]	COVID-19 affected the demand for online food shopping services by using data from Taiwan's largest agribusiness e-commerce platform, increasing sales by 5.7% and the number of customers by 4.9%.
Lagunaa [13]	This preliminary study sheds light on the impact of the COVID-19 health crisis on people's interests, opinions and attitudes towards food.
Sharma [22]	The implementation of the lockdown that occurred due to COVID-19 had a drastic impact on India's online shopping and marketing trends and shifted to online shopping.
Russell [21]	In this study, researchers tried to review the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on consumer characteristics globally, purchasing patterns, the relationship between consumer characteristics and psychographic behavior, and other marketing activities.
Hasanat, et al [18]	The main objective of this study is to determine the impact of the corona virus (COVID-19) on online businesses in Malaysia.
Mehta, et al [16]	This journal discusses consumer behavior during the lockdown period due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

3. Methodology

Based on the literature review, a research model is proposed to describe the purchase intention among customer when pandemic COVID-19 occurred are figured above (figure 2).

This study employed a quantitative research approach and surveyed 772 respondents in Jakarta Greater Area, the capital city of Indonesia, from September 14th to 30th, 2020. The sampling method used was inconvenience sampling through online surveys via Google Form, as a result of the PSBB policy. The questionnaire used a semantic differential scale, where participants were asked to rate their level of desire to purchase a product, with 10

being the most desirable and 1 being the least desirable, based on the product categories determined by the research team. The characteristics of the respondents were also collected, such as age, gender, occupation, and income level. This information would be used to understand how these factors relate to their purchase intentions during the pandemic.

From a total of 772 respondents, the majority of respondents live in Jakarta (41.8%) and the least respondents live in the Bogor area (8%).

Furthermore, the age of the respondents also varies where the majority of respondents are of millennial age (between 20 and 29 years) of 36.9% (figure 3).

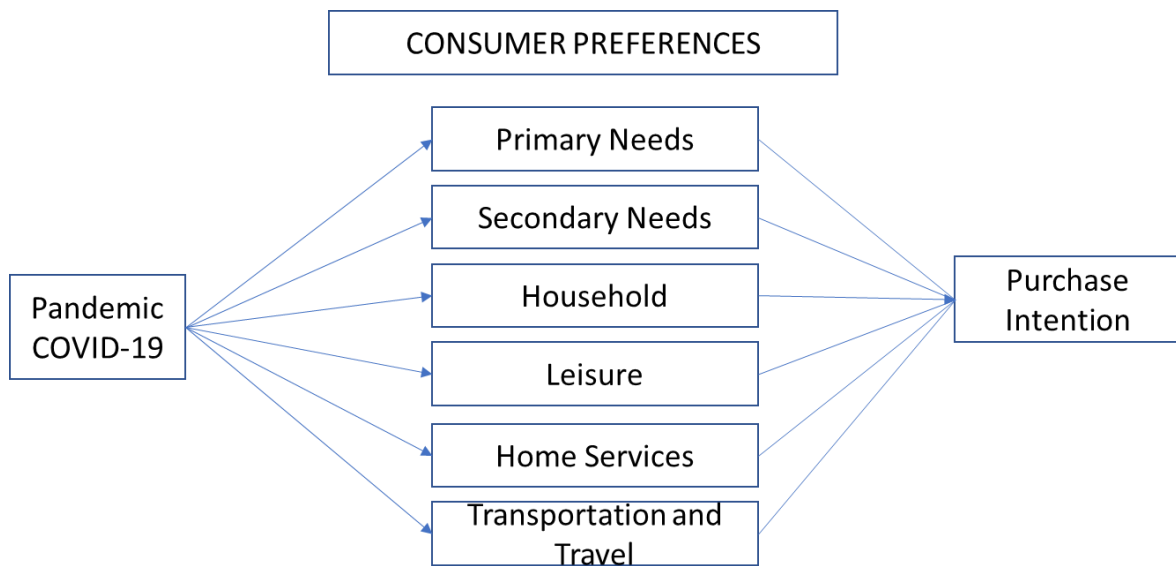


Figure 2. Model of Analyses

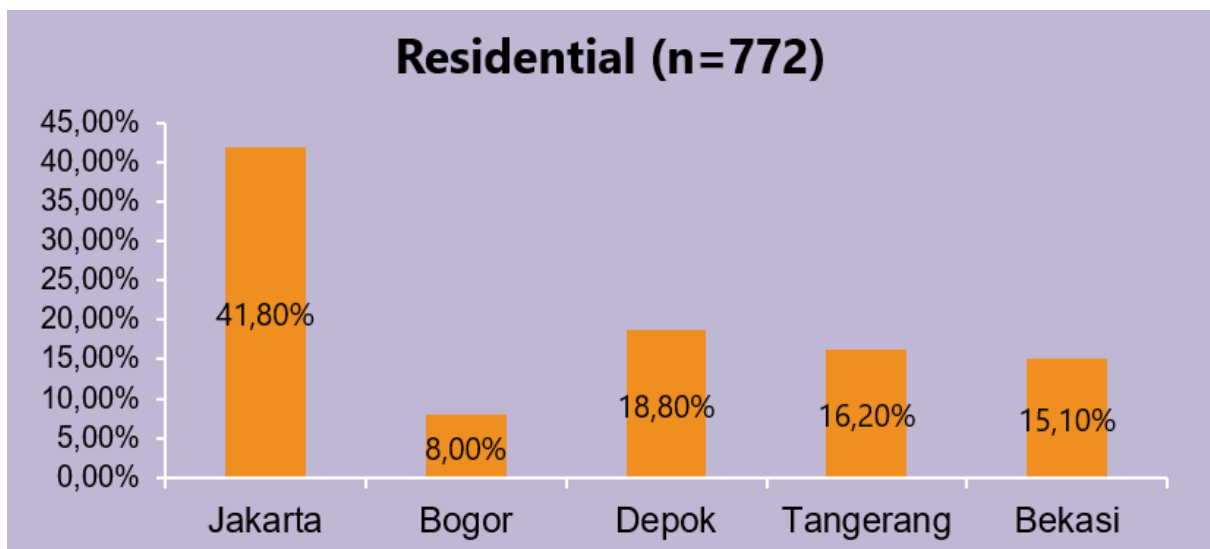


Figure 3. Characteristics of respondents-based location

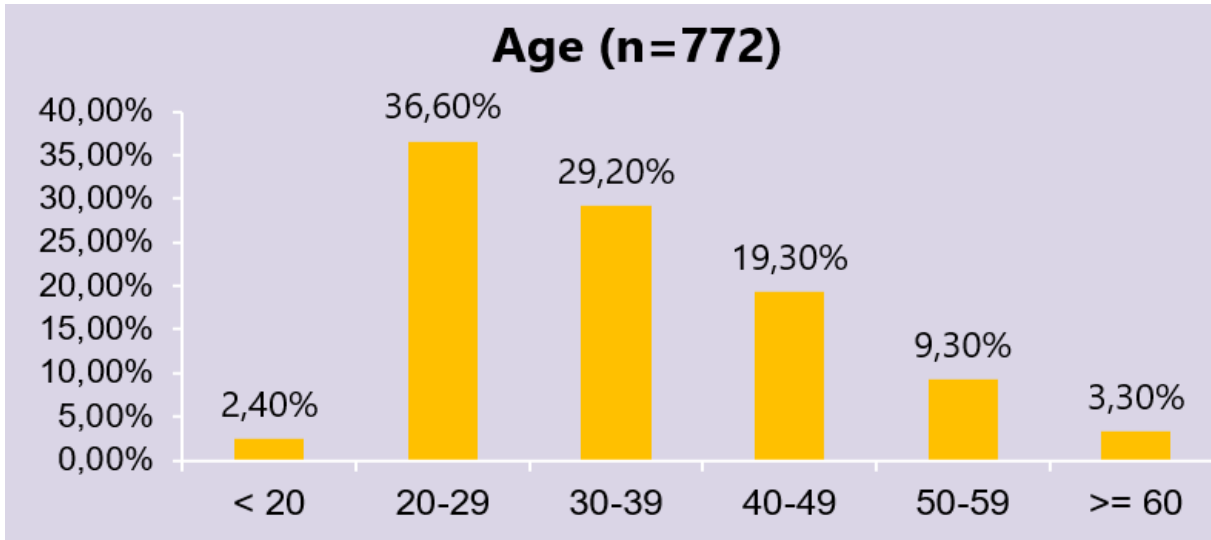


Figure 4. Characteristics of respondents based on Age

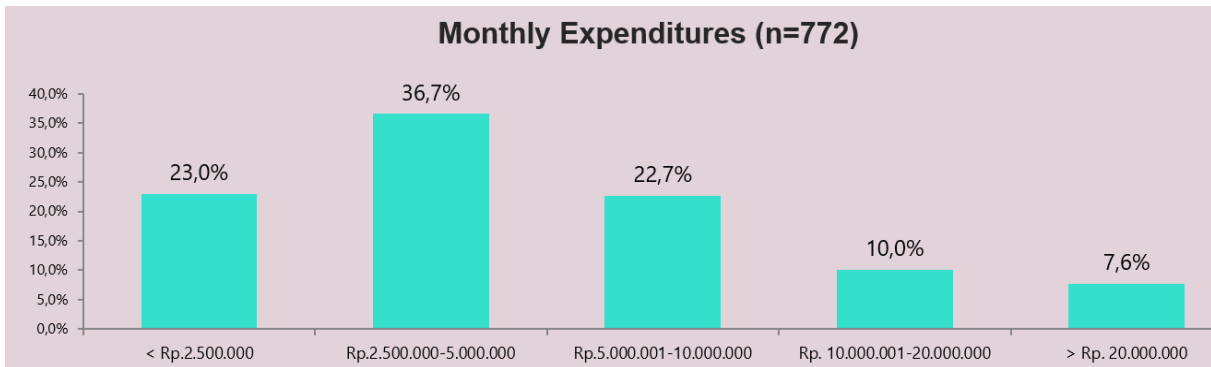


Figure 5. Characteristics of respondents based on the level of expenditure

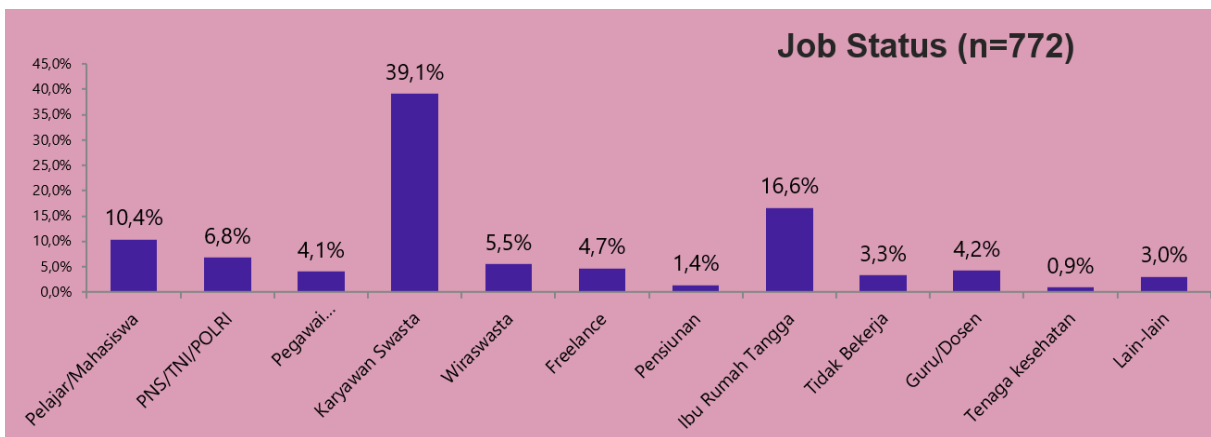


Figure 6. Characteristics of respondents based on employment status

From the socioeconomic status, the variability of respondents is also quite diverse, where at most 283 respondents (36.7%) have expenses between 2.5 and 5 million rupiah per month, and a number of 59 respondents (7.6%) have expenses above 20 million rupiah per month. Meanwhile, the employment status of most respondents is private workers (see figure 6).

4. Finding and Discussion

Researchers believe that the results of the research related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic are very dynamic. Various situations and conditions related to people's perceptions can quickly change due to the impact of tremendous uncertainty. The research team has mapped

the sectors of public consumption for which purchasing interest is measured and organized into 6 categories and 17 sub-categories (see table 2).

During the pandemic period (until September 2020), the highest public buying interest was in buying food and groceries, with an average score of 7.42 on the Guttman scale. The sectors least interested in by respondents were

travel and transportation, with an average score of 2.14 (Table 3).

It is likely that during a pandemic, people prioritize purchasing basic necessities due to a decrease in their purchasing power. This can be an indication for companies in other business sectors that they need to adjust their strategies to cater to the changing consumer needs.

Table 2. Product Categories To Be Measured

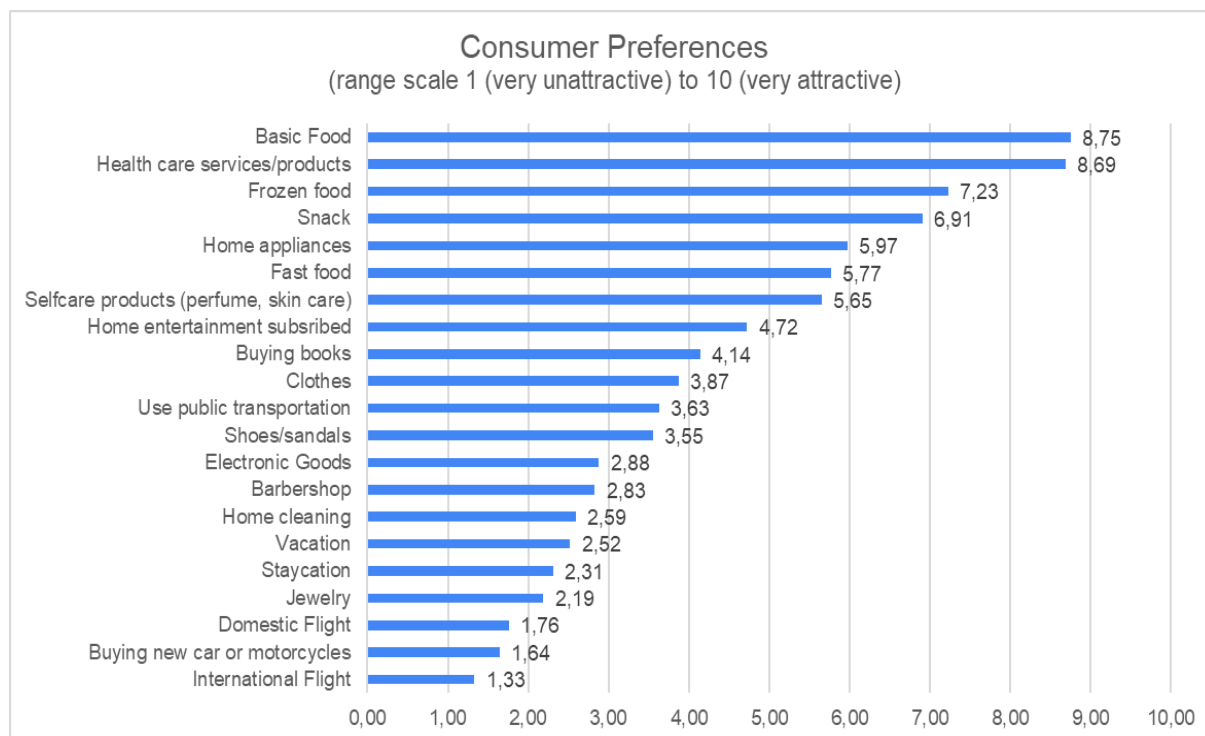
Category	Subcategory
Primary Needs	Basic Food
	Snack
	Frozen Food
	Fast Food
Secondary Needs	Health care products/services
	Shoes/sandals
	Clothes
Household	Jewelry
	Home appliances
	Selfcare product (perfume, skincare)
Leisure	Electronics goods
	Subscribed
	Home entertainment
	Vacation
Home services	Buying books
	Home cleaning
Transportation and Travel	Barbershop/Salon
	Buying new car/motor
	Domestic flight
	International Flight
	Staycation
	Use Public Transportation

Source: data processed by researcher (2020)

Table 3. Purchase Interest Preference (n = 772)

Category	Mean Value
Primary Needs	7,42
Secondary Needs	3,21
Household	4,83
Leisure	3,79
Home services	2,71
Transportation and Travel	2,14

Source: data processed by researcher (2020)



Source: data processed by researcher, 2020

Figure 7. Purchase intention per subcategory products

Respondents tend to reduce their consumption, with the travel and transportation sectors being the least desirable during a pandemic. The research findings related to the respondents' buying interest in the 6 sectors can be presented in figure 7, where it shows the level of interest in each sector and how it is affected by the pandemic. This information can be used by companies to understand the changes in consumer behavior and align their strategies accordingly.

Overall, the research findings indicated that food and foodstuffs were still in high demand among all respondents, regardless of their income levels, with more than 60% of them showing interest in buying these products. When looking at subcategories, the study found that purchasing interest in staples such as rice, flour, and sugar ranked first, with a mean score of 8.75.

Additionally, there was a high interest in buying health-related products such as vitamins, honey and healthy food, with a mean score of 8.69. This could indicate that people are placing more emphasis on maintaining their health during the pandemic, and companies that produce or sell these products may have more opportunities in the market.

Additionally, the study found that for the secondary goods category, respondents had very low interest in buying jewelry items during the pandemic, with a mean score of only 2.19. Similarly, interest in buying clothes and shoes was also low. This aligns with the results of the Retail Sales Survey released by Bank Indonesia in August 2020, which reported a Real Sales Index of 196.6,

indicating a decrease of -9.2% (year-over-year) [1]. This suggests that people are prioritizing essential items during the pandemic, and companies in the jewelry, clothing, and shoe sectors may face more challenges in the market.

Furthermore, the study found that for the category of household goods, the average score was 4.83. The highest purchasing preference within this category was for household necessities, with an average score of 5.97. The reason for this high score is likely due to the fact that people were spending more time at home during the pandemic, thus, there was an increased need for household items. Additionally, there was a significant increase in online sales of household goods, as reported by BPS data, which showed an increase of 480% in April 2020 compared to January 2020 [11]. This could indicate that the pandemic has led to a shift in consumer behavior, with more people turning to online platforms to purchase household goods.

In the household goods category, personal care products and electronic goods are also included. According to the study, the average score for personal care products is 5.65, indicating that people still have a relatively high interest in buying these products. However, electronic goods received the lowest score, with an average of 2.88. One reason for this may be the decline in global sales of smartphones, which dropped by 20.4% in Q2 of 2020 [27]. This indicates that people are less likely to buy electronic goods during the pandemic, and companies in the electronic goods sector may face more challenges in the market.

The analysis of entertainment products also shows low

buying interest among consumers, with an average score of only 3.79. Due to the pandemic and large-scale social restrictions (PSBB), people tend to avoid traveling and instead opt to bring entertainment to their homes. Meanwhile, the preference for book purchases is at an average of 4.14. This suggests that the purchase of family entertainment and book purchases is relatively more desirable for people, despite the pandemic and restriction. This could be an opportunity for companies in these sectors to market their products to consumers who are looking for entertainment options at home.

The research findings also indicate that the transportation and travel categories have the lowest buying interest among respondents, compared to other categories. The recorded average score for the transportation category is only 2.14. This reflects the current reality of society during the pandemic, where both domestic and international flights are limited or cancelled which resulted in the number of daily passengers as of July 2020 falling by 90% [27]. This could be a significant challenge for the transportation and travel industry, as consumers are less likely to use their services during the pandemic, which may lead to a decline in revenue for companies in these sectors.

In Indonesia, several airlines such as Garuda Indonesia and Lion Air have been forced to lay off employees due to financial difficulties caused by the pandemic [5]. This is because of the significant decrease in demand for air travel, resulting in reduced revenue and ultimately affecting the financial stability of these companies. The pandemic has also caused several airlines to operate on reduced capacity, which also affects their financial efficiency.

Airlines industry can also explore other opportunities to generate revenue, such as expanding their cargo service business units. With the rise of e-commerce during the pandemic, the demand for air freight services has increased as more people are shopping online and need their purchases to be delivered quickly. By focusing on their cargo service business, local airlines can tap into this growing market and generate new revenue streams, while also providing a needed service for freight forwarding companies. Additionally, it also could be a strategy to reduce the impact of the fall of passenger revenues.

5. Conclusions

The research findings indicate that during a pandemic, people tend to reduce their consumption, especially for secondary and tertiary goods, which can lead to economic stagnation. In response to this, the government has implemented various stimulus policies to boost public consumption and increase purchasing power. The highest level of public consumption interest was found to be in the food and foodstuff sector, which suggests that policies related to food security should be implemented effectively in order to ensure food security for the population. These policies should be focused on increasing food production

and distribution, and making sure that people have access to affordable and healthy food options.

It is important for the government to take action to support the travel and transportation sector, which has been greatly impacted by the pandemic. This includes implementing economic stimulus policies to help the aviation industry and automotive sub-sector stay afloat during this difficult time. Businesses in this sector must also be proactive in finding ways to adapt and stay competitive, such as through innovation and strategic changes in their business models, in order to survive until the economy recovers.

Acknowledgement

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